

Perceptions Regarding Strategy Implementation Tasks in Selected Industries: A South African Perspective

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Abstract

Despite acknowledged importance of strategy implementation, limited research has been done in this field. This article therefore investigates the perceptions regarding strategy implementation tasks within six selected industries in the Nelson Mandela Metropole of the Eastern Cape, South Africa. To achieve the research objectives, a comprehensive literature study was conducted as to provide a theoretical framework for the empirical study. During the empirical study, self-administered questionnaires were distributed to a non-probability convenient sample of 145 organisations in selected industries. To investigate the relationships between the independent and dependent variables, five null-hypotheses were tested. Perceptions regarding strategy implementation tasks (dependent variables) and classification data (independent variables) were tested. The results revealed significant relationships between some of these variables. It appears that the task of strategy implementation is primarily an operations-driven activity, revolving around the management of people and business processes. Practical guidelines are provided to strategy executors to ensure successful strategy implementation in selected industries.

Key words: *Strategy implementation; tasks*

“Execution is a systematic process of rigorously discussing how’s and what’s, tenaciously following through, and ensuring accountability.”

(Bossidy & Charan, 2003:3)

1. Introduction

Neilson, Martin and Powers (2008:60) attest that a brilliant strategy, blockbuster product or breakthrough technology can put an organisation on the competitive map, but only solid strategy execution can keep them there. Despite this notion, Hrebiniak (2005:4) argues that management literature focused primarily on revealing new ideas regarding planning and strategy formulation, thus greatly neglecting strategy execution and its importance. Slater and Olson (2000:813) state that the basic premise of strategy implementation literature is that different strategies require different configurations of organisational

practices to achieve optimal performance. Lichtblau (2011:8) further postulates that business styles and philosophies change quicker and more dramatically than retail store windows in a mall and in reality strategy and tactics are more than just fads. Cooks (2009) further alleges that “strategy formulation is usually regarded as the exclusive domain of senior management and by comparison, effective implementation of strategy rarely attracts as much kudos or respect. Yet experienced leaders know that the most creative and well-crafted visions and strategic plans are useless if they cannot be translated into action.” Heidi, Gronhaug and Johannessen (2002:226) allege that various obstacles could influence successful strategy implementation, yet few studies have attempted to identify exactly what these implementation barriers are. These barriers can lead to a complete breakdown of a formulated strategy. According to Herreld, O’Reilly and Tushman (2006), the strategy-making process should culminate in a clearly-communicated business design and the allocation of required resources. Implementation begins with an honest appraisal of current organisational alignment and capabilities.

The implementation of a crafted strategy could have a huge impact on an organisation’s overall success, thus a strategy can only add value to the organisation if it is successfully implemented (Raps 2005:145). It is therefore imperative to state that each organisation’s strategy implementation process is unique, and management needs to identify what needs to be done to guide employees to perform the required actions or display the necessary behaviours for successful implementation (Speculand 2010:Internet). In this article, the problem statement and objectives of the study is firstly outlined. A theoretical overview of strategy implementation literature is then provided. In the next sections, the research methodology and empirical results are provided. Lastly, the main conclusions and managerial implications of the study are outlined.

2. Problem Statement

Wei (2005) postulates that although both academic and business communities have long recognised the importance of effective strategy execution for performance, research in this area remains ad hoc and less developed. Despite acknowledged importance of strategy implementation, limited research has been done in this field (Shah 2005:294). Especially, it appears that there is a lack of literature on strategy implementation within South African organisations. Li, Guohui and Eppler (2008:3) assert that unlike strategy formulation, strategy implementation is often seen as a craft, rather than a science and its research history is often seen as fragmented and eclectic. Most aspects of strategy implementation is built on a number of underlying assumptions that failed strategies tend to emanate more from execution problems rather than from formulation shortcomings (Parnell 2008: 1278). Although Hrebiniak (2005:5) argues that strategy implementation is extremely difficult, management teams wanting to develop world- class strategy execution skills must accept a new strategic paradigm and not allow that the implementation part of the strategy is neglected (Bigler 2001:29). Martin (2010:64) adds to this debate by arguing that often organisations found themselves in an “execution trap” – the inability to execute a well-designed strategy. Aaltonen and Ikavalko (2002:415) concur that many studies have been conducted regarding why organisations fail in successfully implementing strategies and findings were predominantly unanimous on issues such as weak management roles in implementation, a lack of communication, lack of employee commitment to the strategy, and an unaligned organisational structure and culture. Higgins (2005:3) further states that as the business environment becomes more complex the need to reformulate strategy becomes more frequent and as a result, senior executives find themselves confronted with the need to integrate a number of changes in the execution of the new or revised strategy. To assist in this regard, various processes and tools are available for strategy implementation.

This lead to the following research question to be addressed in this article:

“What are the perceptions of South African managers and employees regarding various strategy implementation tasks and how do these perceptions differ in terms of certain demographical characteristics?”

