

The Role of Strategic Planning and Organisational Competence on Performance: Evidence from Social Enterprise

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between organisational competence, strategic planning, and organisational performance in Malaysian social enterprises. It focuses on the mediating role of organisational competence in linking strategic planning to performance outcomes and explores how competencies differ in impact between service and non-service sectors. This study employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) to examine data collected from 108 Malaysian social enterprises registered as Company Limited by Guarantee (CLBG). Results indicate that strategic planning does not directly impact organisational performance, while organisational competence has a positive effect of direct and mediates the relationship between strategic planning and performance. The sector moderates the relationship between organisational competence and performance, although the effect is nonsignificant. This study is limited by its small sample size and reliance on self-reported questionnaire data, which may introduce bias and limit generalisability. Social enterprises should enhance organisational competence to better align strategic planning with performance objectives, particularly in leveraging new technologies and external knowledge. This paper addresses gaps in the literature by examining the mediating role of organisational competence between strategic planning and performance. It also provides sectoral insights, highlighting how competencies' influence on performance varies between service and non-service sectors.

Keywords: Strategic Planning, Organisational Competence, Sector, Organisational Performance, Social Enterprise

Introduction

The emergence of hybrid organisations known as social enterprises (SE) has increased globally in recent decades due to their accountability to multiple stakeholders such as beneficiaries, employees, customers, the local community, and funders (Abramson & Billings, 2019; Quillooy et al., 2024). SEs are organisations that incorporate both financial and social goals in their mission which play an important role in delivering social value to the community due to their capability to solve pressing social and environmental problems such as poverty, access to healthcare, and youth unemployment (Rozar et al., 2018) while contributing to the socio-economy of the nation (British Council, 2018).

Over the past decade, the number of SEs has grown substantially, with approximately 10 million SEs worldwide generating an estimated USD 2 trillion in revenue and creating nearly 200 million jobs as of 2023 (WEF, 2024). In Malaysia, the British Council (2018) reported around 20,749 SEs, while MEDAC's 2020 data identified 414 registered SEs contributing RM100 million in turnover and 3,500 jobs (Yeow & Boon, 2022). The actual number is likely higher, but due to the absence of mandatory registration, it remains difficult to determine. While the Malaysian government recognizes the positive impact of SEs on the economic, the exact number of SEs remains unclear due to the lack of a mandatory registration process. Recognizing the sector's importance as an agent of social services, the Malaysian government aims to increase the number of registered SEs to 5,000 by 2025 and 10,000 by 2030 (Bernama, 2022). The Ministry of Entrepreneur Development and Cooperatives (MEDAC) currently leads SE development, building on efforts by the Malaysian Global Innovation and Creativity Centre (MaGIC) and Yayasan Inovasi Malaysia (YIM), which provided essential resources, mentorship, and funding (Yeow & Boon, 2022).

Like other organisations, enhancing organisational performance is a major challenge for social enterprises. Many organisation closures and decreases in production and sales are challenges faced by organisations due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which affects the performance and growth of organisations, including SE. Social enterprises often struggle to secure consistent funding, relying on a mix of grants, donations, and earned income (Abramson & Billings, 2019). This occurred because SE is a hybrid organisation whose main purpose is not the maximisation of profit but the attainment of certain economic and social goals to bring innovative solutions to the problems of social exclusion and unemployment. For instance, initiatives taken by the governments of Singapore and Thailand to improve individuals' and communities' economic and social well-being by developing inclusive business (IB) encompassed financial support and corporate social responsibilities to support organisations to increase financial viability and social impact (ASEAN, 2020). This indicates balancing social missions with profitability is a significant challenge.

While SE aims to create social value, it requires financial resources and strategic planning to sustain its operations. The significant barriers social enterprises face in accessing external financing due to the severe management (Schätzlein et al., 2023) demonstrated that SE encounters conflicts in management, especially in balancing its social mission with financial sustainability. Regardless, all Southeast Asian SE struggles with organisational competence due to a lack of skilled talent and limited access to resources (Gosztonyi, 2022). This is due to competition from organisations that offer higher salaries and more stable careers, causing a shortage of skilled professionals (Brunello & Wruuck, 2021; Mateus et al., 2014) hindering

organizational competence development. Furthermore, limited access to resources, such as financial capital, technology, and infrastructure (Bakhtiari et al., 2020; Nikolov et al., 2020), is a challenge to building organisational competence to operate efficiently and effectively. Thus, effective strategic planning is needed to align their social goals with business objectives, ensuring they can continue to operate and grow while delivering social impact (WEF, 2023). SE should take all the necessary precautions to ensure social value outcomes are fair, inclusive, and sustainable.

SE includes activities and processes aimed at discovering, defining, and utilizing opportunities to improve social capital by creating new enterprises or managing existing organizations innovatively (Zahra et al., 2008). Consistent with prior studies argue that SE managerial competencies, including leadership, strategic thinking, financial management, and communication, are essential for achieving organizational goals and creating social value (Wronka-Pośpiech, 2016). Some cooperatives operate as SE if their primary aim is social or community-oriented, and they reinvest profits to further this mission. However, not all SEs are cooperatives, and not all cooperatives are social enterprises. Generally, cooperatives are also categorized as SE based on criteria. For instance, Bank Kerjasama Rakyat Malaysia (Bank Rakyat) and Koperasi Permodalan Felda Berhad (KPFB) have shown progress in adopting sound business strategies in a dynamic environment (Musa et al., 2020), many cooperatives still struggle due to weak managerial capabilities and low entrepreneurial orientation. These deficiencies hinder their ability to expand and adapt to market changes (Bernama, 2021; SKM, 2021). Therefore, strengthening these capabilities by improving strategic planning, fostering an entrepreneurial mindset, and enhancing knowledge development is important for organisational performance.

First, strategic planning enhances performance effectiveness in public, private, and non-profit organizations, responding efficiently to create competitiveness (Bryson, 1988). Research indicates that strategic planning significantly impacts long-term success (Barron & Chou, 2017; Rau et al., 2020). As Jayawarna & Dissanayake (2019) stated, the relationship between strategic planning and organisational performance has mixed outcomes, arguing that it is important to identify the internal and external factors that affect this relationship. Strategic planning positively affects organisational performance depending on the industry, organizational size, and the specific performance metrics used to maximize performance outcomes (George et al., 2019). For instance, industry characteristics and a country's development stage influence strategic planning success (Kylaheiko et al., 2016). Such effective resource utilization in strategic planning influences management and leads to sustainable performance (Kinyuira, 2020).

