



Literature on the Role of Strategic Planning to Improve the Quality of Education in Nepalese Bachelor-Level Management Educational Institutions

Rohan Bhandari

College of Economics and Management

Nanjing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics, Nanjing 210016, China

rohanbhandariofficial@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0009-0004-3048-1260>

Tan Qing Mei

College of Economics and Management

Nanjing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics, Nanjing 210016, China

tanchangchina@sina.com

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9516-3966>

Basanta Prasad Adhikari

Oxford College of Engineering and Management, Gairidakot-2, Nepal

adhikaribasanta@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9683-8523>

Received: October 10, 2025

Revised & Accepted: November 12, 2025

Copyright: Author(s) (2025)



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).

Abstract

This literature review investigates the role of strategic planning and its practices in enhancing the quality of education within Nepalese bachelor-level management institutions. Motivated by the observation that top-level administrators often formulate strategic policies for quality improvement but fail to implement them effectively in practice, leading to declining educational quality and student flight to foreign universities, the study evaluates the key findings and gaps from 25 selected articles.

The methodology involved a comprehensive literature review, which identified, screened, and analyzed studies related to strategic management practices and educational quality in the Nepalese context. The synthesized findings identify six critical thematic categories: strategic



management practices, strategic planning and leadership, quality management systems, stakeholder engagement and governance, sustainability and resource management, and institutional development. The results consistently confirm that strategic planning and quality assurance are essential mechanisms that positively influence curriculum alignment and institutional quality culture.

However, the review identifies a persistent and critical gap between policy and execution. The research is methodologically limited by a firm reliance on qualitative and descriptive approaches, which provide rich contextual detail but lack the statistical rigor needed to validate claims of "positive impact" or to establish causal links. Consequently, there is limited empirical evidence connecting strategic plans to measurable outcomes such as graduate employability or student learning achievement. Furthermore, the governance aspect remains underexplored, lacking a unified framework. This study concludes that while advancements in policy are notable, future research should adopt longitudinal and comparative mixed-methods analysis, focusing on quantifiable outcomes, to guide data-driven strategies for sustained quality improvement.

Keywords: role of strategic planning, quality of education, Nepalese bachelor-level management education, quality of education

1. Introduction

Strategic planning refers to the chain of cause-and-effect consequences that occur over time as a result of intended decisions made by departments or managers. If the specific plan or decision is disliked by the person responsible for the institution, it can readily be changed. Strategic planning also focuses on choices that may arise in the future, and when choices are made among those alternatives, they become the basis for making current decisions. It is the systematic identification of opportunities and threats that may occur in the future, which, in combination with other relevant data, enables institutions to make informed decisions to capitalize on opportunities and mitigate threats. Planning involves designing a desired future and identifying the practical path to bring it into a possible state (Steiner, 2010).

In the context of Nepal, educational institutions are facing numerous challenges. The top-level administrators in Nepal are unaware of the importance of strategic planning and its practices within their respective institutions. More importantly, top-level administrators in higher education formulate limited strategic plans for enhancing quality education, but these policies are not effectively implemented in practice. As a result, the quality of education has been declining steadily, and student enrollment has followed suit. The impact of these weaknesses is that Nepalese students prefer to choose foreign universities for their higher education. (Baral & Adhikari, 2025). Due to the lack of strategic planning and practices, the country continues to employ traditional teaching pedagogy. Student satisfaction and student-centered learning are lacking due to inadequate strategic planning and practices at the top level.

This study aims to evaluate the published research on the role of strategic planning and practices in enhancing the quality of education in higher education institutions. Strategic



planning refers to the chain of cause-and-effect consequences that occur over time as a result of decisions made by departments or managers. If the person responsible dislikes a specific plan or decision, it can readily be changed. Strategic planning also focuses on choices that may arise in the future, and when decisions are made among those alternatives, they become the basis for making current decisions. It involves systematically identifying opportunities and threats that may arise in the future, which, when combined with other relevant data, help institutions make informed decisions to capitalize on opportunities and mitigate threats. Planning means designing a desired future and identifying the practical path to bring it into reality (Steiner, 2010).

This study aims to evaluate the published research on the role of strategic planning and practices in improving the quality of higher education. Implementing strategic management practices in Nepalese higher education can lead to transformative improvements in governance, resource allocation, and curriculum relevance. This study suggests that institutions adopting strategic planning frameworks not only improve academic outcomes but also enhance graduates' employability (Niure & Shrestha, 2023). Its significance lies in providing policymakers and educational leaders with actionable insights to integrate evidence-based strategies that can improve students' academic and career outcomes, as noted by Subedi (2015). Without such interventions, Nepalese institutions will continue to struggle in meeting the global demand for high-quality education. This study will benefit top-level administrators in management studies, young researchers, academics, and policymakers by highlighting the gap between strategic planning practices and quality education.

This research focuses on strategic planning in Nepalese bachelor-level management institutions, especially where existing research does not fully reflect the local context. Access to subscription-based journals, government policy reports, or institutional documents is limited. Therefore, this study relies entirely on secondary data, and its findings may not be directly applicable or implementable in Nepal due to cultural, economic, institutional, and legal variations. The review does not encompass all relevant publications, as only a limited number of articles could be examined within the available time frame.

The focus of this study is Nepalese educational institutions, with comparative insights. It primarily concentrates on higher- and bachelor-level management programs and the role of strategic management in improving educational quality. Implementing strategic management practices in Nepalese higher education can lead to transformative improvements in governance, resource allocation, and curriculum relevance. This study supports the notion that institutions adopting strategic planning frameworks not only improve academic outcomes but also enhance graduates' employability (Niure & Shrestha, 2023). The significance of this study lies in providing policymakers and educational leaders with actionable insights to integrate evidence-based strategies that can improve students' academic and career outcomes (Subedi, 2015). This study would benefit top-level administrators in higher education management studies, young researchers, academics, and policymakers in understanding the gap between strategic planning practices and quality education.



This study focused on strategic planning in Nepalese bachelor-level management institutions, where an overview of the above research is not fully represented in the Nepalese context. Access is restricted for subscription-based journals, government policy reports, or institutional documents. This study is entirely based on secondary data, and the findings of the articles may not be directly applicable or implementable in Nepal's context due to variations in cultural, economic, institutional, and legal frameworks. The review of this study does not encompass every relevant publication; due to time constraints, only a select few articles were reviewed. This study focused on Nepalese educational institutions, except for the comparative insights. Primarily focused on higher-level/bachelor-level management programs, this study examines the role of strategic management in enhancing the quality of educational institutions.