3. Objectives

The primary objective of this article is to investigate perceptions regarding strategy implementation tasks in selected industries in South Africa and to identify how these perceptions differ in terms of certain demographic characteristics.

3.1 Secondary Goals

To help achieve the primary objective, the following secondary goals are identified:

- To contextualise concepts related to strategy implementation.
- To provide a theoretical overview of strategy implementation tasks in organisations.
- To empirically assess perceptions regarding strategy implementation tasks in organisations within the Nelson Mandela Metropole.
- To provide managerial guidelines regarding strategy implementation tasks in the contemporary workplace.

4. Theoretical Overview of Strategy Implementation

4.1 Concept Clarification

Strategy is the direction and scope of an organisation over the long-term which achieves advantage for the organisation through its configuration of resources (Johnson & Scholes, 2006:1). *Strategy formulation* refers to the assessment of the external and internal environment and integrating the results into goals and strategies (Daft 2012:216). *Strategy execution/implementation* is the sum total of the activities required for the execution of the strategic plans through which strategies and policies are put into action. Strategy execution is a critical cornerstone and an ally in building a capable organisation and the use of appropriate levers of implementation could be the crucial turning point in the development of an organisation (Crittenden & Crittenden 2008:302).

4.2 Nature of Strategy Implementation

Strategy execution takes place when a firm adopts organisational policies and practices that are consistent with the strategy (David 2003:236). Strategy execution is the most complicated and time consuming strategic management component, as it cuts across all facets of managing. It needs to be initiated from many levels and areas inside the organisation (Shah 2005:294). The task of executing a strategy is primarily an operations-driven activity, revolving around the management of people and business processes. Successful execution thus depends on performing a good job with and through others, building and strengthening competitive capabilities, motivating and rewarding people in a strategy supporting manner (Hough, Thompson, Strickland & Gamble 2008:256). Lichtblau (2011:8) also highlights the following seven key success factors for effective strategy implementation, namely: competence, confidence, commitment, creativity, competitive edge, communication, and continuity. Lepsinger (2011:53) identifies the following five secrets to effective strategy implementation:

- Ability to manage change
- Structure must support execution
- Involve right people in right decisions
- Alignment between leader actions and organisational values and priorities
- Organisational-wide coordination and cooperation.

The implementation task entails coordination of a range of efforts expected to transform strategic intentions into actions. This challenges strategist's abilities to deal with various issues related with the implementation process. Strategy implementation also includes on-going adaptation of the strategy through the implementation process and naturally requires learning and adjustment in relation to the strategy (Shimizu 2008:4).

4.3 Strategy Implementation Tasks

Strategy implementation entails finding answers to the question "how?" – the specific techniques, actions and behaviours needed for a smooth strategy-supportive operation (Hough, *et al.* 2008:259). Hrebniak (2005:1) offers a systematic roadmap for execution that encompasses various key success factors such as: organizational structure, coordination, information sharing, incentives, controls, change management, culture, and the role of power and influence in the organisation. According to Thompson, Strickland and Gamble (2010:329), eight managerial tasks are necessary for effective strategy execution (see Figure 1). These eight tasks or tools also formed the basis for the theoretical framework and empirical part of this study.

There is no ready-made managerial recipe for successful strategy execution that could be used across all organisational situations or types of strategies. These actions and tools need to be adapted for each unique situation. These eight components or strategy execution tools and processes are further highlighted and discussed below. Table 1 highlights certain aspects of strategy implementation tasks.

It should be clear from Table 1 that putting a strategy into place calls for various managerial skills. Executing a strategy is mainly an operations-driven and action-orientated activity involving the management of people and processes.

5. Demographical Influences on Strategy Implementation

Various authors (see for example Barber, Laing & Simeone 2005: 210; Golden 1992:145; Wooldridge, Schmid & Floyd 2008:1190 and Zona & Zattoni 2007:852) have attempted to investigate the influence of demographics on strategy execution with varying results. Waldersee and Sheather (1996:105) state that different strategies need to be implemented in different ways and it is often assumed that personality is a primary determinant of strategy execution actions. However, the effect of strategic context on managers' espoused strategy implementation intentions is sometimes overlooked. Parnell (2008:1277) further argues that the extent to which strategies are effectively executed and become an integral part of an organisation varies across organisations due to a number of factors influencing the process of strategic diffusion, such as organisational culture, stage of economic development and management practices. Both Arnold (2010:166) and Ashton and Morton (2005:28) concur by stating that effective management of human resources (talent management) is critical to facilitate the execution of strategies and that employees have different and unique characteristics that influence their behaviour in the workplace and ultimately strategy execution. Goll and Rasheed (2005:999) concluded that there is support for the assertion that management

demographic characteristics influence decision-making and ultimately strategy execution and organisational performance. Harrington and Kendall (2006:207) concur that managers' perceptions of environmental complexity and organisation size directly impact involvement during strategy execution.

