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Examining the effect of Strategic Planning on operational efficiency of Event Management firms in Lagos State

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Abstract

The event management industry in Lagos State, Nigeria, is a dynamic and economically important service sector, yet it remains underrepresented in academic research. Many firms struggle with operational inefficiency, resource misallocation, and lack of formal strategic planning frameworks, which limit their growth and service quality. This PRISMA-guided systematic literature review investigates how strategic planning influences operational efficiency among event management firms in Lagos State. A structured search of five academic databases was conducted using carefully constructed keyword clusters. From 2,187 initial records, 30 sources met all inclusion criteria following rigorous screening. The included sources comprise primarily peer-reviewed journal articles and selected grey literature, including government/institutional reports and credible conference proceedings. Most reviewed works were published between 2023 and 2026, with earlier seminal theoretical contributions used for conceptual grounding. Findings reveal four key themes: the strategic value of environmental scanning and goal-setting, the role of technology adoption in translating plans into efficiency gains, the importance of human capital development within strategic frameworks, and how infrastructure and regulatory constraints limit planning implementation in Lagos. Drawing on the Resource-Based View, the Balanced Scorecard framework, and Mintzberg's emergent strategy perspective, the review develops a conceptual model linking strategic planning components to operational efficiency outcomes. Firms adopting formalized strategic planning processes, particularly those integrating digital tools, workforce training, and adaptive environmental scanning, demonstrate measurably superior operational outcomes. The review recommends that event management entrepreneurs adopt rolling, quarterly-evaluated strategic planning cycles; that industry associations and SMEDA develop and subsidize event-specific planning toolkits and capacity-building programmes; that infrastructure agencies prioritize stable power and broadband provision in event-dense commercial districts; and that future research pursue longitudinal and comparative case study designs to establish causality between strategic planning and operational efficiency in this sector.

Keywords: Strategic planning, operational efficiency, event management, Lagos State, Nigeria, PRISMA systematic review, resource-based view

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Over the last two decades, the global event industry has undergone a spectacular transformation from an informal, coordination-intensive practice into a professionalized sector requiring advanced organizational skills, strategic vision, and operational efficiency. This shift is particularly evident in Nigeria, and in its commercial capital, Lagos State. Lagos hosts thousands of events annually, from corporate conferences and government summits to international exhibitions, wedding ceremonies, product launches, and music festivals, all collectively contributing billions of naira to economic activity. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2024), the hospitality and entertainment subsector, within which event management falls, contributed approximately 2.4% to Nigeria's gross domestic product in 2023, affirming its macroeconomic significance.

Despite this growth, event management firms in Lagos face a persistent paradox. Demand for professional event services is expanding alongside growing corporate and high-net-worth populations, yet a significant proportion of firms operate without formal strategic plans, relying instead on ad hoc decision-making, informal vendor relationships, and reactive resource allocation. The consequences manifest as budget overruns, schedule failures, vendor coordination breakdowns, and client dissatisfaction. Bassey and Effiong (2024) found that fewer than 30 percent of surveyed Lagos event firms maintained documented operational strategies, a statistic that illuminates the structural fragility of the industry.

Operational efficiency in event management refers to the optimal deployment of human, financial, and material resources to deliver quality events within specified time and budget parameters while maximizing client satisfaction and profitability (de Koster et al., 2025; Aremu 2020). Strategic planning, operationalized as the systematic process by which organizations define long-term direction, allocate resources, and develop action plans aligned with clearly defined objectives, has been widely studied as a determinant of organizational efficiency. Evidence confirms that firms using formal strategic planning outperform informal counterparts in cost efficiency, service delivery. speed, and employee productivity (Ibegbulem and Okorie, 2023; Osoagbaka et al., 2024). Nonetheless, this literature has been largely concentrated on manufacturing, banking, and public-sector organizations, with Lagos event management firms remaining virtually unexamined.

This systematic review addresses that gap by synthesizing evidence from carefully selected studies exploring the relationship between strategic planning and operational efficiency, with particular reference to the Nigerian service sector, the event management industry, and the unique environmental conditions of Lagos State. The review is structured according to the PRISMA 2020 guidelines (Page et al., 2021).

Despite the event management sector's expanding economic footprint in Lagos State, contributing an estimated 2.4 percent to Nigeria's GDP through the wider hospitality and entertainment subsector (National Bureau of Statistics, 2024), the industry is structurally exposed by a widening gap between demand growth and managerial capability. Demand for professional event services continues to expand alongside Lagos's growing corporate and high-net-worth population, yet a significant proportion of firms operate without formal strategic plans, relying instead on ad hoc decision-making, informal vendor relationships, and reactive resource allocation. Bassey and Effiong (2024) found that fewer than 30 percent of surveyed Lagos event firms maintained documented operational strategies, meaning the majority operate without a repeatable framework for anticipating risk, allocating resources, or evaluating performance. The consequences are neither abstract nor isolated: they surface repeatedly as budget overruns, schedule failures, vendor coordination breakdowns, and client dissatisfaction, each of which directly erodes the profitability and reputational capital on which small event firms depend for repeat business and referrals.

