

# Strategic Management Practices and Performance of Private Universities in Democratic Republic of Congo

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## ABSTRACT

The Democratic Republic of Congo has been grappling with poor performance in its university sector, a consequence of several compounding factors. Political instability, limited resources, and widespread corruption have significantly undermined the quality of education in the country. Thus, this study sought to examine the effect of strategic management practices on the performance of private universities in Democratic Republic of Congo. The specific objectives included investigating the effect of strategic analysis, strategy formulation, strategy implementation and strategy evaluation & control on university performance. The theoretical review will focus on four theories that have been identified as relevant to the research objectives: the Upper Echelons Theory, the Contingency Theory, the Complexity Theory, and the Environment Dependency Theory. The study adopted a descriptive research design to achieve its objectives. The target population consisted of 24 private universities in the country, as documented by the Ministry of Higher and University Education (2024). The study conducted a census where all the 24 universities were included in the study. Data was conducted using an unstructured questionnaire with both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis, with the aid of SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software. The study found that strategic analysis is positively and significantly related to the performance of private universities in the Democratic Republic of Congo ( $\beta=0.144$ ,  $p=0.034$ ). Similarly, strategy formulation was found to have a positive and significant relationship with the performance of private universities ( $\beta=0.600$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). The study also revealed that strategy implementation is positively and significantly related to the performance of private universities ( $\beta=0.234$ ,  $p=0.021$ ). Furthermore, the results showed that strategy evaluation and control have a positive and significant relationship with the performance of private universities ( $\beta=0.448$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). The study recommends that private universities in the Democratic Republic of Congo should prioritize strategic analysis as an integral part of their strategic management practices. They should allocate resources for comprehensive internal and external analysis to assess strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, market trends, competitor activities, and stakeholder needs. The study further recommends investing in effective strategy formulation by engaging key stakeholders, ensuring alignment with the university's mission and vision, and communicating strategies clearly. Effective strategy implementation is crucial, involving detailed action plans, resource allocation, and collaborative efforts. Finally, the study emphasizes robust strategy evaluation and control through performance metrics, regular reviews, continuous improvement, and a culture of learning to refine strategies and practices for long-term success.

**Keywords:** Strategic analysis, strategy formulation, strategy implementation, strategy evaluation and control, performance, private universities, Democratic Republic of Congo.

## BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The performance of universities refers to the ability of the institution to achieve its goals, objectives, and priorities. It involves measuring and evaluating various aspects of university operations, including teaching, research, service and administration, against predefined standards and benchmarks (Mukundan & Narayanan, 2020). Effective performance management in universities helps to identify areas for improvement, take corrective actions, and continuously monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of strategies and initiatives. High performance shows that resources are effectively allocated and utilized to achieve the desired outcomes (Nkemchor & Ezeanolue, 2021). The performance of universities is a critical concept that reflects the ability of

the institution to achieve its goals, enhance accountability and transparency, and benchmark performance against peer institutions (Meresa, 2019). Effective performance of universities requires a strategic approach that aligns the efforts of various stakeholders toward achieving common goals and objectives (Ruba, van der Westhuizen & Chiloane-Tsoka, 2021; Agyei & Mtembu, 2018; Mukundan & Narayanan, 2020; Nkemchor & Ezeanolue, 2021; Meresa, 2019).

Strategic management practices encompass a range of activities and processes aimed at formulating, implementing, and evaluating strategies to achieve organizational goals and objectives. Strategic management and performance management are critical for universities to achieve academic excellence, enhance student outcomes, and maintain their reputation (Agyei & Mtembu, 2018). Strategic management refers to the process of setting goals, objectives, and priorities to achieve academic excellence, improve student outcomes, and enhance the reputation of the institution (Zotova, Mantoulenko & Plaksina, 2020). It involves analyzing the internal and external environment, identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and formulating strategies to leverage strengths, mitigate weaknesses, exploit opportunities, and manage threats (Alajmi & Arabiat, 2021). Effective strategic management in universities helps to align the efforts of various stakeholders, including faculty, staff, students, and administrators, towards achieving common goals and objectives (Mawanika, Mathenge & Mungai, 2021).

The, strategic management can include strategic analysis , strategy formulation, strategy implementation and strategy evaluation & control (Akilo & Olaosebikan, 2021; Kazem, Abbas, Sabti, Ali & Nasser, 2022; Damas, Wasike, & Dhafana, 2019; AlDhaheri, Ameen & Isaac, 2020; Ayedh & Omar, 2020; Maina & Njeri, 2020; Elif, 2022; Alwedyan, Alhamouri & Hayajneh, 2020; Ruba, van der Westhuizen & Chiloane-Tsoka, 2021). Strategic analysis encompasses the vision, mission, objectives, and policies of the university. Vision and mission statements articulate the long-term aspirations and purpose of the university, guiding its strategic direction (Akilo & Olaosebikan, 2021). Objectives outline the specific goals and targets that the university aims to achieve, providing a roadmap for its actions and initiatives (Akilo & Olaosebikan, 2021). Policies refer to the guidelines and principles that govern decision-making and operational practices within the university (Akilo & Olaosebikan, 2021). Assessing strategic analysis involves evaluating the clarity, alignment, and effectiveness of the university's vision, mission, objectives, and policies in driving its strategic management processes.

Strategy formulation involves the analysis of internal and external factors and the participation of stakeholders in developing strategic plans. Internal analysis examines the strengths and weaknesses of the university, including its resources, capabilities, and organizational structure (Ayedh & Omar, 2020). External analysis focuses on understanding the opportunities and threats in the external environment, such as market trends, competition, and regulatory factors (Ayedh & Omar, 2020). Participation of stakeholders, including faculty, staff, students, and external partners, ensures that diverse perspectives and expertise are considered in the strategic planning process (Ayedh & Omar, 2020). Assessing strategy formulation entails evaluating the depth and breadth of internal and external analyses, as well as the extent of stakeholder engagement in shaping the strategic direction of the university.

Strategy evaluation & control involves comparing the standard practices outlined in the strategic plans with the actual practices and outcomes observed in the university. It includes providing feedback on performance, monitoring progress, and taking corrective measures when necessary. Comparing standard practices with actual practices allows the university to assess the extent to which the strategies are being implemented as intended (Hilman & Abubakar, 2019). Feedback provides information on the performance and effectiveness of the strategies, helping the university to identify areas of improvement or adjustment (Hilman & Abubakar, 2019). Corrective measures involve making necessary changes or interventions to ensure that the university stays on track and achieves its strategic objectives (Hilman & Abubakar, 2019). Evaluating strategy evaluation & control involves examining the alignment between standard and actual practices, the frequency and quality of feedback mechanisms, and the effectiveness of corrective measures in enhancing the implementation of strategies.

