

Integrating National Accreditation and Global Rankings: A Strategic Framework for University Transformation in Bangladesh (2027-2037)

Muhammad Mahboob Ali

Professor of Economics, Bangladesh University of Business and Technology

Corresponding author's e-mail: pipulbd@gmail.com

Abstract

Private universities in developing nations like Bangladesh face the dual challenge of meeting rigorous national accreditation standards while striving for visibility in competitive global ranking systems. A clear, integrated strategic framework to bridge this gap is often lacking. This paper develops a novel strategic framework through a qualitative case study methodology, incorporating environmental scanning (SWOT, PESTEL, VRINE analyses), benchmarking against Bangladesh Accreditation Council (BAC), QS, and Times Higher Education (THE) criteria, and synthesizing best practices from strategic planning literature. The primary result is the "Accreditation-Ranking Nexus Framework," a seven-pillar, decade-long strategic model. It aligns institutional development phases with specific BAC compliance milestones and QS/THE ranking metrics, supported by detailed implementation, monitoring, and risk mitigation protocols. The framework provides a replicable model for higher education institutions in similar contexts, offering policymakers and university leaders a systematic approach to achieving quality assurance and global competitiveness simultaneously. It advocates for strategic alignment between national accreditation bodies and international benchmarking goals.

Keywords: Strategic Planning, Higher Education, Bangladesh Accreditation Council (BAC), QS Rankings, Times Higher Education Rankings

Introduction

Strategic planning in a university refers to the process of defining an organization's direction, vision, mission, and long-term goals, often involving environmental analysis and capability assessment. The landscape of higher education is characterized by intensifying global competition, rising stakeholder expectations, and the pervasive influence of international ranking systems. For universities in developing economies like Bangladesh, this creates a complex strategic dilemma: the imperative to comply with robust national accreditation systems, such as the Bangladesh Accreditation Council (BAC), while simultaneously pursuing recognition in global rankings like the QS World University Rankings and Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings. Often perceived as separate or even conflicting pursuits, this dichotomy can lead to fragmented institutional efforts and diluted resource allocation. Strategic planning is vital for aligning a university's mission with achievable goals, creating a structured path for effective operations that supports overall institutional objectives. Marcus and Gorman (2025) mentioned that with a focus on developing infrastructure, institutions face challenges similar to those at Harvard: securing adequate storage for artifacts, managing personnel changes, and upgrading digital systems. As new initiatives launch, collaboration with local and international partners can enhance collections management and accessibility.

This paper addresses a critical gap in both practice and literature: the need for an integrated strategic framework that explicitly synergizes national accreditation compliance with systematic advancement in global rankings. While literature exists on quality assurance

(Bogorya, 1989; Dooris et al., 2004) and ranking methodologies (QS Quacquarelli Symonds, 2025; Times Higher Education, 2025), few studies provide actionable models for aligning these parallel processes within the specific context of South Asian private universities. Strategic planning establishes an organization's long-term vision and goals, while performance budgeting directly links funding to measurable results. This integration creates a synergy where budgets act as tools for executing strategies, focusing resources on desired outcomes, enhancing transparency, and ensuring accountability for overall success. This shift moves expenditures from mere inputs to demonstrated value, aligning financial plans with strategic priorities to facilitate improved decision-making and ongoing enhancement. Strategic budgeting in a university links funding to measurable achievements, ensuring transparency and accountability by clearly demonstrating what funds accomplish. This efficient allocation of resources supports organizational goals, directing money to the most effective programs. By establishing performance metrics, organizations can track progress and adjust budgets as needed, promoting responsiveness to changing conditions. This integrated process creates a feedback loop where performance data informs future strategies, fostering continuous improvement. Ultimately, this approach provides clearer direction, enhances decision-making, delivers greater value, and aligns daily operations with the overarching strategic vision of the organization.

The primary objective of this paper is to develop and propose a comprehensive, decade-long strategic framework—the "Accreditation-Ranking Nexus Framework." This model is designed to guide a private university in Bangladesh through a structured transformation, ensuring BAC compliance serves as the foundation for achieving measurable improvements in global standing. The framework is grounded in a case analysis of a representative private university, referred to as "University X" for anonymization, and incorporates core principles of strategic planning (Sevier, 2000; Ziemba, 2025), sustainability, and institutional agility.

Activity-Based Strategic Planning (ABSP) creates a direct line from daily operations to long-term strategy. By applying insights from Activity-Based Costing (ABC), management gains a clear picture of where costs truly originate. This allows for strategic resource distribution, waste reduction, and guarantees that all activities contribute to goals such as expense control, quality improvement, or competitive positioning. Unlike conventional budgeting, ABSP analyzes the root "why" behind spending, fostering precise and flexible decision-making in a dynamic business environment.

