

Managing for Impact: Building High-Performance Organisations in a Competitive World

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Abstract: *This paper examines the phenomenon of dealing with its effects as a strategic management artifact of building high-performance organizations in increasingly competitive and dynamic environments. The research paper looks at how the performance management systems and sustainable management strategies influence performance and effectiveness of organizations based on the practices of their leadership. The research is conducted on the rationale of strategic leadership, organizational culture, and impact-oriented management in enhancing the performance and long-term sustainability of the institutions under the contemporary perspectives and existing literature. According to the results, the work in organizations is better when performance frameworks are tightly fixed on clear strategic goals, stakeholder involvement and learning as a practice. However, the obstacles that may curtail the achievement of the targeted outcomes include organizational resistance, inadequate capacity development, and a lack of integration of the performance assessment systems. The study brings to the fore the applicability of adaptive leadership, evidence-based decision-making, and inclusive management in the attainment of meaningful organizational change. Overall, the study may have an impact in the field of management contribution to impact and organizational resilience, competitiveness and sustainable value creation.*

Keywords: Managing for Impact, High-Performance Organizations, Organizational Effectiveness, Strategic Leadership, Performance Management, Sustainable Management, Competitive Environment, Organizational Performance.

I. INTRODUCTION

As the economic world becomes more and more global, dynamic, and competitive, organisations are always under pressure to perform better, stay competitive and make a sustainable impact. The speeding up of technological innovation, shifting market needs, and the increase in competition have transformed the way organisations are managed, and the managerial performance is evaluated [1]. Modern organisations are no longer evaluated by short-term financial performance; rather, they are evaluated on long-term value creation, flexibility, innovation, and organisational resilience. In this context, the principle of managing with impact has become central to a strategy that aligns managerial practices with organisational performance and, more broadly, stakeholder outcomes [2].

Performing organisations demonstrate the ability to consistently achieve high outcomes, maintain operational efficiency, foster staff engagement, and adapt to the strategic environment. Achieving organisational excellence demands a holistic management strategy that involves good leadership, systematic processes, and continuous learning. With the growing competitive pressure across all industries, organisations should not continue to rely on conventional management models but should instead embrace performance-related systems that promote co-operation, creativity, and adaptation to environmental changes [3].

This review presents the key components of constructing high-performance organisations and discusses the relationship between management practices and their impact on organisations in competitive business environments. This section



presents the background ideas that form the basis of performance-driven organisational management, synthesising scholarly discussions to date.

II. UNDERSTANDING HIGH-PERFORMANCE ORGANISATIONS

The ability to maintain high level of performance in relation to their competitors based on efficient use of resources, sound leadership as well as responsive organisational structure is the defining feature of High-Performance Organisations (HPOs). Rather than concentrating on productivity measures, HPOs concentrate more on continuous improvements, employee empowerment, organisational capacity of the employees to innovate and strategic alignment of the organisational functions [4].

A systemic performance management is the hallmark of HPOs. These organisations are integrative of both strategic goals and operational execution where an individual and team effort is attached to organisational goals. Besides, the HPOs build a culture of accountability, learning, and collaboration, which helps them to act in the face of uncertainty in the environment and disturbances in the market [4].

The literature shows that organisational performance is multidimensional in that it covers financial prosperity, functional effectiveness, workforce wellness, customer contentment, and sustainability. This implies that, the concept of HPOs can merely be interpreted through structural and behavioural factors that enhance the performance of organisations [5].

III. BUILDING AND SUSTAINING ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Organisational performance is not an event but a process, which should be strategically planned and be able to change due to continuous adaptation. Sustainable performance occurs when organisations mobilise resources, processes and human capital in line with long-term goals that are well developed. The performance-building strategies that have been demonstrated to be good are having specific goals to be achieved, promoting innovation and organisational learning [6].

