

Strategically Managing Enabling Resources in Higher Education Institutions to Realistically Support their Core Functions and Activities

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Higher Education Institutions need to operate purposefully and effectively to remain viable in the current competitive environment. Strategic planning can help achieve this mission and meet expected objectives through direct and continuous teaching, research, and consultancy services, as well as effective engagement with society, government, and the private sector at all levels. However, higher education institutions, partly due to poor management of available human, financial, and physical resources and mis-targeting these enabling resources, often face significant challenges in attaining these aspirations. This paper presents a strategic approach for managing enabling resources in Higher Education Institutions by developing and implementing plans to effectively direct available human, financial, and physical resources towards sustaining the core functions of learning and teaching, conducting research, and providing consultancy and community service. Hence, the paper provides a framework and a management instrument for determining how to maximise the use of available enabling resources to robustly support institutional core functions and related activities in the continuously changing and competitive environment of higher education.

Keywords: Enabling Resources, Strategies, Management, Relevance, Higher Education.

Introduction

Higher Education Institutions must remain relevant and competitive while effectively engaging with society, government, and the private sector (Baban & Rafik, 2024). However, achieving these goals is challenging for several reasons. These include fluctuations in student enrolments, technological impacts including AI, globalisation, market influences driven by competitive threats, and the pressure to meet public expectations alongside obligations to become more transparent and accountable in the new competitive landscape (Keller, 1983; Baban, 2017; Moja, 2007; Bengtsen & Gildersleeve, 2022; Marshall et.al., 2024). These conditions have compelled HEIs to find ways to manage these demands and pressures, determine their future direction, and simultaneously succeed in an evolving competitive environment (Baban, 2018a, 2024a; Hudson, 2023; Elfert & Ydesen, 2024; Schildermans & Tröhler, 2024). A way forward for universities is to innovate for the future and to build the required competencies to advance lifelong learning, both degrees and micro-credentials, intellectual and job-ready skills, using online or hybrid delivery models. Also, to develop and progress the required novelty to manage the ongoing global challenges like

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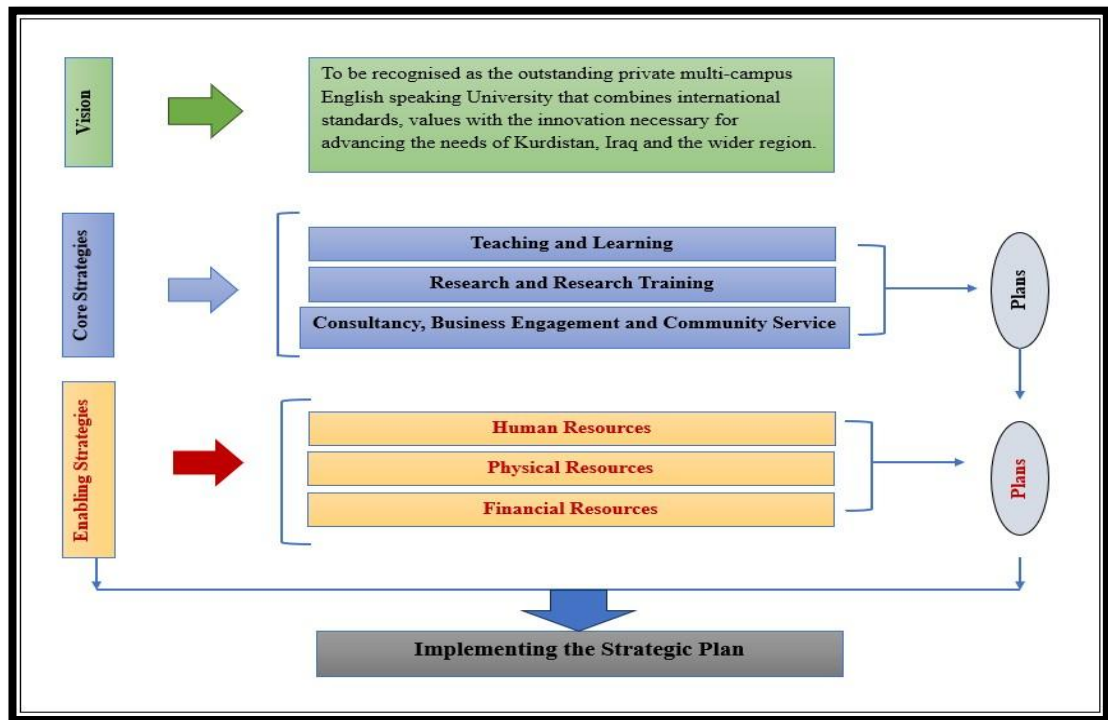
climate and sustainability, and to employ technology at speed. It has been acknowledged that resource management in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) plays a pivotal role in determining institutional effectiveness, quality assurance, and long-term sustainability. The deployment of human, financial, and physical resources represents the foundation upon which universities fulfil their teaching, research, and community engagement mandates (OECD, 2020). Therefore, the success of the essential transformations in HEIs will, to a large degree, depend on adopting, developing, and implementing strategic planning in general and for enabling resources in particular as the proactive and flexible means for operating competitively in a fluctuating environment (Keller, 1983; Baban, 2017, 2018b; Baban & Rafik, 2024).

