



Transformational Leadership and Strategic Management: Enhancing Organizational Performance

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Publication Date: July 4, 2026

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.21187397

Abstract

Higher education institutions operate in increasingly complex environments characterized by globalization, technological change, and rising demands for quality assurance, innovation, and institutional effectiveness. In this context, transformational leadership and strategic management are considered essential organizational mechanisms that may enhance institutional performance when effectively integrated.

This study examined the relationships among transformational leadership, strategic management, leadership–management synergy, and institutional outcomes in Philippine higher education institutions. Specifically, it aimed to determine the extent of implementation of transformational leadership and strategic management practices, examine their relationship with leadership–management synergy, and assess their influence on organizational performance, employee outcomes, and institutional outcomes.

The study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design. Respondents included academic leaders from selected campuses of Isabela State University, specifically Executive Officers, Campus Administrators, Deans, and Program Chairs. Data were gathered using a structured questionnaire adapted from validated leadership and management instruments. Statistical tools used included weighted mean, Pearson correlation, and regression analyses to examine the relationships and predictive effects among variables.

Findings revealed that transformational leadership and strategic management practices were both highly implemented. The two variables were significantly and positively correlated and both significantly predicted leadership–management synergy. Leadership–management synergy significantly predicted organizational performance and was positively associated with employee engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Transformational leadership and strategic management also significantly predicted institutional adaptability, innovation, and growth. Strategic management showed stronger effects on innovation and institutional growth, while transformational leadership exerted greater influence on adaptability.

The study concludes that transformational leadership and strategic management are complementary drivers of leadership–management synergy and organizational effectiveness in higher education institutions. Their integration contributes to improved organizational performance, employee outcomes, and long-term institutional sustainability.

Keywords: *transformational leadership, strategic management, leadership–management synergy, organizational performance, higher education institutions*



1. Introduction

Background and Rationale

Higher education institutions (HEIs) operate in a dynamic and increasingly competitive environment shaped by globalization, technological advancement, shifting student demographics, and heightened expectations for quality assurance and accountability. These developments require universities not only to provide quality education but also to remain adaptive, innovative, and organizationally effective. In this context, leadership and management are critical institutional functions that influence performance, employee outcomes, and long-term sustainability.

Transformational leadership emphasizes vision, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. In higher education settings, transformational leaders help build commitment, foster innovation, and motivate organizational members toward shared institutional goals. Strategic management, on the other hand, focuses on aligning institutional goals, resources, and actions through systematic planning, implementation, and evaluation. It enables institutions to respond to environmental demands and pursue long-term competitiveness.

Although transformational leadership and strategic management have both been recognized as important drivers of organizational success, they are often studied independently. Limited studies in the Philippine higher education context have explored how these two constructs interact and how their integration contributes to leadership–management synergy, employee outcomes, and institutional effectiveness. This gap is especially relevant in multi-campus universities such as Isabela State University, where leadership coordination and strategic alignment are essential to institutional performance.

Review of Related Literature

Transformational leadership has been widely associated with employee engagement, organizational commitment, and innovation. Studies have shown that leaders who inspire and support employees can strengthen motivation, trust, and shared purpose within institutions. Strategic management has likewise been identified as essential to organizational effectiveness because it supports planning, implementation, environmental scanning, and resource alignment.

Recent literature suggests that the integration of transformational leadership and strategic management can create organizational synergy. In higher education institutions, such synergy strengthens adaptability, institutional effectiveness, and long-term development. Employee outcomes such as engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment are also influenced by leadership quality and the coherence of institutional systems. Similarly, innovation and growth are supported when leadership vision is reinforced by strategic planning and execution mechanisms.

Statement of the Problem

This study examined how transformational leadership and strategic management, independently and collectively, influence organizational performance in higher education institutions. It further explored the mediating role of leadership–management synergy and assessed its relationship with employee and institutional outcomes.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What transformational leadership and strategic management practices are implemented within the university?
2. How do transformational leadership and strategic management practices interact to create leadership–management synergy?
3. What is the impact of leadership–management synergy on organizational performance?
4. How does leadership–management synergy correlate with employee engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment?
5. To what extent do transformational leadership and strategic management practices predict institutional adaptability, innovation, and growth?

