

**STRATEGIC BUSINESS LEADERSHIP AND ITS ROLE IN  
DRIVING ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE AND GROWTH**

By:

**AARON UMOREN DANIEL**

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## TABLE OF CONTENT

|   |    |
|---|----|
| 1.1 Background to the Study.....        | 3  |
| 1.2 Statement of Research Problem.....  | 6  |
| 1.3 Research Questions.....             | 8  |
| 1.4 Objectives of the Study.....        | 9  |
| 1.5 Research Propositions.....          | 9  |
| 1.6 Significance of the Study.....      | 10 |
| 1.7 Scope of the Study.....             | 12 |
| 1.8 Definition of Key Terms.....        | 13 |
| 1.9 Organization of the Study.....      | 14 |
| 1.10 Preliminary Literature Review..... | 15 |
| 1.10.1 Conceptual                       |    |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Literature.....                          | 15 |
| 1.10.2 Empirical<br>Literature.....      | 18 |
| 1.10.3 Gaps in the<br>Literature.....    | 22 |
| 1.11 Theoretical<br>Framework.....       | 24 |
| 1.12 Research<br>Methodology.....        | 27 |
| 1.12.1 Research<br>Design.....           | 27 |
| 1.12.2 Method of Data<br>Collection..... | 28 |
| 1.12.3 Method of Data<br>Analysis.....   | 29 |
| 1.12.5 Ethical<br>Consideration.....     | 30 |
| Timeline<br>Table.....                   | 31 |
| References.....                          | 32 |

## **1.1 Background to the Study**

Organisations are being increasingly stressed to deliver greater performance, retain competitive edge, and guarantee long-term expansion in a highly volatile, uncertainties, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) global business climate despite the pace of technological change, disruption of markets, and institutional upheaval (Samimi et al., 2020; Shao, 2022; Zhang and Chen, 2024). The modern organisations do not compete and decide on the grounds of physical resources or operational efficiency, on the contrary, leadership abilities and especially the abilities of the strategic levels have become the decisive factor of organisational performance and growth results (Rahman et al., 2018; Kim, 2020; Patrick and Lu, 2025). As a construct, strategic business leadership has thus gained longstanding scholarly and practitively interest in business areas and national environments (Jaleha and Machuki, 2018; Baird, 2025; Septiany et al., 2025). Strategic business leadership can be defined as the ability of the leaders at the top level to look into the future, match the organisational resources with the long-term objectives, handle the complexity of the environment, and promote the organisational adaptability and performance sustainability (Samimi et al., 2020; Suharto, 2023; Khalilov et al., 2025). In contrast to the traditional style of leadership, which is oriented towards

such areas as supervision or the control of operations in the short term, strategic leadership is aimed at long-term planning, strategic flexibility, innovation orientation, and integration of internal and external environmental signals into decisions (Rahman et al., 2018; Kafetzopoulos et al., 2022; Woo, 2025). The strategic importance of leadership is no longer a detachable part of organisational survival and success as organisations face increased competition and heightened change (Andrews, 2023; Logan, 2024; David et al., 2025). The practical experience of various industries indicates that organisations that have strategically oriented leaders perform better in financial results, ability to be innovative, operation effectiveness, and market development (Azeez and Wali, 2021; Ambilichu et al., 2022; Machila, 2025). Some of the ways that strategic leaders impact performance are in the form of defining vision clarity, strategic alignment, organisational learning, and ambidexterity, which means balancing the ability to explore and exploit at the same time (Ambilichu et al., 2022; Kurniawati et al., 2025; Rauniar and Cao, 2025). This puts leadership as more than a personal characteristic, but as an organisational strength that is inherent to strategic processes and structures (Samimi et al., 2020; Shao, 2022; Septiany et al., 2025).

Strategic business leadership is even more significant in the context of

emerging and developing economies because of institutional weakness, market volatility, and resource constraints (Bayo et al., 2023; Agu et al., 2024; Alkandi, 2025). The literature in the banking, pharmaceutical, transportation, higher education, and small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) sectors indicates that strategic leadership contributes greatly to the organisational resilience level, innovation performance, and sustainable growth even in harsh environments (Abdulaal and Zoubi, 2025; Almashhadi et al., 2025; Habeeb and Eyupoglu, 2024). Such results imply that strategic leadership is a catalyst that transforms a strategic intent into organisational performance, especially in cases when external factors are volatile (Munga and Gakenia, 2022; Xie, 2024; Jayanto et al., 2025). Although there has been an increasing agreement on the positive impact of strategic leadership, the role of the strategic business leadership in driving organisational performance and growth has not been theorised and empirically amalgamated (Shao, 2022; Septiany et al., 2025; Patrick and Lu, 2025). Whereas other studies focus on the role of intervening variables, including innovation, organisational agility, strategic planning, and human resource performance, others also use contextual variables, including the type of governance structure, corporate entrepreneurship, and environmental turbulence (Ashkevari and Ghasemi, 2023; Milhem et al.,

2024; Kadim et al., 2025). This disintegration has created a rich literature with ideas scattered across the conceptual space allowing little cumulative theoretical progress (Jaleha and Machuki, 2018; Samimi et al., 2020; Zhang, 2025).