Based on the above reasoning and primary objective of this study, various null-hypotheses are formulated to test the relationships between the independent and dependent variables. Eight dependent variables (perceptions regarding strategy implementation tasks) and nine independent variables (demographical characteristics of respondents) were used. A total of 72 null-hypotheses were thus formulated in this study. Based on the ANOVA results that follow in the results section, only those formulated hypotheses that show significant relationships between the independent and dependent variables are reported here and those that exhibit no statistically significant relationships are excluded from this discussion. The following independent demographical variables were tested in this study: gender; age; education; position in business; length of current employment; size of business; industry type and employment sector.

The following null-hypotheses are reported in this article:

- H0₁: There is no relationship between the perceptions regarding *building a capable organisation* necessary for strategy implementation and the *ethnic classification* of respondents.
- H0₂: There is no relationship between the perceptions regarding *marshalling of resources* necessary for strategy execution and the *ethnic classification* of respondents.
- H0₃: There is no relationship between the perceptions regarding the *marshalling of resources* necessary for strategy implementation *type of industry* employed of respondents.
- H0₄: There is no relationship between the perceptions regarding *instituting policies and procedures* and the *position of respondents* in an organisation.
- H0₅: There is no relationship between the perceptions regarding the *provision of rewards and incentives* necessary for strategy implementation and the *position of respondents* in an organisation.

The alternative hypotheses (H₁ to H₅) can be stated as the exact opposites of these null-hypotheses.

6. Research Methodology

This section outlines the research methodology followed in this study.

6.1 Research Approach

The quantitative research approach is used in this study by means of descriptive research (perceptions regarding strategy implementation tasks selected in organisations) and exploratory research.

6.2 Population

The population of this study can be regarded as all medium and large-sized organisations within the Nelson Mandela Metropole of the Eastern Cape, South Africa involved in strategy implementation tasks. The reason for using this population and sampling frame is that these organisations are more likely to be involved in strategy implementation tasks than smaller organisations.

6.3 The Sample

A non-probability convenience sample of 180 was drawn based on the availability and accessibility of respondents in the designated region. For the purpose of this study, respondents were selected from the following six broad industries: manufacturing; retailing/wholesaling; financial, insurance and real estate; catering and accommodation; construction and engineering and communication. Only medium (employing

51 to 200 employees) and large-size organisations (201 and more employees) were included in the final sample as these organisations are more likely to deal with strategy execution tasks. Fieldworkers had to establish prior to administering the questionnaire whether respondents are knowledgeable on strategy execution aspects of their organisations.

6.4 Questionnaire Design

Based on the sample size of 180, a survey by means of self-administered questionnaires was used. The questionnaire is divided into three sections:

- Section A deals with perceptions regarding strategy implementation tasks in organisations and consists of eight factors (strategy execution tasks). A total of 45 variables/statements are used. The type of ordinal scale used is a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1).
- Section B investigated general view points of respondents regarding strategy implementation in organisations and included 10 statements using a five-point ordinal Likert scale.
- Section C provides classification data (demographic characteristics) of respondents and contains a nominal scale of measurement, using nine categorical variables.

6.5 Data Collection

Both primary and secondary data were collected. During the literature search various textbooks, journals and the Internet were consulted. Primary data was collected by means of a survey using self-administered questionnaires. A total of 180 self-administered questionnaires were distributed and 145 correctly completed questionnaires were received. The effective response rate of this survey is thus 81%.

6.6 Pilot Study

As the self-developed questionnaire has not been tested before it was given to 15 organisations included in the population. It was also given to a few academics in the field of strategic management and statistics to pay attention to wording and sequence of items, layout and coding of information. The questionnaire was refined and some minor changes were made regarding wording, sequence and layout.

6.7 Data Processing and Analysis

The data from the completed questionnaires were transferred to an Excel spreadsheet. A statistical computer package, named SPSS-PC, was used to process the results. Techniques used during data analysis included descriptive statistics (e.g. mean and standard deviation), frequency distributions, correlation coefficients and analysis of variance.

7. Empirical Results

7.1 Demographical Profile of Respondents

Table 2 provides a demographical profile of the respondents of this study.

From the results in Table 2 it is clear that the majority of the respondents (63%) are males and 37% females. It is also evident that 72% of the respondents are between the ages of 25 to 44 years and 49% have a national certificate/diploma or bachelors degree (21% have a post-graduate qualification). It is further shown that the majority of the respondents are white (41%) and black (23%) and 70% are owners/managers and 30% are employees. Seventy seven percent of the employees have been employed for between one and 10 years with their current employer and 23% for 11 years or longer. The

employment size of the majority of the respondents is medium-sized (60%) and large (40%) organisations. In terms of type of industry, 30% are active in the retail and wholesale industry and 23% in the manufacturing industry respectively. Seventy two percent of the respondents are employed in the private sector whilst only 28% are employed in the public sector.

7.2 Descriptive Statistics

Table 3 provides an overview of the most important and significant descriptive statistics for Section A (perceptions regarding strategy execution tools) of the questionnaire.

