



## IMPACT OF PLANNING PROCESSES ON UNIVERSITY PERFORMANCE: A STUDY OF KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between planning processes and university performance in Kwara State, Nigeria. A descriptive correlational survey design was employed to explore this connection. The study's target population included 5290 employees from three universities within the state. A sample of 357 staff members was selected using a combination of stratified and purposive sampling techniques. Data were collected using two instruments such as the Planning Processes Questionnaire and the University Performance Questionnaire, which demonstrated ordinal alpha reliability values of 0.95 and 0.87, respectively. The study aimed to answer two research questions and test six hypotheses. Descriptive statistics, specifically the median, were applied to address the research questions, while Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling was used to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level. The findings revealed a strong, significant relationship between planning processes and university performance in Kwara State ( $\beta = 0.892$ ,  $t = 23.489$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Furthermore, a positive correlation was identified between academic planning processes and university performance ( $\beta = 0.124$ ,  $t = 2.484$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). In conclusion, the study emphasises that effective planning processes are integral to improving university performance in Kwara State. It is recommended that university administrators prioritise strategic planning to achieve internal, process, and external objectives.

**Keywords:** Planning processes, University performance, Kwara State, Strategic planning, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling

**Paper type:** Research paper

**Type of Review:** Peer Review

### 1. Introduction

Effective planning processes are crucial for guiding and managing the various components of a university to achieve its set objectives. Akpan (2000) identified several key planning processes in Nigerian universities, including academic, curriculum, financial, physical, and human resources planning. In many Nigerian universities, these planning processes are essential not only for goal attainment but also for



efficient resource utilisation, ensuring that universities serve their students effectively while maintaining minimal costs for sustained progress. Each planning process plays a significant role in realising these institutional objectives. The academic planning process is centred around identifying the university's needs, projecting future requirements, planning and delivering programs to address these needs, and evaluating the outcomes. According to Imrie (2016), academic planning involves a series of activities that enable universities to develop a coherent educational framework. Brave (2019) emphasised that academic planning is integral to designing a curriculum that influences cognitive structures, skills acquisition, behavioural changes, and student attitudes. Through curriculum design, academic planning serves as a model for universities to manage their educational practices in a systematic and consistent manner (Brave, 2019; Imrie, 2016).

Curriculum planning involves making deliberate decisions about the content to be taught, including the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that define the educational experience. This process operates within three primary domains: institutional, programmatic, and classroom (Offorma, 2005). Each domain represents a system or subsystem that affects teaching and learning within the university environment, ensuring a holistic educational experience. On the other hand, human resource planning is defined by Bechet & Maki (2002) as the process of aligning the university's workforce with its needs. This involves ensuring that the right number and type of academic and non-academic staff are in place to support the university's goals. The objective of this planning process is to optimise staffing arrangements, thereby supporting the long-term success of the university and benefiting both the institution and its employees. The physical planning process involves assessing land use, social, and economic conditions to promote effective land utilisation and ensure sustainability in meeting societal needs (Onibokun, 2002). This process includes organising land use, identifying suitable sites for development, controlling growth, and preserving resources (Oduwaye, 2009). The goal is to ensure that university infrastructure supports its mission and future growth. Financial planning is vital in managing a university's finances to achieve its strategic objectives. This encompasses budgeting, financial accounting, financial analysis, and decision-making processes (Federal Ministry of Education, 2007). Akinsanya (2008) highlighted various financial sources for universities, such as government funding, tuition fees, grants, and donations. Effective financial planning, along with active stakeholder involvement, is crucial for ensuring that universities can sustain their operations and meet their goals.

