JOURNAL OF THE
ARAB AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
مجلة الجامعة العربية الأمريكية للبحوث

Implications of Applying Uncertainty Management on Strategic Planning under Economic, Social and Political Circumstances Case Study: Birzeit University

Rida Khoury
Faculty of Arts, Music and Design, Birzeit University, Palestine
Corresponding Author: rkhoury@birzeit.edu

Received: 23/12/2025. Revised: 19/1/2026. Accepted: 24/6/2026. Published: 30/06/2026
DIO: 10.35517/AAUP-2026.V12.2.14

Abstract

The aim of the study was to examine how economic, social, and political conditions influence strategic planning at Birzeit University, employing the mixed-method design using questionnaires and interviews. The study sample consisted of 83 managers and supervisors from upper and middle management levels, drawn from a total population of 89 managers and supervisors. The findings revealed that the level of interest in the concept of strategic planning within Birzeit University's administration was moderate (72.3%), which can be attributed to the administration's emphasis on establishing and developing strong relationships with international scholarship programs and initiatives for the exchange of expertise. Moreover, the influences of administrative, economic, and technological conditions on strategic planning at Birzeit University were found to be moderate, too. This indicates that Birzeit University possesses effective administrative systems capable of supporting and implementing the strategic planning process; however, further development of institutional abilities, skills, and capacities in this area remains necessary. Similarly, the influence of the legislative and legal environment on strategic planning was found to be moderate (70.8%). Ultimately, no statistically significant differences were identified in respondents' views regarding the implementation of uncertainty management in strategic planning under economic, social, and political conditions at Birzeit University based on gender, academic qualification, years of experience, or job title. Furthermore, the findings indicated that strategic planning in contexts characterized by political, economic, and social uncertainty is required as an adaptive approach in order to effectively cope with vague, indeterminate, and volatile conditions.

Keywords: Strategic Management, Uncertainty Management, Strategic scanning, Strategic implementation, Strategic evaluation.

1. Introduction

Strategic planning is an essential managerial procedure that allows companies to determine their future, manage resources against goals, and address changes effectively, both internal and external (Al-Aloula, 2022). Strategic planning in higher education facilities is a key factor in improving the performance of institutional, competitiveness, and sustainability in progressively complex settings (Al-Azmi et al., 2023).

Organizations in the past few years were conducting their business in environments that were highly uncertain due to the presence of economic fluctuations, political instabilities, technological changes and social changes. This uncertainty had a crucial impact on the processes of decision-making and doubted the effectiveness of classical planning methods (Alagha et al., 2023). This necessitated the institutions to be more flexible and adaptive to the unpredictable and fast changing environment.

In this regard, uncertainty management has become a very crucial part of strategic planning. It entails the systematic identification, analysis, and response to risks and opportunities, which allows organizations to mitigate the negative effects and take advantage of potential opportunities (Udoh & Udoh, 2024). Incorporating uncertainty management in strategic planning increases organizational resilience and aids in making decisions that are more informed and proactive (Iriani et al., 2024).

This is of special concern in the Palestinian context, where institutions of higher education are running in a climate of constant political, economic, and social instability. These are the prerequisites of great limitations on the performance of the institutions and the inability to introduce effective long-term strategies (Dźwigoł & Dźwigoł-Barosz, 2023). Being one of the most prominent universities in Palestine, Birzeit University is a valuable case study in terms of the way, in which strategic planning is influenced under such uncertainties.

In this regard, this paper seeks to explore the implication of the application of uncertainty management to strategic planning in the economic, social, and political turmoil, as a case study of Birzeit University. The researcher aimed to not only give theoretical arguments, but also offer practical suggestions on how strategic decision-making process in the institutions of higher education that have to work in volatile environments can be enhanced through the management of uncertainty.

1.1 Statement of the Problem:

Uncertain and unstable economic, political, and social conditions continue to pose significant and multifaceted challenges to higher education institutions in Palestine. These conditions not only affect the overall performance and sustainability of universities, but they also have a profound negative impact on their ability to engage in effective long-term strategic planning and informed decision-making. The rapid change of external environment, coupled with the limited resources and ongoing instability increases the levels of uncertainty and risk, thereby constraining institutional development and strategic flexibility. Accordingly, higher education institutions in Palestine are required to strengthen their institutional capacities, enhance organizational resilience, and adopt systematic uncertainty management approaches in order to effectively cope with, adapt to, and overcome these persistent challenges and constraints (Dźwigoł & Dźwigoł-Barosz, 2023). In light of these complex and demanding circumstances, the present study sought to address a clear gap in the existing literature by investigating the role of uncertainty management in supporting strategic planning processes within the Palestinian universities through answering the following primary research question:

What is the impact of political, economic and social unstable conditions and environment on the strategic planning at Birzeit University?

1.2 Research Questions:

1. To what extent is the concept of strategic planning clear at Birzeit University?

2. To what extent does the administration of Birzeit University show interest in strategic planning?
3. To what extent is there a strategic planning culture for the staff at Birzeit University?
4. What is the significance of strategic planning at Birzeit University?
5. What is the impact of administrative, economic, and technological circumstances on strategic planning at Birzeit University?
6. What is the impact of legislative and legal environment on strategic planning at Birzeit University?
7. Are there any significant statistical differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between applying uncertainty management principles and developing strategic plans at BZU related to socio-demographic characteristics in terms of (gender, years of experience, job position)?

1.3 The Research Model:

To specify the dependent and independent variables, the researcher illustrated them in the model below. Figure (1) shows the model of the study.

