

Strategic Management Practices in Enhancing Educational Institutional Performance: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

Strategic management has received increasing attention as educational institutions respond to changing demands, limited resources, and greater expectations for institutional performance. However, empirical findings remain dispersed across different aspects of strategic management, making it difficult to obtain an integrated view of its implementation, outcomes, and enabling conditions. This study therefore conducted a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) of empirical studies published between 2022 and 2026. The review followed the PRISMA 2020 guidelines, while methodological quality was assessed using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT). From 3,911 records retrieved across six electronic databases, 20 studies met the eligibility and quality requirements for the final synthesis. The thematic analysis identified four dimensions of strategic management: holistic strategic management, strategy implementation, continuous evaluation and improvement, and strategic planning. The reviewed studies associated strategic management with organisational effectiveness, educational quality, and institutional strengthening. Three factors were also prominent in supporting implementation: leadership and governance, organisational capacity, and organisational culture and collaboration. Overall, the findings point to the importance of viewing strategic management as an ongoing process in which planning, implementation, monitoring, and improvement are connected. The review provides evidence that may support educational leadership, policy development, and future research.

Keywords: Strategic Management, Educational Institutions, Institutional Performance, Systematic Literature Review, Strategy Implementation

Introduction

Background

In the current global educational landscape, institutional performance has become an important concern for educational institutions seeking to sustain and improve their effectiveness and respond to changing educational demands. Educational institutions are increasingly expected to adapt to changing social, economic, and technological conditions while responding to evolving educational demands (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2018). These demands require institutions not only to respond to

external changes but also to establish clear priorities, align resources, and translate institutional goals into coordinated action. In this context, strategic management provides a framework for establishing strategic direction and aligning institutional priorities, resources, and actions with organisational objectives (Bryson, 2018; David & David, 2016). Through processes such as strategic analysis, formulation, implementation, and evaluation, strategic management provides a mechanism for translating institutional priorities into coordinated action and monitoring progress towards intended outcomes. Empirical research has increasingly examined the relationship between strategic management and different dimensions of educational institutional improvement. For example, Shanko, Demissie, Bezabeh, and Legesse (2025) reported that strategic management explained 54.9% of the variance in the performance of Ethiopian public universities. In another educational context, Cahyaningrum, Untoro, Setiawan, and Wahyudi (2024) found an association between effective strategic management and teacher competence in madrasahs, while Kositpimanvach (2024) reported that strategic management contributed to the long-term competitiveness of private schools in Thailand. Taken together, these studies suggest that strategic management may contribute to institutional improvement through different pathways, including organisational performance, teacher-related outcomes, and institutional competitiveness. At the same time, the variation in institutional settings and outcome measures indicates that the relationship between strategic management and educational institutional performance is not necessarily uniform across contexts. The relevance of strategic management is also reflected in Malaysia's education reform agenda. National initiatives, including the *Pelan Pembangunan Pendidikan Malaysia (PPPM) 2013–2025*, *Transformasi Sekolah 2025 (TS25)*, and the *Sekolah Berprestasi Tinggi (SBT)* initiative, emphasise strategic planning, implementation, and monitoring as components of efforts to strengthen educational institutions (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia [KPM], 2013). These initiatives demonstrate the policy-level relevance of strategic management within the Malaysian education system and reflect expectations for educational institutions to establish coordinated strategies for organisational improvement. However, policy emphasis alone does not establish the extent to which strategic management contributes to institutional performance or the conditions under which its implementation is effective. This distinction highlights the importance of examining the broader empirical evidence concerning strategic management in educational institutions.

Problem Statement

Despite the growing recognition of strategic management as an approach to supporting educational institutional improvement, the empirical literature remains fragmented. Existing studies have frequently examined particular aspects of strategic management, including strategic planning, strategy implementation, evaluation, and strategic leadership, rather than examining these dimensions as interconnected components of a broader organisational process (Misrahayu, Witraguna, Nitiasih, Riastini, & Herawati, 2026; Wafa, Maskuri, & Said, 2026). Consequently, the available evidence provides limited insight into how the different dimensions of strategic management are collectively represented and implemented across educational contexts. Three related gaps can be identified from the existing literature. First, strategic management encompasses several interconnected activities, including environmental analysis, strategy formulation, implementation, and evaluation (Shanko, Demissie, Bezabeh, et al., 2025; Sulaeman & Nuhalisa, 2025; Iskandar, Rusydi, Amin, Nur Hakim, & Amirul Haqq, 2022). However, these dimensions have not been systematically

synthesised to determine which aspects of strategic management receive greater attention across different types of educational institutions (Misrahayu et al., 2026). This limits a comprehensive understanding of how strategic management is operationalised in educational settings. Second, existing studies have examined institutional performance using diverse indicators, including educational quality, student achievement, teacher competence, organisational effectiveness, and institutional competitiveness (Cahyaningrum et al., 2024; Misrahayu et al., 2026; Nsien, Umoh, & Williams, 2024; Shanko, Demissie, & Bezabeh, 2025). Although this diversity reflects the multidimensional nature of institutional performance, it also complicates comparisons across studies and makes it difficult to determine the broader contribution of strategic management to educational institutional performance. This variation highlights the need to examine patterns in the outcomes associated with strategic management across educational contexts. Third, the effectiveness of strategic management implementation may depend on organisational and contextual conditions such as leadership, organisational culture, stakeholder involvement, financial resources, and infrastructure readiness (Atiku & Erebakere, 2025; Sulaeman & Nuhalisa, 2025). Nevertheless, these factors have often been examined separately, while implementation challenges, including resistance to change and budget misalignment, have received less integrated attention (Khuzwayo & Mashau, 2025; Misrahayu et al., 2026). Beyond examining whether strategic management is associated with institutional performance, it is therefore important to understand the conditions that enable or constrain its effective implementation. These gaps collectively indicate that the available evidence provides limited integrated understanding of strategic management dimensions, institutional performance outcomes, and implementation conditions across educational contexts. A systematic synthesis is therefore needed to integrate the dispersed evidence, identify patterns across studies, and clarify areas where the evidence remains limited (Gough et al., 2017; Snyder, 2019). The novelty of this review lies in bringing these three strands of evidence together to clarify how strategic management practices are translated into institutional outcomes and shaped by organisational conditions across educational contexts. From a social sciences perspective, this synthesis contributes an integrated account of the relationship between strategic management, institutional performance, and the organisational conditions that shape implementation in educational institutions.