Strategy implementation involves the institutionalization of strategies, the operationalization of action plans, and the utilization of resources to execute the strategic initiatives. Institutionalization refers to embedding the strategies into the organizational culture, systems, and processes of the university (Kabui, 2020). Operationalization involves translating the strategies into specific action plans, allocating resources, and

assigning responsibilities to individuals or departments within the university (Kabui, 2020). Resource utilization refers to the effective and efficient allocation and utilization of resources to support the implementation of strategies (Kabui, 2020). Evaluating strategy implementation requires assessing the effectiveness of institutionalization efforts in integrating strategies into the university's culture and operations, evaluating the alignment and execution of action plans, and examining the optimization of resource allocation and utilization to support the implementation of strategies. Overall, the strategic management of universities in DRC focuses on enhancing educational quality, infrastructure, and research capacity, while addressing the unique challenges faced by a developing nation.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The problem of the study is that the performance of some private universities in the Democratic Republic of Congo has been poor. This is because the graduation rate of students in most DRC universities has remained at 48.1% between 2018 and 2022 (Ministry of Higher and University Education, 2022). Low graduation rates are a problem because they indicate that more than half of the students entering universities in the Democratic Republic of Congo are not completing their education within the studied timeframe. A 48.1% graduation rate from 2018 to 2022 (Ministry of Higher and University Education, 2022) signifies a loss of educational and economic potential, both for the individuals who do not graduate and for the country as a whole. This underperformance can limit career opportunities for individuals and contribute to a less skilled workforce, thereby affecting the nation's economic growth and social development.

Moreover, political instability, limited resources, and widespread corruption have significantly undermined the quality of education in the country (Etshim, 2017), contributing to the low graduation rates. Insufficient funding has resulted in inadequate infrastructure, outdated teaching materials, and a shortage of qualified faculty, which further hampers the universities' ability to provide a comprehensive educational experience (Ruba, van der Westhuizen & Chiloane-Tsoka, 2021). Additionally, the weak regulatory framework and pervasive corruption in the DRC exacerbate these issues by fostering a culture of impunity and mismanagement (Huguette, 2021). As a result, the underperformance of universities in the DRC not only hinders individual academic success but also impedes the nation's economic development and social progress.

The knowledge gap has been identified based on a review of previous studies, forming the basis of the current study. For instance, Damas, Wasike, and Dhafana (2019) found that strategic direction, environmental analysis, stakeholder involvement, strategic objectives, and having a strategic plan all have an impact on academic performance in secondary schools in the Republic of Congo (DRC). The current study will focus on the effect of strategic analysis, strategy formulation, strategy implementation, and strategy evaluation and control on the performance of private universities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Balemba (2023) examines the strategic decisions made by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the impact these decisions have on their performance. Furthermore, Mawanika, Mathenge, and Mungai (2021) investigated the impact of strategy implementation on secondary school performance in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Furthermore, Ruba, van der Westhuizen, and Chiloane-Tsoka (2021) conducted research on the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on performance in Congolese Higher Education Institutions. Despite these findings, there is still a knowledge gap in understanding the specific effects of strategic management on university performance in the DRC, particularly in the context of private universities in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The current study seeks to fill this void by investigating the relationship between strategic management practices and the performance of private universities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

### **Research Objectives**

The study was guided by the following objectives.

- i. To examine the effect of strategic analysis on performance of private universities in Democratic Republic of Congo.
- ii. To determine the effect of strategy formulation on performance of private universities in Democratic

Republic of Congo.

- iii. To examine the effect of strategy implementation on performance of private universities in Democratic Republic of Congo.
- iv. To establish the effect of strategy evaluation and control on performance of private universities in Democratic Republic of Congo.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review included the theoretical, empirical review and conceptual framework.

### Theoretical Framework

The theoretical review focused on the four theories that have been identified as relevant to the research objectives, namely the Upper Echelons Theory (UET), the Contingency Theory, the Complexity Theory, and the Environment Dependency Theory (EDT).

#### Upper Echelons Theory

The Upper Echelons Theory (UET), developed by organizational theorists Donald Hambrick and Phyllis Mason in 1984, posits that an organization's strategies and performance outcomes are substantially influenced by its top-level executives' personal characteristics (Varpio, Paradis, Uijtdehaage & Young, 2020). Essentially, it asserts that a firm's strategic choices and outcomes are a reflection of its leaders. The main principle of the theory is that the composition of an organization's top management team (TMT) has an impact on its performance (Waldman, Javidan & Varella, 2004). A diverse TMT, in terms of demographics, functional backgrounds, and experiences, can bring a broader range of perspectives and expertise to decision-making, potentially leading to better strategic outcomes. The theory has been widely studied in the field of strategic management and has generated a substantial amount of empirical research (Abatecola & Cristofaro, 2020). The Upper Echelons Theory (UET) was regarded as relevant to inform the current study. In relation to the study's objectives, the Upper Echelons Theory (UET) holds considerable relevance, particularly to the first objective which aims to examine the effect of strategic analysis on the performance of Private universities in Democratic Republic of Congo. UET proposes that the strategic analysis of an organization is significantly influenced by the characteristics of its top management. As such, it provides a theoretical lens through which to understand how the backgrounds, experiences, values, and cognitive biases of the university's leaders shape strategic analysis and subsequently impact the university's performance. In the context of Private universities in Democratic Republic of Congo, the study will delve into the role that the university's leaders play in forming strategic analysis.

#### Contingency Theory

The Contingency Theory, developed in 1960 by Professor Fred Fiedler, is a significant framework in organizational theory that posits there is no one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to organizing and leading a company, and the effectiveness of management and leadership techniques is contingent upon various internal and external circumstances (Donaldson, 2001). The main principle of the theory is that optimal organizational performance is achieved when the organizational structure and other key variables are well-matched to the demands of the environment (Van de Ven & Drazin, 1984). These variables could include strategy, size, technology, and the style of leadership, among others. The essence of the theory is that effective organizations are those that can identify the important contingencies for their specific situation and adapt their approach to fit these contingencies (Otley, 2016). The Contingency Theory was considered relevant for the current study. It is particularly relevant to the second objective of this study, which aims to determine the influence of strategy formulation on the performance of Private universities in Democratic Republic of Congo. The theory provides a useful framework for understanding the process of strategy formulation within a specific institutional and environmental context. In this study, the theory can help analyze how the university's leadership formulates strategies considering various internal and external factors, such as the institution's size, resources, cultural

nuances, as well as broader socio-economic and educational policies in Democratic Republic of Congo.

