# The Perceptions of Senior Management with Regard to Strategy Implementation in the Limpopo Provincial Department of South Africa

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## Abstract

Strategy implementation has always been a challenge in government departments and this article argues that it should not be perceived as an obstacle, but as a vehicle for realising organisational goals. Strategy implementation in the public sector has not been researched extensively, and organisational culture, organisational structure, resource allocation and the processes of linking strategy formulation with implementation all remain a key challenges. A strategy implementation process in the Limpopo Provincial Department (LPD) was investigated. The purpose of the article was to examine the perceptions of senior managers with regard to strategy implementation in the LPD. A mixed-methods approach was used to collect data and the IBM SPSS statistics (Version 24) were used to interpret and analyse the data that was collected. The findings revealed that incompetence, devoting less time to the core business, and continual engagement in politics by senior managers, often lead to ineffective strategy implementation. This article, therefore, recommends the appointment of competent senior managers who are capable of steering clear of party politics during working hours. This will improve strategy implementation processes in the public sector.

**Keywords:** Strategy, Strategy implementation, Limpopo provincial department, Organisational performance.

## Contents

**Contribution of this paper to the literature**
This article intended to probe the perceptions of senior management on strategy implementation in the Limpopo Provincial Department (LPD). The findings revealed that incompetence, devoting less time to the core business, and continual engagement in politics by senior managers, often lead to ineffective strategy implementation.

# 1. Introduction and Background to the Study

This section focuses on the background and research gap, the statement of the problem, research questions and research objectives of the article.

## 1.1. Background and Research Gap

Unsuccessful strategy implementation has always been a global challenge which proliferate to emerge in different organisations (Burke, 2016); (Olivier & Schwella, 2018); (Höglund, Holmgren Caicedo, Mårtensson, & Svärdsten, 2018); (Maotwanyane & Pretorius, 2018); (Ridwan, 2019). The Republic of South Africa has adopted the National Development Plan 2030 strategic vision and trajectory to ensure enhanced service delivery and the achievement of its long-term objectives (Zarenda, 2013). The success of this initiative depends on effective implementation of strategies and optimisation of performance, despite the influences arising from political, social and economic situations (Burke, 2016). Strategic management consists of three stages, namely, strategy formulation, implementation and control (Olivier., 2015); (Höglund et al., 2018); (Ridwan, 2019). Strategy implementation is the second stage of those strategy management processes, which play a pivotal role in the public sector. It refers to the process of executing the plans and policies of the organisation to attain long-term objectives (Kordnaeij, 2016). Strategy implementation in the public sector is a subject that has not been broadly covered in the literature (Burke, 2016); (Elbanna, Andrews, & Pollanen, 2016); (Elbanna & Fadol, 2016); (Kihara, 2017); (Andrews, Beynon, & Genc, 2017); (Olivier & Schwella, 2018); (Maotwanyane & Pretorius, 2018); (Höglund et al., 2018); (Ridwan, 2019); (Cândido & Santos, 2019). In addition, little research has been conducted into the link between senior management's perceptions and strategy implementation in the public sector. Therefore, this article intended to probe the perceptions of senior management on strategy implementation in the Limpopo Provincial Department (LPD). Furthermore, this article intended to fill research gap in strategy implementation.

Limited studies were conducted locally on strategy implementation in the public sector in the Republic of South Africa. For example, Olivier and Schwella (2018) examined closing the strategy execution gap in the public sector: a conceptual model. The findings revealed that the model intended to discover the nine vital strategic components. On the other hand, Burke (2016) investigated strategy implementation insights from the Competition Commission of South Africa. The study uncovered how the capabilities that are built up in the organisation's priority positioning facilitate the detection of the opportunities with regard to strategy implementation. Ngcobo and Mdani (2015) probed the evaluation of strategic management in assisting South African municipalities to improve service delivery. The results shows that there are areas that require enhancement to strengthen positive audit outcomes. Although the studies are not limited to those highlighted above, none of these studies have explored the perceptions of senior management towards strategy implementation in the public sector.