Research Questions

Based on the problem statement and research gaps presented above, this systematic literature review (SLR) will address the following research questions:

1. How are the dimensions of strategic management implemented across different types of educational institutions?
2. What influence does strategic management have on the performance of educational institutions?
3. What factors influence the effectiveness of strategic management implementation in educational institutions?

Research Objectives

This SLR aims to synthesise and critically analyse empirical evidence on strategic management in educational institutions, with particular attention to the dimensions of strategic management, its influence on institutional performance, and the factors affecting implementation effectiveness. Specifically, three research objectives were established:

1. To analyse the dimensions of strategic management implemented in educational institutions based on selected empirical studies.
2. To synthesise research findings on the influence of strategic management on the performance of educational institutions.
3. To identify and synthesise the factors influencing the effectiveness of strategic management implementation in educational institutions.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study used a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to identify, appraise, and synthesise empirical studies on strategic management practices in educational institutions. The review examined how strategic management is implemented in educational institutions, its influence on institutional performance, and the factors associated with implementation effectiveness. Compared with traditional narrative reviews, the SLR approach provides a more structured process for searching, selecting, appraising, and synthesising existing evidence, supporting transparency and reproducibility (Snyder, 2019). The review followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. The review process covered study identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and final inclusion (Moher et al., 2009; Page et al., 2021). The methodological quality of the included studies was assessed using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT 2018), followed by thematic synthesis of extracted data. This study employed a qualitative synthesis approach based on document analysis of empirical studies that met the predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Data extracted from the selected studies were organised according to three areas of focus: (i) dimensions of strategic management implemented in educational institutions, (ii) the influence of strategic management on institutional performance, and (iii) factors affecting implementation effectiveness.

Data Sources and Literature Search Strategy

The literature search was conducted across six electronic databases: Scopus, Web of Science (WoS), SAGE Journals Online, ERIC, MyEBSCO, and Google Scholar. These databases were selected to cover literature from educational management, strategic management, and the broader social sciences, including multidisciplinary, education-specific, and regional sources. Using multiple databases helped to capture relevant empirical studies from different research areas. The search strategy was developed around three core concepts: strategic management practices, educational institutional performance, and educational institution context. Search strings were constructed using Boolean operators (AND, OR), synonymous and related terms, and truncation (*) to broaden the retrieval of relevant studies (Booth et al., 2016). The search strings applied across the six databases are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Search Strategy Across Electronic Databases

Database	Search String
Scopus	TITLE-ABS-KEY (("strategic management" OR "strategic management practice*") AND ("institutional performance" OR "school performance") AND ("educational institution*" OR school* OR "primary school*" OR "secondary school*"))
Web of Science (WoS)	TS= (("strategic management" OR "strategic management practice*") AND (performance OR "organizational performance" OR "institutional performance" OR "school performance" OR "educational performance") AND ("educational institution*" OR school* OR "primary school*" OR "secondary school*"))
SAGE Journals Online	("strategic management" OR "strategic management practice*") AND ("institutional performance" OR "school performance") AND (school* OR universit* OR "educational institution*")
ERIC	("strategic management" OR "strategic management practice*") AND ("educational institution performance" OR "institutional performance" OR "organizational performance" OR "school performance") AND ("educational institution*" OR school* OR universit* OR college*)
MyEBSCO	AB ("strategic management" OR "strategic management practices") AND AB ("educational institution*" OR school* OR universit*) AND AB ("institutional performance" OR "organizational performance" OR effectiveness)
Google Scholar	("strategic management" OR "strategic management practices") AND "educational institution"

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Eligibility criteria were established to determine which studies were relevant to the review. The eligible publications comprised journal articles, master's theses, doctoral dissertations, and conference proceedings published between 2022 and 2026 in Malay, English, or Indonesian. The selected timeframe was intended to capture recent empirical research on strategic management practices in educational institutions. Seminal works, including Bryson (2018), David and David (2016), Kaplan and Norton (2008), Mintzberg (1994), and Wheelen and Hunger (2012), were consulted to support the theoretical foundation of the review but were not included in the empirical synthesis. The inclusion and exclusion criteria applied to the empirical studies are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

