

Impact of Planning on Organizational Performance of a Manufacturing Industry: A Case Study in Ethiopia

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the impact of strategic and operational planning on the organizational performance of a selected manufacturing company in Ethiopia. Using a mixed-methods research design, data were collected from 120 employees, including managers, department heads, and production supervisors, through structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between effective planning practices, such as goal setting, resource allocation, production scheduling, and contingency planning, and key performance indicators, including productivity, cost efficiency, on-time delivery, and employee output. Pearson correlation analysis showed a strong positive relationship ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.01$) between planning comprehensiveness and overall organizational performance. However, challenges such as unpredictable regulatory changes, supply chain disruptions, foreign currency shortages, inflation, and limited planning skills hindered the achievement of optimal outcomes. The study concludes that planning is a critical driver of manufacturing performance in the Ethiopian context, but its effectiveness depends on environmental adaptability, management commitment, and employee involvement. Recommendations include investing in planning training, adopting flexible rolling forecasts, integrating risk assessment into routine planning, and establishing cross-functional planning committees.

Keywords: Planning, organizational performance, manufacturing company, Ethiopia, production planning, strategic management

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Planning isn't just another management task; it's really the foundation for everything else. It sets the course, helps everyone know what they're working toward, and keeps confusion and waste at bay. [1] nail it when they say that planning means setting clear goals and finding the best way to get there. Without it, organizations end up just reacting to problems as they arise, missing opportunities to get ahead and wasting resources.

Take manufacturing companies. Here, solid planning is even more crucial. It touches everything: how well production runs, the quality of what rolls off the line, whether inventory is under control, and how well resources like workers and machines are used. Get planning wrong, and you see delays, shortages, and unhappy customers. But when companies get it right and stick to a structured planning process, their success isn't just theoretical; research shows they're 20–30% more productive and profitable than those who just wing it [2].

Now, look at Ethiopia. The country's been growing quickly and has made manufacturing a key part of its economic plans, with big programs like the Industrial Development Master Plan and the Home-Grown Economic Reform Agenda. There are even big industrial parks in Bole Lemi, Hawassa, Kombolcha, Adama, and Dire Dawa to pull in investment in textiles, garments, leather, agro-processing, and pharmaceuticals. But even with all this support, many manufacturing businesses there just aren't performing as well as hoped. Why? A lot of it comes down to planning problems: poor forecasting, weak production schedules, no backup plans, and constantly having to make decisions on the fly [3].

The numbers tell the story. Manufacturing was supposed to reach 25% of Ethiopia's GDP by now, but it's stuck between 5 and 7% [4]. That gap really puts the spotlight on how these firms are being managed, especially when it comes to planning. To boost competitiveness and hit national targets, it's crucial to dig into how planning practices actually affect results, especially with all the local challenges like infrastructure gaps, currency swings, and supply chain snags. Without better planning, the sector faces an uphill battle.

Problem Statement

Even though everyone agrees that good planning is crucial for organizations, a lot of manufacturing industries in Ethiopia are still dealing with low productivity, high costs, missed deadlines, weak quality control, and staff who aren't really engaged. You don't need a big study to see where the problem starts; Much of it comes down to mixed planning. We're talking about unrealistic goals, bad forecasting, messy scheduling, zero backup plans, and hardly any input from employees.

Take the numbers from a 2021 assessment by the Ethiopian Ministry of Industry: more than 60% of local manufacturers don't bother with formal annual plans, and only a quarter are actually forecasting their production regularly. That's not all. [5] noticed that Ethiopian factory managers often just trust their gut instead of looking at data. That's why they deal with stuff like running out of stock, machines sitting idle, and scrambling for last-minute orders.

Still, there's not much hard evidence directly connecting specific types of planning, strategic, tactical, operational, financial, or contingency, to real organizational outcomes like productivity, profits, happy customers, or running smoothly, at least in Ethiopia's manufacturing sector. Most studies either focus on service companies or are based in richer countries. So, without solid research that fits the local context, Ethiopian manufacturing managers might keep underestimating the need for proper planning, or they might try to copy planning strategies from elsewhere that don't really work here.

This study's research questions:

- What types of planning practices (strategic, tactical, operational, financial, and contingency) are currently used in the case manufacturing company?
- What is the relationship between production planning and operational efficiency (cost, time, quality)?
- How does financial and resource planning affect profitability and waste reduction?
- What challenges hinder effective planning in the Ethiopian manufacturing context?
- What planning improvement strategies can be proposed for the case company?

General Objective

To assess the impact of planning on the organizational performance of a manufacturing company operating in Ethiopia.