Research by Yalokwu (2006) found that universities with robust planning processes tend to perform better than those with limited or no planning. Effective planning processes provide direction for the future development of educational systems and are essential for achieving quality education and student success. Additionally, effective planning allows universities to address both internal and external challenges while defining the necessary resources to achieve their established goals. University performance, as defined by Mortimore (2000), involves the attainment of specific goals and objectives. In this context, performance is often equated with quality and reflects how well a university and its stakeholders meet desired outcomes (Chapman & Adams, 2002). According to Sun, Creemers, and De Jong (2007) there are two primary objectives of performance studies such as identifying the characteristics of effective universities, and understanding the variations in educational outcomes. Bennett, Crawford, and Cartwright (2003) argued that performance refers to the ability of a university to exceed expected student progress. This study focuses on academic excellence and the achievement of internal, process, and external objectives. Therefore, to enhance university performance, planning processes must be strategically implemented by relevant stakeholders, as poor planning can negatively affect performance for years. This study examined university planning processes across several dimensions academic, curriculum, physical, human resources, and financial planning and aims to understand how these dimensions contribute to improved performance, resource acquisition, and goal achievement in higher education institutions.

## **2. Research Methods**

This study employed a correlational survey research design, which was deemed appropriate for examining the relationship between planning processes and university performance in Kwara State. The

research focused on all university staff within the state, totalling 6200 individuals. Three universities were selected through purposive sampling based on their ownership type. Such universities include the University of Ilorin (Unilorin), Kwara State University (KWASU), and Al-Hikmah University. These institutions represent federal, state, and private universities, respectively. They were confined in this study to ensure a comprehensive view of the higher education landscape in Kwara State. The combined population of these three universities was 5290 staff members: 3621 from Unilorin, 1068 from KWASU, and 601 from Al-Hikmah University. Purposive sampling was used to facilitate timely and targeted access to respondents, ensuring the selection of universities that are representative of the broader university system.

A sample size of 357 staff members was determined using the sample size determination formula provided by Research Advisors (2006) at a 95% confidence level. This sample was composed of 118 academic staff and 239 non-academic staff, selected through stratified and proportionate sampling techniques. Specifically, the sample included 245 respondents (80 academic staff, 165 non-academic staff) from Unilorin, 72 respondents (22 academic staff, 49 non-academic staff) from KWASU, and 41 respondents (16 academic staff, 25 non-academic staff) from Al-Hikmah University. The stratified sampling approach ensured that both academic and non-academic staff from each university were proportionately represented. To collect the relevant data, two questionnaires were developed: the Planning Processes Questionnaire (PPQ) and the University Performance Questionnaire (UPQ). Both questionnaires utilised a four-point Likert scale, ranging from 4 (Strongly Agree) to 1 (Strongly Disagree), to measure the responses of participants. The PPQ comprised two sections: Section A gathered demographic data, while Section B included 25 items related to academic, curriculum, human resource, physical, and financial planning processes. The UPQ contained 15 items designed to assess various sub-variables of university performance.

A pilot study was conducted with 8 academic staff and 12 non-academic staff from universities not included in the main study to assess the reliability of the instruments. The ordinal alpha reliability values were 0.95 for the PPQ and 0.87 for the UPQ, indicating high reliability of the instruments. Data were coded and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 23.0. Descriptive statistics, particularly the median, were used to address the research questions. Additionally, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was employed to test both the main and operational hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance, providing a robust approach to model relationships and test causality between the variables.

### 3. Presentation of Results

#### 3.1 Planning processes implemented by universities in Kwara State

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for planning processes. To facilitate the interpretation of the scale, respondents' answers to the four Likert scale options were categorised into two groups: low (1-2.49) and high (2.5-4.0). This categorisation simplifies the interpretation of responses and aids in understanding the overall trends in the implementation of planning processes across the universities.

**Table 1: Performance Level of Planning Processes**

S/N	ITEMS	Median	Level
A	Academic Planning (AP)	2.4	Low
B	Curriculum Planning (CP)	4	High
C	Physical Planning (PP)	4	High
D	Human Resources Planning (HR)	4	High
E	Financial Planning (FP)	4	High
	<b>Overall median (planning processes)</b>	<b>3.68</b>	<b>High</b>

Table 1 presents the results of the study investigating the level of planning processes among universities in Kwara State, with a particular focus on the sub-components of these planning processes. The findings indicate that the median values for each item within the construct ranged from 2.0 to 4.0, which suggests

that a substantial level of planning processes is being implemented by the universities. The overall median value for the construct was 3.68, further indicating that the sampled universities demonstrate a considerably high level of planning processes. However, it is important to note that while many items scored above the established thresholds, a few items fell below them. This observation suggests that there are specific areas within the planning processes that may require improvement in order to achieve a consistently high level of planning across all sub-components.

