

The Role Of Strategic Leadership In Business Strategy Implementation: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract: Strategic leadership has become a critical factor in ensuring the successful implementation of business strategies in an increasingly dynamic, uncertain, and competitive environment. While many organizations are capable of formulating effective strategies, failures often occur during the implementation phase due to leadership-related challenges. This study aims to analyze the role, relevance, and impact of strategic leadership on business strategy implementation. This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach following PRISMA guidelines. Relevant articles published between 2023 and 2025 were collected from ScienceDirect and other reputable academic sources. A total of 100 articles were identified and screened based on predefined inclusion criteria. The selected studies were analyzed to address three research questions concerning the relevance, role, and impact of strategic leadership in strategy implementation. The findings indicate that strategic leadership remains highly relevant in the contemporary business environment, as evidenced by the increasing number of related publications. Strategic leadership contributes significantly to strategy implementation through vision development, effective communication, decision-making, adaptability, and change management. Furthermore, strategic leadership enhances organizational agility and supports successful adaptation to technological disruption, digital transformation, and environmental uncertainty. Strategic leadership has a substantial impact on organizational performance and the effectiveness of business strategy implementation. Leaders who demonstrate adaptive, innovative, and visionary capabilities are better positioned to overcome implementation challenges and achieve sustainable competitive advantage in the VUCA era. Future organizations will increasingly require strategic leaders capable of integrating internal capabilities with external environmental demands

Keywords: Strategic Leadership, Business Strategy, Strategy Implementation

INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization and increasingly complex business competition, organizations are required to possess high adaptability and appropriate strategies to maintain sustainability and competitive advantage (Hitt et al., 1998). Rapidly changing business environments, driven by technological advancements, digitalization, evolving consumer preferences, and increasing global economic uncertainty, require companies to not only formulate sound and adaptive strategies but also ensure their effective implementation. In today's competitive landscape, organizations must respond quickly to external changes while maintaining internal alignment and operational efficiency. In this context, strategy implementation becomes a critical phase that bridges planning

and execution. It is at this stage that well-designed strategies are translated into concrete actions, resource allocation, and organizational processes. Therefore, successful implementation plays a decisive role in determining whether an organization can achieve its goals and sustain long-term performance.

Although many organizations are capable of developing comprehensive strategic plans, many fail during the implementation phase (Kabeyi, 2019). This failure is often not due to a weak strategy, but rather to an ineffective implementation process. This indicates a gap between strategy planning and implementation, a key issue in strategic management. Therefore, supporting factors are needed to bridge this gap, one of which is strategic leadership. The success or failure of an organization is largely determined by leadership (Kaiser et al., 2008). Because leaders are generally responsible for the success or failure of a project, they are the primary determinant of its success. In general, a leader must possess extensive knowledge of various subjects. This knowledge serves as a reference for decision-making (Von Krogh et al., 2012).

In the era of digital transformation and globalization, companies are required to have adaptive and competitive business strategies (Khanom, 2023). However, strategic success depends not only on formulation but also on its implementation. One key factor in strategic implementation is strategic leadership.

Strategic leadership does not come naturally to a leader; rather, it must be learned, so a leader must also be able to educate themselves to become a strategic leader (Davies & Davies, 2013). A leader must also be able to educate themselves to become a strategic leader, one who can think strategically, communicate effectively, and collaborate with others to implement change and create a better future for the company (McCausland & Martin, 2001).

According to Suharto, effective strategic leadership is leadership that is able to implement the strategic management process perfectly through the development of the company's vision and mission (Suharto, 2023). Effective strategic leadership is a fundamental process in which effective strategic management can be implemented effectively and perfectly. Strategic management can use the foundation of a company's vision and mission to formulate and implement a strategy (Alkhafaji & Nelson, 2013). The strategic guidelines established by top management will serve as

a foundation for strategic leaders to develop appropriate ways to engage all employees in the company to achieve goals and improve company performance.

Strategic leadership has several capabilities to create a positive work environment for employees and can deliver maximum performance results for the company (Serfontein, 2010). Strategic leadership plays a crucial role in improving company performance. In addition to defining the organization's vision and mission, strategic leaders are tasked with realizing these goals through successful strategic implementation (Jabbar & Hussein, 2017). They are able to manage organizational resources effectively, make wise choices in difficult situations, and inspire employees to give their best efforts (Abdulfatai, 2021).

