

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND INSTITUTIONAL EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: REALITY, CORRELATION, AND IMPACT

Adel Ayed ALSHAMMARI

*Department of Education, College of Education, University of Hafr Al-Batin, Saudi Arabia
drshammary@uhb.edu.sa*

Halla Abdullah ALMUTAIRI

*Ministry of Education
Saudi Arabia ahlh6349@gmail.com*

Abstract

Based on the importance of strategic planning and its impact on various administrative variables such as institutional excellence, the goal of this study is to explore the current status of these variables and the relationship of correlation and impact between them in one of the higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia. The study adopted a descriptive-analytical methodology and used a questionnaire as a data collection tool to ensure its validity and reliability. It was distributed to a random sample of 101 faculty members at Hafr Al-Batin University in Saudi Arabia. The study found that despite the moderate reality of both strategic planning and institutional excellence at the university, the results showed a strong positive relationship between these variables at a significance level of 0.01, three of the four dimensions of strategic planning had a significant impact on institutional excellence. The study provides a useful reference for higher education institutions regarding the current status of strategic planning and institutional excellence, as well as the relationship and impact between them. It also offers valuable data for decision-makers to improve the state of strategic planning in these institutions. The results can potentially help enhance strategic planning practices in Saudi universities and, on a broader scale, in other parts of the Middle East and the world.

Keywords: Strategic planning, Institutional excellence, Educational institutions, Correlation, Impact

1. INTRODUCTION

Strategic planning is one of the approaches to positive change aimed at development. It serves as the primary guiding force for business organizations to achieve outstanding performance, ensuring their survival and continuity. It represents a modern approach to change, transitioning from random and practices to participatory, innovative, and excellence-oriented management practices (Donagh & Branka, 2019; Kateryna et al., 2019). Additionally, it is a means of addressing future challenges related to management systems and the appropriate method for optimal utilization of material and human resources (Alfurjani & Almutaser, 2019; Clay et al., 2016). Therefore, its importance lies in its significant impact as a tool for organizations to identify and navigate changes and trends in the work environment (Krzysztof & Raoul, 2019), mitigating the effects of these changes, and preparing plans and execution procedures associated with them (Bontempo et al., 2015).

David (2009) views strategic planning as the essence of strategic management, including the process of defining and formulating the organization's mission in line with its core vision, building its future goals and objectives. Strategic planning is also seen as a set of actions, concepts, and tools aimed at achieving diverse benefits for the organization, gathering data about the internal and external environment, and improving decision-making processes (Wolf & Floyd, 2017). Furthermore, it plays many vital roles with positive impacts on organizations (Cunha & Magalhaes, 2019; Jennifer & Neal, 2019; Pirtea et al., 2009).

In contemporary times, many institutions, including higher education institutions, face numerous challenges that necessitate adjustments and changes in their organizational performance to address these challenges (Ravichandran, 2018; Sunghun et al., 2014). Given the volatile environment in which higher education institutions operate, particularly in the Arab world and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Alshammari, 2022), there is a pressing need for strategic planning. This is crucial for determining the optimal direction for these institutions to follow, as the absence of such planning can have serious consequences that negatively impact their future outcomes

(Alyosfi, 2020). Thus, these institutions should adopt strategic planning characterized by flexibility, renewal, openness, and a focus on vision, mission, goals, policies, and procedures to ensure performance excellence and enhance competitiveness (Karam & Kitana, 2020).

On the other hand, organizational excellence represents the most suitable means for organizations to perform innovatively and challenge themselves. This is achieved by formulating a vision, mission, and goals that are based on empowering individuals in a way that ensures flexibility in performance (Maryam & Ardabili, 2016). Organizational excellence is no longer a luxury or a secondary matter for businesses, regardless of their orientations. It has become a necessity in light of the tremendous developments in knowledge and its applications, requiring organizations to adapt and compete vigorously with numerous other organizations, not only locally or regionally but also globally (Aboseif, 2021; Alyosfi, 2020).

Institutional excellence is based on the pursuit of achieving performance levels that surpass ordinary levels, reaching a high level of performance (Maheshwari & Linh Kha, 2021). It is built through the pursuit of opportunities, preceded by effective strategic planning. Institutional excellence has become a followed approach in advanced organizations because it is a path to achieving sustainability and high levels of stakeholder satisfaction, as well as individual and organizational goals (Salem, 2018).

