Determinants of Successful Strategy Implementation: A Survey of Selected Public Schools in South Africa

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ABSTRACT: *The paperanalyses the determinants of successful strategy implementationwithinPublic Schools inSouth Africa. Using simple random sampling technique, a total of one hundred and sixty-five(165) respondents were chosento participate in the survey. A questionnaire structured within a Likert scale format was used to collect data on compensation management, managerial behaviour, institutional policies and resource allocation asfactors influencingsuccessful strategy implementation.The data was collected and analysed using SPSS statistical package. The Cronbach's alpha of 0.759 and the Keiser-Meyer-Olkin of 0.810 obtained indicated reliability and sampling adequacy of the data used respectively. Based on the Cramer's V co-efficients obtained from the chi-square test; compensation management, managerial behaviour, institutional policies and resource allocationall provedstatistically significant associationwith successful strategy implementation.*

KEYWORDS: *Public schools, compensation management, managerial behaviour, institutional policies,resource allocation, implementation.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The implementation oforganisational strategy is a recurringtheme in both strategic management and organizational science. Continuous academic research and empirical evidenceshow that successful strategy implementation has a significant impact on organizational performance (Hrebiniak and Joyce, 1984) and it is vital forattainment of operational efficiency and consequently,realization of organizational effectiveness. In the same vein, Sproull and Hofmeister(1986)also view effective strategy implementation as critical to the smooth functioning of an organization whilst (Schilit, 1987 and Noble, 1999) confirm itsindispensability as an essentialingredient in the method for success of both public and private organizations. The successful implementation of strong and robust strategies will give institutions such as public schoolsnumerous advantages. These include high student pass rates, enhancement of teacher competence and reduction in student dropouts without overemphasizing well educated citizens which act as key custodians of innovation and inventions (Giles, 1991 and Noble, 1999).

Pursuant to that, strategy implementation remains essentially relevantinunpredictable operational environments within which educational institutions co-exist.This is evidenced by the subsequent fact that the environment in whichpublic institutions operate is increasingly becoming complex,(D'Aveni, 1999). Furthermore, enormous persistent developmentsin integration of global markets, swift technological transformation, removal of institutional regulations and the intensifying global competition have inevitably altered the institutional operational landscape during the 1990s and beyond (Volberda, 1996). In vogue, these unavoidable environmental developments have ushered in strong pressures not only for regular strategyadjustments(Thomas, 2002);but most importantly,understanding of factors that hinder realization of successful strategy implementation. In unstable environments, it has been greatly observed that the capacity to executeinnovative strategies hastily and successfullymay signify the difference between success and failureamongpublic institutions, (Hauc and Kovac, 2000).Nonetheless, well-inventedpublic school strategies only generatebetter performance forsuchschools when they are successfully implemented (Bonoma, 1984).On contrary,Schilit (1987)argues that well-formulated strategies are useless if not implemented successfully.By virtue of that discourse, it becomes apparent thatorganisational strategic success not only calls for asuitable strategy but successful strategy implementation (Hussey, 1996). Furthermore, Nutt (1998) revealed that strategies that do not succeedwhen implemented can proveto be costly, in terms of forgone benefits and formulation costs associatedwith time and financial commitments.

Phrased less euphemistically, by dint of the above discussed points - it is of paramount significance to note that successful strategy implementation should be made a priority in the public schools around Mpumalanga Province if superior public school performance is to be realised. In that regard, an understanding of determinants of successful strategy implementation factors warrants constant attention from researchers and policy makers.

II. RESEARCH PROBLEM

The sustainable survival and effective functioning of public schools is difficult to achieve without the ability to implement strategies successfullyinturbulent operational environments (Hitt, Ireland and Hoskisson (2005). In the same vein, evidence from Sterling (2003) revealed that only 30% of strategies are properly and successfully implemented by most public institutions and as such this is a worrying margin and hence deserves continuous improvement. Based on that, thisstudy seeks to analyse how compensation management, managerial behaviour, institutional policies andresource allocation influence successful strategy implementation in public schools within Mpumalanga Province of South Africa.

2.1 Research Objectives
[1] To analyse the extent of the association between compensation managementand successful strategy implementation
[2] To determine the degree of the association between managerial behaviour and successful strategy implementation
[3] To measure the level of association between institutional policies and successful strategy implementation
[4] To ascertain the magnitude of association between resource allocation and successful strategy implementation

2.2.Research Questions
[1] What is the extent of the association between compensation management and successful strategy implementation?
[2] What isthe degree of the association between managerial behaviour and successful strategy implementation?
[3] What is the level of association between institutional policies and successful strategy implementation?
[4] What is the magnitude of association between resource allocation and successful strategy implementation?

