



# **Strategic Planning in Education: A Systematic Review**

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## **Authors' contributions**

*This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. Author JCB read the journals, analyzed the data, discussed the method and findings, drafted, reviewed, and revised the manuscript. Author POD searched the journals, read the journals, edited the paper based on prescribed format, and arranged the references. Author ASO gave the concept, read the journals, analyzed the data, and discussed findings. Author ARR searched the journals, read the journals, created and discussed figure and tables. Author MDJ mentored the researchers, guided them in writing, edited the paper to ensure language and syntactical consistency, and revised the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.*

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## **ABSTRACT**

Problems in the educational system must be addressed immediately given their adverse effects on school operations. In dealing with these matters, strategic planning plays a vital role in creating a specific plan of action to overcome organizational issues. Thus, this systematic review explored the various literature on strategic planning in education through the PRISMA framework. Studies included in this review are focused on the challenges, processes, and impact of strategic planning in educational institutions written in the English language and conducted between 2020 and 2022 from Google Scholar. Out of 131 records identified from database searching, fifteen articles from eight countries revealed three themes for the challenges of strategic planning, namely: lack of knowledge and skills in strategic planning, improper conduct of strategic planning, and low level of stakeholder involvement in strategic planning. The analysis also showed three themes for the

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process of strategic planning, namely: considering organizational vision, mission, goals, and objectives, involving stakeholders in strategic planning, and evaluating the internal and external environment. Finally, the two themes about the impact of strategic planning are gaining a competitive advantage and determining the organization's present and future course. These findings necessitate the conduct of strategic planning to improve educational organization. However, schools had trouble conducting it properly. Therefore, future researchers may explore more strategies to overcome the said problems. They can also delve into issues, perspectives, and techniques of strategic planning during the implementation of a full face-to-face learning modality to examine challenges and adjustments of plans amidst transition.

*Keywords: Challenges; impact; organization; process; system.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Problems and changes are inevitable in the educational system. As the world progresses, these are also increasing more rapidly and causing a myriad of demands that school personnel must adjust to [1]. These challenges need to be addressed as immediately as possible given their adverse effects on school operations. In dealing with these, strategic planning plays a vital role in creating a specific plan of action to overcome issues within an organization. According to Flanders [2], strategic planning is the key to assisting educational institutions in responding and preparing for these obstacles that impede educational advancement.

In addition, Austin [3] revealed that strategic planning guaranteed effective strategic management. This serves as the backbone in managing and dealing with organizational circumstances to ensure success. Schools without strategic plans hardly managed operations and activities. This compromises effective and efficient school services; in turn, leads to low student achievement.

Strategic planning in public schools must therefore be taken seriously to operate and deal with the changes in the current environment. A school could set high goals for itself through strategic planning and concentrate heavily on carrying out the objectives. The enhancement of educational personnel and educators' standards should be a part of strategic planning as well. They should be trained and shaped as the most effective individuals in the field of education because they were the pioneers of educational excellence [4].

In consonance with the impact of strategic planning above, Moran [4] stated that strategic

planning helps an institution deal with future demands and challenges. It is also crucial in adjusting to different issues and providing direction to all its activities. The focus of strategic planning is to fit institutional plans into environmental demands. Thus, strategic planners must think carefully about what they wanted an institution to be in the future and align strategies to fit with their vision.

Generally, strategic planning is indeed essential in the management of public schools because it plays a crucial role in assisting educational key players in assessing the internal and external environments to plan effectively and address growing issues within the organization. This helps in ensuring that public schools can gain a competitive advantage on a global scale. According to Tarifi [5], analyzing how strategic planning affects the organization can help achieve exceptional performance.

Even in the previous times, Yaakob, Musa, Habibi, and Othman [6] highlighted the importance of strategic planning in promoting sustainable school development and in enabling the linking of organizational goals and institutional activities, which in turn resulted in the creation of a strategic plan. However, Jalal and Murray [7] emphasized that negligence and lack of experience in applying accurate processes of strategic planning might put plans into dust instead of improving educational organization.

After all, the previous instances above might differ from today's conditions given the various changes in the educational system due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the pandemic emerged in the year 2019, World Health Organization (WHO) declared its outbreak in the year 2020. To compare the issues of the year 2019 to the present time, this systematic review aimed to examine further challenges, processes,

and the impact of strategic planning in education from 2020 up to 2022.