### 3.2 Current level of performance of universities in Kwara State

Table 3 provides an overview of the descriptive statistics, specifically the median values, for each item that measures the level of university performance. These values will help to gauge the current performance levels within the universities in Kwara State, providing insight into the relationship between planning processes and university outcomes.

**Table 2: Level of University Performance**

S/N	ITEMS	Median	Level
<b>F</b>	<b>Internal objectives (IO)</b>		
1	university updates educational and training programs	4	High
2	the university has better facility to admit additional students in line with the carrying capacity	4	High
3	there is an appropriate educational and administration and recreational facilities based on students' needs in the university	4	High
4	the university upgrades teaching and non-teaching staff on regular basis	4	High
5	the university organised staff development programme and motivate lecturer to attend	4	High
<b>G</b>	<b>Process objectives (PO)</b>		
6	the university increases use of information technology for improving learning skills	4	High
7	the university increases efforts to improve undergraduates' performance through a follow up programme	4	High
8	the university improves lecturers' productivity by setting required goals	4	High
9	the university creates chances to improve group collaboration and optimal usage of current capabilities	4	High
10	the university develops decent institutional values to improve the quality of the services provided	4	High
<b>H</b>	<b>External objectives (EO)</b>		
11	the university prepares a conducive learning atmosphere to assist students further their education	4	High
12	the university is in good relationship with industries located in their catchment areas	4	High
13	Training of high-level manpower is being carried out by the university	4	High
14	the university encourages training of faculty members in carrying out advanced research activities	4	High
15	the university provides training for extremely capable undergraduates who could add to societal improvement	4	High
	<b>Overall median (University performance)</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>High</b>

Table 2 demonstrates that each item within the sub-components of the university performance construct had a median value of 4, signifying a strong degree of performance. The overall construct also achieved an overall median value of 4.0, indicating that the universities in Kwara State are performing at a high level. Notably, all items evaluating this variable surpassed the predefined thresholds, further emphasising the consistently strong performance across the different areas assessed.

### 3.3 Hypothesised model

The proposed model as illustrated in Figure 3, comprises an independent construct called planning processes. This construct involves several sub-components including academic planning process (APP), curriculum planning process (CPP), financial planning process (FPP), physical planning process (PPP), and human resources planning (HRP), all of which serve as measures of planning processes. In contrast, the dependent construct is university performance, which encompasses sub-components such as internal objectives (IO), process objectives (PO), and external objectives (EO), collectively representing the overall construct of university performance. In the hypothesised model, all sub-constructs of planning processes are directly linked to university performance, suggesting a causal relationship between the two constructs. These sub-constructs were measured reflectively, meaning they were assessed based on the indicators that represent them.