No.	Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
1	Document Type	Empirical journal articles, master's theses, doctoral dissertations, and conference proceedings	Books, book chapters, editorials, book reviews, letters to editors, and documents without empirical data
2	Research Focus	Studies examining strategic management practices and their relationship with educational institutional performance	Studies that do not examine strategic management practices, or are unrelated to educational institutional performance
3	Research Design	Empirical quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods studies	Conceptual papers, theoretical articles, non-systematic narrative reviews, systematic literature reviews, and meta-analyses
4	Language	Malay, English, and Indonesian	Languages other than Malay, English, and Indonesian
5	Publication Period	Studies published between 2022 and 2026	Studies published before 2022
6	Data Source	Studies retrieved from Scopus, WoS, ERIC, MyEBSCO, SAGE Journals Online, Google Scholar, or recognised institutional repositories	Studies with unverifiable sources or retrieved from non-credible academic outlets
7	Context	Studies conducted in educational institutions at school or higher education level, in Malaysia or other countries	Studies conducted in non-educational organisations such as companies, industries, or business sectors

Study Selection and Quality Assessment

The study selection process followed the PRISMA 2020 guidelines and proceeded through four stages: identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion (Figure 1). A total of 41 studies that remained after the initial screening were assessed in full text and appraised using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT), Version 2018 (Hong et al., 2018). The MMAT provides a framework for assessing the methodological quality of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods studies. The appraisal began with two screening questions, followed by five design-specific criteria, with each criterion rated Yes (Y), No (N), or Can't Tell (CT), as presented in Table 3. Following the quality appraisal, 21 studies were excluded because they did not meet the predefined methodological quality threshold, leaving 20 empirical studies for the final thematic synthesis. The quality score was calculated based on the number of MMAT criteria rated "Yes," with studies receiving 5/5 classified as high quality, those receiving 4/5 as moderately high quality, and those scoring below 4/5 excluded from the final synthesis. Most of the excluded studies used qualitative case-study designs (MMAT Category 1). The main concerns identified in these studies involved insufficient evidence that the findings were grounded in the data, limited support for the interpretations presented, and inadequate coherence among data sources, data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Thus, the exclusion of these studies was primarily related to methodological and analytical reporting rather than adequacy of the research questions or data. Figure 1 presents the PRISMA 2020 flow diagram of the study selection process.

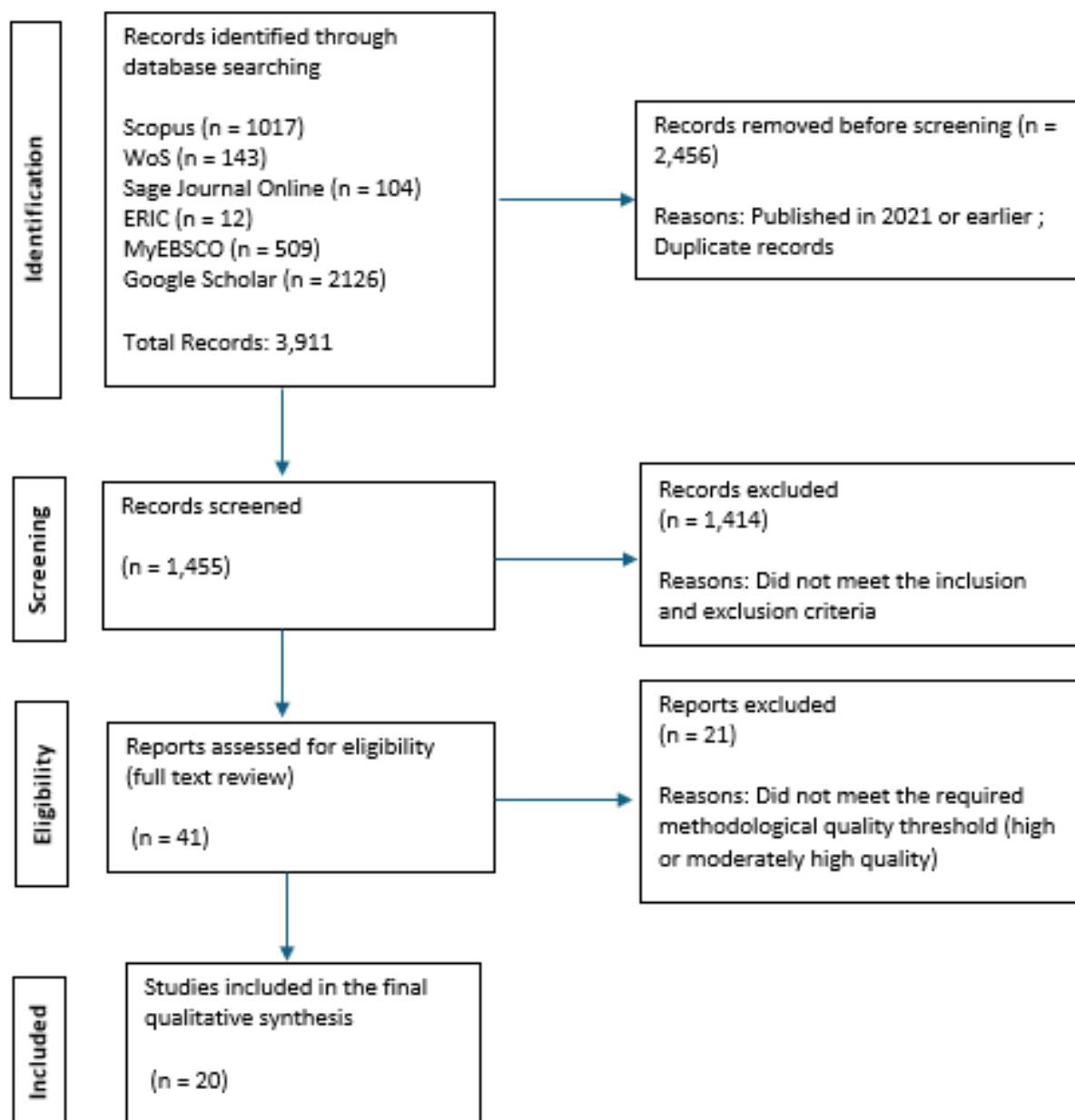


Figure 1 PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram of the Study Selection Process Adapted from Page et al. (2021)