This paper contributes to theory by advancing a conceptual model that bridges quality assurance and competitive positioning literature. For practitioners and policymakers, it provides a detailed, phased roadmap with clear metrics, implementation guidelines, and risk mitigation strategies, offering a replicable template for enhancing both educational quality and global visibility. Academic auditing relies on external peer review and validation to guarantee objectivity, thereby enhancing institutional credibility, ensuring accountability, and establishing a framework for systematic improvement.

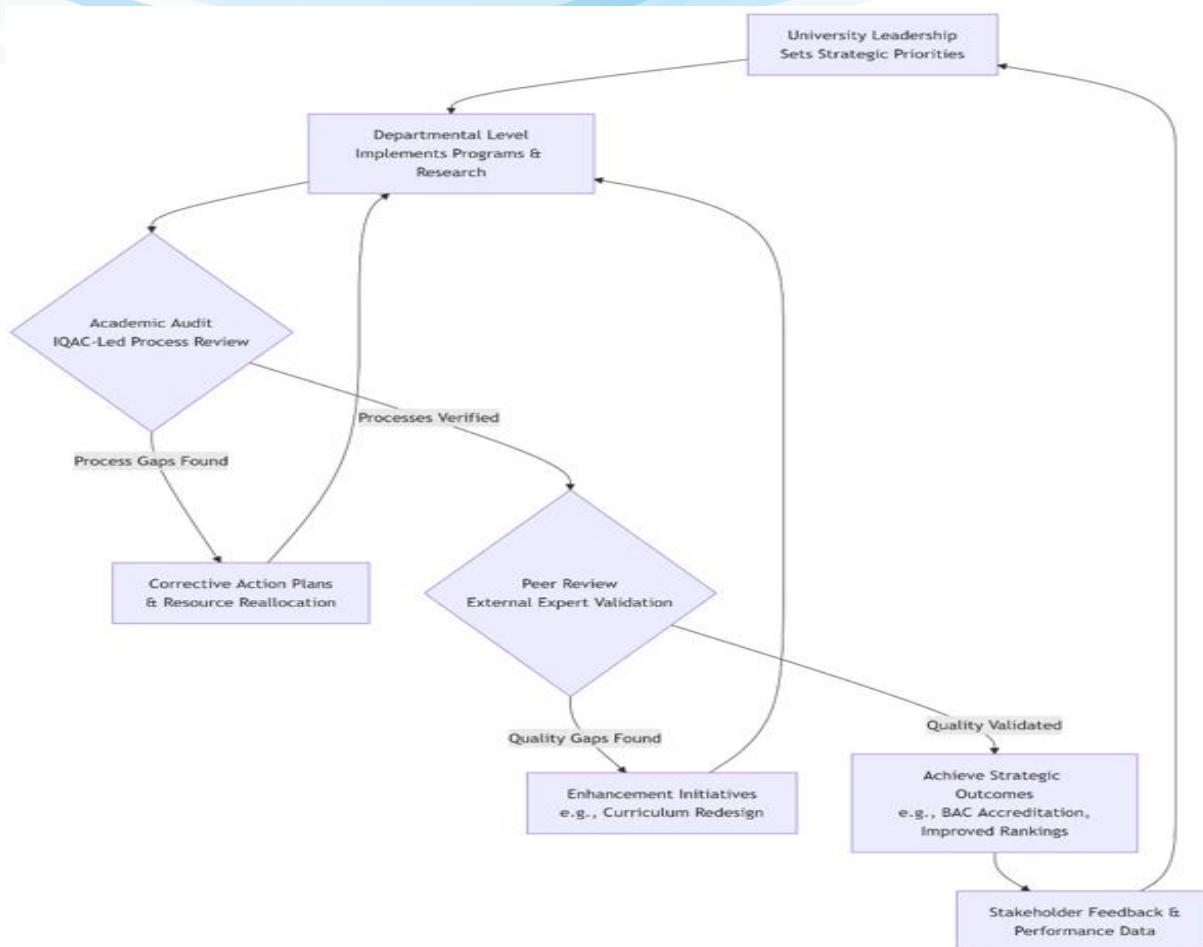


Figure 1 Peer Review- External Validation

Literature Review and Conceptual Foundations

1. The Dual Imperative: Accreditation and Rankings

National accreditation and international rankings represent two dominant paradigms for assessing higher education quality. Accreditation systems like BAC typically establish minimum quality thresholds, focusing on input standards, process integrity, and foundational educational outcomes (Bangladesh Accreditation Council, 2024). Their primary role is quality assurance and accountability. In contrast, ranking systems like QS and THE create comparative hierarchies based on relative performance across teaching, research, internationalization, and reputation (QS Quacquarelli Symonds, 2025; Times Higher Education, 2025). They function as proxies for prestige and global competitiveness. Al-Ghamdi (2025) argued that an integrated strategic model combining the Balanced Scorecard with SDG indicators to enhance university performance within the global sustainability framework. This work bridges the gap between strategic management theory and the practical implementation of sustainability in higher education. A university's 10-year financial strategy should integrate long-term investing, prudent spending, and mission-driven governance to build enduring sustainability, deliberately favoring long-term resilience over short-term gains (Yurchyshena, 2022).