Performance also requires endurance and flexibility in the face of changes in business situations to maintain. Organisations should keep an eye on internal processes and outside trends to keep up and to keep competing. Continuous improvement, knowledge sharing mechanisms and employee development initiatives can be useful in ensuring a stable performance over time [7].

Moreover, sustainable performance is an element of efficiency and flexibility balance. High performance within organisations is generally related to high levels of coordination between operational practices and the vision of the leadership, as it helps the organisation to be consistent as it changes with time.

A. Operating in a Competitive Business Environment

The business world today is characterized by stiff competition, rapid innovation, and globalization. Organisations operate in environments that are technologically disruptive, with changing consumer demands and altered regulatory systems. Such conditions prompt organisations to continually improve their strategies and enhance operational effectiveness to stay competitive [8].

The examples of success in the competitive environment require organisational responsiveness and strategic agility. The ability to innovate, quick decision-making, and consistent value delivery are becoming critical factors in gaining a competitive advantage. Organisations should thus be able to build the capability to predict market changes and be proactive rather than reactive [9].

In addition, there has been increased rivalry in the market over talent, knowledge, and technological capabilities, alongside traditional market rivalry. Consequently, organisations have to develop an effective internal culture and flexible managerial systems that enable them to remain competitively viable in the long run and contribute to organisational sustainability [10].



B. Management Practices for Creating Impact

The main mechanisms for creating and maintaining organisational impact are management practices. Sound management goes beyond administrative containment to include sound decision-making, resource utilisation, and the creation of a climate that encourages innovation and cooperation. Managers are instrumental in translating organisational goals into implementable strategies and in influencing employees towards a common objective [11].

Impact-oriented managerial practices are focused on transparency, accountability, and participatory leadership. These practices promote employee participation, increase productivity and organisational commitment. Moreover, performance monitoring systems and feedback enable organisations to measure progress and make informed adjustments to strategies and operations [12].

The complexity of organisational environments has also underscored the importance of data-driven decision-making and agile management practices. Those organisations that embrace adaptive management are in a better position to respond to uncertainty, exploit emerging opportunities and make meaningful organisational outcomes [13].

IV. CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATION OF MANAGING FOR IMPACT

In this section, the conceptual basis for managing and ensuring impact is presented through a discussion of key ideas, including high-performance organisations, organisational effectiveness, the competitive environment, strategic leadership, and sustainable organisational impact, which determine an organisation's long-term success.

A. Managing for Impact: Meaning and Scope

Managing for impact is the organisational approach by which organisations develop and execute management strategies that deliver measurable, sustainable results. Compared to conventional management methods, which are mainly concerned with controlling operations and their efficiency, managing for impact is more about strategic alignment, value creation and the organisation's long-term effectiveness. It entails establishing specific organisational objectives, tracking performance results and continually readjusting managerial practices to ensure that organisational undertakings contribute to the desired outcomes [14].

The frame of managing to impact is relevant to internal organisational performance as well as the external stakeholder performance and contributions to society. Organisations are increasingly realising that sustainable impact means achieving equilibrium between economic performance, social responsibility and environmental sensitivity. Strategy planning, performance management, stakeholder involvement, and lifelong organisational learning, in their turn, are part of the practices embedded in managing for impact [15].

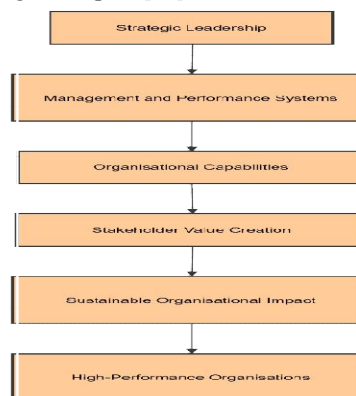


Fig. 1. Steps for Managing for Impact in High-Performance Organisations (HPOs)