Institutional excellence is based on the pursuit of achieving performance levels that surpass ordinary levels, aiming for high-level performance (Maheshwari & Linh Kha, 2021). It is built on the effective strategic planning that precedes the quest for opportunities to capitalize on. Organizational excellence has become a prevalent approach in advanced organizations because it leads to sustainability and achieving high levels of stakeholder satisfaction. Additionally, it works toward individual and organizational objectives (Salem, 2018). Achieving organizational excellence is a well-organized and deliberate process that requires essential elements, including inspirational leadership and a flexible organizational structure capable of achieving goals optimally (Alazwari, 2022).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The topic of strategic planning, its importance, roles, and impacts has garnered the interest of numerous researchers, resulting in various studies that support further research on the subject. For instance, Yaqub (2020) conducted a study aimed at understanding the impact of the organizational context on the relationship between strategic planning and enhancing organizational performance at the Africa International University. The results indicated a positive and statistically significant relationship between the study variables in achieving strategic objectives. Abdulaziz and Al-Zou'l (2020) conducted a study with the goal of identifying the impact of strategic planning on organizational success, considering organizational factors as mediators in government universities in northern Jordan. The results revealed a statistically significant impact of strategic planning, along with its dimensions, on organizational success across dimensions in universities. Makhlofi (2020) conducted a study to understand the importance of strategic planning and its impact on institutional governance at the University of Mohamed Khider in Biskra, Algeria. The results demonstrated a statistically significant impact of strategic planning, encompassing its various dimensions, on the implementation of institutional governance. Abu khuras (2020) conducted a study to uncover the current state of strategic planning in Libyan higher education institutions, focusing on the prevalence of the strategic planning culture at the Islamic Asmariya University. The results indicated significant shortcomings in the presence of the strategic planning process at this university, reflecting similar issues in other higher education institutions in Libya. Nzuki (2017) aimed to understand the significance of strategic planning applications on performance at Sandoz GmobH, a company in Kenya. The results, based on a sample of 98 managers from various administrative levels, showed a statistically significant impact of strategic planning on organizational performance in the company. These studies collectively underscore the significance of strategic planning in various organizational contexts and its potential to enhance organizational performance and success. They provide valuable insights into the relationship between strategic planning and other organizational variables, encouraging further research in this area.

On the other side a group of researchers has shed light on the concept, reality, effects, and importance of Institutional excellence And its relationship to some administrative variables. For instance, Zahran (2022) conducted a study aimed at assessing the status of Institutional excellence in Egyptian universities in light of the

European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) criteria. The results indicated the presence of several obstacles that Egyptian universities face, hindering their ability to apply the EFQM model for Institutional excellence. Regarding the role of empowerment in achieving Institutional excellence, ElZamil (2016) conducted a study to identify the role of empowering female employees in achieving Institutional excellence at Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University in Saudi Arabia. The study also aimed to explore the employees' perceptions of administrative empowerment dimensions and Institutional excellence dimensions and whether there is a significant correlational relationship between administrative empowerment dimensions and organizational excellence dimensions at the university. The study found that administrative empowerment was high, and there were statistically significant relationships between the dimensions of employee empowerment and Institutional excellence.

As for the study of the relationship between strategic planning and Institutional excellence, Basheer et al. (2022) conducted research to determine the impact of strategic planning on achieving organizational excellence in the Ministry of Interior in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The study also aimed to uncover the relationship between strategic planning and Institutional excellence, and the results showed a positive correlational relationship between them. Additionally, Alyosfi (2020) conducted a study to investigate the impact of strategic planning on organizational excellence at Kuwait University. The results demonstrated that there was an impact of strategic planning on organizational excellence at the university. Moreover, Alkhayareen and Mansour (2020) conducted a study aiming to measure the impact of strategic planning on achieving Institutional excellence in government institutions. The researcher used a descriptive analytical approach to deal with the research variables, and the study concluded that there was an impact of strategic planning dimensions on achieving organizational excellence in the leadership of the Qatari Ministry of Defense.

The review of previous studies highlighted the significant role of the strategic planning process and Institutional excellence in organizations and their impact on the work environment from various administrative aspects. It also revealed the scarcity of studies conducted in higher education institutions, especially in the Arab region, emphasizing the need for a scientific study to fill this gap and provide a clear understanding of the relationship and impact between these two variables. This would assist decision-makers in higher education institutions in utilizing the results for decision-making and the development of these institutions.

2.1. Strategic Planning and Institutional Excellence in Saudi Higher Education Institutions

Universities, as representatives of higher education institutions, are among the most fiercely competitive organizations in the world. Many international organizations and bodies have given considerable attention to the process of ranking universities, which has become a primary reference point for those interested in education and those seeking to determine the level and quality of these institutions (such as QS Ranking, Shanghai Ranking, Times Ranking). Therefore, any higher education institution cannot secure a place among this vast array of institutions unless it convinces the world around it of its distinctiveness. This distinctiveness cannot be achieved through personal efforts or random initiatives but must be based on competent and deep strategic planning, which reflects on the final outcome of the university.

To ensure the quality of education, there was a clear need to enhance knowledge of strategic management in higher education institutions and provide the tools for strategic planning (Abdul Rashid and Abu Samah, 2016; Krstevska and Bajrami, 2023). With the emergence of academic accreditation for educational institutions at the beginning of the twentieth century, which requires the presence of quality standards and the application of strategic management concepts and strategic planning, universities had to start adopting this type of planning. This planning outlines policies that govern their performance through transparency, participation in the management and evaluation processes, updating academic programs, and responding to stakeholders' needs in a way that achieves excellence (Alhabdan, 2021).