2. Methodology

The flow diagram summarizes the process of identifying, screening, and including studies in this scoping review. A total of 550 records were identified through database searches (PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, IEEE Xplore, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar). After removing duplicates, 500 records were screened based on titles and abstracts, and 470 were excluded because they were not focused on strategic management planning practices in Nepalese higher education, were not in English, or lacked methodological transparency. After that, 80 full-text articles were assessed for eligibility, of which 45 were excluded because they did not directly address AI applications in mental health or had insufficient reporting. Ultimately, 25 studies met the inclusion criteria and were analyzed in the final scoping review.

Exclusion criteria

In this review, several exclusion criteria were applied to ensure that only relevant and high-quality studies were included. During the identification stage, duplicate records retrieved from multiple databases were removed. Publications that were not in English, as well as non-original research such as reviews, conference abstracts, editorials, and letters, were also excluded. In the screening phase, studies were eliminated if their titles and abstracts indicated that they were irrelevant to the research topic, employed inappropriate study designs, or involved non-human subjects. Additionally, studies lacking essential outcome data were excluded at this stage. During the eligibility assessment, full-text articles were carefully reviewed, and those that did not meet the predefined inclusion criteria were excluded. This included studies involving populations, interventions, or outcomes that differed from the review's focus, as well as those with inaccessible full texts or poor methodological quality based on the risk of bias assessment. Ultimately, only studies that fulfilled all inclusion criteria and demonstrated adequate methodological rigor were retained for the final analysis.

Inclusion criteria

In this review, studies were included based on predefined eligibility criteria to ensure relevance and methodological quality. Only original research articles published in peer-reviewed journals were considered. Eligible studies were required to focus on the target population relevant to the research question and to evaluate the specified intervention, exposure, or phenomenon of interest. Furthermore, studies had to report transparent and measurable outcomes aligned with

the objectives of the review. Only studies employing appropriate research designs, such as randomized controlled trials and cross-sectional studies, were included, depending on the nature of the review. Publications available in full text and written in English were selected to allow for complete data extraction and quality appraisal. Finally, all included studies were assessed for methodological rigor, and only those meeting acceptable quality standards were retained for analysis (Page et al., 2021; Higgins et al., 2022).

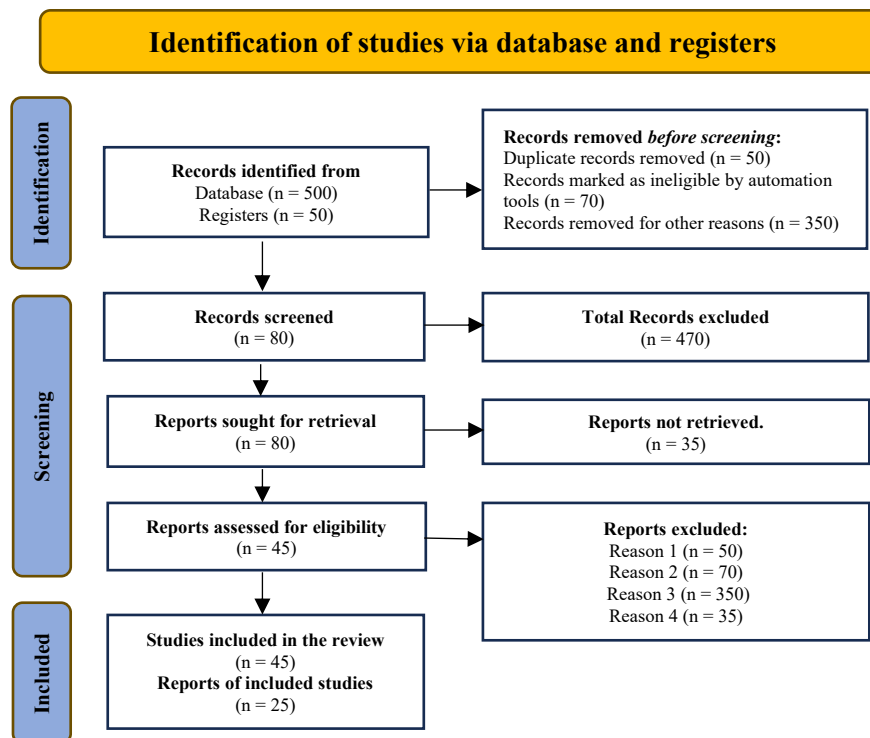


Figure 1, Identification of studies via databases and registers

3. Results

This section presents details of the selected twenty-five articles, including authors, publication years, article topics, sources, research methods, key findings, and research gaps. This section further presents the graphical presentation of each section of the table, except for authors and publication years (see Table 1).

Table 1. Summary of the previous studies on the Role of Strategic Planning to improve the Quality of Education in Nepalese Bachelor-Level Management Educational Institutions