Crisp (1991) defines strategic planning in higher education as the set of activities designed to identify the appropriate future direction of an institution, including the steps to move in that direction. Therefore, strategic planning is viewed as a pathway for formulating institutional mission, vision, values, drivers, developing organisational focus, and prioritising the use of all available enabling resources (Hinton, 2012). HEI strategies tend to have a vision, plans for core functions, as well as plans for enabling resources. The planning process is also tasked with ensuring that these individual components are aligned with each other and mutually supportive (Baban, 2024) (Figure 1).

Strategic planning in the current competitive environment can guide Higher Education Institutions to evaluate their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, indicating how to remain viable by continuously enhancing their standing in teaching, research, and consultancy while effectively engaging with society, government, and the private sector at all levels (Chaffee, 1984; Gumport & Sporn, 1999; Hinton, 2012; Baban, 2018a, 2018b). However, partly due to the mishandling and mistargeting of enabling resources, they often face significant challenges in achieving these aspirations (Baban, 2017, 2018b).

Evidently, in recent times, most HEIs tend to face challenges in effectively managing enabling resources (human, financial, physical, technological, and informational), resulting in diminished institutional performance and limited student outcomes. However, despite recognition of their importance, a major limitation of the literature across all enabling resource domains is their fragmented treatment. Most studies focus on individual resource types in isolation rather than their interdependence and without analysing the synergy between them (Ngare, 2023; CEDTECH, 2024). Only a small subset of scholars employed integrative frameworks such as the RBV or Dynamic Capabilities Theory, which emphasise how institutions mobilise and reconfigure resources to adapt to change (Teece, 2018). Empirical work by Salmi (2020) and Sunder (2022) suggests that HEIs achieve sustainable performance when human, financial and physical resources are strategically aligned. In this context, this work aims to define, identify gaps in, and propose a practical approach for the efficient management of enabling resources in higher education institutions.

Figure 1. The Basic Structure for a HEI Strategic Plan (Baban, 2024)



In terms of research questions, the work aims to examine how effective the current management practices of enabling resources are. Also, what challenges do higher education administrators and staff face in managing enabling resources, and what strategies can be implemented to enhance their effective management and utilisation in HEIs? Hence, the objectives are to identify the types of enabling resources available in HEIs, explore the challenges faced by administrators and staff in managing enabling resources effectively, and propose strategies and policy recommendations for improving the management and utilisation of enabling resources in higher education.

More specifically, this paper presents a planned roadmap for effectively managing and directing all available human, financial, and physical resources in Higher Education Institutions towards nourishing their core functions, priorities, and activities. Therefore, the paper provides a practical framework and a management instrument for determining how to maximise the use of available enabling resources in Higher Education Institutions to remain viable in the continuously changing and competitive environment of higher education.

SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis aims to identify the strengths and weaknesses of an institution and the opportunities and threats in the environment. Having identified these factors, strategies are developed which may build on the strengths, eliminate the weaknesses, exploit the opportunities, or counter the threats.

The strengths and weaknesses are identified by an internal appraisal of the institution, and the opportunities and threats by an external appraisal. The internal appraisal examines all aspects of the institution, covering, for example, personnel, facilities, location, products, and services, to identify the institution's strengths and weaknesses. The external appraisal scans the political, economic, social, technological, and competitive environment to identify opportunities and threats (Baban, 2018b).

A benefit of using SWOT analysis is the ability to connect internal and external factors to facilitate new strategies. Thus, resource and competency-based planning can enrich SWOT analysis by developing the internal perspective while maintaining both internal and external perspectives concurrently. Furthermore, SWOT analysis serves as the foundation for resource and competency-based planning. Similarly, scenario planning appears to be a rather different technique at first glance. However, scenario analysis emphasises the external environment and identifies key external factors like the external appraisal of SWOT analysis. The creation of scenarios can therefore also enhance SWOT analysis (Baban, 2018b).

SWOT analysis is often presented as a method for rapidly moving toward an agreed-upon strategy. While it can certainly aid in generating new strategic initiatives, a strategic development process also requires considerable analysis and testing of new initiatives before adoption. This testing should be conducted against all developed scenarios where they exist, and a financial evaluation would certainly be advisable, if not mandatory. Important developments to the SWOT approach have involved prioritising the various factors generated and adding a feedback loop in the strategy generation process to ensure that high-scoring factors are addressed by the strategic initiatives. This is crucial for ensuring that significant weaknesses and threats are not overlooked and that the institution's potential is fully realised. Furthermore, SWOT analysis has stood the test of time and can readily incorporate ideas from newer approaches, such as resource- and competency-based planning and scenario development. Crucially, however, it keeps internal and external factors in focus simultaneously (Dayson, 2004; Baban & Rafik, 2024).

In terms of higher education applications, SWOT analysis serves as a planning tool for identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing the management of enabling resources in a HEI (Learned et al., 1965; Dyson, 2004; Baban, 2018b; Baban & Rafik, 2024). Therefore, it entails specifying the organisation's objective and identifying the internal and external factors that are favourable or unfavourable in achieving that objective (Cheng-lin & Chen Jian, 2016).

The SWOT analysis for developing and implementing a HEI's enabling resources strategies can be briefly conceptualised as (Baban, 2018b; Baban, 2024a; Baban and Rafik, 2024):

- i. Strengths: characteristics of the HEI's use of its human, financial, and physical resources that give it an advantage over other universities at present and in the future.
- ii. Weaknesses: characteristics of the HEI's use of its human, financial, and physical resources that place it at a disadvantage relative to other Universities at present and in the future.