Research done by Andrews et al. (2017) asserts that there are numerous theories of strategic management that have been positively applied in the public sector and these include amongst others, process theories, resource-based view theory, Porter's strategic positioning, and practice-based view theory. Although some of these theories have been effectively implemented in the public sector, they have seldom been employed to respond to matters pertaining to strategy implementation. Hence, strategy implementation attributes and apportionment of scarce resources remain a hurdle in the public sector (Pablo, Reay, Dewald, & Casebeer, 2007); (Elbanna & Fadol, 2016); (Höglund et al., 2018); (Maotwanyane & Pretorius, 2018); (Ridwan, 2019). For instance, Franks (2014) argues that reward systems for compensating employees for exceptional performance have been obstructed by political interference in the public sector. Therefore, the morale of employees' decreases and their contributions towards effective strategy implementation become problematic.

In the main, political interference plays an adverse role in the public sector at large (Zarenda, 2013); (Franks, 2014); (Elbanna et al., 2016); (Elbanna & Fadol, 2016); (Höglund et al., 2018); (Maotwanyane & Pretorius, 2018); (Ridwan, 2019). It leads to reduced strategy implementation efforts and thus diminished organisational performance. Despite the political environment and other external variables (such as economic, social, technological and ecological factors), public sector organisations should ensure that the needs of various stakeholders are contemplated (Burke, 2016). However, it requires knowledgeable and dedicated senior managers who are able to apply their skills and expertise competently, regardless of their political status. To ensure that strategy implementation manifests in the public sector, senior managers should transfer their skills to employees by means of coaching and mentoring (Njoroge, Machuki, Ongeti, & Kinuu, 2015). This could lead to the successful implementation of strategies and enhancement of service delivery.

Vision and mission statements are the cornerstones for formulating and implementing strategies and these should be aligned with the strategies and long-term objectives of the organisation (Zarenda, 2013); (Olivier & Schwella, 2018); (Ridwan, 2019); (Mukhamad, Rahmat, Semerdanta, & Darmansyah, 2020). Generally speaking, the primary objective of the public sector is to provide efficient and effective service delivery rather than making a profit (Lemarleni, Ochieng, Gakobo, & Mwaura, 2017). The Limpopo Provincial Department (LPD) is one of the 13 government departments in the Limpopo Province of the Republic of South Africa. It operates within five districts, namely, Mopani, Vhembe, Capricorn, Waterberg and Sekhukhune. The primary goal of the LPD is to provide free health care services to the citizens of Limpopo Province, as stipulated in Section 27 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996); (Limpopo Department of Health, 2014-19).

## 1.2. Statement of the Problem

Strategy implementation has been viewed as a fundamental challenge in both the public and private sectors and ineffective implementation has an adverse impact on performance (Pablo et al., 2007); (Burke, 2016); (Andrews et

al., 2017); (Olivier & Schwella, 2018); (Höglund et al., 2018). However, strategy implementation should not be perceived as an obstacle, but as the vehicle for realising long-term goals. This article deliberated about strategy implementation in the Limpopo Provincial Department (LPD). It has been advocated that poor sustainability of strategies is due to inefficient senior management perceptions, poor adjustment to technological innovation and changes, and lack of proper expertise. These are all evident in both the public and private sectors (Ogaja & Kimiti, 2016). Therefore, ineffective strategy implementation amongst others is attributed to managerial incompetence. In addition, inadequate leadership style, political engagement, inefficient planning and management as well as inadequate allocation and distribution of resources within the public sector have led to strategy implementation failure (Njoroge et al., 2015); (Elbanna & Fadol, 2016); (Elbanna et al., 2016); (Höglund et al., 2018); (Olivier & Schwella, 2018); (Maotwanyane & Pretorius, 2018). The factors highlighted above can negatively affect strategy implementation and thus the overall performance of the LPD.

Strategy implementation has been viewed by many scholars as involving a difficult task (Njoroge et al., 2015); (Carlos & Santos, 2015); (Elbanna et al., 2016); (Burke, 2016); (Höglund et al., 2018); (Olivier & Schwella, 2018); (Maotwanyane & Pretorius, 2018); (Momanyi, Senaji, & Were, 2018); (Merkus, Willems, & Veenswijk, 2019); (Ridwan, 2019); (Cândido & Santos, 2019). Consequently, it has been reported by several studies (Olivier., 2015); (Carlos & Santos, 2015); (Kordnaeij, 2016); (Olivier & Schwella, 2018) that 90% of strategies in both the public and private sectors fail due to unsuccessful implementation processes. Therefore, based on the predicaments identified from various reports and literature, this article sought to investigate senior management's perceptions of how to enhance strategy implementation and identify various approaches that could be employed to improve the performance of the LPD. The research questions were pursued in order to explore the best strategies within the organisational context for improved managerial competence and hence the sustainability of strategy implementation in the LPD. However, the findings of this article cannot be generalised to the wider public service organisations, but could provide direction in the making of informed decisions as far as strategy implementation is concerned.