In analysing the measure of central tendency (mean values) for the factors used in Section A of the questionnaire, it appears that most values cluster around point four of the scale (agree), indicating that respondents tend to agree with most of the factors in this section of the questionnaire. The lowest mean score (3.62) was obtained for the factor regarding the marshalling of resources. Measures of dispersion, by means of low standard deviation scores indicate that respondents tend not to vary much regarding the factors tested in these sections of the questionnaire.

Table 4 indicates the frequency distribution results for Section B of the questionnaire (perceptions regarding general aspects of strategy implementation).

It appears that the mean scores for these variables tend to cluster around point four on the scale (agree), except for variables B4 to B6 (neutral). Respondents tend to be neutral toward aspects such as: the use is of self-directed (control) work teams and Internet technology and e-commerce business practices and that there are fewer barriers between vertical ranks and functions in the organisation. These three variables also indicated relatively high standard deviation scores which indicate that respondents tend to vary in their responses regarding these aspects of strategy implementation.

7.3 Reliability and Validity of the Measuring Instrument

External validity is ensured by means of a proper and sound sampling procedure. Attention was given to ensure that the questionnaires were completed at the appropriate time and place and under conditions conducive for accurate research. Internal validity of the instrument's scores is ensured through both face and content validity. Expert judgment and a pilot study were undertaken to assist in this regard. The statistical software package, SPSS, was used to determine the Cronbach's alpha values for the eight predetermined factors of Section A. To confirm the internal reliability of these nine factors, Cronbach's alpha was calculated (refer to Table 5).

The reliability coefficients of Cronbach's alpha for the various factors are all above 0.7. It can therefore be concluded that all factors are internally reliability.

7.4 Correlation

An inter-item correlation exercise was conducted to determine the correlation between the variables constituting each factor in Section A of the questionnaire. A detailed presentation of the correlation matrix results falls beyond the scope of this article. It can however, be reported that all the variables in each factor show positive relationships with each other. The highest positive r -value (0.7528) was obtained for the item in the factor regarding the provision of resources and incentives factor (A32) and the lowest positive r -value (0.1802) for the item of marshalling resources (A15). A positive correlation coefficient (r -value) indicates a strong or positive relationship among the variables. No negative r -values are reported.

7.5 ANOVAs

The purpose of this analysis is to investigate the relationship between the independent and dependent variables and to test the stated hypotheses. Table 6 provides an outline of the variables used in this analysis. Inferential statistics are used to make inferences about the population using sample data to make decisions regarding various hypotheses. Different analyses of variance exercises were conducted to test the stated hypotheses. Only those ANOVA results that show significant relationships between the independent (classification data) and dependent variables (strategy implementation tasks) are reported and those that exhibit no significant relationships are excluded from this discussion.

The ANOVA results clearly indicate the relationships between the independent and dependent variables. The null-hypotheses (H_{01} to H_{05}) can, in all cases, be rejected at a significance level of 0.05 and the alternative hypotheses can be accepted. These null-hypotheses fall within the rejection region ($p < 0.05$ and large F-statistic values), which indicate that there is a significant relationship (difference) between the perceptions regarding strategy implementation tasks and some of the classification data variables (H_1 to H_5 can be accepted which indicate that there are significant relationships between the tested variables). From the above results, one can therefore construct the following model, as depicted in Figure 2, to indicate the different relationships between the dependent and the independent variables. Those variables that are not linked to any of the variables thus indicate no relationships.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

The strategy implementation process is affected by many variables inside and within the organisation's environment. It appears that the task of strategy implementation is primarily an operations-driven activity, revolving around the management of people and business processes. Successful execution thus depends on performing a good job with and through others, building and strengthening competitive capabilities, motivating and rewarding people in a strategy supporting manner. The implementation task entails coordination of a range of efforts expected to transform strategic intentions into actions. This study focused on eight key strategy implementation or managerial tasks, namely: building a capable organisation; marshalling resources; instituting policies and procedures; adopting best practices and continuous improvement; installing information and operating systems; providing rewards and incentives; instilling a corporate culture and leadership.

The following conclusions and recommendations can be drawn, based on the analysis of variance of the independent variables (classification data) and dependent variables (strategy execution tools and processes) used in this study:

- There appears to be a significant relationship between the perceptions regarding building a capable organisation and the ethnic classification of respondents (H_{01} rejected). Owners, managers and employees of different ethnic groups have divergent views on building a capable organisation necessary for strategy implementation. Organisations should therefore ensure that efforts for building a capable organisation should make provision for the viewpoints of a diverse workforce. Organisations should make provision for a strong management team to drive strategy implementation and that employees with needed experience, technical skills and intellectual capital are recruited and retained across the spectrum of a diverse workforce.
- It was found that the marshalling of resources necessary for strategy implementation is significantly related to the ethnic classification of respondents and type of industry in which they are employed.

