

Strategic Planning, Leadership Communication, and Good Governance in Schools: A Systematic Literature Review

Ahmad Syamil Abdul Rahim^{1*}

¹ School of Education, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Malaysia

* Corresponding Author: ahmadsyamil1989@gmail.com

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Abstract: *This study systematically reviews current research and trend of theories on the interconnection between strategic planning and leadership communication on good governance practice in school. The drawing of this review was designed according to PRISMA from reviewed sources which are Scopus and Web of Science (WoS). Referring to the PICO framework, this study aims to explore the unique interconnection between strategic planning, leadership communication, and good governance in schools. The review has synthesized pertinent articles from 2021 to 2025 and found that strategic planning implementation can improve organizational performance, ineffectiveness of strategic initiatives is caused by poor leaders' communication, and good governance is well practiced through execution of strategic planning and effective communication. In general, this systematic literature review provides insights into the interconnection between strategic planning and leadership communication on good governance practice in school. Thus, it signals the need for further studies on the sustainability of this interconnection and the influence towards good governance practice. Future research should examine specific leadership styles, such as transformational or distributed leadership, to identify which approaches most effectively bridge strategic planning with governance outcomes. Finally, scholars are encouraged to observe professional development frameworks that enhance school leaders' communicative competencies, ensuring they can articulate strategic goals clearly to all stakeholders and directly impacts long-term institutional accountability and governance standards.*

Keywords: Strategic Planning; Leadership Communication; Good Governance; Educational Institutions; The Interconnection

1. Introduction

In the landscape of any educational institutions, an operative and structured strategic plan can become one of the essential roadmaps for the organizations (Bantilan et al., 2023). However, this roadmap cannot be applied and implemented without the engine of effective leadership communication, which results into collective action. It is a critical synergy where planning is interconnected with communication which ultimately builds core elements to good governance (Gani & Harun, 2024). This systematic literature review aims to identify the involved interconnections between strategic planning, leadership communication, and the application of good governance within educational institutions, navigating a comprehensive geographical scope from global perspectives to the Malaysian context. This review synthesizes findings, discussions, and theories from numerous literatures, initially forming from world-wide trends,

narrowing its focus to Asia countries, and finally, empirical studies in Malaysia. De Moya et al. (2017) explained the funnel-shaped approach is a model to analyse from a broader to specific topic where it ensures the literature is grounded in the wider field before providing a more precise gap in that focused knowledge. Consequently, this systematic literature review shifts the readers' attentions towards understanding the core elements of strategic planning, leadership communication, and good governance globally before entering the local educational settings. Building on these empirical insights, the conceptual landscape of strategic planning, leadership communication, and good governance in education can be further understood through this concept map generated by Scopus AI.