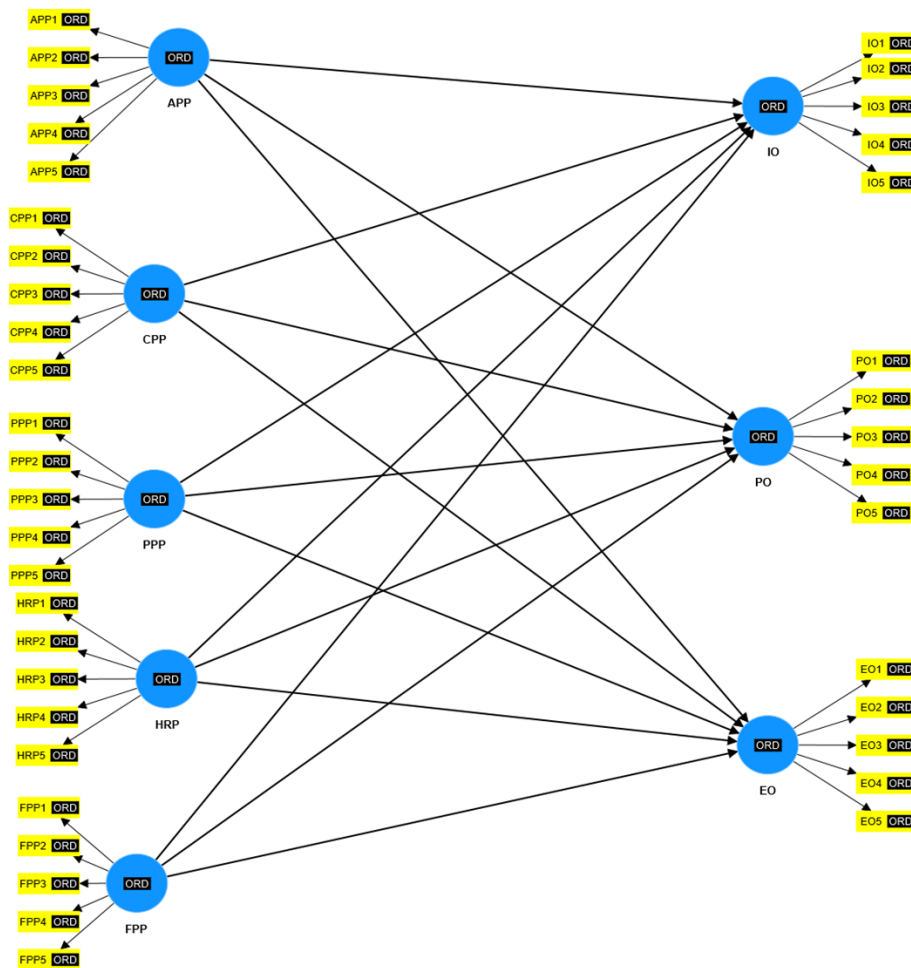


Figure 1: Hypothesised non-recursive model

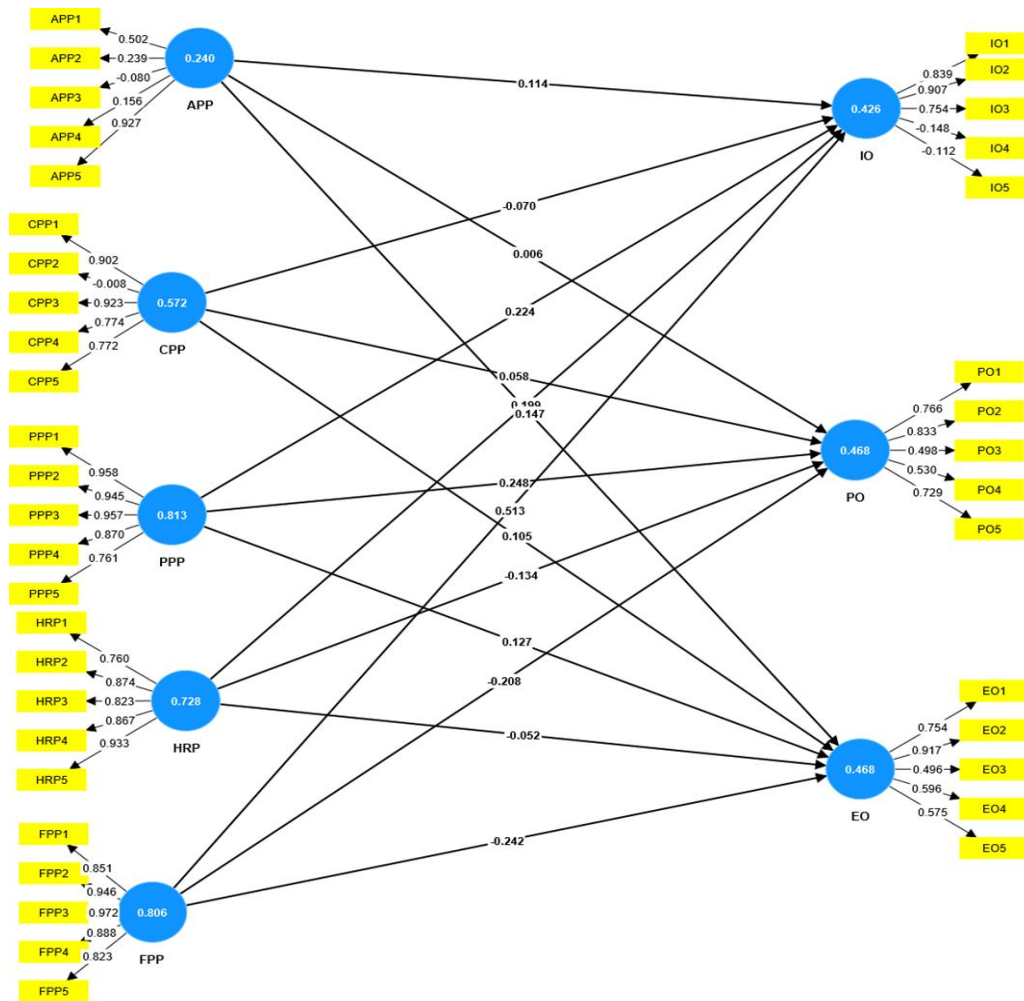


Figure 2: Evaluation of structural model