Saudi universities face several strategic challenges that have weakened their competitiveness, particularly emerging ones. This became evident with the global university rankings, highlighting the need for Saudi universities to apply strategic planning in their management. Such planning can help them address many challenges and improve their competitiveness, ultimately achieving institutional excellence. The absence of this

type of planning has negative consequences and leads to a waste of material and human resources for the university (Alshammari, 2017).

The University of Hafr Al-Batin is one of the newest universities established in the Kingdom in 2014. It requires further studies to support decision-making and assist in achieving its self-set goals. Experts in management agree that any modern organization must start with a clear strategy that paves the way toward its objectives. Hence, this study aims to bridge this research gap by revealing the current status of both strategic planning and institutional excellence at the university. Given the scarcity of information on the relationship between strategic planning and institutional excellence, this study seeks to uncover this relationship and the actual impact of strategic planning on the university's institutional excellence. This will be achieved through the perspectives of faculty members who experience the practical aspects of university management. The researchers expect that these faculty members will provide objective and truthful data about the current situation. The study's problem is defined by the following questions:

1. What is the level of strategic planning at the University of Hafr Al-Batin from the perspective of faculty members?
2. What is the level of institutional excellence at the University of Hafr Al-Batin from the perspective of faculty members?
3. What is the type of relationship between strategic planning and institutional excellence?
4. Does strategic planning with its dimensions (strategic analysis, strategic vision, strategic mission, strategic objectives) have an impact on Institutional excellence?

From these questions, the following hypotheses are derived:

Ho 1: There is no significant meaningful relationship between strategic planning and institutional excellence.

Ho 2: There is no impact of strategic planning on institutional excellence.

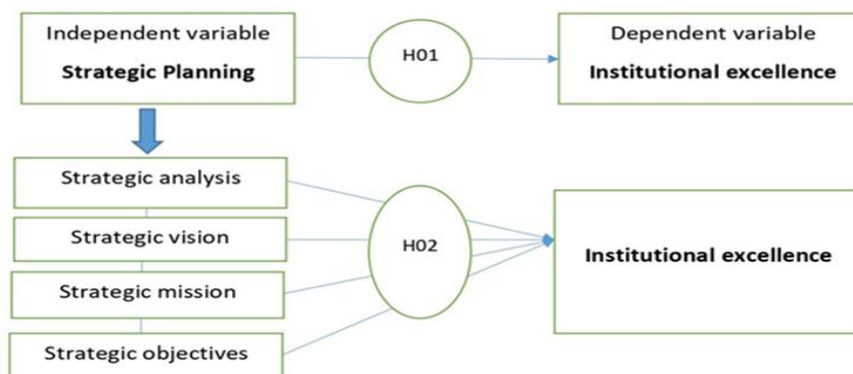


FIGURE 1- THE RELATIONSHIP MODEL BETWEEN STRATEGIC PLANNING AND INSTITUTIONAL EXCELLENCE

The study aims to establish a scientific foundation for understanding strategic planning and organizational excellence. It focuses on examining the frameworks previously explored in these areas. A key objective is to investigate the nature of the relationship and the impact that exists between strategic planning and organizational excellence. The research is motivated by the growing significance of these concepts in the realm of business, which are now central to the study and evolution of management. Additionally, the study underscores the value of its findings in increasing awareness about the critical role of strategic planning in achieving organizational excellence. It also endeavors to assess the effectiveness of universities in implementing strategic planning and achieving a high level of organizational excellence. The goal is to identify their strengths and weaknesses in these areas, thereby facilitating the development of practical methods and processes to improve the application of strategic planning tools within the study's defined parameters.

Researchers often categorize planning into long-term planning and short-term planning (Donald et al., 2017; Hee Sung, 2019; Juliane et al., 2019). The current study, however, focuses on long-term planning, which is defined

by Michael (1993) as the suitable and appropriate approach for setting long-term goals and guiding the organization towards achieving these goals. The study procedurally defines it as the actions and activities carried out by the leadership at University of Hafr Al-Batin. These actions are aimed at analyzing the strengths, weaknesses, and threats in the external environment and crystallizing them through a vision, mission, and strategic objectives that rely on measuring and monitoring their future performance.

On the other hand, organizational excellence is defined as a set of rare and unique organizational characteristics that distinguish an organization from its competitors. These characteristics enable it to manage its resources and enhance its competitive position. It is one of the creative methods that allows the organization to respond quickly to environmental changes, thereby outperforming its competitors (Alsharah, 2020). The study defines it procedurally as a reflection of how University of Hafr Al-Batin utilizes its various resources and invests them in a way that enables it to efficiently and effectively achieve its goals through leadership and stakeholder satisfaction.

3. METHODOLOGY

The researchers employed a descriptive-analytical methodology, which aims to study a phenomenon as it exists in reality, focusing on providing a precise, qualitative, and quantitative description and analysis of it. This methodology is suitable for addressing the research questions and subsequently analyzing and discussing them. The data collection process was based on a questionnaire distributed to the study population, which includes all faculty members at University of Hafr Al-Batin holding the ranks of Professor, Associate Professor, and Assistant Professor. The total number of faculty members in this category was 502 individuals (General Manager Resources, Personal Contact, April 16, 2023). This study was conducted with the approval of the Deanship of Scientific Research at the University of Hafr Al-Batin.