(H₀₂ to H₀₃ rejected). Respondents from different ethnic groups and types of industries differ in their perceptions regarding strategy implementation tasks. Organisations should thus realise that managers and employees from different ethnic groups view the use of resources necessary for strategy implementation differently. It seems inappropriate to use a “one-size fits all” approach when allocating resources for strategy implementation as different ethnic groups attach differing values to the manner in which these resources are allocated and use. It also appears that there are divergent viewpoints from respondents from different types of industries regarding the marshalling of resources necessary for strategy implementation. The approach to and manner in which resources are obtained and allocated differs across industries. However, there were no other significant differences between the perceptions of respondents from the six industry types and the other dependent variables.

- It was also found that the position of respondents is significantly related to perceptions regarding the instituting of policies and procedures and the provision of rewards and incentives (H₀₄ and H₀₅ rejected). Owners/managers and employees have different views regarding the use of these strategy implementation tasks. The type of and manner in which policies and procedures are implemented is viewed differently by owners and managers/employees. Respondents from different positions also view and attach different values to rewards and incentives given for strategy implementation tasks. Organisations should thus realise that rewards and incentive programmes or schemes is not perceived the same by all.

Based on the items in the questionnaire, Table 7 provides general guidelines and recommendations for using strategy implementation tasks in the workplace.

The following extract seems appropriate to conclude this article with:

“The architecture of the strategy execution process is often a rather neglected and ignored part ... The two most important elements of the strategy execution process architecture are; translation of the strategy into manageable actions and steps and continuous adaptation of the strategy to the corporate context. The other main sources of strategy execution collapse – the execution syndromes – are often difficult to detect, since they only slowly become an inherent part of the organizational culture and composition ...”

(Pederson, 2008:2)

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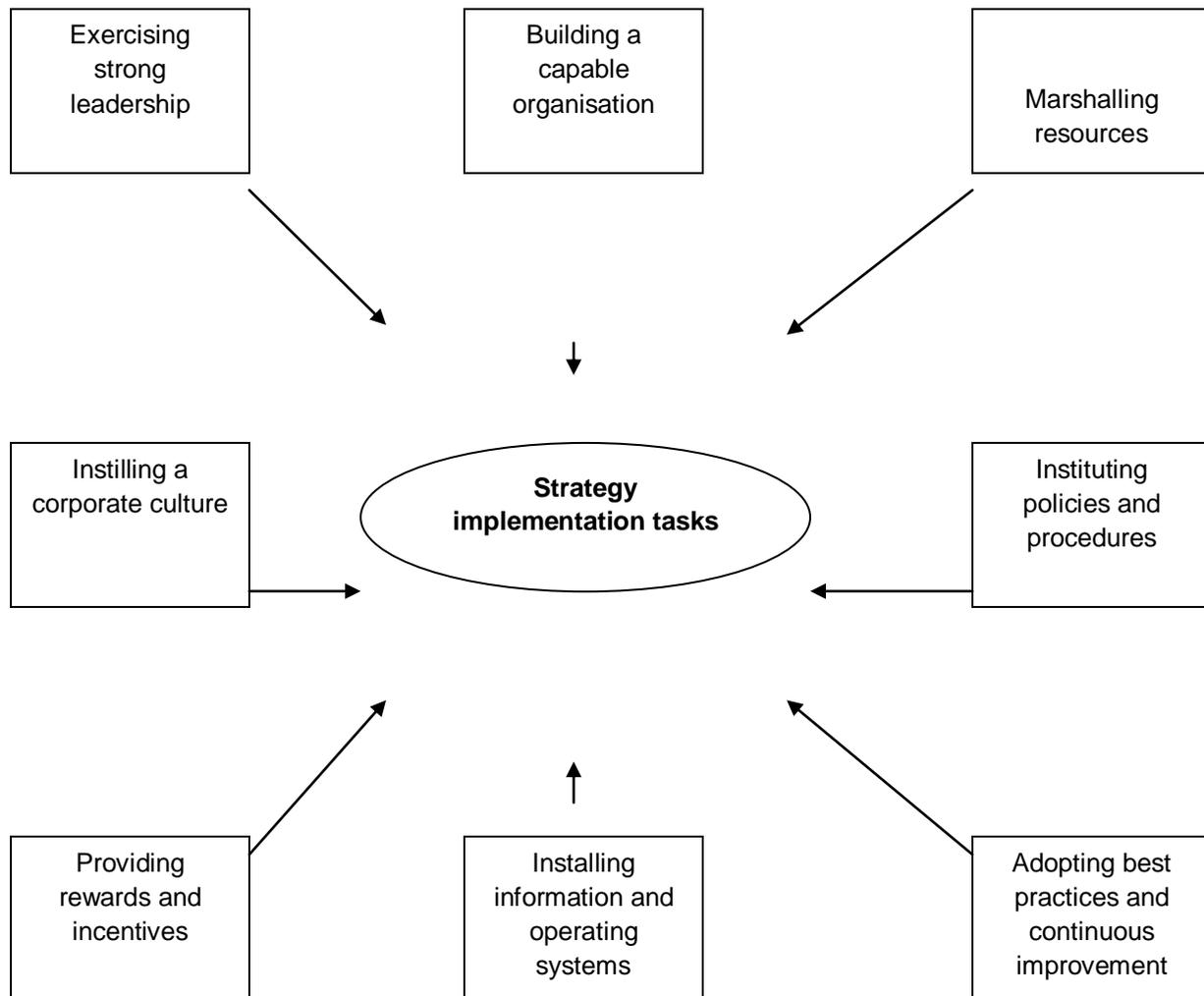