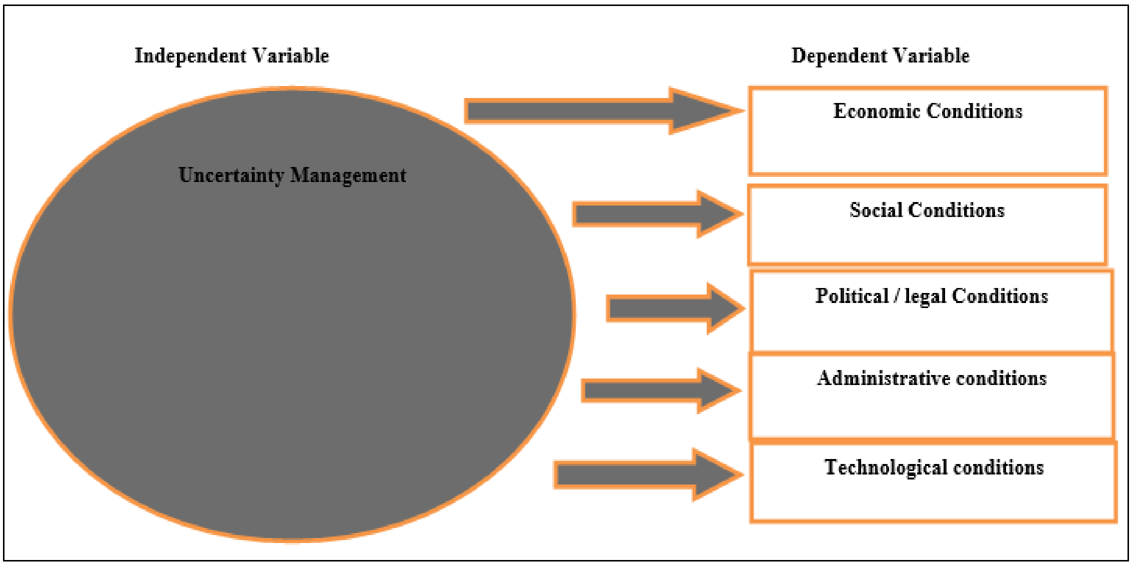

Figure 1: Research Model of the Study

1.4 Focus on Research:

The primary objective of the present exploratory study was to examine the potential implications of applying uncertainty management in strategic planning within economic, social, and political contexts, using Birzeit University as a case study. In addition, the researcher employed the mixed-method design, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methods through the use of questionnaires and interviews to collect primary data and achieve the objectives of the study.

1.5 Research Hypotheses:

H0-1: There is no statistically significant relationship between uncertainty management and strategic planning effectiveness at Birzeit University.

H0-2: There is no statistically significant relationship between internal/external environmental factors and uncertainty management implementation.

H0-3: There is no statistically significant relationship between uncertainty management and achievement of strategic objectives.

H0-4: There are no statistically significant differences in uncertainty management practices based on demographic variables (gender, experience, job position).

H0-5: There are no statistically significant differences between upper and middle management in applying uncertainty management.

H0-6: There is no statistically significant relationship between institutional preparedness and effective uncertainty management.

1.6 The Research Objective:

The main objective of the study was to investigate the relationship between the principles of uncertainty management and the development of strategic planning under social, economic and political conditions that Palestinian universities face, in general, and BZU, in particular.

1.7 The significance of Research:

1. This study highlighted the importance of applying uncertainty management in strategic planning under complex economic, social, and political conditions, particularly in unstable environments such as Palestine.
2. It addressed a research gap by focusing on uncertainty management within higher education institutions, encouraging further empirical studies in Palestinian universities.
3. The study emphasized the integration of uncertainty management and strategic planning as a critical tool for achieving strategic success and effective resource mobilization under unstable conditions.
4. By combining a theoretical framework with a practical case study of Birzeit University, the research provided practical insights into how uncertainty affects strategic planning outcomes.
5. The findings provided valuable scientific knowledge to the field of strategic planning and offered practical guidance for higher education institutions to improve their strategic decision-making while considering political, economic, and social uncertainties.

2. Theoretical Framework:

The term strategy can be traced back to the Greek word strategoi, which referred to military leaders in ancient Athens, whose role involved formulating high-level plans to succeed in uncertain and risky situations. In this regard, Fuertes et al. (2020) distinguished between strategic planning and strategic management, arguing that strategic planning represents a logical and rational process that culminates in the selection of decisions to be implemented, whereas strategic management is a continuous and dynamic process concerned with performance and the ongoing search for appropriate strategic options. Consequently, while strategic planning leads to sound strategic decisions, strategic management contributes to the achievement of long-term strategic outcomes.

2.1 Theoretical Foundations of Strategic Planning

The integration of strategy and planning helped organizations to anticipate and respond effectively to the unstable situations in the organizations (Schuhly, 2022). The theoretical philosophy of the strategic planning was approached by several theories:

2.2 The Behavioral Theory of the Firm

The development of the behavioral theory of the firm by (Greve & Zhang, 2022) had a major influence on the development of transaction cost theory. It is also said to be a foundational theory for the development of dynamic capabilities theory and evolutionary economics. The theory premises on the assumption that business decision-making is a concrete and bounded process and provides a holistic view of how organizations make decisions. This theory was subsequently developed by Cyert and March (2020) who claimed that organizations create strategic and informational environments within which decision-making is carried out and providing decision-makers with the authority and the means to influence others.

3. Resource-Based Theory

The resource-based view (RBV) was originally developed at the business level to analyze the relationship between organizational resources, competition, and profitability. It emphasizes issues related to competitive imitation, returns on innovation, information asymmetry, and the ways in which the accumulation of resources can generate sustainable competitive advantage (Al-Aloula, 2022). According to this perspective, the strategy formulation process comprises five main stages: examining the firm's resource base, identifying core competencies, assessing profit potential, selecting an appropriate strategy, and developing and expanding resources and competencies to enhance organizational performance. Nevertheless, the theoretical implications of RBV for strategic management remain insufficiently defined, as a comprehensive and unified theoretical framework is still lacking and the practical applicability of RBV has not been fully developed.

The resource-based view has been criticized for its weak theoretical foundations, imprecise conceptualization, and limited capacity to account for change and dynamism (Furr & Eisenhardt, 2021). In response to the increasing need for sustainable competitive advantage, organizations have increasingly shifted their focus toward developing dynamic capabilities that enable resources and competencies to adapt to environmental changes. From this perspective, RBV and dynamic capabilities theory suggested that the formal strategic planning process itself may be viewed as a dynamic capability that supports the creation and maintenance of competitive advantage, particularly in volatile and unstable environments (Meshulach & Kedar-Levy, 2022).

3.1 Scanning the Internal and the External Environment

During the process of identifying the organizational goals and designing effective strategies that can be used to realize the organizational goals, higher education institutions usually aim to analyze their internal and external environment. The internal environmental analysis is concerned with the mission, vision, objectives, organizational structure, departments, culture and resources that are available in the institution. However, the external environmental analysis is done to study the important contextual factors, such as the economic, political, socio-cultural, and technological conditions, that play an important role in the strategies of decision-making and performance by the institution. (Silverman & Smith, 2024).

3.2 Business Mission and Vision

In the development of an organization's strategic plan, the mission statement plays a crucial role, as it articulates the fundamental purpose and rationale for the organization's existence (AlQershi, 2024). Accordingly, the mission statement provides a shared point of reference, guides the decision-making process, and motivates and directs the efforts and competencies of human resources within the organization.