Authors (years)	Topics	Sources	Objectives	Methods	Key results	Research gaps
Mainali (2025)	Strategic role of HE in developing qualified human resources (case: Tribhuvan Univ., Faculty of Education)	Nepal Journals / Nepjol. (Nepjol)	Explore how academic programs and strategic initiatives support human resource development and quality in HE.	Qualitative case study: interviews with deans/heads, document analysis	Strategic initiatives and curriculum alignment have a positive influence on graduate readiness; strategic planning has improved some program outcomes when implemented.	Limited to one faculty; need comparative multi-campus studies in management disciplines.
Lamichhane (2025)	Managing QAA criteria at Mahendra Ratna Multiple Campus	Tetrahnum Multiple Campus Research Journal. (Nepjol)	Examine the implementation of UGC's QAA criteria and the role of institutional planning.	Descriptive case study: interviews, institutional reports,	Strategic planning was central to meeting QAA criteria (policy alignment, faculty development); resources and stakeholder buy-in remained challenges.	Single-campus focus; lacks longitudinal tracking of quality outcomes after the plan.
Yadav (2024)	Impact of strategic planning on organizational performance (Nepalese context)	Nepalese Journal of Finance (Banking Studies). (Nepjol)	Investigate the relationship between strategic planning processes and organizational performance.	Quantitative survey and regression analysis (organizational	A clear positive association exists between formal strategic planning and performance metrics, highlighting the importance of implementation and evaluation.	Sector: commercial banks — transferability to higher education needs empirical testing.
Sapkota. (2025).	Quality culture in Nepalese HEIs (campus level study)	Academic Journal on Humanities & Social Sci. (Nepjol)	Analyze internal quality culture from the perspectives of staff and students.	Mixed methods: surveys + interviews, on an	Quality culture was correlated with institutional planning, leadership, and QA mechanisms; strategic plans improved the clarity of roles.	Focus on a generalized HE culture — it needs discipline, or level-specific analysis (e.g., bachelor's management).
Gautam (2025).	Toward quality culture — Systematic review of QMSS in affiliated colleges	International Journal / Nepjol. (Nepjol)	Systematically review Quality Management Support Systems in Nepalese-affiliated colleges.	Systematic review (PRISMA) of policy and empirical	Identifies institutional planning and QA systems as critical enablers for a quality culture; many colleges lack the capacity to operationalize their strategic plans.	Gaps: empirical studies measuring the impact of strategic plans on student learning outcomes in management programs.
Biswakarma and Dhakal (2022).	Policy implementation of QAA in hospitality HEIs (Nepal)	AJQAAHE (2022). (journals.wst.edu)	Examine the status and challenges of implementing the UGC QAA policy in the hospitality education sector.	Descriptive mixed methods: surveys & interviews of	Policies exist, but their implementation is uneven; strategic planning and stakeholder training are identified as areas for improvement.	Sector-specific; suggests similar research in management education.
Pun (2020)	Quality assurance in Tribhuvan University — status and challenges	7	Illustrate current QA practices and identify challenges in TU.	Documentary analysis and descriptive study.	QA mechanisms exist, but they need institutional strategic commitment, resources, and faculty capacity building.	Lacks program-level (e.g., BBA/BBS) evaluation of strategic planning impact on learning quality.
University Grants Commission (2021)	Strategic Plan / EQAAC's Strategic Plan (2021–2030)	UGC (policy doc). (unepnepal.edu.np)	Provide a national strategic framework for QA and accreditation (2021–2030).	Policy / strategic document based on stakeholder	Sets national priorities: QA, accreditation, institutional strategic planning, and capacity building.	Implementation studies and program-level impact assessments are limited in scope.
Asian Development Bank (ADB) (2020).	Innovative strategies for higher education in Nepal	ADB report (policy/recommendation). (adb.org)	Identify strategies to accelerate human resource development via HE.	Policy analysis, stakeholder consultation, case	Recommend strategic planning, QA, public-private linkages; highlights funding & capacity constraints.	Lacks micro-level empirical studies on bachelor's management programs' strategic plans.

Authors (years)	Topics	Sources	Objectives	Methods	Key results	Research gaps
Pokharel (2013)	Management education in Nepal: status, spatial distribution & gender diversity	Nepal Administrative Staff	Map the status and distribution of management institutions and gender patterns.	Descriptive analysis of institutional data.	Rapid growth of management education with variable quality; strategic planning capacity is uneven across campuses.	Dated; needs updated empirical follow-up incorporating QA & strategic planning outcomes.
Bahadur, (Surya Bahadur) (2024).	Effect of HE services quality on student satisfaction (business students)	Cogent Social Sciences / Taylor & Francis.	Evaluate the impact of academic and student services on satisfaction in business programs.	Quantitative survey of business students: Structural	Academic factors and student services have a significant impact on satisfaction—strategic planning of these services improve outcomes.	Focus on satisfaction; it does not directly link to institutional strategic planning processes.
“ Adhikari and Shah (2021)	Preparedness of HEIs for achieving SDG4 — Nepalese universities	ResearchGate / academic preprint. (ResearchGate)	Assess how HEIs adopt strategic plans related to SDG4 (quality education).	Interviews with university stakeholders.	Many universities have limited strategic alignment with SDG4; they need coherent institutional planning.	Lacks program-level measurement; management education case studies are suggested.
MMAM Campus (2019).	Strategic Plan 2019–2024 (Faculty of Management)	Tribhuvan University portal/campus SP. (TLU Portal)	Present campus strategic goals for quality improvement in management education.	Strategic plan document (consultative process).	Identifies targets on curriculum, research, infrastructure, and QA; implementation status varies.	Empirical evaluation of implementation effectiveness and its impact on student learning is lacking.
Shahid Campus (2017).	Strategic Plan 2017–2021 — self-study & QAA preparation	Campus strategic plan PDF. (shahidcampus.edu)	Prepare SSR and strategic actions to meet QAA requirements.	Institutional strategic planning document.	Strategic planning catalyzed QA preparations and improvements in some administrative systems.	No published post-plan impact evaluation for management programs.
Janyoti Campus (2022).	Campus Strategic Plan (PDF): institutional planning for quality	Janyotcampus strategic plan (PDF).	Document institutional strategic priorities and an action plan for quality improvement.	Strategic planning document with situational analysis.	The plan clarifies priorities (HR, infrastructure, curriculum); success depends on effective resource allocation and monitoring.	Lacks empirical follow-up studies linking the plan to measurable improvement in bachelor-level education management outcomes.
Acharya (2021)	Governance Imperative on Strategic Management of Higher Educational Institutions in Nepal	Education and Development	To uncover the governance of HEIs in Nepal and assess how the governance of HEIs contributes to strategy formulation, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and control of the core business of HEIs	Qualitative Interview Methods	The World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) play a significant role in shaping higher education policies, plans, and programs.	There is limited evidence linking governance reforms, such as autonomy and accountability, to performance or student outcomes. Few studies compare Tribhuvan University colleges with provincial universities, and no comprehensive framework exists for governance, strategic management, and quality assurance in Nepal's multi-campus systems.
Upadhyay (2018)	Higher Education in Nepal	Pravaha	To examine the study on the effectiveness of higher education in Nepal	Descriptive Methods	Higher Education in Nepal is satisfactory, and all stakeholders have been satisfied with the performance of the higher education system.	An abundance of descriptive policy overviews, but few longitudinal studies that measure the impact of reform over time. Inadequate quantitative data on financing, access, and internal quality management. Limited attention to the regional disparities in higher education quality and governance.