### 1.3. Research Questions
- What are the factors that influence strategy implementation of the LPD?
- What effect does strategy implementation have on the overall performance of the LPD?
- What are the tools and techniques that can help senior management in ensuring successful strategy implementation in the LPD?

### 1.4. Objectives of this Article
The objectives are:
- To identify the factors influencing strategy implementation of the LPD.
- To determine the effects of strategy implementation on the overall performance of the LPD.
- To identify the tools and techniques that can assist senior management in ensuring effective strategy implementation in the LPD.

## 2. Literature Review
### 2.1. Theoretical Framework
Different theories were applied in directing this article. This article was guided by the practice-based view of strategy and the McKinsey 7-S framework.

### 2.1.1. Practice-Based View of Strategy
In essence, the practice-based view (PBV) was established as an alternative to the resource-based view and it "attempts to explain performance based on things that are imitable" (Bromiley & Rau, 2016). Thus, by implication, the PBV becomes pertinent to the LPD as a non-profit making organisation and, as such, does not strive for competitive advantage. This implies that the resources can be employed to enhance service delivery to citizens. Holohan and McDonagh (2017) based their research on the development of practice-based mid-range theory in the public sector. The theory intended to expound the taxonomies embedded in daily practice with a view to comprehending what enables practitioners to fulfil strategic mandates.

Initially, PBV is typically associated with strategy-as-practice (that is praxis, practitioners and practices), and this has been extended to the public sector (Olivier & Schwella, 2018); (Höglund et al., 2018); (Merkus et al., 2019). The three are defined as follows. Strategy praxis refers to the process of executing the strategy of the organisation. Strategy practitioners are people who deal with the formulation and implementation of strategy. Strategy practices are actions for accomplishing that strategy. By implication, senior management in the public sector has to integrate the three in order to fast-track the strategy implementation processes.

### 2.1.2. McKinsey 7-S Framework
The McKinsey 7-S framework was initiated by the consultants of McKinsey from New York (Mukhamad et al., 2020). This framework has seven components which are categorised as either hard or soft (Olivier & Schwella, 2018); (Ochiel, Ombui, & Omwenga, 2016). The hard components are simpler to distinguish and can therefore be influenced by managers. These include strategy, organisational structure and systems (Ochiel et al., 2016). On the other hand, soft components are complex to expound and are persuaded by values, beliefs and norms embedded in organisational employees. These include staff, style, skills (expertise of employees) and shared values (Olivier., 2015). The seven components play an integral role in strategy formulation and implementation in the public sector. In addition, the framework also involves a significant approach to evaluating and monitoring change management activities to ensure effective strategy implementation in the public sector.

The McKinsey 7-S framework informs this research paper by giving direction to the exposition of the significant factors influencing strategy implementation in the LPD (Mukhamad et al., 2020). This theory is linked

**64**

to the effect of senior management's perceptions of the strategy implementation process. The McKinsey's framework is a model that describes the difference between formulation and implementation of the strategies, while submitting that "implementation delegated to a subordinate status is the responsibility of middle management" (Ochiel et al., 2016). Strategy implementation demands a dynamic organisational hierarchy that is aligned with the long-term goals of the organisation.

### 2.1.3. Conceptual Framework

This article has developed a particular conceptual framework that enables the researchers to portray graphically the important dimensions to be studied, such as the key factors or models (Cooper, 2019). The framework provides senior management with an explicit direction with regard to the major constructs and variables that need to be emphasised during strategy implementation in the LPD. This framework is suitable for both public and private sectors. Figure 1 below illustrate the conceptual framework developed in this paper:



**Figure-1.** The conceptual framework of strategy implementation.

### 2.2. Factors Influencing Strategy Implementation in the Public Sector

Various factors influence strategy implementation in the public sector. These include organisational structure, organisational culture, people, communication, control, time and resources (Kihara, 2017); (Olivier., 2015). These are discussed below.

