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## A conceptual paper to develop a strategic performance scorecard for private secondary schools

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**Abstract.** *Private secondary schools in South Africa face several challenges in measuring their performance. These include the absence of a precise delineation of performance objectives, inadequate monitoring and evaluation systems, restricted use of data-driven decision-making procedures, and a lack of coherence between the school's overarching strategic objectives and daily operational activities. This study uses a conceptual approach to develop a tailored performance management scorecard for private secondary schools in South Africa, drawing on 220 studies published from 2010 up to 2025. The four key antecedents comprise 1) the student's perspective, 2) academic excellence, 3) learning and growth, and 4) resources. Each antecedent also comprises sub-constructs from which the measuring criteria can be structured. This scorecard is helpful to school managers, school boards, and researchers because it can be used to measure the performance of private secondary schools as a first step toward improving performance management.*

**Keywords:** South Africa, Academic, matric, grade 12, education, learning, improvement.

**JEL Codes:** I25, O47

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### 1. Introduction

South Africa has 24,900 schools, of which 90.8% are public. Likewise, private secondary schools account for less than 10% of all secondary schools (Cowling, 2024). Private schools in South Africa serve affluent and privileged populations, whereas public schools have a greater diversity of racial and economic backgrounds. Private schools have historically served primarily white South African students. However, after apartheid, some private schools experienced an increase in black middle-class enrolment and racial integration. Some common demographic patterns in private schools include higher average family income levels, a higher percentage of English or Afrikaans speakers (compared to the other nine official languages), and some international students from neighbouring countries.

Private urban schools in South Africa may have greater diversity than rural ones. Elite schools can differ significantly in quality from more accessible or affordable private schools and impact demographic trends. Despite English-only rules, students used their home languages informally for problem-solving and social functions. Code-switching is common. Teacher perceptions about home language use were often hostile and unsupportive. No transparent relationships existed between home language use, preference, and student grades. A prior educational background predicted better achievement. The lack of home language support negatively affected learner's identities and excluded parents (Pitout *et al.*, 2021).



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Between 2008 and 2011, provincial education expenditures on school infrastructure declined in absolute terms and as a percentage of total education expenditures. Additional national grants and funding facilitated a renewed focus on infrastructure investment from 2015 to 2018. Despite this, facility maintenance continues to be severely underfunded across provinces, accounting for less than 1% of infrastructure budgets. As a result, the infrastructure gap widens. Taking classroom facilities, for example, five of the nine South African provinces have more classrooms requiring rehabilitation than the newly constructed ones in 2015-2018. Rural areas are the most affected. A recent national assessment showed that only 65% of South Africa's public schools have essential water, sanitation, and electricity infrastructure (Marques, 2022).

## 2. Problem Statement

Unlike state-funded public schools, private schools compete in the open market for funding. Investors apply financial metrics such as return on investment, profitability, capital gains and operating efficiency before making investment decisions. In this regard, private schools compete against all other industries to secure investments and funds (Bisschoff *et al.*, 2022). In practice, this means that if private schools are not worthy investments, investors could instead invest in, for example, retail, manufacturing, or agribusiness. Therefore, private schools must operate at peak efficiency and be profitable so that they are worthy investment opportunities.

One way to improve operating efficiency is to measure and manage the key performance areas. Although several performance measurement tools exist, most are generic or applied to specific industries. No specific performance measurement tool could be found to address private secondary schools specifically. Additionally, no specific tool addresses the unique South African multicultural secondary school environment. Therefore, an educational and managerial gap exists in the performance management of private secondary schools in South Africa (Molefhi, 2016; Holland & Campbell, 2005; Saksono & Bernardus, 2023).

Developing a conceptual scorecard for managing performance can greatly assist managers and the boards of private secondary schools to improve their performance and reach their financial and operational objectives (Chang *et al.*, 2013; Rompho, 2020).

## 3. Study Objective

This conceptual paper aims to develop a performance management scorecard for private secondary schools in South Africa.

## 4. Theoretical Overview of Performance Management

### 4.1 Defining performance management

Performance management is generally described as an organisational tool that employs a predetermined set of objectives and incentives to measure team members. Likewise, performance management can motivate team members to commit to their professional responsibilities. Table 1 shows how performance management has developed since the early 1990s.

