

Challenges of strategic planning in higher education institutions

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Abstract: The purpose of the article is to determine the most common strategic planning (SP) challenges found in the examined literature on higher education institutions (HEIs). The study's methodology is based on choosing and reviewing 35 papers from prominent peer-reviewed journals, electronic sources, and databases. The selection criteria are based on searching these journals and websites using the articles' titles and related concepts. Tables are organized into columns to highlight the most critical issues and factors for each study. The study found that all of the articles chosen focused on the SP challenges that HEIs face in their respective countries, which reflected their local environments. It concludes by disclosing that the broad challenges that face the SP-HEIs relationship are varied and mostly related to the HEIs' strategic models, strategic leadership, resources, SP awareness, performance, sustainability, and competitiveness, and have been grouped into three categories. Originality and value are shown in the interconnected and intertwined components of the findings, and their similarity for different HEIs' countries within their particular context has contributed to the study's originality and value. The practical implication is that the study looks into the most recent challenges and variables impacting the SP-HEI relationship in various countries.

Keywords: *Challenges, Models, Higher education institutions, Strategic planning, Strategic management.*

1. Introduction

The relationship between strategy planning and higher education institutions (SP-HEIs) faces several challenges which impede the sector's achieving competitive and sustainable performance. To address these challenges, it is necessary to determine these challenges, their causes and appropriate solutions which is the objective of this article. It is based on investigating the available and easily accessible studies and literature in this domain focusing on most strategic challenges faced the HEIs. These challenges are thought to be starting by understanding and usages of the terms and concepts of SP or and strategic management (SM) within HEIs field. However, HEIs now have to deal with megatrends Sevier [1] like changing societal expectations, budgetary constraints, economic fluctuations, The effect of science and technology, the shifting needs of the future's students, rising rivalry, modifying school curricula, increasing competition of non-college delivery options, lack of SP awareness, lack of monitoring, unsupportive and demotivated atmosphere, shortages of knowledge and experience, legislative barriers, lack of training programs and recession [2]. All of these and other factors compel higher education decision makers and legislators to seek out the most effective approaches to leading and managing this sector in order to ensure its competitiveness, and sustainability. Some scholars handled and addressed specific SP issues in HEIs using some approaches, such as: SWOT analysis, benchmarking Benrachou [3] and Papadimitriou [4] driving change of HEIs Sevier [1] discrepancies in SP across universities Hu, et al. [5] and specialized SP in HEIs [6].

1.1. Research Objective

This article aims to look into the most prevalent SP challenges found in the reviewed studies of higher education institutions (HEIs).

The study is organized into the following sections: The first section is an introduction that provides a general overview of the challenges facing the SP-HEIs relationship, and the study objective. The second section is a literature review, which includes some definitions and concepts for SP, as well as an explanation of the challenges face the SP-HEIs relationship. Previous studies are included in section two. Section three covers methods of research. Section four contains the findings for the challenge found in previous studies. Section five includes discussion, recommendations and conclusion.

2. Literature Review

The relationship between SP-HEIs faces several challenges which impede the sector's achieving sustainable and competitive performance. To address these challenges, it is necessary to determine these challenges, identify their nature and develop solutions. First of all, the challenges are thought to be starting by understanding and usages of the terms and concepts of strategic planning or and strategic management used in and by the HEI sector. Second, HEIs represents colleges and universities that deal with megatrends. These trends and challenges are including, but not limited to: changing societal expectations, budgetary constraints, economic fluctuations, effect of science and technology, shifting needs of current and future's students, rising rivalry, modifying school curricula, increasing competition of non-college delivery options, lack of SP awareness, lack of monitoring, unsupportive and demotivated atmosphere, shortages of knowledge and experience, legislative barriers, lack of training programs and recession, etc. All of these factors, along with others, will force higher education decision makers and legislators to seek out the finest tools for leading and managing this sector for a healthy and sustainable future survival. Some scholars are focusing their addressing efforts specially on SP in HEIs [1, 2, 5-7]. Others assumed the challenges and issues found could be classified into groups and subgroups such as strategic planning process (e.g., SP models, SP awareness), curricula (academic programs), resources (financial, manpower, devices and technologies), competition and organizational structure (refer to table 2).