Second, organisational competence that aligns individual skills and behaviours with organizational goals, including technical, managerial, and behavioural aspects, is crucial for organizational performance (Shet et al., 2019). Moreover, the significant and positive influence of entrepreneurship on performance indicates that it is an important issue in achieving social welfare, from how to do business, what its competence, and how to manage a business such as the right policies on the management lead to innovation and creativity to solve problems in society (Sariwulan et al., 2020). Emphasizing customer satisfaction may enhance the performance derived from capabilities and resources to sustain a reputation for the difficulty of competitors (Otto et al., 2020). Additionally, market orientation aids in

leveraging market opportunities as part of the organisational culture and behaviour; creating knowledge innovation in products, processes, or managerial practices (Mavondo et al., 2005). Thus, organisational competence underpins achieving a competitive advantage, business reputation, business development, and decision-making processes, thereby improving organisational performance.

Despite the critical role of SE in promoting socially and economically sustainable practices, particularly in Malaysia, however, it remains underexplored. While strategic planning is recognised as essential for organisational management and performance, the impact on the performance of SE has not been adequately studied. Likewise, the role of organisational competence, encompassing organisational learning, market orientation, entrepreneurship and innovation in enhancing organisational performance within SE, is insufficiently understood. Therefore, we would like to examine the role of strategic planning and organisational competence towards organisational performance in SE. Thus, our research questions are as follows:

RQ1. Does strategic planning influence the organisational performance in social enterprise?

RQ2. Does organisational competence influence the organisational performance in social enterprise?

RQ3. How does organisational competence mediate the relationship between strategic planning and organisational performance in social enterprise?

RQ4. How does the importance of specific organisational competencies vary between service and non-service sectors in achieving high performance?

This study contributes to the existing literature on organisational competence and strategic planning toward organisational performance in many ways. Firstly, it explicitly analyses the impact of strategic planning and organisational competence on organisational performance. Secondly, the study examines the mediating role of organisational competence on the relationship between strategic planning and organisational performance in social enterprises. Third, this study examines sector as moderating role on the relationship between organisational competence and organisational performance. In this way, the study will help improve the organisational performance of SE in Malaysia and thereby assist in organisational competence.

The remainder of the paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 describes the literature reviews and hypothesis development to support the foundation of this study. Section 3 outlines the methodology of the study. Section 4 describes the results of the measurement and structural model and the discusses of the empirical evidence for the study. Finally, Section 5 concludes the study with future recommendations and highlights this paper's limitations.

Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Overview of Social Enterprise in Malaysia

Social enterprise (SE) is classified as business activity from conventional organisational forms such as nonprofits, for-profit corporations, small businesses, and cooperatives that focus on social and environmental objectives (British Council, 2018) due to their capability to solve pressing social and environmental problems such as poverty, access to healthcare, and youth unemployment (Rozar et al., 2018) while contributing to the socio-economy of the nation

(British Council, 2018). The introduction of the Social Entrepreneurship Blueprint 2023 (SEMy2030) on 23rd April 2022 by the Ministry of Entrepreneur Development and Cooperatives encouraged the development of social enterprises of an effective regulatory and governance framework to ensure social enterprises operate with responsibility and accountability, apart from building the confidence of the people and the private sector (Bernama, 2022).

Since SE is still new in Malaysia, its concept and definition are unclear. The uncertainty of SE's structure hinders its development. Social enterprises in Malaysia registered with the Registry of Societies Malaysia (ROS) as NGOs are governed by the Societies Act of 1966, and the social enterprises registered with the Cooperative Commission of Malaysia are governed by the Cooperative Societies Act 1993. These organisations can be categorised as social enterprises if they meet the criteria by which they have social goals and business activities and are financially sound.

Distinguishing SE from other organisations posed one of the many obstacles the government faces to boost the ecosystem. Contrary to the sustainability of for-profit businesses, achieving a sustainable performance is a complex task for social enterprises due to the double value creation of social and financial missions and accountability to diverse stakeholders (Samsuddin et al., 2018). This highlights strategies such as community engagement, equitable practices, and long-term impact planning in economic growth and innovation but stresses that sustainable entrepreneurship must balance economic goals with environmental and social responsibilities (Rosário & Figueiredo, 2024).

Despite the importance of capital for entrepreneurs, many entrepreneurs face barriers to access capital is often limited, as traditional investors may not always understand or prioritize the dual goals of social impact and profit (Hwang et al., 2019). According to SEMy2030, to overcome these obstacles, providing more structured training on adapting technology and digitalization, widening access to financing and financial support, and facilitating access to the domestic and international markets. Introducing these strategies, guidelines, and initiatives further indicates the significance of social enterprises in Malaysia in solving social and environmental problems.

Strategic Planning and Organisational Performance

Strategic planning is important for organisations to enhance performance by formulating strategies, developing plans, and structuring operations. Integrating sustainability into strategic planning through frameworks like Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) ensures that organizations consider the broader impacts of their strategies on society and the environment, thereby fostering long-term sustainability (Elkington, 1998). Effective strategic planning is needed to align their social goals with business objectives, ensuring they could continue to operate and grow while delivering social impact. Thus, strategic planning is a process designed by organisations to ensure how organisations adapt the strategic processes to achieve the direction, objectives, and goals.

Rau et al. (2020), found that while strategic planning alone may not directly influence performance, its integration with organisational learning significantly enhances outcomes. However, the impact of strategic planning varies across different contexts, underscoring the

need for a tailored approach. Further, Mathibe et al. (2023), supports that strategic planning alone may not enhance social enterprise performance. Instead, value co-creation mediates the relationship between strategic planning and performance, which is key for greater performance, including social and financial outcomes in social enterprise. Similarly, Nowak (2021), argued that when combined with cognitive diversity, strategic planning is essential for achieving cohesive organisational performance for meeting an organization's mission and strategic objectives. Nevertheless, the study also highlights the necessity of a comprehensive business model that promotes employee social integration, supporting the broader goals of organisational performance.

Given the focus on the role of strategic planning and organisational performance, George et al. (2019), reveals that strategic planning does have a significant positive impact on organisational performance. However, factors such as quality of implementation, organisational size, and environmental stability play important roles in moderating effects that influence the effectiveness of strategic planning with organisational performance. Tarigan & Siagian (2021) further illustrate that while strategic planning is effective, there is a need for additional theoretical frameworks to understand better its influence on operational performance, especially regarding social and environmental aspects. This highlights that while strategic planning significantly enhances performance, achieving measurable results requires sustained effort and commitment.

The importance of strategic planning in social enterprises strengthens the Sabella & Eid (2016) study that social enterprises must develop comprehensive strategies that emphasize the importance of strategic planning, resource management, and innovation to achieve long-term viability while fulfilling their social missions. Consistent with that, Williams et al. (2020) revealed how different configurations such as market analysis, competitive positioning, resource allocation, and leadership strategies in strategic management practices play an effective role to measures both financial and non-financial outcomes in organisations. Thus, the success of organisational performance depends on various strategic practices.