In the present, the Department of Education in the Philippines highlighted through DepEd Order 34, series of 2022 that the transition to five (5) days of in-person class presents learners with new stressors and challenges. These involve adjustment to the school environment, learning modality, additional learning protocols, and a mix of pleasant and difficult feelings that need to be addressed as immediately as possible. Hence, regional offices are encouraged to implement a contextualized set of strategies and interventions as part of the Learning Recovery and Continuity Plan (LRCP). This instance shows the need to employ strategic planning in handling and managing the transition from modular to full face-to-face learning.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the importance of strategic planning in improving the educational system, challenges in its implementation are still evident. Mensah [8] revealed that the problem with strategic planning was the low involvement of stakeholders in the planning process. Consequently, they did not own the plan and no consensus was made. Other challenges were inadequate funds, low level of commitment, resistance to change, and politics. Unfortunately, these problems at the strategic planning level influenced its implementation. Onuorah [9] found some issues that affected its implementation. These involved insufficient knowledge about strategy implementation plan, lack of available funds, poor leadership, stakeholders' few interests, poor communication skills, and lack of resources.

To fill the gaps in the challenges, this systematic review aimed to offer the process of strategic planning from various studies and reviews to examine how other schools or educational organizations conducted their strategic planning for better reflection and understanding of its steps. This process was derived from the experiences, interviews, survey results, perspectives, and viewpoints of educational leaders, teachers, and other individuals involved based on the reviewed journals. In addition, this systematic review also presented the impact of strategic planning for everyone's guidance and awareness.

Even with this research, various searches turned out that there are only a few systematic reviews

on strategic planning in public schools. Besides, most of the studies are old and out of context. To address this gap, this systematic review also sought to connect relevant and latest studies (between the year 2020 to 2022) to systematically analyze issues about strategic planning in education. In ensuring the quality of sources, this paper included literature based on empirical research to make sure that the results and findings of this study are backed up by facts founded on a real application.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The five steps in a systematic review as suggested by Khan, Kunz, Kleijnen, and Antes [10] were followed by the authors. These steps involved framing questions for a review by clearly specifying the problems to be addressed before beginning the review work; identifying relevant work through determining the selection criteria based on the review questions and recording the reasons for inclusion and exclusion; assessing the quality of studies by considering the quality of the searched journals; summarizing the evidence by synthesizing the gathered data; and, interpreting the findings by exploring answers to the research questions.

### 2.1 Research Questions

The following research questions were focused on this systematic review.

1. What are the existing pieces of literature about the challenges of strategic planning in educational institutions?
2. What are the available works of literature about the process of strategic planning in educational institutions?
3. What proof in the literature is there for the impact of strategic planning in educational institutions?

### 2.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The relevant journals of strategic planning in educational institutions relating to challenges, process, and impact were reviewed by the authors. Given the various sources that needed to be screened and filtered according to the eligibility criteria, the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) was utilized to identify relevant works and improve the quality of reporting.

According to Park, Suh, Woo, Kim, and Kim [11], this PRISMA checklist promoted transparency in the study selection process. In addition, this also encouraged authors to provide reasons for excluded studies. Thus, this was used to evaluate the completeness of the reporting of systematic reviews and meta-analyses.

In searching for related reviews, Google Scholar was opened, the “advance search” icon navigated, and the inclusion criteria set up like “in the title of the article” and the year 2020-2022. Then, “strategic planning education” was searched (114 results), “challenges strategic planning” (2 results), “process strategic planning” (7 results), “implementation strategic planning” (4 results), and “impact strategic planning” (4 results). After searching, we realized that there were only a few latest sources about strategic planning in education. There were only a total of 131 journals searched and saved in the Google Scholar Library.

It was noticed that there were some duplications. Hence, the articles were exported through Microsoft Excel and sorted from A to Z. This led to easy removal of 20 duplications. Consequently, there were 111 articles left. These were scrutinized based on the objectives of this systematic review until 67 sources were screened and 44 excluded sources. From these 67 journals, 15 eligible sources were retained for qualitative analysis while 52 articles were

disregarded. The PRISMA Flow Diagram of the Systematic Review is presented in Fig. 1.

### 2.3 Scope of the Study

The articles were screened by mainly focusing on the challenges, processes, and impact of strategic planning in educational institutions. The inclusion and exclusion criteria of this review are presented on Table 1. Inclusions involved any research design, be it qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, or meta-analysis. Thus, there were no criteria placed on the research design.

In addition, studies conducted between 2020 and 2022 were also included in the review given the quality, timeliness, and relevance of these reviews on strategic planning in education. Finally, the published and unpublished journals written in English language were included for easy comprehension.