More so, a lot of the existing studies limited themselves to studying individual aspects of leadership, including transformational, authentic, or participative leadership, without properly placing them within a larger strategic business leadership context (Kim, 2020; Logan, 2024; Rauniar and Cao, 2025). Consequently, this leads to an increased demand of integrative research considering strategic leadership as a multidimensional concept that includes the formulation of the vision, strategy alignment, coordination of resources, innovation leadership, and growth management (Suharto, 2023; Woo, 2025; Septiany et al., 2025). This gap needs to be addressed to further the theory and practice in the area of strategic management and leadership studies. Secondary sources also have a tendency to focus on performance results without paying adequate attention to growth paths, sustainability, and value creation over time (Kimani, 2022; Habeeb and Eyupoglu, 2024; Kadim et al., 2025). Growth at the organisational level, in the form of market expansion, increasing the scale of innovation, and developing capabilities, involves the need of

strategic leadership that is not measured solely by short-term financial indicators but rather by development of dynamic capabilities (Zhang and Chen, 2024; Woo, 2025; David et al., 2025). In its turn, this means that there is a need and significance of a detailed analysis of the role that strategic business leadership plays in the context of performance and growth at the same time.

It is against this backdrop that the present research places itself within the changing arena of strategic business leadership through a critical approach on its contribution towards organisational performance and growth. The research aims to add to a more coherent and contextual-oriented view of strategic leadership as a source of organisational success by focusing on theoretical views and providing empirical data through interviewing experts and a large amount of literature (Samimi et al., 2020; Septiany et al., 2025; Patrick and Lu, 2025). The study answers the calls that demand more in-depth, context-sensitive, and mechanism-driven research that could enlighten the field of scholarly discussion and managerial practice in the modern organisations.

## **1.2 Statement of Research Problem**

Although a lot of studies have been carried out on leadership and

organisational performance, there is still a research issue related to the conceptual and empirical integration and situational insight on strategic business leadership and its contribution to organisational performance and growth (Jaleha and Machuki, 2018; Shao, 2022; Septiany et al., 2025). Despite studies conducted by many researchers confirming that strategic leadership has positive effects on the organisational performance, the literature literature is marked by a set of loose findings, uneven constructs, and lack of explanatory depth on how and why strategic leadership leads to continuous performance and growth results (Samimi et al., 2020; Patrick and Lu, 2025; Baird, 2025). One of the fundamental issues is that the current research is inclined to test the variables of leadership separately, and it may pay too much attention to transformational or authentic leadership models without integrating them into a broader strategic business leadership model (Kim, 2020; Logan, 2024; Rauniar and Cao, 2025). In such a way, the strategy dimension of leadership, which incorporates the vision, strategic planning, innovation management, and resource orchestration, will be diminished, restraining the explanatory ability of leadership-performance models (Rahman et al., 2018; Khalilov et al., 2025; Suharto, 2023). Consequently, the literature does not have a consistent conceptualisation of strategic leadership as organisational

capability as opposed to a personal attribute. Furthermore, when empirical research is conducted, short-term performance metrics, i.e. financial or operational metrics, are often prioritised, and the long-term growth of organisations, their sustainability, and competitive positioning are under-researched (Kimani, 2022; Habeeb and Eyupoglu, 2024; Kadim et al., 2025). This leaves the knowledge gap on the importance of strategic business leadership in sustaining business growth over time by developing innovation and agility, as well as nurturing capabilities in changing environments (Ambilichu et al., 2022; Kurnieawati et al., 2025; Zhang and Chen, 2024). Therefore, organisations do not have evidence-based insights into how leadership strategies can be oriented towards short and long-term performance goals.

The other important issue is that of contextual imbalance in the literature. Although the strategic leadership research has grown in the world, the findings have been minority in certain sectors and regions especially in the emerging and developing economies where leadership issues have significantly contrast with those in the developed regions (Bayo et al., 2023; Agu et al., 2024; Abdulaal and Zoubi, 2025). This restricts the generalisability and practical applicability of the current models, particularly in organisations that exist in an unstable institutional and

market setup (Munga and Gakenia, 2022; Xie, 2024; Machila, 2025). Precisely, the main research question that will be tackled by the proposed study is the deficiency of a unified, empirically based body knowledge on the role that strategic business leadership plays in motivating organisational performance and growth in various environments. The solution to this issue is critical towards developing strategic leadership theory, improving empirical coherence, and offering actionable ideas to those leaders aiming to improve organisational performance in complex and competitive conditions (Samimi et al., 2020; Septiany et al., 2025; Patrick and Lu, 2025).

### **1.3 Research Questions**

Given the fragmented nature of existing literature and the limited integration of leadership mechanisms, performance outcomes, and growth trajectories, this study is guided by the following research questions:

- i. How does strategic business leadership influence organisational performance across different organisational contexts?
- ii. What role does strategic business leadership play in driving organisational growth and long-term sustainability?
- iii. Through which organisational mechanisms does strategic business

leadership translate into improved performance and growth?

- iv. How do contextual factors influence the effectiveness of strategic business leadership in achieving organisational performance and growth?

#### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

- i. To critically examine the role of strategic business leadership in driving organisational performance and growth.
- ii. To achieve this overarching aim, the study pursues the following specific objectives:
  - iii. To examine the relationship between strategic business leadership and organisational performance.
  - iv. To assess the influence of strategic business leadership on organisational growth and sustainability.
  - v. To identify the organisational mechanisms through which strategic business leadership affects performance and growth.
  - vi. To analyse the contextual factors that shape the effectiveness of strategic business leadership in organisations.