The organizational vision statement, on the other hand, defines what the organization aspires to become in the future. As noted by Morrison and Misener (2021), the vision statement encapsulates the organization's overarching philosophy and determines its values, purpose, and long-term direction in alignment with the mission and strategic objectives.

3.3 Strategy Implementation

According to (Bryson and George,2020), strategy implementation is highly significant that transforms the developed strategy into a series of activities and operations that ensure that the corporate vision, mission, strategy and stated organizational objectives are in place and they are successfully realized as planned.

3.4 Evaluation and Control:

Evaluation and control are crucial as part of the strategy since it informs the managers about the reasons that contribute negatively to strategic implementation and failure by the organization to attain the intended objectives and goals. Constant strategies control and evaluation are essential to optimize the organizational performance and enable the organization to benchmark of the corporation progress established and tracked effectively, which further heightens the commitment and satisfaction of the employees and supervisors (Benzaghta, et al., 2021).

4. Importance and Benefits of Strategic Planning

Strategic planning has numerous beneficial effects on the performance of higher education institutions (Fuertes et al., 2020). These effects include enhanced levels of employee commitment and satisfaction, increased satisfaction and loyalty among students and other stakeholders, and the development of the university's brand at both local and international levels through greater attention to social responsibility. Strategic planning also contributes to improving the quality of educational services, mitigating the adverse impacts of environmental challenges, and enabling universities to respond effectively to both internal and external changes, as well as to capitalize on future opportunities. Moreover, it positively influences organizational performance and strengthens universities' capacity to secure diverse funding sources and financial resources.

Supporting this perspective, Mahardhika and Raharja (2023) emphasized that strategic planning helps clarify potential opportunities and threats and provides organizations with a systematic framework for informed decision-making. Additionally, Gutterman (2023) highlighted that strategic planning serves as a key instrument for organizational change. Similarly, Strickland and Fuertes et al. (2020) underscored its critical role in establishing a strong competitive advantage and achieving sustainable organizational performance.

4.1 Difficulties Associated with Strategic Planning

Strategic planning is a complicated process in organizations, and it involves paying attention to industry peculiarities and the internal and external environment. Some of the challenges that organizations encounter when planning strategy are limited resources and capabilities, which limit prioritization of organizational needs (Mahardhika and Raharja, 2023). The planning process is also hindered by bureaucratic barriers, complex policies, and disagreements over resource allocation, in which the managers may feel that the strategic planning deprives them of available decision-making capacity or fail to agree on ways of approaching organizational challenges (Benzaghta et al., 2021). Employees and managerial commitment are also a significant aspect as the planning process may elicit disengagement in managers, who may feel that the strategic planning has denied them the opportunity to make decisions or those who may disagree on how to approach organizational challenges (Gutterman, 2023). It is important to promote participation at every level of the organization and improve commitment and successful implementation. Lastly, inflexible or strictly followed strategic plans may limit the organization's ability to adapt or even to seek other organizational strategies, hence restricting overall performance. (Gutterman, 2023).

4.2 Significance of Strategic Planning for Higher Education Institutions

Higher education institutions face an increasing need for strategic planning due to the growing demands and competitions, diminishing resources and support from governments and international donors, shifting student demographics, and the emergence of virtual and distance learning institutions. Strategic planning enables universities to respond effectively to these challenges and to adapt appropriately to an increasingly volatile external environment.

Moreover, strategic planning provides a structured framework through which universities articulate their vision, mission, and objectives, thereby clarifying the strategic direction to be followed. It supports the achievement of competitive advantage, enhances coordination and cooperation within institutions, and strengthens their capacity to serve students and contributes to the development of the higher education sector. Furthermore, strategic planning aligns institutional resources and competencies with external opportunities and threats, enabling universities to capitalize on favorable opportunities and mitigate threats that could adversely affect institutional performance (Mahardhika & Raharja, 2023).

5. The Challenges of High Education Sector in Palestine

There are basically four major obstacles facing the higher education sector in Palestine:

- There are some nagging issues for higher education institutions in Palestine. Access is one of the key issues, since the high competition between the universities makes them focus on enrollment and new programs rather than focusing on the real needs of the population, which adversely influences the quality of education. (Gutterman, 2023).
- Low salaries also influence the teaching and training of the staff, where most of them may be coerced to do extra work at the cost of diminishing the quality of teaching and research. There is reduced professional development, with no regular fellowship and scholarship programs (Benzaghta, et al., 2021). The quality and relevance of education is problematic and the programs are too poorly coordinated to meet the needs of the labor market leading to high unemployment among the new graduates, especially since most of the students study social sciences. The research has not been given much priority by both the national and international funding sources, either.
- Higher education is not well funded, and this poses a severe financial burden on the quality and relevance of the academic programs.

6. Uncertainty Management Principles

The term uncertainty has been described as a condition in which information is insufficient, imprecise, unreliable, or bordering on ignorance (Udoh & Udoh, 2024). However, uncertainty can also exist even when managers and decision-makers have access to abundant data and information. Bisharat (2022) further elaborates that uncertainty may manifest in the form of ignorance regarding numerical values, experimental bias, measurement errors, ambiguous definitions, or statistical variability.

In this context, Shtim (2024) and Waldenström, Bjorn, and Martinsson (2024) argued that uncertainty not only encompasses variability and ambiguity but may also arise at various stages of a project life cycle, including the preparation of strategic plans for implementing new initiatives (Udoh, 2024). In this regard, Shtim (2024) defined uncertainty management as a project management knowledge area that involves both the management of risks and the exploitation of opportunities, which may be organized as follows:

1. Risk management
   It can be defined as a continuous process for identifying, analyzing and following up the uncertainties, which can introduce negative impacts on the organization while implementing response actions for avoiding risks jeopardizing a successful completion at the organization during implementing the proposed strategic plan.
2. Opportunity management
   It can be defined as a continuous process for identifying, analyzing and following-up uncertainties. This, in turn, introduces positive impacts while implementing response actions to make use of the available opportunities.

On the other hand, communication theories commonly focus on the levels that uncertainty may face, where (Bisharat, 2022) mentioned four levels:

1. The individual level: That motivates human communication skills and influences the ways employees prepare and interpret messages.
2. The interpersonal level: where the message is exchanged between people while communicating.
3. The intergroup level: which could be defined as exchanging messages between people while communicating as a collective.
4. The cultural level: which may be defined as similarities or differences among the people while communicating, which may depend on their culture.