2.1. Definitions

The challenges are thought to be starting by understanding and usages of the terms and concepts of strategic planning or and strategic management. The term and concepts of SP or SM used interchangeably, as well as others such as (strategic planning process, business strategy, and corporate strategy). SP defined as a management of decisions and activities which focused on achieving the long-run performance of the institutions [8]. Also, SP defined by Tarifi [9] as an intricate and collaborative process geared to scan the environment and generate mission, vision, and strategies, capable of improving university capacity and making institutions more appealing and competitive in the market place. Tsiakkios and Pashiardis [10] indicated that SP in the management literature as a concept can also be expressed in terms of business strategy process, SM, or corporation strategy. Every author implies the same idea. They just describe the same process from various perspectives and highlight distinct elements. Bryson [11] define SP as a thoughtful, systematic effort to make basic choices and actions which form and lead whatever an organization or other body is, what it does, and why. Perera and Peiró [12] defined SP as a methodical and organized process by which an organization creates a document explaining how it wants to transition from its current position to the desired future situation. For this research, the word SP will be combined with other authors' concepts and terminologies from HEIs studies that reflect a wide range of this industry sector's aspects. SP is the design of an institution's future by examining its existing environment, analyzing the targets it desires to achieve in the future and how it will attain these targets, and making effective and efficient use of its resources to achieve these goals [13].

2.2. Higher Education Institutions

It is impossible to cover all the colleges and universities in this study because they are so varied in nature and setting. The author will investigate the available and easily accessible studies in this domain focusing on most strategic issues face the HEIs. For many years, researchers have focused on the link between SP and the most profitable industry and how to maintain financial success. In many countries, HEIs is considered as a drain on the public budget. As a result, more emphasis has been placed on the most profitable industry while ignoring others, such as HEIs.

The author of this paper believes that governmental education in general and colleges and universities in particular would be a priority for all generations and countries. It should be available and accessible to all citizens, regardless of limitations and barriers. Despite the fact that demand for higher education is skyrocketing, expenditures are rising and quality standards are becoming increasingly difficult to meet. According to Hu, et al. [5] the literature on university SP has grown in proportion; numerous articles and texts have examined the principles and conceptual frameworks of SP in higher education, in addition to the critical aspects in SP and implementation process, and have presented direction for university strategic planning methods.

From this point on, HEI decision makers will be required to look for the best tools for directing and overseeing this industry in order to ensure a prosperous and sustainable future while utilizing limited resources and facing significant hurdles. Current generations of learners, scientific innovations, financial limits, and economic constraints have necessitated a reevaluation of higher education approaches [2]. According to Immordino, et al. [7] many writings handle the intricate problems confronting the whole system of college and university education, such as, however, not limited to, increasing higher education expenses, new government initiatives and legislation, rising rivalry, collaborative governance, public transparency, developments in technological advances, the rise of online education and enormous accessible online programs, quality of education and assessment, and student accountability. Furthermore, Sevier [1] determines 9 "drivers of change" affecting the higher education setting, such as the effect of technology, the shifting needs of current and prospective students, the cost of attending college, rising rivalry for donated dollars, changing college curriculum, increasing competition of non-college choices for delivery, evolving social norms, a change in authority structures, and rapid unprecedented fogging.

According to Albon, et al. [14] SP is widely seen as essential at HEIs for defining priorities, defining future plans, and supplying a sound foundation for decision-making. Kelly and Shaw [15] state that the leaders of academic institutions have grown more concerned with making the best use of institutional resources in recent years. Academic institutions face pressure to allocate resources more in accordance with their long-term objectives because society does not give them with enough to meet all of the conflicting demands. Universities have to make choices concerning upcoming initiatives and financial investments that go against their predetermined priorities and ambitions. Some scholars start launching and discussing the specialized SP in higher education sectors, and paths to a world-class university for example: internationalization universities [5, 6]. All of these issues urge HEIs leaders and decision makers to find out and apply a holistic and innovative strategic management approach that incorporates historical perspective, considers the present, and predicts the future. Based on this, SP has emerged as the most suitable approach for fundamentally resolving all of these challenges. Kotler and Murphy [16] stated that if the HEIs are to survive in these challenging conditions, it must place a strong emphasis on SP.

The objective of this article is to identify the most strategically significant issues and challenges facing the HEIs using the titles, purposes and findings of the reviewed literature. Such challenges are presumed to be the objective of previous studies and addressed in the SM literature.