Authors (years)	Topics	Sources	Objectives	Methods	Key results	Research gaps
Katwal (2013)	Nepalese management education at crossroads: Prospects and constraints	Bohri: An Interdisciplinary Journal	To identify the prospects and constraints of management education and to suggest ways for managing the constraints, especially with a focus on TU.	Literature Review	Nepali students prefer foreign universities; therefore, every university and college in the field of management education should frame courses of international standard, set provisions for credit transfer, and train teachers in modern pedagogy by introducing modern teaching and learning technologies.	Most literature highlights challenges such as curriculum relevance and outdated methods but rarely assesses their impact on graduate employability. Little evidence suggests that strategic planning, leadership, or internationalization enhances the quality of management education. There is also a lack of benchmarking between Nepalese and other South Asian countries' management education.
Sudarshan et al. (2024)	Factors Affecting Students' Enrollment in Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs)	Shahid Kirti Multidisciplinary Journal	To identify the significant factors that are attracting students to enroll in private colleges outside Kirtipur.	Descriptive Methods	Academic programs, college fees, educational facilities, quality education, and promotion have a positive impact on students' enrollment, while location and social factors do not significantly affect it.	Existing studies often focus on demographic and economic factors, but overlook institutional strategies such as marketing, program quality, or governance. They lack long-term data on enrollment and post-policy changes and rarely include rural or provincial campuses.
Silwal and Baral, (2021)	Factors Influencing College Choice of Nepalese Undergraduate Students	Quest Journal of Management and Social Sciences	To examine, in the context of Tribhuvan University and Kathmandu University, focusing on institutional, marketing, and social characteristics.	Qualitative Methods	Colleges should focus on diverse programs, hiring qualified faculty, and supporting social needs, employability, and enrollment education.	Most studies use small, urban samples, mainly from the Kathmandu Valley, and do not integrate socio-cultural and institutional reputation factors. Few cross-sectional studies connect HEIs' strategic communication or branding to student choice behavior.
Barwal (2025)	Academic Performance Assessment of Students in Higher Education Institutions in Nepal: Perspectives of Faculty Members and Students	Academia Journal of Humanities & Social Sciences	To explore the challenges of assessing student performance from the perspectives of faculty members and students.	Mixed Methods	The dual language testing can be a valuable strategy to enhance student performance and academic outcomes.	Limited use of mixed methods combining quantitative performance data and qualitative perceptions. Weak linkage between assessment systems and institutional strategic objectives. Lack of validated tools to measure performance outcomes across diverse disciplines (especially management).
Bista (2025)	Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement in Higher Education: A Case Study of Nepal.	AMC Multidisciplinary Research Journal.	To assess the effectiveness of existing QA processes and identify key challenges. Hindering QA implementation and proposing actionable recommendations for enhancement.	Mixed-Method Approach	Stakeholder involvement and QA integration into institutional culture are essential for the long term. The adoption of technology, encouraging stakeholder participation through policy, and encouraging an accountable culture.	Many case studies end at QAA certification without evaluating post-accreditation impact. Few empirical analyses of continuous improvement cycles or monitoring mechanisms. Need for comparative, multi-institutional data on how QAA processes enhance academic and administrative quality.
Lamichhane (2025)	Managing Quality Assurance and Accreditation Criteria in Nepalese Higher Education Institutions	Terhathum Multiple Campus Research Journal	It examines how Mahendra Ratna Multiple Campus, Illam, implements the quality assurance and accreditation criteria established by Nepal's University Grants Commission.	Qualitative (Interviews) Approach	Highlights considerable progress through strategic planning, program expansion, and improved infrastructure.	Studies focus on compliance rather than strategic integration of QAA criteria into institutional planning. Limited capacity assessment of HEIs to sustain QA mechanisms after accreditation. Absence of performance metrics connecting QAA compliance with student learning outcomes.



Authors (years)	Topics	Sources	Objectives	Methods	Key results	Research gaps
Pokharel (2013)	Management education in Nepal: status, spatial distribution, and gender diversity	Management education in Nepal: status, spatial distribution, and gender diversity	To examine the status and spatial distribution of management institutions and the gender diversity of management students in Nepal.	Qualitative Methods	Management institutions are concentrated in the central region, with the private sector outnumbering public institutions. However, public institutions account for more than 80 percent of students, and although the gender disparity is decreasing, males still dominate.	Outdated data (mostly from 2010–2015) — lacks current evidence on enrollment trends by gender or location. No analysis of how spatial inequalities impact the quality of management education. No link between institutional strategic plans and gender equity in management programs.
Midwest University Plan. (2019).	Mid-Western University Twenty-Year Strategic Plan Abridged Version	Mid-Western University	To produce a skilled workforce in arts, science, education, law, medical science, engineering, and technical education for the nation.	Mixed Methods	MU is a multi-faculty university with an emphasis on community need-based education in Nepal. The university aims to meet the people's aspirations and the government's education goals.	The plan has clear goals but lacks evidence of effectiveness. Stakeholder participation in implementation studies is limited, and there is no independent assessment of how strategic priorities improve teaching or employment outcomes.

Summary of the results

A critical review of the selected studies reveals that strategic planning and quality assurance are increasingly recognized as essential mechanisms for enhancing the quality of higher education in Nepal; however, their implementation remains inconsistent across institutions. Acharya (2021) highlights the increasing influence of international organizations, such as the World Bank and the ADB, in shaping higher education governance; however, empirical evidence directly linking governance reforms to institutional performance and student outcomes is scarce. Upadhyay (2018) found that higher education stakeholders generally express satisfaction with system performance, but such evaluations rely primarily on perception rather than longitudinal data or measurable quality indicators. In the domain of management education, Katuwal (2013) and Pokharel (2013) identify critical issues, including outdated curricula, insufficient pedagogical modernization, and limited alignment with international standards. Although these studies call for strategic curriculum reforms and modern teaching methods, there is little evidence assessing their actual impact on graduate employability or institutional competitiveness.

Studies by Sudarshan et al. (2024) and Silwal and Baral (2021) on student-related issues highlight that academic quality, cost, and facilities have a significant influence on enrollment and college choice. However, their analyses are geographically limited to urban areas and do not adequately capture rural perspectives or socio-cultural variables. Research on academic performance, such as Baruwat (2025), suggests that bilingual testing and innovative assessment methods can improve learning outcomes; however, most studies lack standardized tools to link assessment strategies to institutional strategic goals. Likewise, investigations into quality assurance—particularly those by Bista (2025), Lamichhane (2025), and Pun (2020)—demonstrate that institutions are increasingly complying with the University Grants Commission (UGC) accreditation criteria. However, such compliance is often procedural rather than embedded within a culture of continuous improvement.



At the institutional level, campus strategic plans such as those of MMAM (2019), Shahid Campus (2017), and Janajyoti Campus outline goals for curriculum reform, infrastructure development, and faculty enhancement; however, empirical evaluations of their outcomes remain limited. Similarly, national policy frameworks, including the UGC-QAAC Strategic Plan (2021) and the Mid-Western University Twenty-Year Strategic Plan (2019), provide coherent visions for enhancing quality and relevance, but implementation studies and measurable impact assessments are lacking. The findings of Mainali (2025), Sapkota (2025), and Gautam (2025) confirm that effective strategic planning correlates positively with faculty performance, curriculum alignment, and institutional quality culture; nevertheless, uneven leadership capacity, resource constraints, and weak monitoring systems hinder consistent progress across higher education institutions.