7. Strategic Priorities and Initiatives at Birzeit University Strategy

The highest priority within Birzeit University's overall strategic planning is to enhance faculty excellence, which is crucial for addressing anticipated faculty retirements and maintaining the institution's long-term academic viability. This priority emphasizes fostering and recognizing excellence and leadership in research, scholarship, creativity, and graduate education, while simultaneously ensuring high-quality undergraduate teaching. Teaching and research excellence are regarded as inseparable, reflecting Birzeit University's commitment to faculty excellence across both domains (Ahmad, 2024).

To achieve these objectives, the strategic plan proposes seven key initiatives aimed at integrating research and teaching quality throughout the planning period, thereby consolidating Birzeit University's status as one of the leading research institutions globally (Iriani et al., 2024):

1. Faculty Renewal: This involves identifying major departments with upcoming retirements, focusing on recruiting new PhD holders and emerging talents, and ensuring the availability of resources to maintain high faculty standards through retirements, internal redistribution, and fundraising efforts.
2. Departmental Leadership through designating certain departments or critical areas as strategic leaders to preserve their status while preventing the decline of other departments.
3. Promotion of Teaching Excellence: This fosters a culture of high-quality teaching across campuses by improving assessment methods, allocating resources to support teaching excellence, and institutionalizing effective departmental models as benchmarks for excellence throughout all units.
4. Inter-College Collaboration **s**trengthens relations among colleges to enhance student opportunities and educational quality by providing cross-college course access and

establishing coordinated interdisciplinary mechanisms to increase cooperation and program reputation.

5. Research Support Enhancements implement strategic, cost-effective measures to support research, scholarship, and creativity, with particular emphasis on libraries, shared science and social science buildings, and administrative support for faculty in applying for and managing research grants.
6. Diversity Advancement makes significant progress toward achieving a more diverse faculty, student body, and staff, particularly in terms of gender representation.
7. Outreach and Engagement Alignment align outreach and public engagement activities with Birzeit's research, scholarship, and educational strengths, expands the campus-wide mission, tailors approach by discipline, and provides increased opportunities for students to engage with the broader community (Ahmad, 2024).

8. Empirical Studies

8.1 International Studies

Risk and Uncertainty Management in Business Strategy Development (Iriani, et al., 2024) investigated the concept of risk and uncertainty management in the development of business strategies within volatile business environments characterized by global economic fluctuations, evolving government policies, and market instability. Employing a qualitative research methodology, the study utilized systematic literature review complemented by thematic analysis to identify emerging patterns and themes related to strategic risk management. The findings demonstrated that adaptive strategies grounded in agility, innovation, and dynamic capabilities were crucial for enhancing organizational competitiveness and ensuring long-term sustainability. Moreover, scenario planning was shown to play a pivotal role in strengthening strategic foresight, resilience, and preparedness by enabling organizations to assess alternative future scenarios and their potential impacts. The study further highlighted the transformative influence of technological advancements—particularly artificial intelligence and data analytics—on risk assessment processes, enhancing strategic decision-making through proactive risk management. Based on these findings, the study recommended fostering a culture of innovation, investing in advanced technological capabilities, and systematically integrating scenario planning into strategic planning processes to effectively navigate uncertainty. Finally, the researchers suggested that future research should focus on comparative and longitudinal studies, adopt cross-disciplinary approaches, explore crisis management, and address ethical considerations to deepen understanding and support organizational resilience and sustainability.

8.2 Arabic Studies

Al-Azmi, et al., (2023) investigated the concept of strategic planning as a central administrative approach for enhancing university education performance at Kuwait University, aligning with contemporary global trends, the digital era, and the objectives of building a knowledge-based society. The pivotal point was strategic planning enables universities to attain a competitive advantage by improving teaching outcomes, advancing scientific research, and strengthening community engagement. Employing a descriptive-analytical methodology, the study examined educational practices and administrative processes related to planning, teaching, motivation, and academic management, with particular emphasis on the role of faculty members in formulating and implementing strategic plans. The findings indicated that faculty involvement in strategic planning significantly contributed to enhancing the quality of university education, as faculty are best positioned to understand learners' needs, institutional capabilities, and the realities of academic life.

Moreover, the results revealed that strategic planning improved universities' capacity to respond effectively to internal and external environmental changes, fostered innovation in teaching and research, and strengthened institutional competitiveness. Based on these findings, the study recommended expanding faculty participation in strategic planning processes, investing in training programs aimed at developing strategic planning skills, and leveraging modern technologies throughout all stages of the educational process to ensure sustainable development and continuous improvement in university performance.

Maati (2025) examined the concept and role of strategic planning as a managerial approach for enhancing organizational effectiveness, with empirical evidence from Jumhouria Bank in Bani Walid. Employing a descriptive–analytical research methodology, the study utilized a questionnaire as the primary data collection instrument, which was distributed to a sample of 40 employees and administrators within the bank. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS software, and simple linear regression analysis was conducted to investigate the relationship between strategic planning and organizational effectiveness. The findings indicated that strategic planning has a statistically significant and positive impact on organizational effectiveness, underscoring its critical role in improving institutional performance, achieving organizational objectives, and enhancing administrative efficiency. Based on these results, the study recommended reinforcing the adoption and implementation of strategic planning practices within organizations, emphasizing their importance in supporting organizational sustainability, improving performance outcomes, and ensuring long-term institutional success.

Al-Yafi'i. (2023) investigated the effect of strategic outlook on leadership orientation in private hospitals in Qatar, with a focus on the relationship between the two constructs. The independent variable, strategic outlook, was measured through three dimensions: strategic planning, scenario building, and strategic vigilance. The dependent variable, leadership orientation, was assessed through innovation, proactiveness, and risk orientation. A 30-item questionnaire was developed to measure these variables and was distributed to a sample of 300 staff members across five private hospitals in Amman. The study employed a descriptive-analytical research methodology to analyze the data. The findings revealed a statistically significant impact of all dimensions of strategic outlook—strategic planning, scenario building, and strategic vigilance—on the dimensions of leadership orientation. Moreover, the results indicated that the overall levels of strategic outlook and leadership orientation in the hospitals were moderate. Based on these findings, the study recommended that private hospitals enhance the application and development of strategic outlook practices to strengthen leadership orientation and improve organizational performance.