## **Complexity Theory**

The Complexity Theory was developed by Stuart Kauffman in 1984. The theory indicates that complex systems are more than the sum of their parts, displaying emergent properties that cannot be predicted from the properties of the individual parts (Dodder & Dare, 2000). The main principle of the theory emphasizes the need for organizations to be flexible and adaptable in order to survive and thrive in an environment of constant change and uncertainty (Kauffman, Koliba, Beckage, Vattay & Bomblies, 2014). The theory also suggests that changes can occur spontaneously and unpredictably, arising from the complex interactions of the different parts of the organization (Smith, 2005). It challenges traditional linear and deterministic approaches to management, instead advocating for an understanding of the non-linear, unpredictable, and emergent behavior of organizations. The Complexity Theory was relevant to the current study. It holds significant relevance to the third objective of the study, which seeks to examine the effect of strategy implementation on the performance of Private universities in Democratic Republic of Congo. The theory's emphasis on adaptability, flexibility, and emergent behavior provides a useful framework to analyze how the university navigates the process of strategy implementation in a complex, dynamic environment. Under the lens of Complexity Theory, strategy implementation is not seen as a straightforward, linear process but as an adaptive and iterative one that involves a wide range of interacting elements within the university, including various departments, staff members, policies, resources, and external factors.

## **Environment Dependency Theory**

The Environment Dependency Theory (EDT), also known as Resource Dependence Theory, was developed by organizational theorists Jeffrey Pfeffer and Gerald Salancik in 1974 (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). The main principle of the theory is that an organization's survival depends on its ability to acquire and maintain resources, and these resources largely come from the organization's environment. According to EDT, the organization must align its strategies with its environmental conditions to secure necessary resources. The environment, in this case, encompasses everything outside the organization's boundaries, including other organizations, societal norms, and economic conditions (Hillman, Withers & Collins, 2009). EDT suggests that organizations do not operate in isolation but are deeply embedded within a broader network of multiple stakeholders, all competing for a similar set of resources (Boyce & Ellis, 2005). The Environment Dependency Theory (EDT) was relevant to the current study. EDT is particularly pertinent to the fourth objective of the study, which aims to establish the effect of strategy evaluation & control on the performance of Private universities in Democratic Republic of Congo. Strategy evaluation & control, in essence, refers to the mechanisms through which an organization monitors and adjusts its strategy in response to changes in its environment. Given EDT's emphasis on the role of the environment in shaping organizational strategies and outcomes, it provides a fitting theoretical lens for investigating this objective. The theory's premise is that the university's success depends not only on its internal management and strategies but also on its ability to acquire and manage resources from its environment. This directly ties into the concept of strategy evaluation & control, which involves monitoring the university's external environment and adjusting strategies accordingly to ensure the continuous alignment of strategies with environmental conditions.

## **Empirical Review**

Akilo and Olaosebikan (2021) found that strategic orientation significantly influences employee performance in private universities in Ogun State, Nigeria, with a recommendation for management to continually reorient employees. Kazem et al. (2022) observed a significant positive correlation between strategic awareness and creative performance among university faculty members in Iraq, suggesting the need for universities to attract qualified individuals and establish international partnerships. Damas, Wasike, and Dhafana (2019) revealed that strategic planning, especially implementation, significantly impacts academic performance in secondary schools in Goma Town, DRC. Hilman and Abubakar (2019) identified that organizational strategy, structure, transformational leadership, talent management, technology integration, and quality culture positively influence university performance, with quality culture serving as a mediator. Ayedh and Omar (2020) reported that strategic planning dimensions positively impact Yemeni universities' performance, with market share being the

most achieved and profitability the least. Balemba (2023) highlighted the diversification of strategic choices among SMEs in the DRC and their mixed impact on performance. Kuhe, Utor, and Ikyanyon (2021) in Nigeria, and Demir (2022) in Turkey, found strategic management practices significantly related to organizational performance. Maina and Njeri (2020) in Kenya noted the importance of leadership, mission and vision, resources, and environmental scanning in enhancing the performance of state corporations.

AlDhaheri, Ameen, and Isaac (2020) showed that strategy formulation positively impacts public sector performance in the UAE. Chepkoskei and Kiambati (2021) in Kenya revealed that performance contracts significantly influence strategy implementation in public universities. Kabui (2020) in Kenya found that strategy implementation mediates the relationship between strategic planning and university performance. Elif (2022) in Turkey indicated that rational strategy implementation and hierarchical culture positively influence local government performance. Alwedyan, Alhamouri, and Hayajneh (2020) found a strong correlation between strategic planning and employee performance in Jordanian universities. El Filali and Hassainate (2018) reported that management control improves university performance. Ovchinkin et al. (2019) highlighted the importance of internal performance monitoring systems in Russian universities. Gellatly, D'Alessandro, and Carter (2020) emphasized the role of individual motivation in university performance, while Seifzadeh and Rowe (2019) identified the significant impact of corporate controls and business-level strategy fit on financial performance in Iranian corporations. Muktiyanto, Hermawan, and Hadiwidjaja (2020) found that management control systems positively influence university performance, mediated by good university governance in Indonesia.

### Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a diagrammatical representation that shows the relationship between dependent and independent variables (Creswell, 2014). Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework.