- iii. Opportunities: elements of the HEI's use of its human, financial, and physical resources that the HEI could exploit to its advantage at present and in the future.
- iv. Threats: elements of the HEI's use of its human, financial, and physical resources that could cause it difficulties and challenges at present and in the future.

A Practical Approach for Developing Enabling Resources Strategies

The successful implementation of a HEI's strategic plans for its core functions of Teaching and Learning, Research, and Consultancy depends on the effective and timely coordinated support provided by the enabling plans for human, financial, and physical resources within the institution (Chaffee, 1984; Gumpert & Sporn, 1999; Hinton, 2012; Baban, 2017, 2018a). Essentially, this method involves developing the institution's plans while maintaining a comprehensive understanding of its resources (such as cash, assets, and employees), its environment (including markets, political and economic issues, customers, and competitors), and the expectations of the institution's stakeholders (anyone with an interest in the business, such as shareholders, staff, customers, government, etc.).

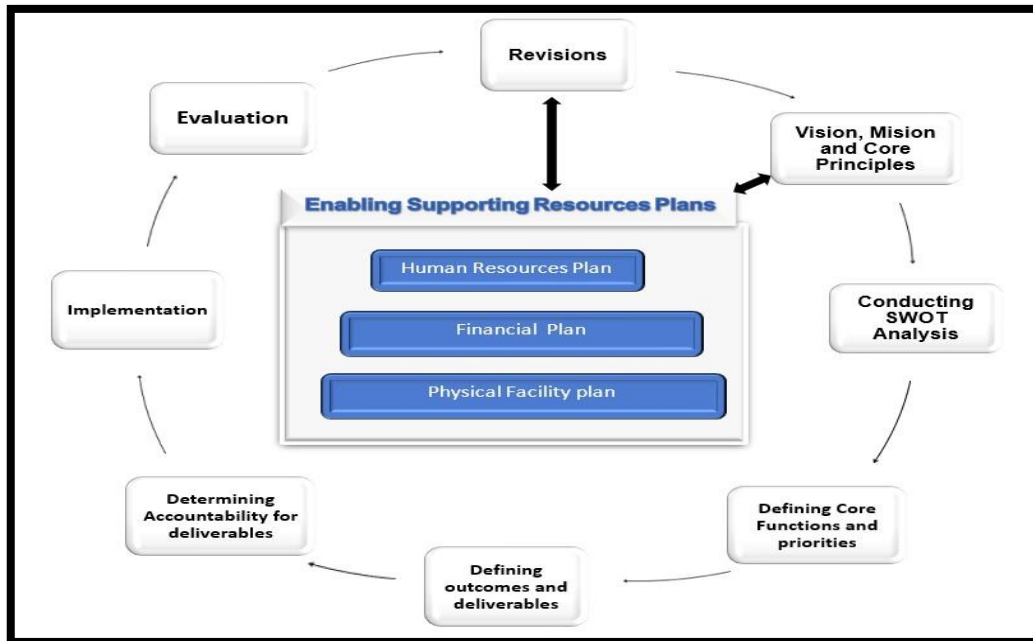
Strategic planning for enabling resources can be developed with two focuses, first a focus on internal pressures, which bases the planning on institutional values, and is purely practical, seeking to assist the HEI in running efficiently and effectively. The other focus is related to positioning the HEI in relation to its external environment, emphasising planning in response to financial changes, government regulations, changes in the student market, competition from other universities, emerging technologies, or international pressures (West-Burnham, 1994; Gumpert & Sporn, 1999; Bayenet et.al., 2000; Baban, 2018a; Baban, 2024a; Larsen & Langfeldt, 2005).

The process will require developing a resource management vision for the organisation's future and determining the necessary priorities, procedures, and operations to achieve that vision (Figure 2). In addition, the plans should include measurable goals that are realistic and attainable. There is also a need for detailed action to implement the plans, define management responsibilities, and provide specific points of reference and guidance during the implementation period (Hinton, 2012; Baban, 2017; Baban & Rafik, 2024). More specifically, the planning process can proceed through determining the following steps (Neumann & Guthrie, 2006; Baban, 2017; Hinton, 2012; Baban, 2018b; Baban & Rafik, 2024).

- i. **Defining vision, mission, and core principles.** This involves articulating the mission and expected objectives that clearly express what the HEI must achieve to address priority issues related to human, financial, and physical resources. This establishes the direction of the institution for the long term and clearly defines the relevant markets, customers, products, and vision by conceptualising what the organisation's future should or could be. In turn, this will determine the HEI's niche and competency within its geographic and virtual environments.

- ii. **Conducting SWOT Analysis for Enabling Resources.** To identify the institution's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing Human, Financial, and Physical Resources at the HEI.

Figure 2. A Practical Approach for Developing Enabling Resources Strategies



This process will provide a realistic understanding of the demand for HEI education based on graduate profiles, including employability skills, the HEI's real competencies, as well as the actual and potential competitors in the field.

- iii. **Prioritising Human, Financial, and Physical Resources Issues.** The process requires precise planning to direct the utilisation of all available enabling resources to support HEIs' core functions, priorities, and activities. The ultimate aim is to ensure the institution's relevance and viability in the future. Hence, identifying priority human, financial, and physical resources is significant to the overall well-being of the HEI and will require the consideration of the entire management team. The key priorities for allocating enabling resources in HEIs should include alignment with HEIs' core functions, priorities, activities, and the capacity to amplify the delivery of the aforementioned core functions, priorities, and related activities. In addition to supporting compliance, safety, and/or risk mitigation, as well as leveraging additional resources.
- iv. **Determining Accountability.** Identifying the accountable personnel and the relevant timelines for implementing the enabling resources management strategies, action plans, and budgets, and effectively communicating the process of allocating resources (time, human capital, and funds) to address the priority issues and achieve the defined objectives.