Figure 1: Eight tasks of effective strategy implementation

Source: Adapted from Thompson *et al.* (2010:330)

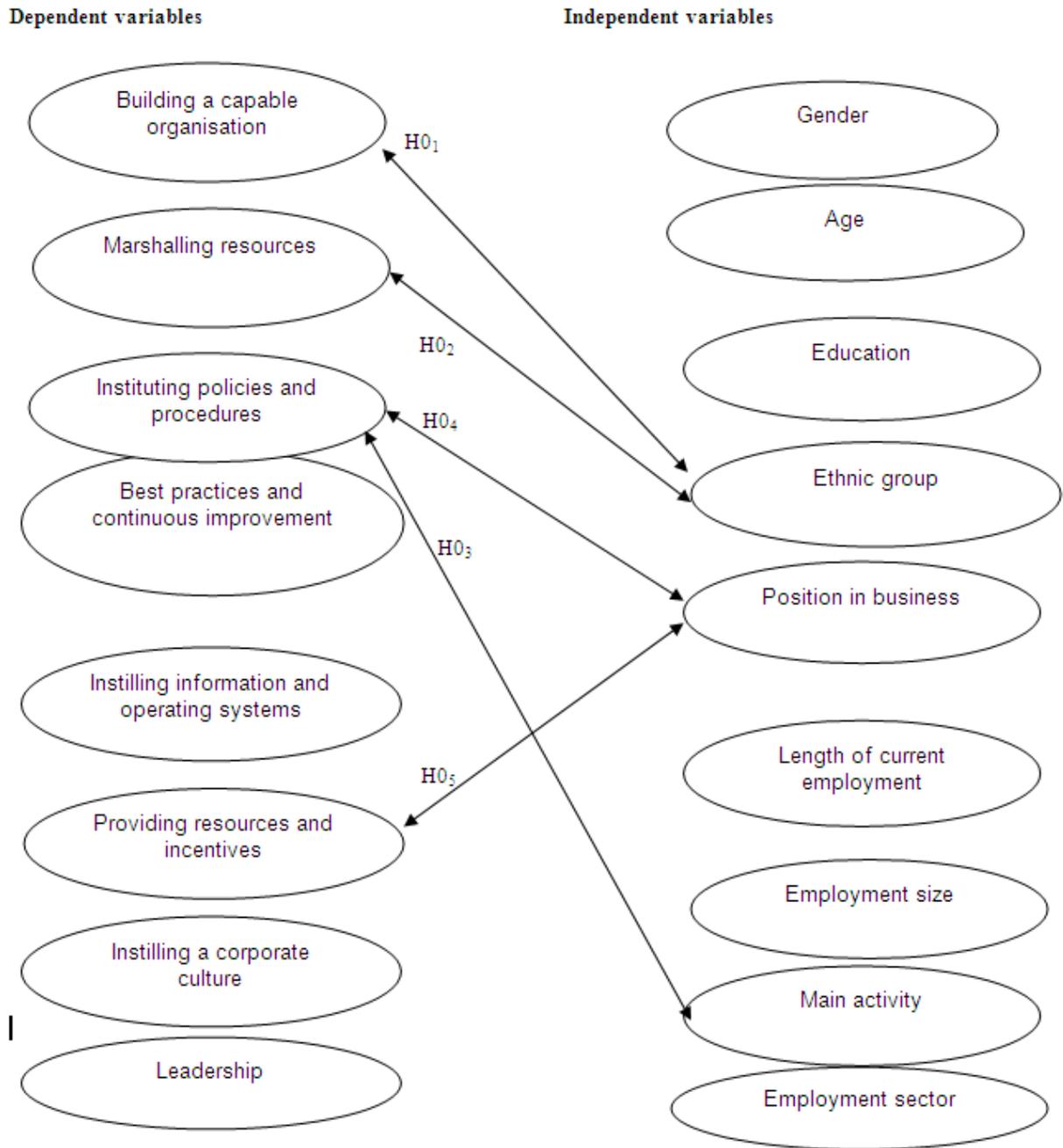


Figure 2: Relationship between the independent and dependent variables: Testing of hypotheses