On the other hand, the studies conducted before 2020, non-English language journals, and other sources outside Google Scholar were excluded. Aside from these exclusions, this paper did not also include sources that were irrelevant to the topic even if they contained the phrase “strategic planning” in the suggested Literature Search Database. With these inclusion and exclusion criteria, the sources utilized in this systematic review were indeed relevant.

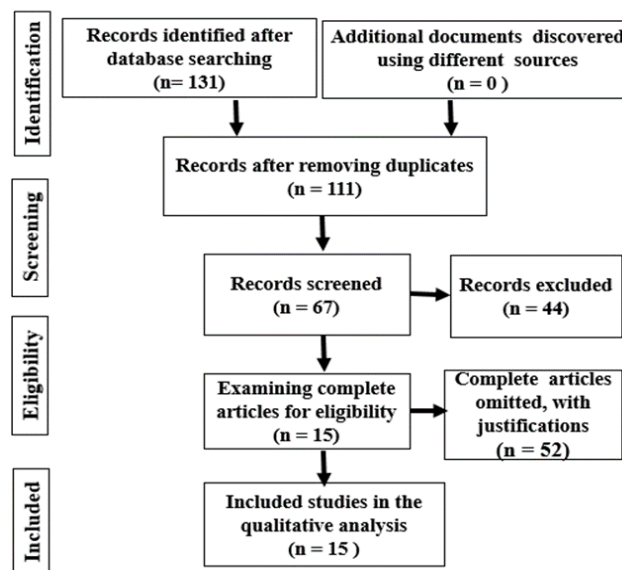


Fig. 1. PRISMA flow diagram of the systematic review

**Table 1. Inclusion and exclusion criteria of the systematic review**

Eligibility criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Time Frame/ Year	2020-2022	Below 2020
Language	English	Other Languages
Methodology	Quantitative/ Qualitative/ Mixed Methods	
Electronic Databases	Google Scholar	Other Sources/ Inaccessible Studies
Publication Status	Published in Journals/ Books Unpublished	

## 2.4 Search Strategy

The guidelines in documenting the analysis method and inclusion criteria were followed. In searching for related reviews, Google Scholar was opened, the “advance search” icon navigated, and the inclusion criteria set up like “in the title of the article” and the year 2020-2022. Then, “strategic planning education” was searched (114 results), “challenges strategic planning” (2 results), “process strategic planning” (7 results), “implementation strategic planning” (4 results), and “impact strategic planning” (4 results). After searching, we realized that there were only a few latest sources about strategic planning in education. There were only a total of 131 journals searched and saved in the Google Scholar Library.

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## 2.5 Data Extraction

This systematic review extracted the names of the authors, years of publication, countries, study design, participant characteristics, study aims, definitions, results and discussion, conclusions, recommendations, implications, and strategic planning in education for easy reference, navigation, and citation. The reviewed studies related to strategic planning in education are presented on Table 2.

**Table 2. Reviewed studies on strategic planning**

ID	Author/s Year	Country	Discipline	Sample size	Research focus
1	Ruzsbánszki [12]	Sweden	Education	14	Examined higher education institution's ways of planning their strategy to understand the challenges presented to the community and the role of media technology in the process of strategic planning
2	Staub [13]	Turkey	Education	N/A	Presented the argument that the use of frameworks such as Bolman and Deal's Four Frames could offer tools for effective diagnosis of the current readiness of an organization to undergo a quality assurance initiative
3	Susanto et al. [14]	Indonesia	Education	N/A	Supported and developed models of competitive advantage that were appropriate for private universities based on their resources with strategic planning as a mediator

ID	Author/s Year	Country	Discipline	Sample size	Research focus
4	Abraheem [15]	Iraq	Education	30	Recognized the impact of strategic planning on administrative empowerment at the University of Misan
5	Minson [16]	United States	Education	18	Demonstrated how qualitative grounded theory methodology was used to review whether higher education institutions (HEIs) incorporated risk into their strategic plans
6	Bayram [17]	Turkey	Education	516	Scrutinized the implementation of plans based on the strategic planning of the Ankara Provincial Directorate
7	Priyambodo & Hasanah [18]	Indonesia	Education	N/A	Explored school strategic planning, analyzed, and planned strategic planning in improving the quality of education at SDN Jetis Bantul
8	Sadik et al. [19]	Iraq	Education	N/A	Examined the role of strategic planning in the transformation of the university's education
9	Al Kadri & Widiawati [1]	Indonesia	Education	N/A	Developed strategic planning as an effort to improve the quality of educators and educational personnel based on internal and external analysis of the school conditions
10	Al Basel & Osman [20]	Egypt	Education	63	Identified the reality of strategic planning practice from the perspective of faculty members
11	Hadji & Osunkunle [21]	South Africa	Education	N/A	Critically analyzed South African universities' strategic planning processes
12	Burdge [22]	United States	Education	40	Examined the implementation of the strategic plan in the College of Education at a selected southern university
13	Babalola [23]	Nigeria	Education	60	Examined strategic planning awareness, acceptance, and application among the ministry of education officials in South West Nigeria
14	Ebiziem et al. [24]	Nigeria	Education	N/A	Investigated strategic planning in the public sector in Nigeria about the education sector
15	Aristyatama [25]	Indonesia	Education	N/A	Proposed a strategy and provided some evidence for current practice in strategic planning for public sector organizations developed by Rumelt's Criteria in the case of the Department of Education and Culture in Kendal Regency