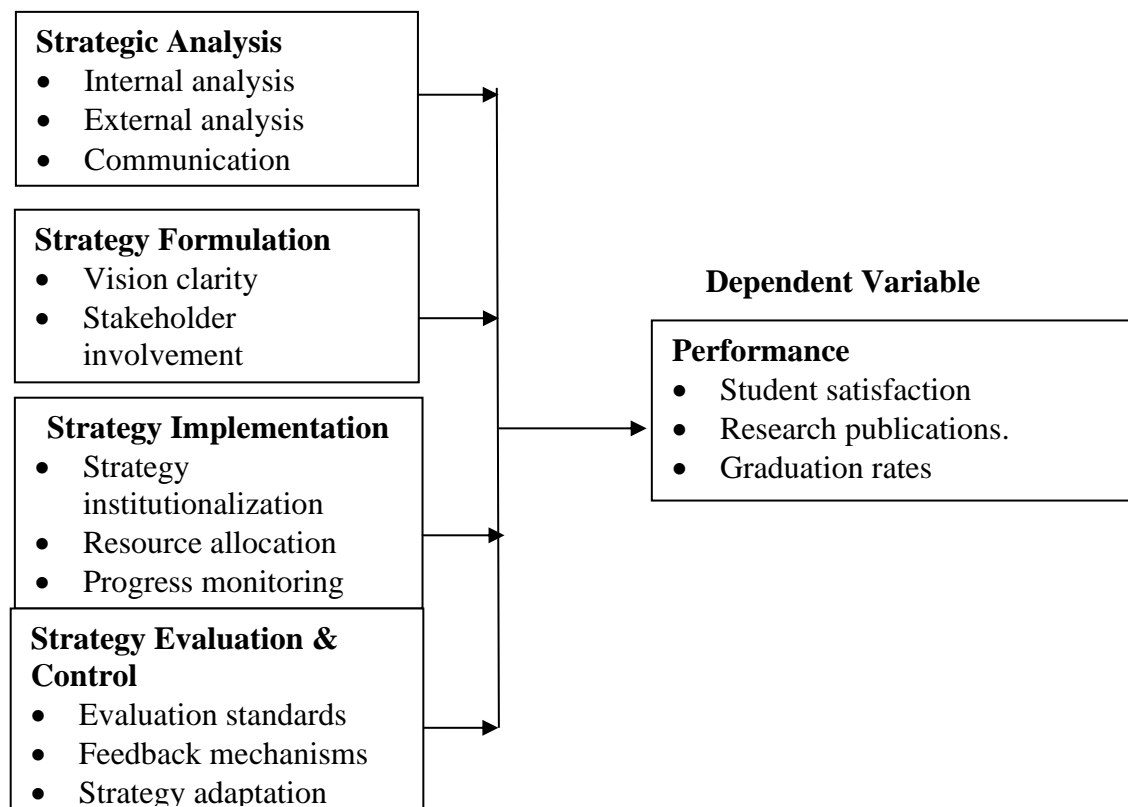


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework Independent Variables

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive research design to achieve its objectives. The descriptive research design was employed to provide a detailed description of the strategic management practices and performance of these institutions. The target population of the study consisted of 24 private universities in the country, as documented

by the Ministry of Higher and University Education (2024). The study conducted a census; thus, all the 24 universities were included in the study. The respondents included deans from each university. Data collection was conducted using an unstructured questionnaire with both closed-ended and open-ended questions. A 5-point Likert scale was utilized to quantitatively assess participants' attitudes and perceptions. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis, with the aid of SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This research chapter addresses data analysis and the discussion of research findings. The discussions are presented in sections, including response rate, descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and regression analysis.

### Response Rate

The study achieved a response rate of 37 deans from the targeted private universities in the Democratic Republic of Congo. This response rate represents a significant proportion of the intended participants, considering the total number of private universities in the country. The participation of these deans in the study provided a valuable insight into the strategic management practices and performance of their respective institutions. Their responses contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between strategic management and university performance in the DRC's private higher education sector.

### Descriptive statistics

The study variables were research and development networks, virtual interfirm networks, interfirm partnerships, knowledge sharing networks, regulatory framework, competitive advantage and performance. The descriptive statistics of the variables are presented in the following sections according to the study objectives.

### Strategic Analysis and University Performance

The summary of the descriptive statistics of strategic analysis and university performance are presented in Table 1

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of Strategic Analysis and University Performance

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Deviation
The university conducts a comprehensive internal analysis to identify its strengths, weaknesses, and resources for effective strategy formulation.	23.50%	55.50%	6.00%	11.00%	4.10%	1.86	0.67
The university conducts a thorough external analysis to identify opportunities and threats in the external environment that may impact its strategy	40.40%	39.80%	2.80%	9.40%	7.50%	2.35	1.11
The university considers emerging trends and market dynamics when formulating its strategies to stay competitive and relevant in the higher	31.70%	50.20%	9.10%	6.00%	3.10%	2.54	1.15

education landscape.							
The university has clear strategic analysis policies in place that guide decision-making and actions hence influencing performance.	18.50%	54.20%	5.00%	20.70%	1.60%	2.30	1.27
The effective communication of the strategic analysis results to all stakeholders has influenced the university performance.	34.80%	46.40%	2.20%	6.30%	10.30%	2.05	1.05
Overall, strategic analysis has influenced the decision-making and actions at all levels of the university.	15.00%	66.10%	4.70%	8.80%	5.30%	2.62	1.09
<b>Average</b>						2.29	1.06

Table 1 shows that 80.2% (40.40% + 39.80%) of the respondents disagreed that their universities conduct a thorough external analysis to identify opportunities and threats in the external environment that may impact their strategy. Only 16.9% (9.40% + 7.50%) agreed with the statement, while 2.80% remained neutral. The mean score of the statement was 2.35 with a standard deviation of 1.11, indicating that most respondents disagreed that universities conduct a thorough external analysis. Regarding emerging trends and market dynamics, 81.9% (31.70% + 50.20%) of the respondents disagreed that their universities consider these factors when formulating strategies to stay competitive and relevant in the higher education landscape. Only 9.1% (6.00% + 3.10%) agreed with the statement, and 9.10% remained neutral. The mean score was 2.54 with a standard deviation of 1.15, suggesting that most respondents disagreed that universities consider emerging trends and market dynamics in strategy formulation. The study also found that 72.7% (18.50% + 54.20%) of the respondents disagreed that their universities have clear strategic analysis policies in place that guide decision-making and actions, hence influencing performance. However, 22.3% (20.70% + 1.60%) agreed with the statement, and 5.00% remained neutral. The mean score was 2.30 with a standard deviation of 1.27, indicating that most respondents disagreed with the existence of clear strategic analysis policies.

Furthermore, 81.2% (34.80% + 46.40%) of the respondents disagreed that effective communication of the strategic analysis results to all stakeholders has influenced university performance. Only 16.6% (6.30% + 10.30%) agreed with the statement, and 2.20% remained neutral. The mean score was 2.05 with a standard deviation of 1.05, implying that most respondents disagreed with the effective communication of strategic analysis results. Lastly, 81.1% (15.00% + 66.10%) of the respondents disagreed that overall, strategic analysis has influenced decision-making and actions at all levels of the university. Only 14.1% (8.80% + 5.30%) agreed with the statement, and 4.70% remained neutral. The mean score was 2.62 with a standard deviation of 1.09, suggesting that most respondents disagreed with the overall influence of strategic analysis on decision-making and actions. The average mean score for all statements was 2.29, with an average standard deviation of 1.06. This indicates that, on average, the respondents disagreed with the statements regarding the influence of strategic analysis on university performance in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

In addition, from the open-ended questions, respondents consistently expressed that strategic analysis is a foreign concept to them and has not been conducted in their institutions. The lack of awareness and implementation of strategic analysis practices suggests that private universities in the DRC are not actively assessing their internal and external environments to inform their decision-making processes. This absence of strategic analysis may hinder these institutions from identifying their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, which are crucial for effective strategic planning and performance improvement.