- v. **Reviewing.** The HEI should schedule regular reviews to ensure that the enabling resources strategies are effectively supporting the HEI's mission and expected objectives as intended and, if necessary, to refine the human, financial, and physical strategies as required.

Developing a Human Resources Strategy

Human capital, encompassing academic and administrative staff, directly influences teaching quality, research productivity, and institutional reputation (Ngare, 2023). Human resources are the most valuable assets for higher education institutions. Therefore, a practical plan is necessary to fully benefit from these resources. Human Resource Planning in the context of higher education is a systematic and logical approach to organising various levels of personnel to guide, coordinate, and manage interpersonal and personnel duties, as well as oversee professional activities. Additionally, it aims to efficiently manage a broad range of functions, including employment, recruitment, rewards, appointments, and assessments of faculty and staff in accordance with the laws, regulations, and policies to retain and attract talent (Rafik & Baban, 2024).

The planning process ensures that enough qualified academics, managers, and administrators are present to successfully deliver the required outcomes from learning and teaching, research, consultancy, and service to all stakeholders. Therefore, it will focus on demand and supply forecasting, which involves obtaining accurate information about current staffing levels, determining the number and type of staff required by the institution based on future goals, growth expectations, and curriculum changes. Simultaneously, it should assess the supply of available talent by evaluating the current workforce and identifying any gaps in skills or qualifications. These gaps may necessitate requirements for training and development to upskill existing staff or the recruitment of new staff with the necessary expertise.

The plan will also emphasise the importance of developing an employment strategy to fulfil the identified staffing needs through means such as internal promotions, recruitment from external sources, and talent development initiatives. Another aspect is planning for training and development programs to help employees improve their skills, stay updated with the latest educational technologies, and prepare to meet the evolving demands of higher education. Furthermore, the plans will require continuous evaluation to assess how well they are being executed and whether the staffing levels and skills align with institutional needs. Periodic reviews should be conducted to determine if there is overstaffing or understaffing, or if additional skills are needed due to changes in the educational landscape. This stage often leads to adjustments in the initial plans, including new hiring or retraining efforts (Baban, 2018b; Baban & Rafik, 2024).

Overall, the planning process must focus on aligning the human resources of an institution with its goals and objectives. In principle, it represents the connection between the educational institution's needs and the supply of qualified individuals to fill roles within it. Without this foresight, higher education institutions may struggle

to maintain the quality of education, research, and administrative operations (Taylor et al., 2008; Gumport & Sporn, 1999; Baban, 2018a, 2024).

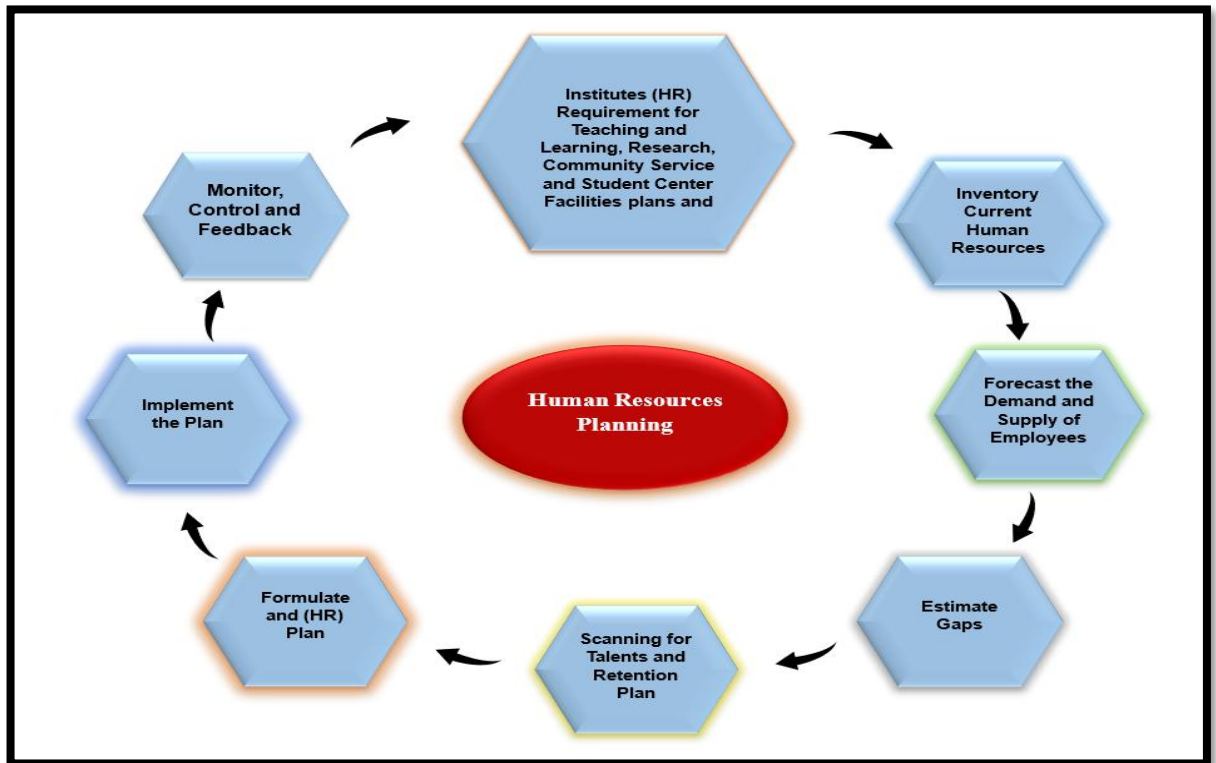
Effective Human resources planning will enable the successful delivery of the institute's core functions, priorities, and related activities through:

1. Providing valuable insights into the workforce and making informed decisions about organisational structure, resource allocation, and strategies.
2. Identifying skill gaps and providing targeted training and development opportunities for employees to increase employee satisfaction, motivation, productivity, and performance.
3. Anticipating and addressing future workforce needs through analysis of the workforce and forecasting future needs.
4. Identifying critical roles, developing potential successors, and facilitating a smooth transition of leadership and continuity in operations.
5. Creating a positive work environment, promoting employee engagement and satisfaction. Hence, aiming to both attract and retain top talent,
6. Managing workforce costs by avoiding overstaffing, understaffing, and identifying opportunities to optimise the workforce structure and performance.
7. Mitigating the risks associated with workforce disruptions and developing contingency plans to handle potential challenges such as labour shortages, changes in labour laws and regulations.

In a practical sense, the planning process often involves gathering data to identify future gaps and surpluses in the workforce, population demographics, as well as turnover rates and their causes. The institution's mission, strategic objectives, and government employment laws and regulations must also be considered. Then, the institution will need to develop a Human Resources Strategy to address the identified needs for the successful accomplishment of an organisation's mission and strategic objectives (Taylor et al., 2008; Gumport & Sporn, 1999; Baban, 2018a).

The process starts by developing an inventory for current human resources, forecasting the demand, and estimating gaps. These are followed by scanning for talents and developing retention policies. Then, a plan is developed, implemented, and monitored for adjustments to meet institutional needs (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Developing and Implementing a Human Resources Plan to Support and successfully deliver HEI's Core Functions, Priorities, and related Activities



Physical Facilities Planning

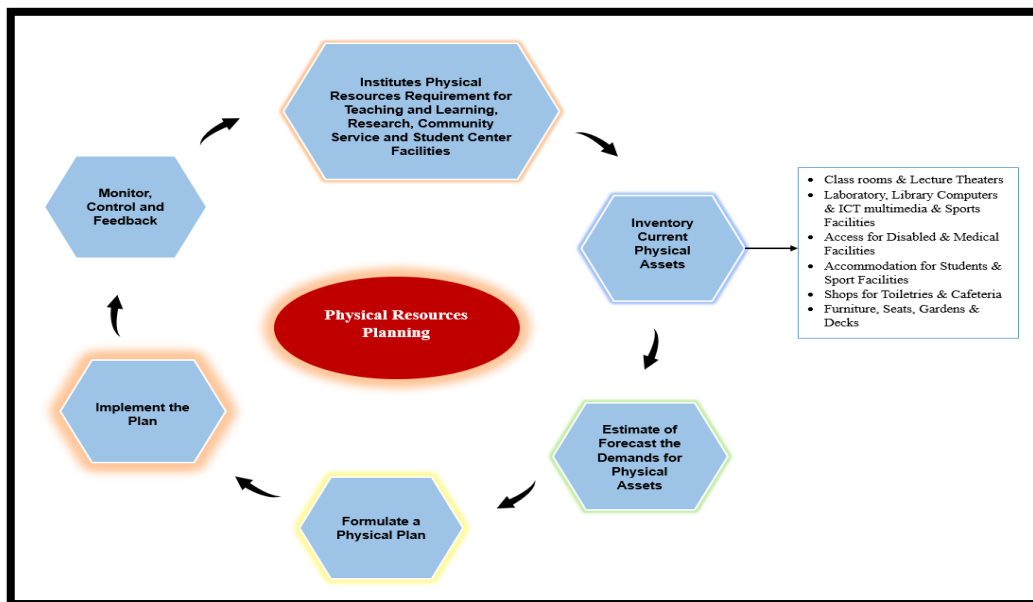
The physical assets and facilities refer to resources that contribute directly or indirectly to creating an optimal environment and atmosphere for quality teaching, learning, research, consultancy, and outreach activities within a higher education institution. These include buildings, classrooms, hostels, staff quarters, workshops, laboratories, ICT centres, libraries, health centres, and sports facilities. Facilities that promote a learning environment and ensure safety are also major considerations in developing physical assets and facilities. Additionally, investing in environmental beautification and sanitation is deemed necessary to create an aesthetic impression that guarantees tranquillity and favourable surroundings for teaching, learning, and research activities. These factors, along with timely and cost-effective maintenance and renewal of all these assets, are crucial (Musa & Baharum, 2012; Baban, 2018b; Baban & Rafik, 2024).

Increasingly, the state of facilities in higher education is becoming an indicator of the overall health of an institution and its readiness to move into the next decade and to fulfil its strategic ambitions to remain both relevant and competitive whilst confronting the shifting paradigm underway in higher education. Hence, with advancements in technology and shifting educational paradigms, institutions must adapt their physical and virtual infrastructures to meet the needs of modern students and faculty.