2.3. Previous Studies in SP for HEIs

Thirty-four studies from HEIs were reviewed (Table 1). The examined articles highlight the challenges and issues that HEIs face in their respective countries. Table 1 displays the titles of the 35

studies that were selected and evaluated, as well as their countries of origin. These studies are either research, case studies, or literature reviews. The analyzed research papers highlight the challenges and issues that HEIs face in their home nations. Tables (1, 2, and 3) are designed to display the title components as well as an illustration of related issues.

Ali [17] found that one of the most significant challenges facing HEIs today is the lack of a proper strategic planning framework and model, despite the fact that the majority of what this sector uses comes from other sectors, mainly businesses. Another study by Ali [18] on strategic implementation in HEIs found that the university's structure, leadership and management, and resources all have a substantial impact on strategic implementation performance. Yulianto, et al. [19] examined the effects of strategic leadership, suitable strategy, and effectiveness on strategy implementation, as well as how these factors affect university competitiveness. The study also sought to develop a conceptual model that linked these parts of the SP process. The study found that, the three variables (strategic leadership, strategy and strategy implementation) are affecting each other and impacting the university competitive advantage as well. Zimmerman [20] investigated the impact of crisis on SP process and strategic implementation on HEIs performance. The study highlighted the need for proactive leadership involvement, creating collaborative planning atmosphere, standardizing strategic planning as a continuous procedure, and intentionally forming alliances to improve institutional sustainable performance.

Chica Vega and Erazo Álvarez [21] proposed SP in universities to achieve successful institutional development. Their study discovered that active involvement of the university community in the processes of institutional management, development, growth, planning, execution, evaluation, and fixing of university processes is essential for carrying out effective SP that promotes institutional development. Habeeb and Eyupoglu [22]. examined the influence of SP on leadership transformation for achieving institutional success in Nigerian HEIs. The findings suggest that SP has a favorable impact on transformative leadership and organizational performance. Furthermore, innovative leadership has a favorable impact on SP and organizational performance. Kalebar [23] aimed to identify specific challenges that HEIs face and propose solutions to overcome them. Challenges include legislative changes affecting academic accreditation standards and how institutions ensure and sustain the quality of their programs and services.

The study of Sywelem and Makhlof [24] handled widespread challenges of SP in HEIs such as lack of SP awareness, training, monitoring and technology. Benrachou [3] examined the development of SP by using SWOT model which was suggested to be most suitable tool to determine the university performance. Paraggua, et al. [25] used SWOT as a success process for SP to analysis institutions internal and external impacting factors. The institutions understood their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Williams [26] provided a streamlined and successful SP model to face the complexity and lack of obvious results of the SP process. Hussein, et al. [27] conducted research on the effects of SP on university corporate performance. The study discovered a strong link between SP and university performance which helps universities achieve their goals. Participating in SP helps universities and other corporate entities to improve their performance. The researched university used SP with all of its indicators to boost its competitiveness. Falqueto, et al. [28] tried to categorize and define the levels of impact of stakeholders in the SP execution in HEIs. According to the study, HEIs prioritize internal and external stakeholders who have authority in this domain. Furthermore, the study discovered that top management, university colleges and programs and external ministries (Planning and budgeting, Federal government Ministry of Education, and external audit agencies, as well as the Office of the Comptroller General) had the most impact on strategic implementation. The student body and society have less influence. The most commonly employed aspects are strategic implementation and stakeholder management.

Jalal and Murray [29] investigate the nature of SP in universities, and provide SP model. The study proved that; SP has the ability to overcome problems in universities by emphasizing the relevance experience during the initial phases of the SP process. SP services as a practical, driven by action