2.3.Hypotheses of the study
[1] There is significant association between compensation management and successful strategy implementation
[2] There exists significant association between managerial behaviour and successful strategy implementation
[3] There is significant association between institutional policies and successful strategy implementation
[4] There exists significant association between the resource allocation and successful strategy implementation

Importance of the Study
In light of the indispensablecontribution made by public schools in empowering learners with foundational knowledge critical for tertiary level, the results of this study will provideconstructive insights regarding the discreteextents to which compensation management;managerial behaviour; institutional policiesand resource allocation factors are linked with successful strategy implementation within Public Schools. Consequently, the research outputs will helpconcerned stakeholders implement corrective measures that can enhance effectivestrategy implementation in the country's Public Schools.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

A huge strand of past researches has confirmed that many strategyimplementations fail (Nutt, 1999). The basic trend in implementation literature shows that implementation failure is 'routine and non-random' (Lin, 1996). Nutt (1999), reports that akey finding from studies of decision-making is thathalf of the decisions implemented in public organizations fail. On contrary, Mintzberg (1990) reveal that few formulated strategies are implemented successfully. To this end, the literature proceeds to review various factors that are perceived to determine effective strategy implementation in public academic institutions. These include compensation management, managerial behaviour, institutional policies and resource allocation.

Compensation management

In his study, Lawler (2001) established a relatively weak correlation co-efficientbetween compensation management and successful strategy implementation index.Lawler discovered that despite the existence of developmental policies and welfare, professional ethics of the teachers was found to be the main reward factor driving successful execution of organizational strategy. In the same token, several earlier studies (Steers, 1981 and Golembiewski, 2000) support the negligible impact of reward management oneffective strategy implementation. Likewise, Maehr and Braskamp (1986) confirmed evidence that motivation of staff on career development was low and this adversely affected motivation on International Standard Organization (ISO) process with regard to successful strategic plansimplementation.This observationis in tandem withMcClelland's perspective on motivation and effective strategy execution.

Managerial behavior:

Strategic or managerial behaviour refers to conduct which is not economically unavoidable, but which is a result of judicious efforts to profile the organisation's operational environment to its own durable competitive advantage (Thomas, 2002). In that regard, the two categories of strategic behaviour are 'non-cooperative behaviour' and 'cooperative behaviour'. Non-cooperative behaviour occurs when an organisation attempts to develop its position as compared to its competitors by trying to discourage them from penetratingyour market to force them exit business.On contrary, cooperative behaviour occurs when organisations in a market attempt to synchronize their actstherebydiscouraging their competitive responses (Thomas, 2002).Over the years institutions management has exhibited managerial behaviour that has influence on strategy execution.Carton and Perloff (1994) found non-cooperative managerial behaviour as exerting enormous influence on successful implementation of strategic plans within public organisations. The correlation coefficient index from Carton and Perfloff's studyrevealed a strong relationship between the two variables. Carton and Perloff further argued that the regular use of strategic plans as apparatus for decision making on human, physical, informational and financial resources management decision acts as a barometer of managerial diagnostic thinking which is a precondition for effective strategy execution. Furthermore, this finding is affirmed by a leadership style that favours strategic implementation benchmarks of performance contracts.

Institutional policies:

Clear and well-constructed institutional policies were discovered as having beneficial effectson favourable execution of strategic plans in tertiary institutions Langfield-Smith (1997). The study's outcomesrevealed a significant correlation coefficient between institutional policies and successful strategy implementation index. On the other hand, Newton and Jeonghun (2010) also provide evidence that the adverse impact of policy statements on decision making is a clear sign ofweak correlation coefficient between powerful execution of strategies and institutional policies. On the same token, Newton and Jeonghun founderratic use of service charter as another major reason for the weak influence of institutional policies on successful implementation of organisational strategies.Theseresults also corroborates with Nganga (2009) which concluded thattertiary institutionslack arealisticapproach of monitoring and evaluatingthe performance and effectiveness of their academic and non-academic staff members.

Resource allocation:

The allocation of resources has an influence on successful execution of management'sactionplans. In a study conducted by Wernham (1984) found poor resource allocation as one of the main reasons behind unsuccessful strategy execution in the British nationalized telecommunication industry. The degree of influence was found to be relatively strongas evidenced by the correlation coefficient.In another study by Bower and Joseph (1986) reported a weakconnection between resource allocation policies and effective execution of strategy.However, the precedingfindings run contrary with reality as distribution of resourcesranks amongfactorswhichpositively influence organisation's successful strategy implementation (Mintzberg and Waters (1985).Mintzberg and Waters (1985), argues that dispensation of resource is like asieve that verifytherequiredevolving strategies which qualify forfinancial injection and action plansthat do not deserve financial support.Borrowing much from above, it becomes evident that the continuous effort should be made in diagnosing the exact determinants of successful strategy implementation at varying time frames.

III. METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE

3.1 1ntroduction
This section is devoted to the research design, sampling technique, sample size, data gathering tools, both reliability and validity testing of the research instrument; and the statistical analytical framework applied in the study.

3.2 Research Design
The study was conducted based on descriptive survey, exploratory and correlational designs. This survey design was chosen to ensure collection of data which precisely capturesthe existing conditions at a specific point in time.

3.3 Sampling Technique and Sample Size
The population for this research survey wasPublic SchoolsinMpumalanga Province of South Africa. A simple random sampling method was applied to chooseparticipants from the target population to guarantee that each respondent had an equal chance of selection. From the 165returned questionnaires, 139 were fully completed flawlessly; attaining a response rate of 84.2 percent.The response rate was consideredsufficient for statistical reliability testing and generalisability of the research results.