## Strategy Formulation and University Performance

Table 2 presents the summary of the descriptive statistics of Strategy Formulation and University Performance

Table 4.4: Descriptive statistics of Strategy Formulation and University Performance

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Deviation
The vision and mission statements of the university clearly communicate its long-term direction and purpose.	28.20%	53.30%	4.40%	7.80%	6.30%	2.08	1.06
The objectives of the university are well-defined and aligned with its vision and mission.	33.20%	47.30%	1.90%	12.20%	5.30%	1.65	1.03
The university actively involves stakeholders, such as faculty, staff, students, and external partners, in the strategy formulation process to ensure diverse perspectives and inputs.	21.30%	58.90%	5.30%	11.60%	2.80%	1.89	0.91
The university aligns its strategic objectives with its overall vision and mission to ensure coherence and consistency in its strategic planning process.	29.20%	45.50%	4.40%	8.50%	12.50%	2.19	0.74
The university considers the input and feedback of key stakeholders when formulating its strategies to address their needs and expectations effectively.	35.70%	40.40%	5.00%	15.00%	3.80%	2.24	1.04
The vision and mission statements of the university clearly communicate its long-term direction and purpose.	16.90%	60.80%	7.20%	9.40%	5.60%	2.32	1.51
<b>Average</b>						<b>2.06</b>	<b>1.05</b>

Table 2 presents the summary of the descriptive statistics of strategy formulation and university performance. The study results found that 81.5% (28.20% + 53.30%) of the respondents disagreed that the vision and mission statements of their universities clearly communicate their long-term direction and purpose. Only 14.1% (7.80% + 6.30%) agreed with the statement, while 4.40% remained neutral. The mean score was 2.08 with a standard deviation of 1.06, indicating that most respondents disagreed with the clarity of their universities' vision and mission statements. Regarding the alignment of objectives with the vision and mission, 80.5% (33.20% + 47.30%) of the respondents disagreed that their universities' objectives are well-defined and aligned with their vision and mission. Only 17.5% (12.20% + 5.30%) agreed with the statement, and 1.90% remained neutral. The mean score was 1.65 with a standard deviation of 1.03, suggesting that most respondents disagreed with the alignment of objectives with the vision and mission.

The study also found that 80.2% (21.30% + 58.90%) of the respondents disagreed that their universities actively involve stakeholders, such as faculty, staff, students, and external partners, in the strategy formulation process to ensure diverse perspectives and inputs. Only 14.4% (11.60% + 2.80%) agreed with the statement, and 5.30% remained neutral. The mean score was 1.89 with a standard deviation of 0.91, indicating that most respondents disagreed with stakeholder involvement in strategy formulation. Furthermore, 74.7% (29.20% + 45.50%) of the respondents disagreed that their universities align their strategic objectives with their overall vision and mission to ensure coherence and consistency in their strategic planning process. However, 21% (8.50% + 12.50%) agreed with the statement, and 4.40% remained neutral. The mean score was 2.19 with a standard deviation of 0.74, suggesting that most respondents disagreed with the alignment of strategic objectives with the vision and mission.

The study also found that 76.1% (35.70% + 40.40%) of the respondents disagreed that their universities consider the input and feedback of key stakeholders when formulating strategies to address their needs and expectations effectively. Only 18.8% (15.00% + 3.80%) agreed with the statement, and 5.00% remained neutral. The mean score was 2.24 with a standard deviation of 1.04, indicating that most respondents disagreed with the consideration of stakeholder input in strategy formulation. Lastly, 77.7% (16.90% + 60.80%) of the respondents disagreed that the vision and mission statements of their universities clearly communicate their long-term direction and purpose. Only 15% (9.40% + 5.60%) agreed with the statement, and 7.20% remained neutral. The mean score was 2.32 with a standard deviation of 1.51, suggesting that most respondents disagreed with the clarity of their universities' vision and mission statements. The average mean score for all statements was 2.06, with an average standard deviation of 1.05. This indicates that, on average, the respondents disagreed with the statements regarding the influence of strategy formulation on university performance in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

In addition, from the open-ended questions, respondents indicated that strategy formulation, if it exists, is solely the responsibility of university managers and is not communicated to faculty and staff. This lack of involvement and communication creates a disconnect between the management and other stakeholders in the strategic planning process. Respondents acknowledged that strategy formulation could be a valuable tool for universities to position themselves in the competitive landscape, but they are uncertain about its practice in their institutions. The absence of a participatory approach to strategy formulation may result in strategies that do not align with the needs and expectations of various stakeholders, potentially affecting the university's performance.

### Strategy Implementation and University Performance

The summary of the descriptive statistics of strategy implementation and university performance is presented in Table 3

Table 3: Descriptive statistics of Strategy Implementation and University Performance

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Deviation
The university has mechanisms in place to institutionalize its strategies, ensuring that they are embedded in the organizational culture and processes.	22.30%	61.10%	6.60%	8.80%	1.30%	1.70	0.81
The university effectively operationalizes its strategies by translating them into specific action plans, tasks, and responsibilities for different departments and individuals.	31.30%	52.00%	2.20%	11.90%	2.50%	2.03	0.96

The university allocates resources, such as financial, human, and technological resources, in a strategic manner to support the successful implementation of its strategies.	18.50%	51.70%	5.30%	17.90%	6.60%	2.05	1.13
The university has established clear performance indicators and targets to monitor the progress and effectiveness of its strategy implementation efforts.	33.90%	40.80%	3.10%	16.90%	5.30%	1.65	1.11
The university provides the necessary training and support to employees to ensure their understanding of the implemented strategies and their ability to execute them successfully.	27.90%	45.10%	3.40%	20.40%	3.10%	2.19	1.13
The university regularly reviews and adapts its strategies based on the changing internal and external factors to ensure their continued relevance and effectiveness.	30.10%	37.30%	7.50%	16.00%	9.10%	2.00	0.92
<b>Average</b>						1.94	1.01

The summary of the descriptive statistics of strategy implementation and university performance is presented in Table 3. The study results found that 83.4% (22.30% + 61.10%) of the respondents disagreed that their universities have mechanisms in place to institutionalize their strategies, ensuring that they are embedded in the organizational culture and processes. Only 10.1% (8.80% + 1.30%) agreed with the statement, while 6.60% remained neutral. The mean score was 1.70 with a standard deviation of 0.81, indicating that most respondents disagreed with the presence of mechanisms to institutionalize strategies. Regarding the operationalization of strategies, 83.3% (31.30% + 52.00%) of the respondents disagreed that their universities effectively operationalize their strategies by translating them into specific action plans, tasks, and responsibilities for different departments and individuals. Only 14.4% (11.90% + 2.50%) agreed with the statement, and 2.20% remained neutral. The mean score was 2.03 with a standard deviation of 0.96, suggesting that most respondents disagreed with the effective operationalization of strategies.

The study also found that 70.2% (18.50% + 51.70%) of the respondents disagreed that their universities allocate resources, such as financial, human, and technological resources, in a strategic manner to support the successful implementation of their strategies. However, 24.5% (17.90% + 6.60%) agreed with the statement, and 5.30% remained neutral. The mean score was 2.05 with a standard deviation of 1.13, indicating that most respondents disagreed with the strategic allocation of resources. Furthermore, 74.7% (33.90% + 40.80%) of the respondents disagreed that their universities have established clear performance indicators and targets to monitor the progress and effectiveness of their strategy implementation efforts. Only 22.2% (16.90% + 5.30%) agreed with the statement, and 3.10% remained neutral. The mean score was 1.65 with a standard deviation of 1.11, suggesting that most respondents disagreed with the establishment of clear performance indicators and targets.