Table 3

Summary of the MMAT (2018) Assessment Criteria

Assessment Stage	Assessment Criteria	Description
Screening	S1	Are there clear research questions?
	S2	Do the collected data allow research questions to be addressed?
Qualitative Studies	Q1–Q5	Whether the qualitative approach is appropriate to the research question; data collection methods are adequate; findings are adequately derived from the data; interpretations are sufficiently substantiated by the data; and there is coherence between qualitative data resources, collection, analysis, and interpretation.
Quantitative Non-randomized Studies	Q1–Q5	Whether participants are representative of the target population; measurement are appropriate for the outcome and intervention; outcome data are complete; confounders are accounted for in the design and analysis; and the intervention or exposure is administered as intended.
Quantitative Descriptive Studies	Q1–Q5	Whether the sampling strategy is relevant to the research question; the sample representative of the target population; measurements are appropriate; the risk of non-response bias is low; and the statistical analysis is appropriate to the research question.
Mixed Methods Studies	Q1–Q5	Whether there is an adequate rationale for using a mixed-methods design; the qualitative and quantitative components are effectively integrated; the outputs of the integration are adequately interpreted; divergences and inconsistencies between the components are addressed; and each component meets the quality criteria of its respective methodological tradition.
Response Categories	Y / N / CT	Yes, No, or Can't Tell.

Note. MMAT = Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool. The MMAT 2018 includes five study-design categories: qualitative, quantitative randomized controlled trials, quantitative non-randomized, quantitative descriptive, and mixed methods. The randomized controlled trial category was not applicable to this review because none of the assessed studies employed this design (Hong et al., 2018).

Characteristics of the Included Studies

Twenty empirical studies met all eligibility and methodological quality criteria and were retained for the final synthesis. Google Scholar yielded the largest number of included studies ($n = 11$, 55%), followed by Scopus ($n = 4$), ERIC and MyEBSCO ($n = 2$ each), and SAGE Journals Online ($n = 1$). No eligible studies were retrieved from Web of Science. Most of the included studies were published in 2025 ($n = 11$), followed by 2023 and 2024 ($n = 3$ each), 2026 ($n = 2$), and 2022 ($n = 1$). All 20 studies met methodological quality criteria applied in the MMAT assessment. Table 4 presents the characteristics of the 20 empirical studies, including authors and publication year, country, educational context, research design, sample, and data collection methods. These characteristics provide an overview of the evidence base and show the range of educational contexts and methodological approaches represented in the review. The findings extracted from the included studies were subsequently organised and synthesised according to the three research objectives and are presented in the Findings section.

Table 4

Characteristics of the Included Studies

ID	Author(s)	Country	Educational Context	Research Design	Sample	Data Collection
K1	Shanko, Demissie, Bezabeh, & Legesse (2025)	Ethiopia	Public Research University	Mixed Methods	237 respondents	Survey and interviews
K2	Nsien et al. (2024)	Nigeria	Higher Education Institution	Quantitative	128 respondents	Questionnaire
K3	Basri et al. (2022)	Indonesia	Madrasah	Qualitative (Case Study)	Principal, teachers and staff	Interviews, observation and documents
K4	Ifejika & Daerefamama (2025)	Nigeria	Public Secondary School	Quantitative (Correlation)	6,893 teachers	Questionnaire
K5	Mugwaze & Smith (2024)	Zimbabwe	Public Secondary School	Qualitative (Case Study)	88 participants	Interviews
K6	Cabreros (2023)	Philippines	Private Technical Vocational School	Quantitative (Correlation)	Principals and teachers	Questionnaire
K7	Rosita et al. (2025)	Indonesia	Public Primary School	Quantitative (Correlation)	Teachers and school leaders	Questionnaire
K8	Khuzwayo & Mashau (2025)	South Africa	Public University	Quantitative (Survey)	61 managers and staff	Questionnaire
K9	Reyes (2023)	Philippines	Public Secondary School	Quantitative (Correlation and Regression)	Principals and faculty members	Questionnaire
K10	Saputri et al. (2025)	Indonesia	Madrasah	Qualitative (Case Study)	Seven informants	Interviews, observation and documents
K11	Atiku & Erebakere (2025)	Ghana	College of Education	Qualitative (Participatory Action Research)	15 informants	Interviews and focus groups
K12	Taufiq (2025)	Indonesia	Islamic Boarding School	Qualitative (Case Study)	Administrators, teachers and students	Interviews, observation and documents
K13	Wafa et al. (2026)	Indonesia	Islamic Boarding School	Qualitative (Ethnography)	Religious leaders, teachers and community members	Interviews and observation
K14	Sulaeman & Nuhalisa (2025)	Indonesia	Faculty of Education	Qualitative (Case Study)	Dean and accreditation team	Interviews and documents

ID	Author(s)	Country	Educational Context	Research Design	Sample	Data Collection
K15	Shanko, Demissie, & Bezabeh (2025)	Ethiopia	Public Research Universities	Mixed Methods	234 respondents	Survey and interviews
K16	Cahyaningrum et al. (2024)	Indonesia	Private University	Quantitative (Correlation)	182 respondents	Questionnaire
K17	Chotipongsiri et al. (2025)	Thailand	Public Schools	Quantitative (SEM)	600 school administrators	Questionnaire
K18	Misrahayu et al. (2026)	Indonesia	Higher Education Institution	Qualitative (Descriptive)	Seven informants	Interviews and documentation
K19	Zakaria (2023)	Malaysia	Ministry of Education Matriculation Colleges	Quantitative (Survey)	158 middle leaders	Questionnaire
K20	Kadir et al. (2025)	Malaysia	Public University	Quantitative (Survey)	280 staff	Questionnaire