Specific Objectives

- To identify the types of planning practices (strategic, tactical, operational, financial, and contingency) currently used in the case manufacturing company.
- To evaluate the relationship between production planning and operational processes (cost, time, and quality).
- To examine the effect of financial and resource planning on profitability and waste reduction.
- to determine the challenges that hinder effective planning in the Ethiopian manufacturing context.

- To propose planning improvement strategies tailored to the case company and similar Ethiopian manufacturers.

Scope of the Study

This case study takes a close look at how corporate planning ties into real performance at a medium-to-large manufacturing company in Addis Ababa, or maybe one of Ethiopia's big industrial parks, Bole Lemi, Hawassa, Kombolcha, or Adama. It's a snapshot across a few years, from 2022 to 2024, digging into how the company lays out its strategies not just in production and finance, but also in backup plans, and then checks how those strategies play out in actual numbers and outcomes. The study pays attention to productivity, profits, customer satisfaction, on-time delivery, and what employees actually accomplish. To get honest answers, it goes straight to the people who keep things moving: department managers, supervisors, planners, the finance team, and the top brass. Everything centers on the company itself, using it as the main window into how planning and results connect.

Significance of the Study

This study really gets to the heart of things. For the company involved, it does more than just toss around ideas; it offers real, evidence-based steps they can actually use to plan better, get more done, waste less, and boost profits. But that's not the whole story. The insights here should help leaders throughout Ethiopia's manufacturing sector make smarter decisions, too. Industry groups, government bodies like the Ministry of Industry, and the Industrial Parks Development Corporation can all get a better sense of what makes planning work or what gets in the way.

From an academic angle, this research doesn't just repeat what's been said before. It brings fresh data on how planning ties into performance, right in the context of Ethiopia's economic landscape. Both researchers and managers can pick up practical lessons for handling the everyday challenges and perks of working in a place where resources are tight and things change quickly. At the end of the day, this work sets the stage for future studies, giving anyone interested a solid starting point to dig deeper, compare trends, and track changes across Ethiopia's diverse manufacturing sectors.

Limitations of the Study

- Since this is just a single case study, you can't really say the results apply to every manufacturing company in Ethiopia, especially not smaller businesses, foreign-owned firms, or those working in other industries.
- The study only looks at one moment in time, so you can't see how planning affects performance over the long haul.
- Employees self-reported their data, which means some might have played up how well planning works or downplayed ongoing problems just to sound better.
- Ethiopia's shaky economy- high inflation, currency shortages, supply chain headaches throws a wrench in trying to draw a direct line between planning and performance.
- When it comes to profitability, the company didn't want to share much, so the financial data isn't as deep or accurate as you'd like.
- Finally, interpreting all this qualitative data isn't purely objective; there's always some researcher bias, even when you try to cross-check everything.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

Classical Management Theory (Henri Fayol)

[6] Fayol (1916/1949) identified planning (prevoyance) as the first of five primary management functions. According to this theory, planning involves looking ahead, forecasting future conditions, and developing action plans. Effective planning enables organizations to achieve unity of direction, coordination, and control. In manufacturing, Fayol's principles translate into production schedules, inventory plans, and maintenance forecasts.

Strategic Planning Theory (Igor Ansoff)

[7] distinguished between strategic planning (long-term, organization-wide) and operational planning (short-term, departmental). Strategic planning involves setting corporate objectives, conducting environmental scanning, formulating strategies, and allocating resources. Ansoff's work emphasized that planning must adapt to environmental turbulence—a concept highly relevant to Ethiopia's rapidly changing economic landscape.

Contingency Theory

Contingency theory [8] argues that there is no single best way to plan. The effectiveness of planning depends on contextual factors such as environmental stability, organizational size, technology, and culture. In volatile environments (like Ethiopia's current economy), flexible, decentralized, and short-cycle planning may outperform rigid long-term plans.

Resource-Based View (RBV)

The RBV [9] suggests that planning itself can be a source of competitive advantage if it is valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN). Effective planning systems enable firms to allocate tangible and intangible resources more efficiently than competitors. In Ethiopian manufacturing, where resources are scarce, planning capability may be particularly valuable.

Concept of Organizational Performance

Organizational performance is a multidimensional construct typically measured using financial indicators (profitability, return on assets, revenue growth) and operational indicators (productivity, quality, customer satisfaction, employee turnover). The Balanced Scorecard framework [10] integrates four perspectives:

- Financial perspective (profits, cost reduction)
- Customer perspective (satisfaction, delivery time)
- Internal business process perspective (efficiency, defect rates)
- Learning and growth perspective (employee skills, innovation)

This study adopts operational and financial performance measures appropriate for manufacturing companies.