Research has increasingly focused on sustainable and flexible design of learning spaces, with smart classrooms and green campuses emerging as themes (Temple, 2018). Physical facilities planning in higher education involves long-term planning and management aimed at developing and maintaining high global standards for physical assets and facilities, in alignment with the institution's mission, vision, and goals. Thus, it encompasses space utilisation, campus development, maintenance, and sustainability initiatives. Naturally, this is a complex, cost-intensive, and very challenging process. Therefore, the need for physical facilities planning is paramount for creating an environment conducive to supporting and successfully delivering HEIs' core functions, priorities, and related activities (Baban 2018b; Baban & Rafik, 2024).

In practical terms, the process starts by developing an inventory for current physical assets, forecasting the demand, and formulating a physical plan. Then the plan is implemented and monitored for adjustments to meet institutional needs (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Developing and Implementing a Physical Resources Plan to Support and successfully Deliver HEI's Core Functions, Priorities, and related Activities.



Financial Resources Planning

Financial planning is essential for HEIs, especially during times of uncertainty and change. It guarantees an institution's capacity to uphold a positive financial status while effectively supporting its core functions, priorities, and related activities.

All Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) aim to realise financial sustainability, which is to have the ability to maintain their financial viability and existence over time. However, challenges often arise from reliance on tuition fees, inflation, rising prices, and inadequate facilities. In addition, global pandemics, wars, and political conflicts will lead to inevitable, impactful changes in HEIs, including decreased student intakes and diminishing government funding. Achieving financial sustainability in

HEIs can be attained by incorporating the concept of sustainability into the plans and operations at all levels through, for example, diversifying revenue streams, reducing costs, improving performance, making long-term investments, and employing data-driven decision-making.

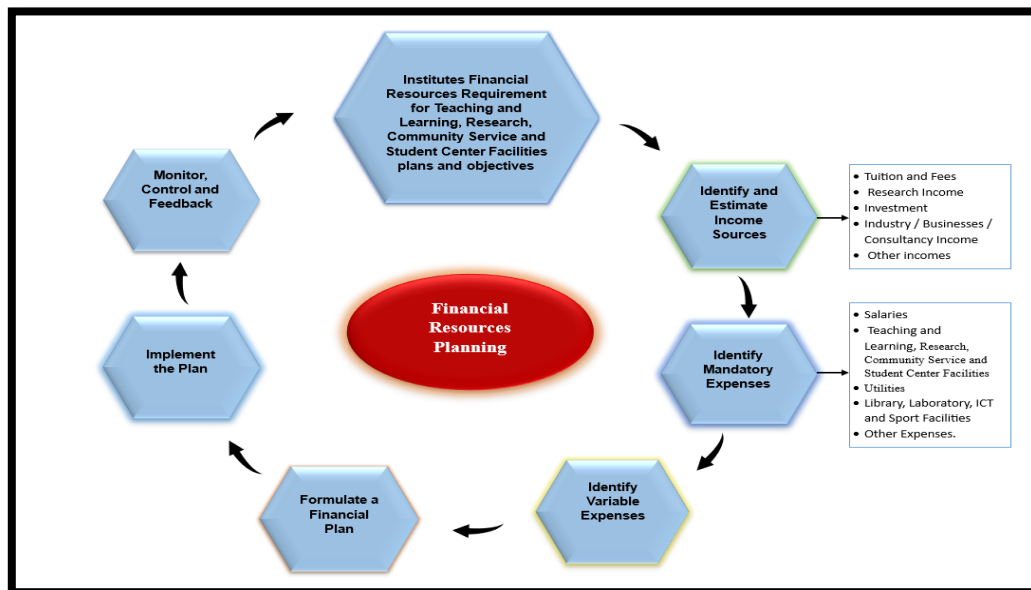
The literature consistently reveals tensions between rising costs, reduced public funding, and growing demands for accountability (Johnstone, 2019). Empirical research demonstrates that financial resource scarcity constrains infrastructure development, technological adoption, and staff recruitment (Salmi, 2020). Nonetheless, most studies remain macro-level and policy-focused, documenting funding sources without assessing how resource distribution affects institutional efficiency or learning outcomes. Only a few adopt performance-based or return-on-investment analyses (OECD, 2020; Sunder, 2022).

Financial Resources Planning in HEIs can assist greatly in achieving financial sustainability by building financial considerations into all key decision-making processes is essential. Hence, it focuses on optimising revenue from student admissions, existing programs, and developing new sustainable revenue streams through research and consultancy activities. Innovation and diversification should be encouraged while ensuring alignment with the HEI's vision and strategic plan. To identify specific strategic, sustainable, and diversified revenue growth priorities, the HEI will need to benchmark its resource capability against local and international universities with which it seeks to compare itself in terms of core functions, priorities, and related activities (Baban, 2018b; Baban & Rafik, 2024).

Furthermore, expenditure should align with strategic goals, ensuring that any growth in expenditure is, at a minimum, matched by increases in revenue. Therefore, there should be a greater focus on managing operating activities within the funds generated and a continuation of strategic cost management programs, along with associated administrative reform and simplification.

In practical terms, the process starts by identifying income sources, mandatory expenses, and variable expenses. These are followed by developing a financial plan, implementing and monitoring the plan for adjustments to meet institutional needs (Figure 5). This process should be supported by transparent budgeting, accountability for financial performance, and an embedded culture of business process improvement to ensure efficiency and effectiveness across the HEI.