Due to the small size of the study population, the instrument was applied to all members using a comprehensive census approach. The questionnaire was sent through university mail to each faculty member, and it was followed up by the researchers. The valid responses for analysis amounted to 101 responses, representing a 20.01% response rate from the study population.

It's worth noting that the researchers excluded the ranks of lecturer and teaching assistant from the study population to ensure the reliability and objectivity of responses, as these positions might require expertise and knowledge in the subject matter. Additionally, the researchers emphasize that the responses were voluntary and confidential to avoid biases that could influence the results.

3.1. Data Collection

The study's questionnaire was developed based on a review of available literature from previous scientific research related to the study's topic and problem (Alkhayareen & Mansour, 2020; Alyosfi, 2020; Basheer et al., 2022; Wolf & Floyd, 2017). It also incorporated the opinions of experts who reviewed the initial questionnaire. The questionnaire included two main axes:

The independent variable, strategic planning, with four dimensions: strategic analysis, strategic vision, strategic mission, and strategic objectives.

The dependent variable, institutional excellence, with four dimensions: leadership, employee satisfaction, customer satisfaction, and community satisfaction.

The questionnaire utilized a five-point Likert scale, where respondents indicated their level of agreement with each statement (ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree"). Table,1 outlines the levels and corresponding degree ranges used to assess the agreement of study sample individuals regarding the study's axes statements. It categorizes their responses into different levels, ranging from "Very Low" to "Very High" based on the degree of agreement. The degree ranges are utilized to classify and interpret the participants' responses for the study's analysis.

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TABLE 1- DIRECTION OF AGREEMENT OF STUDY SAMPLE

Level	Degree
Very low	1 – 1.79
Low	1.80 – 2.59
Moderate	2.60 – 3.39
High	3.40 – 4.19
Very high	4.20 – 5.00

To ensure the face validity of the questionnaire, the researchers presented it to eight experts in educational leadership and management. They sought their opinions regarding the linguistic accuracy, alignment of statements with their respective dimensions, and measurability of the questionnaire. Based on the experts' feedback and observations, the questionnaire was modified, and the final version was adopted. The final version was approved by 80% of them.

Furthermore, the internal consistency reliability of the instrument was confirmed using Pearson correlation coefficients. This was achieved by distributing the questionnaire to a sample of 30 individuals from the study population and calculating Pearson correlation coefficients between each item and its respective dimension. The results are presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2 - INTERNAL CONSISTENCY OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE (PEARSON'S CORRELATION)

	Paragraph	Correlation Coefficient	Paragraph	Correlation Coefficient	Paragraph	Correlation Coefficient
Strategic Planning	1	0.823**	9	0.786**	17	0.833**
	2	0.823**	10	0.846**	18	0.921**
	3	0.792**	11	0.758**	19	0.849**
	4	0.798**	12	0.904**	20	0.863**
	5	0.602**	13	0.867**	21	0.910**
	6	0.814**	14	0.895**	22	0.888**
	7	0.784**	15	0.860**	23	0.843**
	8	0.801**	16	0.874**	-	-
Institutional Excellence	1	0.833**	9	0.655**	17	0.848**
	2	0.811**	10	0.857**	18	0.779**
	3	0.812**	11	0.866**	19	0.874**
	4	0.931**	12	0.828**	20	0.797**
	5	0.809**	13	0.687**	21	0.833**
	6	0.879**	14	0.864**	22	0.786**
	7	0.743**	15	0.901**	-	-
	8	0.686**	16	0.878**	-	-

Table 2 shows that all Pearson correlation coefficients for the statements related to the dimensions of strategic planning and Institutional excellence were statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This indicates that the statements within both dimensions have a strong and significant correlation, demonstrating their validity for achieving the study's objectives. To measure the reliability of the questionnaire, the researchers used Cronbach's Alpha test. The results are presented in Table 3

TABLE 3- CRONBACH'S ALPHA TEST FOR ASSESSING QUESTIONNAIRE RELIABILITY

Axes	Number of Statements	Axis Reliability
Strategic Planning	23	0.980
Institutional Excellence	22	0.976
Overall Reliability	45	0.988

Table 3 demonstrates that the reliability coefficient Alpha exceeded 0.9 for all dimensions of the study's tool, with a value of 0.988 for the overall tool. The values ranged from 0.976 to 0.980 for the dimensions of the tool, indicating the suitability and high stability of the tool's statements.