In the process of implementing organizational strategies, strategic leaders often face challenges. Resistance to change, limited resources, and the complexity of the ever-changing business environment are some examples of challenges that must be overcome. A leader's ability to overcome these challenges will ultimately impact the success of strategy implementation and the achievement of organizational goals.

Another problem is the lack of leadership involvement in the strategy implementation process. In some cases, leaders focus solely on the planning stage without paying sufficient attention to implementation on the ground. Strategy implementation requires ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and adjustment. Without active leadership involvement, even a well-designed strategy has the potential to fail.

Organizational culture also poses a challenge to strategy implementation (Ahmadi et al., 2012). Strategic leadership plays a crucial role in shaping an organizational culture that supports change and innovation. However, if leaders are unable to create a culture that is adaptive and open to change, strategy implementation will face significant obstacles. A rigid organizational culture that is resistant to change can hinder the transformation process necessary to achieve strategic goals.

On the other hand, technological developments and digitalization also demand changes in leadership styles. Leaders are required to possess digital competencies and the ability to manage increasingly complex and globally connected organizations. Strategic leadership in the digital era focuses not only on decision-making but also on the ability to innovate, collaborate, and respond

quickly to change. However, not all leaders are prepared to face these challenges, impacting the effectiveness of strategy implementation.

The lack of an effective performance measurement system also hinders strategy implementation. Strategic leaders need to ensure that clear and measurable performance indicators are in place to evaluate the success of strategy implementation. Without a sound evaluation system, organizations will struggle to identify problems and implement necessary improvements. In this regard, the role of leaders is crucial in setting performance standards and ensuring accountability in strategy implementation.

Bridging the various literature mentioned above, this study will employ a systematic literature review method by searching for and analyzing various journals obtained from ScenDirect and Google Search. The selected documents will then be reviewed and used to answer three research questions (RQs):

RQ1: Is the Role of Strategic Leadership in Business Strategy Implementation still relevant in the future?

RQ2: What is the role of strategic leadership in business strategy implementation?

RQ3: What is the impact of strategic leadership on business strategy implementation?

METHOD

A systematic literature review (SLR) is a structured and rigorous research approach used to collect, critically analyze, integrate, and present findings from multiple studies addressing a specific research question or issue of interest. It is considered a “method” because it follows a transparent, consistent, and widely recognized procedure, allowing other researchers to replicate and validate the process. By applying clearly defined inclusion and exclusion criteria, SLR ensures that only relevant and high-quality studies are selected, thereby enhancing the credibility of the findings.

SLRs provide significant benefits for both researchers and practitioners. For researchers, SLRs offer a strong foundation and justification for future studies by identifying research gaps, inconsistencies, and emerging trends. For practitioners, they deliver comprehensive and evidence-based insights that can inform decision-making and improve professional practices. In this study,

the SLR method is employed to systematically map previous research related to the role of strategic leadership, particularly in the context of business strategy implementation. The objective is to gain a deeper understanding of how the concept of strategic leadership has evolved and contributed to organizational success.

As an initial step in conducting this systematic review, the author develops a PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) flowchart. This flowchart visually represents the stages of identifying, screening, selecting, and including relevant literature obtained from ScienceDirect. It serves as a transparent framework that ensures the review process is systematic and reproducible.

A successful SLR typically consists of three main phases: review planning, review implementation, and review reporting. According to Xiao & Watson, although variations may exist in procedures across different types of SLRs, the process generally follows eight key steps. These include defining research questions, developing a review protocol, conducting a comprehensive literature search, selecting studies, assessing study quality, extracting data, synthesizing findings, and reporting the results in a structured manner (Xiao & Watson, 2019).