The effectiveness of strategic planning varies across different contexts and industries, with limited understanding of its impact in specific settings, such as social enterprises in Malaysia. To gain a more holistic understanding of strategic planning's impact on organisational performance, this study will examine into how strategic planning enhance organisational performance.

Organisational Competence and Organisational Performance

An organisation's capabilities support various lines of business, commonly called core competencies (Day, 1994). "Core competence" is the collective learning and coordination of diverse organisational skills. It emphasizes that organisational competence is essential for competitive advantage (Prahalad, 1993). Additionally, the competence (UK-based) approach is defined as a combination of skills, knowledge, and abilities that enable organisations to perform effectively (Skrinjaric, 2022). Organisational competence is the broader concept that encompasses the ability of an organisation to effectively deploy its capabilities in a coordinated and strategic manner to achieve its objectives. It includes capabilities and the organisation's ability to integrate, develop, and apply them to enhance performance (Teece et al., 1997). An organisation's competence, driven by its capabilities, directly impacts its

performance. Specifically, according to RBV theory, capabilities include market orientation (Day, 1994), entrepreneurship, innovativeness, and organisational learning (Hult & Ketchen, 2001). Valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable capabilities create competitive advantage and enhance organisational performance (Barney, 1991). In summary, capabilities are fundamental to organisational competence, and together, they play a crucial role in determining how well an organisation performs.

The Dynamic Capabilities View (DCV) theory supports the notion that organisations compete based on their resources and capabilities, which they leverage to adapt, innovate, and sustain a competitive edge (Tseng & Lee, 2014). Innovation strengthens organisational competence by enhancing management capabilities, driving value creation responses to environmental changes, influence organisational behaviour, thus improving organisational performance (Damanpour et al., 2009). In this context, competence serves as a guidance for organisational practices that lead to enhance performance. Gomes et al. (2022) in study between strategic capabilities and innovation found that entrepreneurial orientation, organisational learning capability, and service innovation are interrelated and significantly contribute to improving organisational performance. While, Makhoulfi et al. (2021) concludes that entrepreneurial orientation positively impacts innovation capability, but importance of mediating roles significantly affect to enhance innovation outcomes through strategic capability development. Sheik et al. (2023) argued that innovation significantly addresses complex societal challenges to enhance organisational effectiveness (OE) in social enterprises. Hence, the relationship between innovation and organisational competence enhances organisational performance by balancing technology, ideas, inventions, creativity, and market orientation. Implementing innovation involves pursuing new opportunities, ideas, products, or processes in line with technological and market changes.

Kazemian et al. (2016) examines how market orientation contributes to a microfinance institution's sustainable performance, finding that focusing on understanding and meeting customer needs and preferences, such as client satisfaction, loyalty, and financial sustainability, enhances both financial viability and social impact, leading to long-term success. For instance, the relationship between networking capability and market orientation enhances an organisation's business process agility in responding to market dynamics, subsequently improving organisational performance (Kurniawan et al., 2020). Bhattarai et al. (2019) found that market orientation positively impacts the performance of social enterprises. However, when combined with market disruptiveness capability, the ability to challenge and change market norms or create new markets through innovative approaches, a strong market orientation becomes even more effective in driving superior performance. In this way, market orientation creates value for customers, satisfies customer needs, and, in turn, leads to customer loyalty.

Organisational learning is the process by which organizations develop, enhance, and transfer knowledge within their structure to adapt to changing environments (Argote, 2013). Inthavong et al. (2023) stresses the importance of organisational learning influences sustainable firm performance, focusing on the mediating roles of organisational networking and innovation. The finding showed that organisations should not only focus on internal learning processes but also actively engage with external partners to new ideas and markets and foster a culture of innovation to sustain their competitive advantage. Rau et al. (2020)

study finds that organisational learning mediates the relationship between strategic planning and firm performance. Organisations integrate learning mechanisms into their strategic planning processes to ensure that strategic goals with up-to-date knowledge and that learning activities are aligned with long-term objectives. As supported by Zgrzywa-Ziemak & Walecka-Jankowska (2020), a positive relationship between organisational learning and sustainable performance tends to achieve better sustainability outcomes, as learning enables them to innovate, adapt, and respond effectively to external challenges. Thus, integrating learning into strategic planning is important to optimize organisational processes and achieve sustainable performance.

The Mediating role of Organisational Competence on the Relationship between Strategic Planning and Organisational Performance

The importance of organisational competencies extends to other contexts as well. Organisational competence also plays a mediating role in bridging the gap between strategic planning and organisational performance outcomes. Palacios-Marqués et al. (2019) showed that the role of marketing in the success of social enterprises indicates the importance of distinctive competencies in marketing as a mediator between social entrepreneurship and organizational performance. By developing strong marketing capabilities and aligning them with their social mission, social enterprises could enhance both their financial sustainability and social impact. However, many studies have summarily neglected the role of mediating factors of organisational competence in understanding the relationship.

As mediators, organisational competence involving innovation, knowledge management, organisational learning, and entrepreneurial orientation contribute to improving organisational performance. This mediating effect is critical, underscoring that implementing strategies or technologies is insufficient to achieve organizational goals. Instead, the development and utilization of innovative, dynamic, and competitive capabilities enable organisations to effectively adapt, integrate, and reconfigure their resources to meet evolving environmental, social, and economic demands (Teece et al., 1997). However, organisational competence mediates the relationship between strategic planning and organisational performance in the social enterprise still needs to be explored. Further study into this mediating role is essential to fully understand how organisational competence could enhance the effectiveness of strategic planning in organisational performance.

The Moderating role of Sector on the Relationship between Organisational Competence and Organisational Performance

The term "moderator variable" refers to a factor significantly influencing the relationship between an independent and dependent variable, affecting how one impacts the other (Arnold, 1982; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). As described, moderator variables influence the direction or strength of the relationship between independent and dependent variables. Moderator variables significantly influence the direction and strength of the relationship between independent (organisational competence) and dependent (organisational performance) variables (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

Due to that, different sectors may require different competencies to achieve high performance. For instance, the service sector might place a higher value on customer relationship management and adaptability, such as promoting innovation and customer focus

might amplify the positive impact of competencies related to customer service, adaptability, and communication on organizational performance (Kuhn & Bhatiasevi, 2024), while the non-service sector might emphasize operational efficiency and technical expertise. It involves efficiency and quality, which can strengthen the impact of competencies related to process improvement, technical skills, and operational excellence on performance (Azeem et al., 2021). Instead, Willie (2023) emphasizes the change in strategic planning implementation, which deliberately transforms an organisation's values, beliefs, norms, behaviours, and social practices; even strong competencies in these areas may not lead to improved performance. Similarly, Kim & Jung (2022) highlight the importance of considering employee competency and organisational culture when addressing workplace stress, which may create a healthier and more productive work environment; however, if one does not value these competencies or discourages continuous improvement, it may impact performance. Thus, the moderating effect of the sector could reveal how the importance or impact of various competencies varies depending on the industry's characteristics.

Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis Development

Figure 1 below is the conceptual framework illustrated to represent the model of this study. The study is comprised of strategic planning, organisational competence, sector and organisational performance.

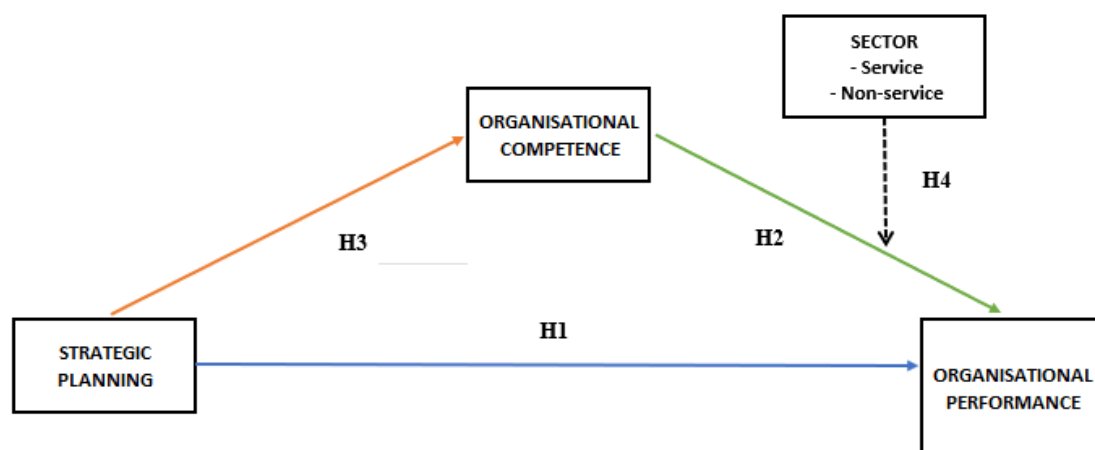


Figure 1. The conceptual framework

Strategic planning positively affects organisational performance depending on the industry, organizational size, and the specific performance metrics used to maximize performance outcomes (George et al., 2019). According to the DCV, organisations that engage in strategic planning are better equipped to develop and deploy resources dynamically, enabling them to respond to environmental changes and competitive pressures effectively (Teece et al., 1997). This shows that coordinating strategic planning with the organisation's resources and external environment leads to improved organisational performance. Consistent with Fahed-Sreih & El-Kassar (2017) suggest that strategic planning improves resource utilization, leading to better organisational performance. Strategic planning is important in guiding performance management, motivating teams, and maintaining a competitive advantage by enhancing

productivity and effective resource allocation, thus enhancing organisational performance. However, the challenges of strategic planning on organisational performance, such as opposition to change, lack of communication, and resource constraints, depend on factors such as organisational culture, leadership, and the external environment influencing the relationship between strategic planning and performance (Jayawarna & Dissanayake, 2019).

Although many studies have examined the effect of strategic planning on organisational performance (Cheng et al., 2014; Fadol et al., 2015; Kylaheiko et al., 2016; Rizan et al., 2019), nonetheless, not all have shown a direct relationship, and fewer have focused specifically on social enterprise. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: There is a relationship between strategic planning and organisational performance.

Organisational competences are essential for enhancing management effectiveness, fostering innovation, and maintaining a competitive advantage to achieve organisational performance objectives. The DCV highlights that organizations must integrate, build, and reconfigure competencies to adapt to rapidly changing environments, ensuring long-term success (Teece et al., 1997). It is important to understand that organisational competence encompasses various factors such as knowledge management, capability, entrepreneurial orientation, organisational learning, and innovation to enhance organisational performance. Tseng & Lee (2014), highlight that implementing knowledge management capability alongside dynamic capability enhances organisational performance and supports competitive advantage. The importance of dynamic capabilities in effective resource allocation functions is to create, extend, and modify the resource base, leading to greater sustainable performance (Gupta et al., 2019). Likewise, Gomes et al. (2022), in the study of strategic capabilities and innovation, found that entrepreneurial orientation, organisational learning capability, and service innovation are interrelated and significantly contribute to improving organisational performance.

While organisational competence has positively impacted organisational performance, it has yet to be widely studied, especially in social enterprises. Therefore, this study hypothesizes that:

H2: There is a relationship between organisational competence and organisational performance

In this study, organisational competence mediates between strategic planning and organisational performance outcomes. The mediator generally facilitates how or why two other variables are related, acting as an interaction effect that predicts an outcome (Fairchild & MacKinnon, 2009). This mediation effect helps determine the presence and strength of variable or contradictory effects. According to Teece et al. (1997), developing and utilizing innovative, dynamic, and competitive capabilities enable organisations to adapt, integrate, and reconfigure their resources to meet evolving environmental, social, and economic demands. Previous study affirms that formulating and implementing a strategy that is supported by organisational capabilities, resources, and competencies to achieve organisational goals like profit, market share, increased sales, productivity, competitiveness, customer satisfaction, quality, and competitiveness (Abuzaid, 2018; Ni et al., 2021; Sariwulan et al., 2020). These competencies enable organisations to implement their strategic planning effectively, allowing them to innovate, respond to market changes, and meet customer

needs. This, in turn, leads to better organisational performance outcomes. This mediation suggests that organisations need to focus not only on formulating strategic planning but also on building and strengthening their competencies to ensure those plans lead to successful outcomes.

Based on this rationale, the study proposes that organisational competence affects organisational performance directly and mediates the relationship between strategic planning and performance. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H3: Organisational competence mediates the relationship between strategic planning and organisational performance

Different sectors will likely demand distinct competencies to achieve high organisational performance (Skrinjaric, 2022). For example, the service sector may prioritize competencies such as customer relationship management and adaptability due to the high level of customer interaction and the need for flexibility in service delivery. In contrast, the non-service sector might focus more on operational efficiency and technical expertise, given the emphasis on production processes and technical innovation (Srećković, 2018). The sector in which an organisation operates can thus play a significant moderating role in the relationship between organisational competence and performance, influencing which competencies are most important for success. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H4: The sector in which a social enterprise operates moderates the relationship between organisational competence and performance, such that the importance of specific competencies varies between the service and non-service sectors

Methodology

Research Design and Instrument

The study uses a quantitative approach, which involves collecting and analysing numerical data. This method is chosen for its cost-effectiveness and time efficiency, particularly when investigating correlations among variables in large samples (Al-Ababneh, 2020). The study employs SEM as an empirical technique to examine the hypotheses. SEM is advantageous because it integrates exploratory factor analysis and structural path analysis, making it suitable for analysing both latent (unobserved) and observed variables, and for testing entire theories (Hair et al., 2011; Hair Jr. et al., 2017). There are two main SEM approaches: Covariance-Based SEM (CB-SEM) and Partial Least Squares SEM (PLS-SEM) (Hair Jr. et al., 2017; Henseler et al., 2016).