Data Synthesis

Data extracted from the 20 included studies were synthesised thematically using the six-phase framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The analysis began with repeated reading of the extracted data, followed by the generation of initial codes and the grouping of related codes into broader themes and sub-themes. The themes were reviewed and refined against the extracted evidence before being organised according to the three research objectives. This process allowed findings from studies conducted in different educational contexts, using different research designs and involving different institutional settings, to be examined within a common thematic framework.

Findings

Research Objective 1: Dimensions of Strategic Management Implemented in Educational Institutions

The thematic synthesis identified four dimensions of strategic management implemented across the included educational institutions namely holistic strategic management, strategy implementation, continuous evaluation and improvement, and strategic planning. Together, these dimensions illustrate how strategic direction is translated into planning, implementation, monitoring and organisational practice to achieve one goal.

Table 5

Dimensions of Strategic Management Implemented in Educational Institutions

Strategic Management Dimension	Frequency (n)	Supporting Studies
Strategy Implementation	9	K4, K5, K7, K8, K9, K11, K12, K16, K19
Holistic Strategic Management	8	K1, K3, K6, K10, K13, K15, K17, K18
Continuous Evaluation and Improvement	3	K14, K16, K19
Strategic Planning	2	K2, K20

As shown in Table 5, strategy implementation was the most frequently reported dimension (n = 9), followed by holistic strategic management (n = 8), continuous evaluation and

improvement ($n = 3$), and strategic planning ($n = 2$). This distribution indicates that strategy implementation received slightly greater attention than holistic strategic management, while strategic planning and continuous evaluation and improvement appeared less frequently in the reviewed studies. This pattern suggests that some dimensions of the strategic management process remain less represented in the empirical literature. Two studies (K16 and K19) addressed both strategy implementation and continuous evaluation and improvement; therefore, the combined frequency across dimensions exceeds the total of 20 included studies.

Theme 1: Holistic Strategic Management

Eight studies (K1, K3, K6, K10, K13, K15, K17, and K18) examined strategic management from a holistic perspective. The evidence in these studies covered several stages of the strategic management process, including vision and mission formulation, environmental analysis, strategy formulation, implementation, monitoring, and continuous evaluation. Basri, Ridwan, Maudin, and Asykur (2022) and Cabreros (2023) viewed these activities as interconnected rather than as separate stages. Chotipongsiri, Dechpichi, and Waichomphu (2025) and Misrahayu et al. (2026) similarly linked strategic planning with routine institutional operations. Other studies reported connections between planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation as part of institutional strategic management (Saputri, Warlizasusi, & Bahri, 2025; Shanko, Demissie, Bezabeh, et al., 2025; Shanko, Demissie, & Bezabeh, 2025; Wafa et al., 2026).

Theme 2: Strategy Implementation

This theme was identified in nine studies (K4, K5, K7, K8, K9, K11, K12, K16, and K19). The reported practices covered five areas: strategic human resource management, organisational resource alignment, stakeholder collaboration, strategic change management, and performance monitoring. Staff development, performance appraisal, workload allocation, reward systems, and supportive working environments were reported as part of strategic human resource management (Ifejika & Daerefamama, 2025; Mugwaze & Smith, 2024). Several studies focused on the aligning financial and human resources, infrastructure, curriculum, and organisational systems with institutional objectives (Khuzwayo & Mashau, 2025; Reyes, 2023; Taufiq, 2025). Rosita, Rahayu, and Sagita (2025) reported teacher participation and stakeholder involvement in the implementation of institutional strategies. Atiku and Erebakyere (2025) examined strategic change management in relation to organisational transformation, leadership, governance, reward systems, and institutional resources. Performance monitoring involved the use of key performance indicators (KPIs), benchmarking, quality assurance systems, and performance audits (Cahyaningrum et al., 2024).

Theme 3: Continuous Evaluation and Improvement

The continuous evaluation and improvement theme was identified in three studies (K14, K16, and K19). Across these studies, several practices for monitoring and evaluating strategy implementation were reported, including KPIs, benchmarking, quality assurance systems, performance audits, feedback mechanisms, and corrective actions. Sulaeman and Nuhalisa (2025) emphasised continuous monitoring through institutional quality assurance processes. Cahyaningrum et al. (2024) highlighted quality assurance and quality control mechanisms for monitoring teaching, learning, and institutional performance. Zakaria (2023) reported the use

of benchmarking and institutional performance indicators for periodic organisational evaluation.

Theme 4: Strategic Planning

Strategic planning was identified in two studies (K2 and K20). The studies examined strategic planning in relation to organisational direction, including the formulation of vision, mission, strategic goals, and environmental analysis. Nsien et al. (2024) reported the use of strategic planning tools, including SWOT and PESTLE analyses, to identify organisational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and to support strategic decision-making. Kadir et al. (2025) described strategic planning as incorporating risk management, financial planning, and human resource development to strengthen institutional planning processes.

Research Objective 2: Influence of Strategic Management on Educational Institutional Performance

Three themes emerged from the thematic synthesis concerning the relationship between strategic management and educational performance: organisational effectiveness, educational quality, and institutional strengthening.