approach centered around scanning the environment indicators that converts setting objectives, targets and resource allocation into substantial achievements. SP ensures that each planning component is linked to other components. The mission serves as the foundation for the entire university. SP offers dedication, drive, and an obvious path for contemporary HEI competitiveness. Hu, et al. [5] highlighted discrepancies in SP across universities of various levels and types. It found that, surveyed HEIs placed a high value on a five-year plan, these institutions at the higher level are more aspirational in their own missions and the university leaders, academic professors, programs heads and offices are the most powerful people in these universities and technical colleges. Private HEIs appear to be more action-oriented than HEIs at other levels or types. Components of SP include: awareness of SP, kinds of strategic plans, influential groups in SP, plan text coverage, and assessment methodologies. Bosire [30] examined factors affect the success of SP in HEIs corporate performance. These traits include management support, the affordability of data and reports consulting, and effective leadership. Bieler and McKenzie [31] investigated the relationship between SP and sustainability in Canadian HEIs. According to the study, 41 strategic plans addressed sustainability in five categories: government, education, campus operations, research, and community outreach. Most important components of the SP include sustainability, governance, education, campus operations, research, community engagement, and policy analysis. Parakhina, et al. [32]. determined the obstacles face the universities' strategic establishment and to seek chances to fulfil strategic competitiveness for Russian universities. The study found that, the lack of strategic flexibility is the most barrier to universities' competitiveness. Gaining methods of SM has a key role in sustainable development for HES. Copying landmarks and strategies of successful universities would not have large effect. Strategic decisions realized by university's administration in collaboration with public authority. Problems facing strategic development are: excessively global character of strategic goal; insufficient of funding, human resources, material, and informational basis for achieving the strategy; poor of necessary organizational and managerial innovations; lack of system for linkage strategic and operative aspects in university management. Hassanien [33] called for the need for innovative strategic model in HEIs where he proposed a model focused on three components: strategic position, strategic choices and strategy in action. Immordino, et al. [7] evaluated the impact of SP in HEIs. Immordino, et al. [7] found that the SP course has been effective in supporting programs and departments in creating mission and vision statements, corporate goals, and plans for action. It additionally assisted in disseminating organizational data, boosting engagement, assimilating new members, and raising awareness of advantages and opportunities for growth [14]. Examined the SP practices and experience from perspectives of university and literature. The study revealed difficulty understanding the authors' disciplinary assumptions, beliefs, and meaning, as well as a lack of clarity in terms of concepts and language utilized. The study of Rashid, et al. [34] emphasized the importance of perceived leadership elements (leadership decision making, leadership styles and leadership change flexibility) in strategic planning at public university. Stukalina [35] determined and discussed some basics and fundamentals of strategic making in contemporary colleges and universities enhanced by customer-focused academic learning environment. The study found that achieving the long-term required to apply holistic SP model supported competitiveness by appropriate internal and external resources distribution for success strategic implementation.

Papadimitriou [4] discovered that, majority of universities use SP. The private universities practiced SP process more than public universities. SWOT model was used more compared to other models. Gamze [36] analyzed strategic model and strategic planning in higher education for both public and private universities in purpose of understanding the dynamics of these institutions. Findings show that, private universities are better in SP development and intertwined with various sectors of economy. Lack of awareness of SP model was found in both public and private universities. They have wrong perception about the SP models and the academics and other staff treat strategic plan as additional workload. Study of Ahmad, et al. [37] purposely integrated SP in HEIs. The study has established a structure to enhance university strategy intent. The study identified that, SP helped in allocation of resources and used to measure institutional effectiveness. Also, the study discovered that

financial structures are one of the most important elements impacting higher education institutional practices.

Owolabi and Makinde [38] examined the influence of SP on university corporate performance. It found that, employees participating in SP have a substantial effect on the plan's approval, more involvement in SP will result in better performance, degree of conformity to SP has a major impact on university performance and there is a considerable association between the scope of SP and university performance. Ofori and Atiogbe [39]. Objectively, examined the nature of SP and identifying influencing factors in public universities. The following factors were identified: the character, structure, and sophistication of communication and information technology; perception of staff that SP is the responsibility of top management which resulted into lack of ownership and commitment. Abdul Kadir [40] illuminated strategy challenges based on perspectives of: top management, management and operations, and academic. Findings show the governmental influence in strategic management process. Adherence to university regulations has increased the challenges in the university management of strategy process. Akyel, et al. [13] concluded that informatics and communication technologies increase the demand for HEI quality by identifying new resources and maximizing the efficiency available resources. To solve all of these issues, Turkey should establish a solid statute (No 5018) authorizing the development, implementation, and monitoring of systematic SP measures in higher education institutions and subject to yearly reviewing their targets for continual development and improvement.

Wan-Hamdan, et al. [41] studied the contribution of facilities management process model on national higher education strategic plan of Malaysia. The most difficulties face the NHESP were infrastructure and resources.