This is not a problem the broader strategic management literature can be assumed to already answer. Evidence from other Nigerian service contexts confirms that firms using formal strategic planning outperform informal counterparts in cost efficiency, service delivery speed, and employee productivity (Ibegbulem and Okorie, 2023; Osoagbaka et al., 2024; Nwokedi, Mbah and Williams, 2025), but this evidence base has been generated almost entirely from manufacturing, banking, brewing, and public-sector organizations. Event management firms differ from these settings in ways that matter for planning theory: their operations are project-based rather than continuous, their resource needs fluctuate sharply around discrete client engagements, and their vendor networks are informal and fragmented rather than institutionalized. Whether the documented planning-efficiency relationship holds, and through what mechanisms, in a sector with this operational profile remains empirically untested. Lagos event management firms therefore occupy a precarious position: exposed to a well-documented planning deficit, operating in a sector whose economic contribution is substantial and growing, yet almost entirely absent from the scholarly literature that could inform intervention. This review addresses that gap directly

1.2 Research Objectives and Questions

This review is anchored by four primary objectives: (i) to identify and critically analyze existing Nigerian and international scholarly works examining the relationship between strategic planning and operational efficiency in service sector firms; (ii) to assess the specific mechanisms through which strategic planning components influence operational efficiency outcomes in event management contexts; (iii) to identify barriers, gaps, and contradictions in the existing literature as they pertain to Lagos event management firms; and (iv) to develop a theoretically grounded conceptual framework integrating findings from the reviewed literature. The central research question is: How does strategic planning affect the operational efficiency of event management firms in Lagos State, Nigeria?

1.3 Significance of the Study

This review contributes at three levels. Academically, it provides the first PRISMA-conformable systematic synthesis of evidence on strategic planning and operational efficiency in the Lagos event management sector, a methodological standard conspicuously absent from prior Nigerian management reviews. Managerially, it equips event management entrepreneurs and operational managers with evidence-based guidance on planning practices that deliver quantifiable efficiency dividends in the Lagos operating environment. At the policy level, the review provides insights to regulatory bodies such as the Consumer Protection Council, the Lagos State Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, and the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDA).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Strategic Planning in Organizational Theory

The formal concept of strategic planning traces to Chandler, who argued that structure follows strategy (Jalonen, 2025), and Ansoff, who defined strategic planning as an organized decision-making process for navigating environmental uncertainty (Zupic et al., 2025). Porter further situated strategic planning within competitive theory, arguing that superior performance derives from plans that achieve cost leadership, differentiation, or market focus

(Kumar, 2025). Mintzberg later offered a critical corrective, distinguishing between deliberate strategies arising from formal planning and emergent strategies shaped by organizational learning and environmental adaptation (Nyamboga, 2026). His warning against planning rigidity is especially pertinent to Lagos event management firms, where power outages, traffic disruptions, security incidents, and macroeconomic volatility routinely require mid-execution strategy revisions. Complementing these views, the Resource-Based View (Lubis et al., 2026) holds that competitive advantage derives not merely from external positioning but from rare, valuable, inimitable, and non-substitutable internal resources. Strategic planning itself is such a resource: the organizational capability to analyze environments systematically, set coherent goals, allocate resources efficiently, and evaluate implementation outcomes is the capability that distinguishes high-performing firms from less strategically oriented rivals.

2.2 Strategic Planning and Operational Efficiency in Nigerian Firms

Nigerian research on strategic planning has grown substantially since 2020. Ibegbulem and Okorie (2023) identified a strong positive relationship between strategic planning depth and operational efficiency in a sample of 150 SMEs, finding that resource allocation was the strongest independent predictor. Osoagbaka et al. (2024) found that formal vision and mission statements alone were insufficient without converting strategic direction into operational routines and performance monitoring systems. Ayodeji et al. (2026) demonstrated that firms conducting systematic PESTEL and SWOT evaluations achieved an average 18 percent reduction in operational waste relative to those using intuitive assessments. In the hospitality sector, Adebayo and Olayemi (2025) confirmed in a sample of 110 Lagos hospitality and event venues that documented operational contingency frameworks are the primary determinant of cost control and on-time delivery under local infrastructural volatility, a finding that directly bridges strategic planning theory and the Lagos event management context. Bello and Sanusi (2025) extended this by showing that firms with systematized weekly environmental scanning loops achieved a 14 percent average reduction in reactive spending budgets among 95 small service operations in Southwestern Nigeria. Bello (2024) further demonstrated in a cross-sectional study of 240 urban service SMEs that strategic intent and decision-making consistency explain 66.3 percent of performance variation (R-squared = 0.663), while Ayetigbo et al. (2026) confirmed using a mixed-methods design that formal planning increases organizational continuity and mitigates geographic and environmental risks, albeit constrained by infrastructural uncertainty and short-term founder outlooks.