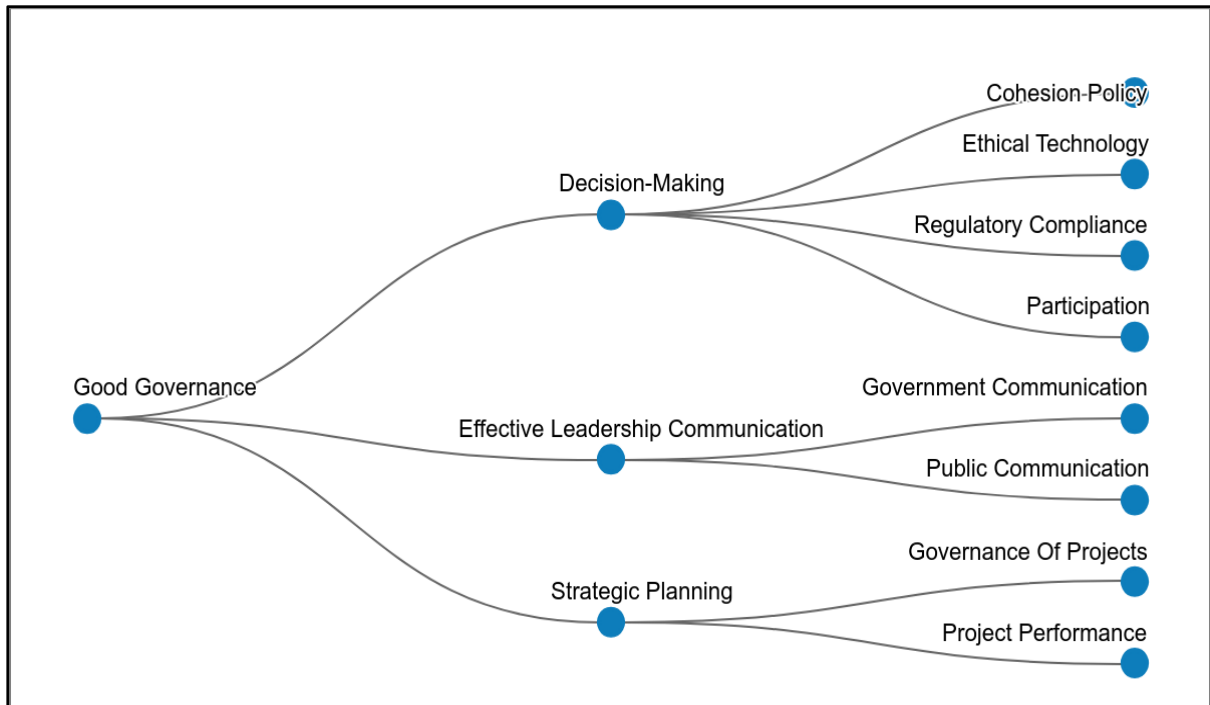


Figure 1: Concept map generated by Scopus AI

2. Research Objectives

As suggested by Lockwood et al. (2015), PICo framework (Population, Interest, Context) is adopted to formulate research questions. In framing the scope of this study, the three components in PICo have each significant distinct.

- i. Population (P) – Specific group or participants targeted by the study. It clarifies the focus of the study by involving few selections such as particular demographic, professional group, or community.
- ii. Interest (I) – Signifies the core phenomenon or subject matter to be examined such as issues and interventions so that they can be explored, analysed, or understood in depth.
- iii. Context (Co) – Environment or setting in which the population and interest take place such as geographical location, background, institutional settings, or any relevant situational factors.

Referring to the PICo framework, it helps to ensure objectives and questions are relevance to the study, hence both aspects are answerable. This systematic approach enables the research to stay in line with its objectives and questions; thus, it can make a significant contribution to the study field. This systematic literature review aims to address the following objectives.

- i. To explore the role of strategic planning in enhancing leadership communication among school leaders.
- ii. To examine the effective leadership communication contribution to the principles of good governance in school.
- iii. To explore the potential ways of strategic planning and leadership communication processes impact decision-making among school leaders regarding governance.

3. Research Questions

The research questions are as follows.

- i. What role does strategic planning play in enhancing leadership communication among school leaders?
- ii. How can effective leadership communication contribute to the principles of good governance in educational institutions?
- iii. In what ways do strategic planning and leadership communication processes impact decision-making among school leaders regarding governance?

4. Relevance of the Review

This systematic literature review provides a critical analysis of the interconnection between strategic planning and leadership communication in fostering good governance in educational institutions. A well-designed strategic plan remains inactive until it is aligned with effective leadership communication (Bantilan et al., 2023). In relation, leadership communication acts as the essential mechanism for translating strategic vision into a shared reality, therefore, good governance can be built by responsible trust and transparency among the employees (Farwitawati et al., 2025). Farwitawati et al. (2025) added that good governance is demonstrated from a well-communicated strategic vision where organizational leaders put the plan into operative framework to exercise acceptable and responsible governance in the organizations. Furthermore, good governance mechanisms such as being accountable, increasing in trust, and performing efficiently are some of the consequences that occur at workplace through consistent positive leadership communication (Sukoco et al., 2024). Putting the aspects in educational context, educational leaders who are planning strategically with the integration of good communication management can influence the formulation of positive educational qualities which at the end will result in the increase of the quality of education at the institutions (Gunawan et al., 2025). The figure 2 below illustrates the insights of this systematic literature review.