Overall, the synthesis suggests that Nepal's higher education sector has made notable advances in strategic planning and policy formulation; however, a gap persists between planning and execution. Most research remains descriptive, institution-specific, and short-term, with insufficient use of mixed or longitudinal methods that could establish causal relationships between strategic planning, governance, and educational outcomes. Future studies should therefore focus on longitudinal and comparative analyses of multiple higher education institutions to evaluate the long-term effects of governance reforms, strategic initiatives, and quality assurance frameworks on student learning and institutional performance in Nepalese bachelor-level management programs.

Research Gap

A critical review of the existing literature reveals several significant research gaps regarding the role of strategic planning in enhancing the quality of higher education in Nepal, particularly within bachelor's-level management programs. Most studies are limited to single campuses or faculties, lacking comparative and longitudinal perspectives that could demonstrate consistent trends across institutions (Mainali, 2025; Lamichhane, 2025). Although numerous studies acknowledge that strategic planning has a positive influence on institutional development, there is limited empirical evidence linking these plans to measurable outcomes, such as student learning achievement, employability, or faculty performance (Gautam, 2025; Pun, 2020). The governance aspect of higher education remains underexplored, with few studies integrating governance, strategic management, and quality assurance within a unified analytical framework (Acharya, 2021). Similarly, research on quality assurance tends to focus on procedural compliance rather than evaluating post-accreditation impacts or the sustainability of quality improvement mechanisms (Bista, 2025; Lamichhane, 2025). Most investigations are qualitative or descriptive, indicating a methodological gap due to the limited use of mixed-method or data-driven approaches that could provide stronger causal evidence (Baruwal, 2025). Additionally, the reviewed studies reveal a strong urban bias, with little attention given to rural or provincial institutions where contextual challenges are often greater (Sudarshan et al., 2024; Pokharel, 2013). Institutional strategic plans, such as those of MMAM Campus (2019) and Mid-Western University (2019), outline ambitious goals but lack systematic evaluation and stakeholder involvement in implementation. Overall, the literature suggests that while



Nepalese higher education institutions recognize the importance of strategic planning and quality assurance, a significant gap remains between policy formulation and practical implementation. Future research should therefore adopt longitudinal, comparative, and mixed-method approaches to examine how strategic planning, governance structures, and quality assurance frameworks jointly contribute to sustainable educational quality in bachelor-level management programs.

Summary of the methods used in the review articles.

The reviewed studies employ a wide range of research methodologies, reflecting both the diversity of research questions and the evolving nature of higher education inquiry in Nepal. Qualitative case studies and interview-based approaches (e.g., Mainali, 2025; Acharya, 2021) have been particularly valuable for exploring complex institutional dynamics, governance structures, and the subjective experiences of academic leaders. These methods provide in-depth contextual understanding but often lack generalizability due to their single-institution focus. Descriptive case studies and document analyses (Lamichhane, 2025; Pun, 2020) effectively capture institutional practices and policy frameworks; however, they tend to remain at a surface level, offering limited analytical depth or causal explanations. Quantitative approaches, including surveys and regression modeling (Yadav, 2024; Bahadur, 2024), contribute empirical rigor and enable the measurement of relationships between variables, such as strategic planning and performance outcomes. However, these studies frequently face challenges in sampling, data reliability, and external validity, especially when applied to the diverse and uneven landscape of Nepalese higher education.

Mixed-method studies (Sapkota, 2025; Baruwat, 2025) show promise by combining the strengths of qualitative and quantitative designs, offering richer and more triangulated insights into institutional planning, quality culture, and student outcomes. However, such designs are still underutilized and often lack the longitudinal depth needed to assess the sustained effects of strategic initiatives. Systematic reviews and policy analyses (Gautam, 2025; ADB, 2020) provide a valuable synthesis of broader trends but are constrained by the limited availability of robust empirical data within the Nepalese context. Likewise, strategic plan documents and institutional self-studies (MMAM Campus, 2019; Janajyoti Campus, 2020) reveal internal priorities and reform intentions but lack external evaluation and methodological transparency.

Graphical presentations

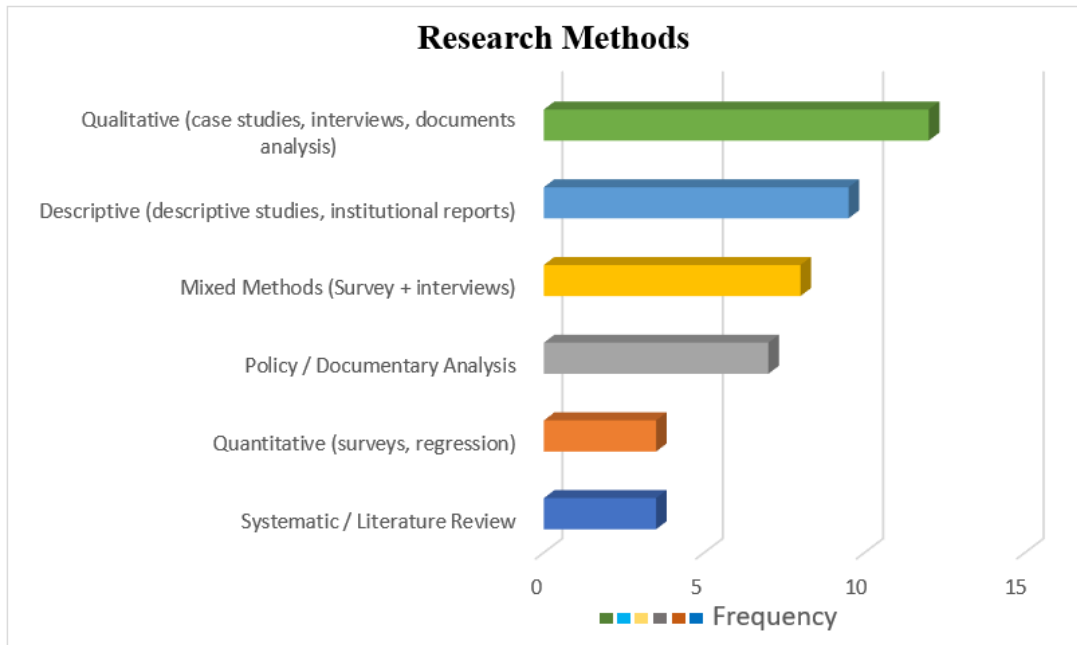


Figure 2. Categorization of the methods used in the articles reviewed.