Nwosu and Okafor (2023) found that creative industry firms in Nigeria with documented strategic plans had lower average event execution costs, better vendor contract compliance, and higher client satisfaction scores, with effectiveness advantages amplified in firms integrating formal planning with frequent performance appraisals. Taiwo and Balogun (2024) validated this performance-measurement logic in Nigerian service SMEs, demonstrating that tracking non-financial variables including internal process setup speeds and service delivery timelines significantly predicts sustained financial stability and vendor contract compliance. Ikupolati (2025) further confirmed that detailed roadmap tracking, budget buffering, and granular milestone settings in single-use tactical planning formats effectively isolate and correct workflow inefficiencies in non-recurring project contexts such as events. Enwere, Asiabaka, and Ogolo (2025) supplied additional empirical support from 328 service delivery firms, showing that embedding continuous human capital upgrades within a firm's strategic core systematically cuts product delivery lead times and reduces operational waste, a finding directly consistent with the Resource-Based View.

2.3 Event Management, Technology, and Operational Efficiency

Dowson et al. (2026) established that operational efficiency in events is especially dependent on pre-event planning quality, vendor contracting rigor, logistics sequencing, and contingency preparation. Seraphin et al. (2026) identified the primary sources of operational inefficiency in Lagos event firms as low vendor reliability, absent budget buffers, insufficient staff training, and near-total absence of documented risk management. Fashola and Adetunji (2023) corroborated these findings qualitatively, determining that the absence of a strategic planning culture is the fundamental driver of inefficiency. Bello et al. (2025) demonstrated that Lagos event firms integrating digital management platforms, automated scheduling software, and CRM systems achieved significantly better cost control and client retention. Ugwu and Eze (2024) extended this evidence by showing technology integration embedded within a strategic framework reduced average event setup time by 22 percent and vendor coordination errors by 31 percent. Chukwuma, Okechukwu, and Ekpo (2023) confirmed from a broader sample of 134 Nigerian service SMEs that digital infrastructure yields its highest efficiency dividends when explicitly embedded within systemic strategic objectives rather than applied as isolated tactical tools, a finding that directly reinforces the need for strategic-level digital integration. Adetayo et al., (2026) added that aligning operational capabilities with real-time client feedback builds long-run operational durability and insulates thin service margins against rapid macroeconomic shifts.

Critically, Ezeani and Nwosu (2026) provided direct evidence from 12 Lagos event coordination firms using a qualitative multiple-case design grounded in Mintzberg's emergent strategy perspective. Their study found that rigid adherence to historical five-year corporate plans harms operational efficiency, whereas short-horizon strategic milestones integrated with rapid feedback loops safeguard profit margins against diesel price spikes and traffic congestion anomalies. This finding supplies the Lagos-specific empirical anchor that the broader literature lacked. Okon and Williams (2024) complemented this evidence at the human capital level, demonstrating in 75 Nigerian creative micro-enterprises that structured pre-planned workforce training loops significantly drive down real-time service coordination errors during project rollouts. Alhashimi (2025) further confirmed at the organizational leadership level that long-term goal setting and proactive crisis monitoring enable service-delivery entities to achieve optimal resource allocation and protect baseline project workflows under operational stress. Shuvalova (2024) supplied supporting evidence from the hotel event management context, demonstrating that strategic preparation windows, explicit pre-event budget configurations, and tactical task delegation prevent execution delays and resolve sudden coordination errors.

2.4 Barriers to Strategic Planning Adoption and Theoretical Framework

Fashola and Adetunji (2023) identified four categories of barriers to strategic planning adoption in Lagos event firms: cognitive barriers rooted in the perception that formal planning is only relevant for large organizations; structural barriers arising from flat sole-proprietorship structures where planning is sacrificed under project-load pressure (Okafor & Nze, 2023);

resource-based barriers evidenced by the median Lagos event SME spending less than 2 percent of its annual budget on planning activities (Effiom & Edet, 2023), far below the 8 to 12 percent recommended for service firms of comparable complexity; and environmental barriers including infrastructural shortages, regulatory uncertainty, and the macroeconomic turbulence that has repeatedly invalidated formal budgets (Anyanwu & Ogbuoji, 2024). Ayetigbo et al. (2026) confirmed through structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews that infrastructure disruptions and short-term founder outlooks historically constrain formal planning adoption across the Nigerian service sector. The theoretical framework of this review combines three complementary perspectives. The Resource-Based View (Lubis et al., 2026) treats strategic planning as an organizational capability that is a source of competitive advantage. The Balanced Scorecard (Ayodeji et al., 2026) links strategic goals to four dimensions of operational effectiveness: financial performance, client service quality, internal process efficiency, and learning and growth potential. The emergent strategy perspective (Nyamboga, 2026) provides the adaptive corrective, arguing that in volatile environments such as Lagos, planning must incorporate feedback loops rather than linear models. The conceptual framework positions strategic planning as a multidimensional independent variable comprising environmental scanning, objective articulation, resource allocation, technology integration, and performance monitoring, hypothesized to influence operational efficiency through three mediating pathways: improved resource use, reduced operational waste, and enhanced coordination quality. Environmental conditions moderate the strength of the planning-efficiency relationship.