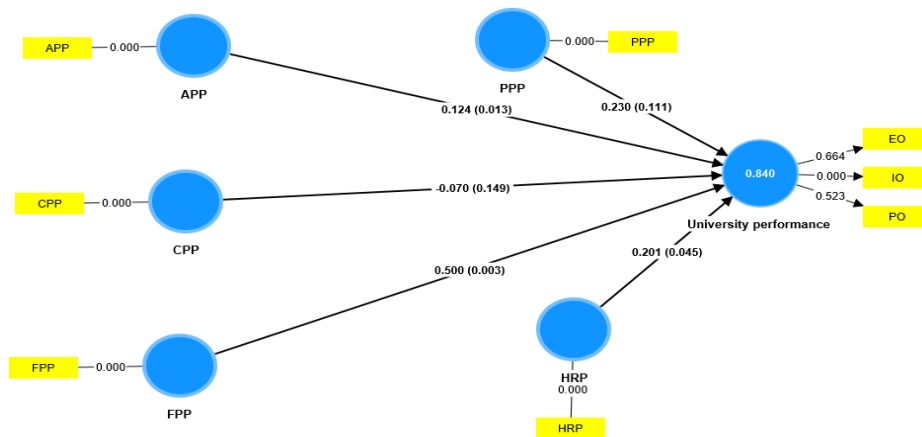


Figure 3: Structural model (sub-constructs)

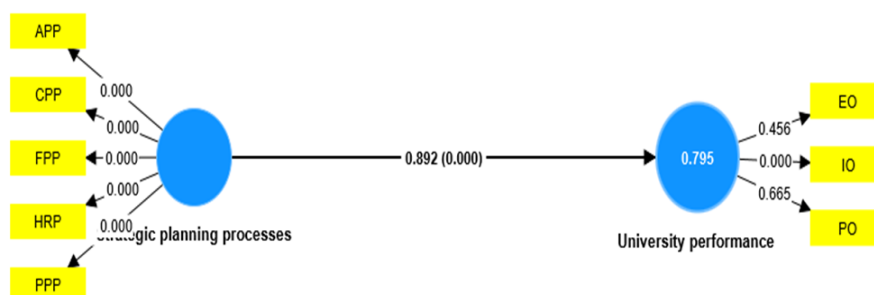


Figure 4: Structural model (main construct)