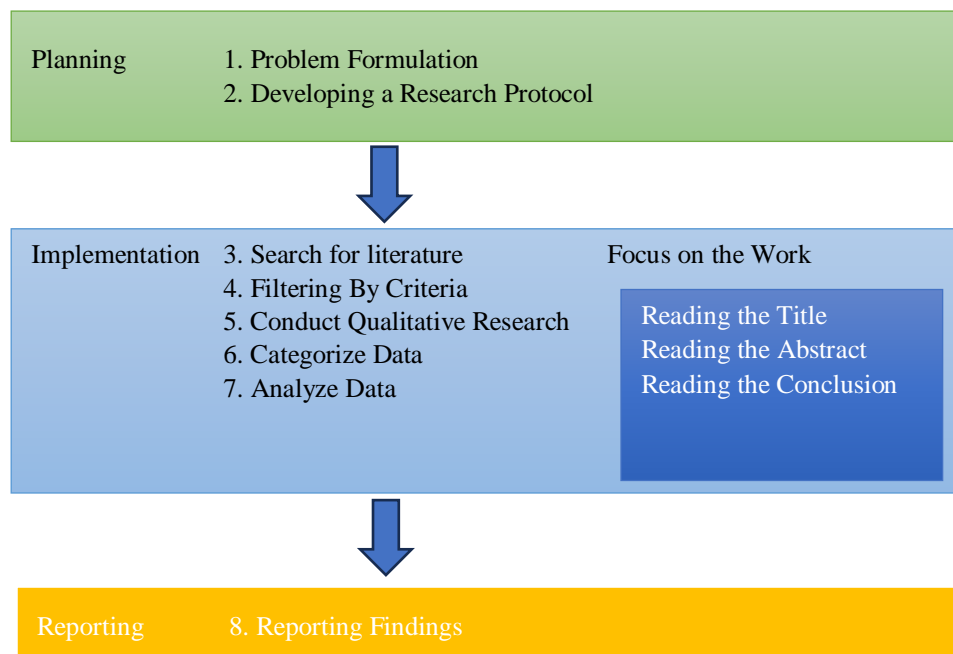


Figure 1. Stages of the SLR Process: Sumber: Watson 2017

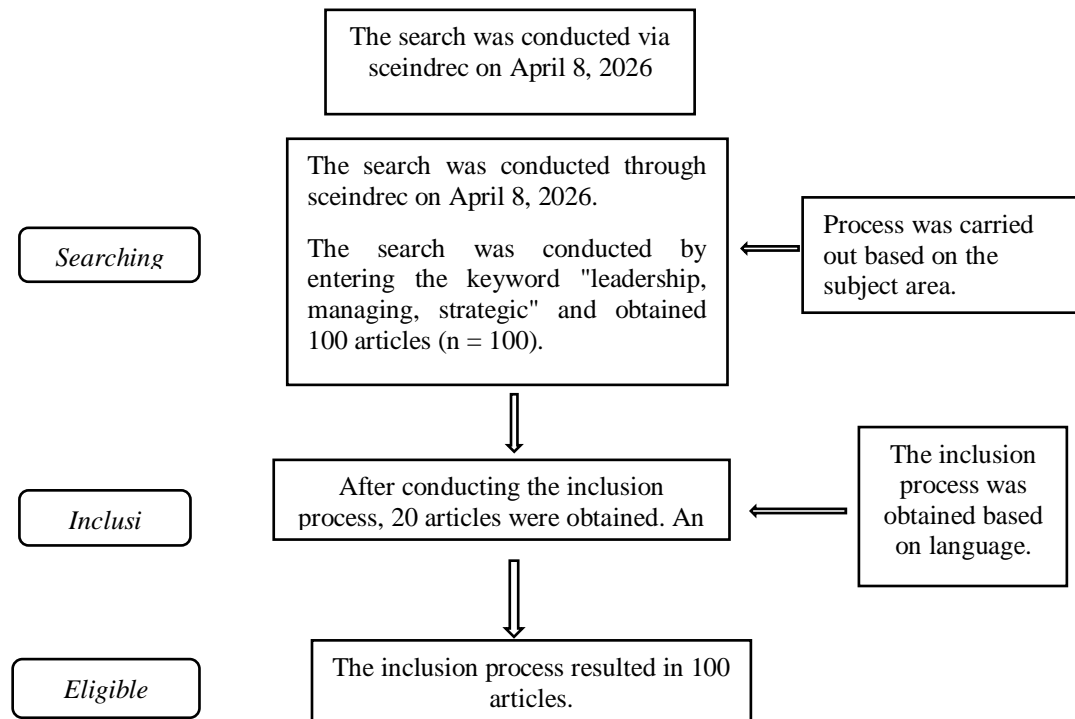


Figure 2. Strategy Leadership Role Diagram for Strategic Implementation (PRISMA) Research

An initial search on SceinDirect on April 8, 2026, using the keywords "leadership, managing, strategic" yielded 100 articles. After an initial selection process based on subject area suitability and publication language appropriateness, the number of articles meeting the inclusion criteria was reduced to 100. This stage marks the initial selection process that ensures that only thematically relevant and linguistically accessible publications are forwarded to the next evaluation stage according to PRISMA guidelines. The search process on SceinDirect found 100 published articles relevant to the research topic.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The search results obtained using specific keywords in ScienceDirect were systematically analyzed to address the research questions outlined in this study. Relevant articles were carefully selected based on their alignment with the study objectives, ensuring the inclusion of recent and high-quality sources. This approach enabled a comprehensive understanding and supported the development of well-founded conclusions.