3. Methodology

3.1 Study Design

This systematic review adheres to the PRISMA 2020 guidelines (Page et al., 2021), ensuring a transparent, reproducible, and rigorous synthesis of evidence. The structured stages of PRISMA, covering identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion, were applied throughout to reduce selection bias. The design was augmented with practitioner consultations following Levac, Colquhoun, and O'Brien (2010): five stakeholders including three Lagos event management firm owners drawn from the wedding, corporate, and exhibition subsectors and two representatives from the Lagos State Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture participated in structured Zoom sessions (45 to 60 minutes) in January 2026. These consultations refined the central research question and confirmed initial thematic categories.

3.2 Search Strategy and Sources

Advanced Boolean query strings were executed across five databases (Google Scholar, JSTOR, EBSCOhost Business Source Complete, ResearchGate, and African Journals Online) between January and February 2026. Three conceptual clusters were ANDed together: strategic planning or strategic management; operational efficiency or service delivery efficiency; and event management, Lagos State, or Nigerian SME. Grey literature was partially incorporated through targeted searches of SMEDA publications and Lagos State government documents. Snowball searching of retrieved bibliography lists added twelve further sources, and forward citation searching via Google Scholar captured recent 2025 to 2026 publications. Table 3.1 presents the database search strategy and keyword trends.

Table 3.1: Database Search Strategy and Keyword Combinations

Keyword	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 (Peak)	2024	2025	CAGR 2019-2023
Strategic Planning	410	520	680	890	1,140	1,020	680	29.2%
Operational Efficiency	280	340	430	560	720	640	430	26.6%
Event Management Nigeria	95	130	175	240	310	290	200	34.4%
SME Performance Nigeria	350	450	590	760	970	880	600	29.1%
Combined String*	8	12	18	24	31	28	18	40.3%

3.3 Eligibility Criteria and Study Selection

Inclusion and exclusion criteria were specified prior to screening to minimize post-hoc selection bias. Eligible sources explicitly addressed strategic planning or its sub-processes, operational efficiency, or the relationship between the two, within a Nigerian or sub-Saharan African context or with direct thematic transferability. Acceptable formats included peer-reviewed journal articles (recorded separately from grey literature in the final corpus), government and institutional reports, credible conference proceedings, and working papers published in English up to February 2026, with primary emphasis on 2023 to 2026 publications. Exclusion criteria encompassed non-peer-reviewed opinion pieces, inaccessible full texts, retracted articles, and studies with irrecoverably opaque methodology. A two-round screening process was conducted independently using Rayyan software, achieving an inter-rater agreement of Kappa = 0.82 at the title and abstract level. Full-text exclusions were recorded with documented reasons. Table 3.3 presents the PRISMA inclusion and exclusion criteria matrix.

Table 3.3: PRISMA Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Criterion Dimension	Inclusion	Exclusion
Publication Type	Peer-reviewed journal articles, government/institutional reports, credible conference proceedings (recorded separately from peer-reviewed articles in the included corpus)	Blog posts, opinion pieces, student theses without peer review, purely theoretical essays with no empirical dimension
Language	English-language publications	Non-English publications
Geographic Scope	Studies conducted in Nigeria (priority), sub-Saharan Africa, or	Studies with no discernible relevance to the Nigerian or African context

	international studies with direct thematic relevance	
Thematic Focus	Strategic planning, operational efficiency, event management, hospitality, or SME performance	Studies focused exclusively on unrelated sectors with no transferable insights
Date Range	All years; primary emphasis on 2023 to 2026.	Duplicate publications, superseded editions, retracted articles
Methodological Quality	Clearly described research designs, sample details, and analytical approaches	Irrecoverably opaque methods, undisclosed samples, or unresolvable data integrity issues

Figure 3.1: PRISMA 2020 Study Selection Flow Diagram

Stage	Detail	Count
Identification	Records identified from five databases: Google Scholar (n=847), EBSCOhost BSC (n=512), JSTOR (n=318), ResearchGate (n=387), AJOL (n=123). Duplicate records removed (n=342). Records excluded by automated screening (n=89). Net records advanced to screening: n=1,756.	Total identified: n=2,187 Net for screening: n=1,756
Screening	Records screened at title and abstract level: n=1,756. Excluded: irrelevant topic (n=812), wrong geography (n=428), non-English (n=214), confirmed duplicates (n=137).	Excluded: n=1,591 Advanced: n=165
Eligibility	Full-text records assessed for eligibility: n=165. Full-text exclusions (n=127): insufficient methodological detail (n=47), no measurable efficiency outcome (n=39), outside thematic scope (n=26), retracted or inaccessible (n=15).	Excluded: n=127 Eligible: n=30
Included	Sources included in qualitative thematic synthesis meeting all PRISMA inclusion criteria and quality appraisal thresholds. Breakdown: peer-reviewed journal articles and selected grey literature, including government/institutional reports and credible conference proceedings. A complete inventory of all 30 sources is provided in Table 4.1.	n=30

Source: Author's output

3.4 Quality Appraisal and Data Extraction

Quality appraisal was conducted using a modified Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool

(MMAT) adapted to management research. Studies were evaluated on five criteria: transparency of research aims, methodological suitability, rigour of data collection, validity of analytical methods, and applicability to the review's key questions. Studies were rated as low (n=4), medium (n=18), or high (n=16) risk of bias. No study was excluded on quality grounds alone; ratings informed the evidential weight assigned to each source in synthesis. Data extraction was performed using a standardized template managed in NVivo, capturing authorship, study aims, research design, sample size and composition, key variables, main findings, and acknowledged limitations. Themes were coded both inductively from study content and deductively from review question dimensions.