Table 6

Influence of Strategic Management on Educational Institutional Performance

Influence on Educational Institutional Performance	Frequency (n)	Supporting Studies
Organisational Effectiveness	12	K1, K2, K6, K7, K8, K9, K13, K15, K17, K18, K19, K20
Educational Quality	5	K4, K5, K11, K12, K16
Institutional Strengthening	3	K3, K10, K14

Table 6 shows that organisational effectiveness was the most frequently reported influence of strategic management (n = 12), followed by educational quality (n = 5) and institutional strengthening (n = 3).

Theme 1: Organisational Effectiveness

Organisational effectiveness was identified in 12 studies (K1, K2, K6, K7, K8, K9, K13, K15, K17, K18, K19, and K20). The reported outcomes included organisational performance, operational efficiency, decision-making, adaptability to environmental change, and organisational resilience. Two studies provided quantitative evidence of this relationship. Shanko, Demissie, Bezabeh, et al. (2025) reported that strategic management practices explained 54.9% of the variance in university performance, while Shanko, Demissie, and Bezabeh (2025) reported a contribution of 62.3%. Other studies linked strategic management with organisational performance through resource management, financial alignment, service delivery, and continuous organisational improvement (Cabreros, 2023; Chotipongsiri et al., 2025; Khuzwayo & Mashau, 2025; Nsien et al., 2024; Reyes, 2023). Digital transformation, human resource development, leadership communication, and risk management were also identified as organisational capabilities associated with institutional effectiveness (Kadir et al., 2025; Misrahyayu et al., 2026; Wafa et al., 2026; Zakaria, 2023).

Theme 2: Educational Quality

Five studies (K4, K5, K11, K12, and K16) addressed educational quality. Across these studies, strategic management was associated with improvements in teaching quality, professional development, learning outcomes, and quality assurance. Strategic human resource practices, including reward systems, appropriate workload allocation, staff welfare, and teacher competency development, were associated with teacher motivation, professionalism, teaching effectiveness, and student academic achievement (Ifejika & Daerefamama, 2025; Mugwaze & Smith, 2024). Atiku and Erebyere (2025) and Taufiq (2025) reported that continuous professional development, increased staffing capacity, and improved learning facilities contributed to better student learning outcomes, motivation, and enrolment. Cahyaningrum et al. (2024) reported that quality assurance and quality control mechanisms strengthened student competency and lecturer professionalism through systematic monitoring processes.

Theme 3: Institutional Strengthening

Institutional strengthening was identified in three studies (K3, K10, and K14). The reported outcomes included institutional capacity, credibility, sustainability, accreditation, organisational reputation, collaborative networks, and competitiveness. Basri et al. (2022) found that developing high-quality human resources strengthened institutional competitiveness and increased public confidence. Saputri et al. (2025) linked continuous professional development with educational quality and institutional accreditation. Sulaeman and Nuhalisa (2025) reported that adaptive and innovative strategic management practices were associated with institutional reputation, collaborative partnerships, and recognition at both national and international levels.

Research Objective 3: Factors Influencing the Effectiveness of Strategic Management

Three factors emerged from the thematic synthesis in relation to the effectiveness of strategic management implementation in educational institutions: leadership and governance, organisational capacity, and organisational culture and collaboration.

Table 7

Factors Influencing the Effectiveness of Strategic Management Implementation

Factors Influencing Strategic Management Effectiveness	Frequency (n)	Supporting Studies
Leadership and Governance	10	K1, K6, K9, K10, K12, K14, K15, K16, K17, K19
Organisational Capacity	7	K2, K4, K5, K8, K11, K18, K20
Organisational Culture and Collaboration	3	K3, K7, K13

Leadership and governance was the most frequently reported factor (n = 10), followed by organisational capacity (n = 7) and organisational culture and collaboration (n = 3).

Theme 1: Leadership and Governance

Leadership and governance were identified in 10 studies (K1, K6, K9, K10, K12, K14, K15, K16, K17, and K19). The studies linked these factors to establishing organisational direction, guiding strategic decision-making, coordinating implementation, and monitoring strategic initiatives. Chotipongsiri et al. (2025) and Shanko, Demissie, Bezabeh, et al. (2025) reported leadership involvement throughout the strategic management process, encompassing

planning, implementation, monitoring, and control. Several studies examined leadership practices such as stakeholder engagement, transformational leadership, participative management, organisational communication, quality assurance, performance monitoring, and systematic data management in relation to strategic implementation (Cabreros, 2023; Cahyaningrum et al., 2024; Reyes, 2023; Sulaeman & Nuhalisa, 2025; Taufiq, 2025). Leadership autonomy, effective communication, and direct control over institutional fund allocation were also reported as enabling conditions for strategic management implementation (Saputri et al., 2025; Shanko, Demissie, & Bezabeh, 2025).

Theme 2: Organisational Capacity

Organisational capacity was identified in seven studies (K2, K4, K5, K8, K11, K18, and K20). The studies described organisational capacity in terms of mobilising resources, developing staff competencies, and establish organisational conditions that support strategic management implementation. Capacity-building practices reported in the studies included strategic management training, continuous professional development, reward systems, staff welfare, delegated responsibilities, and teacher competency development (Atiku & Erebakere, 2025; Ifejika & Daerefamama, 2025; Mugwaze & Smith, 2024; Nsien et al., 2024). Other studies examined strategic resource allocation, financial and risk management, technology readiness, cross-departmental coordination, and staff competencies in relation to the implementation of strategic initiatives (Kadir et al., 2025; Khuzwayo & Mashau, 2025; Misrahayu et al., 2026).