Table 1: Performance management as defined since the early 1990s



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Year	Definition	Authors
1991	“The development of individuals with competence and commitment, working towards the achievement of shared meaningful objectives within an organisation which supports and encourages their achievement.”	Lockett, 1991, p.2
1995	“Performance management is managing the business.”	Mohrman and Mohrman, 1995, p.4
1995	“Directing and supporting employees to work as effectively and efficiently as possible following the organisation's needs.”	Walters, 1995, p.5
1998	“Performance management is a strategic and integrated approach to delivering sustained success to organisations by improving the performance of the people who work in them and by developing the capabilities of teams and individual contributors.”	Armstrong and Baron, 1998, p.2
2022	“Performance management can be defined as a systematic process for improving organisational performance by developing the performance of individuals and teams. It is a means of getting better results from the organisation, teams, and individuals by understanding and managing performance within an agreed framework of planned goals, standards, and competence requirements.”	Armstrong, 2022, p.1
2023	“Performance management is a tool for helping managers monitor and evaluate employees' work. Its goal is to create an environment where people can perform to the best of their abilities and align with the organization's overall goals”.	Investopedia, 2024, p.1
2023	“Performance includes activities to ensure that goals are consistently being met effectively and efficiently.”	Cambridge Dictionary, p.1

All these definitions stress the significance of coordinating individual and group efforts to achieve organisational objectives. An organisation's success depends on its employees' efforts, and this alignment ensures those efforts go towards the right things. These approaches, from Lockett's "working towards the achievement of shared meaningful objectives" to Armstrong and Baron's "improving the performance of the people who work in them," have the same overarching objective: achieving harmony between individual and organisational objectives. These definitions highlight Performance Management Systems' (PMS) positive impact on growth and progress. They understand that the purpose of a PMS is not merely to monitor performance levels but also to boost output. Individuals and groups can be trained to perform better by improving their knowledge and abilities and maximising the efficiency and effectiveness of achieving their objectives. Mohrman and Mohrman's claim that PMS is about "managing the business" strategically by integrating processes to guide individuals and teams to achieve their objectives, grow



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professionally, and maximise the organisation's productivity and success. It is an integral part of the overall strategy and success, and a continuous, systematic practice at the individual and team levels.

Jukka (2023) identified positive relationships between the organisation's Management Control System (MCS) and organisational performance. Jukka's study showed that in an effective MCS that uses information to assess the performance of an organisation and its (human) resources, managers and leaders better execute and modify organisational performance and are more likely to achieve the organisation's strategic objectives. The results also suggested that different business strategies yield better performance when aligned with the appropriate management controls represented by an MCS.

Another study by Berchicci (2022) examined whether business cycles influence the relationship between CEOs' overconfidence and performance. They find that expansion periods increase the positive relationship between overconfident CEOs and firms' performance, while recession periods weaken it.

A study of public-private partnerships also found that a PMS enables practitioners to understand project process performance better and then ensure informed decision-making about required actions to improve future performance. As a result, an organisation needs to compile a "performance framework" to identify the organisation's required performance areas strategically. This "list" or "performance framework" is a performance scorecard. Kaplan and Norton (1992) initially developed the balanced scorecard as a generic tool to measure an organisation's performance. However, the balanced scorecard is a generic approach and does not incorporate the uniqueness of educational performance management. As such, a tailored scorecard is needed to manage the performance at private secondary schools (Bos-Nehles *et al.*, 2017; Li *et al.*, 2006; Kao *et al.*, 2024).

#### **4.2 The Performance Management System in the school environment**

In schools, teachers and their supervisors traditionally start the PMS process by making performance development plans and annual agreements with objectives and targets to reach. Supervisors check on teachers two to three times a year to assess if they are reaching their performance agreements (Combs *et al.*, 2006; Deci & Ryan, 1985). A Performance-Based Reward System is also part of the PMS system. Its objective is to reward good performance. (Aksal *et al.* 2011, Varma and Budhwar, 2023). Although these performance agreement discussions are also part of the public schools' performance management system, these discussions are more aimed at determining what teachers and headmasters do about quality education (in a much higher teacher-student ratio), sports and extracurricular activities (Holland & Campbell, 2005; Dzimbiri, 2008; Marobela & Andrae-Marobela, 2013; Tan *et al.*, 2024).

The success of a PMS depends on constant feedback, on-the-job training, teacher commitment and motivation. Aslam *et al.* (2011) believe that a PMS system for teachers could be improved if teachers were given proper feedback, trained by their supervisors, and participated in planning and performance review meetings (Nxumalo *et al.*, 2018). As such, private secondary schools must establish mechanisms to collect data on teachers' key performance indicators (KPIs) and regularly review and analyse it to assess their performance. This can be done using student tests, surveys, staff and parents, and financial reports (Mothusi, 2008; Poister, 2008). Data analysis includes finding trends, areas of strength and weakness, and ways to improve. It is important to regularly report on the school's performance and progress toward its objectives, both inside and outside (Holland & Campbell, 2005; Dzimbiri, 2008; Marobela & Andrae-



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Marobela, 2013; Hart, 2023). Performance measurement metrics and how it is analysed should be consistent to enable year-on-year improvements (Thus, in effect, establishing an annual scorecard).

Based on the scorecard's data, private secondary schools can develop specific performance improvement plans to solve problems and make the most of their strengths. Typical initiatives can include programmes to help teachers improve their skills, help struggling students, apply curriculum changes, improve the way teachers teach, and initiate programmes to get parents more involved and happier with school (Monnaesi, 2011; Mothusi, 2008; Poister, 2008). Improvement initiatives should align with school objectives and have clear action plans, timelines, and people or teams in charge. Performance management is not a one-time managerial intervention, but an ongoing process focused on continuous improvement. This means making a supportive and collaborative space where feedback is valued, and people are encouraged to learn from successes and failures (Boipono *et al.*, 2014; Monnaesi, 2011; Mothusi, 2008; Bergdahl *et al.*, 2020).