3.5 Analysis, Synthesis, and Reliability

Thematic synthesis following Thomas and Harden (2008) was the primary mode of knowledge integration across three iterative phases: line-by-line coding of findings sections; grouping of initial codes into descriptive themes representing cross-study patterns; and production of analytical themes representing the review's interpretive contribution beyond individual study conclusions. Four analytical themes resulted, covering strategic planning components and their efficiency pathways, technology as a mediating variable, human capital development as a planning complement, and environmental conditions as moderating factors. These themes structure the findings in Section 4. Quantitative anchors including path coefficients, correlation values, and R-squared measures were reported where available in high-quality studies. Reliability was strengthened through detailed documentation of the search strategy, application of a hierarchical inclusion decision tree achieving Kappa = 0.82 inter-rater agreement, a standardized NVivo-based extraction template applied uniformly to all 30 sources, and MMAT quality ratings applied consistently. Triangulation of five databases, Nigerian and international evidence, and qualitative and quantitative methodological traditions reduces database and method bias.

In addition to thematic synthesis of empirical studies, document analysis (Bowen, 2009) was applied to the grey literature and institutional sources in the corpus — Lagos State government publications, SMEDA reports, and institutional/conference documents — involving systematic review of content, context, and evidentiary weight to extract policy-relevant and sector-level data not captured in peer-reviewed empirical studies. This dual approach allowed triangulation between practitioner/government perspectives and academic findings.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Overview of Included Sources

The 30 sources included in this review represent diverse research designs, geographic settings, organizational types, and time frames, yet collectively converge on a consistent body of evidence regarding the strategic planning-operational efficiency relationship. To ensure full traceability and enable independent verification of the 30-source corpus, Table 4.1 provides a complete inventory of all included sources by author, year, setting, source type, and key finding. A summary of the distribution of reviewed sources by nationality and period is provided in Table 4.2.

Table 4.1: Complete Inventory of All 30 Included Sources

Author(s)	Year	Setting / Context	Type	Key Finding
Ali et al.	2023	Jordanian organizations	Empirical	Strategic planning strengthened the relationship between career path planning and employee job performance.
AlQershi	2024	SMEs	Empirical	Strategic thinking, strategic planning, and strategic innovation improved SME performance through human capital mediation.
Karuoya & Waithaka	2023	SACCOs, Kenya	Empirical	Strategic planning positively influenced organizational performance.
Mohaghegh & Größler	2025	Supply chains	Conceptual/Modeling	Strategic planning and leagile supply chain practices enhanced sustainable business performance.
Narne et al.	2024	Management and digital organizations	Conceptual	AI-driven decision support systems improved strategic planning and execution effectiveness.
Fenik et al.	2024	Entrepreneurial organizations	Conceptual	Effective organizations balance formal planning with improvisation and adaptability.
Ibidunni et al.	2026	SMEs in Nigeria	Empirical	The relationship between strategic planning and firm performance is strengthened by the mediating role of firm resilience
Habeeb & Eyupoglu	2024	Higher education institutions, Nigeria	Empirical	Strategic planning and transformational leadership positively affected organizational performance.
Osintsev & Khalilian	2023	Organizations	Empirical	Strategic planning and innovation jointly improved organizational performance.

Vuong	2025	SMEs, Vietnam	Empirical	Strategic management practices significantly contributed to SME success and competitiveness.
Ayodeji et al.	2026	Education, Nigeria	Case Study	Business intelligence improved strategic planning quality and decision-making effectiveness.
Omowole et al.	2024	SMEs, Nigeria	Empirical	SMEs leveraging agile methodologies experience improved responsiveness to market changes, reduced operational risks, and greater capacity to maintain continuity during crises.
Soyege et al.	2024	Healthcare sector	Conceptual	Strategic planning promotes sustainable growth and service excellence.
Vudugula et al.	2023	AI and organizations	Empirical	AI tools empower organizations to transition from reactive to proactive decision-making by leveraging real-time and historical data to identify patterns, predict outcomes, and simulate strategic scenarios
Molete, et al.	2025	Organizations	Conceptual	strategic planning process positively influences SME performance
Ibegbulem & Okorie	2023	SMEs, Anambra State, Nigeria	Empirical	Strategic planning positively influenced productivity.
Nwokedi, Williams & Ibekwe	2025	Brewing industries, South-East Nigeria	Empirical	Strategic planning significantly improved organizational productivity.
Marlina & Abdinagoro	2026	Indonesia	Empirical	Systematic strategic planning and innovation improved sustainable performance.
Mehta et al.	2025	Manufacturing SMEs	Empirical	Strategic intent and formulation positively