### 2.2.1. Organisational Structure

Organisational structure is regarded as being one of the important internal strengths with regard to strategy implementation (Elbanna & Fadol, 2016); (Maotwanyane & Pretorius, 2018); (Merkus et al., 2019); (Cândido & Santos, 2019); (Mukhamad et al., 2020) and it assists in improving organisational performance in the public sector (Olivier., 2015). Therefore, for superior functionality, the organisation requires complete organisational structure and systems to enhance strategy implementation. The LPD has organisational structures that include administration, health professionals and emergency medical services. Komingoi (2011) suggests that organisations in the public sector should match the organisational structure with the chosen strategy in order to attain superior performance and ensure the sustainability of strategy implementation.

### 2.2.2. Organisational Culture

People have diverse beliefs, values, norms and standards which are deeply embedded in the organisation. Organisational culture as a factor of strategy implementation in the public sector has a persuasive effect on organisational "processes, employees and performance" (Alam & Islam, 2017). The culture should be aligned with the strategies, vision and values of the organisation to enable proper implementation of strategies in the public sector (Zarenda, 2013); (Olivier., 2015); (Elbanna & Fadol, 2016); (Maotwanyane & Pretorius, 2018); (Merkus et al., 2019); (Cândido & Santos, 2019); (Mukhamad et al., 2020). Lemarleni et al. (2017) argue that organisational culture has a considerable impact on strategy implementation in the public sector. Therefore, senior management needs to enhance employee participation in policy decision-making and thus strategy implementation.

### 2.2.3. People

Human resources are essential capital that steers strategy implementation in the public and private sectors and hence ensure superior organisational performance (Elbanna & Fadol, 2016); (Kihara, 2017); (Maotwanyane & Pretorius, 2018); (Mukhamad et al., 2020). Therefore, extensive training and the development strategy of employees has to be deliberately executed to support effective strategy implementation in the public sector (Franks, 2014). The absence of employee involvement by senior management creates the gradualness of strategy implementation as employees may feel excluded (Merkus et al., 2019); (Cândido & Santos, 2019). Hence, teamwork has been perceived as being a main contributory factor in attaining strategy implementation and thus the strategic objectives of the organisation (Olivier., 2015). This implies encouraging employees to support the strategy implementation as a project.

### 2.2.4. Communication

Communication plays a significant role in disseminating information and knowledge during the process of strategy implementation (Elbanna & Fadol, 2016); (Lemarleni et al., 2017); (Maotwanyane & Pretorius, 2018); (Merkus et al., 2019); (Mukhamad et al., 2020). Regular and continuous communication of the business prospects become significant. A lack of communication strategy can be thought of as being a possible reason for the obstruction of proper strategy implementation in the public sector (Komingoi, 2011); (Cândido & Santos, 2019). Consequently, appropriate communication channels and strategies should be in place. The LPD employs different virtual communication channels, including, amongst others, e-mails and WhatsApp groups.

### 2.2.5. Control

The solid control of flow of information and other resources has been vital in the public sector environment (Elbanna & Fadol, 2016); (Elbanna et al., 2016). Leadership in the public sector should enforce control and should maintain the flexibility and capability of employees in strategy implementation (Höglund et al., 2018); (Maotwanyane & Pretorius, 2018); (Merkus et al., 2019); (Ridwan, 2019). Ngcobo and Mdani (2015) suggest that a lack of ample control in public service has caused unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure to be incurred. This had an adverse effect on service delivery and the performance of institutions in the public sector environment. The control of scarce resources plays a material role in ensuring the effective implementation of strategies in the public sector environment (Pablo et al., 2007); (Cândido & Santos, 2019).

### 2.2.6. Time

Time is another factor that impedes effective policy and strategy implementation in the public sector, as senior managers "often spend their time garnering political favour and looking for their next position" (Franks, 2014). Time has been identified as scarce resource and it should be used fruitfully (Olivier., 2015); (Elbanna & Fadol, 2016); (Cândido & Santos, 2019). The fulfilment of policy and strategy implementation depends heavily on time (Elbanna et al., 2016); (Maotwanyane & Pretorius, 2018). At the same time, senior managers in the public sector should devote much time to implementing chosen strategies in order to ensure that there is focus on service delivery and improved performance (in this case the LPD).