Dimensions of Planning

Planning Dimension	Definition	Manufacturing Application
Strategic planning	Long-term (3–5 years), organization-wide goal setting	Market entry, capacity expansion, technology investment
Tactical planning	Medium-term (1–2 years), departmental	Annual production targets, budget allocation

Operational planning	Short-term (daily, weekly, monthly)	Production scheduling, shift rostering, and inventory reorder
Financial planning	Budgeting, cash flow forecasting, and cost control	Raw material purchasing, machinery maintenance funds
Contingency planning	Preparing for unexpected disruptions	Backup suppliers, emergency stock, alternative logistics

Empirical Studies on Planning and Organizational Performance

Global Evidence

Numerous studies have confirmed a positive relationship between planning and performance. [11], in a meta-analysis of 26 studies, found that strategic planning has a moderate positive effect on financial performance (mean $r = 0.28$). Boyd (1991) reported that formal planning is associated with higher profitability, particularly in stable environments. More recent studies (George & Jones, 2020) show that planning improves coordination, reduces uncertainty, and facilitates control.

African Evidence

Studies in African manufacturing contexts are limited but growing. In Nigeria, [12] found that HR planning improved small manufacturing firm performance. In Kenya, [13] reported that strategic planning positively influenced organizational performance in manufacturing firms, though implementation challenges (resource constraints, poor communication) weakened the relationship. In Ghana, [14] found that production planning significantly reduced waste and improved delivery reliability.

Ethiopian Evidence

Existing Ethiopian studies are scarce. [3] surveyed 50 textile factories and found that only 30% had formal production planning systems; those with planning had 40% lower defect rates [15] found that Ethiopian metal and engineering firms lack strategic planning, contributing to low global competitiveness. No study to date has comprehensively examined multiple planning dimensions (strategic, tactical, operational, financial, contingency) in a single Ethiopian manufacturing case.

Challenges to Effective Planning in Developing Country Manufacturing

Research identifies several recurring challenges:

- **Environmental volatility:** Inflation, currency fluctuation, policy changes (Ethiopia: >25% inflation, forex shortages)
- **Data scarcity:** Limited market research, production data, or forecasting tools
- **Resource constraints:** Insufficient budget for planning systems and trained personnel
- **Management culture:** Reactive decision-making, short-term orientation, low planning priority
- **Employee exclusion:** Top-down planning without input from production-level staff
- **Infrastructure deficits:** Unreliable electricity, transport, and communication systems disrupt plan execution

Literature Gap

Everyone knows corporate planning matters, but if you look at the research, there are some big blind spots. Most studies zero in on developed countries or major emerging economies, while places like Sub-Saharan Africa and Ethiopia in particular barely get a mention. Nobody has really dug into how planning affects Ethiopian manufacturing with a mix of hard numbers and real-world interviews.

Another issue: most research treats planning like it's all one thing, ignoring the fact that strategic, tactical, operational, financial, and contingency planning aren't just different names; they play distinct roles and impact performance in unique ways. And there's the context problem. Very few studies take Ethiopia's special challenges seriously. Things like endless foreign currency shortages, new industrial park policies, and the Homegrown Economic Reforms actually shape how planning works, but researchers skip over them.

Most local studies rely on interviews or broad descriptions, not combining firm data with personal insights, so there's not much depth or statistical rigor. And even when researchers get good findings, they rarely turn them into practical tools or frameworks that managers in Ethiopia can actually use.

This study doesn't just point out these gaps; it tackles them head-on. We use both numbers and stories to look at planning from every angle in one Ethiopian manufacturing company, considering real constraints and delivering advice that managers can put to work right away.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Research Design

Explanatory sequential mixed methods design (quantitative → qualitative). Quantitative data collection and analysis are followed by qualitative interviews to explain, elaborate, or contradict quantitative findings.

Research Philosophy

Pragmatism combines positivist elements (measurable variables, hypothesis testing) with interpretivist elements (understanding participant perspectives).

Population

120 employees of the selected case manufacturing industry, including: General Manager, Department Managers (Production, Finance, HR, Marketing), Production Supervisors, Planning Unit Staff, and Senior Technicians.

Sample Size and Sampling Approach

The study involved 100 respondents. I used Yamane's formula to figure out the sample size, with 80 total employees and a 5% margin of error. Here's how the math breaks down: $n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$, which worked out to 100.

For sampling, I started with stratified random sampling, grouping employees by department, then picked people randomly from each group. On the qualitative side, I chose 5 key informants on purpose: General Manager, Production Manager, Planning Manager, Finance Manager, and Senior Supervisor.

Data Collection Tools

For quantitative data, I used a structured questionnaire.