3.4 Data Gathering
Primary data was collected through the use of structured questionnairesframed around the five-point Likert scale format. The five point Likert scale questions anchored from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The questionnaire amassed data on the senior school management's level of agreement regarding the extent to which specific factors affect successful strategy implementation within the Public Schools in Mpumalanga Province.

3.5 Statistical Analysis
The results of the survey were analysed using descriptive statistics and chi-square techniques. The Statistical Package for Social Scientist (SPSS) version 21 statistical package was used to process the collected data. Beforeexecuting correlational analysis, reliability and exploratory factor analysis were performed to check reliability and adequacy of the sampling size; respectively.

IV. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

4.1 Descriptive Statistics
Table 1 below displays the mean score statistics of the compensation management, managerial behaviour, institutional policies and resource allocation were computed to reflect each distinct factor's level of significance.

Table 1: Mean Scores and Variance of Factors

Variable	Mean	SD	Eigenvalue	Percentage of variance
Compensation management	2.92	0.912	1.513	72.692
Managerial behaviour	3.32	0.667	1.912	60.342
Institutional policies	2.78	0.981	1.856	70.452
Resource allocation	3.14	0.751	1.813	60.425

The results indicate Managerial behaviour has the highest mean score (=3.32); while the least mean score was for Compensation management (=2.92).

4.2 Scale Reliability
Reliability analysis was used to measure consistency and internal stability of data (Table 2). The Cronbach's Alpha was calculated to determine the inter-item consistency and reliability of how well items in the set used were positively correlated to one another.

Table 2: Scale Reliability of Total Items

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	No. of Items
0.759	0.764	12

The value of the Cronbach's alpha (= 0.759) confirmstatistically reliability ofthe survey items; thus the items measured a single unidimensional latent construct. Therefore, the collected data for this research survey were found to be internally consistent and stable.

Table 3: Reliability of Individual Items

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
Compensation management	0.559	3
Managerial behaviour	0.632	3
Institutional policies	0.576	3
Resource allocation	0.603	3

The reliability results of the distinct dimensions are depicted in Table 2. The results are statistically significant in view of the number of items used for each construct.

4.2 Validity of Instruments
The structural validity and suitability of the sampling items was analyzed using the Keiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO=0.810); which was statistically significant for the analysis.

Table 4: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.810
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	132.864
	Df	4
	Sig.	.000

The Bartlett's test of sphericity (= 132.864; $p < 0.05$) confirms that data on compensation management, managerial behaviour, institutional policies and resource allocation qualify for further analysis.

Table 5: Correlation Matrix

		Compensation management	Managerial behaviour	Institutional policies	Resource allocation
Correlation	Compensation management	1.000	.605	.536	.583
	Managerial behaviour	.605	1.000	.575	.512
	Institutional policies	.536	.575	1.00	.617
	Resource allocation	.583	.512	0.617	1.00

The matrix determinant of 0.347depicts that the scale observed is one dimensional; therefore implying that the items are not an identity matrix.

4.3 Chi – Square Results
The Cramer's V coefficient was used as a post-test to determine the strength of association after the chi-square test of significance has been undertaken. The questionnaire had eight extracted factors that determine performance of small and medium enterprises. These factors have been classified into three major factors; namely entrepreneur attributes, firm characteristics and external environment. The table below shows the chi-square test and Cramer's V coefficients for the factors used in the study.

Table 6: Chi-Square and Cramer's V Coefficient

Factor	Chi-square	Cramer's V coefficient
Compensation management	1.827E2	0.531
Managerial behaviour	3.881E2	0.858
Institutional policies	3.237E2	0.716
Resource allocation	2.030E2	0.580

The Chi-square results in table 6 above reveal that compensation management, managerial behaviour, institutional policies and resource allocation all have associations with successful strategy implementation in Mpumalanga Province's Public Schools. The Cramer's V coefficients of all the four factors indicate existence of a very strong association between managerial behaviourfactors and successful strategy implementation. On the other hand, Cramer's V coefficient confirms a strong association between institutional policies and successful strategy implementation.Somewhat above moderate strengths of association are found between resource allocation factors; and between compensation management and successful strategy implementation.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The main purpose of the studywas to analyse the differential impacts of compensation management, managerial behaviour, institutional policies and resource allocation on successful strategy implementation within South African public schools.The results revealed that compensation management, managerial behaviour, institutional policies and resource allocation have a considerable impact on successful strategy implementation within public schools.

5.2 Recommendations

The research findings endorse thatcompensation management, managerial behaviour, institutional policies and resource allocation all have statistically significant positive impacts on successful strategy implementation within public schools in Mpumalanga Province. These findings imply that public schools should improve these factors.Public schoolsought tooffer rewards that will motivate their staff, strategically apply both cooperative and non-cooperative behaviour. In addition, it is recommended that public schools must craft unambiguous strategic, tactical and operational policies and equitablyallocate their scarce and vital resources.It is the author's belief that if all theserecommendationsare properly adopted, they will help the public schools examined realise successful strategy implementation.

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