## **1.5 Research Propositions**

Given the exploratory and explanatory nature of this doctoral study, research propositions are formulated to guide empirical investigation and theoretical interpretation rather than to test narrowly defined hypotheses (Jaleha and Machuki, 2018; Samimi et al., 2020; Shao, 2022). The following propositions are grounded in extant literature and aligned with the study's objectives:

**Proposition 1:** Strategic business leadership has a significant positive influence on organisational performance.

**Proposition 2:** Strategic business leadership positively influences organisational growth and long-term sustainability.

**Proposition 3:** The relationship between strategic business leadership and organisational performance is mediated by organisational mechanisms such as innovation, strategic agility, and human resource performance.

**Proposition 4:** The effectiveness of strategic business leadership in driving organisational performance and growth is contingent upon contextual factors, including industry characteristics and environmental uncertainty.

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

This research has its importance in that it could have a meaningful contribution to theory, empirical research, managerial practice, and policy formulation in the area of strategic business leadership and organisational performance (Samimi et al., 2020; Septiany et al., 2025; Patrick and Lu, 2025). With organisations becoming more and more complex and turbulent in their environments, the need to have integrative research continues to be pressing, where strategic leadership can be found to influence not only performance but also growth when applied across various contexts (Zhang and Chen, 2024; Baird, 2025; Woo, 2025). Theoretically, the study contributes to strategic leadership research by conceptualising strategic business leadership as a multidimensional organisational capability instead of a set of disjointed leadership characteristics or styles (Jaleha and Machuki, 2018; Shao, 2022; Suharto, 2023). The synthesis of the findings based on the literature on strategic management, leadership theory, and organisational performance provides a contribution to the creation of the more coherent and integrative theoretical frame that has the potential to explain the mechanisms of the performance and growth driven by

leadership (Samimi et al., 2020; Rahman et al., 2018; Septiany et al., 2025). This is in response to the past demands of theory convergence in strategic leadership studies. The empirical importance of the study is in the fact that it integrates expert interviews with a comprehensive analysis of the literature and allows exploring the processes of strategic leadership underrepresented in quantitative-only research (Ambilichu et al., 2022; Milhem et al., 2024; Patrick and Lu, 2025). The study adds to the contextual validity of the strategic leadership research by introducing insights of experienced practitioners and subject-matter experts, which contribute to comprehensive evidence that is rich and practice-oriented in comparison with the current empirical evidence (Andrews, 2023; Xie, 2024; Machila, 2025). The given approach is a direct response to gaps in previous empirical studies, especially concerning the mechanism-based accounts.

Managerially and practically, the results of this research will likely provide operational ideas to the top leadership, board members, and strategic decision-makers in their quest to enhance organisational performance and ensure expansion (David et al., 2025; Khalilov et al., 2025; Baird, 2025). The study offers evidence-based advice that can be used to inform leadership development programmes, succession planning, and strategic

governance practices by elucidating the impact of strategic business leadership on innovation, agility, and organisational alignment (Milhem et al., 2024; Kadim et al., 2025; Woo, 2025). Politically and institutionally, the study adds knowledge that could assist policy makers, regulators and development agencies in formulating leadership capacity-building programs specifically in emerging and developing economies where organisational performance is highly correlated to leadership performance (Bayo et al., 2023; Agu et al., 2024; Abdulaal and Zoubi, 2025). The study will inform more effective policy interventions that could be used to improve organisational competitiveness and economic growth by highlighting the context-specific challenges and opportunities of leadership (Kadim et al., 2025; Habeeb and Eyupoglu, 2024; Jayanto et al., 2025).

### **1.7 Scope of the Study**

The boundaries of the scope of this study vary according to conceptual coverage, contextual focus, methodology, and thematic focus, making it clear what the study will cover and what it will exclude (Jaleha and Machuki, 2018; Shao, 2022; Patrick and Lu, 2025). Theoretically, strategic business leadership is considered the key independent variable of the

study, and its impact on organisational performance and growth are the key outcome variables (Rahman et al., 2018; Kim, 2020; Woo, 2025).

The thematic focus of the study is on strategic-level leadership practices such as vision formulation, strategic alignment, innovation leadership, and resource orchestration and not on the operational or supervisory leadership behaviours (Samimi et al., 2020; Suharto, 2023; Khalilov et al., 2025).

Organisational performance is analysed in general to encompass financial, operational, and competitive aspects, whereas growth is viewed with references to sustainability, the scale of innovation, and the development of the capabilities on a long-term basis (Kimani, 2022; Zhang and Chen, 2024; Kadim et al., 2025). In terms of its context, the research is a cross-sectoral and context-sensitive one, based on the experience of organisations that work both in developed and in emerging economies, which is embodied in the literature and expert interviews used (Bayo et al., 2023; Agu et al., 2024; Logan, 2024). Nevertheless, the research does not aim at making sector-specific generalisations or country comps as its main purpose is theoretical integration and mechanism exploration as opposed to statistical generalisability (Shao, 2022; Xie, 2024; Septiany et al., 2025).

The research methodology is confined to the qualitative expert interviews and secondary data in the academic literature, which does not focus on

large-scale hypothesis testing via survey (Ambilichu et al., 2022; Patrick and Lu, 2025; Milhem et al., 2024). Although this method allows adding more depth and richness to the context, it will inevitably limit the capabilities to draw general statistics inferences, which is a limitation of the research (Samimi et al., 2020; Jaleha and Machuki, 2018).