A model is provided in Figure 1 on ways that organisations can perform highly using impact-oriented management practices. The first model is Strategic Leadership that provides a vision, direction and guidance to the organisational activities. A successful leader will convert the strategic goals into structured Management and Performance Systems, including planning, performance evaluation and organisational governance systems. The systems help organisations to



develop high Organisational Capabilities, which consist of innovation, learning, operational efficiency, and employee engagement. The greater these capabilities, the better the organisations can generate Stakeholder Value, such that the employees, customers, partners and even society itself can gain the benefits of organisational activities. The eventual outcome of this value creation is Sustainable Organisational Impact where the organisations are able to attain economic, social and operational success in the long term. The final outcome of the process is the development of the High-Performance Organisations (HPOs), which are found to be very competitive, flexible and long-term organisational performance in highly dynamic and competitive environments.

B. Strategic Leadership and Management Practices

Strategic leadership largely plays the main role in the establishment of the organisational direction and in creating the culture of high performance. The role of leaders would be to introduce the vision of the organisation, align the resources in the alignment with the strategic priorities, and motivate the employees toward achieving the common goals. Good leadership also comes with a culture of mistrust, collaboration and creativity in the organisation [16].

The leadership vision can be converted into the end product of the translation process through management practices. These practices include strategic planning, performance management systems, employee development plans and knowledge sharing programs. When effectively implemented in an organisation, such practices will result in higher efficiency and employee engagement [17].

Change-responsive and flexible strategic leadership in the modern organisational environment should also be adaptable. Leaders must be in a position to manage organisational change, steer through uncertainty and foster innovation that will drive organisational performance.

C. Organisational Performance and Effectiveness

Organisational performance refers to the level at which organisational strategic objectives and operational objectives are realised. The measurement of organisational performance has long been evaluated on the basis of financial measures, and profitability, increment in revenues and reduction in costs have been the key indicators. However, contemporary perspectives have recognised organisational effectiveness as a wider aspect that includes employee involvement, customer satisfaction, innovation capacity and long-term sustainability [18].

Organisational effectiveness is used to refer to the extent to which an organisation uses its resources in a prudent manner as it adjusts to new environments. Close relationships are observed between high organisational effectiveness and strong coordination of strategic planning, operational process and human resource development. With well-integrated organisations in these aspects, it is more likely that they achieve more stable and sustainable performance outcomes [19].

In addition, the quantitative and qualitative measures are required to measure organisational performance as it is multidimensional and requires the measurement of organisational success. This expanded focus enables organisations to not only focus on their short-term performance, but also their long-term growth and development potential.

D. High-Performance Organisations: Concept and Characteristics

HPO refers to organisations that consistently achieve high performance through the efficient use of their resources, strategic leadership, and flexible organisational systems. These organisations exhibit a sustained capacity for high productivity, innovation, and value to stakeholders over a protracted period. The notion of HPOs focuses on organisational systems that combine strategic vision and operational implementation [20].

There are some features that differentiate high-performance organisations from traditional organisational set-ups. These are commitments to strong leadership, clear strategic direction, employee empowerment, co-operative organisational cultures, and a strong emphasis on continuous improvement. Moreover, HPOs are usually highly flexible in their structures, enabling them to respond quickly to environmental changes without compromising organisational stability [21].



HPOs will be better positioned to adapt to market fluctuations and technological changes because of the innovation, knowledge-sharing, and performance-based cultures they promote. Therefore, the emergence of HPOs can be a very important goal for organisations seeking to remain competitive in the volatile business world [22].

E. The Competitive Business Environment

The contemporary business environment is characterized by increased complexity, high rate of technological advancements and international competition. The organisations must be in markets where the processes of innovation are shorter, the expectations of the customers vary continuously, and the competition has never been experienced before. These situations require adaptable strategies and responsive managerial behaviors of organisations [1].

The business environment is competitive and influences organisational decision-making, allocation of resources and strategic priorities. The need to stay competitive compels organisations to keep on following the external trends, technological changes and market fluctuations. Failure to adapt to the same may result in poor organisational performance and market irrelevance [23].