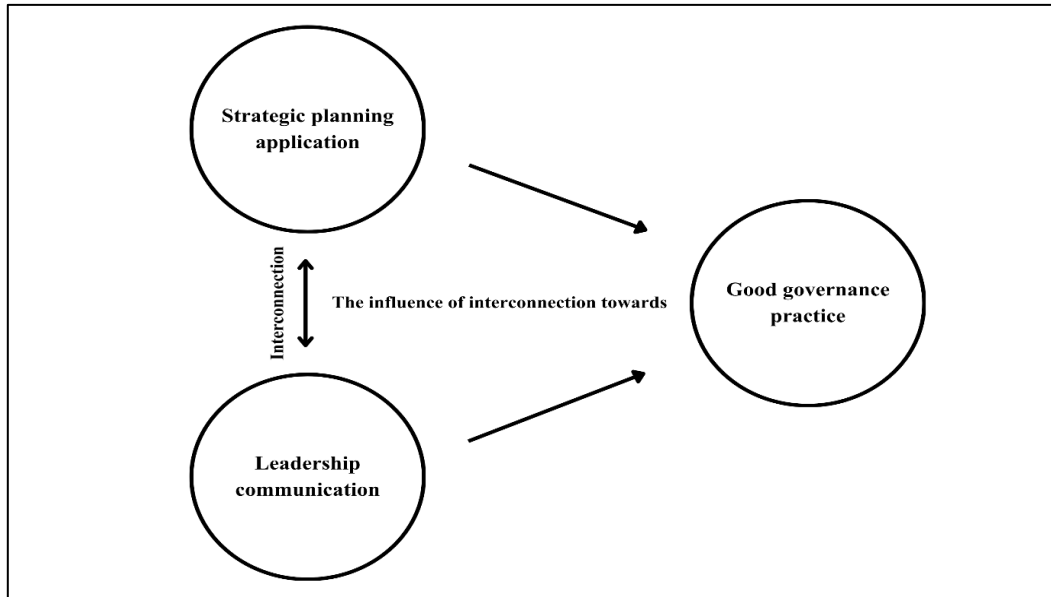


Figure 2: The review insights

5. Methodology

This systematic literature review is designed to identify the interconnection between strategic planning and leadership communication towards good governance in educational institutions. According to Azarian et al. (2023), this systematic literature review is conducted to lessen individual biases in research synthesis and is also used to provide consistency in scholarly inquiries. In addition, the structured methodology of systematic literature reviews helps to minimize biased interpretations, thereby offering more reliable findings for further investigation or studies (Azarian et al., 2023). Carrera-Rivera et al., (2022) added that a systematic literature review provides a structured process in analysing existing theories and findings in research by presenting a comprehensive overview of those aspects analytically. It is further explained by Shaheen et al. (2023) where the authors suggested that this extensive and methodical review is also designed to synthesize existing literature in past studies, therefore, this can result in increasing the reliability and validity of research findings across numerous disciplines. The mapping of this systematic literature review is designed according to Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses Statement (PRISMA) recommendations where four phases are suggested namely, identification, screening, eligibility, and included (Moher et al., 2009).

Search Strategies

A precise search strategy is important in order to successfully identify relevant studies, which is commonly involved multiple databases and the detailed search scope is developed from key concepts and terms (Shaheen et al., 2023). This systematic search strategy is critical in gathering comprehensive scholarly articles for reviewing (Sauer & Seuring, 2023) and the formulation of these search strategies can help to develop a wide-ranging systematic literature review (Han et al., 2024). A systematic and thorough search was performed across multiple academic databases to capture a wide range of relevant and pertinent studies and the databases used are Elsevier: Scopus and Web of Science (WoS). The search was limited to related studies published from 2021 to 2025 to incorporate the current theories and findings and also latest research developments. Besides, examples of keywords used while searching for related studies were Strategic Planning, Leadership Communication, Good Governance in Educational Institutions, The Interconnection, and The Relationship. Additionally, Boolean search strings were also used as this technique helped to retrieved information retrieval (Bello Aliyu, 2017).