8.3 Palestinian Studies

Raddad, (2022) explored the role of urban agriculture as a component of sustainable urban development and to propose a strategic model for its integration into Palestinian urban planning. The research identified the current absence of urban agriculture within the urban development processes of Palestinian cities, highlighting a gap between urban planning policies and urban agricultural practices. The study employed a qualitative and evaluative approach, analyzing the existing urban planning framework and assessing the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of Palestinian urban planners and policymakers toward urban agriculture. The findings showed that political instability, combined with limited knowledge and willingness among urban planners, has resulted in negative attitudes and insufficient consideration of urban agriculture in urban development. Based on these insights, the study proposed a strategic model aimed at increasing awareness, enhancing knowledge, and fostering positive attitudes among planners and policymakers. Integrating urban agriculture into Palestinian urban environments not only supports urban ecosystem services and multifunctional use of green spaces but also contributes to urban food security, social and cultural interaction, and the overall improvement of air quality and urban life. The study recommended adopting this model in urban planning processes to make Palestinian cities more resilient and sustainable, especially under conditions of political instability.

Dwikat, et al., (2022) investigated the factors that enhanced the sustainable performance of manufacturing SMEs in developing countries with turbulent business environments, focusing on Palestine. Drawing on the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) framework, Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, and sustainable performance literature. The research examined the impact of systematic strategic planning (SSP) and strategic business innovation (SBI) on SME sustainability. A quantitative, descriptive-analytical methodology was employed, utilizing a structured questionnaire distributed to a sample of 377 manufacturing SMEs, of which 245 valid responses were analyzed. The study applied Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using Smart PLS 3.0 to test the hypothesized relationships between variables. The findings indicated that the sustainable performance of SMEs could be significantly enhanced through supportive national policies, collaborative organizational culture, participatory management practices, and the implementation of SSP and SBI at the firm level. Specifically, strategic planning and business innovation emerged as key drivers for improving environmental, social, and economic outcomes in highly competitive and politically unstable environments. The study recommended that policymakers promote sustainability-oriented policies for SMEs, while managers in manufacturing firms adopt systematic planning and foster innovation to strengthen organizational resilience and long-term sustainable performance.

Iwadi & Ali, (2024) examined the influence of practicing strategic planning methods on crisis management among employees of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society in Hebron. Using an explanatory sequential design, unstructured interviews with experts were conducted to develop a questionnaire, followed by structured interviews to interpret the results. A simple random sample of 339 employees was targeted, and 181 valid questionnaires were analyzed. The findings indicated a statistically significant positive effect of strategic planning practices on crisis management, with the overall levels of strategic planning and crisis management being moderate. The field of work area ranked highest for strategic planning practices, while the learning dimension ranked highest for crisis management. The study recommended enhancing strategic planning practices through training programs, resource provision, and further research across institutions. Overall, the research highlighted the importance of strategic planning in improving organizational capacity to manage crises effectively.

Alagha, et al., (2023) examined the impact of macro-environmental factors (political and economic) on strategic thinking and bank performance across different geographical contexts. Adopting a qualitative comparative case study approach, the research employed purposive sampling and semi-structured in-depth interviews with 50 bank executives, including 33 Malaysians and 17 Palestinians. Data was analyzed using Atlas Software. The findings revealed that executives' strategic thinking dimensions were shaped by both macro and micro-environments, which subsequently affected bank performance. In uncertain environments, commercial bank executives focus on evaluating the external environment, whereas local Islamic bank executives prioritize monitoring and responding to changes. In stable environments, foreign bank executives similarly assess and adapt to environmental factors, while local Islamic banks emphasize customer satisfaction. Overall, the study highlighted the critical role of environmental conditions and strategic thinking in guiding executive actions, shaping internal processes, employee perspectives, and product development, thereby directly influencing organizational performance. It recommended that banks tailor strategic approaches based on environmental stability and market type to enhance performance outcomes.

8.4 Agreement with Previous Studies

This study agrees with previous empirical studies on various points:
The researcher employed a quantitative research methodology in gathering the research data and information. In addition, the questionnaire method helped the researcher investigate the views and perception of the sampled population. Moreover, this research concentrated on the implications of using uncertainty management on strategic planning which was the aim of several empirical studies. Similarly, the researcher in these studies explored the barriers and challenges encountered in higher education institutions by strategic planning.

8.5 Differences with previous studies

This study differs from other empirical studies because the period (2018–2019) was characterized by high levels of economic, political and social conditions that had a negative impact on strategic planning particularly in high institutions of learning. In addition, the study stands out among other empirical studies because this research focused on Birzeit University, which is one of the top higher education institutions in Palestine.

8.6 What distinguishes the Study from Previous Studies

The research scope was based on the exploration of the impact of the principles of uncertainty management on the preparation and development of the strategic plans, considering the presence of the internal and external factors contributing significantly to the realization of such plans. The research aimed at upper and middle managers in the organization of Birzeit University, who are managers and supervisors. The research used the mixed-methods design that incorporated both quantitative and qualitative design since it involved administration of questionnaires to upper managers, middle managers, and supervisors, and interviews with senior managers.

8.7 Comments on Literature Review

The relevance of strategic planning and management has been supported by empirical evidence, but little has been done to explore the role of uncertainty management in the face of political, economic, and social instability, and as such, the current research made a unique contribution based on a case of Birzeit University.

9. Study Results

9.1 Descriptive Statistics

To describe the main variables of the study, the researchers used descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations to calculate the results.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Level**
Strategic Planning	3.62	0.58	Moderate
Uncertainty Management	3.55	0.61	Moderate
Administrative Factors	3.60	0.57	Moderate
Economic Factors	3.48	0.63	Moderate
Technological Factors	3.51	0.59	Moderate
Legal Environment	3.54	0.60	Moderate

Interpretation:
The results indicated that all study variables scored at a moderate level. This suggested that Birzeit University demonstrated a reasonable level of engagement in strategic planning and

uncertainty management practices. However, these practices were not fully developed, indicating the need for further institutional enhancement.

9.2 Pearson Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between uncertainty management and strategic planning.

Table 2: Correlation between Uncertainty Management and Strategic Planning

Variables	1	2
1. Uncertainty Management	1	
2. Strategic Planning	0.12	1

p-value = 0.18

Interpretation:

The results showed a weak positive correlation ($r = 0.12$) between uncertainty management and strategic planning. However, this relationship was not statistically significant ($p = 0.18 > 0.05$). This indicated that uncertainty management did not have a strong direct association with strategic planning within the studied context.

9.3 Independent Samples t-test (Gender Differences)

An independent samples t-test was conducted to examine whether there were differences in uncertainty management practices based on gender.

Table 3: t-test Results for Gender Differences

Variable	Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	p-value
Uncertainty Management	Male	3.58	0.60	0.85	0.39
	Female	3.52	0.62		

Interpretation:

The results indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between male and female respondents in uncertainty management practices ($t = 0.85$, $p = 0.39$). This suggested that gender dd not influence perceptions or implementation of uncertainty management within the university.