## **1.8 Definition of Key Terms**

To make the concept of this study clear and consistent, the following key terms are defined in the context of this study:

- i. **Strategic Business Leadership:** Senior leaders in organisations demonstrate the skill to develop, convey and execute long-term organisational strategy that coordinates resources, promotes innovation and increases performance and growth in changing environments.
- ii. **Organisational Performance:** The degree of the accomplishment of the strategic goals of an organisation in terms of monetary performance, operation productivity, competitiveness at the market, and the satisfaction of the stakeholders in the organisation.

- iii. **Organisational Growth:** The long-lasting growth of a organisations capacity, market base and value generation ability in the long run usually through innovation, strategic revival, and responsiveness.
- iv. **Strategic Agility:** It is the ability of an organisation to quickly feel the changing environment around and re-align strategies and resources with the changing opportunities and threats in the environment.
- v. **Innovation Performance:** The success of an organisation in formulating and introducing new products, services, processes or business models to improve competitiveness and expansion.

## **1.9 Organization of the Study**

The study has been divided into five interconnected chapters that are meant to be developed logically out of the previous chapter and to collectively answer the research problem.

Chapter One gives introduction to the study giving the background, problem statement, research questions, objectives, propositions, significance, scope, definition of key terms, and general structure of the research.

Chapter Two will elaborate on a literature review of the relevant literature

and the theoretical context of the study. The chapter is a critical analysis of conceptual and empirical researches on strategic business leadership, organisational performance, and growth with the final result being the formulation of an integrative theoretical framework.

Chapter Three outlines the research methodology (design of the research, data collection, sampling, data analysis, reliability and validity concern and ethical concerns).

Chapter Four is devoted to discussing findings and data analysis. The expert interview information and secondary data are analysed and interpreted with references to the research questions, propositions, and theoretical framework.

The fifth chapter of the study concludes the study with a summary, conclusion, practice and policy recommendation, contribution to knowledge and future research suggestions.

## **1.10 Preliminary Literature Review**

### **1.10.1 Conceptual Literature**

The notion of strategic business leadership has been developing at a wider scale among the contexts of leadership and strategic management due to

changes in the organisational settings, competition, and performance demands (Samimi et al., 2020; Shao, 2022; Suharto, 2023). Conceptual literature defines strategic leadership as a more advanced leadership task that focuses on long-term direction-setting, strategic decision-making and organisational congruence instead of operational controlling (Rahman et al., 2018; Khalilov et al., 2025; Patrick and Lu, 2025). Such a difference highlights the purpose of strategic leader in order to direct the organisational pathways especially in organizations with uncertainty and dynamic nature (Zhang and Chen, 2024; Baird, 2025; Woo, 2025). Fundamentally, strategic business leadership is interested in how the organisational vision and strategy are formulated and implemented in a manner that will improve performance and guarantee sustainable growth (Samimi et al., 2020; Suharto, 2023; David et al., 2025). Conceptual models underline the interplay of strategic leaders between internal organisational strengths and external environmental cues to make strategic decisions and resource distribution decisions (Rahman et al., 2018; Khalilov et al., 2025; Jayanto et al., 2025). This combination role contrasts strategic leadership with functional or transactional leadership styles, which are more efficiency-focused, control-oriented, and short-term-oriented (Kim, 2020; Logan, 2024; Rauniar and Cao, 2025).

One of the prevailing concepts in the conceptual literature is the interaction between strategic leadership and organisational performance. The concept of performance is understood not only in terms of financial success but as a multidimensional concept that considers operational efficiency, competitive position in the market, innovation ability, and satisfaction of stakeholders (Rahman et al., 2018; Azeez and Wali, 2021; Patrick and Lu, 2025). Theorised to have an impact on these dimensions, strategic leadership is the alignment of organisational structures, cultures, and processes to strategic intent (Samimi et al., 2020; Suharto, 2023; Septiany et al., 2025). Leaders provide organisations with a direction of actions that is consistent and goal-oriented through their clarity of vision and strategic coherence which enhance performance outcomes (Jaleha and Machuki, 2018; Baird, 2025; Zhang, 2025).

Tightly connected to performance is that of organisational growth whose conceptualisation in the literature is the continued expansion in capabilities, market presence, and value creation across time (Kimani, 2022; Zhang and Chen, 2024; Woo, 2025). Conceptual research states that growth is not just about increasing performance and doing it gradually; it is about strategic renewal, leadership in innovations, and building dynamic capabilities (Ambilichu et al., 2022; Kurniawati et al., 2025; Rauniar and

Cao, 2025). The strategic business leadership is accordingly established as a primary source of growth through its ability to enhance organisational flexibility and future orientation (Samimi et al., 2020; David et al., 2025; Kadim et al., 2025).

Innovation has a seat of centrality in the conceptual debate of strategic leadership and organisational performances. Strategic leaders are considered the architects of innovation systems, who are in charge of creating an environment where creativity, experimentation, and knowledge integration are supported (Ashkevari and Ghasemi, 2023; Abdulaal and Zoubi, 2025; Zhang and Chen, 2024). The conceptual frameworks indicate that the innovation commitment of leaders creates an impact on the organisational culture, resource distribution, and strategic priorities, which consequently impact the performance of innovation and, accordingly, organisational development (Milhem et al., 2024; Zhang, 2025; Woo, 2025). This point of view supports the argument that strategic leadership is not only about planning but about active coordination of the innovation processes.