This specific search strategy was developed to ensure all-inclusive coverage of the literature pertinent to the review’s objectives. The Boolean search strings are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Boolean search strings summary

<p>Scopus</p>	<p>TITLE-ABS-KEY (("strategic planning" OR "strategic management" OR "strategic plan*" OR "organizational strategy" OR "strategy formulation") AND ("leadership communication" OR "communicative leadership" OR "leader communication" OR "communication style" OR "stakeholder engagement" OR "managerial communication") AND ("good governance" OR "effective governance" OR "institutional governance" OR "accountability" OR "transparency" OR "school governance") AND ("education" OR "school*" OR "academic" OR "college"))</p> <p>Date of Access: December 2025</p>
<p>Web of Science (WoS)</p>	<p>TS= (("strategic planning" OR "strategic management" OR "strategic plan*" OR "organizational strategy" OR "strategy formulation") AND ("leadership communication" OR "communicative leadership" OR "leader communication" OR "communication style" OR "stakeholder engagement" OR "managerial communication") AND ("good governance" OR "effective governance" OR "institutional governance" OR "accountability" OR "transparency" OR "school governance") AND ("education" OR "school*" OR "academic" OR "college"))</p> <p>Date of Access: December 2025</p>

The identification of studies is summarised in Figure 3 based on Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses Statement (PRISMA) by Moher et al. (2009).