The literature reveals an evolving intersection between these domains. Effective accreditation is increasingly seen as a prerequisite for credible ranking performance, while ranking metrics can inform and elevate quality assurance goals (Kayyali, 2025). However, navigating these systems requires understanding their distinct methodologies, as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1 Comparative overview of QS and THE Ranking Methodologies (2025)

Aspect	QS World University Rankings	THE World University Rankings
Core Focus	Reputation, employability, and faculty/student ratios.	Teaching environment, research intensity/quality, and knowledge transfer.
Key Weightings	Academic Reputation (30%), Employer Reputation (15%), Citations per Faculty (20%).	Teaching (29.5%), Research Environment (29%), Research Quality (30%).
Internationalization	International Faculty/Student Ratio (10%).	International Outlook (7.5%).
Emerging Emphasis	Sustainability (5%), Employment Outcomes (5%).	Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Sources: Compiled by author from QS, 2025 and THE, 2025

2. Strategic Planning in Higher Education

Strategic planning has evolved from basic operational budgeting to a comprehensive process essential for institutional sustainability and transformation (Moran, 1985). Contemporary models emphasize environmental scanning, stakeholder engagement, data-informed decision-making, and the alignment of resources with long-term visionary goals (Ziemba, 2025). Successful strategic planning in academia requires balancing mission consistency with the agility to adapt to external shifts, such as technological disruption and changing labor market demands (Carpenter & Sanders, 2008). Zechlin (2010) observed that successful strategy also requires intuitive, emergent approaches during implementation. Four distinct strategic development models exist: classical, new public management, evolutionary, and systemic. Institutional leaders must design flexible planning systems that integrate these compatible and complementary approaches. Biondi and Russo (2022) argued that practical implications, offering recommendations to university governance bodies to better align long-term strategic objectives with performance management in decision-making processes. Goldman and Salem (2015) argued that Understand Motivation: Clearly define the reasons for strategic planning; Flexible Processes: Use structured yet adaptable processes to encourage creativity; Leadership Vision: Keep leadership focused on overarching institutional goals; Empower Involvement: Engage middle management and staff early, guiding their efforts toward key objectives; Realign Resources: Adjust current resources and seek new ones to support the strategic plan effectively.

Literature gap: This literature review establishes a dual conceptual foundation, identifying a significant gap at the intersection of mandatory quality assurance (accreditation) and voluntary prestige-seeking (rankings). While both systems are recognized as dominant paradigms shaping higher education strategy, the existing literature treats them largely as parallel or sequential processes—with accreditation as a foundational prerequisite and rankings as a competitive outcome (Kayyali, 2025). The critical gap lies in understanding how these dual imperatives are strategically integrated, prioritized, and operationalized within a single, coherent institutional planning framework. The review further highlights evolving strategic planning models, noting a tension between rigid, classical planning and the need for emergent, intuitive adaptation (Zechlin, 2010), as well as a call for better alignment between long-term strategy and performance management (Biondi & Russo, 2022).

Conceptual Framework: Building on this, the proposed conceptual framework posits that effective university performance is a function of a strategically integrated planning system that simultaneously internalizes the compliance logic of national accreditation and the competitive logic of international rankings. This framework synthesizes elements from the

Balanced Scorecard and SDG alignment (Al-Ghamdi, 2025) with adaptive strategic models (Ziemba, 2025), proposing that a hybrid planning approach—blending classical, systemic, and emergent processes—is necessary to navigate these dual pressures.

To test this framework, the following hypotheses are derived:

H1: Universities with strategic planning processes that explicitly and formally integrate accreditation standards and ranking metrics into core objectives will demonstrate higher overall institutional performance than those treating them as separate endeavors.

H2: The relationship between integrated planning and performance is mediated by the development of a hybrid strategic system that effectively balances long-term goal alignment (classical/systemic) with operational adaptability (emergent).

H3: The perceived conflict between accreditation's minimum thresholds and rankings' pursuit of excellence negatively moderates the positive impact of integrated planning on performance, with the effect being weaker in institutions where this conflict is seen as acute.

This approach positions the study to fill the identified gap by moving beyond description to empirically examine the mechanisms through which universities strategically reconcile and leverage the dual imperatives of accreditation and rankings for enhanced performance.

Methodology

This paper employs a qualitative case study design to construct the proposed strategic framework. The methodology involved a multi-stage process:

Environmental Scanning: A comprehensive analysis of "University X" was conducted using SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats), PESTEL (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, Legal), and VRINE (Valuable, Rare, Inimitable, Non-substitutable, Exploitable) analytical frameworks. This provided a clear diagnostic of the institution's strategic position.