9.4 One-Way ANOVA (Years of Experience)

A one-way ANOVA test was conducted to examine differences based on years of experience.

Table 4: ANOVA Results for Years of Experience

Variable	F-value	p-value	Effect Size (η^2)
Uncertainty Management	1.21	0.31	0.04

The ANOVA results showed no statistically significant differences based on years of experience ($F(3,79) = 1.21$, $p = 0.31$). The effect size was small ($\eta^2 = 0.04$), indicating that experience had a minimal practical impact on uncertainty management practices.

9.5 One-Way ANOVA (Job Position)

Another ANOVA test was conducted to assess differences across job positions.

Table 5: ANOVA Results for Job Position

Variable	F-value	p-value	Effect Size (η^2)
Uncertainty Management	1.34	0.27	0.05

The findings indicated that there were no statistically significant differences across job positions ($F = 1.34$, $p = 0.27$). The effect size was also small ($\eta^2 = 0.05$), suggesting that managerial level did not significantly affect uncertainty management practices.

9.6 Regression Analysis

A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the effect of uncertainty management on strategic planning.

Table 6: Regression Analysis Results

Variable	Beta (β)	t-value	p-value
Uncertainty Management → Strategic Planning	0.15	1.56	0.12

The regression analysis indicated that uncertainty management did not significantly predict strategic planning ($\beta = 0.15$, $p = 0.12$). Although the relationship was positive, it was not statistically significant, suggesting that other factors might play a more influential role in shaping strategic planning processes.

Overall, the statistical analysis revealed that all variables operated at a moderate level, with no statistically significant relationships or differences across the tested variables. This indicated that while uncertainty management was present within the university, its impact on strategic planning remained limited and required further development and integration.

10. Discussion:

The results of this analysis suggested that the general strategic planning level and uncertainty management in Bir Zeit University was average. The latter finding was also in line with the existing literature that proposed that institutions of higher education tended to exhibit moderate-level strategic planning as a result of resource constraints and organizational restrictions (Mahardhika & Raharja, 2023). Although the university demonstrated the knowledge of the concepts of strategic planning, the practical application was scarce, which indicated the disparity between theoretical knowledge and practical application in the institutions.

The intermediate degree of influence in this research could be explained by a number of contextual and organizational factors. The first reason was that strategic planning processes were partially institutionalized and planning was present but not incorporated in the day-to-day decision-making process. This observation was congruent with Benzaghta et al. (2021) that confirmed that inadequate resources and bureaucratic systems might impede the successful process of strategic planning. Also, the political and economic climate in Palestine was volatile and posed a lot of uncertainty, limiting long-term planning and promoting more conservative and risk-shy approaches (Udoh, Udoh, 2024). These environments tended to restrain the capacity of the institutions to adopt proactive and innovative approaches.

Additionally, there were structural constraints in the university, which add to the moderate results. Decentralized decision-making processes also minimized the involvement of employees and also restricted the variety of opinion in strategy planning. This statement aligned with Gutterman (2023) who explained that the absence of stakeholder participation can undermine the success of strategic planning processes. On the same note, lack of coordination among departments and the lack of investments in staff training minimized the ability of the organization to successfully execute strategic initiatives. These structural obstacles emphasized the significance of organizational flexibility and participatory strategies in improving strategic performance.

Theoretically, the results confirmed that uncertainty management is a dynamic capability that can help an organization adjust to changing environments. Furr and Eisenhardt (2021)

observed that organizations that work in an uncertain environment need to come up with flexible and adaptive strategies to stay competitive. Nonetheless, this study showed that the uncertainty management in Birzeit University was not yet a dynamic capability that wasfully developed. Rather, it was used in a reactive and haphazard fashion, restricting its usefulness in assisting strategic planning. This contributed to the necessity to incorporate uncertainty management in a more systematic way into strategic management process (Meshulach & Kedar-Levy, 2022).
Moreover, the fact that all the demographic variables did not show statistically significant relationships and differences implied that there was a common perception among managers in terms of strategic planning and uncertainty management practices. This observation aligned with the study by Dwikat et al. (2022), where managers who work in ambiguous settings are more likely to develop common strategic outlooks as a result of common institutional structures and environmental forces. This homogeneity could be associated with similar organizational culture but it could also mean that there was no variety in strategic thinking.
This study could be applied to other institutions of higher learning that are in volatile environments such as Birzeit University. According to Iriani et al. (2024), to become more resilient and sustainable, organizations in the state of uncertainty have to implement adaptive strategies, invest in innovation, and use scenario planning. Universities operating under such conditions should thus not perceive strategic planning in traditional ways but rather implement more adaptive and dynamic models that ensure the consistent adaptation of the strategic planning to the changes in the environment. In addition, there is a need to improve stakeholder involvement, technological infrastructure, and capacity building within the institutions, which are key milestones towards effective strategic planning amidst uncertainty.
Altogether, the results of the given study highlighted the fact that strategic planning under the condition of uncertainty should be based on the balance between stability and flexibility. Although there is a base level of strategic planning at Birzeit University, more needs to be done to ensure that there is greater management of uncertainty, greater institutional flexibility, and greater long-term strategic performance. These findings add to the literature because they offer empirical data in the context of a higher education that functions in the environment of political, economic, and social instability, thus contributing to the knowledge about strategic planning in the situation of uncertainty.

11. Conclusion:

The findings of this study provided comprehensive insights into the strategic planning practices at Birzeit University and their interaction with the complex political, economic, and social environment in Palestine. The results indicated that strategic planning is generally well understood and institutionalized within the university, supported by qualified administrators, continuous leadership training, and long-standing strategic practices. The alignment of the university’s mission, vision, and goals with its strategic initiatives reflected a structured and mature approach to planning. However, the study also revealed moderate levels of interest and engagement among administrators, as well as limited involvement of staff in the strategic planning process, highlighting areas for improvement in participative leadership and organizational culture.

Furthermore, administrative, economic, technological, and legislative factors were found to exert moderate influence on strategic planning, suggesting that while Birzeit University possesses effective systems, further enhancement of institutional skills, capabilities, and adaptive measures are necessary to navigate uncertainty. The absence of significant differences in respondents’ perceptions concerning uncertainty management across socio-demographic characteristics underscores a shared understanding of strategic planning principles among the university’s leadership.