Hamedan [42] focused on formulating a university strategy using SWOT method. Hamedan found that, offensive strategy is most appropriate for the university. And other four strategies are focused on: education, diversification of income resources, students' admission and research partnership with reputable research centers. Kettunen [43] demonstrated how HEIs could develop regional initiatives to increase their environmental impact. The study found that, regional strategies are useful approach in accomplishing the strategic themes and objectives, also, it assured that, SP process produced positive results. Machado, et al. [44] assessed the level of institutional planning engagement at HEIs. The study concluded that, several universities are involved in planning to varying degrees, and a lot of those who are not, wish to incorporate planning into their policy formation toolkit. Out of 61 respondents, 48 indicated being actively involved in the general planning process and having a formal planning procedure. Three said that they did not have a formal planning procedure, while the others stated that they had some planning. Data from the study, which investigated the extent to which important issues in SP were addressed by the institutions examined, tempers implementation. Pidcock [45] examined how to relate an SP model to actual practice in a university. It was found that, SP awareness is low and evaluation system was not being developed in early stages. There was no link between SP and the main areas of teaching, learning, and research at the university.

Table 1.

Shows studies' title components and their respective countries.

#	Author/s & study title	Country
1.	Ali [17]. Strategic planning process model for universities & colleges	S. Arabia
2.	Ali [18]. Strategic implementation for higher education in KSA Supporting SDG4	S. Arabia
3.	Yulianto, et al. [19]. Corporate strategy, strategic leadership, strategy implementation and competitive advantage: A conceptual model proposal	Indonesia universities
4.	Zimmerman [20]. An Investigation of Crisis on Higher Education Strategic Planning and Execution.	USA
5.	Chica Vega and Erazo Álvarez [21]. Importancia de la planificación estratégica en las instituciones de Educación Superior. Translated (Importance of SP in higher education institutions)	Ecuador
6.	Habeeb and Eyupoglu [22]. Strategic Planning, Transformational Leadership and Organization Performance: Driving Forces for Sustainability in Higher Education in Nigeria. Sustainability	Nigeria
7.	Kalebar [23]. Strategic Management in Higher Education: Navigating Challenges and Opportunities	Bangalore
8.	Sywelem and Makhlof [24]. Common challenges of strategic planning for higher education in Egypt.	Egypt
9.	Benrachou [3]. Developing Strategic Planning in Organization Higher Education.	Russia
10.	Paraggua, et al. [25]. SWOT analysis in a Maritime Higher Education Institution: Strategic planning basis for institutional efficiency.	Philippines
11.	Williams [26]. Strategic planning in higher education: a simplified B-VAR model.	Jamaica
12.	Hussein, et al. [27]. The impact of strategic planning in the university's competitiveness	Iraq
13.	Falqueto, et al. [28]. Strategic planning in higher education institutions: what are the stakeholders' roles in the process?	Brazil
14.	Jalal and Murray [29]. Strategic planning for higher education: A novel model for a strategic planning process for higher education. West of Scotland	University Scotland
15.	Hu, et al. [5]. Strategic planning and the stratification of Chinese higher education institutions.	China
16.	Bieler and McKenzie [31]. Strategic planning for sustainability in Canadian higher education.	Canada
17.	Bosire [30]. Selected factors that influence successful strategic planning in South African higher Ed.	S. Africa
18.	Parakhina, et al. [32]. Strategic management in universities as a factor of their global competitiveness.	Russia
19.	Hassanien [33]. Strategic planning in higher education, a need for innovative model	KSA
20.	Immordino, et al. [7]. Evaluating the impact of strategic planning in higher education.	USA
21.	Albon, et al. [14]. Strategic planning in an educational development Centre: Motivation, management, and messiness.	British Columbia
22.	Rashid, et al. [34]. The importance of perceived leadership elements of SP at public university	Malaysia
23.	Stukalina [35]. Strategic management of higher education institutions.	Latvia
24.	Papadimitriou [4]. Strategic planning and benchmarking organizational routines of universities in the Western Balkans.	Western Balkans
25.	Gamze [36]. Strategic model and strategic planning in higher education.	Turkey
26.	Ahmad, et al. [37]. Strategic planning in higher education institutions.	Malaysia
27.	Owolabi and Makinde [38]. The effects of strategic planning on corporate performance in university education: A study of Babcock University.	Nigeria
28.	Ofori and Atiogbe [39]. Strategic planning in public universities: A developing country perspective.	Ghana
29.	Abdul Kadir [40]. Strategy management process in higher education: a case study on a Malaysian public university (Doctoral dissertation, University of East Anglia).	Malaysia
30.	Akyel, et al. [13]. Strategic planning in institutions of higher education: A case study	Turkey
31.	Hamedan [42]. Formulating a strategy for a university using SWOT technique: A case study.	Iran
32.	Wan-Hamdan, et al. [41]. Contribution of facilities management processes in supporting Malaysia national higher education strategic plan	Malaysia
33.	Kettunen [43]. Strategic planning of regional development in higher education.	Finland
34.	Machado, et al. [44]. The status of strategic planning in Portuguese higher education institutions: Trappings or substance?	Portuguese
35.	Pidcock [45]. Strategic planning in a new university.	UK