4. RESULTS

The first question: What is the level of strategic planning at the University of Hafr Al-Batin from the perspective of faculty members? To answer this question, we used mean scores and standard deviations (SD,s) with the SPSS statistical software. The results are as follows, as shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4 - MEANS AND SD,s OF SAMPLE INDIVIDUALS' ASSESSMENTS OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

	Dimensions	Mean	SD	Rank	Verbal Significance
1	Strategic Analysis	3.18	0.917	4	Moderate
2	Strategic Vision	3.57	0.905	1	High
3	Strategic Mission	3.38	0.959	2	Moderate
4	Strategic Objectives	3.23	0.978	3	Moderate
Overall Average		3.31	0.888		Moderate

From Table 4, it is evident that the overall level of strategic planning at the university is "moderate". Among the dimensions, "Strategic Vision" ranked first with a mean score of "high," while "Strategic Analysis" had the lowest mean score among the dimensions. The standard deviation for all dimensions was 0.888, indicating convergence and consistency in the opinions of the sample members regarding the assessment of the level of strategic planning dimensions at the university.

The results, in general, indicate that the university has deficiencies in adopting strategic planning as expected, despite the importance of this process and its significant role in the university's success, as emphasized by numerous studies (Bontempo et al., 2015; Cunha & Magalhaes, 2019; Krzysztof & Raoul, 2019). This calls for organized efforts by the university to address its weaknesses and align with the Ministry of Education's directives to activate institutional work. Universities should commit to the planning process to achieve the goals of Saudi Vision 2030 in education.

These results align with the findings of a study by Abu Khuras (2020), which indicated significant deficiencies in the availability of the strategic planning process in Libyan higher education institutions. They also correspond with the results of a study by Abdulaziz and Al-Zou'l (2020), which showed a moderate level of strategic planning in government universities in northern Jordan. In Table 5 the detailed results for each dimension of strategic planning:

Table 5 shows that 7 statements out of the total strategic planning statements were rated at a "high" level, while the other 16 statements were rated at a "Moderate" level.

In the strategic analysis dimension, statement number 5 received a "high" rating, indicating that the university designs its organizational structure in a way that helps achieve its goals. This may be attributed to the fact that the organizational structure has been pre-prepared for all universities, and it is similar and unified for all due to the universities' affiliation with the Ministry of Education, which limits their independence and ability to make significant changes.

In the "strategic vision" dimension, 3 statements, namely numbers 11, 8, and 9, received a "high" rating. This could be explained by the fact that the university's strategic vision is publicly declared and advertised on the university's pages, which is why these statements received a high rating. These statements contributed to the overall "high" rating of this dimension among the four dimensions.

Regarding "strategic objectives," statements 13 and 14 received a "high" rating. This could be attributed to the same reason mentioned in the previous dimension, which is the focus on the theoretical aspect at the expense of the practical side. However, as indicated by statements 18 and 19, the practical aspect is lacking, and the university's alignment with its material and human resources is weak.

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TABLE 5 - MEANS AND SD,s OF SAMPLE INDIVIDUALS' RATINGS FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING STATEMENTS

	Pa.	Statement	Mean	SD	Rank	Verbal Sign.
Strategic Analysis	1	The university analyzes its internal environment to identify the human (financial, administrative) resources it possesses.	3.32	1.009	2	Moderate
	2	The university establishes the foundations that help it develop its strategy to create a competitive advantage.	3.16	1.065	4	Moderate
	3	The university studies external environmental variables to identify the opportunities and threats it faces.	3.22	1.045	3	Moderate
	4	The university studies internal environmental variables to identify strengths and weaknesses.	3.11	1.029	5	Moderate
	5	The university draws its organizational structure in a way that helps it achieve its goals.	3.48	1.072	1	High
	6	The university uses strategic planning to find innovative solutions to potential future problems.	3.03	1.144	6	Moderate
	7	The university attracts administrative competencies experienced in strategic planning.	2.95	1.195	7	Moderate
Overall Average			3.18	0.917	Moderate	
Strategic Vision	8	The university possesses a vision that expresses its future ambitions and aspirations.	3.66	0.993	2	High
	9	The university's vision is characterized by clarity and comprehensiveness.	3.61	1.077	3	High
	10	The university prioritizes achieving its vision in all of its activities and decisions.	3.28	1.078	4	Moderate
	11	The university clearly declares its vision and mission on its official website.	4.02	1.029	1	High
	12	The university outlines the strategic responsibilities of all its departments in a way that aids in achieving the objectives.	3.28	1.141	5	Moderate
Overall Average			3.57	0.905	High	
Strategic Mission	13	The university sets clear and understandable objectives for everyone.	3.52	1.092	1	High
	14	The university aligns its general objectives with the functions expressed in its mission.	3.42	0.972	2	High
	15	The university sets flexible goals that can be adjusted according to circumstances.	3.19	1.036	4	Moderate
	16	The university links its objectives to the needs and desires of the community to which it belongs.	3.26	1.246	3	Moderate
	17	The university sets objectives associated with a specific timeframe.	3.16	1.120	5	Moderate
	18	The university promotes an organizational culture that aids in achieving the objectives.	3.09	1.155	6	Moderate
	19	The university takes into consideration its material and human resources when setting its goals.	3.01	1.136	7	Moderate
Overall Average			3.23	0.978	Moderate	
Strategic	20	The university's message clarifies its general direction.	3.74	1.016	1	High
	21	The university adheres to high-quality standards that support its mission based on the available resources.	3.11	1.174	4	Moderate
	22	The university's message is relatively stable compared to its objectives.	3.39	0.938	2	Moderate
	23	The university follows policies and procedures that help it achieve its mission.	3.27	1.094	3	Moderate
Overall Average			0.960	3.38	Moderate	

As for the "strategic message," only statement 20 received a "high" rating. This can be explained by the earlier discussion about the university's vision and mission. While the university has developed the theoretical aspect of its vision and mission, it has not been able to achieve a high level of performance in the practical aspect. Therefore, the university's ability to adopt high-quality standards, policies, and procedures to support its mission is rated at a "Moderate" level. Parker et al. (2015) highlight the difficulty of building a strategic message and the need for more time, but they emphasize its importance as a solid foundation for motivation and creating a positive organizational climate.