RQ1: Is the Role of Strategic Leadership in Business Strategy Implementation still relevant in the future?

No	Author	Year	Explanation
1	Daniel Lopez fernandes	2025	Methodology, strategies, and factors for business innovation in large companies
2	Matias Orkamo	2025	Leadership behaviours to promote organisational performance in private sector digital transformation – A systematic literature review
3	Salitha Nair Subramania	2024	Towards modern leadership styles in the context of the engineering sector
4	Thomas Tepstad Berga	2025	A new holistic framework for megaproject portfolio success
5	Krish nendu saha	2025	A review of circular economy disruption research: insights into industry 4.0 enabled circular economy framework for sustainability during turbulent times
6	Lori Qingyuan yue	2025	Organizational nationalism
7	Kevin s Groves	2025	Cultivating the experience of dignity at work during digital transformation: Protective & proactive strategies for leaders and organizations
8	Rei Hsuan lee	2024	Advancing a sustainable built environment: A comprehensive review of stakeholder promotion strategies and dual forces
9	Manal Ahdadou	2025	Artificial intelligence in corporate boards: a dual-dimensional framework for integration across autonomy and structural levels
10	Antonio Moreira	2024	Innovation capabilities and their dimensions: A systematic literature review
11	Teresa Heyder	2023	Ethical management of human-AI interaction: Theory development review
12	Rohit Madan	2023	AI adoption and diffusion in public administration: A systematic literature review and future research agenda
13	Elina Jaaska	2025	Bridging change and project management: A review and future research directions
14	Hugo pertz maure	2024	Mobility business models toward a digital tomorrow: Challenges for automotive manufacturers
15	Himasai Kiran Reddy Durgam	2025	Green construction supply chain: Reviewing advancements, obstacles, and possibilities
16	Emmanuel Kaffi mairides	2025	Blockchain technology for sustainable supply chains in the fishing industry: A systematic review
17	Diana Fischer	2024	Digital transformation in disaster management: A literature review
18	Manuel Brunner	2025	From a conventional to a sustainable business model a review on transformation actions and indicators
19	Sinandy Dayana Rico Lugo	2023	Characteristics of decision process towards circular food economy: A review
20	True h. Le	2024	How authenticity in events fosters social sustainability: Towards an authenticity ecosystem and implications for destination management

Table 1. Relevant Research Results

The table shows an increase in the role of strategic leadership and strategic implementation. This is evident in leadership that creates policies aligned with company progress. Leadership with

sound decisions and policies will create positive changes for the company and impact its income and profits.

From 2023, the number of articles increased to 3, 2024 to 5, and 2025 to 11. This represents an increase in articles from 2023 to 2025, spanning three years. Therefore, the role of leadership remains relevant in the future.

RQ2: What is the role of strategic leadership in business strategy implementation?

The increasingly rapid, complex, and uncertain business environment has forced organizations to abandon static leadership patterns. Technological disruption, digital transformation, regulatory changes, and global labor market dynamics are factors that require organizations to adapt quickly and effectively. In this context, adaptive leadership emerges as a relevant and strategic approach to answer the challenges of the VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity) era (Heifetz et al., 2009).

Current trends indicate that Human Resources (HR) strategies often fail to be effectively implemented not due to a lack of planning, but due to leaders' inability to navigate complex change barriers (Northouse, 2021).

For example, many organizations have formulated talent development and cultural transformation strategies, but in practice, they are mired in internal resistance, inter-departmental silos, and a lack of employee engagement in the change process (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018).

The urgency of this discussion is heightened by post-COVID-19 pandemic trends, where hybrid work models, new skill requirements, and employee well-being demands have become strategic priorities. Leaders are required not only to manage human resources efficiently but also to mobilize, inspire, and navigate teams amidst uncertainty. Adaptive leadership acts as a catalyst in bridging an organization's strategic vision with actual execution on the ground, through the ability to read the context, manage collective emotions, and build cross-functional collaboration (Glover & Dixon, 2002) (Yukl & Mahsud, 2010).