The first step in performance management is to properly formulate the school's vision and mission and then set clear and measurable objectives to make these dreams come true (Gamble *et al.*, 2024). As such, managers and leaders at private secondary schools must follow suit to ensure that their efforts are directed in the right direction and that their best resources are employed effectively and efficiently. Several studies (Li *et al.*, 2006; Laursen & Foss, 2003; Rompho, 2020) show that schools with clear objectives are more likely to act focused and purposeful, leading to better performance results. These studies also show that a structured performance measurement tool, such as a scorecard, provides a detailed picture of the school's performance. This whole-school approach assists schools in determining their strengths and weaknesses and in making effective decisions towards performance improvement. Schools that use targeted programmes to fix areas of weakness and build on areas of strength tend to gain significant performance improvements (Laursen & Foss, 2003; Jiménez-Jiménez & Sanz-Valle, 2011; Choirul Amin *et al.*, 2021).

Schools that emphasise continuous improvement and invest in strategic projects demonstrate their commitment to improving performance. The results show how important it is for private secondary schools to create a culture of continuous improvement (Monnaesi, 2011; Mothusi, 2008; Poister, 2008; Kilag *et al.*, 2024).

The strategic framework helps create a supportive and collaborative environment where feedback is valued, and people are encouraged to learn from their successes and failures. This culture encourages innovation, helps people learn from each other, and helps schools respond well to changing needs and challenges. The good effects of using a strategic scorecard to manage performance for private secondary schools (Monnaesi, 2011; Mothusi, 2008; Poister, 2008; Jiménez-Jiménez & Sanz-Valle, 2011; Choirul Amin *et al.*, 2021).

### **4.3 Performance management and leadership**

A PMS aims to improve employees' productivity by tracking how well they do their jobs (Poister, 2003). Other authors opine that performance management is the key process by which organisations set objectives, determine standards, assign, and evaluate work, and distribute rewards. (Varma and Budhwar, 2023).

A study by Ridwan (2023) on schoolteachers and principals found that teacher performance is not a stand-alone factor. Many factors, such as facilities, training, support, and the school's financial well-being,



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the community and the neighbourhood influence it. Regarding the principals, it also includes the school management system established by the school board. Another study on school principal leadership and its influence on teacher professionalism in the learning process in the private Madrasah Aliyah schools in Malaysia revealed that leadership is a determining factor in improving teachers' professionalism, school performance, and a conducive learning process (Warisno & Hidayah, 2022). An intense PMS fosters innovative work behaviour such as high distinctiveness, consistency, and consensus (Bauwens *et al.*, 2023). In public secondary schools in Kenya, Sakwa *et al.* (2023) noted that, more specifically, the principal's reward system was crucial in determining teacher performance, and hence, a proper blend of the various rewards was urgent to achieve optimal teacher performance. Evidence indicates that strategic leadership, strategic resource allocation, and strategic incentives tend to impact the performance of public secondary schools positively and significantly (Nang'ole & Muathe, 2023; Sengendo & Eduan, 2024).

All these studies show that it is beneficial for schools if the leadership know about and implements a PMS. Performance management serves as a viable substitute for the conventional employee evaluation system, enabling managers to evaluate the performance of their employees more comprehensively. A performance management strategy that yields positive outcomes is frequently characterised by its continuous nature (Poister, 2003) because performance management provides team members with numerous opportunities to improve their work performance. Implementing efficient performance management strategies can empower teams to collaborate effectively and work toward achieving immediate and long-term organisational objectives.

Concerning leadership styles, Garengo and Betto (2022) revealed that the shift from a passive avoidant to a transactional leadership style supports implementing a PMS. Then, further change from transactional to transformational leadership favours the development of achievement culture and participative performance management practices. Other studies in leadership by Chughtai and Khan (2024) and Garengo and Betto (2024) confirmed that knowledge-sharing behaviour and work engagement mediate the relationship between knowledge-oriented leadership and employees' innovative performance.

#### **4.4 Summary**

The literature review shows that a PMS is a viable alternative to managing performance metrics. It includes human resources and extends to various other performance metrics. The various studies also show that performance management comprises several interconnected metrics and criteria. No single metric or criterion can be isolated. Hence, a typical scorecard or conceptual framework is required to measure the performance of private secondary schools.

## **5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **5.1 Research approach**

A literature review was conducted to develop a conceptual framework. This approach facilitates a comprehensive analysis of pertinent literature about the subject matter, thereby presenting the opportunity to uncover previously unexplored concepts. Conducting a detailed literature review enhances the rigour and outcomes of the review process using a well-defined and replicable methodology and a comprehensive and impartial search strategy to identify and assess a substantial body of literature (Tranfield *et al.*, 2003; Mulrow, 1994; Menon *et al.*, 2022).