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The most common assessment of strategic planning was at the "moderate" level, with 16 statements falling into this category. The least common assessment was for statement number 7, which indicated a weakness in the process of attracting managerial competencies. This weakness could be attributed to the fact that the university is located in a remote area, far from the availability of services that individuals require, leading to a reluctance of many competent individuals to work there. Additionally, the lack of leadership stability at the university may have contributed, as the university has changed its leadership five times in the past ten years. Statement 19 ranked second-lowest in terms of assessment and pointed out that the university does not consider its material and human resources adequately when setting its goals. This lack of consideration can have a negative impact on the university's ability to achieve its objectives.

In general, the university seems to prioritize the theoretical aspects of strategic planning over the practical ones, resulting in "high" ratings for statements related to theory and "Moderate" ratings for those related to practical implementation. Many researchers emphasize the importance of aligning theory and practice in the vision and mission aspect, as vision and mission should not be mere slogans and empty titles (George et al., 2019; Philbin, 2011). In summary, based on the average values and standard deviations, it can be concluded that the members of the study sample rate the university's performance in the strategic planning dimension as "Moderate". This suggests a relative consensus among them in evaluating this aspect, while the standard deviations of the statements are statistically acceptable.

The second question: What is the level of institutional excellence at the University of Hafr Al-Batin from the perspective of faculty members? To answer this question, mean values and standard deviations were used, and the results are as follows:

TABLE 6 - MEANS AND SD,s FOR SAMPLE INDIVIDUALS' ASSESSMENTS OF INSTITUTIONAL EXCELLENCE

	Dimension	Arithmetic Mean	SD	Rank	Verbal Significance
1	Leadership	3.16	1.110	4	Moderate
2	Customer Satisfaction	3.56	0.821	1	High
3	Employee Satisfaction	3.31	0.996	3	Moderate
4	Community Satisfaction	3.34	0.958	2	Moderate
Overall Average		3.34	0.908		Moderate

Table 6 shows that the institutional excellence of the university, in general, is rated as "Moderate". All dimensions fall into this level except for the second dimension, "customer satisfaction," which is rated as "high." This result can be attributed to the fact that the university, being one of the newest universities in the Kingdom, still needs to complete various administrative and financial aspects. There is a shortage in completing the university's infrastructure, as well as a lack of experienced academic and administrative staff, which in turn has affected the university's excellence.

The administrative instability of the university, with five changes in its presidency since its establishment, has led to a lack of stability in administrative and academic decision-making. The frequent transitions have not allowed for advanced steps in institutional excellence.

This result is also related to the first axis of strategic planning, which was rated as "Moderate". The study has shown a correlational and influential relationship between these two variables.

To elaborate on each dimension of institutional excellence, they are presented as Table 7. Table 7 reveals that out of the institutional excellence dimensions, 8 statements are rated as "high," while the remaining 13 statements are all rated as "medium."

In the "Leadership" dimension, only one statement, number 3, received a "high" rating, indicating that the university's management encourages communication between leaders and subordinates.

In the "Customer Satisfaction" dimension, three statements received a "high" rating. This is the only dimension within institutional excellence that achieved a "high" rating. These results can be attributed to the university's clear and non-negotiable admission procedures based on academic achievement and standardized tests, which provide reassurance to applicants. The university also closely monitors professors' work, schedules, and office

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hours to serve students, allowing students to voice complaints and suggestions at all levels. These practices have led to a "high" rating in this dimension

TABLE 7 - MEANS AND SD,s OF SAMPLE INDIVIDUALS' RATINGS FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING STATEMENTS