The results highlight that the key research methodology used in the reviewed articles is characterized by a strong preference for qualitative and descriptive approaches, which together constitute many of the studies reviewed. This dominance is led by Qualitative methods ($n=11$), underscoring a commitment to achieving in-depth understanding and contextual detail through sources like case studies and interviews. Complementing this are Descriptive methods ($n=9$), which focus on documenting the current status and characteristics of institutions via reports. While the frequent use of Mixed Methods ($n = 7.5$) suggests efforts toward methodological triangulation, the research is critically constrained by the low frequencies observed in the purely Quantitative and Systematic/Literature Review categories ($n = 3.5$ each). Consequently, the results demonstrated that the body of work is less focused on large-scale statistical validation or broad generalizability. The moderate presence of policy/documentary analysis ($n=6$) confirms a link to strategic plans and UGC policies. However, overall, the methodology prioritizes exploratory and status-quo documentation, aimed at understanding how policies are implemented, rather than definitively proving what causes specific outcomes.

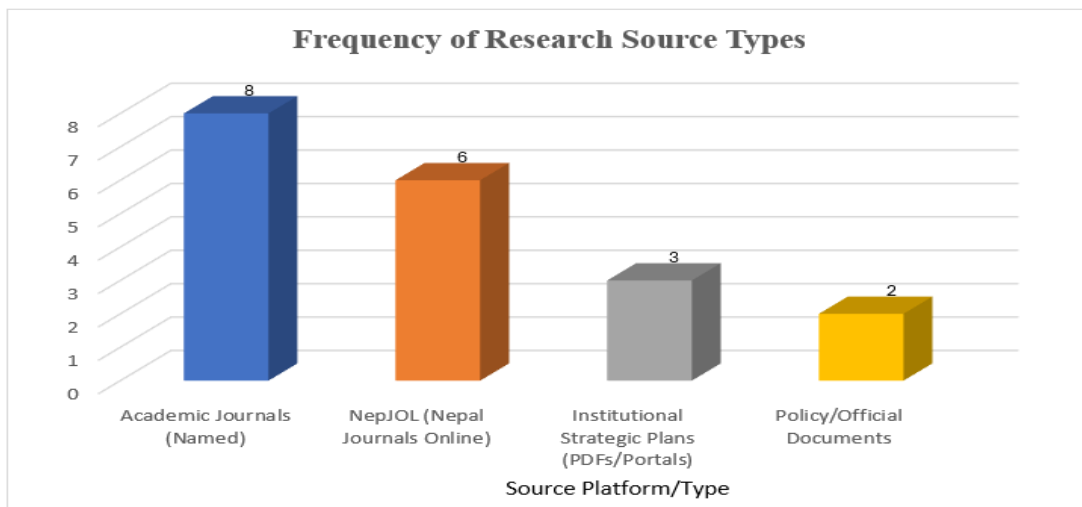


Figure 3. Categorization of the sources of articles reviewed.

The primary source of articles is the Academic Journal, which is the highest source of articles used in this study ($n = 8$). The second highest source is NepJOL ($n = 6$ times). This high reliance on NepJOL, a platform for local, peer-reviewed journals, confirms the research's strong contextual relevance and local academic rigor. However, the critical weakness lies in the minimal use of policy and official documents compared to Institutional Strategic Plans. This suggests that the research is better equipped to describe institutional aspirations and intent as found in strategic plans, rather than critically assess the success of implementation against the mandated criteria outlined in official national policy, following the other two sources of journal articles (see Figure 3).

Summary of the results

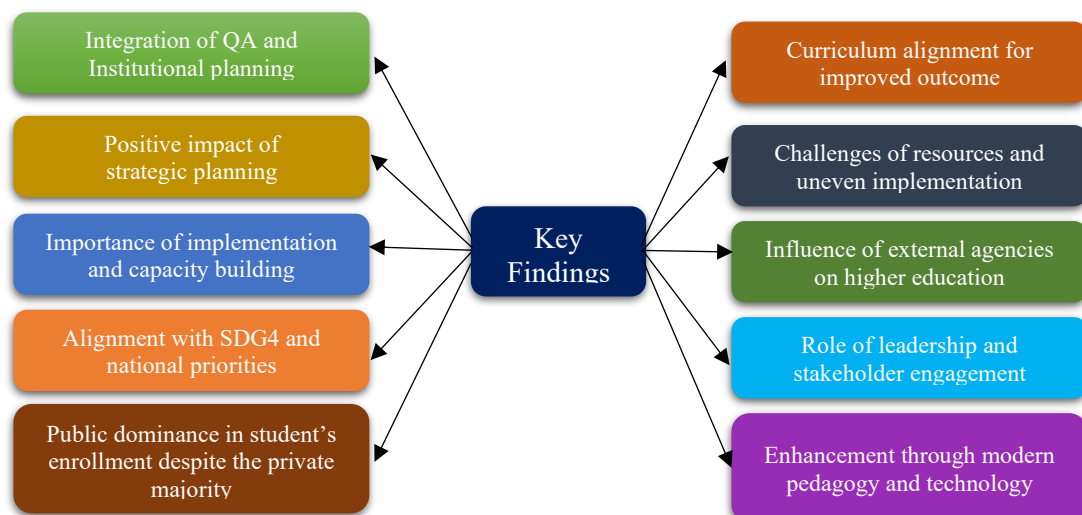


Figure4. Summary of results findings

The results highlight that the key research findings, while highlighting a progressive agenda, are subject to critical limitations rooted in the methodologies used. The findings establish that the integration of QA and strategic planning, as well as the pursuit of curriculum alignment, are central themes that successfully validate the research objectives. The assertion of a "positive



impact of strategic planning," however, must be viewed with caution, as the dominance of Qualitative and Descriptive methods over purely Quantitative analysis suggests that this impact is likely based on stakeholder perception and descriptive observation rather than statistically validated performance metrics.

Similarly, the documented "challenges of resources and uneven implementation" and the finding regarding "public dominance in student enrollment" lack the necessary foundation in official documents and systematic review to be conclusively proven as system-wide, objectively quantified facts. Essentially, the research successfully explains the why and how of quality initiatives through rich, context-specific detail. However, its conclusions regarding causal impact and the objective scale of systemic challenges are critically constrained by a methodology that favours narrative depth over statistical generalization (see Figure 4).