In response to the competition these organisations are now focused on innovation, efficiency in operations and strategic agility. The capabilities will assist in making sure that organisations are able to detect emerging opportunities, positively respond to disruptions in the market, and maintain a long-term competitive advantage [24].

F. Sustainable Organisational Impact

Sustainable organisational impact refers to long-term benefits brought about by organisational operations that bring about sustainable value to the internal and external stakeholders. Such an idea conditions the necessity to find the balance between short-term objectives of performance and long-term organisational sustainability. Only those companies that are interested in short-term profits may compromise long-term sustainability and their relations with stakeholders [25].

Sustainable impact involves incorporating economic, social and environmental issues in the organisational decision-making. Such an integrated approach can assist organisations to stay at the same level of performance and positively contribute to society and the business ecosystem. Furthermore, sustainable impact encourages businesses to come up with strong systems that can withstand economic shocks and environmental threats [26].

The quest for sustainable organisational impact has become one of the major strategic concerns as organisations persist to work in a growing, complex environment. Managing to impact requires a holistic approach that incorporates performance management, leadership effectiveness and environmental awareness to attain long-term organisational success.

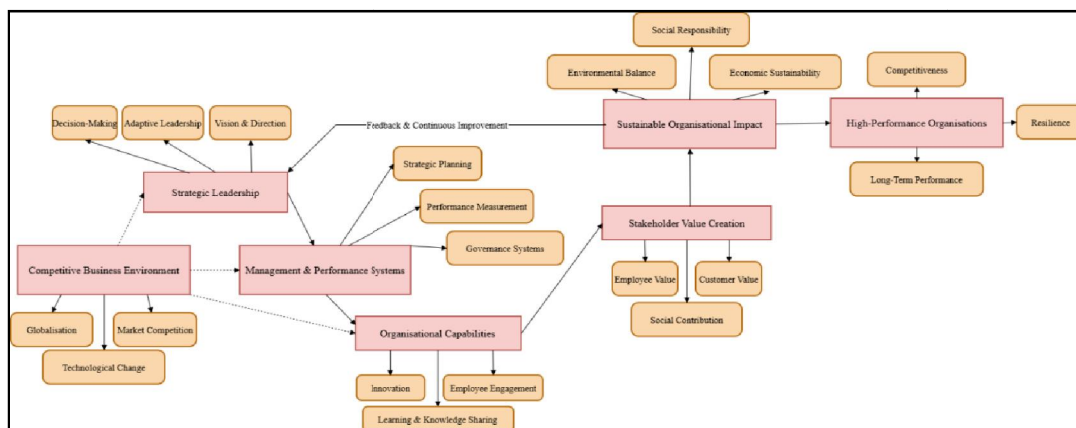


Fig. 2. Framework for Managing for Impact in High-Performance Organisations



The proposed model (Figure 2) for managing impact in high-performance organisations is based on existing literature on strategic management, organisational performance and sustainability. It also demonstrates the relationship between critical organisational factors and the attainment of long-term effectiveness and performance.

Strategic leadership forms the heart of organisations, offering the direction, vision and flexibility they need to adapt to a changing environment. These leadership systems are operationalised through management and performance systems, such as planning, governance, and performance measurement, which ensure the well-organised implementation of strategies. Such systems nurture the production of organisational capabilities that are listed among the most popular drivers of efficiency and responsiveness: innovation, learning, and employee engagement.

The increase in capabilities enables organisations to deliver stakeholder value that benefits employees, customers and society. This value generation supports sustainable organisational impact and encompasses economic, social, and environmental impacts. Eventually, the results of these processes are high-performance organisations, which are competitive, resilient, and successful over time. The competitive business environment is also recognized within the framework, which requires the organisation to constantly adapt. Another cycle creates continuity in learning and enhancement, making managing for impact a dynamic concept.

V. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section covers the primary literature on organisational sustainability, high-performance organisations, performance management systems, and impact-oriented institutional practices. Leadership, managerial activities, staff dedication, and performance models are essential success factors and long-term influences in public, military, and higher education.