3. Research Methodology

A total of 35 relevant studies were chosen from global peer reviewed journals, electronic academic resources and databases. They representing 27 countries among them the leaders of HEIs field (table 1). The search and selection criteria are based on using the study's title in one way, or combining it with similar ideas, thoughts, and concepts related to the SP in HEIs (colleges and universities) in the other way. The selected studies' objectives, discussions and conclusions have been the primary focus. The

selected studies were done in a variety of 27 countries around the world. Some of the reference lists to the chosen studies were useful. As shown in tables 2 & 3, these studies have been organized in sequential as per the publishing year and divided into two group: one is between 2020 to 2025 and the second group from 2001 to 2019 as shown in table 2. Tables are divided into columns to summarize the most important information and data for each study (e.g., study title, purpose, findings, related challenges and factors, and their impact on performance). The major influencing factors have been grouped based on their relative importance in words, concepts, and meaning. Each study's method and construct have been taken into account, and their content analysis has been of great value.

Table 2.

Summarizes SP challenges for reviewed studies divided into two periods 2020-2024 & 2019-2001.

Studies	Most focused challenges
2020-2025/13	Thirteen studies between 2020 to 2025 identified the most challenging factors in the SP-HEIs relationship, which can be summarized as follows: applying suitable strategic framework & models, strategic leadership, appropriate strategy, strategic implementation, impact of stakeholders, legislative changes, crisis, strategic performance, lack of SP awareness, training, monitoring, and technology, corporate competitiveness, TOP management, staff, and resources.
2019-2001/22	Twenty-two studies were conducted between 2001 and 2019, acknowledging the importance of the SP in HEIs and identified the influencing factors on the SP for university's competitiveness. The most factors addressed by these studies are as follows: The need for holistic and innovative SP models and framework, lack of management buy-in and employee participation, lack of SP clarity and awareness, the inadequate and complexity of information and data, sustainability, governance, education campus, operations, research, and involvement in the community, policy analysis, lack of strategic flexibility, lack of resources and resource allocation,

4. Findings

As shown in table 3, 34 out of 35 (97.14%) study titles stated a direct SP-HEIs relationship. In addition to that, some titles include SP along with other terms such as: 14 (40%) studies associated SP with SP models for HIEs (studies No 1,3,9, 10, 11, 14, 19,20,23,24, 25,31,32 and 35), 10 (40%) linked SP to leadership or /and management (studies No. 2,3,6,4,6,17,18,19,24,29 and 31), 8 (22.9%) related to resources (studies No.2,14,18,23,26,30,31 and 32). 4 (11.42%) associated the title with sustainability (studies No. 1,2, 6 and 16), 4 (11.42%) related to SP awareness (studies No. 8,21,25 and 35). 4 (11.42%) related to academics (studies No. 7,15,23,25 and 29), 3 (8.8%) related to research (studies No. 16,31 and 35), 2 (5.7%) associated with competitiveness (studies No. 3,12 & 23), 2 studies (5.7%) and the rest are associated with various factors, such as crisis, structure and efficiency).

Based on these numbers and percentage, it is clear that, SP models and frameworks, leadership and management, resources, sustainability, SP awareness, research and competitiveness are the most general challenges face the SP-HEIs relationship. Moreover, it is found that influencing factors interact with one another as dependent or independent variables, and they influence the competitiveness and sustainability of university performance. The study also found that an innovative SP model and methods is the big challenge face the HEIs. Findings revealed that, the challenges factors are not affecting the universities and colleges alone, but they are interconnected and affecting one another which positively or negatively impact the entire success of the performance and competitive sustainability.