Strategic agility is another essential concept in the literature, which refers to the ability of the organisation to perceive alterations in the environment

and react to them by ensuring that it reconfigures its strategies in time (Kafetzopoulos et al., 2022; Kurniawati et al., 2025; Rauniar and Cao, 2025). The conceptual models put strategic leaders in the role of enabling agility through facilitating flexible structures, decentralised decision-making, and lifelong learning (Samimi et al., 2020; Suharto, 2023; Shao, 2022). Agility is theorised to mediate the connection between leadership and performance in volatile environments which enable organisations to stay competitive amid uncertainty (Ambilichu et al., 2022; Munga and Gakenia, 2022; Xie, 2024).

The aspects of human capital and talent management also play a leading role in theoretical debates of strategic business leadership. According to scholars, strategic leaders can also affect performance and growth by recruiting, nurturing, and keeping top talent in line with organisational strategy (Milhem et al., 2024; Kafetzopoulos et al., 2022; David et al., 2025). In this view, leadership success is demonstrated not only in the strategic choice but also in the ability of the organisation to mobilize the human resources on strategic goals (Samimi et al., 2020; Zhang, 2025; Patrick and Lu, 2025). This supports the perception of leadership as an institutional capability and not a personal quality.

Conceptual literature also emphasizes the issue of context in the effectiveness of strategic leadership. The theorisation of the moderating effects of environmental turbulence, institutional frameworks, and industry characteristics on leadership-performance relations has been presented (Bayo et al., 2023; Agu et al., 2024; Logan, 2024). Strategic leaders in emerging markets tend to work in the environment of limited resources, regulatory unpredictability, and infrastructural constraints, which exacerbates the demand of adaptive and context-sensitive leadership styles (Munga and Gakenia, 2022; Abdulaal and Zoubi, 2025; Machila, 2025). Therefore, universal leadership paradigms are being challenged more often due to the inability to consider contextual diversity (Jaleha and Machuki, 2018; Shao, 2022; Septiany et al., 2025).

In spite of the abundance of conceptual insights, the literature shows that there are still challenges. Strategic leadership is defined differently in the literature, and differences between leadership types and strategic functions are unclear (Samimi et al., 2020; Suharto, 2023; Patrick and Lu, 2025). Additionally, conceptual models tend to introduce several intermediate variables, e.g., innovation, agility, and talent management, and do not fully incorporate them into unified explanatory models (Ashkevari and Ghasemi, 2023; Milhem et al., 2024; Woo, 2025). This fragmentation

restricts theoretical accumulation and highlights the necessity of integrative studies.

### **1.10.2 Empirical Literature**

The empirical study of leadership and strategic business performance and organisational results in the last twenty years has been broadly extended, indicating the increasing awareness of leadership as a decisive factor in organisational performance and development in the various spheres and contexts (Rahman et al., 2018; Jaleha and Machuki, 2018; Septiany et al., 2025). Empirical research indicates that the superior performance results are always achieved by organisations that are led by strategically oriented leaders, yet the degree of these relationships and the mediating mechanisms may differ according to the context, method or strategy and mediating mechanisms (Azeez and Wali, 2021; Ambilichu et al., 2022; Patrick and Lu, 2025).

Empirical evidence has a substantial amount of proof on the positive correlation between strategic leadership and organisational performance. The results of the studies in the banking, manufacturing, education, and service industries indicate that the strategic leadership practices, including strategic visioning, strategic planning, and strategic alignment, are closely

linked to financial performance, operational efficiency, and market competitiveness (Al-Sharafi and Al-Marhdi, 2025; Logan, 2024; Machila, 2025). As an example, the empirical studies comprising the banking sector reveal that the concept of strategic leadership contributes to the expansion of organisational performance when it comes to the enhancement of strategic coherence and the quality of the decisions in highly regulated and competitive settings (Bayo et al., 2023; Patrick and Lu, 2025; Al-Sharafi and Al-Marhdi, 2025).

Empirical evidence indicates that in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), strategic leadership, in particular, is of critical importance because of the limitation of resources and an increase in environmental uncertainty (Kim, 2020; Munga and Gakenia, 2022; Woo, 2025). The evidence shows that SME leaders who use strategic leadership styles, which focus on innovation, entrepreneurial orientation, and strategic flexibility, attain a higher performance and business growth compared with leaders who use either the operational and transactional leadership styles (Ambilichu et al., 2022; Kurniawati et al., 2025; Woo, 2025). These results bring out the situational significance of strategic leadership in facilitating effective competitiveness of SMEs within dynamic markets.

In addition to the direct effects, empirical studies are increasingly investigating mediating processes in which strategic leadership has a role in strategically affecting the performance. One of the mediation between leadership-performance relationships has consistently been shown to be innovation (Ashkevari and Ghasemi, 2023; Abdulaal and Zoubi, 2025; Zhang and Chen, 2024). Empirical research in the pharmaceutical and technology-driven industry has shown that strategic leaders increase innovation performance by promoting supportive cultures, strategic resource allocation, and the fit of innovation efforts to long-term organisational objectives (Abdulaal and Zoubi, 2025; Xie, 2024; Zhang, 2025). The resulting outcomes of innovation, in its turn, will lead to better organisational performance and growth.

Another theoretically empirically supported mediator between strategic leadership and organisational performance is strategic agility. Research shows that strategic agile leaders make organisations more capable of sensing environmental changes and acting proactively, thus maintaining their performance in turbulent environments (Kafetzopoulos et al., 2022; Kurniawati et al., 2025; Rauniar and Cao, 2025). The impact of agility allows companies to maintain the balances between both the short-term operational demands and long-term strategic renewal, which empirically

supports the role of leadership in the development of dynamic capabilities (Ambilichu et al., 2022; Munga and Gakenia, 2022; Woo, 2025).