CB-SEM is typically used for theory confirmation and requires assumptions like multivariate normality, while PLS-SEM is preferred for prediction, especially with small sample sizes, non-normal data, or complex models (Hair et al., 2012). PLS-SEM is chosen for this study due to its efficiency, flexibility with data, and ability to handle the study's objectives, including evaluating complex models with mediating and moderating effects (Hair Jr et al., 2014).

This study measured using a 5-point Likert scale with specific items related to the development and implementation of strategic planning within social enterprise by (Fahed-Sreih & El-Kassar, 2017; Lämsiluoto et al., 2016; Tasleem et al., 2019). For organisational competence with item focusing on various aspects of organisational capabilities, such as technological competencies, knowledge development, and innovation management (Attia &

Salama, 2018; Camisón-Zornoza et al., 2020; Latifah et al., 2021) while, organisational performance divided into economic and social dimensions, each measured using items assess the social enterprises performance in areas such as sales growth, competitiveness and ethical practices (Abbas et al., 2019; Baumgartner, 2014; Gupta et al., 2019; Tasleem et al., 2019). The value measurement under the "sector" variable typically involves categorizing organisations into different sectors based on their primary economic activity or industry. This variable is often used to differentiate between various industries or fields in which organisations operate. Organisations are classified into the service sector, such as healthcare, education, or finance, while the non-service sector encompasses manufacturing and agriculture. Thus, a binary variable where '1' represents organisations in the service sector and '0' represents non-service sector organisations.

Participation and Data Collection Procedures

The study uses a stratified random sampling method, a type of probability sampling, to ensure the generalizability of the results (Saunders et al., 2009). This method is particularly suitable for ensuring that different subgroups within the population are adequately represented. The sample consists of senior managers and executive management from social enterprises in Malaysia. These participants were chosen because of their significant roles in overseeing and making strategic decisions within their organisations.

The primary data collection instrument is a questionnaire, designed to gather quantitative data. The questionnaire is divided into four parts; Part A: Organization profile (e.g., size, income, type of social enterprise). Part B: Demographic information of respondents (e.g., academic background, experience). Part C: Independent variables, focusing on strategic planning, and organisational competence. Part D: Dependent variables, measuring organisational performance across economic, social, and environmental dimensions.

The questionnaire was distributed through various channels by electronically, by mail, or in person to reach a broad range of participants. The questions are clear and logically structured, with each question's purpose defined to ensure accurate measurement of the variables. The questionnaire was made available in both English and Malay to accommodate respondents' language preferences. Out of 285 questionnaires distributed, 108 were completed and returned, yielding a usable response rate of 37.9 percent (Yu & Cooper, 1983). The sample size drawn from SE registered with Company Commission of Malaysia (CCM) as the company limited by guarantee (CLBG).

A pilot study was conducted to evaluate the factor loadings, which met the threshold of 0.5, ensuring convergent validity (with AVE, of 0.5 and CR, of 0.7). Discriminant validity was also confirmed, with the ratio of HTMT not exceeding 0.85. The preliminary statistical tests on the pilot study variables successfully met these minimum criteria. Data were then analysed using path modelling through the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach, utilizing Smart PLS software (Kwong-Kay Wong, 2013). Specifically, the study employed Smart-PLS 4 (Cheah et al., 2024) to assess the mediating effects of organisational competency on the relationship between strategic planning and organisational performance.

Results and Discussions

Data Analysis

The data analysis in this study was analysed using the Smart PLS version 4.1.0.7. PLS-SEM has the added advantage of estimating the measurement and structural models (Joe F. Hair Jr. et al., 2017).

Participants Demographics

The respondents' demographic details include gender distribution and educational background. The sample showed a higher participation rate among female respondents (66.67%), with most respondents holding a bachelor's degree and some having a master's degree, as illustrated in Table 1. This indicates that the participants were well-educated and possessed sufficient skills and knowledge to answer all the survey questions proficiently.

Table 1

Demographic of Respondents

Profile of respondents	Frequency	(%)
Gender		
Male	36	33.33
Female	72	66.67
Total	<i>N</i> = 108	
Academic qualification		
SPM	14	12.96
Diploma	28	25.93
Bachelor's degree	46	42.59
Master's degree	16	14.81
PHD	1	0.93
Other	3	2.83
Total	<i>N</i> = 108	
Size of social enterprise		
Small	9	8.33
Medium	64	59.26
Large	35	32.41
Total	<i>N</i> = 108	

Assessment of the Measurement

Data were analysed through path modelling using the PLS approach and the Smart PLS software. The analysis begins with assessing the measurement models (Joe F. Hair Jr. et al., 2017). A vital advantage of the PLS approach compared to the covariance-based structural equation modelling is its ability to deal with situations where knowledge about the distribution of the latent variables is restricted, requirements about the closeness between estimates and the data should be met (J.F Hair Jr. et al., 2021). In our research model, all constructs are specified with reflective indicators, as depicted in Figure2.

The study ensured the validity and reliability of the constructs by testing for outer loadings (≥ 0.7), composite reliability ($CR \geq 0.7$), average variance extracted ($AVE \geq 0.5$), and heterotrait–monotrait (HTMT) ratio (≤ 0.85). These tests confirmed that the measurement instruments were reliable and valid for the study. The results demonstrate that all reflectively measured

constructs are both reliable and valid. Table 2 presents measurement assessment for variable and indicators, showing that all factor loadings exceed the threshold value of 0.7, with the exception of EC2 and EN2, which have slightly lower loadings of 0.631 and 0.680, respectively. Nonetheless, these indicators are important to maintain the content validity of the construct (Joseph F. Hair et al., 2012).