This study found that the endogenous variables, specifically university performance, exhibited R<sup>2</sup> values of 0.840 and 0.795, indicating a substantial explanatory power (Hair et al., 2013). These results are depicted in Figures 3 and 4. Additionally, the Q-square values for the endogenous constructs ranged from 0.210 to 0.104, demonstrating good predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2013). The study also analysed the direct relationships between the constructs, as presented in Table 3, figures 1, 2, 3 and 4 which highlights the strength and direction of these associations

**Table 3: Direct effect relationships**

Relationships	$\beta$	Std. Dev.	T-statistics	p-values	Remarks
planning processes -> University performance	0.892	0.038	23.489	0.000	Significant
APP -> University performance	0.124	0.050	2.484	0.013	Significant
CPP -> University performance	-0.070	0.049	1.443	0.149	Not significant
FPP -> University performance	0.500	0.167	2.995	0.003	Significant
HRP -> University performance	0.201	0.100	2.004	0.045	Significant
PPP -> University performance	0.230	0.144	1.595	0.111	Not significant

### 3.4 Testing hypotheses

Ho: There is no correlation between planning processes and university performance in Kwara State.

The findings presented in Table 3 revealed a significant and positive correlation between planning processes and university performance ( $\beta = 0.892$ ,  $t = 23.489$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This indicates that planning processes have a strong influence on university performance in Kwara State. The positive  $\beta$  coefficient suggests that improvements in planning processes were associated with improvements in university performance. The significant t-value and p-value further substantiate the notion that this relationship is not due to random chance but represents a meaningful association.

Ho1: There is no correlation between the academic planning process and university performance in universities in Kwara State.

The findings presented in Table 3 revealed a statistically significant connection between the academic planning process and university performance ( $\beta = 0.124$ ,  $t = 2.484$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). These results imply that the academic planning process positively and significantly impacts university performance in Kwara State. The positive  $\beta$  coefficient indicates that an increase in the academic planning process is associated with improved university performance. The significant t-value and p-value confirm that this relationship is not due to chance but reflects a genuine association.

H02: There is no correlation between the curriculum planning process and university performance among universities in Kwara State.

The findings presented in Table 3 revealed that there is no statistically significant connection between the curriculum planning process and university performance ( $\beta = -0.070$ ,  $t = 1.443$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). In other words, the data analysis did not provide evidence to support the idea that the curriculum planning process has a meaningful impact on university performance in Kwara State. The coefficient of -0.070 suggests a weak negative relationship, but it is not statistically significant. The t-value of 1.443 is below the critical value needed to reject the null hypothesis. Additionally, a p-value greater than 0.05 indicates that the observed results could have occurred by chance.

H03: There is no correlation between the financial planning process and university performance in universities in Kwara State.

According to the findings presented in Table 3, it was observed that the financial planning process does have a statistically significant correlation with university performance ( $\beta = 0.500$ ,  $t = 2.995$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The data analysis provides strong evidence to support the claim that the financial planning process has a

meaningful impact on university performance in Kwara State. The coefficient of 0.500 suggests a moderate positive relationship, and the relationship is statistically significant. The t-value of 2.995 exceeds the threshold needed to reject the null hypothesis, confirming the significance of this relationship. Additionally, the p-value of less than 0.05 signifies that the observed results are unlikely to be due to chance.

H04: There is no correlation between the physical planning process and university performance in universities in Kwara State.

The results presented in Table 3 suggest that there is no significant correlation between the physical planning process and university performance. The coefficient ( $\beta$ ) for the relationship is 0.230, the t-value is 1.595, and the p-value is greater than 0.05. These statistical values suggest that the physical planning process does not significantly influence university performance in Kwara State.

H05: There is no correlation between the human resources planning process and university performance in universities in Kwara State.

Based on the findings presented in Table 3, it is evident that there is a statistically significant relationship between the human resources planning process and university performance. The statistical results show that the beta coefficient ( $\beta$ ) is 0.201, indicating a positive relationship, and the t-value is 2.004. Moreover, the p-value is less than 0.05, suggesting that the relationship is statistically significant. This indicates that the human resources planning process has a meaningful positive impact on university performance in Kwara State.