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to examine the relationship between transformational leadership and strategic management and determine how their integration contributes to leadership–management synergy and organizational outcomes in higher education institutions.

Specifically, it aimed to:

1. determine the extent of implementation of transformational leadership and strategic management practices;
2. examine the relationship of transformational leadership and strategic management with leadership–management synergy;
3. assess the impact of leadership–management synergy on organizational performance;
4. determine the relationship between leadership–management synergy and employee engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment; and
5. evaluate the predictive effect of transformational leadership and strategic management on institutional adaptability, innovation, and growth.

Hypothesis

The integration of transformational leadership and strategic management does not significantly contribute to leadership–management synergy in higher education institutions.



2. Materials and Methods

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design with causal-comparative elements. The descriptive component was used to determine the level of implementation of transformational leadership and strategic management practices. The correlational component examined the relationships among transformational leadership, strategic management, leadership–management synergy, employee outcomes, and institutional outcomes. Regression analysis was also used to determine the predictive influence of the major variables on organizational performance and institutional outcomes.

Participants

The respondents of the study were 172 academic leaders from selected campuses of Isabela State University. These included Executive Officers, Campus Administrators, Deans, and Program Chairs from the campuses of Echague, Cabagan, Cauayan, Ilagan, Angadanan, Jones, Roxas, San Mariano, and San Mateo. Since the population was relatively manageable, the study used total enumeration.

Instruments

Data were gathered using a structured questionnaire adapted from validated instruments and relevant literature. The transformational leadership section was based on the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), while strategic management items were adapted from strategic management frameworks. Additional items were included to measure leadership–management synergy, employee engagement, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational performance, adaptability, innovation, and institutional growth. A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure responses.

Procedure

Permission to conduct the study was secured from the University President and campus administrators. After approval, the researcher distributed the questionnaires to the identified respondents. Participation was voluntary and confidentiality was ensured. Completed questionnaires were collected, checked, encoded, and prepared for statistical analysis.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The following statistical tools were used:

Weighted Mean and Standard Deviation – to determine the level of implementation of transformational leadership and strategic management practices;



Pearson Product–Moment Correlation (Pearson r) – to determine the relationships among transformational leadership, strategic management, leadership–management synergy, and employee outcomes;

Multiple Regression Analysis – to determine the predictive influence of transformational leadership and strategic management on leadership–management synergy, adaptability, innovation, and institutional growth;

Simple Linear Regression – to determine the effect of leadership–management synergy on organizational performance.

3. Results

Implementation of Transformational Leadership and Strategic Management Practices

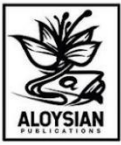
The findings revealed that both transformational leadership and strategic management practices were highly implemented in the university. Strategic management obtained an overall mean of 4.639, while transformational leadership obtained an overall mean of 4.600, both interpreted as Very High. This indicates that respondents consistently perceived strong implementation of both leadership and strategic governance practices in their institution.

For strategic management, the highest-rated indicator was the clear definition of short-term and long-term goals, while the lowest-rated indicator was the communication of strategic plans across organizational levels. For transformational leadership, ethical and professional role modeling emerged as the highest-rated practice, while encouraging creativity and challenging assumptions received the lowest mean, although still within the very high range.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics on Transformational Leadership and Strategic Management Practices

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation	Rank
Strategic Management Practices				
Short-term and long-term goals are clearly defined and measurable.	4.75	0.436	Very High	1
The institution establishes a clear vision and mission to guide strategy.	4.74	0.439	Very High	2
The institution regularly monitors progress toward strategic goals.	4.69	0.501	Very High	3
Employees are actively involved in implementing strategic initiatives.	4.69	0.501	Very High	3
Resources are efficiently allocated to support strategy implementation.	4.68	0.482	Very High	4
Strategic goals align with the institution's overall objectives.	4.64	0.483	Very High	5
Strategies are updated based on performance and	4.62	0.523	Very High	6