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The literature review focused on developing a strategic conceptual framework for measuring and managing performance using a scorecard for private secondary schools. Initially, 220 literature studies were identified, but after scrutiny, 53 articles were retained and carefully reviewed to develop the conceptual, strategic framework for managing performance (see Figure 1).

## 5.2 Data collection review process

The primary data sources were Scopus, ISI Web of Knowledge, International Bibliography of Social Sciences (IBSS), and Google Scholar databases. Scopus, IBSS and ISI Web of Knowledge are widely recognised as the most extensive repositories of peer-reviewed journals in the social sciences. At the same time, Google Scholar is renowned for its vast collection of scholarly literature (Jiménez-Jiménez & Sanz-Valle, 2011; Gusenbauer & Haddaway, 2020; Martin-Martin *et al.*, 2021).

In the preliminary investigation, we employed a set of search terms and keywords independently and in combination using the Boolean operators "and" and "or." The specific search terms and keywords used were "Performance management," "Balance Scorecard," "Education," "Private and secondary schools," "Academic excellence" and "Learning and growth."

The articles selected for inclusion in this review had to meet specific criteria. These criteria are: 1) This literature review exclusively included articles published in the past 15 years (Gündüzalp, 2017; Karathanos, 2005; Anastacio, 2016; Yildiz & Esmer, 2023), 2) Articles must be published in peer-reviewed journals with vital impact factors, as these are recognised for providing reliable data and having significant influence in the respective field (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2005; Sarma & Patgiri, 2024), 3) Only English articles were considered, and 4) The articles had to focus on research related to performance management, balanced scorecard education, private and secondary schools, academic excellence, or learning and growth.

The exclusion criteria were: 1) The articles were excluded if they did not match the selected search keywords, and 2) This study focuses solely on private secondary institutions; therefore, articles on elementary schools were not considered.

## 5.3 Data extraction procedure

The first step of the sample analysis was to find any existing data. Abstracts were checked to see if they met the inclusion requirements. The research methodology and the discussion sections will be considered and summarised if the article passes the initial evaluation. Furthermore, any effects the models could have on the management of performance in private secondary schools were recorded (Atamturk *et al.*, 2011; Gao *et al.*, 2024; Fernandez-Rio & Iglesias, 2024; Wilson *et al.*, 2024). (See Figure 1).



Fig. 1: Research methodology flow chart explaining the selection process of articles (Source: Author's own)

Figure 1 presents a flow chart that visualises the selection process for the articles included in this review. Step 1 included the selection of keywords, using words such as performance management, balanced scorecard, education, private and secondary schools, academic excellence, learning, and growth. After searching for keywords, 220 title abstracts were retained. After considering the absence of an exit



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relationship between performance management, balanced scorecards, education, and private and secondary schools, 120 articles were retained. After further reviewing irrelevant papers on the performance management code card, education, and private and secondary school relations, another 35 articles were removed. The remaining 55 papers were evaluated by including the selection of the people based on the selected time frame (the last 15 years) to select the final papers published within the last ten years. Older papers older than 15 years were discarded. The remaining articles were used in the analysis.

#### **5.4 Description of the analysis**

The population consisted of 220 articles identified by keyword selection. After scrutiny (see Figure 1), 53 articles (24.09%) were suitable for analysis. The definitions of the 53 articles and measurement items were scrutinised to ensure that the included studies used a scorecard or strategic framework to manage performance in private secondary schools (Alolah, 2014; Amin, 2021). The research questions and objectives, the theoretical framework(s) used, the management of performance practices, the sample used, the research design and method, and the main findings were compared. This analysis showed that the different researchers used similar strategic frameworks to manage performance. This inductive approach aimed to identify the best strategic framework for managing performance in private secondary schools (Schobel, 2012; Alolah, 2014; Amin, 2021). The results showed that although there are similarities, different researchers focused more on specific variables within their strategic frameworks for managing performance. For example, Janssen (2005) and Ramamoorthy *et al.* (2005) discuss performance management, while Fernandez and Moldogaziev (2013) examine learning and growth. Other authors (Chinpakdee & Gu, 2024; Uy *et al.*, 2024; Kaldes *et al.*, 2024) are also worthy of mention in this context.

## **6. Results**

### **6.1 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that effectively measure the performance of private secondary schools are paramount in evaluating their efficacy and achievement. These metrics offer significant information on different aspects of school performance, enabling school administrators, educators, and stakeholders to make well-informed decisions aimed at improving the educational experience and general results for students (Anastacio, 2016; Gündüzalp & Arabac, 2017; Kardianto *et al.*, 2022).