#### 4. Discussion of Findings

The results presented in Table 1 indicate that the planning processes among universities in Kwara State are at a high level. This finding carries significant implications for the higher education sector in the State. It suggests that universities in Kwara State have widely adopted planning processes, which positively contribute to their overall performance. This widespread adoption reflects an appreciation for the relevance of planning and the active implementation of these processes by the universities. However, the identification of certain areas where planning fell below expectations underscores the need for targeted improvements. Addressing these weaknesses could further enhance the effectiveness of the universities' planning processes and, consequently, their overall performance. These findings underscore the critical role of planning processes in Kwara State universities and offer valuable insights for their ongoing development and refinement. Such refinement is necessary to continuously elevate institutional performance and adapt to evolving educational demands.

This result aligns with previous study by Miller (2018), who emphasised the essential role of planning processes in universities. Miller argued that planning helps prioritise goals and align them with the university's mission and vision. Additionally, research by Kabui et al. (2018) and Aregbeshola & Esther (2012) highlighted the importance of involving university stakeholders in the planning process. Their findings suggest that inclusivity in planning can significantly enhance implementation efforts and foster greater success. The high level of university performance observed across various institutions in this study further supports these conclusions. In summary, the results indicate consistently high performance, reflecting positively on the academic and operational quality within these universities. The alignment of internal, process, and external objectives is crucial for achieving holistic and sustainable performance. Internal objectives drive strategic direction, process objectives ensure operational efficiency, and external objectives enhance the university's relevance and impact. By balancing these objectives effectively, universities can improve their overall performance, strengthen their reputation, and contribute more meaningfully to society.

The study's results also show that planning processes significantly influence university performance in Kwara State. These findings have important implications for stakeholders in higher education. They highlight the critical role of effective planning in enhancing university performance. By investing in planning, universities can better align their goals, resources, and actions, ultimately leading to improved



outcomes and overall success. Such insights are invaluable for policymakers, administrators, and decision-makers seeking to optimise university performance through strategic planning. Moreover, the results emphasise the need to foster a culture of planning within universities, allocate sufficient resources, and support planning initiatives, which can positively impact various dimensions of university performance, including academic excellence, operational efficiency, and stakeholder satisfaction. This observation is consistent with studies like Bidemi et al. (2018), which found a significant positive relationship between strategic planning and university performance at the University of Ibadan. Similarly, Kabui et al. (2018) found a direct association between the strategic planning process and the performance of accredited universities in Kenya.

Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of focusing on academic planning processes to enhance university performance. Effective academic planning can help universities better align their academic goals, curricula, teaching methods, and other educational processes. This alignment ultimately improves performance outcomes. These findings suggest that universities should prioritise academic planning to enhance various aspects of performance, including teaching quality, curriculum relevance, research productivity, and student outcomes. Recognising academic planning as a critical element in university management and governance is essential for sustaining high performance. Prior research, such as Oyeniran et al. (2021), found that certain aspects of academic planning can predict goal achievement in higher institutions, while other aspects may require improvement. Moreover, Odette and Andala (2022) found a positive and significant relationship between academic planning and school performance in Rwanda. Similarly, Alawamleh et al. (2013) identified a positive correlation between academic planning and the value of educational programs at Al-Balqa' Applied University.