Barros et al. (2026) examined the application of a Balanced Scorecard (BSC)-inspired model in a public organisation through an in-depth explanatory single-case study, based on interviews with participants, documents, and observations of meetings. The research gives a credible view of the interaction of performance management tools with those that are currently in place in organisation activity, and it established that despite the fact that structural change was realised, there was no significant change in the managerial decision-making because of organisational rigidity, training, weak alignment of reward system, and no involvement of leadership. This emphasizes that effective performance frameworks require both cultural and behavioural change, not technical adoption. The single-case design, however, does not generalise, and the results are case-specific [27].

Smit et al. (2025) discuss the way in which universities are turning into impact-driven institutions by considering the role of such policy instruments as impact narratives, impact profiles, and data infrastructures that are intended to quantify contributions to sustainable development goals. The analysis of documents and interviews, as qualitative methods, enables an in-depth examination of how organisational strategies and evaluation mechanisms redefine academic practices. Theoretically, the research makes a contribution by drawing to light the socio-technical processes involved in redefining research relevance and impact. Nevertheless, the narrow case approach to a single university and the heavy emphasis on theory limit the generalizability and usefulness for institutions seeking to replicate these reforms. Although Smit et al. focus on the institutionalisation of research impact in the context of higher education, the current research extends the notion of organisational impact to strategic leadership and high-performance organisational practices, aiming to achieve overall organisational effectiveness [28].

Roos (2024) tells about the increasing focus on the societal impact of business school research and the creation of Impact Labs in Hult International Business School as a means of improving the quality of research, institutional reputation, and societal contribution. The research is useful in that it addresses the growing pressure on educational establishments to have practical applications and impact beyond conventional academic publications. The work is, however, mostly descriptive and based on a single institution, thus limiting the generalisability of the findings. Moreover, the study provides no empirical evidence to determine the significance of the Impact Lab model in enhancing research impact or institutional performance [29].



Lozano (2023) contributed to the discourse of organisational sustainability excellently by adopting the systems approach, which encompasses the internal interaction and external impact on the organisational parts. The aspect that the study utilized a wide range of statistical tests increases its contribution to the field of empirical study and reinforces the perception that, the strategic and managerial functions of an organisation are more concerned with sustainability as opposed to the operations functions, which further supports the argument that sustainability ought to be placed in an organisation in a holistic way. Nevertheless, reliance on self-reported cross-sectional survey data limits causal interpretation and overlooks contextual variables, such as leadership practices and organisational culture, which affect sustainability implementation. The author has provided a good theoretical basis of sustainability, but has only covered the engagement dimension and impact dimension, as opposed to the current study, which has attributed sustainability to the strategic leadership, organisational performance and effectiveness in a bid to understand how organisations may realise sustainability and high performance at the same time [30].

Fragoso et al. (2022) investigated High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS), organisational commitment, and performance relations. The study makes a valuable contribution by showing that HPWS has positive effects on affective, normative and continuance commitment; that affective commitment has an intermediate effect between HPWS and performance benefits (such as task performance and contextual performance); and that affective performance indirectly decreases counterproductive performance. The study reinforces the claim that employees' attitudes and behaviours are critical determinants of organisational performance. Nonetheless, the extreme specialisation of the military context hinders generalisation to civilian or corporate organisations, and the use of perceptual measures can introduce bias in responding to them [31].