### 2.2.7. Resources

Resources, including human, financial and technological resources, are pivotal to strategy implementation (Alam & Islam, 2017). Resources such as leadership's expertise and sufficient time may be constantly essential during the implementation process of strategies (Elbanna et al., 2016); (Maotwanyane & Pretorius, 2018); (Mukhamad et al., 2020). Organisations in the public sector encounter huge challenges in the process of strategy implementation, which involves the distribution of scarce resources and the motivation of employees and politics (Elbanna & Fadol, 2016); (Alam & Islam, 2017); (Höglund et al., 2018); (Ridwan, 2019); (Mukhamad et al., 2020). In addition, Ochiel et al. (2016) advocate that the performance of public sector organisations is obstructed by a shortage of resources. Franks (2014) contends that senior management's lack of appropriate expertise hampers the achievement of goals in the public service.

### 2.3. Tools and Techniques for Successful Strategy Implementation in the Public Sector

The tools and techniques for effective strategy implementation in the public sector include annual objectives, policies and functional strategies (Komingoi, 2011). These are discussed below.

### 2.3.1. Annual Objectives

Annual objectives are elementary for strategy implementation in the public sector, as they represent the means of distributing resources to various directorates (Komingoi, 2011); (Elbanna & Fadol, 2016); (Höglund et al., 2018). They enable senior managers in the public sector to focus on set targets and measureable objectives. Annual objectives are revealed in the strategic plan of the organisation and are coupled with the vision statement, mission statement and long-term objectives. The annual objectives of the LPD are pinpointed in its strategic plan and other strategic documents of the department.

### 2.3.2. Policies

Policies are required to direct the organisational activities to accomplish its mandates that result from the short-term (Höglund et al., 2018); (Maotwanyane & Pretorius, 2018). Komingoi (2011) suggests that policies are there to "set boundaries, constraints and limits on the kind of administrative actions that can be taken to reward or sanction behaviour; they clarify what can and cannot be done in pursuit of the organisation's objectives". Formal policies and procedures enable senior managers to make informed decisions in order to attain the strategic objectives of the organisation (Kihara, 2017); (Ridwan, 2019). The enhancement of strategy implementation in the public sector depends on introducing new systems that enforce proper policies and the execution of procedures (Olivier., 2015); (Elbanna & Fadol, 2016). The LPD has policies and procedures that guide its daily activities.

### 2.3.3. Functional Strategies

Functional strategies are key to regular activities that take place in every functional area within the organisation (in this case the LPD) in order to implement chosen strategies successfully (Komingoi, 2011). These include, amongst others, directorates such as financial management, human resources management, public relations, supply chain management and information communication and technology (ICT) in the public sector. All of these directorates are crucial for strategy implementation in the public sector. The LPD includes functions such as finance, human resource management, healthcare services, ICT, supply chain management, emergency medical services, and pharmacy services.

## 3. Methodology

This paper adopted a mixed-methods approach using empirical research. The target population was 120 employees of the Limpopo Provincial Department (LPD) comprising health professionals and middle managers. The target population was drawn from employees from the Provincial Head Office, the Mopani District Office and Mopani District Hospitals. Only assistant directors, deputy directors and directors were allowed to participate in the study. The sample size was 30 employees. A self-completion questionnaire was employed as a data collection technique. The self-completion questionnaires were administered by means of the drop and pick method. The preliminary questionnaires were pretested (piloted) amongst the three employees in one of the Limpopo Provincial Department to ascertain their opinions concerning question clarity and simplicity of answering (Ary, Jacobs, Irvine, & Walker, 2018). Data analysis and interpretation were conducted using IBM Statistical Packaging for the Social Sciences (SPSS) statistics (Version 24). Furthermore, descriptive and inferential statistics were utilised to interpret the collected data. Cronbach's Alpha was used as a measure of internal consistency and the average inter-item correlation. The One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test was also employed to reveal the significance of the difference between the research variables.

## 4. Research Findings and Discussion

Data interpreted and analysed was summed up in relation to the research objectives of this paper. Graphs and tables were used to illustrate the findings explicitly.

### 4.1. Response Rate

All 30 questionnaires were distributed amongst the respondents, appropriately completed and returned. This signifies the response rate of 100%.