environmental changes.				
Leaders analyze external opportunities and threats to inform decisions.	4.62	0.498	Very High	6
Internal strengths and weaknesses are systematically assessed in planning.	4.55	0.499	Very High	7
Strategic plans are communicated effectively across all organizational levels.	4.42	0.496	Very High	8
Transformational Leadership Practices				
My leader models ethical and professional behavior.	4.69	0.462	Very High	1
My leader supports my personal and professional development.	4.67	0.471	Very High	2
My leader communicates a clear and inspiring vision for the institution.	4.67	0.471	Very High	2
My leader treats me with individuality and respect.	4.65	0.548	Very High	3
My leader listens carefully to my concerns and needs.	4.63	0.496	Very High	4
My leader demonstrates confidence in achieving institutional goals.	4.60	0.491	Very High	5
My leader recognizes and appreciates employee contributions.	4.55	0.499	Very High	6
My leader expresses optimism about what we can achieve together.	4.54	0.500	Very High	7
My leader encourages innovative thinking when addressing problems.	4.52	0.501	Very High	8
My leader challenges assumptions and promotes creative approaches.	4.48	0.501	Very High	9

Note. For Strategic Management Practices, the overall mean was 4.639 with a standard deviation of 0.374, interpreted as Very High. For Transformational Leadership Practices, the overall mean was 4.600 with a standard deviation of 0.388, interpreted as Very High



Relationship Between Transformational Leadership, Strategic Management, and Leadership–Management Synergy

Table 2

Correlation Matrix of Transformational Leadership, Strategic Management, and Leadership–Management Synergy

Variables	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	Interpretation	Decision
Transformational Leadership and Strategic Management	.774	< .001	Strong positive relationship	Significant
Transformational Leadership and Leadership–Management Synergy	.774	< .001	Strong positive relationship	Significant
Strategic Management and Leadership–Management Synergy	.861	< .001	Very strong positive relationship	Significant

Note. All correlations are significant at $p < .001$

Correlation analysis showed that transformational leadership and strategic management were strongly and positively related ($r = .774$, $p < .001$). Transformational leadership was also strongly associated with leadership–management synergy ($r = .774$, $p < .001$), while strategic management demonstrated a very strong positive relationship with leadership–management synergy ($r = .861$, $p < .001$).

Table 3

Multiple Regression Analysis of Transformational Leadership and Strategic Management as Predictors of Leadership–Management Synergy

Predictor	B	SE B	t	p
Transformational Leadership	0.301	0.066	4.591	< .001
Strategic Management	0.757	0.068	11.136	< .001

Note. Dependent variable = Leadership–Management Synergy. $R = .878$, $R^2 = .770$, adjusted $R^2 = .767$, $F = 279.700$, $p < .001$. B = unstandardized coefficient; SE B = standard error of B.

Multiple regression analysis further revealed that both transformational leadership and strategic management significantly predicted leadership–management synergy. The model was statistically significant ($R = .878$, $R^2 = .770$, $F = 279.700$, $p < .001$), indicating that 77% of the

variance in leadership–management synergy was explained by the two predictors. Strategic management showed a stronger predictive effect ($B = 0.757$, $p < .001$) than transformational leadership ($B = 0.301$, $p < .001$).

Impact of Leadership–Management Synergy on Organizational Performance

Table 4

Simple Linear Regression Analysis of Leadership–Management Synergy as Predictor of Organizational Performance

Dependent Variable	Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>R</i> ²	Decision
Organizational Performance	Leadership–Management Synergy	0.714	0.055	12.978	< .001	.501	Significant

Note. *B* = unstandardized coefficient; *SE B* = standard error of *B*. The model was significant at $p < .001$.

Simple linear regression analysis indicated that leadership–management synergy significantly predicted organizational performance ($B = 0.714$, $SE = 0.055$, $t = 12.978$, $p < .001$). The model explained 50.1% of the variance in organizational performance ($R^2 = .501$), suggesting that stronger alignment between leadership and management contributes substantially to improved organizational outcomes.