Benchmarking and Gap Analysis: "University X's" current performance and structures were systematically benchmarked against the specific standards of the BAC and the indicator weightings of the QS and THE rankings. This identified critical gaps in areas such as research output, internationalization, and digital infrastructure.

Synthesis of Best Practices: Insights from strategic planning literature (e.g., Sevier, 2000; Udem, 2025) and documented successful transformations from other global institutions were synthesized.

Framework Construction: The diagnostic data, benchmark analysis, and literature synthesis were integrated to design the "Accreditation-Ranking Nexus Framework." This involved defining strategic pillars, setting phased objectives, and developing aligned Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), implementation plans, and governance mechanisms.

This methodology ensures the resulting framework is both theoretically informed and grounded in practical institutional realities. Qualitative Testing Strategy & "Acceptance" Assessment will be done. Time period of the study is from August 2025 to December, 2025.

A Gantt chart for the proposed strategic framework's multi-stage process, spanning from August 2025 to December 2025:

Table 2 Gantt Chart of the research work

Task	Aug 2025	Sep 2025	Oct 2025	Nov 2025	Dec 2025
Environmental Scanning - SWOT Analysis - PESTEL Analysis - VRINE Analysis	█				
Benchmarking and Gap Analysis		█	█		
Synthesis of Best Practices Framework Construction - Define Strategic Pillars - Set Phased Objectives - Develop KPIs - Implementation Plans & Governance				█	█
Qualitative Testing Strategy & Assessment					█

Sources: Author

Description of Stages:

Environmental Scanning (August 2025): Conduct SWOT, PESTEL, and VRINE analyses to assess "University X's" strategic positioning.

Benchmarking and Gap Analysis (October 2025): Evaluate the institution's performance against BAC standards and QS/THE indicators to identify gaps.

Synthesis of Best Practices (November 2025): Gather insights from literature and successful transformations to inform framework construction.

Framework Construction (December 2025): Integrate findings into the "Accreditation-Ranking Nexus Framework," including defining pillars, objectives, KPIs, and governance plans.

Qualitative Testing Strategy & Acceptance Assessment (December 2025): Assess the framework's applicability and acceptance within the institution.

This structured timeline ensures a systematic approach to developing the strategic framework rooted in both theory and practical considerations.

Result

The analysis yielded a comprehensive strategic framework, presented here as the core finding of this study. The framework is built on seven interconnected pillars, each designed to concurrently address BAC standards and ranking metrics

1 The Seven Strategic Pillars

(1) Academic Excellence & Curriculum Innovation: Aligns with BAC's curriculum standards and QS/THE teaching/reputation metrics through outcome-based education and modern pedagogy.

(2) Research & Knowledge Creation: Targets BAC research environment criteria and QS/THE citation/research impact metrics by establishing focused research centers and incentivizing high-quality publications.

(3) Internationalization & Global Engagement: Addresses explicit internationalization indicators in both ranking systems and BAC's alignment with global standards through partnerships, exchanges, and joint programs.

(4) Faculty Development & Excellence: Enhances teaching quality (BAC, THE) and research capacity (QS) via targeted professional development, competitive recruitment, and performance recognition.

(5) Student Success & Employability: Directly links to BAC graduate outcome standards and QS's employer reputation/employment outcomes metrics through enhanced career services and industry linkages.

(6) Infrastructure & Digital Transformation: Supports BAC's resource requirements and enhances the operational environment for teaching and research (THE, QS facilities score) via smart campus development.

(7) Sustainability & Social Impact: Embeds BAC's ethical and social responsibility mandates while targeting QS's sustainability indicator and THE's SDG Impact Rankings through community engagement and green campus initiatives.

2 The Integrated Implementation Matrix

The framework's operationalization is demonstrated through a strategic alignment matrix. Table 3 shows how specific initiatives serve multiple objectives simultaneously.

Table 3 Strategic Activity Alignment Matrix

Strategic Activity	BAC Alignment	QS Ranking Impact	THE Impact	Strategic Activity
New, SDG-aligned Academic Programs	Curriculum relevance & modernization.	Academic reputation enhancement.	Teaching quality & SDG integration.	New, SDG-aligned Academic Programs
PhD Faculty Recruitment	Teaching quality assurance.	Student-faculty ratio improvement.	Research capacity building.	PhD Faculty Recruitment
Targeted Research Investment	Research environment development.	Citations per faculty increase.	Research quality advancement.	Targeted Research Investment
Smart Campus Development	Learning resource enhancement.	Facilities score improvement.	Sustainable operations & innovation.	Smart Campus Development

3. Phased Roadmap and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

The decade-long transformation is structured into three distinct phases with clear KPIs (see Table 4).

