



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

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Abstract

The paper analyses the determinants of successful strategy implementation within Public Schools in South Africa. Using simple random sampling technique, a total of one hundred and sixty-five (165) respondents were chosen to 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 as factors influencing successful 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 allocation all proved statistically significant association with successful strategy implementation.

Keywords: Public schools, Compensation management, Managerial behaviour, Institutional policies, Resource allocation, Implementation.

Introduction

The implementation of organisational strategy is a recurring theme in both strategic management and organizational science. Continuous academic research and empirical evidence show that successful strategy implementation has a significant impact on organizational performance (Hrebiniak and Joyce, 1984) and it is vital for attainment 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 its indispensability as an essential ingredient 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 schools numerous 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 relevant in unpredictable operational environments within which educational institutions co-exist. This is evidenced by the subsequent

fact that the environment in which public institutions operate is increasingly becoming complex, (D'Aveni, 1999). Furthermore, enormous persistent developments in 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 strategy adjustments (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 execute innovative strategies hastily and successfully may signify the difference between success and failure among public institutions, (Hauc and Kovac, 2000).

Nonetheless, well-invented public school strategies only generate better performance for such schools 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 that organisational strategic success not only calls for a suitable strategy but successful strategy implementation (Hussey, 1996). Furthermore, Nutt (1998) revealed that strategies that do not succeed when implemented can prove to be costly, in terms of forgone benefits and formulation costs associated with 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.

Research Problem

The sustainable survival and effective functioning of public schools is difficult to achieve without the ability to implement strategies successfully in turbulent 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, this study seeks to analyse how compensation management, managerial behaviour, institutional policies and resource allocation influence successful strategy implementation in public schools within Mpumalanga Province of South Africa.

Research Objectives

- i. To analyse the extent of the association between compensation management and successful strategy implementation
- ii. To determine the degree of the association between managerial behaviour and successful strategy implementation
- iii. To measure the level of association between institutional policies and successful strategy implementation

- iv. To ascertain the magnitude of association between resource allocation and successful strategy implementation

Research Questions

- i. What is the extent of the association between compensation management and successful strategy implementation?
- ii. What is the degree of the association between managerial behaviour and successful strategy implementation?
- iii. What is the level of association between institutional policies and successful strategy implementation?
- iv. What is the magnitude of association between resource allocation and successful strategy implementation?

Hypotheses of the study

- i. There is significant association between compensation management and successful strategy implementation
- ii. There exists significant association between managerial behaviour and successful strategy implementation
- iii. There is significant association between institutional policies and successful strategy implementation
- iv. There exists significant association between the resource allocation and successful strategy implementation

Importance of the Study

In light of the indispensable contribution made by public schools in empowering learners with foundational knowledge critical for tertiary level, the results of this study will provide constructive insights regarding the discrete extents to which compensation management; managerial behaviour; institutional policies and resource allocation factors are linked with successful strategy implementation within Public Schools. Consequently, the research outputs will help concerned stakeholders implement corrective measures that can enhance effective strategy implementation in the country's Public Schools.

Literature Review

A huge strand of past researches has confirmed that many strategy implementations fail (Nutt, 1999). The basic trend in implementation literature shows that implementation failure is 'routine and non-random' (Lin, 1996). Nutt (1999), reports that a key finding from studies of decision-making is that half 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 coefficient between 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 on effective strategy implementation. Likewise, Maehr and Braskamp (1986) confirmed evidence that motivation of staff on career development was low and this adversely affected motivation on both ISO process and BOG decisions with regard to successful strategic plans implementation. This observation is in tandem with McClelland's perspective on motivation and effective strategy execution.

Managerial behaviour

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 penetrating your market to force them exit business. On contrary, cooperative behaviour occurs when organisations in a market attempt to synchronize their acts thereby discouraging 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 Perloff's study revealed 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 effects on favourable execution of strategic plans in tertiary institutions Langfield-Smith (1997). The study's outcomes revealed 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 of weak correlation coefficient between powerful execution of strategies and institutional policies. On the same token, Newton and Jeonghun found erratic use of service charter as another major reason for the weak influence of institutional policies on successful implementation of organisational strategies. These results also corroborates with Nganga (2009) which concluded

that tertiary institutions lack a realistic approach of monitoring and evaluating the 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's action plans. 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 strong as evidenced by the correlation coefficient. In another study by Bower and Joseph (1986) reported a weak connection between resource allocation policies and effective execution of strategy. However, the preceding findings run contrary with reality as distribution of resources ranks among factors which positively influence organisation's successful strategy implementation (Mintzberg and Waters (1985). Mintzberg and Waters (1985), argues that dispensation of resource is like a sieve that verify the required evolving strategies which qualify for financial injection and action plans that 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.

Methodology and Procedure

Introduction

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.

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 captures the existing conditions at a specific point in time.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The population for this research survey was Public Schools in Mpumalanga Province of South Africa. A simple random sampling method was applied to choose participants from the target population to guarantee that each respondent had an equal chance of selection. From the 165 returned questionnaires, 139 were fully completed flawlessly; attaining a response rate of 84.2 percent. The response rate was considered sufficient for statistical reliability testing and generalisability of the research results.

Data Gathering

Primary data was collected through the use of structured questionnaires framed 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.

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. Before executing correlational analysis, reliability and exploratory factor analysis were performed to check reliability and adequacy of the sampling size; respectively.

Analysis of Results

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).

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) confirm statistically reliability of the 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.

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

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 behaviour factors 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.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The main purpose of the study was 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.

Recommendations

The research findings endorse that compensation 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 schools ought to offer 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 equitably allocate their scarce and vital resources. It is the author's belief that if all these recommendations are properly adopted, they will help the public schools examined realise successful strategy implementation.

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