Aspects of strategy implementation tasks	Authors
<p>Building a capable organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting together a strong management team. • Recruiting and retaining capable employees. • Building core competencies and capabilities. • Structuring the work effort by organising value chain activities and business processes and level of decentralisation. 	<p>Hill & Jones (2004:404)</p> <p>Needle (2004:210)</p> <p>Shimizu (2008:8)</p> <p>Thompson <i>et al.</i> (2010: 331)</p>
<p>Marshalling resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departmental budgeting suitable for the current strategies (strategy-driven budgets). • Raising additional funds if internal cash flows prove to be insufficient to fund planned strategic initiatives (borrowing or selling additional shares). • Budget reallocations and resource shifting if strategy is changing. • Putting enough resources behind new initiatives and to stop activities and projects that are no longer justified. 	<p>Campbell, Stonehouse & Houston (2002:195-196)</p> <p>Crittenden & Crittenden (2008:306)</p> <p>David (2003:242)</p> <p>Shah (2005:299)</p> <p>Thompson <i>et al.</i> (2010: 358)</p>
<p>Instituting policies and procedures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in strategy requiring some changes in work practices and the behaviour of employees. • Top management providing clear guidance when instituting new policies and procedures. • Policies/procedures enforcing needed consistency (standardization and conformity). • Use policy changes as lever for changing corporate culture conducive to strategy execution. 	<p>Dyck & Neubert (2009:241)</p> <p>Gottschalk (2008:184)</p> <p>Lepsinger (2011:53)</p> <p>Robbins & DeCenzo (2004:72)</p> <p>Thompson <i>et al.</i> (2010: 359)</p>
<p>Adopting best practices and continuous improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmarking performance of certain activities and business processes against other best practices. • Realisation of abandoning old way of doing things and switching to a best-practice mindset. • Using business process reengineering to re-organise people and processes performing strategy-critical activities into new organisational arrangements. • Dedicated efforts to instill a culture of operating excellence. 	<p>Crittenden & Crittenden (2008:301)</p> <p>Ehlers & Lazenby (2004:240)</p> <p>Salah, Carretero & Rahim (2010:269)</p> <p>Saunders, Mann & Smith (2008:1095)</p> <p>Thompson <i>et al.</i> (2010: 361)</p>
<p>Instilling information and operating systems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-conceived and state-of-the-art operating systems to strengthen organisational capabilities. • All key strategic performance indicators tracked and reported on a regular basis. • Performance of empowered employees measured to ensure that standards are met. • Using peer evaluation to measure performance of team members. 	<p>Brenes, Mena & Molina (2008:596)</p> <p>Crittenden & Crittenden (2008:305)</p> <p>David (2003:292)</p> <p>Shah (2005:300)</p> <p>Thompson <i>et al.</i> (2010: 370)</p>

<p>Providing rewards and incentives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing both monetary and non-monetary motivational incentives to strategy executors. • Linking the reward system to strategically relevant performance outcomes. • Incentives are based on achieving results and what to be achieved and not on performing assigned duties (what to do). • Employees at all levels held accountable for carrying out assigned parts of the strategic plan and rewards are based on the calibre of results achieved. 	<p>Gladstein (2006:Internet)</p> <p>Heidi <i>et al.</i> (2007)</p> <p>Hill & Jones (2004: 417)</p> <p>Ott, Kzats & Thomas (2006:Internet)</p> <p>Thompson <i>et al.</i> (2010: 373)</p>
<p>Instilling a corporate culture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate culture or work climate grounded in values and practices conducive to strategy execution efforts. • Corporate culture imbedded with values promoting strong employee identification and commitment to the vision and strategy. • Culture-building objective is to create a work climate and style of operating mobilising the energy and behaviour of employees. • A series of culture-changing actions are being initiated as to adapt to new strategic initiatives. 	<p>Atreya (2007:Internet)</p> <p>Hill & Jones (2004:404)</p> <p>Kazmi (2008:1564)</p> <p>Robbins & Coulter (2005: 53)</p> <p>Thompson <i>et al.</i> (2010: 386)</p>
<p>Leadership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a network of contacts and sources of information to stay on top of how well things are going. • Constructive pressure to instill a spirit of high achievement and operational excellence. • Management leading development of better competencies and capabilities. • Management displaying ethical integrity and leading social responsibility initiatives. 	<p>Alkhafaji (2003:Internet)</p> <p>Brenes <i>et al.</i> (2008:596)</p> <p>Hrebiniak (2005:359)</p> <p>Ott <i>et al.</i> (2006:Internet)</p> <p>Sull (2007:30)</p> <p>Thompson <i>et al.</i> (2010: 408)</p>

Table 1: Aspects of strategy implementation tasks

Source: Smith (2011:478)

Characteristic	Category	Amount	(%)
Gender	Male	92	63
	Female	53	37
Age	18-24	16	11
	25-34	64	44
	35-44	40	28
	45-54	18	13
	55-64	5	3
	65+	2	1
Highest qualification	Grade 11 or less	8	6
	Grade 12/equivalent	33	23
	National Certificate/Diploma	33	23
	Bachelor's degree	38	26
	Post-graduate degree/diploma	31	21
	Other	2	1
Ethnic group	White	59	41
	Coloured	34	23
	Black	37	26
	Asian	15	10
Position in business	Owner	21	14
	Manager	81	56
	Employee	44	30
Length of current employment	< 1 year	19	13
	1-5 years	63	43
	6-10 years	30	21
	11-15 years	19	13
	16 years +	14	10
Employment size	Medium (50-199)	87	60
	Large (200+)	58	40