Based on these findings, it is evident that strategic planning in higher education institutions, particularly in unstable contexts, requires a dynamic and adaptive approach that integrates uncertainty management. The study recommended enhancing participative leadership, promoting a culture of continuous strategic awareness, establishing measurable indicators to track progress, and fostering international collaboration for knowledge exchange. Additionally, developing the skills of staff and strengthening information systems are critical for ensuring effective monitoring, implementation, and sustainability of strategic plans.

In conclusion, this research contributed to valuable theoretical and practical insights by demonstrating the importance of integrating uncertainty management with strategic planning. It highlighted the need for Palestinian universities to strengthen institutional capacities, enhance organizational resilience, and optimize strategic decision-making under volatile socio-political and economic conditions. Ultimately, the study underscored that proactive, flexible, and well-coordinated strategic planning is essential for achieving long-term institutional objectives, improving organizational performance, and ensuring the sustainable development of higher education institutions in challenging environments.

12. Recommendations:

1. The Palestinian universities should focus on uncertainty management basing on political, social and economic instability to design strategic plans that would result in the successful attainment of the goals.
2. Birzeit University is recommended to implement participative leadership, where all employees at the managerial level are engaged in the strategic planning process to increase their level of satisfaction, loyalty and commitment to the university strategy.
3. Strategic planning should be regarded as a mechanism by the university, which will increase transparency, crisis management, and organizational competence in complex and unstable economic, political, and social contexts.
4. The researcher recommends that Birzeit University needs to foster an organizational culture that always promotes strategic planning in the university and adherence to the strategic plan. In addition, corrective actions are taken when there is a need.
5. The researcher recommends that Birzeit University must design measurable and factual indicators and measurements to gauge the progress of the university in attaining the strategic plan.
6. According to the researcher, the management of the university s required to focus on the mission, vision and strategic objectives of the university in the process of developing the university strategy.
7. According to the researcher, the university should establish some form of global cooperation with many other international initiatives for the exchange of experience and scholarships. In addition, the strategic plan of the university must facilitate the continuing education and community service.
8. The researcher proposes that Birzeit university should train the employees regarding the importance of strategic planning in institution development. In addition, the management of Birzeit University must bring out the importance of strategic planning in Birzeit University.
9. The researcher proposes that to prepare the strategic plan of the University, Birzeit University must be interested in recruiting well-educated and trained professionals and specialists in preparing strategic plans.

10. The researcher recommends that information systems in the university must be developed and updated at Birzeit University to ensure the capability of monitoring and measuring the level of success in achieving the strategic plan implementation.

13. Future Research:

1. Strategic planning in Birzeit University, its role in reference to Total Quality Management.
2. The level of strategic planning in the Higher education institutions in Palestine.
3. Preparation of a SWOT analysis as the foundation of strategic planning in Birzeit University or in high education institutions.
4. A paper entitled "Implications of Applying Uncertainty Management on Strategic Planning under Economic, Social, and Political Circumstances in the health sector: A Case Study of Birzeit University during COVID-19" will be made and will be presented to a conference.

14. Limitations of Research

The limitations and obstacles are:

1. Some managers declined to respond to the study questionnaire.
2. Some questions were not answered by some of the sample of the study.
3. Delays and the lengthy time taken to respond to and complete the questionnaire of the study.
4. In this case, the researcher was only interested in a single institution of higher learning which is Birzeit University.

Declarations:
The authors declare that this manuscript is an original work, has not been published previously, and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere. All authors have read and approved the final manuscript.

- **Conflict of Interest:** The authors declare that they have no competing interests that could have influenced the research presented in this study.
- **Availability of Data and Materials:** The datasets and materials used and analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.
- **Funding Statement:** This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

15. References

Ahmad, J. (2024). Strategic Planning: Navigating Uncertainty in Business Management. Journal of Management & Social Science, 1(02), 33-46.

Alagha, M., Taha, A. Z. B., & Ismail, M. N. B. (2023) The influence of the uncertainty environment on the strategic thinking, strategic action, and bank performance of executives: a comparative study between the palestinian and malaysian banking sectors.

Al-Aloula, W. A. S. (2022). Reconfiguring strategic resources to enhance the performance of a firm during economic uncertainty using the framework of the resource-based theory. The University of Liverpool (United Kingdom).

Al-Azmi, Amina Mubarak Hamed, Abdel Nasser Radi, Ezza Ahmed Atta Allah, & Fatima Mohamed Al-Bardawili. (2023). Requirements for overcoming the obstacles facing faculty members at Kuwait University in practicing strategic planning skills. Journal of Educational Sciences – Faculty of Education, Qena, 56(56), 46–80.