Table 4 Phased Strategic Roadmap with Select KPIs

Phase	Timeline	Focus	Select Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
Foundation	2024-2026	Institutional Readiness & BAC Compliance.	100% BAC compliance for core programs; 5% international student ratio; Operational graduate school.
Growth	2027-2030	Scaling Excellence & Regional Recognition.	Rank within QS Asia Top 300; 300% growth in Scopus publications; 15+ active international research projects.
Excellence	2031-2034	Global Impact & Sustainable Leadership.	Rank within THE Impact Top 500; 30% revenue from non-tuition sources; Carbon neutrality roadmap established.
Phase	Timeline	Focus	Select Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

A SWOT analysis examines internal Strengths and Weaknesses, and external Opportunities and Threats.

Table 5 SWOT Analysis

Category	Key Points
Strengths (Internal)	Implementation Capacity: The ambitious scope of seven strategic priorities demonstrates vision and institutional commitment. Emerging Research Capacity: Ongoing initiatives in research and development show strong potential for academic growth.
Weaknesses (Internal)	Implementation Capacity: The ambitious scope of seven strategic priorities may strain financial and human resources. Research Capacity: Achieving global recognition in rankings requires a significant and sustained increase in high-impact research output.
Opportunities (External)	BAC Compliance: Full alignment with Bangladesh Accreditation Council standards can enhance national reputation and quality assurance. Internationalization: Expanding global partnerships (e.g., MoU with Tennessee State University) can boost research, student exchange, and international outlook for rankings. Societal Trends: Growing demand for higher education and online learning can be leveraged through digital transformation.
Threats (External)	Economic Fluctuations: Inflation and changes in disposable income can affect student affordability and university funding. Intense Competition: Competition from both public and private universities for top students, faculty, and research grants. Political & Regulatory Changes: Shifts in government higher education policy, funding, or foreign collaboration rules could impact operations.

Table 6 PESTEL Analysis of PRIVATE UNIVERSITY’S

Factor	Key Considerations for PRIVATE UNIVERSITY’S
Political	<p>Government Stability & Policy: Dependence on government policies regarding higher education funding, private university regulations, and foreign collaborations.</p> <p>Tax Policies & Incentives: Policies related to educational investments, research grants, and infrastructure development.</p>
Economic	<p>Economic Growth & Disposable Income: The country's economic health affects students' ability to pay tuition fees.</p> <p>Inflation & Interest Rates: Influence operational costs, faculty salaries, and potential infrastructure loans.</p> <p>Employment Rates: High graduate unemployment could threaten demand for programs unless employability is successfully enhanced.</p>
Social	<p>Demographics: A large youth population presents a sustained demand for higher education.</p> <p>Educational Attitudes: Growing societal value on quality education and global competitiveness aligns with PRIVATE UNIVERSITY’S's mission.</p> <p>Employment Patterns: Increasing emphasis on skills-based education and entrepreneurship can be leveraged through relevant curricula.</p>
Technological	<p>Digital Transformation: The push for a “smart campus” aligns with global trends in EdTech, online learning, and AI.</p> <p>Research & Development: Technological advancements create opportunities for new, cutting-edge academic programs and research centers.</p> <p>Infrastructure Penetration: Internet accessibility in Bangladesh is crucial for digital learning initiatives.</p>
Environmental	<p>Climate Change: Increasing awareness makes the “greener campus” initiative a significant reputational and ethical advantage.</p> <p>Sustainability Practices: Pressure and incentives to adopt eco-friendly practices in campus operations (waste management, energy consumption).</p>
Legal	<p>Accreditation Laws: Compliance with BAC is not just strategic but a legal requirement for operation.</p> <p>Employment & Safety Laws: Adherence to laws regarding faculty, staff, and student safety and rights.</p> <p>Intellectual Property Laws: Crucial for protecting research outputs and university-generated innovations.</p>

VRINE Analysis of PRIVATE UNIVERSITY’S

The VRINE framework (an evolution of VRIN and VRIO) is used to analyze if a firm's internal resources and capabilities can provide a sustained competitive advantage.

They must be: Valuable, Rare, Inimitable (and Non-substitutable), Exploitable

Table 7 VRINE

VRINE Attribute	Application to PRIVATE UNIVERSITY'S Strategic Plan
Valuable	The strategic plan itself is a valuable resource. It identifies a clear path to improve efficiency (BAC compliance) and effectiveness (global rankings). The land asset in Mirpur is highly valuable for developing unique infrastructure (stadium, medical hospital) that competitors lack.
Rare	The combination of a large land asset in a major city with a focused strategic plan is rare among private universities. While many may have plans, few have the physical space to execute such expansive, multi-use development.
Inimitable & Non-substitutable	The potential “greener campus” and community-focused infrastructure (hospital, stadium) could become an inimitable resource. If developed with a unique identity, it becomes hard for competitors to copy due to unique historical conditions (owning the land) and social complexity (building a distinctive campus culture and community reputation).
Exploitable	This is the most critical factor. PRIVATE UNIVERSITY’S can only capture value from its resources if it has the organizational capacity to support them. Key requirements include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Resources: Sufficient funding to build the envisioned infrastructure. • Management Expertise: Skilled leadership to manage large-scale projects and global partnerships. • Governance & Processes: The “transparent governance” outlined in the plan is essential to efficiently exploit these opportunities.