### 4.2. Demographics

The personal information of respondents was required. This included respondents' directorate, number of years in public service, gender, age, number of years in the department, marital status, position, salary level, employment status and qualifications obtained. The findings revealed that out of 30 respondents, 23 were male and the remaining seven were female. The findings showed that 46,7% of the respondents were aged between 36 and 45 years, forty percent of the respondents were between 46 and 55 years, while 6,7% of the respondents were between 56 and 65 and 6,6% of the respondents were between 26 and 35 years. The findings also indicated that 40% of the respondents possess 11 to 20 years' experience in the public service; 30% of the respondents have 21 to 30 years of experience; 20% of the respondents have 0 to 10 years of experience and 10% of the respondents have 31 to 40 years of experience. Furthermore, the findings showed that 36,7% of the respondents have 0 to 10 years in the Limpopo Provincial Department (LPD), 43,3% of the respondents have 11 to 20 years in the LPD, 10% of the respondents have 21 to 30 years in the LPD and 10% of the respondents have 31 to 40 years in the LPD. The findings also showed that 60% of the respondents were assistant directors, 33,3% of respondents were deputy directors and 6,7% of the respondents were directors. The findings also indicated that 43,3% of the respondents were on salary level 9 to 10, 50% of the respondents were on salary level 11 to 12 and 6,7% of the respondents were on salary level 13 to 14.

### 4.3. Factors Influencing Strategy Implementation in the Limpopo Provincial Department (LPD)

The paper sought to probe the perceptions of senior management with regard to strategy implementation in the LPD. Various factors influencing strategy implementation in the department were explored. Figure 2 below presents the findings from the empirical findings.
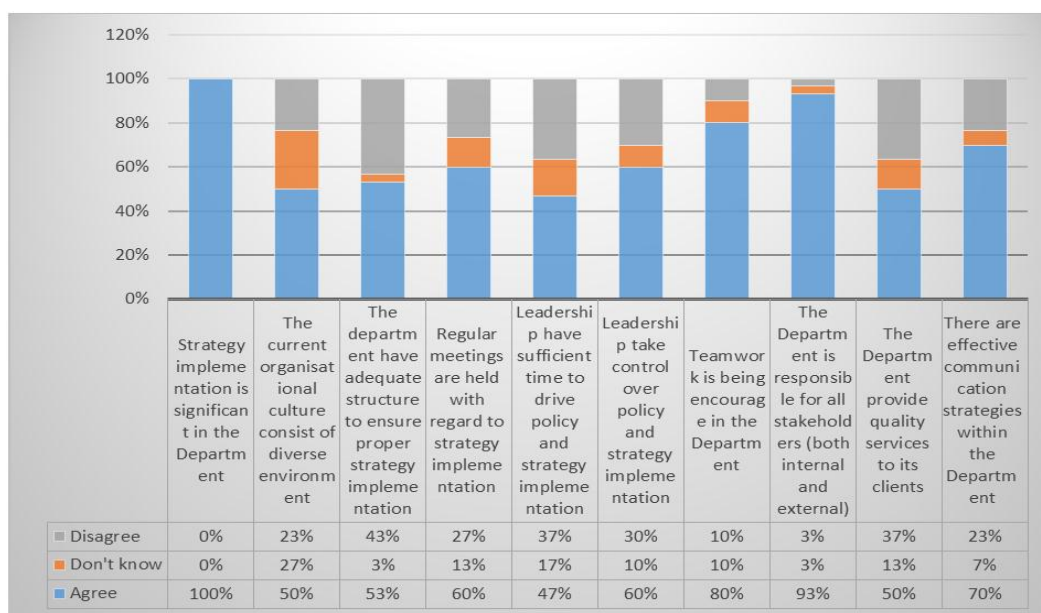


| | Strategy impleme ntation is significan t in the Departm ent | The current organisat ional culture consist of diverse environm ent | The departm ent have adequate structure to ensure proper strategy impleme ntation | Regular meetings are held with regard to strategy impleme ntation | Leadershi p have sufficient time to drive policy and strategy impleme ntation | Leadershi p take control over policy and strategy impleme ntation | Teamwor k is being encourag e in the Departm ent | The Departm ent is responsib le for all stakehold ers (both internal and external) | The Departm ent provide quality services to its clients | There are effective communi cation strategies within the Departm ent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ▪ Disagree | 0% | 23% | 43% | 27% | 37% | 30% | 10% | 3% | 37% | 23% |
| ▪ Don't know | 0% | 27% | 3% | 13% | 17% | 10% | 10% | 3% | 13% | 7% |
| ▪ Agree | 100% | 50% | 53% | 60% | 47% | 60% | 80% | 93% | 50% | 70% |

**Figure-2**. Factors influencing strategy implementation in the LPD.

All the respondents (100%) agreed that strategy implementation is significant in the department. On the question of the current organisational culture, consisting of a diverse environment, 50% of the respondents agreed, 27% were unsure while 23% disagreed. A majority of respondents (53%) agreed that the department has adequate structure to ensure proper strategy implementation, while 3% were unsure and 43% disagreed. Furthermore, a majority (60%) of the respondents agreed that regular meetings are held with regard to strategy implementation in

the department, while 13% were unsure and 27% disagreed. On the other hand, 47% of the respondents agreed that leadership has sufficient time to drive policy and strategy implementation, 17% were unsure and 37% disagreed.