Figure 5. Developing and Implementing a Fanatical Resources Plan to Support and successfully Deliver HEI's Core Functions, Priorities, and related Activities.



Implementation Plans

The implementation plans serve as a means to effectively deliver the vision, goals, and objectives outlined in the Human, Financial, and Physical Resources plans on time. However, while creating a strategic plan is important, successful execution ultimately determines an institution's success. Achieving success often hinges on having clear actions, measurable goals, and performance indicators, while making the strategy visible and aligning efforts for implementation (Baban, 2018a, 2018b, 2024a, b). Some actions to ensure successful implementation include (Hinton, 2012; Baban, 2018a, 2018b, 2024a, b):

- i. **Gaining Leadership Commitment:** Achieving this commitment to a strategy is essential for ensuring alignment across all levels of an organisation. Hence, leadership should actively participate in planning discussions, publicly state their commitment to the strategic plan, and lead by example in taking ownership of the goals under their purview.
- ii. **Aligning all Institutional Plans, Functions, and Activities with Strategic Objectives:** This will ensure that all divisions and decision-makers have clarity on the overall objectives and how their plans and activities contribute to achieving the same end objectives.
- iii. **Converting Strategic Intent into Defined Actions:** Operationalising the strategic plan transforms high-level aspirations articulated in the strategy into specific, actionable, and measurable steps that can be executed by employees across levels.
- iv. **Driving Accountability Across All Levels:** Establishing accountability requires clearly defining responsibilities related to the strategy and ensuring

follow-through. Each strategic objective and initiative must have an owner responsible for overseeing progress and success. Therefore, a robust review and performance management mechanism will cultivate a culture of accountability throughout the institution's hierarchy. Progress against implementation plans is continuously monitored using relevant key performance indicators and metrics.

- v. **Boosting Overall Performance:** Effective implementation also enhances execution capabilities across the organisation, maximises operational efficiencies, and strengthens process compliance, collectively resulting in significant performance gains.

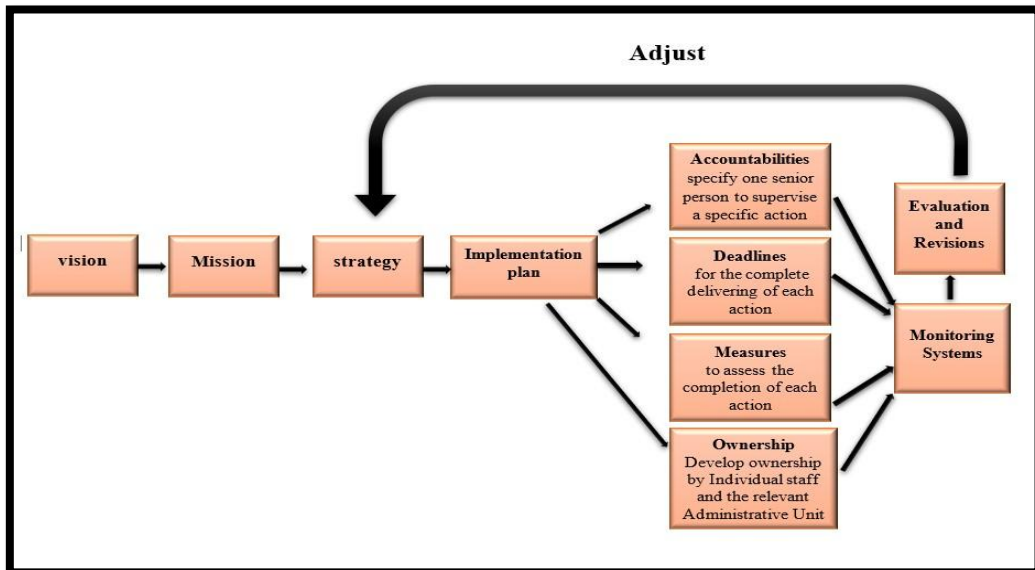
Some of the major obstacles faced during implementation include:

- i. **Having Inadequate Resources:** Even the best strategies struggle when teams lack the necessary skills, technology, budget, or capacity to execute assigned initiatives. Pursuing overly ambitious goals without sufficient resources results in failure, frustration, and a loss of credibility in the strategy.
- ii. **Lack of Communication:** When communication is inadequate, divisions and decision-makers do not function in harmony, leading to inefficient duplicate efforts, critical gaps falling through the cracks, and an overall lack of cohesion across the organisation. Maintaining open dialogue at all levels ensures transparency when challenges arise so that leadership can quickly reallocate resources in response.
- iii. **Poor Performance Tracking:** Not having clearly defined key performance indicators (KPIs) and progress monitoring processes will make it difficult to measure and monitor progress, also it will not be possible to take advantage of the opportunities to adjust the plans when needed.
- iv. **Change Resistance:** Changes and strategic shifts will inevitably create resistance due to the need for adopting new mindsets, modifying deep-seated behaviours, and disrupting established norms. Unambiguously dealing with concerns raised by change resisters and pessimists also helps secure their understanding and approval before implementation. Conveying the case for change, depicting a positive and inspirational vision of the future, and outlining the major advantages for employees and the institution's future smooths the path forward.