Theme 3: Organisational Culture and Collaboration

Organisational culture and collaboration were identified in three studies (K3, K7, and K13). The studies examined organisational values, collaborative practices, and stakeholder relationships in relation to strategic management implementation. Basri et al. (2022) highlighted organisational values, including trustworthiness, sincerity, responsibility, and institutional commitment, as part of the ethical foundation for achieving quality-based objectives. Wafa et al. (2026) reported the importance of mutual trust, organisational cohesion, and community relationships in supporting collaboration. Rosita et al. (2025), however, found that teacher participation did not necessarily contribute to school performance when involvement remained peripheral. The study emphasised the importance of integrating teacher participation into governance and supporting it through continuous professional development and collaborative team structures.

Discussion

Implementation of Strategic Management Dimensions in Educational Institutions

The findings indicate that educational institutions generally adopt a holistic strategic management approach. However, when the dimensions are examined individually, strategy implementation emerges as the most frequently reported dimension. This finding is consistent with Kaplan and Norton (2008), who emphasise the translation of strategy into operational action. However, the greater emphasis on implementation should not be interpreted as evidence that other dimensions are less important. Shanko, Demissie, Bezabeh, et al. (2025) found that internal environmental analysis, strategy formulation, and strategy evaluation and control were significant predictors of university performance, whereas institutional vision and external environmental analysis were not statistically significant predictors because they were insufficiently aligned with institutional realities and

external environmental scanning. In a separate study, Shanko, Demissie, and Bezabeh (2025) found that strategy formulation and internal environment analysis were positively associated with institutional performance. Both findings suggest that effective strategic management depends on the interaction of multiple dimensions, particularly the connection between planning, implementation, and evaluation. This interpretation is consistent with Wheelen and Hunger (2012) and David and David (2016), who argue that strategic management is most effective when formulation, implementation, and evaluation function as an integrated process rather than as isolated phases. Within the context of this SLR, the continuous evaluation and improvement dimension emerged as the least frequently reported theme. However, Cahyaningrum et al. (2024) and Sulaeman and Nuhalisa (2025) demonstrated that this dimension functions as an ongoing, proactive mechanism for identifying operational weaknesses and sustaining institutional relevance, which aligns with David and David's (2016) framework, rather than merely serving as a static, post-hoc review stage. The effectiveness of this process depends on the organisational conditions that support implementation. Findings from both Misrahayu et al. (2026) and Khuzwayo and Mashau (2025) suggest that effective implementation depends not only on the strategic plans but also on the alignment of organisational coordination, resources, and capabilities with strategic priorities.

Evidence of similar pattern was also reported in the Malaysian context, where Zakaria (2023) found that middle leaders in Matriculation Colleges emphasize operational strategy implementation over evaluation and control. Meanwhile, Kadir et al. (2025) identified that while risk management is recognized as vital dimension of university strategic planning, its effective execution is often hindered by resource constraints and weaknesses in standardized documentation procedures. These findings are relevant with the policy direction in the PPPM 2013 – 2025, which advocates an integrated planning–implementation–evaluation cycle (KPM, 2013), and the Malaysia Education Plan 2026 - 2035 (RPM 2026 – 2035), which positions institutional risk management as a key component of governance reform and organisational preparedness (KPM, 2026).

Influence of Strategic Management on Educational Institutional Performance

The review indicates that strategic management influences educational institutional performance through three interrelated areas: organisational effectiveness, educational quality, and institutional strengthening. Organisational effectiveness was the most frequently reported outcome. This emphasis is consistent with Bryson's (2018) view that strategic management brings organisational priorities, resources, and actions into alignment to support organisational performance. The relationship, however, is not automatic. Rosita et al. (2025) found that peripheral teacher participation did not improve school performance, suggesting that organisational effectiveness also depends on meaningful stakeholder involvement. This reflects David and David's (2016) view of strategic management as an integrated process linking organisational priorities and action. On the other hand, the evidence on educational quality points particularly to professional development and the conditions surrounding teaching. Cahyaningrum et al. (2024) found that lecturer professionalism and quality assurance linked strategic management with student competencies. Meanwhile, Mugwaze and Smith (2024) cautioned that excessive administrative workload and weak instructional supervision could weaken this relationship. Beyond educational quality, institutional strengthening represents a longer-term organisational outcome. Basri et al. (2022) associated it with systematic organisational

analysis and human capital development, while Saputri et al. (2025) showed that communication weaknesses and inefficient resource utilisation constrained accreditation outcomes. The evidence indicates that institutional strengthening depends on sustained implementation and continuous organisational improvement rather than the existence of strategic plans alone. Within the Malaysian context, this observation is relevant to the national education transformation agenda. According to Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia (2013), the PPPM 2013 – 2025 emphasises strategic resource management to achieve its five system aspirations. This policy direction is further reflected in Strategic Thrust 7 of RPM 2026 – 2035 and the School Transformation Programme 2025 (TS25), which emphasise strategic leadership and data-informed management to support holistic school improvement (KPM, 2026).