The study also found that 73% (27.90% + 45.10%) of the respondents disagreed that their universities provide the necessary training and support to employees to ensure their understanding of the implemented strategies and their ability to execute them successfully. Only 23.5% (20.40% + 3.10%) agreed with the statement, and 3.40% remained neutral. The mean score was 2.19 with a standard deviation of 1.13, indicating that most respondents

disagreed with the provision of necessary training and support. Lastly, 67.4% (30.10% + 37.30%) of the respondents disagreed that their universities regularly review and adapt their strategies based on the changing internal and external factors to ensure their continued relevance and effectiveness. However, 25.1% (16.00% + 9.10%) agreed with the statement, and 7.50% remained neutral. The mean score was 2.00 with a standard deviation of 0.92, suggesting that most respondents disagreed with the regular review and adaptation of strategies. The average mean score for all statements was 1.94, with an average standard deviation of 1.01. This indicates that, on average, the respondents disagreed with the statements regarding the influence of strategy implementation on university performance in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Besides, from the open ended questions, respondents revealed a lack of information on the existence or execution of strategic plans in their universities. They mentioned that strategy implementation, if it occurs, is dictated by the managers, while faculty members are primarily focused on teaching and lesson planning. This suggests a top-down approach to strategy implementation, with limited involvement and ownership from faculty and staff. The absence of effective communication and engagement in the implementation process may lead to a lack of alignment between strategic objectives and day-to-day operations, ultimately impacting the university's performance.

### Strategy Evaluation & Control and University Performance

Table 4 presents the summary of the descriptive statistics of strategy evaluation & control and university performance.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics of Strategy Evaluation & Control and University Performance

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Deviation
The university has well-defined standards and benchmarks against which it evaluates its actual practices and performance to ensure alignment with strategic goals	16.60%	59.60%	7.80%	10.30%	5.60%	2.32	1.51
The university has established a robust feedback mechanism that enables the collection and analysis of relevant data and information to monitor the progress and effectiveness of its strategies.	34.20%	46.10%	1.90%	13.20%	4.70%	1.92	0.68
The university takes proactive corrective measures when deviations or gaps are identified between the actual practices and the established standards or benchmarks.	36.10%	40.10%	5.30%	10.30%	8.20%	2.41	1.50
The university encourages an open and transparent communication culture where feedback on the effectiveness of strategies is shared and discussed	30.70%	49.00%	2.40%	6.70%	11.20%	1.86	1.46
The university utilizes performance metrics and key performance	27.90%	45.60%	3.80%	17.00%	5.60%	2.22	1.11

indicators (KPIs) to assess the progress and outcomes of its strategies and make informed decisions.							
The university fosters a culture of continuous improvement and learning, where lessons from the strategy implementation process are captured and used to enhance future strategies	40.40%	31.30%	7.50%	14.10%	6.60%	1.92	1.23
<b>Average</b>						2.11	1.25

Table 4 presents the summary of the descriptive statistics of strategy evaluation & control and university performance. The study results found that 76.2% (16.60% + 59.60%) of the respondents disagreed that their universities have well-defined standards and benchmarks against which they evaluate their actual practices and performance to ensure alignment with strategic goals. Only 15.9% (10.30% + 5.60%) agreed with the statement, while 7.80% remained neutral. The mean score was 2.32 with a standard deviation of 1.51, indicating that most respondents disagreed with the presence of well-defined standards and benchmarks for evaluation. Regarding the establishment of a robust feedback mechanism, 80.3% (34.20% + 46.10%) of the respondents disagreed that their universities have established a robust feedback mechanism that enables the collection and analysis of relevant data and information to monitor the progress and effectiveness of their strategies. Only 17.9% (13.20% + 4.70%) agreed with the statement, and 1.90% remained neutral. The mean score was 1.92 with a standard deviation of 0.68, suggesting that most respondents disagreed with the presence of a robust feedback mechanism.

The study also found that 76.2% (36.10% + 40.10%) of the respondents disagreed that their universities take proactive corrective measures when deviations or gaps are identified between the actual practices and the established standards or benchmarks. Only 18.5% (10.30% + 8.20%) agreed with the statement, and 5.30% remained neutral. The mean score was 2.41 with a standard deviation of 1.50, indicating that most respondents disagreed with the proactive corrective measures taken by their universities. Furthermore, 79.7% (30.70% + 49.00%) of the respondents disagreed that their universities encourage an open and transparent communication culture where feedback on the effectiveness of strategies is shared and discussed. Only 17.9% (6.70% + 11.20%) agreed with the statement, and 2.40% remained neutral. The mean score was 1.86 with a standard deviation of 1.46, suggesting that most respondents disagreed with the encouragement of an open and transparent communication culture.

The study also found that 73.5% (27.90% + 45.60%) of the respondents disagreed that their universities utilize performance metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs) to assess the progress and outcomes of their strategies and make informed decisions. Only 22.6% (17.00% + 5.60%) agreed with the statement, and 3.80% remained neutral. The mean score was 2.22 with a standard deviation of 1.11, indicating that most respondents disagreed with the utilization of performance metrics and KPIs. Lastly, 71.7% (40.40% + 31.30%) of the respondents disagreed that their universities foster a culture of continuous improvement and learning, where lessons from the strategy implementation process are captured and used to enhance future strategies. Only 20.7% (14.10% + 6.60%) agreed with the statement, and 7.50% remained neutral. The mean score was 1.92 with a standard deviation of 1.23, suggesting that most respondents disagreed with the fostering of a culture of continuous improvement and learning. The average mean score for all statements was 2.11, with an average standard deviation of 1.25. This indicates that, on average, the respondents disagreed with the statements regarding the influence of strategy evaluation & control on university performance in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Moreover, from the open ended questions, respondents consistently reported that they have never encountered any evaluation or control of strategic plans in their institutions. They emphasized that if such practices were in place, they would have been informed about the plan's existence and content. The lack of awareness about

strategy evaluation and control indicates that these critical aspects of strategic management are not actively practiced or communicated in these universities. Without regular monitoring, assessment, and feedback mechanisms, it becomes challenging to measure the effectiveness of strategies and make necessary adjustments to improve performance.