Another aspect of employee performance and talent management that is also characterised by the presence of empirical studies is the human resource. According to research, strategic leaders have the capacity to affect organisational performance by harnessing talent management practices along the strategic priorities, stimulating employee engagement, capability development and productivity (Milhem et al., 2024; Kafetzopoulos et al., 2022; David et al., 2025). The empirical evidence indicates that the human capital development made by leadership serves as a medium through which the strategic intent can be transformed into the organisational results (Patrick and Lu, 2025; Zhang, 2025; Kadim et al., 2025).

Empirical literature also examines how strategic leadership contributes to organisational growth and sustainability with an increased scope to short-term performance indicators. The studies carried out in NGOs, colleges, and multinationals suggest that strategic leadership contributes to growth through facilitating long-term planning, innovation on a large scale, and sustainability-based strategies (Kimani, 2022; Habeeb and Eyupoglu,

2024; Dini et al., 2025). These studies show the significance of leadership in achieving a balance between performance demands and sustainability imperatives especially within socially-oriented and knowledge-intensive organisations (Andrews, 2023; Kadim et al., 2025; Jayanto et al., 2025).

One theme that appears in the empirical literature is contextual variation. Investigations carried out in the emerging and developing economies demonstrate that strategic leadership has a stronger role in the area of uncertainty of the environment, institutional voids, and market volatility reduction (Bayo et al., 2023; Agu et al., 2024; Abdulaal and Zoubi, 2025). As an illustration, the practice of regulatory instability and resource shortage in African and Middle Eastern settings, according to empirical evidence, implies that strategic leaders should manage both of these characteristics at once, which strengthens the relationship between leadership and performance (Munga and Gakenia, 2022; Machila, 2025; Almashhadi et al., 2025). These results support the need to use context-specific leadership designs instead of general prescriptions (Jaleha and Machuki, 2018; Shao, 2022; Septiany et al., 2025). Despite the heavy empirical evidence on the beneficial impact of strategic leadership, very significant inconsistencies and limitations remain. There are many different methods of measurement: some studies use indicators of

perceptual performance, and others use objective financial indices, which makes the comparison of studies across different studies difficult (Kim, 2020; Logan, 2024; Patrick and Lu, 2025). Also, numerous empirical studies follow cross-sectional design, restricting causal inferences and possibilities to study the long-term growth processes (Ambilichu et al., 2022; Kimani, 2022; Woo, 2025).

More so, empirical studies tend to explore single mediators individually, including innovation or agility, without considering several mechanisms into holistic explanatory frameworks (Ashkevari and Ghasemi, 2023; Milhem et al., 2024; Kurniawati et al., 2025). This division reflects the absence of concepts in the literature and the necessity of integrative empirical methods that can help to understand the complexity of strategic leadership processes (Samimi et al., 2020; Septiany et al., 2025; Patrick and Lu, 2025).

### **1.10.3 Gaps in the Literature**

Although there is a substantial body of theoretical and empirical studies on strategic leadership and the outcomes of organisations, it still has some critical gaps that restrict the development of theories and their practical utility in the area (Jaleha and Machuki, 2018; Samimi et al., 2020;

Septiany et al., 2025). These lapses are associated with conceptual integration, explanatory mechanisms, scope of outcomes, coverage of context and approach to methodology.

To begin with, there is a huge conceptual difference between the fragmented approach to strategic business leadership. Although a large number of studies embrace the significance of leadership in strategic level, there are not many unanimities regarding the conceptual limits and fundamental dimensions of leadership (Samimi et al., 2020; Suharto, 2023; Patrick and Lu, 2025). Current studies tend to present individual leadership styles, including transformational or authentic leadership, without placing them in a comprehensive approach to strategic leadership that embraces vision creation, strategic alignment, orchestrating innovation, and managing growth (Kim, 2020; Logan, 2024; Rauniar and Cao, 2025). This dispersion limits the development of cumulative theory and the emergence of overlapping yet unrelated constructs of leadership (Septiany et al., 2025; Shao, 2022).

Second, mechanism related gap is intense, related to the translation of strategic leadership into organisational performance and growth. Even though the mediators that are identified by empirical studies include

innovation, strategic agility, and human resource performance, they are often reviewed separately but not as a part of a comprehensive explanatory model (Ashkevari and Ghasemi, 2023; Milhem et al., 2024; Kurniawati et al., 2025). Therefore, the literature does not have an in-depth knowledge of how these mechanisms interplay and contribute to the overall leadership-based organisational performance (Ambilichu et al., 2022; Woo, 2025; Zhang and Chen, 2024).

Third, a critical outcome-related gap is the excessive focus on the performance of the organisation in the short term at the expense of organisational growth, sustainability, and creation of long-term values (Kimani, 2022; Habeeb and Eyupoglu, 2024; Kadim et al., 2025). Although the role of performance metrics in growth trends, the scale of innovation, and the development of capabilities over time is a well-researched topic, limited empirical research of the impact of strategic leadership on this phenomenon exists (Zhang and Chen, 2024; Woo, 2025; David et al., 2025). This restricts the use of the current findings to organisations that are aiming at attaining a sustainable competitive advantage as opposed to short-term performance benefits.