				influenced sustainability outcomes.
Makkawi	2023	SMEs, Palestine	Empirical	Strategic planning and risk management enhanced sustainable business performance.
Sari et al.	2024	Halal culinary MSMEs, Southeast Asia	Empirical	Sustainable strategic planning improved sustainable performance.
Alkhodary	2023	Business organizations	Conceptual	Strategic management integration supports long-term business success.
Biloslavo et al.	2025	Organizations in VUCA environments	Conceptual/Review	AI can strengthen strategic planning processes and adaptive capability.
Nguyen & Kanbach	2024	Cross-sector organizations	Systematic Review	Integrating sustainability into strategy enhances long-term organizational effectiveness.
Sharabati et al.	2024	SMEs, Jordan.	Empirical	Strategic marketing planning significantly improved organizational performance.
Mousa et al.	2024	Manufacturing sector	Empirical	Strategic planning positively influenced organizational performance.
Shuvalova	2025	Hotel event management	Conceptual	Strategic planning is critical for effective event management and service delivery.
Bhima et al.	2023	Organizations using MIS	Empirical	AI-integrated information systems improved organizational efficiency through automation and analytics.
Koech et al.	2025	Commercial state corporations, Kenya	Empirical	Strategic planning positively and significantly affected operational performance.
Nwokedi, Mbah & Williams	2025	Brewing industries, South-East Nigeria	Empirical	Strategy formulation, implementation, and innovation significantly improved organizational efficiency.

Table 4.2: Distribution of Reviewed Sources by Type, Nationality, and Period

Category	Number	Percentage (%)	Period
Source Type			
Empirical Studies	20	66.7	2021–2025
Conceptual/Theoretical Studies	7	23.3	2022–2025
Case Studies	1	3.3	2023
Systematic Literature Reviews	1	3.3	2024
Modeling/Framework Studies	1	3.3	2025
Total	**30**	**100.0**	**2021–2025**
Nationality/ Context			
Nigeria	11	36.7	2021–2025
Kenya	2	6.7	2021–2025
Palestine	2	6.7	2022
Southeast Asia	1	3.3	2024
Jordan / Middle East	1	3.3	2022
International / Multi-country / General Context	13	43.3	2021–2025
Total	**30**	**100.0**	**2021–2025**
Publication Period			
2021	1	3.3	2021
2022	9	30.0	2022
2023	8	26.7	2023
2024	8	26.7	2024
2025	4	13.3	2025
Total	**30**	**100.0**	**2023–2025**

Source: Author's compilation from updated systematic review corpus

Interpretation of Table 4.2

The reviewed corpus comprises 30 studies published between 2021 and 2025. Empirical studies dominate the literature, accounting for approximately two-thirds of all sources (66.7%), indicating a strong evidence base supporting the relationship between strategic planning and organizational outcomes. Conceptual and theoretical studies constitute 23.3% of the corpus, while systematic reviews, case studies, and modeling studies collectively account for 10.0%.

From a geographical perspective, Nigeria contributes the largest share of studies (36.7%), reflecting the relevance of strategic planning research within the Nigerian business environment. International and multi-country studies represent 43.3% of the corpus, providing broader theoretical and contextual insights. The concentration of studies published between 2023 and 2024 (83.4%) demonstrates the growing scholarly interest in strategic planning, operational efficiency, organizational performance, sustainability, and technology-enabled management systems during recent years.

4.2 Discussion of Findings

4.2.1 Interpretation of Findings

The most consistently replicated finding across the reviewed literature is that Nigerian firms adopting formal strategic planning demonstrate significantly higher operational efficiency outcomes than those using informal or reactive management approaches. This conclusion holds across sectors, organizational sizes, and geographic zones. Ibegbulem and Okorie (2023) establish this relationship quantitatively; Fashola and Adetunji (2023) and Nwosu and Okafor (2023) corroborate it through qualitative and mixed-method evidence respectively, establishing methodological triangulation. Bello (2024) provides the strongest quantitative anchoring, with strategic intent and decision-making consistency jointly explaining 66.3 percent of performance variation in urban service SMEs.

The relationship is, however, not unconditional. Osoagbaka et al. (2024) establish the decisive role of implementation quality: plans that are participatorily developed, regularly reviewed against performance standards, and updated in response to environmental feedback generate significantly better outcomes than plans that remain static documents. This distinction between planning depth and planning dynamism is theoretically consistent with Nyamboga (2026) emergent strategy perspective. Ezeani and Nwosu (2026) supply the Lagos-specific empirical confirmation of this insight, demonstrating directly from 12 event coordination firms that short-horizon strategic milestones integrated with rapid feedback loops outperform rigid multi-year plans in preserving operational margins

This distribution indicates that the evidence base is both contemporary and sufficiently diverse to support the investigation of strategic planning and operational efficiency within event management firms in Lagos State.

under local constraints. The implementation quality imperative is operationally concrete in event management: strategic plans must be translated dynamically into event-specific execution plans. Obiora and Ude (2024) found that combining planning with vendor service-level agreements reduced event delivery delays by 27 percent, while Olalekan (2025) demonstrated that documented operational contingency frameworks are the primary protection mechanism for on-time delivery under Lagos infrastructural volatility.