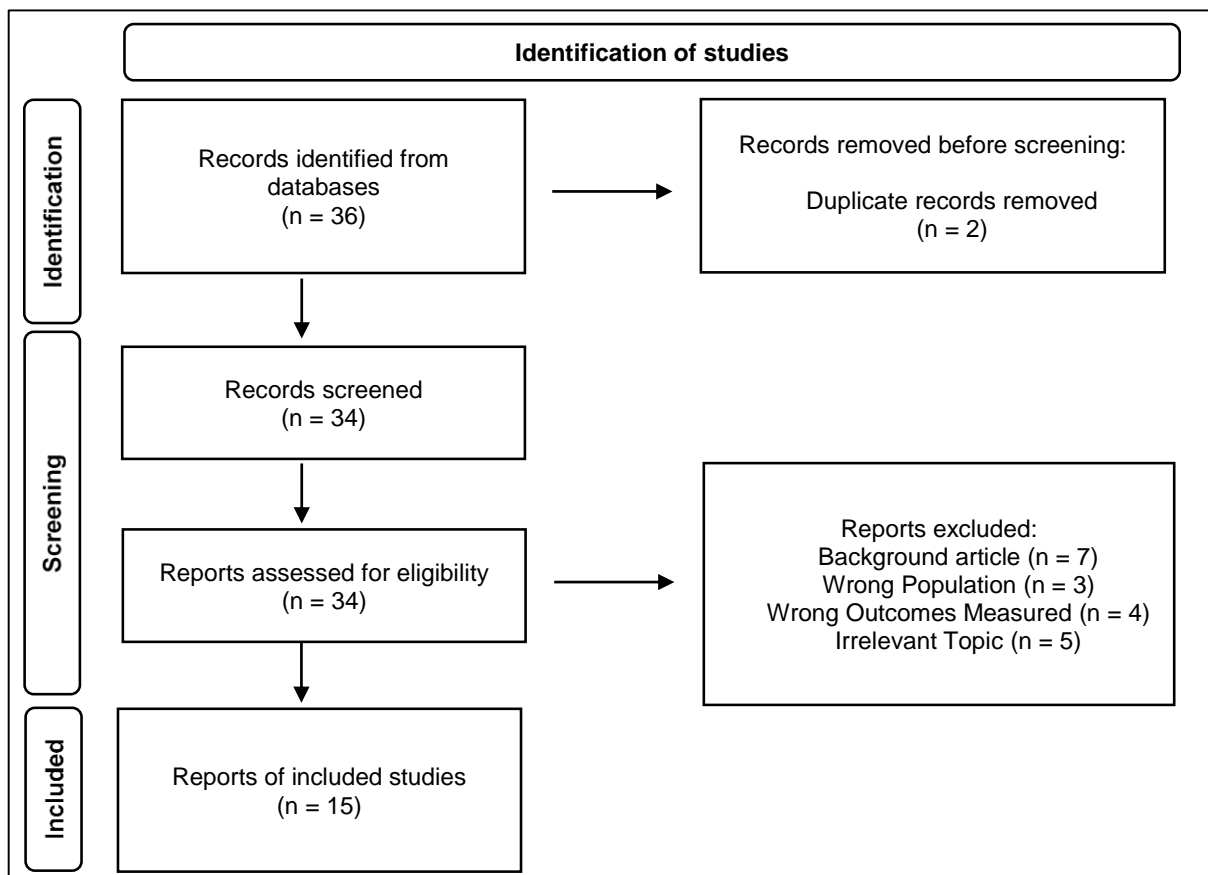


Figure 3: The search strategy and articles selections

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

In order to ensure the significance of the chosen studies, aspects of relevancy, quality and years of publication date must be prioritized (Shaheen et al., 2023). The search strategy also involved

snowballing for identification of primary studies in systematic literature studies from the reference lists of identified key articles to capture additional pertinent studies (Wohlin et al., 2022). Firstly, relevant studies were included if they focused on the three main key points which are strategic planning, leadership communication and good governance in educational institutions. Studies examining the interconnection and relationship of those key points conducted in the non-educational settings were not considered as the non-educational setting may provide different point of views of those particular topics. Secondly, only peer reviewed and published journal articles were included to sustain high research standards (Azarian et al., 2023). Lastly, only publications from 2021 to 2025 were selected to provide recent trends and growths in the studied field. On the other hand, exclusion criteria will filter out studies which are showing unclear relationship or interconnection of strategic planning, leadership communication, and good governance in educational settings, as well as those lacking empirical data or theoretical grounding. Apart from that, non-peer-reviewed sources and opinion pieces were also excluded. Table 3.2.1 below summarised the search protocol table using PICOS approach (Population, Intervention, Context, Outcome, Study Design), adapted for management in education (Eriksen & Frandsen, 2018).

Table 2: Search protocol table using PICOS approach

Criterion	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Timeframe	2021 – 2025	Before 2021
Language	English only.	Non-English papers
Document Type	Peer-reviewed journal articles and reviewed papers	Book chapters, dissertations, editorials, opinion pieces, blogs
Context (Population)	Educational Institutions: Schools, Vocational Institutes, or Ministry of Education.	Corporate/Business sector, Healthcare, NGOs, Military, or Public Administration (Government generally).
Subject Focus	Studies explicitly linking Strategic Planning OR Leadership Communication to Good Governance	Studies focusing solely on classroom pedagogy, curriculum design, student grades, or infrastructure without a management focus.
Study Design	Empirical studies (Quantitative, Qualitative, Mixed Methods)	Anecdotal reports, non-academic magazine articles.

6. Findings and Discussion

Strategic Planning and Leadership Communication

The inter connected relationship between strategic planning and leadership communication acts as the important mediator that can increase the quality of educational institutions through good governance by the leaders. Bantilan et al. (2023) explained that a strategic plan can perform as the crucial roadmap which outlines the institutional goals clearly while Mekolle (2024) stated that educational authorities or leaders who practice effective communication can empower positive contributions to governance.