## 2.6 Risk of Bias (Quality) Assessment

This paper utilized risk of bias (quality) assessment to accurately judge the study type

and assess its quality. Assessing the study's internal validity was vital as it has been used to examine the potential reliability of evidence generated within a study. That was to protect the

reviews from the risk of systematic error or a deviation from reporting the truth or appropriate evidence finding. Results of the quality assessment were translated through some empirical construct to the potential risk of bias [26]. Since bias might affect the study results, methodological safeguards were placed within the design, conduct, and analysis of research studies. The limitation, quality, substance of the journal's evidence, and recommendations were also assessed to examine if these would fit the current needs of strategic planning in education.

## 2.7 Data Analysis

Given the findings and reviews from different systematic reviews, the data were carefully analyzed. Using the table that contained systematic reviews with respective focus, data about strategic planning in educational institutions were analyzed through thematic analysis. Thus, themes for the challenges, process, and impact of strategic planning in education were formulated.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The 15 reviewed articles in this paper came from eight countries. These were distributed properly according to the following: Sweden (1), Turkey (2), Indonesia (4), Iraq (2), United States (2), Egypt (1), South Africa (1), and Nigeria (2). Four studies (27%) concentrated on basic education while ten studies (67%) focused on higher education. On the other hand, only one study (6%) was not identified. Distribution of the reviewed studies by country and by educational level is shown on Table 3.

### 3.1 Challenges of Strategic Planning in Education

Based on the comprehensive review of the 15 articles, we have identified three themes for the challenges of strategic planning in education: lack of knowledge and skills in strategic planning, improper conduct of strategic planning, and low level of stakeholder involvement in strategic planning. The different themes of the challenges of strategic planning in education are presented on Table 4.

#### 3.1.1 Lack of knowledge and skills in strategic planning

This theme means that school leaders and teachers still have insufficient knowledge and

skill in terms of strategic planning. Based on the reviewed journals, this theme has two constructs: school leaders' and employees' confusion about strategic planning and educators' lack of professional development on strategic planning methods.

Regarding the school leaders and employees' confusion about strategic planning, Abraheem [15] stated that school heads and teachers were confused about the nature and process of strategic planning. They did not have explicit knowledge of the notion of strategic planning. Thus, they needed to equip themselves with strategic planning by participating in some pieces of training and seminars about it. Thus, Hadji and Osunkunle [21] recommended that deans, managers, and staff must be trained on strategic planning in advance and take ownership of the strategic plan to be empowered in implementing it.

In terms of educators' lack of professional development on strategic planning methods, Aristyatama [25] revealed that school leaders and personnel were not knowledgeable about the control of strategic planning. Al Basel and Osman [20] found that leaders encountered difficulties in developing appropriate methods and tools to provide the needed data for strategic planning. Besides, they had a lack of interest in participating in training for this. In his assertion, Babola (2020) suggested improving educators' capacity for effective strategic planning by engaging in the continuous professional development of strategic planning methods.

In general, these themes and ideas convey the need for school leaders and teachers to be competent and skillful in strategic planning since they are responsible for the initiation and conduct of strategic planning. Thus, they should learn more about strategic planning and be hands-on with it to gain more experience and enhance their knowledge to enforce it better.

#### 3.1.2 Improper conduct of strategic planning

This theme refers to the inappropriate implementation and practice of strategic planning in schools. Educators' insufficient knowledge might contribute to the improper conduct of strategic planning. Based on the reviewed journals, this theme has two constructs: poor management of strategic planning, and strategic planning is for compliance and accreditation only.