Knowledge is the most crucial factor in innovation, both in science and technology. Knowledge and innovation are crucial for maintaining a company's competitiveness. It's crucial to distinguish between technological and non-technological innovations because innovation is related

to the external environment, which is easily imitated and accessible by competitors (Yu et al., 2017).

Technological innovations originate externally, easily accessible to many internal vendors, and especially non-technological ones, providing significant opportunities for advancing innovation. Non-technological innovations, such as business models and business concepts, are a way to demonstrate business potential for service companies (González-Blanco et al., 2019).

Therefore, the role of strategic leadership in implementing business strategy will be highly relevant in the future if policymakers or shareholders are able to identify the weaknesses and capabilities of their employees, which are internal factors within a company, in detail, which will support leadership policies. Equally important is the consideration of other supporting factors, including external factors, such as good technology and government policies that will impact company decisions, such as taxes and banking.

RQ3: What is the impact of strategic leadership on business strategy implementation?

Strategic leadership is the ability of leaders to develop a long-term vision, plan effective strategies, and implement policies that can lead the organization toward its overall goals. This type of leadership requires Strategic leadership is not only about tactical thinking, but also about being able to see long-term opportunities and threats that can impact the direction of the organization (Haycock, 2012).

Strategic leadership is the ability of leaders to lead in a dynamic environment and adapt strategic decisions to market changes and new challenges. The changing business environment demands that leaders be adaptive, innovative, and able to anticipate change quickly and accurately (Boikanyo, 2025). The benchmark aspects of integrating factors influencing strategic leadership include vision, effective communication, decision-making, and change management. Strategic leadership plays a crucial role in guiding organizations in facing business challenges and achieving competitive advantage. Without strategic leadership, organizations risk losing direction and failing to navigate the complexities of the marketplace.

Strategic leadership has a significant impact on a company's future and its survival. This aligns with VUCA theory, an acronym for Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity.

This theory describes situations in the business, social, or global environment in general that are rapidly changing, uncertain, and unclear.

To navigate the VUCA environment, organizational leaders are often advised to use the VUCA PRIME framework:

1. Volatility – Vision: Establishing a clear vision as direction amidst turmoil.
2. Uncertainty – Understanding: Increasing understanding through research and listening to reduce uncertainty.
3. Complexity – Clarity: to address ambiguity
4. Agility – (Assertiveness): to overcome ambiguity. <https://employers.glints.com>

Adaptive leadership must always be aware of future opportunities and challenges. This will also impact the company's future. We see this not only in terms of capital and good will, but also by observing the market and observing the company's agility in actively participating in unclear changes and rigidity in action between leaders and employees. In this case, we also consider external factors, such as government, technology, banking, taxes, and so on. This must be balanced well between internal (employees) and external (technology). This will all be achieved through innovative leadership policies and strategic leadership implementation in response to rapid change. This will also be supported by swift and appropriate leadership action.

CONCLUSION

Strategic leadership has several capabilities to create a positive work environment for employees and can deliver maximum performance results for the company. Delivering maximum performance results to the company. Strategic leadership plays a crucial role in improving company performance. Beyond defining the organization's vision and mission, strategic leaders are tasked with realizing these goals through successful strategic implementation. They are able to effectively manage organizational resources, make wise choices in challenging situations, and inspire employees to give their best efforts. However, in the process of implementing strategic goals, strategic leaders often face challenges. Resistance to change, limited resources, and the complexity of a constantly changing business environment are just a few examples of challenges they must overcome.

A leader's ability to overcome these challenges will ultimately impact the success of strategy implementation and the achievement of organizational goals. The increasingly rapid, complex, and uncertain business environment has forced organizations to abandon static leadership patterns. Technological disruption, digital transformation, regulatory changes, and the dynamics of the global labor market are factors that require organizations to adapt quickly and effectively. In this context, adaptive leadership has emerged as a relevant and strategic approach to addressing the challenges of the VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity) era. Current trends indicate that Human Resources (HR) strategies often fail to be implemented effectively, not due to a lack of planning, but due to leaders' inability to navigate the complex barriers of change. For example, many organizations have formulated talent development and cultural transformation strategies, but in practice, they are mired in internal resistance, inter-departmental silos, and a lack of employee engagement in the change process.

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