In practical terms, following certain prerequisites can reinforce implementation and ensure successful outcomes. These include (Gumport & Sporn, 1999; Hinton, 2012; Baban, 2018a, 2018b, 2024a, b):

1. Assignment of responsibility, deadlines, and identification of measures of completion and documentation. Consequently, it is necessary to identify one and only one person to be accountable for supervising a particular action to completion, a date by which the action is expected to be completed, and what measures will be used to assess completion of the action (Fig. 6).
2. The person's assigned responsibilities for the actions must have the authority and the necessary resources (people, time, space, technology, and funding) to deliver the required objectives on time.
3. To facilitate faculty participation, the HEI should target faculty members individually and strive to obtain their commitment, willingness, and a positive collective sense of the need for change. Additionally, it should encourage the organisational units to take responsibility for planning their enabling resources while promoting alignment between unit-level plans and the HEI's overall strategic plan.
4. Strengthen the participation and capacity of managers and implementers. This is necessary to enable the organisational units to successfully fulfil their role in the planning process, and it can be achieved through creating a diverse leadership team with deep organisational knowledge, a variety of perspectives, and an understanding of decision-making powers and boundaries.
5. Conducting a semi-annual review. This review is necessary to transparently examine the outcomes and to adjust the plans as necessary.

Figure 6. The Implementation Process for enabling Strategic Plans (Baban, 2024a)



1. The implementation plan should be flexible in its formation; hence, it can be easily adjusted to respond to concerns about the planning process as well as the internal and external changes that will occur within the duration of the enabling resources plans.
2. HEIs in their early years of strategic planning need to establish feasible goals and action plans, factoring in the changes associated with mobilising and managing human as well as financial resources.

Conclusions

Higher education institutions increasingly face challenges in remaining relevant and competitive while enhancing and delivering their core functions of learning and teaching, research, consultancy, and community service. These challenges can be addressed by modernising the institution's vision and programs, utilising new approaches to learning and teaching, and energising research, consultancy, and community services. However, these efforts are often not fully realised, partly due to inadequate management for human, financial, and physical resources, which potentially can provide flexible means for operating competitively in complex organisations like HEI's which need ongoing revitalisation to remain relevant and competitive.

An evaluation of literature reveals that while human, financial and physical resources each play indispensable roles in HEIs, research on their utilisation is fragmented, uneven, and theoretically underdeveloped. Human and technological resource studies dominate contemporary discourse, whereas financial and physical resource analyses remain descriptive. The challenge ahead is to move towards integrated, evidence-based, and context-sensitive approaches that conceptualise HEIs as complex adaptive systems. By aligning these resources strategically and sustainably, institutions can enhance their educational quality, resilience, and social impact.

This paper presents a process for developing and implementing strategic plans for human, financial, and physical resources in Higher Education (HE) to support and enable the delivery of the institution's foresight for its declared objectives, including core functions. The paper, as a prerequisite, promotes establishing collective institutional agreements on the institution's operating principles, priorities, and fundamentals to allocate and ensure the availability of all the necessary resources when they are needed at the HEI, college, and department levels. Hence, the leadership should focus on aligning the necessary human, financial, and physical resources allocations and cultivating new resources to support the key priorities in the HEI strategic plan.

Experience shows that the planning process and associated procedures can help guide senior management and empower middle managers in organising and allocating their resources to deliver the institution's daily core activities and broader aims. Furthermore, the developed plans provide specific points of reference and guidance during the planning process and the implementation period. In addition to monitoring progress, they detect deviations from the plan and correct them promptly. Having strategic plans also provides direction for the institution and gives staff members a sense of shared responsibility, allowing managers to make resource allocation decisions according to clearly defined goals, establishing a measure for success by

comparing growth and performance to predetermined objectives, and enhancing institutional adaptability to anticipate and meet the changing demands of the market.

The novelty of this research can be characterised as providing a comprehensive view of enabling resources by presenting a holistic framework that integrates human, financial, physical, technological, and informational resources as interconnected enablers of institutional performance. Furthermore, the work has a specific focus on higher education, which remains under-researched in resource management, especially in developing or resource-constrained contexts.

In terms of contributions to knowledge and practice, the research develops a conceptual framework to effectively manage enabling resources' influences in HEIs' performance, determined by leadership and governance practices. Besides providing practical recommendations for achieving sustainable resource management, promoting accountability, enhancing institutional resilience through better planning and resource utilisation, and contributing to the overall quality of higher education by improving teaching, learning, and research environments.

In terms of implications for practice, the paper encourages strategic resource allocation through empowering administrators to align resources (human, financial, technological) with institutional goals to improve efficiency and outcomes. It also supports monitoring and evaluation systems through implementing systematic tracking of resource utilisation to identify gaps, reduce waste, and optimise performance. Regarding implications for policy, the research encourages policymakers to use evidence-based budgeting and adopt transparent and data-driven approaches for allocating enabling resources across departments and institutions. It also establishes clear guidelines for managing enabling resources, including roles, responsibilities, and accountability mechanisms. In addition to promising performance incentives through connecting effective resource management, institutional outcomes, encouraging efficiency, and innovation. It also encourages sustainable and equitable use of resources, ensuring all units and students have fair access to enabling resources.

Implications for future research include comparative studies: examining differences in resource management strategies between public vs. private higher education institutions, or across countries; impact and performance studies: investigating the long-term impact of effective resource management on institutional performance and student outcomes. In addition to sector-specific resource management, examining how specific types of resources (e.g., human capital, ICT infrastructure, laboratory facilities) affect performance outcomes. Also, policy impact studies: assessing how national or institutional policies influence resource management practices and overall higher education quality.

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