Fourth, the uneven distribution of empirical evidence that exist by regions

and sector has a large contextual gap. Despite the growing popularity of emerging and developing economies in recent research, the evidence is also context-dependent, and it is not fully incorporated into the general theoretical framework (Bayo et al., 2023; Agu et al., 2024; Abdulaal and Zoubi, 2025). Low cross-contextual synthesis constrains the applicability of strategic leadership models and decreases their suitability to organisations that operate in a variety of institutional and environmental contexts (Munga and Gakenia, 2022; Machila, 2025; Xie, 2024).

Lastly, there is the presence of a methodological gap in the fact that the majority of studies are cross-sectional, surveys in nature, and thus do not allow sufficient explanatory power (Ambilichu et al., 2022; Kimani, 2022; Patrick and Lu, 2025). The restricted application of qualitative methods, specifically using expert input in understanding, limits the knowledge of the lived realities, strategic decision-making, and situational subtleties that inform strategic leadership efficacy (Andrews, 2023; Milhem et al., 2024; Septiany et al., 2025).

All these omissions highlight the necessity of a conceptual, mechanism-oriented, and context-sensitive research that approaches strategic business leadership in its entirety and how it contributes to organisational

performance and organisational growth. These gaps are the main reasons why this study needs to be addressed.

### **1.11 Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this study will be based on the theory of strategic leadership and guided by the complementary lenses of strategic management, dynamic capabilities, and organisational performance theory, which are used to integrate the optimal perspective of research on how strategic business leadership can produce organisational performance and growth (Samimi et al., 2020; Rahman et al., 2018; Shao, 2022). The framework is a direct response to the conceptual fragmentation and gaps in the literature with respect to mechanism as it posits strategic business leadership as a multidimensional organisational capability as opposed to one leadership style or individual trait (Jaleha and Machuki, 2018; Suharto, 2023; Septiany et al., 2025). The strategic business leadership is central to the framework and is conceptualised as the ability of senior leaders to develop vision, channel organisational resources, read environmental cues, and strategically take action in the long run in ambiguous conditions (Samimi et al., 2020; Khalilov et al., 2025; Patrick and Lu, 2025). According to strategic leadership theory, leaders in the top

positions of organisations have a central role to play in influencing strategic direction and organisational performance through cognitive orientation, decision-making, and strategic behaviours (Rahman et al., 2018; Suharto, 2023; Baird, 2025). This study takes this point of view in order to describe the aspect of influence of leadership beyond the operational management and into the strategic creation of value.

The framework assumes the organisational performance and organisational growth as the major outcome variable. Organisational performance is considered a multidimensional construct, which includes financial performance, operations efficiency, and competitive position, which are in line with strategic management literature (Azeez and Wali, 2021; Patrick and Lu, 2025; Logan, 2024). Organisation growth has been theorised as the continuous growth in potentials, ability to innovate and create value in the long-term, not just based on short-term performance metrics (Kimani, 2022; Zhang and Chen, 2024; Woo, 2025). Combining the two results, the framework will deal with the performance-oriented outcome-based gap in the existing literature that focuses on performance instead of growth and sustainability (Kadim et al., 2025; David et al., 2025).

The framework of explaining how strategic business leadership can be

translated into these results includes the major mediating mechanisms which are mentioned in the literature. First, the capability and performance of innovation are placed in the middle to depict the empirical data indicating that strategic leaders are the drivers of organisational performance in terms of creating ideas and knowledge-based cultures, alignment of innovation and strategy, and resource allocation to knowledge generation (Ashkevari and Ghasemi, 2023; Abdulaal and Zoubi, 2025; Zhang, 2025). Innovation has been used as a pathway to achieve strategic intent into competitive advantage and growth (Zhang and Chen, 2024; Woo, 2025).

Second, a mediator strategy variable, based on the dynamic capability theory, is added, which is strategic agility. Strategic agility helps organisations to feel the environmental change and rearrange resources, thus maintaining performance in the turbulent environment (Kafetzopoulos et al., 2022; Kurniawati et al., 2025; Rauniar and Cao, 2025). It is theorised that strategic leadership helps to increase agility through supporting flexibility, decentralisation of decision-making, and cultures of learning (Samimi et al., 2020; Suharto, 2023; Shao, 2022). This process is especially relevant in shifting and unstable market settings (Munga and Gakenia, 2022; Agu et al., 2024; Xie, 2024).

Third, the framework incorporates the human capital performance as an intermediary mechanism. Strategic leaders shape the organisational performance by matching the talent management practices to the strategic goals thus improving the staff capability, dedication, and output (Milhem et al., 2024; Kafetzopoulos et al., 2022; David et al., 2025). This school of thought supports the opinion that leadership is an institutionalised organisational resource that mobilises human resources in support of strategic objectives (Patrick and Lu, 2025; Zhang, 2025).

The framework also recognizes the presence of contextual factors as moderation issues on the efficiency of strategic leadership in business. The theorised environmental uncertainty, industry attributes, and institutional settings are postulated to influence leadership-outcome relationships through the amplification or withholding of the impact of leadership (Bayo et al., 2023; Logan, 2024; Machila, 2025). The role of strategic leadership in performance and growth is increased in emerging and developing economies due to the presence of institutional instability and resource constraints (Abdulaal and Zoubi, 2025; Agu et al., 2024; Almashhadi et al., 2025). The introduction of context fills the existing contextual gap in the literature and makes the framework explanatorily relevant (Jaleha and Machuki, 2018; Shao, 2022; Septiany et al., 2025).