	Pa.	Statement	Mean	SD	Rank	Verbal Sig.
Leadership	1	Mutual trust prevails in the university's work environment between employees and leadership.	3.16	1.309	2	Moderate
	2	The university has the ability to find alternative solutions to the problems it faces.	3.07	1.151	4	Moderate
	3	The university encourages open communication between leaders and subordinates.	3.41	1.242	1	High
	4	The university supports and promotes innovative ideas.	3.07	1.210	5	Moderate
	5	The university nurtures the next generation of leaders and prepares them for the future.	3.12	1.260	3	Moderate
	Overall Average			3.16	1.110	Moderate
Customer Satisfaction	6	The university provides an educational environment that stimulates students' thinking and prepares them for the future.	2.99	1.063	5	Moderate
	7	The university adopts standardized admission and transfer procedures for all students.	3.92	0.945	2	High
	8	The university provides modern technological resources for student use.	3.26	1.128	4	Moderate
	9	The university guides the academic faculty to announce office hours for communication with students.	4.16	0.977	1	High
	10	The university takes into consideration the suggestions and complaints submitted by stakeholders.	3.46	1.136	3	High
	Overall Average			3.56	0.821	High
Employee Satisfaction	11	The university measures the level of employee satisfaction with the services it provides to them.	3.31	1.164	3	Moderate
	12	The university enhances the capabilities of its employees by facilitating their participation in scientific events (training, seminars, workshops, conferences).	3.27	1.280	4	Moderate
	13	The university practices fairness in the promotion and incentive system for all employees (academic and administrative).	3.43	1.134	1	High
	14	The university leverages its human resources by creating employment opportunities that align with these capabilities.	3.31	1.046	2	Moderate
	15	The university takes into consideration the suggestions and complaints submitted by its employees.	3.26	1.146	5	Moderate
	Overall Average			3.31	0.996	Moderate
Community Satisfaction	16	The university provides activities that serve the community (research, consulting, and training) in line with its strategy.	3.42	1.089	2	High
	17	The university supports scientific research aimed at addressing societal issues.	3.07	1.235	6	Moderate
	18	The university consults with experts from both the private and public sectors when formulating its strategy.	3.34	1.177	4	Moderate
	19	The university is committed to raising awareness in the community about current issues.	3.32	1.140	5	Moderate
	20	The university is dedicated to preserving and sustaining the environment.	3.48	0.965	1	High
	21	The university signs effective cooperation agreements with various civil society institutions.	3.41	0.992	3	High
Overall Average			3.34	0.958	Moderate	

In the "Employee Satisfaction" dimension, statement 13 received a "high" rating due to the academic and administrative promotion systems being based on established regulations from relevant councils, thus following relatively clear procedures for all.

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND INSTITUTIONAL EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: REALITY, CORRELATION, AND IMPACT

In the "Community Satisfaction" dimension, statement 19 received the highest average, indicating the university's commitment to environmental conservation and sustainability. This can be attributed to the university's geographical independence and the availability of sufficient space for urban planning and organization.

The overall level for the institutional excellence axis is "medium." The lowest averages were found for statements related to support for creativity, encouragement of innovation, support for research, and problem-solving. Statement 6 indicates that the university does not provide an educational environment that stimulates students' thinking and prepares them adequately for the future, while statements 4 and 3 suggest a lower level of support for innovative ideas and a weakness in the university's ability to find alternative solutions to the problems it faces.

The third question: What is the type of relationship between strategic planning and institutional excellence? To determine the presence of a statistically significant relationship between strategic planning and institutional excellence, a Pearson correlation test was used, and the results are presented in Table 8.

TABLE 8 - THE PEARSON CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN DIMENSIONS OF STRATEGIC PLANNING AND OF INSTITUTIONAL EXCELLENCE

	Leadership	Customer Satisfaction	Employee Satisfaction	Community Satisfaction	Institutional Excellence
Strategic Analysis	0.804	0.751	0.779	0.880	0.865
Significance	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Strategic Vision	0.821	0.759	0.766	0.789	0.841
Significance	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Strategic Goals	0.844	0.828	0.825	0.875	0.903
Significance	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Strategic Message	0.817	0.772	0.803	0.847	0.869
Significance	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Strategic Planning	-	-	-	-	0.923
Significance	-	-	-	-	0.000

The results presented in Table 8 indicate a strong positive correlation between all dimensions of strategic planning and institutional excellence. The results show that all relationships are statistically significant at the 0.01 level. The lowest correlation coefficient observed was 0.751, with a significance level of 0.000, while the highest correlation coefficient was 0.903, which was found between strategic objectives and institutional excellence. This suggests that the university's efforts to achieve excellence are closely tied to its strategic objectives. The overall correlation between strategic planning and institutional excellence is 0.923, with a significance level of 0.00. These results lead to the rejection of the null hypothesis proposed by the study, confirming the alternative hypothesis that there is a strong correlation between all dimensions of strategic planning and dimensions of institutional excellence.

The fourth question: Does strategic planning with its dimensions (strategic analysis, strategic vision, strategic mission, strategic objectives) have an impact on Institutional excellence? To uncover the impact of strategic planning on Institutional excellence, a multiple regression analysis was conducted, and the results are presented in Table 9.

TABLE 9 - MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Strategic Planning Dimensions	Impact Coefficient (B)	t-Value	Significance Level (Sig)	Determination Coefficient (R ²)	Correlation Coefficient (R)	F-Value	Statistical Significance
Strategic Analysis	0.221	2.534	0.013	0.854	0.924	140.18	0.000
Strategic Vision	0.204	2.665	0.009				
Strategic Mission	0.143	1.412	0.161				
Strategic Objectives	0.405	3.469	0.001				

The results presented in Table 9 demonstrate a statistically significant positive impact of strategic planning on Institutional excellence at a level of 0.01. The independent variable (strategic planning) is shown to explain 85.4% of the variations observed in the dependent variable (Institutional excellence), with approximately 15% of the variations attributable to other unexamined variables or random factors beyond the study's control.