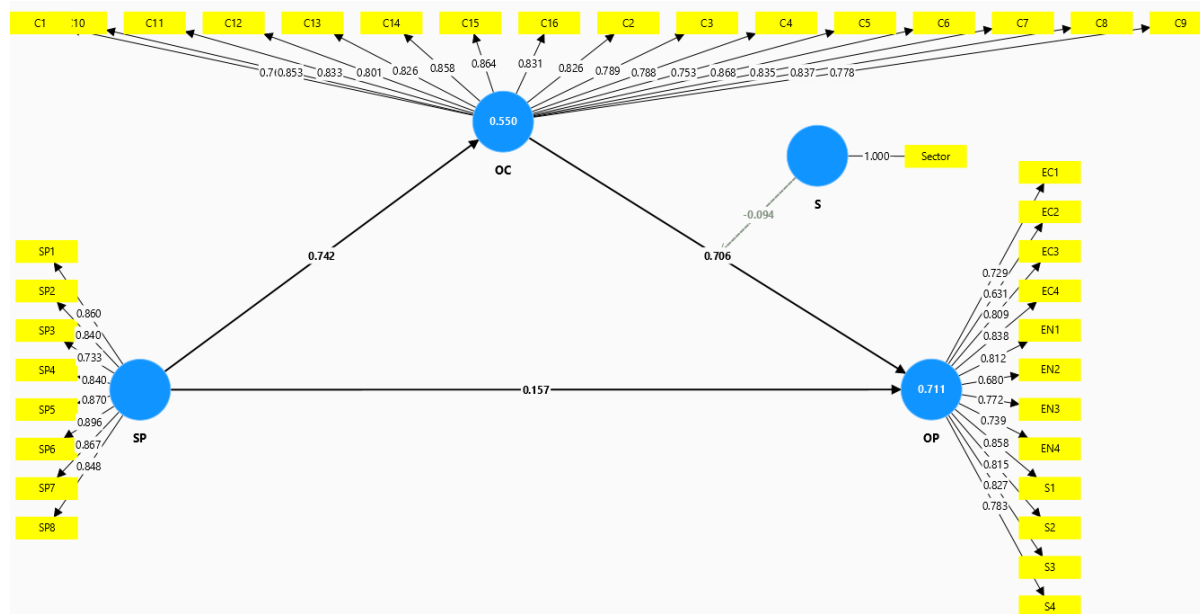


Figure 2. Path model and PLS estimates

Tables 3 and 4 evaluate the measurement validity and reliability. All construct reliability indicators, including Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (ρ_a), and composite reliability (ρ_c), have values above the 0.7 threshold (Sarstedt et al., 2017). According to the Fornell-Larcker criterion, the organisational competence (OC) and organisational performance (OP) constructs have few disputes. However, the difference is too small, each with 0.011 and 0.054, respectively, and can be ignored (Ab Hamid et al., 2017; Rahim & Magner, 1996). However, strategic planning (SP) and sector (S) constructs show good discriminant validity. Similarly, the HTMT value for the relationship between OP and OC is 0.859, which exceeds the threshold value of 0.85 (Franke & Sarstedt, 2019), indicating a potential lack of discriminant validity between these constructs. However, according to Henseler et al. (2015), HTMT with a threshold value between ranging 0.85 to 0.90 is accepted. Henseler et al. (2015) suggest using bootstrapping to formally test whether the HTMT is significantly lower than 1. Overall, discriminant validity can be accepted for this measurement model and supports the discriminant validity between the constructs.

Table 3

Measurement Assessment for Variable and Indicators

Construct	Items	Loadings	Mean	Standard Deviation
Strategic Planning	SP1	0.860	4.362	0.722
	SP2	0.840	4.319	0.722
	SP3	0.733	4.275	0.796
	SP4	0.840	4.051	0.854
	SP5	0.870	4.051	0.854
	SP6	0.896	4.167	0.881
	SP7	0.867	3.964	0.928
	SP8	0.848	3.949	0.895
Organisational Competence	C1	0.768	3.899	0.927
	C2	0.826	4.036	0.802
	C3	0.789	3.870	0.806
	C4	0.788	3.754	0.867
	C5	0.753	3.761	1.094
	C6	0.858	3.978	0.872
	C7	0.835	3.732	0.967
	C8	0.837	3.739	0.943
	C9	0.778	3.971	0.955
	C10	0.853	4.123	0.888
	C11	0.833	4.043	0.931
	C12	0.801	3.949	0.950
	C13	0.826	3.754	0.962
	C14	0.858	4.101	0.942
	C15	0.864	4.116	0.893
	C16	0.831	3.964	0.971
Organisational Performance	EC1	0.729	3.913	0.897
	EC2	0.631	3.572	0.884
	EC3	0.809	3.913	0.838
	EC4	0.838	3.906	0.833
	S1	0.858	4.007	0.830
	S2	0.815	4.101	0.810
	S3	0.827	4.080	0.799
	S4	0.783	4.159	0.735
	EN1	0.812	3.848	0.932
	EN2	0.680	3.652	1.047
	EN3	0.772	3.790	0.951
	EN4	0.739	3.804	1.021
Sector	S	1.000	0.841	0.366

Table 3

Convergent Validity

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE	VIF
Organisational Competence	0.967	0.970	0.672	
Organisational Performance	0.940	0.948	0.604	
Strategic Planning	0.943	0.952	0.715	
OC -> OP				2.232
SP -> OC				1.000
SP -> OP				2.225
S x OC -> OP				1.025

Table 4

Discriminant Validity

Construct	OC	OP	S	SP
Organisational Competence	0.820			
Organisational Performance	0.831	0.777		
Sector	-0.079	-0.077	1.000	
Strategic Planning	0.742	0.686	-0.081	0.845
HTMT < 0.85				
OP <-> OC (0.859)				
SP <-> OC (0.765)				
SP <-> OP (0.706)				
S X OC <-> OP (0.185)				

Structural Model of the Study*Collinearity*

Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) is used to assess the degree of multicollinearity among independent variables in a regression model in line with the structural model assessment procedure outlined in (Joe F. Hair et al., 2019). We are assessing the structural model for collinearity issues by examining the VIF values to determine whether there is multicollinearity among the independent latent constructs that influence the dependent constructs in the model. All the VIF values are below 5, suggesting no serious concern about multicollinearity affecting the regression model. A rule of thumb is that VIFs between 1 and 5 indicate moderate multicollinearity (Henseler et al., 2009). So, collinearity is not at critical levels (Table 3), and the VIF values appear well-specified without causing issues in estimating regression coefficients.

Significant and Relevance of the Path Coefficient

In line with Henseler et al. (2009), the bootstrapping procedure was applied in PLS path modelling (108 cases, 5,000 samples, two-tailed) to evaluate the structural model and determine the statistical significance of path coefficients. By supporting the PLS structural model assessment, different criteria are considered, including R^2 , the goodness-of-fit (GoF) index, and the Stone–Geiser Q^2 test for predictive relevance (Chin, 1998; Joe F. Hair Jr et al., 2014; Sarstedt et al., 2017). Chin (1998) described R^2 values of 0.25 as acceptable. While the

model fit is relatively tiny according to absolute standards (Joseph F. Hair et al., 2022), we consider it suitable for this study because of the model's low complexity. Moreover, the standard root mean squared residual (SRMR) met the required threshold of $SRMR < 0.08$, indicating that the model fit was satisfactory. The goodness-of-fit criterion proposed by Hu & Bentler (1998) indicates that it confirmed the data fit the theory well.