On the question of leadership taking control over policy and strategy implementation, a majority (60%) of the respondents agreed, 10% were unsure and 30% disagreed. Furthermore, on the question of whether teamwork is being encourage in the department, a majority (80%) of the respondents agreed, 10% were unsure and 10% disagreed. Also, 93% of the respondents agreed that the department is responsible for all stakeholders (both internal and external), 3% were unsure and 3% disagreed. In addition, 50% of the respondents agreed that the department does provide quality services to its clients, 13% were unsure and 37% disagreed. In the last question of determining whether effective communication strategies exist within the department, a majority (70%) of the respondents agreed, 7% were unsure and 23% disagreed.

## 4.4. The Effects of Strategy Implementation on the Overall Organisational Performance

This paper further investigated the effects of strategy implementation on the overall organisational performance. Figure 3 below illustrates the results from empirical research.
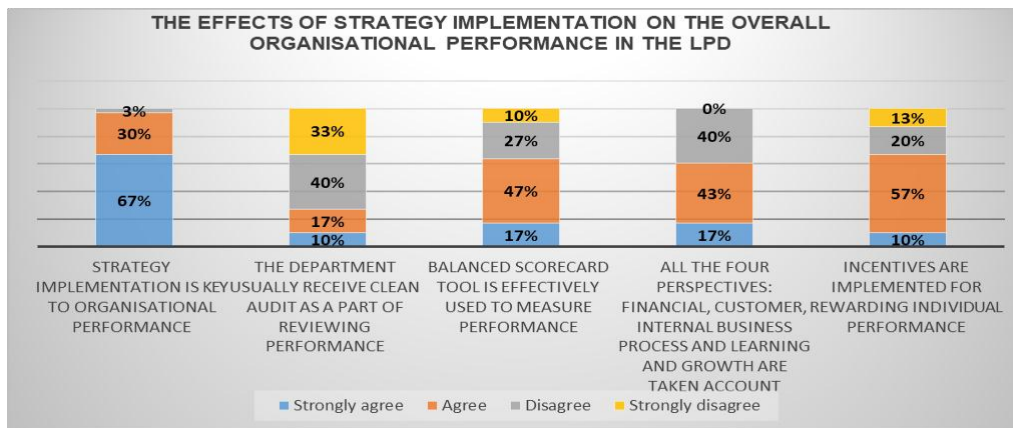


**Figure-3.** The effects of strategy implementation on the overall organisational performance.

On the first statement of strategy implementation being key to organisational performance, a majority (67%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 30% agreed and 3% disagreed. Furthermore, 10% of the respondents strongly agreed that the department usually receives a clean audit as a part of reviewing performance, 17% agreed, 40% disagreed and 33% strongly disgreed. On the statement of a balanced scorecard tool being effectively used to measure performance, while 17% of the respondents strongly agreed, 47% agreed, 27% disagreed and 10% strongly disagreed. Only 17% of the respondents agreed that all four perspectives (financial, customer, internal business process and learning and growth) are taken into account, a majority (43%) agreed and 40% disagreed. On the last statement of incentives being implemented to reward individual performance, 10% of the respondents strongly agreed, 57% agreed, 20% disagreed and 13% strongly disagreed.

## 4.5. The Tools and Techniques that can Assist Leadership in Ensuring Effective Strategy Implementation in the Limpopo Provincial Department (LPD)