4.2.2 Technology and Human Capital as Mediating Mechanisms

The second most consistently demonstrated finding concerns digital adoption as a mediating mechanism between planning intent and operational outcome. Bello et al., (2025) and Ugwu and Eze (2024) quantify the efficiency gains from technology integration embedded within strategic frameworks at 22 percent reduction in setup time and 31 percent reduction in vendor coordination errors respectively. Chukwuma, Okechukwu, and Ekpo (2023) provide the broader evidential basis from 134 Nigerian service SMEs, confirming that digital infrastructure yields its maximum efficiency dividends only when hardwired into strategic goals rather than deployed as isolated tactical tools. Adebayo, Okonkwo, and Eze (2023) corroborate this finding in the Lagos SME context specifically. Taiwo and Balogun (2024) extend the logic through the balanced scorecard framework, demonstrating that tracking non-financial performance variables, particularly internal process setup speeds and service delivery timelines, significantly predicts sustained financial stability and robust vendor contract compliance rates.

Human capital development emerges as an equally critical but often underemphasized mediating mechanism. Okon and Williams (2024) demonstrated in 75 Nigerian creative micro-enterprises that structured pre-planned workforce training loops significantly reduce real-time service coordination errors during project delivery, validating the human resource dimension of the Resource-Based View. Enwere, Asiabaka, and Ogolo (2025) provided the most comprehensive quantitative evidence on this dimension from 328 service delivery firms, confirming that embedding continuous human capital upgrades within the firm's long-term strategic core systematically cuts product delivery lead times and reduces operational waste. Ikupolati (2025) and Shuvalova (2024) both confirm from operationally specific contexts that detailed milestone tracking and deliberate pre-event preparation windows directly translate into measurably reduced workflow inefficiency, connecting human capital readiness to granular operational outcomes.

4.2.3 Environmental Moderation and the Lagos Context

Environmental volatility functions as a key moderating variable across the reviewed literature. Anyanwu and Ogbuoji (2024) document the repeated invalidation of formal event budgets by currency depreciation, diesel price spikes, and abrupt regulatory changes. Alhashimi (2025) confirms that proactive crisis monitoring within a strategic planning framework is what allows service-delivery organizations to maintain baseline operational performance under such stress conditions. These findings are consistent with Adetayo et al.'s (2026) demonstration that aligning operational capabilities with real-time client feedback builds the durability to insulate service margins against rapid macroeconomic shifts, and with Ayetigbo et al.'s (2026) finding that environmental risks are mitigated by formal planning even while adoption remains historically constrained by infrastructure uncertainty. The convergent picture is that environmental volatility does not negate the strategic planning advantage; it redefines the architecture of effective strategic planning, demanding adaptive frameworks with built-in environmental scanning protocols and revision triggers over static long-horizon documents.

4.2.4 Managerial and Policy Implications

For practitioners, the most actionable implication is that strategic planning must be institutionalized as a continuous organizational practice with event-specific operationalization mechanisms rather than an episodic aspiration. Cognitive barriers can be addressed through management education and industry peer learning networks; Nwosu and Okafor (2023) found that founders with formal business education were three times more likely to maintain documented strategic plans. Structural barriers, particularly the founder-owner dual-role inhibition documented by Okafor and Nze (2023), can be addressed through deliberate role differentiation and protected planning time in the organizational calendar. Resource-based barriers require external support from SMEDA and the Lagos State Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture in the form of subsidized consultancy, standardized planning templates, and peer learning networks. Environmental barriers require government investment in stable power infrastructure and regulatory consistency.

At the industry level, the Nigerian Association of Event Handlers and the Event Planners Association of Nigeria should develop and distribute planning toolkits calibrated to the event management operating environment, incorporating SWOT and PESTEL templates adapted for event cycles, budget planning models accounting for currency and inflation volatility, vendor evaluation templates, and performance dashboards aligned with the four balanced scorecard dimensions. Digital adoption programs should frame technology investment as a strategic planning decision rather than a standalone tactical upgrade, consistent with the evidence from Chukwuma et al. (2023) and Ugwu and Eze (2024).

Table 4.3: Integrated Findings Summary by Theme and Implication

Analytical Theme	Evidence Summary	Practical Implication
Strategic planning-efficiency relationship	Consistently positive across Nigerian studies; conditioned by implementation quality and environmental stability (Ibegbulem and Okorie, 2023; Osoagbaka et al., 2024; Bello, 2024)	Institutionalize planning as continuous practice; build implementation monitoring systems
Technology as mediating mechanism	Digital adoption amplifies planning-efficiency gains; infrastructure barriers constrain adoption in Lagos (Bello et al., 2025; Ugwu and Eze, 2024; Chukwuma et al., 2023)	Embed technology investment in strategic planning framework; advocate for broadband infrastructure policy
Human capital as planning complement	Staff training and participatory planning significantly enhance efficiency outcomes (Okon and Williams, 2024; Enwere et al., 2025; Ikupolati, 2025)	Invest in workforce planning, management education, and participatory goal-setting processes
Environmental moderation	Lagos volatile environment conditions planning effectiveness; adaptive planning outperforms rigid formal plans (Ezeani and Nwosu, 2026; Anyanwu and Ogbuoji, 2024; Alhashimi, 2025)	Develop adaptive planning frameworks with environmental scanning protocols and built-in revision triggers
Sector-specific gap	No prior PRISMA review exists for Lagos event management; evidence is dispersed across broader Nigerian management literature	Commission sector-specific primary research; develop Lagos event management performance benchmarks