Measuring a private secondary school's success often relies on evaluating its academic performance, a KPI. This indicator includes metrics such as 1) scores on standardised tests, 2) graduation rates, and 3) the proportion of students admitted to private higher secondary schools. High test scores indicate that the institution provides high-quality education, equipping students for future academic endeavours. This evidence suggests that instructional strategies and the overarching pedagogical framework effectively foster student learning and achievement (Karathanos & Karathanos, 2005; Ko *et al.*, 2023). The metrics of student retention and enrolment rates hold significant importance as they serve as key indicators of a school's capacity to sustain a favourable learning environment and effectively address the requirements of its student body. High retention rates indicate a positive correlation between student satisfaction with their educational experience and the support they perceive from the school community. On the contrary, robust enrolment rates indicate that the educational institution is successfully attracting new cohorts of students and garnering recognition for its academic curricula and supplementary activities.



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Parent and student satisfaction surveys can serve as valuable KPIs for assessing the overall satisfaction levels of the various stakeholders within the educational institution. Periodic surveys provide an avenue for parents and students to offer their perspectives on numerous aspects of the academic institution, encompassing pedagogical efficacy, infrastructure, communication, and overall contentment (Johanson *et al.*, 2006; Ko *et al.*, 2023; Yuliansingh *et al.*, 2024).

Positive feedback indicates that the educational institution is successfully fulfilling the expectations of its community, whereas negative feedback can shed light on specific areas that require improvement. Measurement of College and Career Readiness is a KPI, particularly in the context of secondary education, as it assesses the effectiveness of educational institutions in equipping students for the challenges they will face after completing their studies. In private secondary schools, inclusion and accomplishments in extracurricular activities are crucial KPIs. The participation of students in extracurricular activities, encompassing sports, arts, clubs, and community service, plays a vital role in fostering their holistic personal and social growth. Monitoring the levels of student engagement and recognising any commendations or honours obtained can indicate the educational institution's dedication to cultivating a comprehensive learning experience and students' abilities beyond academics.

## **6.2 Performance of private secondary schools in terms of identified KPIs**

The performance of private secondary schools can be evaluated by utilising diverse KPIs, which offer significant insights into their efficacy and productivity. KPIs discussed here encompass various factors influencing the comprehensive quality of education and the school's ability to fulfil its mission and objectives effectively (Alolah *et al.*, 2014; Amin, 2021). Academic achievement is a KPI that encompasses various metrics, including standardised test scores, graduation rates, and college acceptance rates. Private secondary schools that demonstrate high levels of performance frequently exhibit exceptional performance in these domains, as they prioritise the implementation of demanding curricula, employ highly competent teaching personnel, and provide individualised support to address the unique learning requirements of their students.

A school that consistently demonstrates high academic achievement indicators is likely to be perceived as successful in effectively fulfilling its primary function of delivering a high standard of education to its students (Brown & Wohlstetter, 2006; Rahayu *et al.*, 2023).

The student-teacher ratio is an additional KPI that is very important. A commonly observed correlation exists between reduced class sizes in private secondary schools and improved student participation and academic achievement levels. Schools that maintain reduced learners-to-teacher ratios can provide enhanced individualised instruction and dedicated focus to each student, thereby cultivating an environment conducive to effective learning (Schobel & Scholey, 2012; Amin, 2021; Brown & Wohlstetter, 2009; Mubonenwa, 2019).

In addition, educational institutions of this nature can recognise and confront academic obstacles early, potentially resulting in enhanced academic outcomes. Furthermore, academic pursuits, extracurricular activities, and the accessibility of diverse programs also influence a school's performance. Private secondary schools that provide diverse extracurricular activities encompassing sports, arts, music, and community service are important in fostering students' comprehensive growth and development (Siburian & Pangaribuan, 2020). Engagement in extracurricular activities enhances students' aptitudes and talents



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and fosters teamwork, leadership, and time management skills, which are crucial for their holistic advancement and future achievements. The holistic school environment and culture are KPIs that significantly influence students' experiences and outcomes. A positive and inclusive environment can enhance student engagement and motivation and foster a sense of belonging. Educational institutions that cultivate a secure, considerate, and nurturing ambience cultivate a setting conducive to academic growth and individual advancement. Financial stability and efficient resource management are KPIs that are of utmost importance (Amin, 2021; Liang, 2012; Brown & Wohlstetter, 2009; Rompho, 2020). Private secondary schools must prioritise effective financial management to uphold education standards and sustain the necessary infrastructure and resources. Schools that adopt sustainable financial practices can allocate resources toward teacher professional development, technological advancements, and contemporary instructional materials, thereby augmenting the overall quality of the learning environment.

## **7. The Theoretical School Performance Scorecard**

The study considered 71 qualitative, 62 quantitative, four mixed-method and two generically researched articles. Eventually, 53 of these articles were systematically reviewed (25 quantitative and 28 qualitative studies) to identify relevant variables and their interrelationships, and to develop a theoretical model to measure and manage performance management in private schools in South Africa. In particular, the systematic review identified four perspectives central to private school performance. They are 1) *The Student Perspective*, 2) *Internal Processes for Academic Excellence*, 3) *A Learning and Growth Perspective*, and 4) *Resource Perspective*. These perspectives comprise sub-constructs, while the two sub-constructs of the *Learning and Growth Perspective* comprise further variables. Figure 2 graphically displays the results of A systematic theoretical analysis in a theoretical school performance scorecard model.