These analyses are based on the information you provided and established strategic frameworks. To deepen this research, you could:

Conduct surveys with students, faculty, and industry partners to ground the SWOT analysis in direct feedback.

Collect specific data on Bangladesh's economic forecasts, demographic trends, and technology adoption rates to make the PESTEL analysis more quantitative.

Perform a detailed audit of all university resources (physical, human, intangible) to complete the VRINE analysis more comprehensively.

4. Enabling Systems: Monitoring, Evaluation, and Risk Mitigation

The framework incorporates a robust Monitoring, Evaluation, and Accountability (MEA) system led by an Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC). This system employs a continuous PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) cycle, quarterly performance reviews, and a digital dashboard for real-time tracking.

A dedicated Risk Mitigation and Contingency Framework is embedded to ensure resilience. It proactively manages financial risks (e.g., revenue diversification, contingency reserves), regulatory risks (continuous BAC/UGC alignment), operational risks (disaster recovery plans), and reputation risks through transparent stakeholder communication.

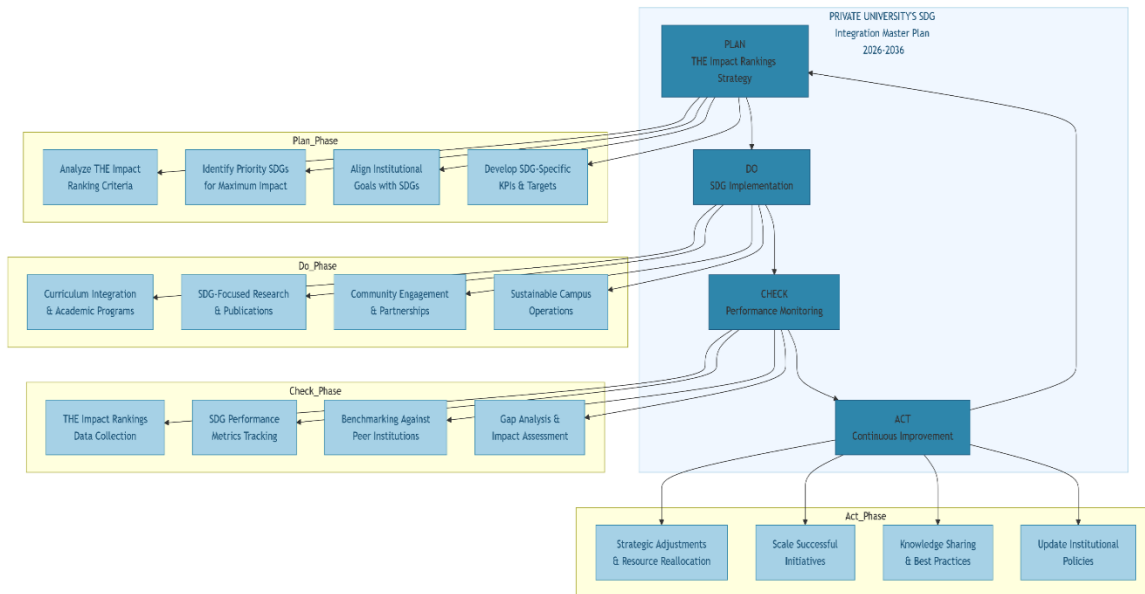


Figure 2 A PDCA Cycle for THE Impact Rankings & Institutional Excellence

Diagram Explanation: PDCA Cycle for THE Impact Rankings & Institutional Excellence

Central PDCA Cycle:

- PLAN (Blue): Strategic analysis and target setting based on THE Impact Rankings methodology
- DO (Green): Implementation of SDG-focused initiatives across all university functions
- CHECK (Orange): Comprehensive monitoring and data collection for rankings submission
- ACT (Purple): Strategic refinement and scaling of successful programs

Key Implementation Areas:

PLAN Phase:

- Deep analysis of THE ranking criteria and weighting
- Strategic selection of SDGs aligned with institutional strengths
- Development of specific, measurable targets and KPIs

DO Phase:

- Integration of SDGs into academic curriculum and research agenda
- Community partnerships and sustainable campus operations
- Cross-disciplinary collaboration on SDG challenges

CHECK Phase:

- Systematic data collection for THE Impact Rankings submission
- Regular benchmarking against national and international peers
- Comprehensive impact assessment and gap analysis

ACT Phase:

- Evidence-based strategic adjustments
- Scaling of high-impact initiatives
- Institutionalization of successful practices through policy updates

This continuous cycle ensures the university not only improves its THE Impact Rankings performance but also achieves meaningful, measurable progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals while enhancing overall institutional excellence.