Table 5 shows the parameter estimation results, including path coefficients and significance levels that run through the bootstrapping procedure on SmartPLS. The results indicate that not all hypotheses are supported. The OC has a significant and substantial impact on OP ($\beta = 0.706$, $p < 0.001$). Similar results to the mediated effect of OC on the relationship between SP and OP are also significant and positive ($\beta = 0.523$, $p < 0.001$). Hence, both H2 and H3 are supported. On the other hand, SP does not have a direct significant effect on organisational performance ($\beta = 0.157$, $p > 0.05$). Nevertheless, the results suggest that while strategic planning may not directly impact organisational performance, it plays an important role in enhancing organisational performance indirectly through the mediation effect of organisational competence, leading to improved organisational performance. Further, it illustrates the moderating effect of the S on the relationship between OC and OP ($\beta = -0.094$, $p > 0.05$). Despite β is -0.094 , indicating a small negative effect of this interaction on OP, however, the p-value is 0.123, greater than 0.05, meaning the result is not statistically significant. Therefore, H4 is not supported, indicating that S does not moderate the relationship between OC and OP.

Table 5

Result of Bootstrapping Procedures

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	SD	t-values	p-values	Sig	
H1	SP → OP	0.157	0.103	1.518	0.129	$p > 0.05$	Not Supported
H2	OC → OP	0.706	0.087	8.138	0.000	$p < 0.05$	Supported
H3	SP → OC → OP	0.523	0.089	5.869	0.000	$p < 0.05$	Supported
H4	S x OC → OP	-0.094	0.061	1.543	0.123	$p > 0.05$	Not Supported

Mediating Effects of Organisational Competence

Table 6 depicts the bootstrapping results, demonstrating the organisational competence mediating effect on the relationship between strategic planning and organisational performance. The mediating effects showed significant results in 5,000 repetitions of bootstrapping since 0 was not included between the lower and upper bounds of the bias-corrected confidence interval. In particular, the significance was maintained by using the Bootstrap techniques. It is confirmed as partial mediation ($p < 0.05$); strategic planning → organisational competence → organisational performance showed moderately strong partial mediation, with an organisational competence of 76.91% between strategic planning and organisational performance of exists.

Table 6

Significance Testing of Mediating effects with Bootstrap

Relationship	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect	VAF	Bias CI (L)	Bias CI (H)
SP -> OC -> OP	0.157	0.523	0.680	76.91%	0.377	0.704

Note (s):

Threshold limit of VAF

0 – 20%: No Mediation

20 – 80%: Partial Mediation

Above 80%: Full Mediation

(Baron & Kenny, 1986; Zhao et al., 2010)

Moderating Effects of Sector

To better understand the significant interactions, simple slope analysis was used considering three conditional values of the moderator variable: the mean, one standard deviation below, and one standard deviation above the mean (Hernandez-Carrion et al., 2016). The three lines shown in Figure 3 represent the relationship between OC (x-axis) and OP (y-axis). The middle line represents the relationship for an average level of the sector. The other two lines represent the relationship between OC and OP for higher (i.e., the mean value of S plus one standard deviation unit) and lower (i.e., the mean value of S minus one standard deviation unit) levels of the moderator variable S.

As can be seen, the red line has the steepest slope, followed by the blue line, and then the green line. This suggests that the positive relationship between OC and OP is stronger when the moderator variable S is at a lower level (-1 SD). As S increases, this relationship weakens slightly (as indicated by the decreasing steepness of the slope). The graph illustrates that the effect of organisational competence on organisational performance is moderated by S. Thus, it can be concluded that the impact of OC on OP varies depending on the level of S. When S is lower, OC has a stronger positive impact on OP. In contrast, at higher levels of S, the impact of OC on OP is still positive but slightly weaker. In other words, the relationship between organisational competence and organisational performance changes depending on the value of a moderating variable S. The moderation effect is such that the relationship between OC and OP is strongest when S is low and weakens as S increases.

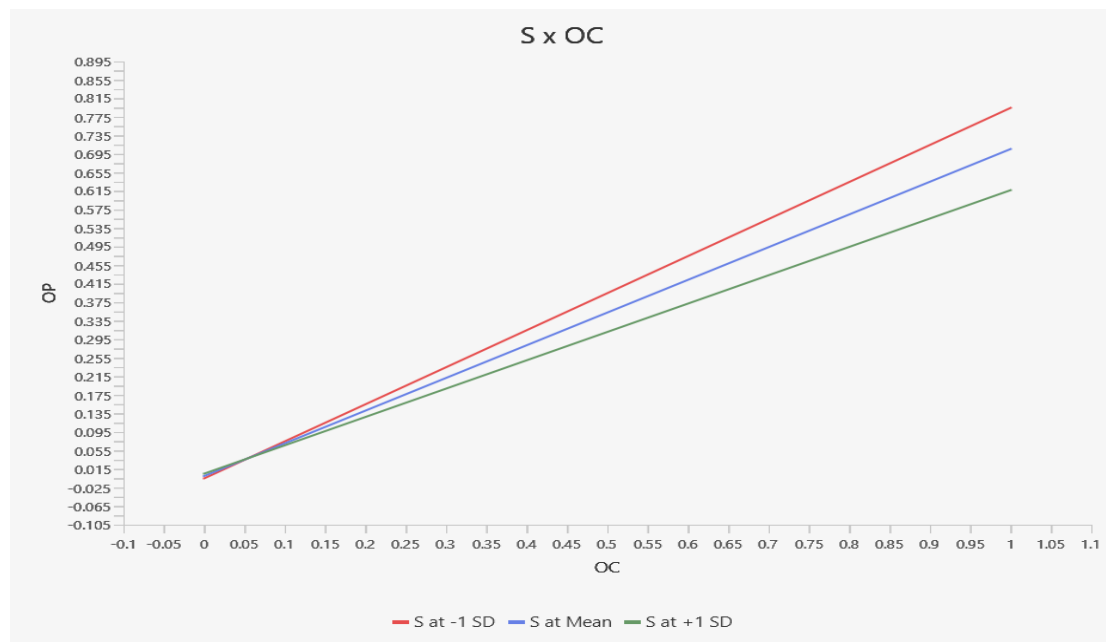


Figure 3. The moderating effect of sector on organisational competence and organisational performance

Conclusion

Summary of the Research

This study extends the exploration of organisational competence by examining and testing the direct and mediating effects of strategic planning on a SE organisational performance. The findings complement existing literature by showing that implementing strategies or technologies is insufficient to achieve organisational performance. Instead, developing and utilizing innovative, dynamic, and competitive capabilities enable organisations to implement strategic planning, leading to successful outcomes effectively. The study also contributes to the organisational competence literature by identifying the importance of strategic planning to achieve organisational performance. This study provides several theoretical and practical implications.