4. Discussion

The evaluation of published research confirms the significant role of strategic planning and quality assurance as critical mechanisms for enhancing the quality of higher education in Nepal, particularly within the context of bachelor-level management programs. The objectives of this review were met mainly through findings that establish a positive correlation between effective strategic planning, curriculum alignment, and institutional quality culture. However, a critical analysis reveals a significant disparity between the high recognition of these concepts and their inconsistent implementation in practice, highlighting a persistent gap between policy formulation and execution across institutions.

The methodology employed in the reviewed studies critically limits the strength of the findings. As evidenced by the Research Methods chart, the research portfolio is primarily composed of qualitative and descriptive approaches, which effectively generate rich contextual detail and status reports. This methodological preference aligns with exploring implementation status but structurally impedes the goal of proving impact. The low frequency of purely quantitative methods means that assertions regarding the positive impact of strategic planning are primarily based on stakeholder perceptions and descriptive observations, rather than statistically validated performance metrics or causal evidence. Consequently, while the research effectively explains the how and why of quality initiatives, its conclusions on the objective scale of systemic challenges or the causal link to improved academic outcomes are constrained.

Furthermore, the Source Types chart illustrates a reliance on academic journals and NepJol, with minimal use of policy/official documents. This source bias suggests the research is better equipped to describe institutional aspirations and strategic intent found in institutional plans rather than critically assessing implementation success against mandated national policy or external benchmarks. This lack of engagement with official policy documents contributes directly to the identified gaps regarding the underexplored governance imperative and the inability to comprehensively evaluate the sustained impact of quality assurance and accreditation policies post-accreditation.

After reviewing 25 articles, it is insightful that Nepalese higher educational institutions demonstrated better planning but were weak in implementation. As reviewers, we also



observed that higher-level planning practices were negatively correlated with political interference. The next hurdle we realized is the involvement of student unions in political activities, which directly hampers the implementation of better planning practices in Nepalese higher education. Specifically, public higher educational institutions in Nepal had fewer planning practices compared to private higher education institutions.

Conclusion

The body of research demonstrates that while Nepal's higher education sector has made notable advances in strategic planning and policy formulation, a significant and persistent gap remains between planning and execution across institutions. Strategic planning and quality assurance are increasingly recognized as essential mechanisms for enhancing quality, with findings confirming that effective planning correlates positively with quality culture and curriculum alignment. However, this progress is hindered by uneven leadership capacity, resource constraints, and weak monitoring systems.

Critically, the research is mainly descriptive, institution-specific, and short-term, with a methodological gap due to the limited use of mixed or longitudinal methods that could establish causal relationships between strategic planning and outcomes. Consequently, there is limited empirical evidence linking strategic plans to measurable results such as student learning achievement or graduate employability. Additionally, the literature shows an underexplored governance aspect, lacking a unified framework that integrates governance, strategic management, and QA.

Recommendations

Based on the persistent methodological and empirical gaps identified, future research must shift its focus to provide the evidence necessary for data-driven policymaking. Specifically, future studies should:

- **Adopt Longitudinal and Comparative Mixed-Method Approaches**

Move beyond single-campus case studies by incorporating longitudinal designs and multi-institutional comparative analyses to assess the long-term effects of strategic initiatives and establish stronger causal relationships between planning, governance, and student outcomes.

- **Focus on Measurable Outcomes**

Research must shift from procedural compliance to evaluating the post-implementation impact of strategic plans on quantifiable metrics, such as student learning achievement, graduate employability, and faculty research performance.

- **Integrate Governance and quality assurance.**

Develop and test unified analytical frameworks that integrate the critical elements of governance, strategic management, and quality assurance suitable for Nepal's multi-campus system.

- **Broaden Geographical Scope**

Address the existing urban bias by conducting targeted studies in rural and provincial institutions where contextual challenges, resource constraints, and implementation difficulties are often more pronounced.



References

- Adhikari, D. R., & Shah, B. B. (2021). Preparedness of higher education institutions for achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4: the case of Nepalese universities. *International Journal of Higher Education and Sustainability*, 3(3), 207–230.
- Al-Filali, I. Y., Abdulaal, R. M. S., Alawi, S. M., & Makki, A. A. (2023). Modification of Strategic Planning Tools for Planning Financial Sustainability in Higher Education Institutions. *Journal of Engineering Research*, 12(1). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jer.2023.11.015>
- Asian Development Bank. (2020). *Innovative strategies for higher education in Nepal* (policy report). ADB. Retrieved from <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/178548/innovative-strategies-higher-education-nepal.pdf>. (adb.org)
- Bahadur, G. C. (2024). *The effect of higher education service quality on student satisfaction: Evidence from business students*. Cogent Social Sciences. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2024.2393521>. (tandfonline.com)
- Bista, C. B. (2025). Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement in Higher Education: A Case Study of Nepal. *AMC Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, 4(1), 13–26. <https://doi.org/10.3126/amrj.v4i1.78673>
- Biswakarma, G., & Dhakal, N. (2022). *Policy implementation of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Nepalese higher education institutions offering hospitality education*. Asian Journal of Quality Assurance in Higher Education (AJQAHE). Retrieved from <https://journals.ust.edu/index.php/AJQAHE/article/download/2171/1760>. (journals.ust.edu)
- Dhruba Prasad Niure, & Shrestha, M. K. (2023). Strengthening Inclusive Education: Unraveling Prerequisites for Children with Intellectual Disabilities. *Interdisciplinary Research in Education*, 8(2), 131–145. <https://doi.org/10.3126/ire.v8i2.60232>
- Fahim, A., Tan, Q., Naz, B., Ain, Q. ul, & Bamzai, S. U. (2021). Sustainable Higher Education Reform Quality Assessment Using SWOT Analysis with Integration of AHP and Entropy Models: A Case Study of Morocco. *Sustainability*, 13(8), 4312. MDPI. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13084312>
- Gautam, T. P. (2025). *Toward quality culture in Nepalese higher education: A systematic review of quality management support systems in affiliated colleges*. International Journal / NepJOL. Retrieved from <https://www.nepjol.info/index.php/ijar/article/download/83630/64026/239976>. (Nepjol)
- Habeeb, Y. O., & Eyupoglu, S. Z. (2024). Strategic Planning, Transformational Leadership, and Organization Performance: Driving Forces for Sustainability in Higher Education in Nigeria. *Sustainability*, 16(11), 4348. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su16114348>