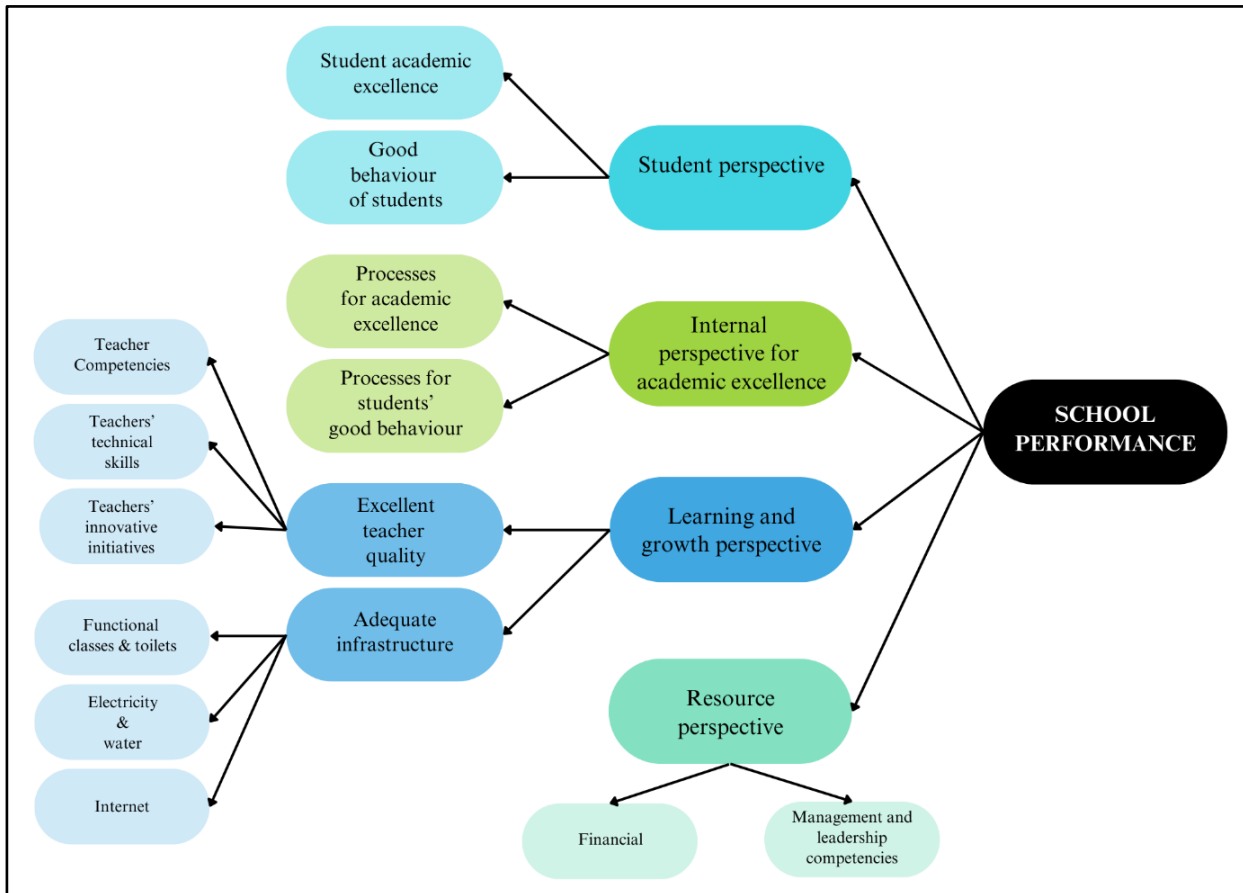


Fig. 2: Theoretical School Performance Scorecard (Source: Author's own)

## 8. Discussion

### 8.1 Theoretical implications

Using a scorecard as a strategic framework for performance management in private secondary schools within South Africa has significant theoretical implications that may substantially influence the educational domain. A significant theoretical implication is related to the congruence between objectives and outcomes (Siburian & Pangaribuan, 2020). Implementing a scorecard enables educational institutions to effectively delineate their strategic objectives and desired outcomes according to the municipality's overarching educational mission. Establishing this alignment facilitates a unified approach to education, encouraging uniformity and collaboration among educational institutions and enhancing educational outcomes (Alolah, 2014; Amin, 2021; Brown & Wohlstetter, 2009;). Another noteworthy theoretical implication pertains to prioritising decision-making based on empirical data. The scorecard approach is based on systematically gathering and examining pertinent data to evaluate the performance of educational institutions. The data-driven decision-making process empowers educational institutions to identify both areas of proficiency and deficiency more precisely, thus facilitating the implementation of focused interventions and the allocation



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of resources (Gusnardi, 2019; Hasan & Chyi, 2017; Soderberg, 2011; Saksono & Bernardus, 2023; Hanushek *et al.*, 2023). Furthermore, this approach promotes a culture of responsibility and openness, as educational institutions must justify their achievements based on predetermined criteria and exhibit ongoing improvement.