Furthermore, the table indicates that all dimensions of strategic planning have an impact on Institutional excellence except for the strategic mission, where the significance level for this dimension is greater than 0.05. The dimension with the most significant impact is strategic objectives, with an impact coefficient of 0.405 and a significance level of 0.001. These findings align with previous studies such as Nzuki (2017), Abdulaziz and Al-Zou'1 (2020), Alkhayareen and Mansour (2020), Alyosfi (2020), Makhlofi (2020), And Besheer et al. (2022).

5. DISCUSSIONS

The study's findings provide valuable insights into the state of strategic planning and institutional excellence at Hafr Al-Batin University, Saudi Arabia. The moderate level of strategic planning and institutional excellence observed suggests a need for focused efforts to enhance these aspects. The following discussion delves into the implications of the results, their alignment with existing literature, and recommendations for future research and practice.

1. Strategic Planning Level:

The moderate rating of strategic planning aligns with similar studies in the Middle East, such as those in Libya and northern Jordan, indicating a common challenge in the adoption of strategic planning processes in higher education institutions in the region. The deficiencies noted in the dimensions of strategic planning, particularly in strategic analysis and the practical aspect of goal alignment, highlight areas where the university can direct improvement efforts.

The prioritization of theoretical aspects over practical implementation suggests a need for a more balanced approach. As emphasized by various researchers, a successful strategic planning process requires not only well-defined goals but also effective execution, involving the alignment of resources and continuous evaluation of progress.

2. Institutional Excellence Level:

The overall "Moderate" rating for institutional excellence, with "customer satisfaction" as the only dimension rated "high," reflects the challenges faced by the university in completing its infrastructure, acquiring experienced staff, and maintaining administrative stability. The administrative turnover, with five changes in presidency, has likely hindered progress toward institutional excellence. The results emphasize the interconnectedness between strategic planning and institutional excellence. The correlation and impact analysis reveals a strong positive relationship between the two variables, reinforcing the idea that effective strategic planning is crucial for achieving excellence in various dimensions.

3. Correlation and Impact:

The Pearson correlation test provides statistical evidence of a robust positive correlation between all dimensions of strategic planning and institutional excellence. The strong correlation coefficients, particularly the highest coefficient between strategic objectives and institutional excellence, indicate that the university's efforts to achieve excellence are closely tied to its strategic goals. The multiple regression analysis further supports these findings by demonstrating a statistically significant positive impact of strategic planning on institutional excellence. The high explanatory power of strategic planning (85.4%) underscores its significance in influencing institutional excellence. Notably, the dimension of strategic mission did not show a significant impact on institutional excellence. This result warrants further investigation to understand the factors contributing to this finding and to identify potential areas for improvement in the university's mission alignment with its overall goals.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The results of the study showed that the level of strategic planning at the university is moderate, and it also showed that Institutional excellence is at the same moderate level. This result supported the main goal of the study, which investigates the role of strategic planning in achieving Institutional excellence. The results indicated

a strong correlation between the two variables and also showed a statistically significant effect of three dimensions of strategic planning on institutional excellence. This correlation and impact reflected the influence of the university's strategic planning on its level of Institutional excellence. This suggests that the university should work on adopting a strategic planning process that combines future thinking, objective analysis, and self-assessment of its goals and priorities in a way that ensures its distinctiveness and effectiveness.

This result underscores the effective role of strategic planning in the success of organizations. The better an organization can manage its strategic planning, the more likely it is to achieve the desired level of Institutional excellence. Conversely, when an organization does not excel in its strategic planning, it can have negative consequences on many aspects of performance and excellence. The results of the study have highlighted valuable insights that can help managers, decision-makers, and practitioners identify strengths and weaknesses that need to be addressed.

However, it should be noted that this analysis was based on a limited sample, and there may be variations in perceptions and evaluations if the study is expanded to include a larger sample of individuals. Therefore, it may be necessary to conduct further research and data analysis to achieve a high degree of confidence in the results and conclusions drawn.

Based on the results of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. More efforts should be made to enable the university to engage in effective strategic planning. This aspect should be given importance based on the results obtained from its implementation. This can be achieved through work mechanisms and training programs, spreading a culture of strategic planning among employees, and providing the necessary requirements for implementation.
2. Field studies should be conducted to identify the reasons for the university's low adoption of strategic planning and address the current situation.
3. Attention should be given to the dimensions of Institutional excellence that play a significant role in the university's success and have a positive impact on the strategic planning process.
4. Alignment between theoretical policies and practical applications of strategic planning should be achieved, without stopping at theoretical monitoring.
5. Competent individuals capable of participating in the university's strategic planning should be recruited, and opportunities for active participation by all parties in building and implementing plans should be provided.
6. Further studies should be conducted on the role and impact of strategic planning on other administrative aspects such as performance levels, organizational loyalty, and job satisfaction.

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