The notable finding of this article is what shown in table 2, all these challenges could be classified into the following: the need of: (strategic leadership, appropriate strategy, strategic implementation, applying holistic and innovative SP models and frameworks). lack of: (SP clarity, SP awareness, strategic flexibility, management buy-in and employee participation governance, training, monitoring, and technology). The inadequate of: (information and data, resources and resource allocation). The impact of: (stakeholders, legislative changes and policy analysis, corporate competitiveness) impact the strategic performance and competitive sustainability for universities and colleges of HEIs.

Table 3.

Shows studies title components and associated challenges.

#	Study	Study title content						
		SP /HEIs	SP Models	Leadership/ management	Competitive	Sustainable	Resources	Other
1.	Ali [17]	✓	✓			✓		
2.	Ali [18]	✓		✓		✓	✓	structure
3.	Yulianto, et al. [19]		✓	✓	✓			
4.	Zimmerman [20]	✓		✓				crisis
5.	Chica Vega and Erazo Álvarez [21]	✓						
6.	Habeeb and Eyupoglu [22]	✓		✓		✓		
7.	Kalebar [23]	✓						academic
8.	Sywelem and Makhlof [24]	✓						awareness
9.	Benrachou [3]	✓	✓					
10.	Paraggua, et al. [25]	✓	✓					efficiency
11.	Williams [26]	✓	✓					
12.	Hussein, et al. [27]	✓			✓			
13.	Falqueto, et al. [28]	✓						stakeholders
14.	Jalal and Murray [29]	✓	✓				✓	
15.	Hu, et al. [5]	✓						academic
16.	Bieler and McKenzie [31]	✓				✓		
17.	Bosire [30]	✓		✓				
18.	Parakhina, et al. [32]	✓		✓			✓	
19.	Hassanien [33]	✓	✓	✓				
20.	Immordino, et al. [7]. Evaluating the impact of strategic planning in higher education.	✓	✓					
21.	Albon, et al. [14]	✓						awareness
22.	Rashid, et al. [34]	✓						
23.	Stukalina [35]	✓	✓		✓		✓	academic
24.	Papadimitriou [4]	✓	✓	✓				benchmark
25.	Gamze [36]	✓	✓					Awareness / academic
26.	Ahmad, et al. [37]	✓					✓	
27.	Owolabi and Makinde [38]	✓						
28.	Ofori and Atiogbe [39]	✓						academic
29.	Abdul Kadir [40]	✓		✓				
30.	Akyel, et al. [13]	✓					✓	
31.	Hamedan [42]	✓	✓	✓			✓	
32.	Wan-Hamdan, et al. [41]	✓	✓				✓	
33.	Kettunen [43]	✓						
34.	Machado, et al.	✓						

	[44]							
35.	Pidcock [45]	✓	✓					awareness
	Total	34	14	10	3	4	8	

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion

The objective of the study is to identify the most prevalent challenges with the relationship between SP and HEIs. This relationship has been directly addressed in all of the examined studies and literature.

The words and concepts in 34 of the 35 study titles refer to SP and HEIs, or they indicate and acknowledge the same meaning for the SP-HEI relationship. However, the SP-HEI relationship faces major and diverse challenges, the most common of which is a lack of relevant and novel theoretical frameworks and models. This finding corresponding with many studies (e.g., [17, 32, 35]). The remaining challenges include strategic and transformational leadership Ali [18]; Habeeb and Eyupoglu [22] and Rashid, et al. [34] resources Ali [18]; Falqueto, et al. [28] and Stukalina [35] sustainability Ali [18] and Bosire [30] strategic awareness Sywelem and Makhoulf [24] and Immordino, et al. [7] and Gamze [36] competitiveness. All of these strategic components pose significant challenges to this relationship's capacity to survive, prosper, compete, and achieve sustainable success.

The challenge of designing and applying more effective and efficient strategic planning model and framework are still found to be the important issue within the HEIs, as 14 of the examined studies have raised the issue of strategic planning or strategic management model. Various SP models have been proposed and applied in various business sectors, but for HEIs is still a challenge. Benrachou [3] and Papadimitriou [4] examined development of SP by using the popular SWOT model for increasing university performance. Where Ali [17] and Hassanien [33] called for the need for holistic and innovative strategic model in HEIs. As an interconnected and intertwined relationship with other variables, most of these studies stressed on the lack of awareness of SP model which was determined in public and private universities and even the staff of these universities have wrong perceptions about the SP models and considered them as extra load [36]. According to Stukalina [35] achieving long-term and sustainable competitiveness requires the use of a comprehensive SP model supported by proper internal and external resource distributed for successful strategic implementation. also, Pidcock [45] assured that matching model with SP in university was found very low. In addition, Williams [26] tackled this issue by presenting an understandable and effective SP model to address the SP process's complexity and lack of apparent effects.