Factors Influencing the Effectiveness of Strategic Management Implementation in Enhancing Educational Institutional Performance

Three factors were closely associated with the effectiveness of strategic management implementation: leadership and governance, organisational capacity, and organisational culture and collaboration. Among these, leadership and governance was the most frequently reported factor. Shanko, Demissie, Bezabeh, et al. (2025), Shanko, Demissie, and Bezabeh (2025), Cabrerros (2023), Taufiq (2025), and Cahyaningrum et al. (2024) consistently highlighted the role of leaders in coordinating resources, guiding implementation, and monitoring performance. At the same time, Shanko, Demissie, Bezabeh, et al. (2025) found that an overly idealistic vision did not improve organisational performance. This indicates that leadership is not simply a matter of setting strategic direction; it also involves translating that direction into coordinated and sustained action, as emphasised by Bryson (2018). Organisational capacity was the second most frequently reported factor, with human capital, resources, and management systems identified as important conditions for implementation. Khuzwayo and Mashau (2025) found that resource misalignment constrained implementation despite well-developed plans, while Atiku and Erebakere (2025) suggested that further technology integration is a vital future strategy to overcome resource constraints. These findings highlight the importance of organisational capacity in translating strategic plans into practice and are aligned with Bryson's (2018). Although organisational culture and collaboration were the least frequently reported factors, the available evidence still points to their importance. Basri et al. (2022) and Wafa et al. (2026) linked trust and strong stakeholder relationships to organisational resilience, whereas Rosita et al. (2025) found that peripheral and procedural participation did not improve organisational performance. These suggest that collaboration is more likely to support strategic management when stakeholder involvement is substantive rather than merely procedural. In the Malaysian context, these themes are relevant to several Ministry of Education initiatives. Leadership development is supported through programmes offered by Institut Aminuddin Baki (IAB), while the School Improvement Specialist Coaches Plus (SISC+) initiative provides instructional coaching to strengthen school capacity. Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) also provide a platform for collaborative professional learning and stakeholder interaction. Together, these initiatives illustrate how leadership, organisational capacity, and collaboration are addressed within the Malaysian education system, although their contribution to strategic management depends on how they are implemented at school level.

Implications of the Study

Theoretical Implications

The findings support an integrated interpretation of strategic management in which planning, implementation, evaluation, and improvement are closely connected. This interpretation is consistent with the strategic management perspectives of Bryson (2018), David and David (2016), Wheelen and Hunger (2012), and Kaplan and Norton (2008), which emphasise the relationship between strategic direction, action, performance and evaluation. The greater emphasis on strategy implementation than on vision formulation and environmental analysis is also compatible with Mintzberg's (1994) view of strategy as an adaptive process shaped by organisational learning rather than formal planning alone. Overall, the findings indicate that strategic management is better understood as a cyclical and mutually reinforcing process rather than a linear sequence. The review also identifies a close relationship between strategic management implementation, institutional performance, and the organisational conditions that influence implementation effectiveness.

Implications for Educational Leadership and Practice

Educational leaders need to balance strategic implementation with effective planning and continuous evaluation. Institutional visions are more likely to guide practice when they are realistic, contextually grounded, and translated into operational priorities that are understood across all organisational levels (Bryson, 2018). Continuous evaluation should also be incorporated throughout the implementation process to identify emerging weaknesses and inform timely adjustments. In addition, organisational capacity remains important for translating priorities into practice, particularly through professional development, middle leadership, and digital readiness. Teacher participation is also important throughout the strategic management cycle, with collaborative structures such as Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) providing opportunities for teachers to contribute to implementation and institutional improvement.

Implications for Malaysian Educational Policy

The findings on strategic implementation, monitoring, and continuous improvement are consistent with the broader transformation agenda of the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013 - 2025 (PPPM 2013 - 2025) and the strategic priorities outlined in the Malaysia Education Plan 2026 - 2035 (RPM 2026 - 2035). Institutional monitoring could place greater emphasis on implementation quality and continuous improvement alongside conventional outcome indicators. Such an approach would allow policymakers and school leaders to assess not only whether institutional targets are achieved, but also how effectively strategic initiatives are translated into practice. The findings also highlight the importance of leadership and organisational capacity in supporting implementation, suggesting continued attention to leadership development and instructional coaching, particularly among middle leaders. Within the Malaysian context, these considerations may also inform the implementation of institutional risk management and school improvement initiatives by strengthening the connection between strategic leadership, data-driven decision-making, and systematic monitoring and evaluation.

Conclusions

This systematic literature review (SLR) synthesised evidence from 20 empirical studies published between 2022 and 2026 to address three research questions on strategic

management in educational institutions. Using the PRISMA protocol and quality appraisal through the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT), the review generated three key conclusions. Across the 20 studies, strategic management was generally treated as a process extending beyond formal planning and encompassing planning, implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement. Among these processes, strategy implementation emerged as the dominant dimension, while strategic planning and continuous evaluation received comparatively less attention, despite their importance for sustaining long-term institutional effectiveness. Strategic management is associated with institutional performance across three areas: organisational effectiveness, educational quality, and institutional strengthening. These outcomes depend on the alignment of strategic priorities, organisational resources, and stakeholder engagement. The effectiveness of strategic management implementation is influenced by several interrelated factors, including leadership and governance, organisational capacity, and organisational culture and collaboration. These factors operate collectively rather than independently. This SLR contributes to the social sciences by integrating previously fragmented empirical evidence into a conceptual understanding linking strategic management implementation, institutional performance, and the organisational conditions influencing implementation effectiveness. However, this review is limited by its reliance on six databases, the methodological constraints of the included studies, and the diversity of institutional contexts, which may limit the transferability of the findings. To better understand how strategic management influences educational outcomes, future research should examine the role of continuous evaluation and improvement through longitudinal, qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods designs, particularly within the Malaysian context. Comparative studies across public and private institutions in Malaysia would further clarify the influence of contextual factors on implementation effectiveness. Overall, this review provides an integrated evidence base for strengthening strategic management practices and supporting sustainable improvements in educational institution performance.

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