The strategic framework also integrates the notion of a balanced scorecard, which encompasses various dimensions of school performance that extend beyond the sole academic accomplishments. A scorecard offers a more comprehensive assessment of a school's effectiveness by considering various perspectives, including student satisfaction, teacher development, and community engagement (Bremser & White, 2000; Siburian & Pangaribuan, 2020). This approach, characterised based on its equilibrium, is supported by contemporary educational theories that underscore the importance of comprehensive growth and equipping students for the challenges they may encounter outside the academic realm. Furthermore, the strategic framework fosters a culture of learning and innovation within educational institutions. To achieve established performance objectives, educational institutions can explore novel pedagogical approaches, curriculum advancements, and systems to support students (Dariyo *et al.*, 2022). The prevalence of an innovative culture can yield widespread benefits, extending beyond individual students to encompass the larger educational community through the dissemination and adoption of successful practices.

## 8.2 Practical implications

Implementing a strategic framework for performance management, specifically using a scorecard, in private secondary schools in South Africa can yield noteworthy practical implications (Pereira & Filipe Melo, 2012; Dario & Turmanggor, 2024). The proposed methodology involves the development of a comprehensive and equitable performance management framework based on the educational institution's overarching vision and objectives. Enhanced objective alignment is a key practical implication of implementing this strategic framework. A scorecard facilitates the establishment of explicit and quantifiable objectives for private secondary schools based on their mission and long-term vision. By disseminating these objectives to individual teachers and staff members, a more comprehensive understanding is achieved regarding the extent to which everyone's role contributes to the overall achievement of the educational institution (Williams, 2010; Hasan & Chyi, 2017; Soderberg, 2011; Yuliansingh *et al.*, 2024;).

This alignment cultivates a sense of purpose and incentivises stakeholders to collaborate effectively towards common objectives. Using a scorecard in school performance management has a practical implication in the form of a data-driven decision-making process. Once the framework has been established, educational institutions can gather and evaluate pertinent data, including academic achievements, student attendance records, teacher evaluations, and allocation of resources (Storey, 2002; Soderberg, 2011; Coşkun & Nizaeva, 2023). A data-driven approach enables school administrators to make well-informed decisions grounded in empirical evidence rather than relying on intuition or assumptions. This tool enables the discernment of positive attributes and areas for improvement within the educational institution, allowing for prompt modifications to strategies and interventions to enhance overall performance.

In addition, a scorecard offers a structured approach to monitoring and assessing progress over time. Stakeholders can consistently evaluate their performance by establishing KPI and corresponding targets for



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every facet of the educational institution's functioning (Hasan & Chyi, 2017; Soderberg, 2011; Nugraha, 2020).

The continuous monitoring process allows educational institutions to promptly detect potential concerns, facilitating the timely resolution of issues before they become more severe. Furthermore, this practice fosters a climate of responsibility and ongoing improvement, as educational professionals and administrators comprehensively understand their anticipated achievement levels and can proactively implement measures to achieve or surpass them.

## 9. Limitations

Firstly, it is essential to note that the narrow emphasis on private secondary schools within South Africa could limit the generalizability of the results. Private schools often exhibit unique attributes and possess resources that may not be indicative of the broader educational environment. Therefore, it is essential to exercise caution when implementing the strategic framework developed in this study in diverse contexts, such as public schools or those in different regions, as its applicability may be uncertain (Ovando & Ramirez, 2007; Lipe & Salterio, 2000; Rotaru *et al.*, 2020).

Furthermore, the use of a quantitative methodology is accompanied by inherent limitations. Although quantitative research offers valuable numerical data and statistical analysis, it may not comprehensively capture the intricate complexities and nuances inherent in the educational environment (Nørreklit, 2003; Henson *et al.*, 2020; Frisby, 2024;)

Due to this study's predominant numerical data and metrics, certain crucial elements of school performance, such as qualitative evaluations of teaching quality, student engagement, and school culture, may need to be considered or examined sufficiently.

In addition, it is essential to note that the study's use of historical data for performance evaluation may introduce potential biases. Performance metrics derived from historical data may not fully consider the impact of dynamic circumstances or evolving challenges educational institutions may face (Yüksel & Coşkun, 2013; Coşkun *et al.*, 2023).

A more comprehensive examination could involve integrating longitudinal data or qualitative evaluations to complement the quantitative results, thus offering a more comprehensive comprehension of school performance and the efficacy of the proposed framework. This constraint is related to the data collection. If the data needs to be updated or modernised to add new research, the inferences derived from this study can be confirmed, updated or even compromised (De Oliveira *et al.*, 2020; De Jesus Alvares Mendes Junior & Alves, 2023). Furthermore, researchers must consider potential biases that may arise during the data collection process, mainly when data is obtained from specific sources or stakeholders who may have vested interests in the anticipated results of the study.