**Table 3. Distribution of the reviewed studies by country and by educational level**

Place of publication/ study	Educational level			Total
	Basic education	Higher education	Not identified	
Sweden		1		1
Turkey	1	1		2
Indonesia	3	1		4
Iraq		2		2
United States		2		2
Egypt		1		1
South Africa		1		1
Nigeria		1	1	2
Total	4	10	1	15

**Table 4. Themes on the challenges of strategic planning in education**

Themes on the challenges of strategic planning in education	Characteristics	Study ID	Number of studies
Lack of Knowledge and Skills in Strategic Planning	School Leaders and Employees' Confusion about Strategic Planning	[4] [11]	2
	Educators' Lack of Professional Development on Strategic Planning Methods	[13] [10] [15]	3
Improper Conduct of Strategic Planning	Poor Management of Strategic Planning	[4] [7] [15]	3
	Strategic Planning is for Compliance and Accreditation Only	[1]	1
Low Level of Stakeholder Involvement in Strategic Planning	Absence of Stakeholders during Strategic Planning	[1] [4] [12] [13] [15]	5
	Lack of Interest due to Complicated Strategic Plans and Language Barriers	[1] [11]	2

Concerning the poor management of strategic planning, Aristyatama [25] discovered that leaders were less competent in managing the conduct of strategic planning. Moreover, Priyambodo and Hasanah [18]; and Abraheem [15] revealed that the obstacle encountered in school strategic planning was poor management. Thus, the school needed to collaborate with the school committee and learn more to manage strategic planning properly.

Talking about the issue that strategic planning is for compliance and accreditation only, Ruzsbánszki [12] claimed that strategic planning processes brought challenges to the leadership of the higher education institution. Usually, strategic planning is for compliance and accreditation only. This case was not motivating the strategy planners. As a result, strategic planning document remains as a paper and has nothing to

offer. This can lead to a bulky and boring strategic document that will be eventually left unread by the intended audience.

To sum up, school personnel found it hard to conduct proper strategic planning. Their lack of understanding of the nature, process, and guidelines of strategic planning contributes to negative effects on the implementation of strategic planning. Therefore, intensive training for all school role-players must be a requirement to avoid the purpose of compliance and accreditation only.

### 3.1.3 Low level of stakeholder involvement in strategic planning

This theme pertains to the low participation of stakeholders during strategic planning. This reality is opposite to the idea that stakeholders



should be actively involved in school planning for shared responsibility. Based on the reviewed journals, this theme has two constructs: the absence of stakeholders during strategic planning and the lack of interest due to complicated strategic plans and language barriers.

In terms of stakeholders' absence during strategic planning, Burdge [22] and Aristyatama [25] concluded that the impediments identified in strategic planning were the less involvement of stakeholders and lack of collaboration. These realities are contrary to the idea that stakeholders should be actively involved in school planning. As a result, they could not grasp fully the process, importance, and role in strategic planning. However, Babalola [23] revealed that stakeholders were aware of their role, but they failed to accept it. Moreover, Abraheem [15] shared that attaining sustainable education was difficult due to a lack of community involvement. Sadly, Ruzsbánszki [12] still revealed that stakeholders were not actively involved in school planning and did not attend meetings even in the present time.

Discussing the lack of interest due to complicated strategic plans and language barriers, Hadji and Osunkunle [21] conveyed that some of the stakeholders delayed their participation during the conduct of strategic planning due to language difficulty. These reasons made them less interested in the strategic planning process and resulted in frustration. Ruzsbánszki [12] added that another reason for the low involvement of stakeholders in strategic planning was the complication of the strategy. Stakeholders found it hard to understand concepts in strategic plans. Thus, their involvement was not guaranteed.

In summary, realities showed that stakeholder involvement is low. Their absence during strategic planning and lack of interest due to complications and language difficulty demotivated them to participate and lessened their school commitment. This left the school personnel alone to conduct strategic planning, and the phrase "stakeholder involvement" remained an ideal only which was far from reality. This circumstance entails to design plans to actively involve stakeholders in strategic planning. Fortunately, this systematic review offers insights into the process and impact of

strategic planning in education for everyone's guide.

## **3.2 Process of Strategic Planning in Education**

Given the challenges of the improper conduct of strategic planning due to school leaders' incompetence and stakeholders' low level of participation, this paper offers the process of strategic planning in education for them to be guided. Based on the comprehensive review of the fifteen articles, three themes for the process of strategic planning we have identified viz: (i) considering organizational vision, mission, goals, and objectives; (ii) involving stakeholders in strategic planning, and (iii) evaluating the internal and external environment. The different themes in the process of strategic planning in education are presented on Table 5.