Further, this study proposed that the different sectors may require different competencies to achieve high performance. Specifically, we proposed that the sector acts as a moderator; the impact of strategic planning and organisational competence on performance might differ between service and non-service social enterprises. However, the nonsignificant moderating effect of the sector on the relationship between organisational competence and performance might be attributable to the importance of specific competencies varying between the service and non-service sectors. A study by Kim & Jung (2022) proved that the sector could reveal how the importance or impact of various competencies varies depending on the industry's characteristics.

This research makes a significant theoretical contribution by expanding the understanding of the relationship between strategic planning and organisational competence in the context of social enterprises (SEs). It overcomes a gap in the literature by examining how organisational competence mediates the relationship between strategic planning and organisational performance, showing that while strategic planning provides a structured approach for

setting objectives, it does not always directly correlate with improved organizational performance. However, strategic planning positively influences organisational performance through the mediating effect of organisational competence. The findings corroborate the theoretical suggestion of dynamic capabilities theory (DCV), emphasizing that adaptability and innovation are key for SEs navigating complex, resource-constrained environments.

Contextually, this study contributes to the Malaysian social enterprise structure by addressing its challenges in sustaining its operations, such as improper strategic planning and resource constraints. By highlighting sectoral distinctions in competency needs, this study provides practical insights into the importance of specific competencies that vary between the service and non-service sectors in SEs. For example, the service sector may prioritize competencies such as customer relationship management and adaptability due to the high level of customer interaction and the need for flexibility in service delivery. In contrast, the non-service sector might focus more on operational efficiency and technical expertise, given the emphasis on production processes and technical innovation. Therefore, it is recommended that policymakers give more attention and judgment to strategic planning and organisational competence to increase both sectors' growth and impact.

Theoretical Implications

Based on the arguments of previous studies Rau et al. (2020), strategic planning alone may not directly influence performance. This study found that strategic planning not significantly affect organisational performance. Instead, strategic planning positively influences organisational performance through the mediating effect of organisational competence. First, these results support existing studies arguing that strategic planning, when combined with cognitive diversity, innovation positively achieves organisational performance (Fahed-Sreih & El-Kassar, 2017; Nowak, 2021). This demonstrated that strategic planning is important for organisations to achieve organisational performance by formulating strategies, developing plans, and structuring operations (Epstein & Roy, 2001).

Second, previous studies believed that organisational competencies enables organisations to respond to complex challenges and opportunities effectively, ensuring long-term success and resilience (Klein et al., 2011). Several studies have demonstrated the above argument through empirical data (Gupta et al., 2019; Violinda & Sunjian, 2018). Still, some studies say that leveraging the organisational competence may not always lead to good sustainable performance, which may only sometimes negatively affect environmental performance (Eikelenboom & Jong, 2019). Despite that, this study complements existing literature by examining the organisational competence towards organisational performance, and these findings are consistent with previous studies (Gomes et al., 2022; Makhoulfi et al., 2021; Sheik et al., 2023) that organisational competence positively impacts organisational performance. This stated that social enterprises should sustain organisational competence practices to enhance organisational performance.

Third, this study found that organisational competence significantly and positively mediates the effect of a social enterprise's organisational performance and promotes the effect of strategic planning. Given the difficulty of sustainable growth with a SE competence due to rapid business and environmental changes, it is important to understand how strategic planning could impact organisational competence and organisational performance. The

previous study (Abuzaid, 2018; Ni et al., 2021; Sariwulan et al., 2020) examined the mediating role of organisational competence that improve resource efficiency and ensure organisational goals achieved such as profit, market share, increased sales, productivity, competitiveness, customer satisfaction, quality, and competitiveness, emphasizing that the capability involved in an organisation's activities results in sustained competitiveness (Winter, 2003). Along with this, Acosta-Prado & Tafur-Mendoza (2022) assert that technological changes alone do not drive sustainable performance; innovation capabilities generate new business opportunities and enhance sustainability. This study collected and analysed data from 108 social enterprise in Malaysia and confirmed the positive mediating effect of organisational competence on strategic planning and organisational performance. Based on these results, this study complements existing literature by providing new knowledge on the mediating role of organisational competence in influencing strategic planning and organisational performance.

Although the sector does not moderate the relationship between organizational competence and organizational performance in social enterprise, this study considered empirical evidence to prove that sectoral distinctions shape how organizational competencies translate into performance outcomes, with each sector emphasizing different capabilities for competitive advantage (Kuhn & Bhatiasevi, 2024). Similarly, as Azeem et al. (2021) highlighted, businesses that emphasize technical expertise and processes tend to see stronger performance outcomes, especially in sectors where operational efficiency to enhance competitive advantage. This underscores the importance of aligning sector-specific competencies with strategic performance objectives. However, Willie (2023) emphasizes that improved performance is not always guaranteed, even with strong competencies in these areas.

Practical Implications

Our findings contribute to managerial practice in enhancing organisational performance by leveraging strategic planning and organisational competence. These results show that managers should pay more attention to the organisational competence to strengthen their strategic planning for better organisational performance. First, managers of SE should recognize that using organisational competence may contribute to strategic planning. Most importantly, SE should understand the importance of effectively implementing strategic planning to provide quality products and services and create new ideas, technology, processes, and business models, leading to better performance. Therefore, managers may realize synergy by adopting an organisational competence to interact between strategic planning and organisational performance. The results of this study could assist managers in acquiring and using some of the organisational competence available in managing SE.

Second, managers should be aware the importance of acquiring new technology and knowledge externally to renew and broaden their organisational competence to support SE and improve organisational performance. SE may enhance their strategic efforts and achieve organisational performance improvements by developing and leveraging their organisational competence. By focusing on organisational competencies such as innovative, dynamic, and collaborative capabilities, SE be able to respond to market changes, create value, and sustain long-term growth. With this, the role between strategic planning and organisational competence is important for driving continuous improvement and enhance organisational outcomes. We have confirmed that organisational competence mediates between strategic planning and organisational performance. The findings particularly benefit policymakers and

practitioners in formulating socio-economic policies to improve SE organizations' strategic planning and efficiency and lead to organisational performance. Third, SE should adapt its strategic focus to the specific demands of its sector. Therefore, aligning sector-specific competencies with strategic objectives is important for sustainable competitive advantage, leading to improving organisational performance.

Limitation

Despite its multifaceted contribution, our study has the following limitations: Firstly, since the registered SEs in Malaysia are minimal, there is not enough evidence to describe the importance of strategic planning and organisational competence toward enhancing the SEs' performance. Lastly, as this study uses a questionnaire as the research instrument, the results are based on the data collected, which may affect the answer's accuracy. Therefore, the answers provided by the respondents might not reflect the real practices of the SEs.

Future Research

On the other hand, more research related to this topic with different variables could be carried out for future research. In addition, there are not many studies which examine the strategic planning and organisational competence of SEs in Malaysia. Thus, this provides some opportunities for future research.

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