The second challenge is strategic leadership; Yulianto, et al. [19] and Ali [17] examined the implications of strategic leadership on university performance and competitiveness, while Habeeb and Eyupoglu [22] investigated the impact of SP and transformative leadership on university achievement. Zimmerman 2024 also investigated the significance of proactive leadership, particularly prior to and during a crisis. These evidences illustrate how strategic leadership is so crucial and significant challenge for higher education sector, which might be encapsulated into multiple aspects and dimensions within the strategic planning domains. Other studies revealed the impact of the most influential people in the university SP process, such as leaders, academic professors, and school heads, who carry out effective and successful SP in HEIs, Chica Vega and Erazo Álvarez [21]; Falqueto, et al. [28] and Hu, et al. [5]. Abdul Kadir [40] empathized the challenge which was based on influence and perspectives of top executives' management, the academics and the governmental entities in strategic management process. Owolabi and Makinde [38] added that, employees participating in SP have a substantial effect on the plan's approval, more involvement in SP will result in better performance, degree of conformity to SP has a major impact on university performance. The nature and type of the strategy was found to be an obstacle for the SP-HEIs relationship Parakhina, et al. [32] determined the most barrier and obstacle to universities' competitiveness is the lack of strategic flexibility and Hamedan [42] found that, offensive

strategy was most appropriate strategy for university. Other challenges as challenging of legislative changes which affect academic accreditation standards and sustainability of their programs and rendered services Kalebar [23]. Ahmad, et al. [37] indicated that, allocation of resources, measuring institutional effectiveness and funding systems are the major factors challenging HEIs.

6. Conclusion

The most frequent SP challenges identified in SP-HEIs relationship are many and varied; some important of these variables are the lack of an innovative and holistic SP frameworks and models. Strategic leadership is the second challenge addressed. The effects of strategic transformational leadership, appropriate strategy, and effective implementation on university competitiveness and sustainable performance, could be solved by approaching new thinking, creating an innovative SP conceptual model and framework that link and harnessing all of these factors towards better life for HEIs. Increase institutional resilience and success, could be achieved by involving active senior leaders, create a planning-friendly culture, normalize SP as an ongoing process, and intentionally construct shared value relationships. Other challenges, such as resources, sustainability, awareness, competitiveness, academic and research, have been identified as additional challenges. It is worth noting that all of these variables are interconnected and have an impact or are impacted by one another, particularly the lack of availability of appropriate SP models and transformational leadership.

Also, the most influential people whether within the internal the university or external such as: governmental states, leaders, academic professor, schools' heads is of great factors and essential for carrying out effective and success SP in HEIs relationship. Other challenges should be paid attention to, which include legislative changes, lack of SP awareness, training, monitoring and technology. The author observes that these obstacles and causes present at various stages of the university SP process and could be categorized into groups. Some of these variables could be tracked and found in SP groups and components, universities and colleges, or in external environments where a new way of thinking and holistic approach would be extremely beneficial in harnessing and transforming them from negative to positive impact, or at the very least reducing their causes and effect risks.

7. Recommendations

Comprehensive research and studies should be conducted to broaden or develop new theoretical frameworks and models for the higher education sectors. The relationship between SP and HEIs has been expanded and integrated to include various strategic features and components, most notably the need for innovative and holistic strategic planning models, which are the most challenging factors for HEIs. Leaders, decision-makers, management and policymakers of HEIs must focus more on transformational and innovative leadership approaches for achieving sustainable and competitive performance. SP scholars, academics, and more extensive platform studies and research should be focused on establishing and designing creative and innovative strategic thinking that are congruent with the emerging megatrend and rapidly changing requirements for HEIs.

Funding:

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

Transparency:

The author confirms that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

Acknowledgement:

Thanks to Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University for continuous support to the scientific research program, as “This study is supported via funding from Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University project number (PSAU/2024/R/1445)”

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