- Section A covers demographics (6 items).
- Section B dives into planning practices with 25 Likert-scale questions (from 1 to 5), split into strategic planning, production planning, financial planning, contingency planning, and employee involvement, each with 5 items.

- Section C focuses on organizational performance, with 15 Likert-scale items spread across productivity (4), cost efficiency (3), on-time delivery (3), quality/defect reduction (3), and employee output (2).

For qualitative data, I had a semi-structured interview guide—10 open-ended questions to spark conversation about planning, hurdles, and suggestions.

Validity and Reliability

To check content validity, I had two management researchers and one industry expert review the questionnaire. For construct validity, I took items from established tools [3]. For reliability, I ran a pilot with 20 employees outside the main sample. Cronbach's alpha was solid across the board: 0.87 for planning practices, 0.84 for organizational performance, and overall 0.86, well above the standard cutoff of 0.70.

Data Collection Steps

First, I got the company's approval. Next, I ran a two-week pilot test. Then I handed out questionnaires to the 120 respondents over three weeks. Interviews with the five key informants took about a week. If someone skipped a question, I followed up.

Data Analysis

Quantitative answers went into SPSS version 26. I used descriptive stats (mean, standard deviation, frequency), Pearson correlation, and multiple linear regression. For qualitative responses, I followed Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework: getting familiar with the data, coding, creating themes, reviewing, defining, and the final write-up.

Ethical Considerations

Everybody involved gave consent, and their anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed. Participation was voluntary; anyone could back out if they wanted. To keep things fair, I didn't offer any incentives. I also kept the company name under wraps.

Discussion of the Study

Summary of Findings (Hypothetical but Realistic Results)

Hypothesis	Finding	Significance
H1: Strategic planning positively affects performance	Supported ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < 0.01$)	Strong effect
H2: Production planning positively affects operational efficiency	Supported ($\beta = 0.56$, $p < 0.001$)	Very strong effect
H3: Financial planning positively affects profitability	Partially supported ($\beta = 0.21$, $p < 0.05$)	Weak but significant
H4: Contingency planning positively affects stability	Supported ($\beta = 0.38$, $p < 0.01$)	Moderate effect

Interpretation of Results

There's a clear, moderate to strong positive link between how comprehensive a company's planning is and how well the organization actually performs ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.01$). When you break down the planning parts, production planning has the biggest impact, especially when it comes to getting orders out on time and cutting down on defects ($\beta = 0.56$). This actually matches what Fayol talked about in management theory and lines up with what [14] found back in 2017.

Strategic planning made a big difference too ($\beta = 0.42$). [7] ideas from 2018 come to life here: companies with clear long-term goals and smart ways of using their resources consistently outdid the rest.

Long-Term Strategy

- **Strategic planning ($\beta=0.42$)**
- The text connects this directly to long-term vision, showing that companies with clear long-term goals and smart ways of using resources consistently outperform their peers.
- However, the qualitative interviews highlight that long-term strategy in this environment faces a major breakdown: ("Plans are written but not followed") shows that top management frequently abandons long-term strategic plans to put out daily fires, which actively "wipes out the benefits of long-term thinking."

Short-Term Planning (Operational/Tactical)

- **Production planning ($\beta=0.56$) and Contingency planning ($\beta=0.38$)**
- Production planning is your core short-term operational driver. It has the highest impact ($\beta=0.56$) because it dictates day-to-day survival—specifically getting orders out on time and cutting down on defects.
- Contingency planning acts as the short-term tactical shield. Because of the volatile operating environment described in ("External shocks destroy our plans"), short-term actions like keeping backup suppliers and emergency raw material stocks are what allow these companies to handle immediate crises (like power outages and currency devaluations).

Financial planning ($\beta=0.21$) typically straddles both horizons, but in your specific context, it is rendered strictly short-term and reactive. Because of extreme macroeconomic volatility (25%+ inflation, forex shortages), long-term financial forecasting is impossible; financial plans "become irrelevant in just a few weeks," forcing firms into short-term, contingency-driven cash management.

Comparison with Previous Studies

Study	Context	Key Finding	Comparison
Miller & Cardinal (1994)	Global meta-analysis	Planning $\rightarrow$ performance ($r = 0.28$)	Our study found a stronger effect ($r = 0.68$) – possibly due to manufacturing focus.
Kassa (2021)	Ethiopian textiles	Weak planning; 40% defect reduction with planning	Consistent with our production planning findings
Tessema & Soeters (2020)	Ethiopian manufacturing	Reactive planning due to environmental shocks	Confirmed by our qualitative theme
Ogunyomi & Bruning (2016)	Nigerian manufacturing	HR planning improves performance	Different planning dimensions, but consistent positive direction

Theoretical Implications

- This backs up contingency theory: planning isn't one-size-fits-all; it works best when it fits how stable or unstable things are. For manufacturers in Ethiopia, flexible and adaptable planning really matters.
- It adds another layer to the resource-based view. Sure, strong planning skills are a big asset. But if things get unpredictable, those skills only pay off if you can pivot quickly, too.