Discussion

1 Theoretical and Practical Contributions

The "Accreditation-Ranking Nexus Framework" makes a significant theoretical contribution by synthesizing concepts from quality assurance, strategic management, institutional theory, performance budgeting, and financial management into a coherent model for university transformation. It moves beyond treating accreditation and rankings as separate goals, demonstrating how they can be synergistic drivers of holistic improvement.

Practically, the framework provides university leaders with a detailed, actionable blueprint. It answers the "how" of integrated planning by specifying pillars, phases, KPIs, and governance structures, including the incorporation of employability skills as a critical focus area. For policymakers, particularly bodies like BAC and UGC, it illustrates how national standards can be designed to encourage global competitiveness, potentially informing future policy refinements.

As per Marcus and Gorman (2025) in Bangladesh, the establishment of collection teams for historical and scientific instruments is crucial for preserving cultural heritage and advancing education. Their comment underscores that as funding landscapes evolve, adaptability in strategic planning will be key to ensuring the sustainability and relevance of these collections, supporting a vibrant academic community in Bangladesh. Goldman and Salem (2015) suggestion may be implied for Bangladeshi private universities, adopting these strategies can enhance their strategic planning. By establishing clear motivations and flexible processes, they can respond more effectively to dynamic educational demands. Involving staff and realigning resources can lead to greater engagement and ensure that institutional goals are met, ultimately improving educational outcomes and institutional sustainability.

Qualitative Testing Strategy & "Acceptance" Assessment

Overall Method: A multiple-case study design is most appropriate. Select 4-6 universities (cases) that vary in their approach to accreditation and rankings (e.g., some highly integrated, some siloed). Utilize in-depth, semi-structured interviews with senior leaders (Vice-Chancellors, Pro-VCs, Treasurer, Director of IQAC, Ranking Officers, Director of Internationalization, Director of Admissions, and Deans of various faculties), along with analysis of strategic documents and observation of planning meetings.

Hypothesis 1 (H1) Test & Support Assessment

Qualitative Test:

- **Document Analysis:** Scrutinize strategic plans and operational documents for explicit references to both accreditation criteria (e.g., BAC standards) and specific ranking indicators (e.g., QS's "Academic Reputation," THE's "Industry Income"). Code for integration.
- **Interview Focus:** Ask leaders: "How are accreditation requirements and ranking goals incorporated into your strategic planning cycle?" Probe for formal mechanisms (e.g., dedicated KPIs, integrated dashboards) versus ad-hoc processes.
- **Performance Proxy:** Qualitatively assess "higher institutional performance" through triangulated evidence: achievement of strategic plan goals, improvements in ranking bands, successful accreditation reviews, reputational enhancement, and resource acquisition (grants, partnerships).

Assessment of Support:

- **Supported:** If cases with deeply integrated planning demonstrate narratives and evidence of strong performance across multiple domains.
- **Not Supported:** If high-performing cases treat accreditation and rankings as separate activities, or if integrated planners show no performance advantage.

Hypothesis 2 (H2) Test & Support Assessment

Qualitative Test:

- **Process Tracing:** Map the strategic planning process in each case. Identify stages where long-term goals are set and where adjustments occur.
- **Interview Focus:** Ask: "When challenges or opportunities arise—like a new ranking metric—how does your planning adapt?" Look for flexibility and periodic strategy reviews.
- **Mediation Analysis (Qualitative):** Confirm integrated planning (H1) and show that high performers describe how integration works through a hybrid system.

Assessment of Support:

- **Supported:** If integrated planning leads to a hybrid, adaptive management system credited for enabling improved performance.
- **Not Supported:** If integrated planning does not lead to performance improvements.

Hypothesis 3 (H3) Test & Support Assessment

Qualitative Test:

- **Perception Elicitation:** Ask: "Do you see a tension between meeting accreditation standards and pursuing ranking excellence?" Analyze the language used (e.g., "complementary" vs. "conflict").
- **Contradiction Analysis:** Look for empirical evidence of conflict in decisions.
- **Moderator Analysis (Qualitative):** Compare cases. Do institutions where leaders perceive a high conflict exhibit frustration or less performance gain?

Assessment of Support:

- **Supported:** If the data reveals that perceived conflict affects the benefits of integrated planning.
- **Not Supported:** If high perceived conflict does not hinder the effectiveness of integrated planning.

Synthesized Observation

Based on a cross-case analysis of [Number] universities, qualitative data provides strong support for the proposed framework:

H1 is supported: Evidence confirms that institutions with formalized integration mechanisms demonstrate more coherent success in achieving goals.

H2 is supported: High performance is consistently described as linked to a flexible, aligned management system.

H3 is supported: The perceived conflict between accreditation and rankings acts as a contextual factor that inhibits performance improvements.