## 10. Further theoretical support for the scorecard

The research by Rompho (2020) found strong evidence supporting using a scorecard to measure education performance. Although the Balanced Scorecard by Kaplan and Norton is not ideally suited for education, the principle of an adapted and applied scorecard for schools is sound. A school that consistently demonstrates high academic achievement indicators is likely to be perceived as successful in



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delivering a high standard of education to its students (Brown & Wohlstetter, 2006; Rahayu *et al.*, 2023). This improves stakeholder satisfaction and impacts school performance regarding growth, healthy finances, reputation, and enrolment numbers (Rompho, 2020). Regarding the good behaviour of students, Saksono and Bernardus (2023) found that students need to develop good character and spirituality (wellbeing education) and reflect it in their daily attitude at school. Similarly, good academic outputs increase parent satisfaction (Wei & Ni, 2023). This will create greater involvement and engagement of parents and consequently improve their satisfaction (Wei & Ni, 2023), resulting in reputation and revenue growth for schools. It was found that school attributes are essential in determining parents' contentment with public primary school services. Parents become dissatisfied when their children do not receive good services and may react by withdrawing them to other schools in search of greener pastures. This implies that parents' continued discontent with services will lead to a decline in future enrolment figures in public primary schools unless something is done promptly (Chuktu *et al.*, 2024). Supportive research by Kristanti *et al.* (2024) highlights the importance of synergy between schools and parents in influencing students' academic achievement and character development. Another research by Dariyo *et al.* (2022) reflected that innovations in schoolteachers lead to greater stakeholder satisfaction and positively impact academic excellence. Another study by Sengendo and Eduan (2024) revealed the importance of transformational leadership in schools as a significant predictor of academic influence through idealised influence, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration. Tan and Walker (2024) found that school leadership practices were significantly associated with student academic achievement. An earlier study by Aninsingh *et al.* (2022) identified character education as a significant predictor of academic success, enhancing the importance of the 'Internal Process for Good Behaviour' parameter in a school scenario. Other leadership practices, such as distributed leadership and diverse leadership styles, significantly improve learner outcomes (Jambo & Hodge, 2019; Maqbool *et al.*, 2023). Gningue *et al.* (2022) find a positive relationship between teacher leadership and school climate, significantly impacting the internal process in a school setting.

The Internal Perspective for Academic Excellence comprises two sub-perspectives: the Processes for Academic Excellence and the Processes facilitating Good Behaviour of Students. In the context of the internal process for academic excellence, Saksono and Bernardus (2023) stated that it is essential for a school to create higher employee (teachers and staff) satisfaction in schools using a scorecard, which was used as a strategic framework for a holistic evaluation. Another vital parameter considered in the internal perspective for academic excellence is the number of qualified pass-outs in a national-level certification examination (e.g., Grade 12) expressed as a percentage of the number of students excelling in matric to the total number of students. Dariyo *et al.* (2022) also noted that innovations in facilities and infrastructure lead to greater stakeholder satisfaction. Other elements that significantly impacted the Internal Perspective for Good Behaviour are the percentage of public participants participating in the budget preparation and the number of community activities (Rompho, 2020). The third perspective deals with learning and growth, which includes Excellent teacher quality and Adequate infrastructure. Indicators subscribing to Learning and Growth are Innovation initiatives (measured by the number of innovation proposals) and Teacher competencies (measured by the number of teachers completing professional development to the total number of teachers in a school). Other studies also found strong evidence that teacher training, particularly technical training (Learning and growth parameter), positively impacted job performance and enhanced academic excellence, creating value for stakeholders in the process (Ogunbayo & Mhalanga, 2022). From a



Learning and growth perspective, the Quality of teachers is the main driver. An Adequate infrastructure encompasses basic structural infrastructure such as functional classrooms and water closet facilities, constant electricity and water supply, internet connectivity, and computers. Learning and growth, as well as a Resource perspective, drive Internal processes. The perspectives are also interrelated. Sufficient resources attract and support good teachers. At the same time, good teachers attract good school resources (Rompho, 2020). Finally, from the resource's perspective, financial, leadership, and management resources are essential in any school's performance.

## 11. Future Research

This article used a systematic literature review to identify relevant antecedents to measure school performance. In doing so, the literature study developed a theoretical framework to serve as a scorecard in secondary schools. However, this framework needs to be developed further by: 1) developing specific measuring criteria for each identified antecedent, 2) empirically validating the antecedents, measuring criteria, and the scorecard, and 3) measuring the performance of schools using the scorecard.

## 12. Summary

This article used a systematic literature review to develop a framework (or scorecard) to measure the performance of schools in the Ethekwini district of Kwa-Zulu Natal in Durban, South Africa. After identifying 220 relevant articles, closer scrutiny reduced the number of relevant articles to the first 120 and then to 53. These 53 articles were used to develop the antecedents of the theoretical framework that can be used as a scorecard to measure secondary school performance. The results are novel and unique and highlight the importance of using a structured framework for performance management. The results also provide a basis for the empirical development of a management and consulting tool for the basic education sector.

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