### Performance of Private Universities

The summary of the descriptive statistics of performance of private universities is presented in Table 5

Table 5: Descriptive statistics of Performance of Private Universities

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Deviation
In the last five years, the university has consistently received top ratings for its academic programs.	26.60%	44.20%	5.00%	16.30%	7.80%	2.08	1.06
In the last five years, the university has consistently received top ratings for its student satisfaction.	35.40%	36.70%	7.20%	12.20%	8.50%	2.32	0.88
The university has demonstrated an increase in the research publications over the past five years.	27.60%	30.70%	2.80%	27.90%	11.00%	2.11	0.94
The university has achieved consistently high graduation rates in the last five years.	15.70%	61.80%	5.60%	10.00%	6.90%	2.00	0.78
The university has increased its funding over the last five years.	29.20%	52.00%	5.30%	9.40%	4.10%	1.97	0.99
The university has demonstrated increase in collaborations with other institutions and industries in the last five years	21.30%	57.10%	2.50%	11.90%	7.20%	2.03	0.65
The student enrolment rate has been increasing over the years	30.10%	49.20%	2.20%	7.20%	11.30%	2.19	0.74
Average						<b>2.10</b>	<b>0.86</b>

The summary of the descriptive statistics of performance of private universities is presented in Table 5. The study results found that 70.8% (26.60% + 44.20%) of the respondents disagreed that in the last five years, their universities have consistently received top ratings for their academic programs. Only 24.1% (16.30% + 7.80%) agreed with the statement, while 5.00% remained neutral. The mean score was 2.08 with a standard deviation of 1.06, indicating that most respondents disagreed with the consistent top ratings for academic programs. Regarding student satisfaction, 72.1% (35.40% + 36.70%) of the respondents disagreed that in the last five years, their universities have consistently received top ratings for student satisfaction. Only 20.7% (12.20% + 8.50%) agreed with the statement, and 7.20% remained neutral. The mean score was 2.32 with a standard deviation of 0.88, suggesting that most respondents disagreed with the consistent top ratings for student satisfaction.

The study also found that 58.3% (27.60% + 30.70%) of the respondents disagreed that their universities have demonstrated an increase in research publications over the past five years. However, 38.9% (27.90% + 11.00%) agreed with the statement, and 2.80% remained neutral. The mean score was 2.11 with a standard deviation of 0.94, indicating a relatively balanced opinion on the increase in research publications. Furthermore, 77.5% (15.70% + 61.80%) of the respondents disagreed that their universities have achieved consistently high graduation rates in the last five years. Only 16.9% (10.00% + 6.90%) agreed with the statement, and 5.60% remained neutral. The mean score was 2.00 with a standard deviation of 0.78, suggesting that most respondents disagreed with the consistently high graduation rates. The study also found that 81.2% (29.20% + 52.00%) of the respondents disagreed that their universities have increased their funding over the last five years. Only 13.5% (9.40% + 4.10%) agreed with the statement, and 5.30% remained neutral. The mean score was 1.97 with a standard deviation of 0.99, indicating that most respondents disagreed with the increase in funding.

Regarding collaborations, 78.4% (21.30% + 57.10%) of the respondents disagreed that their universities have demonstrated an increase in collaborations with other institutions and industries in the last five years. Only 19.1% (11.90% + 7.20%) agreed with the statement, and 2.50% remained neutral. The mean score was 2.03 with a standard deviation of 0.65, suggesting that most respondents disagreed with the increase in collaborations. Lastly, 79.3% (30.10% + 49.20%) of the respondents disagreed that the student enrollment rate has been increasing over the years. Only 18.5% (7.20% + 11.30%) agreed with the statement, and 2.20% remained neutral. The mean score was 2.19 with a standard deviation of 0.74, indicating that most respondents disagreed with the increasing student enrollment rate. The average mean score for all statements was 2.10, with an average standard deviation of 0.86. This indicates that, on average, the respondents disagreed with the statements regarding the performance of private universities in the Democratic Republic of Congo over the past five years.

In addition, from the open-ended questions, respondents highlighted various challenges faced by these institutions in the DRC. They mentioned financial difficulties, low student enrollment, internal organizational issues, and a lack of concerted planning as major obstacles to their performance. Respondents also noted that university performance largely depends on the vision and decisions of the managers or founders, with limited involvement of other stakeholders. This centralized decision-making process may not adequately address the diverse needs and perspectives of the university community. Some respondents even questioned the overall performance and development of private universities in the country, suggesting a need for significant improvements in strategic management practices and stakeholder engagement.

### Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis examines the association between independent and dependent variables. The correlation results are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6: Correlation Results

		Performance	Strategic Analysis	Strategy Formulation	Strategy Implementation	Strategy Evaluation & Control
Performance	Pearson Correlation	1.000				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
Strategic Analysis	Pearson Correlation	.385*	1.000			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.019				
Strategy Formulation	Pearson Correlation	.551*	0.286	1.000		

	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.086			
Strategy Implementation	Pearson Correlation	.586**	.420**	.405**	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000		
Strategy Evaluation & Control	Pearson Correlation	.622**	0.077	0.256	0.249	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.652	0.126	0.137	

The study found that strategic analysis is positively and significantly associated with performance ( $r=0.385$ ,  $p=0.019$ ). This suggests that as private universities in the Democratic Republic of Congo engage more in strategic analysis practices, their overall performance tends to improve. Furthermore, the results indicate that strategy formulation has a strong positive and significant correlation with performance ( $r=0.551$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). This implies that private universities that effectively formulate strategies aligned with their mission, vision, and goals are more likely to achieve better performance outcomes. The study also found a strong positive and significant correlation between strategy implementation and performance ( $r=0.586$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). This highlights the importance of effectively executing the formulated strategies to drive university performance. Moreover, the results show that strategy evaluation and control have the strongest positive and significant correlation with performance ( $r=0.622$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) among the independent variables. This underscores the crucial role of regularly assessing the effectiveness of implemented strategies and making necessary adjustments to ensure continuous improvement.

### Regression Analysis

The goal of regression is to find the best linear combination of the independent variables that can predict the dependent variable. The regression analysis includes the analysis of model fitness, analysis of variance and regression of coefficient. The study results of multiple model fitness is presented in Table 7

Table 7: Model Fitness

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.817a	0.668	0.627	0.299976

a. Predictors: Strategic analysis, strategy formulation, strategy implementation, strategy evaluation & control

The model fitness results presented in Table 7 demonstrate the overall effectiveness of the regression model in explaining the variation in the performance of private universities in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The R Square value of 0.668 indicates that approximately 66.8% of the variance in university performance can be explained by the predictor variables, which include strategic analysis, strategy formulation, strategy implementation, and strategy evaluation and control. This suggests that the strategic management practices included in the model have a substantial collective impact on the performance of private universities. Overall, the model fitness results support the significance of strategic management practices in predicting university performance. The analysis of variance results are presented in Table 8

Table 8: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	5.797	4	1.449	16.106	.000b



	Residual	2.88	32	0.09		
	Total	8.677	36			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

b. Predictors: Strategic analysis, strategy formulation, strategy implementation, strategy evaluation & control