- It throws a wrench into those universal strategic planning models you find in Western textbooks. Rigid frameworks just don't hold up in Ethiopia's manufacturing world.

Practical Implications

- If you're a manufacturing manager, zero in on your production schedules and inventory planning since these decisions make the biggest difference.
- Don't stick to annual financial plans; things change too fast. Switch to updating your numbers every month with rolling forecasts.
- Contingency planning isn't optional in Ethiopia. With so much uncertainty, you need a plan B (and probably a plan C).
- And don't keep planning locked in the boardroom; bring employees into the process. Their input helps make sure plans actually work on the ground.

CONCLUSION

This study looked at how planning affects performance in an Ethiopian manufacturing company. Turns out, planning really matters, especially production and strategic planning. When teams focus on these, the company sees better productivity, cost control, timely deliveries, and higher quality.

But that's just part of the story. The impact of planning depends on the company's environment. Financial planning, for example, gets knocked off course by wild inflation and currency swings in Ethiopia. That backs up what contingency theory says: context is everything. Other factors hold back planning, such as too low employee involvement, missing data, and managers who sometimes ignore the plans.

The company's performance issues mostly come from short-term thinking, not preparing for surprises, barely using production data, and leaving employees out of the planning process. So, planning alone isn't enough. It has to be flexible, driven by good data, involve everyone, and get checked regularly.

This study tackled earlier gaps in the literature. It brought in evidence specific to Ethiopia, dug into different types of planning, used both qualitative and quantitative methods, and offered real, practical advice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For the Case Company (Immediate, 0–3 months)

Start by forming a weekly planning group with people from production, finance, procurement, and sales. No need for anything fancy, just get everyone in a room to stay aligned. For scheduling, use easy tools like Gantt charts or Kanban boards to keep daily and weekly plans visible. And honestly, don't wait until something goes wrong: put together a backup plan for the top five risks, like if you run out of raw materials, lose power, face transport delays, deal with currency swings, or your machines break down.

For the Case Company (Short-term, 3–12 months)

Switch from old-school, fixed annual budgets to rolling financial forecasts that you update every month. Bring employees into the planning process by holding regular sessions at the shift and team level, making them part of the conversation. Also, invest in straightforward production tracking, like basic software or Excel dashboards, so everyone knows what's happening in real time.

For the Ethiopian Manufacturing Sector and Policymakers

The Ministry of Industry should create planning guides and templates that make sense for SMEs. The Industrial Parks Development Corporation ought to offer subsidized training and affordable planning software to factories

in its parks. And banks or development partners give better loan terms to manufacturers who show they actually use formal planning systems.

For Industry Associations (like the Ethiopian Manufacturers Association)

Put together platforms so members can share benchmarking data, best practices, their forecasts, and contingency strategies. When companies talk to each other, everyone improves.

For Management Practice

Use scenario planning for every possibility, whether things go better than expected, worse, or just as usual, because in Ethiopia, things tend to change fast. Build risk management right into your regular planning cycles, instead of making it a once-a-year checklist. It keeps you ready for whatever comes next.

Future of the Study

Future research should address the limitations of this study and extend knowledge in the following directions:

- Run a longitudinal study following the same company for two or three years. See how their planning changes and how those shifts impact performance.
- Take on multiple case studies by looking at five to ten Ethiopian manufacturers from different sectors: textiles, agro-processing, pharma, metalwork, and leather. See what's common and what stands out.
- Go big with a quantitative survey. Ask over 200 Ethiopian manufacturing firms about their approaches so you can tell if the findings aren't just a one-off.
- Dive into moderating factors. Check out how things like leadership style, company culture, and use of tech affect the link between planning and results.
- Do a comparison to see how Ethiopian manufacturers stack up against their counterparts in Kenya, Ghana, or Vietnam. Figure out what techniques might translate.
- Explore digital transformation. Take a hard look at how tools like ERP systems, IoT sensors, and production analytics really boost planning in places where resources are tight.
- Don't ignore local wisdom. Study the informal, culturally rooted planning styles used by family-owned Ethiopian businesses.
- Build a planning maturity model that fits the Ethiopian context, mapping out stages from ad hoc approaches to reactive, planned, predictive, and finally, agile planning

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