To start with, strategic planning and leadership communication are both foundational elements to any educational institutions in sustaining credible management and resulting in the success of education (Habeeb & Eyupoglu, 2024). In a study among 388 staff from 48 state universities in Nigeria by Habeeb and Eyupoglu (2004), the researchers found that in order for all the staffs to understand and actively pursue the strategic objectives targeted, educational leaders should create operative frameworks to improve communication in the team. This action will open the opportunity for all the staffs or the team members to be involved in strategic planning implementation and at the end, it can improve organizational performance. Gunawan et al.

(2025) added that the roles of both strategic planning and leadership communication were different where strategic planning acted as a structured model to set long-term goals, aligned resources, and then, operated to complex challenges, while leadership communication profiled institutional culture, trust, and engagement. The authors found issues and challenges in the implementation of strategic planning in Islamic education institutions due to the ineffectiveness of strategic initiatives through poor leaders' communication (Gunawan et al., 2025). The interconnection between these domains of strategic planning and leadership communication was further recognized in a study by Okeleke and Agwoje (2023) where the researchers indicated that there was a significant relationship between the application of strategic planning practices and effective institutions management focusing on one the key variables which are leaders' strategic communication among 20 academic staffs in Public Universities in The South-South Region of Nigeria. This showed the important of driving institutional performance through operative strategic planning and authoritative leadership communication (Okeleke & Agwoje, 2023). Besides, recent research also suggested the urgent needs for educational leaders to move beyond traditional administered models by adapting and implementing effective frameworks tailored to the unique and flexible demands of current education by emphasizing sustainability strategic planning and communicate strategically (Sliwka et al., 2024). The authors identified that school principals in 26 schools in one of the unnamed European countries agreed on recruiting more transformational leaders who practice the application of strategic planning and communicate strategically in the institutions and reorient their leadership based on the current educational settings (Sliwka et al., 2024). In the Malaysia context, a conceptual study by Aziz and Rusli (2024) reported that the strategic communication was crucial for in the effort of educating people about public policies and strategic planning. This study also highlighted the important roles of strategic communicator where leadership were acknowledged from that aspect (Aziz & Rusli, 2024). Apart from that, Abdul Gani and Ab Halim (2024) recommended strategic leadership and effective leadership communication management signified a vital role in ensuring the operational curriculum in the institutions remain aligned with industry needs, thus, these could help to improve the quality of the educational institutions. Simultaneously, educational leaders who were practicing leadership communication styles proved to be one of the most effectives in building positive atmosphere in the organization and at the end, achieving strategic initiatives successfully (Gani & Harun, 2024).

Good Governance

Educational leaders are required to practice and apply good governance in their educational institutions. Rom and Soda (2023) explained that practicing good governance principles are needed for every leader in various types of resources management and education is believed to be one of the management systems which should put the implementation of good governance as their top priority. Educational leaders in educational institutions who practice and uphold good governance must adhere to core principles. Some of the core principles are being transparency, offer accountability in delegating task, provide opportunity for team members' active participation, promote fairness, and prioritize ethical integrity (Javellana Ballenas & Orongan, 2025). The authors also stressed on the policies of school governance which are managing school policies and structures and making effective decision making to ensure transparency and accountability within the school building, resulting in nurturing positive school culture (Javellana Ballenas & Orongan, 2025). Therefore, educational leaders are encouraged to apply suitable and practical model of good governance in their educational institutions and promote ethical conduct of work among team members. Additionally, educational leaders are suggested to actively engage stakeholders such as teachers, students, parents, and communities the process of decision making so that the unique socio-economic

contexts of every individual are respected and this action can ensure a better governance in the organization (Rosser, 2023). Involving other stakeholders means the educational leaders have successfully utilized and promoted collaborative governance approaches which can address dynamic encounters and sustain the educational institution performance (Wande Kasope Elugbaju et al., 2024).