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results presented in Table 8 further confirm the statistical significance of the regression model. The p-value associated with the ANOVA is 0.000, which is below the conventional threshold of 0.05. This indicates that the model, which includes strategic analysis, strategy formulation, strategy implementation, and strategy evaluation and control as predictors, is statistically significant in explaining the variation in university performance. The F-value of 16.106 suggests that the model has a strong explanatory power and that the relationship between the predictors and performance is not due to random chance. The ANOVA results provide strong evidence to support the validity of the regression model and the importance of strategic management practices in driving the performance of private universities in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The regression of coefficient results is presented in Table 9

Table 9: Regressions of Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.083	0.314		0.266	0.792
Strategic Analysis	0.144	0.065	0.235	2.214	0.034
Strategy Formulation	0.600	0.150	0.553	4.007	0.000
Strategy Implementation	0.234	0.096	0.326	2.436	0.021
Strategy Evaluation & Control	0.448	0.088	0.543	5.124	0.000

a Dependent Variable: Performance

The study found that strategic analysis is positively and significantly related to the performance of private universities in the Democratic Republic of Congo ( $\beta=0.144$ ,  $p=0.034$ ). This indicates that an increase in strategic analysis practices leads to improved performance of these institutions. Strategic analysis involves assessing the internal and external factors that influence the university's operations, such as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. By conducting thorough strategic analysis, universities can make informed decisions, develop effective strategies, and allocate resources efficiently, which ultimately contributes to better performance outcomes. Similarly, strategy formulation was found to have a positive and significant relationship with the performance of private universities ( $\beta=0.600$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). This suggests that universities that effectively formulate strategies aligned with their mission, vision, and goals are more likely to achieve superior performance. Strategy formulation involves defining the university's strategic direction, setting objectives, and developing action plans to achieve those objectives. When universities have well-defined strategies in place, they can prioritize initiatives, allocate resources effectively, and guide decision-making processes towards the achievement of their goals, leading to enhanced performance.

The study also revealed that strategy implementation is positively and significantly related to the performance of private universities ( $\beta=0.234$ ,  $p=0.021$ ). This highlights the importance of successfully executing the formulated strategies to drive university performance. Strategy implementation involves translating the strategic plans into concrete actions, assigning responsibilities, and monitoring progress. Effective strategy implementation ensures that the university's operations are aligned with its strategic objectives, resources are

utilized optimally, and coordination among different departments and stakeholders is enhanced. When strategies are implemented successfully, universities can achieve better performance outcomes, such as increased student enrollment, higher graduation rates, and improved financial sustainability. Furthermore, the results showed that strategy evaluation and control has a positive and significant relationship with the performance of private universities ( $\beta=0.448$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). This underscores the crucial role of regularly assessing the effectiveness of implemented strategies and making necessary adjustments to ensure continuous improvement. Strategy evaluation and control involve establishing performance metrics, monitoring progress, comparing actual results with planned objectives, and taking corrective actions when needed. By having robust evaluation and control mechanisms in place, universities can identify areas of strengths and weaknesses, adapt to changing circumstances, and make data-driven decisions to optimize their performance. Regular evaluation and control help universities stay on track towards achieving their strategic goals and enable them to make timely interventions to address any performance gaps.

## CONCLUSION

The study concludes that strategic analysis has a significant positive effect on the performance of private universities in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The findings suggest that universities that engage in comprehensive internal and external analysis to identify their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats are more likely to achieve better performance outcomes. By conducting strategic analysis, universities can make informed decisions, develop effective strategies, and allocate resources efficiently, ultimately leading to improved performance. The study also concludes that strategy formulation plays a crucial role in enhancing the performance of private universities in the DRC. The results indicate that universities that effectively formulate strategies aligned with their mission, vision, and goals are more likely to achieve superior performance. Well-defined strategies provide a clear direction for the university, enable prioritization of initiatives, and guide decision-making processes towards the achievement of strategic objectives. Thus, investing time and resources in strategy formulation can significantly contribute to the overall performance of private universities.

Besides, the study concludes that strategy implementation has a significant positive impact on the performance of private universities in the DRC. The findings highlight the importance of successfully executing formulated strategies to drive university performance. Effective strategy implementation involves translating strategic plans into concrete actions, assigning responsibilities, and monitoring progress. When strategies are implemented successfully, universities can align their operations with strategic objectives, optimize resource utilization, and enhance coordination among different departments and stakeholders, leading to better performance outcomes. Further, the study concludes that strategy evaluation and control is a critical component of strategic management that significantly influences the performance of private universities in the DRC. The results demonstrate that regular assessment of the effectiveness of implemented strategies and making necessary adjustments are essential for continuous improvement. Robust evaluation and control mechanisms enable universities to identify strengths and weaknesses, adapt to changing circumstances, and make data-driven decisions to optimize performance. Therefore, prioritizing strategy evaluation and control practices can substantially contribute to the overall performance of private universities.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that private universities in the Democratic Republic of Congo should prioritize strategic analysis as an integral part of their strategic management practices. Universities should allocate sufficient resources and expertise to conduct comprehensive internal and external analysis regularly. This can involve assessing the university's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, as well as analyzing market trends, competitor activities, and stakeholder needs. By institutionalizing strategic analysis practices, universities can make informed decisions and develop strategies that capitalize on their strengths and opportunities while mitigating weaknesses and threats. The study further recommends that private universities in the DRC should invest in effective strategy formulation processes. Universities should engage key stakeholders, including faculty, staff, students, and external partners, in the strategy formulation process to ensure diverse perspectives and buy-in. The formulated strategies should be clearly articulated, aligned with the university's mission and vision, and communicated effectively to all stakeholders. Universities should also ensure that the strategies are

flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances while maintaining a clear direction towards the achievement of long-term goals.

The study also recommends that private universities in the DRC should focus on effective strategy implementation to translate their formulated strategies into tangible results. Universities should develop detailed action plans, assign clear responsibilities, and allocate necessary resources to support the implementation process. Regular monitoring and reporting mechanisms should be established to track progress and identify any deviations from the planned objectives. Universities should also foster a culture of collaboration and accountability, ensuring that all stakeholders are actively involved in the implementation process and held responsible for their contributions. The study recommends that private universities in the DRC should establish robust strategy evaluation and control practices to continuously assess and improve their performance. Universities should define clear performance metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs) aligned with their strategic objectives. Regular performance reviews should be conducted to monitor progress, identify areas of improvement, and make data-driven decisions. Universities should also encourage a culture of learning and continuous improvement, where lessons learned from the evaluation process are systematically captured and used to refine future strategies and practices. By prioritizing strategy evaluation and control, universities can ensure that their strategic management efforts are effective and contribute to long-term success.

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