### **3.2.1 Considering organizational vision, mission, goals, and objectives**

This theme means that the process of strategic planning involves the consideration of the school's vision, mission, goals, and objectives as a guide in planning strategies or creating action plans. Based on the reviewed journals, this theme has two core ideas: focusing on vision and mission as bases in strategic planning and setting goals and objectives at the beginning.

In terms of focusing on vision and mission as bases in strategic planning, Ebiziem, Ebere, and Izim [24] encouraged educational key players to put planning as reasoning about how an organization would get where it wanted to go. This instance conveys the importance of focusing on vision and mission during strategic planning. Conformingly, Aristyatama [25] highlighted vision and mission as bases in planning and formulating plans. Moreover, Minson [16] and Bayram [17] revealed that mission and vision must be determined since these are also the bases for setting values and goals for effective strategic planning.

About settings goals and objectives at the beginning, Aristyatama [25] shared that school leaders should prioritize the selection of goals and objectives for effective strategic planning. In addition, Staub [13] stressed that managers should think more strategically about the institution's objectives at the beginning. Furthermore, Abraheem [15] and Bayram [17]

**Table 5. Themes on the process of strategic planning in education**

Themes on the process of strategic planning in education	Characteristics	Study ID	Number of studies
Considering Organizational Vision, Mission, Goals, and Objectives (VMGO)	Focusing on Vision and Mission as Bases in Strategic Planning	[5] [6]	4
		[14] [15]	
Involving Stakeholders in Strategic Planning	Settings Goals and Objectives at the Beginning	[2] [4]	4
	Letting Stakeholders Understand their Roles	[6] [15]	
Evaluating Internal and External Environment	Utilizing SWOT Analysis	[1] [4]	4
		[11] [12]	
Considering Available Resources	Orienting Stakeholders on the Process and Importance of Strategic Planning	[1] [8]	3
		[11]	
Considering Available Resources	Utilizing SWOT Analysis	[2] [4]	8
		[6] [7]	
Considering Available Resources	Utilizing SWOT Analysis	[8] [9]	8
		[14] [15]	
Considering Available Resources	Utilizing SWOT Analysis	[2] [3]	6
		[4] [5]	
Considering Available Resources	Utilizing SWOT Analysis	[6] [14]	6
		[6] [14]	

concluded that goals and objectives must be set at the beginning to guide everyone on what strategies to plan and formulate.

In summary, vision, mission, goals, and objectives are vital in strategic planning. These serve as inspiration or reference for school personnel in planning strategies. Hence, everything in the action plan must adhere to these statements. In return, the purpose of strategic planning should be the achievement of these visions, missions, goals, and objectives. Thus, considering all of these and setting these at the beginning promotes achievable plans and ensure success.

### 3.2.2 Involving stakeholders in strategic planning

This theme refers to the participation and contribution of stakeholders in strategic planning. Based on the reviewed journals, this theme has two core ideas also: letting stakeholders understand their roles and orienting stakeholders about the process and importance of strategic planning.

Regarding letting stakeholders understand their roles, Hadji and Osunkunle [21] stated that stakeholder involvement could improve strategic planning and make it more meaningful. Thus, the school should give more time to stakeholders to actively participate in strategic planning processes by simplifying language for better

understanding. Similarly, Burdge [22] concluded that communication and collaboration are essential in strategic planning. Moreover, Abraheem [15] posited that it is necessary to involve all the concerned individuals in the process of strategic planning for them to be fully convinced about the performance of the strategic plan. Finally, Ruzsbánszki [12] suggested involving all stakeholders to participate in strategic planning so they know their roles.

When it comes to orienting stakeholders about the process and importance of strategic planning, Sadik, Marouf, and Khaleel, [19] suggested that stakeholders' awareness about the need to participate in the process and the importance of strategic planning must be delivered to promote their involvement. In the same vein, Hadji and Osunkunle [21] and Ruzsbánszki [12] added that stakeholders should be oriented about the process of strategic planning for them to be aware of what to do and appreciate its importance in improving the educational system.

In general, the studies entail the involvement of stakeholders in strategic planning by explaining their roles. Upon identifying their roles, they would be more motivated to participate and perform their functions in school planning. To ensure participation, they should also be oriented about the process and importance of strategic planning by providing them with comprehensible insights. In these ways, they would be more

knowledgeable about strategic planning and function accordingly.

### **3.2.3 Evaluating internal and external environment**

This theme pertains to the assessment or consideration of the internal and external environment in strategic planning. Based on the reviewed journals, this theme has two constructs: utilizing Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) analysis and considering available resources in strategic planning.