Recent studies have shown the important of practicing good governance among educational leaders in every educational organization. In a study about assessing the performance of Peruvian education system by De la Cruz and Mergoni (2024), the authors found that applying good governance and structured administration practices in Peruvian education systems would have positively influenced effective education service. In particular, being compliance to appropriate standards helped to ensure accountability and transparency (De la Cruz & Mergoni, 2024). Besides, multiple studies in Indonesia also indicated the similar findings. Nabella et al. (2022) conducted a study among 178 teachers at Batam City Senior High School and the authors reported that that there was a direct influence of leadership culture on good governance at the school through the creation of trust among school teachers while another study among 838 vocational school principals, vice-principals, and teachers in Indonesia by Supriadi et al. (2021), the findings outlined the characters of good school governance would facilitate the participation of every working members in the college during the problem solving process, thus, significantly improved the quality of the made decisions. Apart from that, Rom & Soda (2023), stated the notion of good governance was extensively spread in Malaysia and was actively used during the operation of most of the government projects, and the authors suggested that it is very crucial to continuously improve the understanding of good governance principles among Malaysian.

The interconnection

The interconnection between these three aspects namely, strategic planning, leadership communication, and good governance in educational institutions is best understood as a cyclical and synergistic ecosystem. The meeting point is they do not function as separate entities but, they mutually drive the educational institution to success. The summary of this interconnection is shown in Figure 4.

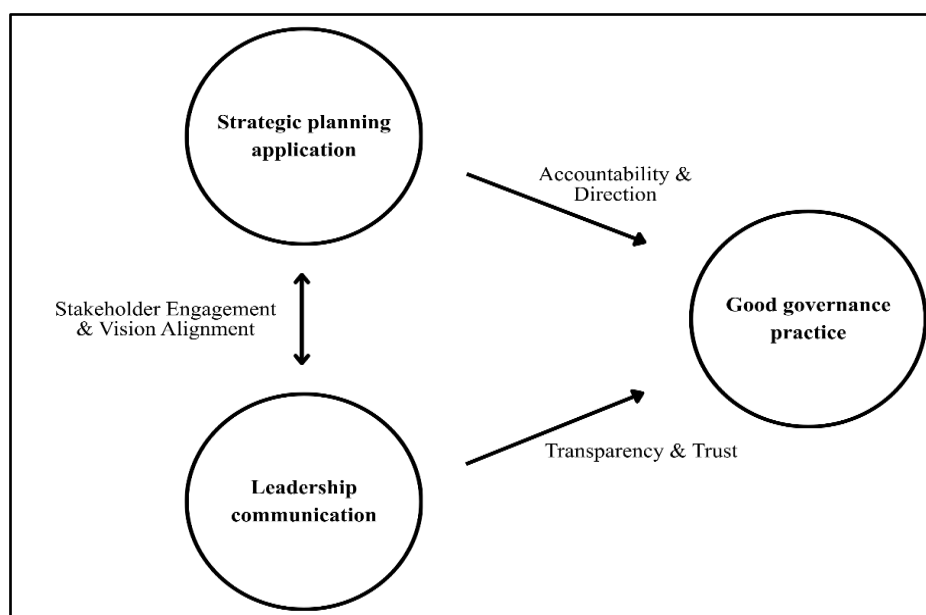


Figure 4: Summary of the interconnection

In school, good governance needs the institution to have a clear direction of what to achieve at the end of the targeted timeframe (Javellana Ballenas & Orongan, 2025). Therefore, a strategic plan is needed as it can provide the metrics of success (Adeoye et al., 2025). For example, when an institution approves a 5-year strategic plan, it must be clearly explained to all the teachers on what are the targeted aims and objectives to be reached. However, one of the reasons why a strategic plan often fails in educational institutions is because it is not delivered effectively to all the teachers. To find the solution, effective leadership communication can bridge this gap and high-quality leaders should be able to translate and distribute the strategic goals into responsibilities among the teachers (Adole, 2024). One of the elements to distribute strategic aims and objectives is the application of two-way communication among school leaders and teachers where a good leader communicates well to ensure the plan is operated competently by the teachers. In addition, good governance is considered as making reliable and wise decisions and this can be achieved through effective leadership communication where it ensures that decision-making processes are functioned efficaciously (Figueiredo et al., 2024).