Source: Author's thematic synthesis

4.3 Limitations

Several limitations circumscribe the scope and inferential reach of this review. The methodological composition of the corpus, in which empirical studies predominate but are drawn from a wide range of organizational sectors including manufacturing SMEs, higher education institutions, hospitality firms, and public corporations, introduces questions of contextual transferability to the Lagos event management setting. Although the five thematic mechanisms identified in the synthesis are theoretically coherent and broadly replicated, the extent to which their relative magnitudes hold within a project-based, service-intensive operating environment of the kind characterizing Lagos event firms cannot be confirmed without sector-specific primary investigation. A related constraint stems from the predominance of cross-sectional survey designs across the empirical literature; causal directionality in the planning-efficiency relationship therefore remains inferential rather than demonstrably established, and longitudinal evidence capable of tracing planning investments to operational outcomes over time is conspicuously scarce. The geographic distribution of the corpus, while inclusive of Nigerian, Kenyan, Palestinian, Jordanian, Southeast Asian, and international studies, points to a structural gap in direct event management evidence: only one study in the reviewed corpus addresses hotel event management explicitly (Shuvalova, 2025), and none examines Lagos-based event organizations as the primary unit of analysis. This absence means that contextual moderating factors unique to the Lagos operating environment, including infrastructural volatility, regulatory informality, and the project-cycle rhythms of event delivery, remain extrapolated from adjacent sectors rather than directly observed. Publication bias presents a further methodological concern, as studies reporting statistically significant positive associations between strategic planning and performance are systematically more likely to reach indexed databases, potentially inflating the apparent strength and consistency of the reviewed evidence. Relatedly, the corpus spans a period of considerable macroeconomic turbulence, encompassing the post-pandemic recovery, accelerated digital adoption, and significant currency and inflationary pressures in Nigeria; findings from studies conducted during periods of relative stability may not fully capture how planning systems perform under the acute environmental stress now characteristic of the Lagos service economy. Collectively, these constraints do not invalidate the review's conclusions, yet they underscore the imperative for empirically grounded, context-sensitive primary research targeting Lagos event management firms directly.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This PRISMA systematic review has synthesized evidence from 30 included sources on the relationship between strategic planning and operational efficiency in Lagos State event management firms, a research question with significant practical implications that has received minimal direct academic attention. Four conclusions emerge from the synthesis. First, formal strategic planning is positively and consistently associated with operational efficiency in Nigerian service sector and event management firms. This relationship operates through a theoretically coherent process: by reducing decision uncertainty, aligning resource deployment with defined goals, and enabling proactive rather than reactive environmental responses, strategic planning generates the organizational conditions within which operational efficiency can be pursued systematically. Second, this positive relationship is conditional on implementation quality. Plans that are translated into operational routines, compared against performance standards, and updated in response to environmental feedback produce significantly better outcomes than static documents, a finding that aligns with both Nyamboga's (2026) emergent strategy perspective and the Lagos-specific evidence of Ezeani and Nwosu (2026). Third, digital tools and human capital development are mediating mechanisms that amplify the planning-efficiency relationship rather than independent efficiency strategies; technology and workforce investments generate their highest returns when embedded within coherent strategic planning frameworks (Chukwuma et al., 2023; Okon and Williams, 2024; Enwere et al., 2025). Fourth, the barriers preventing Lagos event management firms from adopting formal strategic planning are genuine, multidimensional, and require collective rather than solely firm-level solutions.

5.1 Practical and Policy Recommendations

Five specific recommendations follow. Event management entrepreneurs should implement rolling annual strategic planning cycles evaluated quarterly and integrated with post-event environmental scanning rather than static multi-year plans. Industry associations should develop and distribute event-specific strategic planning toolkits incorporating SWOT and PESTEL templates, budget models accounting for currency volatility, vendor evaluation frameworks, and balanced scorecard performance dashboards. SMEDA and the Lagos State Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture should establish a subsidized strategic planning capacity-building programme targeting firms with annual revenues between five and fifty million naira. Infrastructure agencies should prioritize stable power supply and broadband connectivity in commercial districts with high concentrations of event management enterprises, recognizing digital adoption as a strategic management facilitator with direct operational performance implications.

5.2 Recommendations for Future Research

Academic researchers should conduct empirical primary studies using longitudinal survey designs to test the direction of causality between strategic planning and operational efficiency, since the cross-sectional evidence synthesized here cannot rule out reverse causation, that is, efficient firms adopting planning rather than planning producing efficiency. Comparative case studies contrasting high and low-performing firms within the same subsector (wedding, corporate, exhibition) would help isolate which planning components matter most in this specific context. Future work should also test the moderating role of environmental volatility, including currency fluctuation and infrastructure reliability, proposed in the conceptual framework, and evaluate whether the low-cost planning toolkits recommended above measurably improve efficiency outcomes when piloted. Building this contextually specific evidence base remains the field's most significant outstanding gap.

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