Arshad et al. (2020) attempt to solve the challenge of converting the public sector organisations in developing countries into high-performance organisations by suggesting the application of the High Performance Organisation (HPO) framework and mixed-method research design, which is explanatory sequential in nature, to diagnose strengths and weaknesses of the organisations. The research is useful in highlighting the necessity of strategic performance evaluation and reform in public-sector institutions, especially in developing contexts. But most of the study is rather theoretical and lacks empirical support, which limits its practical use and the ability to assess the efficiency of the proposed framework [32]

TABLE I. SUMMARY OF REVIEWED LITERATURE

Author (Year)	Research Focus	Methodology	Key Findings	Research Gap / Limitation
Barros et al. (2026)	Implementation of Balanced Scorecard (BSC) in public organisations.	Qualitative single-case study; interviews, documents, and meeting observations.	Performance tools require cultural and behavioural change; organisational rigidity and weak leadership involvement hinder implementation.	Single-case design limits generalisation; context-specific findings; lacks long-term performance evaluation.
Smit et al. (2025)	Transformation toward impact-driven universities and policy instruments.	Qualitative study; document analysis and semi-structured interviews.	Policy tools (impact narratives, profiles, data systems) reshape academic practices and institutional strategies.	Case-specific findings; heavy theoretical orientation; limited practical implementation guidance.
Roos (2024)	Impact-driven research and institutional transformation in business schools.	Descriptive institutional analysis (case-based discussion).	Impact Labs enhances research relevance, institutional reputation, and societal contribution.	Mostly descriptive; single institutional focus; lacks empirical measurement of impact effectiveness.



Lozano (2023)	Organisational sustainability and system elements engagement and impact.	Quantitative survey (210 responses); Descriptive analysis, Friedman test, ratio analysis, ANOVA.	Sustainability engagement is strongest in research, management, and strategy; internal and external sustainability efforts are interconnected; promotes holistic systems perspective.	Relies on self-reported cross-sectional data; limited causal explanation; ignores contextual factors like leadership and organisational culture; focuses mainly on engagement and impact dimensions.
Fragoso et al. (2022)	Relationship between High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS), organisational commitment, and performance.	Quantitative study using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM); sample of 336 military personnel.	HPWS positively influences organisational commitment; affective commitment mediates performance outcomes; behavioural factors drive performance.	Military context limits generalisability; reliance on perceptual measures; focuses mainly on HR-level factors rather than organisational strategy.
Arshad et al. (2020)	Transformation of public sector organisations into High-Performance Organisations (HPOs) in developing countries.	Conceptual study proposing the HPO framework and an explanatory sequential mixed-method design.	Highlights the need for performance diagnosis and strategic reforms to improve public sector effectiveness.	Lacks empirical validation; framework not tested practically; limited evidence of implementation effectiveness.

As shown in Table I above, past research highlights disparate aspects of organisational performance and influence. As an example, Rene Lozano stressed the organisation's sustainability from a systems perspective, whereas Muhammad A. Arshad stressed transforming public-sector institutions into HPOs using the HPO framework. Paula Fragoso, in her turn, investigated how High-Performance Work Systems and employee commitment can enhance performance outcomes. Equally, Ricardo S. Barros examined the implementation issues of performance management systems in state organisations and Johan Roos and J. P. Smit examined the concept of performance management systems in higher education. Though these studies offer valuable perspectives, most focus on individual aspects of an organisation rather than on the approach of combining leadership, performance systems, and sustainability into a holistic managing-for-impact system.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study concludes that managing for impact is a key factor in enhancing organisational performance by harmonising strategic leadership, performance measurement systems, and sustainable management practices in competitive environments. The results indicate that performance frameworks and managerial innovations can be used to promote organisational effectiveness, but their effectiveness in implementation is based on the commitment of the leadership, the organisational culture, employee involvement, and the ability to integrate the new practice with the existing operational structures. The research also demonstrates that organisational rigidity, as well as a lack of training, stakeholder engagement and a connection between performance and reward systems, could prevent the achievement of the intended results.

On the basis of these findings, organisations are advised to focus on capacity building by facilitating continuous training, promoting participatory leadership styles, and developing user-friendly, data-driven performance management systems that support informed decision-making and create long-term impact. Besides, the strategic goals, assessment systems, and reward systems should be more aligned to enhance efficiency and adoption. Further long-term empirical



research in the different organisational contexts and industries is suggested to investigate changes in performance and sustainability implications, which would lead to greater generalisability and an in-depth understanding of management-for-impact practices.

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