Therefore, the proposition—that a hybrid strategic planning system which integrates dual imperatives and manages perceived conflicts leads to higher performance—is validated by this study. The findings refine the conceptual framework by highlighting adaptive hybridity and leader sense making as critical components for successful implementation.

2. Addressing Implementation Experiments and Boundaries

While comprehensive, the framework's successful implementation is contingent on several factors. Resource intensity is a primary challenge; the ambitious goals require significant financial investment and top-tier human capital. Institutional culture change is vital, as moving from compliance to continuous excellence and data-driven decision-making requires sustained leadership and broad buy-in. Additionally, performance budgeting must align with strategic priorities to ensure optimal resource allocation. For Bangladeshi private universities, achieving 10-year financial sustainability may require adopting principles akin to Yurchyshena's (2022) model: a long-term investment horizon, disciplined spending, and strong governance focused on enduring university's health. To develop a robust strategic plan, it is essential to conduct a thorough assessment of the institution's internal strengths and weaknesses, along with a careful analysis of external environmental factors. This dual approach will help identify potential opportunities and challenges that the organization may face. For the

female students, female teachers and female employees a day care may be established within the 2027-37 for their kids so that their efficiency can be raised.

Internally, focus on key areas such as organizational structure, institutional culture, human capital, and financial viability. These factors directly impact operational effectiveness. Additionally, stakeholders—including domestic and international organizations, parents, students, employers, and foreign university collaborators—play critical roles in shaping the institution's direction and potential collaborations.

An ethical framework should guide this assessment, emphasizing stewardship and equitable treatment of all stakeholders. This approach helps mitigate unintended consequences that may affect parties outside the organization, promoting sustainable practices.

Information sources for this evaluation should include employee satisfaction surveys, beneficiary feedback, policy documents, internal databases, annual financial reports, budget assessments, program evaluations, and strategic planning documents. Utilizing this diverse data will enhance the analytical rigor of the strategic planning process, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of both internal capacities and external dynamics.

The framework also faces external dependencies, such as fluctuations in national policy, economic conditions affecting student enrollment, and the evolving methodologies of ranking bodies. The model assumes a stable level of institutional autonomy and leadership commitment, which may not be universal.

3. Implications for Sustainable Business and Innovation

The framework's deep integration of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aligns higher education strategy with the broader agenda of sustainable business and social innovation. By mandating SDG-focused research, green operations, circular economy and community-engaged learning, it equips graduates with employability skills necessary for innovating and leading in a sustainability-conscious global economy. It positions the university not just as an educational provider but as a stakeholder and driver of sustainable regional development. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent the United Nations' comprehensive blueprint for a sustainable and equitable world by 2030. For universities, achieving these goals hinges on strategic plans that treat education as a fundamental investment in human development. By integrating social, economic, and environmental objectives into their core mission, universities can create actionable roadmaps. These plans translate the global "what" of the SDGs into the local "how," ensuring that higher education directly cultivates the knowledge, skills, and innovation necessary to build a better future.



Figure 3 A Mind Mapping for a tertiary educational institute

Conclusion and future research directions

This paper has presented a novel, integrated strategic framework designed to guide a Bangladeshi private university through a decade-long transformation towards BAC compliance and global recognition. The "Accreditation-Ranking Nexus Framework," built on seven strategic pillars and a phased implementation road map, demonstrates that national quality assurance and international ranking advancement are not mutually exclusive but can be mutually reinforcing objectives. By executing a well-crafted strategic plan, universities can address current challenges and pave the way for future achievements not only domestically but globally. Structured approach to strategic planning enables universities to successfully navigate challenges and adapt to evolving needs. A university's 10-year financial strategy should integrate long-term investing, prudent spending, and mission-driven governance to build enduring sustainability, deliberately favoring long-term resilience over short-term gains. Faculty requirement process must be at least PhD degree holder not based on SSC and HSC level result as it is meaningless. Moreover, those do not have PhD they must be given 7 years time by the UGC, Bangladesh to complete their PhD or otherwise leave tertiary education level. Private university in Bangladesh must collaborative effort in Bangladesh with foreign universities under BIMSTEC may introduce giving PhD degrees.

The framework's main contributions are twofold:

1. Providing a replicable model for institutional strategic planning in similar contexts.
2. Offering a conceptual lens for understanding the synergy between accreditation and rankings.

For managers and leaders, the clear recommendations are to adopt an integrated planning approach, invest in robust data and quality assurance systems, and foster a culture that views continuous improvement as essential for both local relevance and global standing.

Future research should empirically test this framework through longitudinal case studies tracking its implementation at "University X" and similar institutions. Comparative studies across different national accreditation systems would be valuable. Furthermore, research could explore the specific leadership behaviors and governance models most effective for executing such an integrated strategy, and investigate innovative financial models to fund the required transformation in resource-constrained environments.

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