Characteristic	Category	Amount	(%)
Type of industry	Manufacturing	34	23
	Retailing/Wholesaling	43	30
	Financial, insurance, real estate	28	19
	Catering and accommodation	17	12
	Construction and engineering	11	8
	Communication	12	8
Employment sector	Private	105	72
	Public	40	28

Table 2: Demographical profile of respondents: Section C of the questionnaire

Factor/ Variable	Description	Mean score	Standard deviation
A1-A10	Building a capable organisation	3.88	0.63
A11-A15	Marshalling resources	3.62	0.70
A16-A20	Instituting policies/procedures	3.93	0.66
A21-A25	Best practices and continuous improvement	3.77	0.75
A26-A30	Instilling information/operating systems	3.65	0.76
A31-A35	Providing resources/incentives	3.64	0.91
A36-A40	Instilling a corporate culture	3.67	0.75
A41-A45	Leadership	3.98	0.77

Table 3: Descriptive statistics for Section A of the questionnaire

Factor/ Variable	% Agree	% Neutral	% Disagree	Mean	Standard deviation
B1	77	15	8	3.95	1.00
B2	83	10	7	4.10	0.91
B3	69	18	13	3.70	0.97
B4	53	33	14	3.48	0.97
B5	59	20	21	3.47	1.16
B6	54	30	16	3.46	1.00
B7	65	23	12	3.64	0.92
B8	78	15	7	4.00	0.89
B9	78	15	7	3.92	0.85
B10	70	19	11	3.74	0.96
Overall				3.75	0.67

Table 4: Frequency distribution results and descriptive statistics for Section B

Variables	Factor	Cronbach's Alpha
A1-A10	Building a capable organisation	0.87
A11-A15	Marshalling resources	0.74
A16-A20	Instituting policies/procedures	0.78
A21-A25	Best practices and continuous improvement	0.82
A26-A30	Instilling information/operating systems	0.77
A31-A35	Providing resources/incentives	0.89
A36-A40	Instilling a corporate culture	0.85
A41-A45	Leadership	0.87

Table 5: Cronbach's alpha for Section A of the questionnaire

Independent variables: (Classification data)	Dependent variables: (Strategy execution tools)	F-Test	P-Value	H0
Ethnic classification	Building a capable organisation	5.079	0.002	H0 ₁
Ethnic classification	Marshalling resources	5.355	0.002	H0 ₂
Type of industry	Marshalling of resources	5.938	0.001	H0 ₃
Position in organisation	Instituting policies and procedures	3.908	0.002	H0 ₄
Position in organisation	Provision of rewards and incentives	5.091	0.002	H0 ₅

Table 6: Analysis of variance results for the independent and dependent variables

No.	Guideline description
	Building a capable organisation:
1.	There should be a strong management team driving strategy implementation and employees with needed experience and skills should be recruited and retained.
2.	A set of competencies and capabilities should be developed suited to the current strategy and should continuously be updated and revised as external conditions change.
	Marshalling resources:
3.	Departmental budgets should be suitable for the current strategies (strategy-driven budgets) and a change in strategy leads to budget reallocations and resource shifting.
4.	Strong actions should be taken to put enough resources behind new initiatives and to stop activities and projects that are no longer justified.
	Instituting policies and procedures:
5.	Policies and procedures help enforce needed consistency (standardisation and conformity) when performing activities but also empower employees to act independently.
6.	The policy-changing process should be a powerful lever for changing corporate culture and creating a work climate conducive to strategy execution.
	Best practices and continuous improvement:
7.	There should be a realisation of abandoning old way of doing things and switching to a best-practice mindset.
8.	There should be a total quality management approach aimed at instilling enthusiasm and commitment for doing things right and to instill a culture of operating excellence.
	Instilling information and operating systems:
9.	There should be a well-conceived and state-of-the-art operating systems to strengthen organisational capabilities.
10.	All key strategic performance indicators should be tracked and reported on a regular basis and the performance of empowered employees should be measured to ensure that standards are met.
	Providing rewards and incentives:
11.	Both monetary and non-monetary motivational incentives should be linked to strategically relevant performance outcomes.
12.	Employees at all levels should be held accountable for carrying out assigned parts of the strategic plan and rewards should be based on the calibre of results achieved.
	Instilling a corporate culture:
13.	Corporate culture or work climate should be grounded in values and practices which promote strong employee identification and commitment to the vision which is conducive to strategy execution efforts.
14.	A series of culture-changing actions should be initiated as to adapt to new strategic initiatives

Leadership:	
15.	Management should lead the development of better competencies and capabilities and display ethical integrity and leads social responsibility initiatives.
16.	The leadership challenge is to push for corrective actions if strategy execution is not delivering good results.

Table 7: General guidelines for successful strategy implementation

Source: Smith (2011:493)