Relationship Between Leadership–Management Synergy and Employee Outcomes

Table 5

Correlation of Leadership–Management Synergy with Employee Engagement, Job Satisfaction and Organizational commitment

Variables	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	Interpretation	Decision
Leadership–Management Synergy and Employee Engagement	.498*	< .001	Moderate positive relationship	Significant
Leadership–Management Synergy and Job Satisfaction	.655*	< .001	Strong positive relationship	Significant
Leadership–Management Synergy and Organizational Commitment	.408*	< .001	Moderate positive relationship	Significant

Note. *significant at $p < .001$.

Leadership–management synergy was positively and significantly associated with employee engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Specifically:

Employee Engagement: $r = .498, p < .001$ (moderate positive relationship)

Job Satisfaction: $r = .655, p < .001$ (strong positive relationship)

Organizational Commitment: $r = .408, p < .001$ (moderate positive relationship)

Among the three employee outcomes, job satisfaction showed the strongest relationship with leadership–management synergy.

Predictive Effect of Transformational Leadership and Strategic Management on Institutional Outcomes

Regression analysis showed that transformational leadership and strategic management significantly predicted institutional adaptability, innovation, and institutional growth.

Table 6

Multiple Regression Analysis of Transformational Leadership and Strategic Management as Predictors of Institutional Adaptability, Innovation, and Institutional Growth

Model	Outcome Variable	Regression Equation	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	F	p
1	Institutional Adaptability	$IA = 1.347 + 0.389(TL) + 0.265(SM)$	.572	.327	.319	40.595	< .001
2	Innovation	$INN = 0.669 + 0.093(TL) + 0.732(SM)$	.754	.568	.563	109.925	< .001
3	Institutional Growth	$IG = 0.872 + 0.269(TL) + 0.497(SM)$	.668	.446	.439	67.100	< .001

Note. TL = Transformational Leadership; SM = Strategic Management; IA = Institutional Adaptability; INN = Innovation; IG = Institutional Growth. All models were statistically significant at $p < .001$.

Institutional Adaptability

The model for adaptability was significant ($R = .572, R^2 = .327, F = 40.595, p < .001$). Both transformational leadership ($B = 0.389, p < .001$) and strategic management ($B = 0.265, p = .018$) significantly predicted adaptability, with transformational leadership showing a slightly stronger effect.

Innovation

The innovation model showed the strongest explanatory power ($R = .754, R^2 = .568, F = 109.925, p < .001$). Strategic management was a significant predictor ($B = 0.732, p < .001$), whereas transformational leadership was not statistically significant ($B = 0.093, p = .265$). This suggests

that innovation is more strongly influenced by structured planning systems and institutional mechanisms than by leadership behavior alone.

Institutional Growth

The model for institutional growth was also significant ($R = .668$, $R^2 = .446$, $F = 67.100$, $p < .001$). Both transformational leadership ($B = 0.269$, $p = .006$) and strategic management ($B = 0.497$, $p < .001$) significantly predicted institutional growth, with strategic management showing the stronger effect.

Table 7

Regression Coefficients for Transformational Leadership and Strategic Management

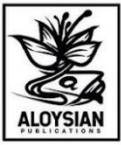
Outcome Variable	Predictor	B	SE B	t	p
Institutional Adaptability	Intercept	1.347	0.339	3.970	< .001
	Transformational Leadership	0.389	0.108	3.625	< .001
	Strategic Management	0.265	0.111	2.392	.018
Innovation	Intercept	0.669	0.264	2.530	.012
	Transformational Leadership	0.093	0.083	1.118	.265
	Strategic Management	0.732	0.088	8.330	< .001
Institutional Growth	Intercept	0.872	0.307	2.840	.005
	Transformational Leadership	0.269	0.097	2.780	.006
	Strategic Management	0.497	0.100	4.970	< .001

Note. B = unstandardized regression coefficient; $SE B$ = standard error of B .

Overall, the findings indicate that strategic management demonstrated a more consistent and stronger predictive influence, particularly on innovation and growth, while transformational leadership contributed more strongly to adaptability.