In terms of utilizing SWOT analysis, Ebiziem et al. [24] stressed that environmental analysis is vital in strategic planning. Aristyatama [25] and Al Kadri and Widiawati [1] stated that the process of evaluating the environment is through Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) Analysis. This could be done by deducing data about internal and external factors. Similarly, Sadik et al. [19] also recommended that an environmental survey and SWOT analysis must be performed during strategic planning to identify the organization's internal and external conditions.

In addition, studies by Bayram [17] and Priyambodo and Hasanah [18] arrived at a consensus that understanding administrative problems and SWOT analysis recreate an important role in strategic planning as it helps plan strategies by school status and environmental conditions to avoid challenges and be prepared for uncontrollable opportunities and threats. Moreover, Abraheem [15] and Staub [13] expressed the need to understand the school environment in strategic planning. Thus, everyone should have a complete awareness of all the problems or weaknesses to better analyze the needs during strategic planning.

In considering available resources, six studies revealed that educators must account for the available resources in strategic planning to allocate funds to certain plans carefully. Ebiziem et al. (2020) stated that resource analysis is significant in strategic planning. In the same manner, Staub [13] and Susanto, Kurniaty, Purnamie, and Kapriani [14] agreed that resources must be considered in deciding plans. Planning must coordinate with available resources for smooth implementation. Correspondingly, Abraheem [15] and Minson [16] stressed that strategic planning should be

budget-focused, and the basis for making decisions must be related to finances and resources in general. Finally, Bayram [17] concluded that school personnel should consider financial problems in strategic planning to avoid future challenges in the implementation.

Generally, the evaluation of the internal and external environment is crucial in strategic planning. Analyzing the internal environment such as its strengths and weaknesses guides the school personnel and stakeholders in planning strategies based on the school's condition. Similarly, the assessment of the external environment such as opportunities and threats helps them plan actions that are responsive to the school's needs and status. Through these SWOT and resource analyses, strategic planning became practical, wise, and appropriate to the school environment.

### **3.3 Impact of Strategic Planning in Education**

Based on the fifteen reviewed articles, the impact of strategic planning is conveyed in two themes which are gaining a competitive advantage and determining the organization's present and future course. The impact of strategic planning in education is presented on Table 6.

#### **3.3.1 Gaining competitive advantage**

This theme refers to the positive contribution of strategic planning in gaining a competitive advantage. This has created three characteristics, namely: accommodating change in the environment; promoting sustainable development; and improving the quality of educational personnel.

In terms of accommodating change in the environment, Sadik et al. [19] disclosed that organizations must be able to adapt to environmental changes through strategic planning to sustain the organization's competitive edge. Inability to do so would cause them to lose focus on the outcome, which would prevent them from succeeding in their objectives. Partial commitment, personnel failure, and resource shortages have a significant impact on the strategic plan's performance. Correspondingly, Abraheem [15] stated that strategic planning can help the organization meet strategic challenges and improve its ability to quickly deal with rapid and unexpected environmental changes for practical survival.

**Table 6. Themes on the impact of strategic planning in education**

Themes on the impact of strategy formulation in education	Characteristics	Study ID	Number of studies
Gaining Competitive Advantage	Accommodating Change in the Environment	[1] [4] [8]	3
	Promoting Sustainable Development	[4] [14]	2
	Improving the Quality of Educational Personnel	[9] [14]	2
Determining the Organization's Present and Future Course	Improving Organizational Performance	[2] [7] [15]	3
	Defining Organizational Objectives	[5] [14]	2

Moreover, Ruzsbánszki [12] emphasized that due to the current status quo of the specific set of academic traditions, change is particularly challenging for educational institutions. Change is uncomfortable because it implies a unique transition that needs adjustment. Learning institutions must adapt to their surroundings and the changing needs of the market, society, and their students to remain relevant in educating their clients in the ever-changing world.

Aside from being adaptive to changes, organizations also need to promote sustainable development. Ebiziem et al. [24] revealed that strategic planning assisted schools in clarifying future directions and improving educational services. Thus, strategic planning in educational organizations contributed a relevant impact on their growth and sustainable development. Besides, Abraheem [15] suggested that it must take several steps to improve the reality of strategic planning, including establishing a venue for strategic planning and creating a set of training programs for its employees to improve their knowledge of strategic planning concepts. These steps lead to the most important aspect of successfully converting strategic planning into a tool for the long-term management of the organization by taking into account the environmental conditions that determine future sustainable strategies.