Ali, Hussein Awad Al-Yafiʻi. (2023). The impact of strategic foresight on entrepreneurial orientation: A field study of private hospitals. Journal of Humanities and Natural Sciences, 4(9), 237–254.
AlQershi, N. (2024). Strategic thinking, strategic planning, strategic innovation and the performance of SMEs: The mediating role of human capital. Management Science and Education Innovations, 1(19).
Benzaghta, M. A., Elwalda, A., Mousa, M. M., Erkan, I., & Rahman, M. (2021). SWOT analysis applications: An integrative literature review. Journal of Global Business Insights, 6(1), 54-72.
Bisharat, A. N. F. (2022). The Impact of Social Entrepreneurship on Value Creation: The Moderating Role of Uncertainty Avoidance of NGOs in Jordan (Master's thesis, Princess Sumaya University for Technology (Jordan)).
Bryson, J., & George, B. (2020). Strategic management in public administration. In Oxford research encyclopedia of politics.
Cyert, R. M., & March, J. G. (2020). A behavioral theory of the firm. Barakaldo Books.
Dwikat, S. Y., Arshad, D., & Mohd Shariff, M. N. (2022). The influence of systematic strategic planning and strategic business innovation on the sustainable performance of manufacturing SMEs: The case of Palestine. Sustainability, 14(20), 13388.
Dźwigoł, H., & Dźwigoł-Barosz, M. (2023). Strategic management in conditions of uncertainty. Zeszyty Naukowe. Organizacja i Zarządzanie/Politechnika Śląska.
Fuertes, G., Alfaro, M., Vargas, M., Gutierrez, S., Ternero, R., & Sabattin, J. (2020). Conceptual framework for the strategic management: a literature review—descriptive. Journal of engineering, 2020(1), 6253013.
Fuertes, G., Alfaro, M., Vargas, M., Gutierrez, S., Ternero, R., & Sabattin, J. (2020). Conceptual framework for the strategic management: a literature review—descriptive. Journal of engineering, 2020(1), 6253013.
Furr, N. R., & Eisenhardt, K. M. (2021). Strategy and uncertainty: Resource-based view, strategy-creation view, and the hybrid between them. Journal of Management, 47(7), 1915-1935.
Greve, H. R., & Zhang, C. M. (2022). Is there a strategic organization in the behavioral theory of the firm? Looking back and looking forward. Strategic Organization, 20(4), 698-708.
Gutterman, A. S. (2023). Introduction to strategic planning. Available at SSRN 4407351.
Iriani, N., Agustianti, A., Sucianti, R., Rahman, A., & Putera, W. (2024). Understanding risk and uncertainty management: A qualitative inquiry into developing business strategies amidst global economic shifts, government policies, and market volatility. Golden Ratio of Finance Management, 4(2), 62-77.
Iwadi, I., & Ali, D. (2024). The Influence of Strategic Planning Methods on Crisis Management: A Case Study of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society Employees in Hebron. Journal of Palestine Ahliya University for Research and Studies, 3(1), 115-136.
Maati, Mohamed Omar Mua'tiq. (2025). Strategic planning and its impact on organizational effectiveness. Afro-Asian Journal for Scientific Research (AAJSR), 343–357.
Mahardhika, B. N., & Raharja, S. (2023). The importance of strategic planning with modern trends in education. Al-Ishlah: Jurnal Pendidikan, 15(2), 1807-1820.
Meshulach, A., & Kedar-Levy, H. (2022). Resource Uncertainty and Sustainable Competitive Advantage: A Resource Base Theory Perspective. Available at SSRN 4025177.
Morrison, K. A., & Misener, K. E. (2021). Exploring the conditions for strategic planning in nonprofit community sport. Sport Management Review, 24(5), 747-769.
Mulyaningsih, M. U. L. Y. A. N. I. N. G. S. I. H., Danial, R. D. M., Komariah, K., Firdausijah, R., & Yuniarti, Y. (2021). The effect of strategic planning on competitive advantages of small and medium enterprises. Management Science Letters, 11(2), 411-416.
Raddad, S. H. (2022). Strategic planning to integrate urban agriculture in Palestinian urban development under conditions of political instability. Urban Forestry & Urban Greening, 76, 127734.
Schühly, A. M. (2022). What is strategic management and why do we need it: theoretical foundations of strategic management. In Cultural Influences on the Process of Strategic Management: Using Scenario Planning for Decision Making in Multinational Corporations (pp. 33-135). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Shtim, M. Y. (2024). The Moderating Role of Perceived Environmental Uncertainty in the Impact of Corporate Governance on Strategy Implementation: An Empirical Study in Information Technology Sector in Jordan (Doctoral dissertation, Middle East University).

Silverman, D. A., & Smith, R. D. (2024). Strategic planning for public relations. Routledge.

Udoh, A. P., & Udoh, F. E. (2024). Strategies For Sustainable Development of Akwa Ibom State University In A Period of Socio-Political and Economic Uncertainty. FUOYE JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT, 1(2).

Waldenström Bjørn, F., & Martinsson, I. (2024). Exploring Decision Making Processes and their Influence on Uncertainty Management.

آثار تطبيق إدارة عدم اليقين على التخطيط الاستراتيجي في ظل الظروف الاقتصادية والاجتماعية والسياسية- دراسة حالة: جامعة بيرزيت

ريدا خوري
كلية الفنون والموسيقى والتصميم، جامعة بيرزيت، فلسطين
الباحث المراسل: rkhoury@birzeit.edu

Received: 23/12/2025. Revised: 19/1/2026. Accepted: 24/6/2026. DIO:

الملخص
تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف أثر الظروف الاقتصادية والاجتماعية والسياسية على التخطيط الاستراتيجي في جامعة بيرزيت، حيث يعمل قطاع التعليم العالي الفلسطيني بشكل عام في بيئة معقدة وعالية الخطورة وغير مؤكدة، استخدمت الباحثة في هذه الدراسة كلاً من المنهج الكمي والمنهج الكيفي من خلال استخدام استبيان قامت الباحثة بتوزيعها على عينة الدراسة، كما اعتدت الباحثة على المقابلات الشخصية، تكونت عينة الدراسة من عينة مكونة من (83) مديراً ومسؤولاً ممن يعملون في المستويات الإدارية العليا والمتوسط، من أصل مجتمع الدراسة المكون من أصل (89) مديراً ومشرفاً.
خلصت الدراسة إلى مجموعة من النتائج كان من أهمها: أن إدارة جامعة بيرزيت لديها مستوى متوسط من الاهتمام بمفهوم التخطيط الاستراتيجي، كما أظهرت نتائج الدراسة وجود درجة متوسطة من الموافقة في المتوسطات الحسابية لاستجابات عينة الدراسة نحو تأثير الظروف الإدارية والاقتصادية والتكنولوجية على التخطيط الاستراتيجي في جامعة بيرزيت. يشير هذا إلى أن جامعة بيرزيت لديها أنظمة إدارية جيدة تضمن عملية التخطيط الاستراتيجي وقادرة على ممارستها، لكنها تحتاج إلى تطوير قدراتها ومهاراتها في هذا المجال. ووجود درجة متوسطة في المتوسطات الحسابية لتقديرات عينة الدراسة نحو تأثير البيئة التشريعية والقانونية على التخطيط الاستراتيجي في جامعة بيرزيت، وفي نهاية المطاف وجدت الباحثة أنه لا يوجد فروق إحصائية في المتوسطات الحسابية لتقديرات عينة الدراسة نحو بأثر تطبيق إدارة عدم اليقين بشأن التخطيط الاستراتيجي في ظل الظروف الاقتصادية والاجتماعية والسياسية في جامعة بيرزيت تعزى لمتغيرات الدراسة الجنس، والتحصيل الدراسي، وسنوات الخبرة، والمسمى الوظيفي، وكان من اهم نتائج الدراسة أنه قد تبين أن التخطيط الاستراتيجي في ظل الظروف السياسية والاجتماعية والاقتصادية التي تتسم بعدم اليقين والتي تتطلب صياغة استراتيجية مرنة.
تقترح الباحثة أن على جامعة بيرزيت وضع خطة استراتيجية واضحة وتطوير ثقافة تنظيمية تعزز التخطيط الاستراتيجي في الجامعة. وزيادة مشاركة الموظفين ومشاركتهم في التخطيط الاستراتيجي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الإدارة الاستراتيجية، إدارة عدم اليقين، المسح الاستراتيجي، التنفيذ الاستراتيجي، التقييم الاستراتيجي.