Implications for practice and policy

The findings have important implications for higher education leaders and policymakers. Universities may benefit from leadership development programs that strengthen transformational leadership competencies while also improving strategic planning and implementation capabilities. Institutional policies should likewise promote leadership–management integration to ensure that vision, planning, and execution are aligned across academic and administrative structures. For policymakers and educational planners, the study highlights the importance of incorporating



leadership and strategic management integration into quality assurance frameworks, governance reforms, and institutional development initiatives.

Study limitations

This study was limited to academic leaders from selected campuses of Isabela State University; therefore, the findings may not be generalizable to all higher education institutions. The study also relied on self-reported data, which may be influenced by personal bias and perception. Moreover, the cross-sectional nature of the design limits causal interpretation of the relationships among the variables.

4. Discussion

The findings of the study demonstrate that both transformational leadership and strategic management are highly implemented in higher education institutions and function as complementary organizational mechanisms. The high ratings obtained by both constructs suggest that university leaders are not only perceived as inspiring and supportive but also capable of implementing structured planning and governance systems. This reflects the increasing importance of combining visionary leadership with systematic institutional planning in higher education.

The strong positive relationship between transformational leadership and strategic management indicates that leadership and management are not isolated domains but are interconnected in practice. Leaders who articulate vision, motivate employees, and model ethical behavior appear more likely to support effective strategic planning and implementation. This relationship is reinforced by the regression findings showing that both transformational leadership and strategic management significantly contribute to leadership–management synergy.

Leadership–management synergy emerged as a major predictor of organizational performance, indicating that the alignment of leadership and management functions is critical to institutional effectiveness. When leaders and managers operate in a coordinated manner, institutions are better positioned to align strategic goals with operational actions, thereby improving organizational outcomes. This also explains the positive associations between leadership–management synergy and employee engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Among these outcomes, job satisfaction was most strongly associated with synergy, suggesting that employees respond favorably to institutions where leadership direction and management systems are coherent and supportive.

The regression results further indicate that transformational leadership and strategic management do not exert identical effects across all institutional outcomes. Transformational leadership showed a stronger influence on adaptability, suggesting that leadership behaviors such as motivation, responsiveness, and support for change are especially important when institutions need to adjust to new demands. Strategic management, on the other hand, showed stronger and more consistent effects on innovation and institutional growth, highlighting the importance of



structured systems, resource alignment, and implementation mechanisms in achieving broader institutional development.

These findings suggest that organizational performance in higher education is best understood not as the product of leadership alone or management alone, but of their integration. Universities that strengthen both transformational leadership practices and strategic management systems are more likely to enhance employee outcomes, organizational performance, adaptability, innovation, and long-term growth.

5. Conclusion

The study concludes that transformational leadership and strategic management are highly implemented and significantly related in higher education institutions. Their integration contributes significantly to leadership–management synergy, which in turn enhances organizational performance. Leadership–management synergy is also positively associated with employee engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment.

Furthermore, transformational leadership and strategic management significantly predict institutional adaptability, innovation, and growth, although their effects vary depending on the outcome. Transformational leadership contributes more strongly to adaptability, while strategic management shows stronger and more consistent effects on innovation and institutional growth.

Overall, the findings affirm that transformational leadership and strategic management function as complementary drivers of leadership–management synergy and organizational effectiveness. Strengthening both leadership and strategic management practices may help higher education institutions improve institutional performance, employee outcomes, innovation, and long-term sustainability.

Recommendations for future research or implementation

Based on the findings of the study, the following are recommended:

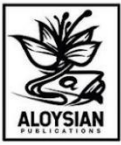
1. Higher education institutions should strengthen both transformational leadership and strategic management practices to enhance leadership–management synergy and institutional effectiveness.
2. University administrators should improve the communication of strategic plans across all organizational levels to ensure stronger alignment and implementation.
3. Leadership development programs should emphasize transformational leadership competencies such as vision communication, employee development, and adaptability.
4. Strategic management systems should be reinforced to support innovation, resource alignment, and institutional growth.
5. Future studies may include faculty and staff respondents, use longitudinal designs, or explore other variables such as organizational culture and resource capacity to provide a more comprehensive understanding of leadership–management synergy.

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