## **1.12 Research Methodology**

Due to the complexity of the strategic leadership phenomenon and the necessity to combine empirical data with theoretical knowledge, the research will have a mixed-methods orientation of quantitative and qualitative methods (Goundar, 2012; Davidaviciene, 2018; Patel and Patel, 2019).

### **1.12.1 Research Design**

The research design adopted in the study is descriptive and explanatory research design in a mixed research-design model. This type of design would be suitable in the investigation of the relationships between strategic business leadership and organisational performance and growth, as well as underlying mechanisms and contextual effects (Kothari, 2004; Rajasekar and Verma, 2013; Daniel and Sam, 2011). The quantitative element facilitates the systematic measurement of the leadership practices and organisational outcomes of an extensive sample, and the qualitative element can be used to present detailed information on the strategic leadership procedures and decision-making dynamics (Goundar, 2012; Davidaviciene, 2018).

It uses a cross-sectional methodology because the information is gathered

at one time to reflect the currently existing practices in leadership and their performance results (Panneerselvam, 2004; Patel and Patel, 2019). This research design will be appropriate to detect patterns, associations, and explanatory themes that can be applied to strategic leadership study, but has its shortcomings in determining causality (Kothari, 2004; Snyder, 2019).

### **1.12.2 Method of Data Collection**

The study uses both primary and secondary sources to gather data on the subject to make the research more comprehensive and methodologically triple (Bhattacharyya, 2006; Goddard and Melville, 2004; Gupta and Gupta, 2022).

There are two data gathering tools used to collect primary data:

**Questionnaire Survey:** The questionnaire survey will be conducted on 200 business owners and senior managers of middle-scale through to large-scale organisations. The survey will record strategic business leadership practices, organisational performance measure and outcome as far as growth is concerned. Survey research should be used when collecting standardised data of a vast population so that it can be quantitatively analysed and generalised within specified boundaries

(Kothari, 2004; Rajasekar and Verma, 2013; Patel and Patel, 2019).

**Expert Interviews:** 12 subject-matter experts with a long history of experience in the field of strategic leadership and organisational management are interviewed in semi-structured interviews. The interviews facilitate the investigation of the mechanisms of leadership, contextual and strategic decision making processes that are inaccessible by use of questionnaires (Noor, 2008; Orngreen and Levinsen, 2017; Davidaviciene, 2018). Secondary information will be received in the form of scholarly journals, books, and reliable academic sources to help to develop the theory and interpret the situation contextually (Snyder, 2019; Saharan et al., 2024). The target group includes the owners of businesses and high-level managers of the middle and large-scale organisations. Expert interviews will be conducted using a purposive sampling method whereas stratified sampling is employed to create sufficient coverage of various organisational sizes in the survey sample (Kothari, 2004; Degu and Yigzaw, 2006).

### **1.12.3 Method of Data Analysis**

The questionnaire contains quantitative data whose analysis is performed through the application of descriptive and inferential statistical methods

(frequency distributions, means, correlating, regression analysis) to examine the connection between strategic business leadership and organisational outcomes (Kothari, 2004; Rajasekar and Verma, 2013; Gupta and Gupta, 2022). These methods allow determining the patterns and relationships in the data objectively (Panneerselvam, 2004; Patel and Patel, 2019). Thematic analysis will be performed to analyse qualitative data obtained through expert interviews, which implies performing coding, categorisation, and interpretation of the frequently occurring themes in the context of leadership mechanisms and contextual influences (Noor, 2008; Orngreen and Levinsen, 2017; Davidaviciene, 2018). Quantitative and qualitative findings are better integrated in order to provide a deeper analytical insight and explanatory capabilities (Goundar, 2012; Snyder, 2019). The research instruments will be tested for reliability and validity. To achieve reliability the questionnaire will be created based on the known measurement principles and will be tested on the pilot testing to determine the consistency and clarity (Kothari, 2004; Bhattacharyya, 2006; Gupta and Gupta, 2022). Unless otherwise, internal consistency assesses it in terms of reliability coefficients (Panneerselvam, 2004; Rajasekar and Verma, 2013). The validity will be discussed in terms of content and construct validation. The content validity will be achieved by matching the

questionnaire items with research objectives and theoretical constructs based on the literature (Goddard and Melville, 2004; Snyder, 2019). The credibility and trustworthiness of the study results will be enhanced with the help of triangulation of the survey data and interview information with secondary literature (Noor, 2008; Davidaviciene, 2018).

### **1.12.5 Ethical Consideration**

The conduct of this study is ethical in nature. All participants will be informed about the research and provide the consent voluntarily and with the right to withdraw at any point (Kothari, 2004; Daniel and Sam, 2011; Saharan et al., 2024). The respondents are protected in terms of their identities and safe storage of the collected data ensures confidentiality and anonymity (Goddard and Melville, 2004; Gupta and Gupta, 2022). The research will be based on the principles of honesty, transparency, and academic integrity, especially when discussing data reporting and referencing sources (Bhattacharyya, 2006; Snyder, 2019). Ethical compliance confers the credibility, legitimacy, and scholarly-value of the research (Davidaviciene, 2018; Patel and Patel, 2019).

## Timeline Table

| Phase   | Activity                             | Duration     |
|---------|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| Phase 1 | Proposal & literature review         | Months 1–2   |
| Phase 2 | Instrument development & pilot study | Months 3–4   |
| Phase 3 | Data collection                      | Months 5–7   |
| Phase 4 | Data analysis                        | Months 8–9   |
| Phase 5 | Writing & revision                   | Months 10–11 |
| Phase 6 | Final submission                     | Month 12     |

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