The finding that there is no correlation between curriculum planning and university performance suggests that improving curriculum planning alone may not directly enhance overall university performance. This insight has important implications for policymakers, administrators, and educators in Kwara State. It suggests that other factors and strategies should be considered to address performance issues and improve educational quality. The literature shows mixed results regarding the relationship between curriculum planning and university performance. For instance, Graziose et al. (2017) found that effective curriculum planning helps institutional heads and teaching staff frame performance targets, monitor student performance, and design policies that directly influence performance. However, Schleiff et al. (2021) discovered that curriculum planning could negatively affect overall performance if educators overemphasise certain roles while disregarding others, highlighting the need for a collaborative approach to curriculum development. The study also suggests that emphasising financial planning processes can positively influence university performance. Effective financial planning leads to better resource allocation, increased financial stability, and improved operational efficiency, all of which contribute to enhanced educational outcomes and institutional success. Prior studies support this view, such as Ugiriwabo et al. (2023), who found a positive relationship between financial management practices and academic performance in Rwandan secondary schools. Similarly, Akikaya et al. (2019) and Ariyo et al. (2020) found significant positive effects of financial planning on the performance of banks and small-scale businesses, respectively.

The lack of a relationship between physical planning and university performance in Kwara State suggests that other factors may play a more significant role in determining university performance. Therefore, solely improving physical planning may not lead to substantial performance gains. It may be more prudent for universities to allocate resources to areas with a stronger impact on academic outcomes and overall institutional effectiveness. Finally, the study found that human resources planning significantly influences university performance in Kwara State. This finding underscores the importance of human resource management in fostering institutional success. By focusing on activities such as recruitment, training, and staff development, universities can improve performance levels. This finding is consistent with prior studies such as Nondoh et al. (2020), Ubah and Ibrahim (2021), and Ellinger and Svendsen (2021), all of which found that human resource planning positively influences organisational performance.

## 5. Implication of the Study's Findings

The findings of this study have significant implications for university administration and stakeholders in higher education. The research highlights that effective planning processes such as academic, financial, and human resource planning are critical drivers of university performance. Universities in Kwara State demonstrated high performance due to their adoption of structured planning frameworks. However, weaknesses in areas such as curriculum development and physical planning reveal opportunities for targeted improvement. These insights suggest that universities should prioritise comprehensive and strategic planning approaches, focusing on resource alignment, inclusive stakeholder engagement, and regular evaluation to sustain and enhance institutional goals. This reinforces the need for policymakers and administrators to view planning as an ongoing process, rather than a one-time activity, that underpins quality education, operational efficiency, and societal impact.

## 6. Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is evident that the planning process has a significant and positive influence on performance of universities located in Kwara State. The results show that effective planning processes strongly influence the achievement of internal, process, and external objectives. These findings highlight the importance of robust planning as a driver of university performance. By investing in strategic planning, universities can better align their goals, resources, and actions, resulting in improved outcomes across various performance dimensions. Moreover, these findings offer valuable insights for policymakers, administrators, and other decision-makers in shaping strategies and policies aimed at optimising university performance. It is crucial to recognise that planning processes are not merely about improving lecturers' effectiveness. Rather, they are designed to enable all stakeholders to understand their roles and contribute meaningfully to the institution's success. Effective planning should support the professional development of staff and enhance the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the institution. This comprehensive approach will help identify and address challenges in a timely manner, ensuring continuous institutional improvement. Ultimately, fostering a culture of planning will empower universities to achieve their goals and adapt to emerging challenges in the higher education landscape. The following recommendations are derived from the findings of this study:

1. Universities should actively circulate and promote the adoption of effective planning processes at all levels of their institutions. This will help align internal and external objectives, ensuring that universities can successfully meet their mission and vision while improving operational and academic performance.
2. It is essential for universities to allocate sufficient financial resources to support the implementation of their plans. Proper funding is crucial for achieving both internal and external objectives and for sustaining long-term development. Adequate financial support will enhance the overall effectiveness of university operations and facilitate the achievement of strategic goals.
3. Universities must ensure that their physical planning efforts are closely aligned with their mission and vision. This alignment is essential for creating a conducive environment that supports the institution's long-term goals. Such alignment will foster a more effective physical infrastructure that enhances the overall performance and sustainability of the institution.
4. Universities should integrate strategic management practices into the management of their human, financial, and natural resources. By applying strategic management principles, universities can ensure that resources are utilised efficiently to achieve both internal and external objectives. This will lead to improved performance and long-term success, fostering a more responsive and adaptive institution.

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