The critical meeting point of strategic planning and leadership communication is placed in the shared translation of a school's vision into actionable, inclusive, and transparent practices (Norman et al., 2025). In line with that, strategic planning provides the analytical overall framework by determining school needs, formulating long-term visions, and setting objectives to improve educational quality (Murugi & Mugwe, 2023). However, this planning requires leadership communication to move from a static document to a successfully implemented reality (Olivia Marbun et al., 2023; Sofia et al., 2023). Thus, the meeting point occurs when a school principal effectively communicates the strategic vision and ultimately, good organizational governance is built through this synergy. Blending these three aspects, there are three main relationships from this interconnection. Firstly, effective leaders foster open communication and seek discussion with teachers, students, and parents before making strategic decisions (Husni et al., 2024). Next, through open communication, collaborative governance ensures that diverse groups are actively involved in school management, creating a more dynamic and participatory environment and it will result in building positive trust and compliance with ethical standards in the schools as it enhances transparency and trust by sharing information, maintaining high degrees of teamwork, and utilizing democratic group decision-making (Adeoye et al., 2025; Gani & Harun, 2024; Javellana Ballenas & Orongan, 2025).

It can be addressed that these three aspects generate a virtuous connection in a high-performing educational institution. Firstly, strategic planning sets the aims, objectives and goals, secondly, leadership communication articulates these aims, objectives and goals to stakeholders and continuously gathers feedback and lastly, good governance guarantees the feedback is integrated and the plan is executed efficiently. Therefore, this interconnection between strategic planning and leadership communication functions as a dynamic system that drives good governance in schools. Ultimately, this synergy ensures that governance is a collaborative practice grounded in trust and clear institutional purpose.

7. Conclusion

The investigation of the interconnection of strategic planning and leadership communication and the practice of good governance in educational institutions have shown that all elements are important in achieving educational institutions aims and goals. It is essential at the earlier stage to comprehend the interconnection between strategic planning and leadership communication and later, bridging the idea to fostering good governance practice in

educational institutions. Strategic planning is crucial to sustain effective management in educational institutions (Castillo et al., 2024). Habeeb and Eyupoglu (2024) added that it involves a structured process begins with firstly, setting long-term aims and goals, secondly, developing policies and procedures, and lastly, allocating resources to bring into line with the targeted objectives of the institutions.

Likewise, effective leadership communication is also one of the critical leadership components in educational institutions. Effective leadership communication can build a positive working environment, encourage active collaboration, and at the end, it will help to achieve the institution aims and goals (Olivia Marbun et al., 2023). It is further explained by the authors that leaders who practice effective communication is one of the good examples of effective leadership (Olivia Marbun et al., 2023). M'Mugambi (2024) explained two key points about the interconnection of strategic planning and leadership communication and the practice of good governance in educational institutions which are alignment and clarity and engagement and collaboration. Strategic planning provides a clear guideline for problem solving, decision-making and resource allocation while leadership communication guarantees that this strategic plan is effectively and clearly communicated to all stakeholders, thus good governance is well documented during the process (Husni et al., 2024). Whereas, in the concept of engagement and collaboration, leaders who communicate evidently and effectively can engage all the stakeholders, hence, developing a cooperative atmosphere that provisions the strategic planning implementation (Husni et al., 2024). This kind of engagement and collaboration is one of the decisive elements in good governance (Adole, 2024). For future research, it is suggested to explore the sustainability of this interconnection and to add crisis management elements for broader point of view. As for conclusion, practicing good governance in the educational institutions among educational leaders strongly requires the interconnection of strategic planning and leadership communication.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this study.

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