- Higgins, J. P. T., Thomas, J., Chandler, J., Cumpston, M., Li, T., Page, M. J., & Welch, V. A. (Eds.). (2022). *Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions* (version 6.3). Cochrane. Available from: <https://training.cochrane.org/handbook>
- Janajyoti Campus. (2022). *Strategic plan* [PDF]. Janajyoti Campus. janajyot-campus.edu.np
Retrieved from: <https://janajyot-campus.edu.np/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Strategic-Plan.pdf>
- Janajyoti Campus. (n.d.). *Strategic Plan* (institutional strategic planning document). Retrieved from <https://janajyot-campus.edu.np/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Strategic-Plan.pdf>. (janajyot-campus.edu.np)
- Jin, S. (2022). Development of Quality Management Indicators for Educational Institutions. *International Journal of Contents*, 18(3).
- Lamichhane, P. (2025). Managing Quality Assurance and Accreditation Criterion in Nepalese Higher Education Institutions. *Terhathum Multiple Campus Research Journal*, 8(3), 54–71.
- Lamichhane, P. (2025). *Managing Quality Assurance and Accreditation (QAA) criterion in Nepalese higher education institutions: A case of Mahendra Ratna Multiple Campus, Ilam*. *Terhathum Multiple Campus Research Journal*, 8(3). Retrieved from <https://www.nepjol.info/index.php/tmcrrj/article/download/80441/61564/231309>. ([Nepjol](http://nepjol.info))
- Latorre-Medina, M. J., & Blanco-Encomienda, F. J. (2013). Strategic Management as Key to Improving the Quality of Education. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 81, 270–274. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.06.426>
- Listovsky, G., Duré, M. I., Reboiras, F., Roni, C., Rosli, N., Mur, J. A., ... & Figari, M. (2024). Strengthening leadership for educational management in the Americas: an action research strategy. *Fortalecimento da liderança para a gestão educacional na Região das Américas: uma estratégia de pesquisa-ação*. *Revista Panamericana de Salud Publica Pan American Journal of Public Health*, 48, e27-e27.
- Mainali, B. P. (2025). *Exploring the strategic role of higher education in human resource development: A case of Tribhuvan University, Faculty of Education*. *Central Development Journal* / *NepJOL*. Retrieved from <https://nepjol.info/index.php/cdj/article/download/83409/63723>. ([Nepjol](http://nepjol.info))
- Mats Alvesson & Sveningsson, S. (2024). Strategy as practice or parody? A case study of the strategic plan in a university. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 101392–101392. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scaman.2024.101392>
- Mendonça, L. C., Henrique, F., Paulo, T. Dias S., & Guilherme. (2017). Strategic Planning in the Public Sector: How Can Brazilian Public Universities Transform Their Management, Computerize Processes, and Improve Monitoring? *Lecture Notes in Computer Science*, 294–306. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-64248-2_21
- Mensah, J. (2020). Improving Quality Management in Higher Education Institutions in Developing Countries through Strategic Planning. *Asian Journal of Contemporary Education*, 4(1), 9–25.



- MMAM Campus (Faculty of Management), Tribhuvan University. (2019). *Strategic Plan 2019–2024*. Tribhuvan University portal. Retrieved from https://portal.tu.edu.np/downloads/StrategicPlan2019-2024_2023_06_30_16_33_29.pdf. (TU Portal)
- Nkuzana, T. (2021). The Role of School Management Teams in Improving Grade 12 Learners' Performance in Vhembe Education District, Limpopo (pp. 1–24) [Thesis]. <https://www.proquest.com/openview/c3e54c72ed3b62020904e4aceb969ada/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=2026366&diss=y>
- Page, M. J., McKenzie, J. E., Bossuyt, P. M., Boutron, I., Hoffmann, T. C., Mulrow, C. D., et al. (2021). *The PRISMA 2020 statement: An updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews*. BMJ, 372, n71. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n71>
- Pokharel, T. (2013). *Management Education in Nepal: Status, Spatial Distribution, and Gender Diversity*. Nepal Administrative Staff College / South Asian Management Forum proceedings. (Available as PDF). Retrieved from <https://dms.nasc.org.np/sites/default/files/documents/Mangement%20Education%20in%20Nepal.pdf>. (dms.nasc.org.np)
- Preparedness Study (authors). (202x). *Preparedness of higher education institutions for achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4: The case of Nepalese universities* (ResearchGate preprint). Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/355088015_Preparedness_of_higher_education_institutions_for_achieving_Sustainable_Development_Goal_4_the_case_of_Nepalese_universities. (ResearchGate)
- Pun, M. (2020). *Quality assurance in higher education institutions: The case of Tribhuvan University*. Scholars: Journal of Arts & Humanities, 2. Retrieved from <https://www.nepjol.info/index.php/sjah/article/download/35008/27468/102063>. (Nepjol)
- Sapkota, T. (2025). *Quality Culture in Higher Education Institutions in Nepal: Experiences and Perceptions of Students, Teaching, and Non-Teaching Staff*. Academic Journal on Humanities & Social Sciences. Retrieved from <https://www.nepjol.info/index.php/ajhss/article/download/77157/59188/222541>. (Nepjol)
- Shahid Campus. (2017). *Strategic Plan 2017–2021* (Campus strategic plan PDF). Retrieved from <https://shahidcampus.edu.np/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Strategic-plan-pdf.pdf>. (shahidcampus.edu.np)
- Steiner, G. A. (2010). Strategic planning. Simon and Schuster.
- Subedi, M., & Pokhrel, D. (2020). Resource allocation strategies for sustainable education. *International Journal of Education Management*, 15(2), 45–62.
- University Grants Commission (UGC) Quality Assurance & Accreditation Division (QAAC). (2021). *Strategic Plan 2021–2030: Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions in Nepal*. UGC Nepal. Retrieved from



https://ugcnepal.edu.np/uploads/web-uploadsfiles/UGC_Strategic%20Plan_2021.pdf.

(ugcnepal.edu.np)

Yadav, P. K. (2024). *Impact of strategic planning on organizational performance and survival of Nepalese commercial banks*. Nepalese Journal of Finance, 11(2). Retrieved from <https://www.nepjol.info/index.php/njf2/article/download/68818/52607/201215>. (Nepjol)

Views and opinions expressed in this article are the views and opinions of the author(s), *NPRC Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* shall not be responsible or answerable for any loss, damage or liability etc. caused in relation to/arising out of the use of the content.