Further, the weight of strategic planning is also aimed at improving the quality of educational personnel. Al Kadri et al. [1] posited that educators and educational staff are the major players in education who directly affect the educational process. Thus, they must be able to function at their highest level for the educational process to proceed as planned. Ebiziem *et al.* [24] also highlighted that strategic planning improves the teaching-learning process which implies that it enhances educators' quality at first.

These findings highlighted the significance of raising the caliber of educators and other educational staff so that they can better meet modern expectations and technological advancements. Fortunately, this can be realized through effective strategic planning.

**3.3.2 Determining the organization's present and future courses**

This theme pertains to the capacity of strategic planning in identifying an organization's future circumstances. It has developed two characteristics which are improving organizational performance and defining organizational objectives.

When it comes to improving organizational performance, Aristyatama, [25] argued that planning strategically is crucial for all learning institutions because many complex issues need to be resolved in the current education landscape to improve organizational performance. With this, Priyambodo and Hasanah [18] revealed that strategic planning creates a pertinent basis for decision-making. It also helps in identifying priorities for decision-making to clarify future directions and enhance organizational performance.

In addition, Staub [13] stressed that the necessity for effective and efficient strategic plan formation is expanding in educational institutions. Multiple organizations throughout the world have started expressing interest in developing strategic plans as a result of the numerous policies and programs they established at various times. Raising standards, acquiring great instruction, and enabling the school to successfully operate itself have all been accomplished through the introduction of strategies and plans. Therefore, a strategic plan serves as a physical representation of the overarching orientation for

managing educational institutions and improving organizational performance if properly implemented.

Taking into consideration from the foregoing studies, defining organizational objectives is essential in the life of the organization. Ebiziem et al. [24] emphasized that strategic planning is likely to have an impact on the organization and would move the organization from where it is to where it wants to be. Similarly, Minson [16] shared that strategic planning allows educational institutions to define objectives. With these, schools can generate productive steps to attain these objectives and ensure future advancements. Considering these studies, institutions can narrow their focus in their identification of objectives for achieving those goals through the strategic planning process. This can assist in steering the institution in the right direction to achieve its goals.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

This study is aimed at providing a comprehensive review of the challenges, processes, and impact of strategic planning in educational institutions based on the various literatures. To follow the systematic process, this paper utilized the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA). This served as a guide in identifying the inclusion and exclusion criteria of relevant works.

In searching for relevant works, this paper utilized Google Scholar. The time frame was 2020-2022. During the data collection process, the authors searched varied sources to satisfactorily support the existing reviews and remove the duplicated ones. All references were documented accordingly for better search. Journals were carefully examined to extract data carefully and evaluated through the risk of bias (quality) assessment to accurately judge the study type.

Given the fifteen reviewed articles from the eight countries, this paper carefully analyzed the data through thematic analysis. The researchers formulated themes for the challenges, processes, and impact of strategic planning in education. Three themes emerged for the challenges of strategic planning, namely: lack of knowledge and skills in strategic planning, improper conduct of strategic planning, and low level of stakeholder involvement in strategic planning. On the other hand, the process of strategic planning in

education involved three themes, namely: considering organizational vision, mission, goals, and objectives, involving stakeholders in strategic planning, and evaluating the internal and external environment. Finally, two themes about the impact of strategic planning in education emerged such as gaining competitive advantage and determining the organization's present and future course. These findings expressed the importance of strategic planning in formulating strategies to overcome challenges and improve educational organizations for future success.

With the generated themes from the journals, strategic planning plays a significant part in improving educational institutions. However, challenges in the improper implementation due to lack of knowledge and low stakeholder involvement hinder effective strategic planning. Thus, this systematic review offers the processes and impact of strategic planning for educational key players' guides.

This also serves as inspiration for every educational leader and stakeholder to consider strategic planning before implementing any rule, policy, or activity. In addition, this paper opens more opportunities for future researchers to focus more on the strategies to actively overcome the challenges presented in this review, specifically in motivating stakeholders to participate in strategic planning and enhancing educators' knowledge and skills in conducting strategic planning. Moreover, it would also be interesting to delve into issues, perspectives, and techniques of strategic planning during the implementation of a full face-to-face learning modality to examine challenges and adjustments of plans amidst transition.

#### **CONSENT**

All authors declare that 'written informed consent was obtained from the patent (or other approved parties) for publication of this case report and accompanying images.

#### **ETHICAL APPROVAL**

All authors hereby declare that ethical considerations were properly observed in the conduct of the study. The researchers cited and acknowledged all the authors involved in this study. The researchers also read carefully the articles and paraphrased these to properly state the findings without changing the content.

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## COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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