This article further explored the tools and techniques that can assist leadership in ensuring effective strategy implementation in the LPD. Figure 4 below depicts the findings from the empirical study:
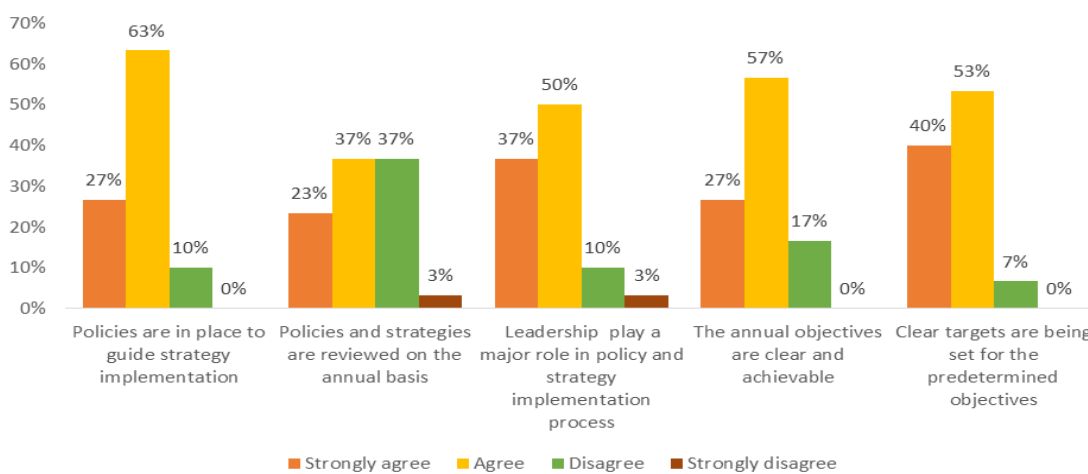


**Figure-4.** The tools and techniques that can assist leadership in ensuring effective strategy implementation in the LPD.

On the statement of whether policies are in place to guide strategy implementation in the department, 27% of the respondents strongly agreed, 63% agreed and 10% disagreed. Furthermore, 23% of the respondents strongly agreed that policies and strategies are reviewed on an annual basis, 37% agreed, 37% disagreed and 3% strongly disagreed. On the statement of leadership playing a major role in the policy and strategy implementation process, 37% of the respondents strongly agreed. A majority (50%) of the respondents agreed, 10% disagreed and 3% strongly disagreed. In addition, 27% of the respondents strongly agreed that the annual objectives are clear and achievable, a majority (57%) agreed and 17% disagreed. Finally, 40% of the respondents strongly agreed that clear targets are being set for the predetermined objectives while a majority of 53% agreed and 7% disagreed.

## *4.6. Descriptive Statistical Analysis*

Descriptive statistics were used to explain the elements of a sample. Furthermore, the mean, standard deviation, and minimum and maximum values for all scaled questions were also computed and used in the explanation of the findings. The item-level responses are summated to scale level and the summary of statistics and frequency distribution are supplied in Table 1.

**Table-1.** Summary of descriptive statistics of mean knowledge scores (n=30).

| Element | Position | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error |
|---------|----------|---|------|----------------|------------|
| Factors influencing strategy implementation in the Provincial Department | Assistant Director | 18 | 14.5 | 4.579 | 1.079 |
| | Deputy Director | 10 | 16.5 | 5.359 | 1.695 |
| | Director | 2 | 22.5 | 2.121 | 1.5 |
| | Total | 30 | 15.7 | 5.066 | 0.925 |
| Tools and techniques that assist in ensuring successful strategy implementation in the Provincial Department | Assistant Director | 18 | 9.11 | 2.139 | 0.504 |
| | Deputy Director | 10 | 9.2 | 2.616 | 0.827 |
| | Director | 2 | 13 | 1.414 | 1 |
| | Total | 30 | 9.4 | 2.415 | 0.441 |
| The influence of strategy implementation on organisational performance in the Provincial Department | Assistant Director | 18 | 10.83 | 2.203 | 0.519 |
| | Deputy Director | 10 | 11.3 | 2.791 | 0.883 |
| | Director | 2 | 14.5 | 0.707 | 0.5 |
| | Total | 30 | 11.23 | 2.473 | 0.452 |

## *4.7. Reliability and Validity*

The internal consistency of the knowledge scale was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha and the average inter-item correlation. Cronbach's Alpha is used as a measure of the internal consistency of similar elements which make up a scale (Bell, Bryman, & Harley, 2019); (Cooper, 2019). These values are presented in Table 2.

**Table-2.** Internal consistency reliability values of scales.

| Scale | Cronbach's Alpha | Average inter-Item correlation | Number of item |
|-------|------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|
| Factors influencing strategy implementation in the Provincial Department | 0.847 | 0.384 | 9 |
| The influence of strategy implementation on organisational performance in the Provincial Department | 0.584 | 0.208 | 5 |
| Tools and techniques that assist in ensuring successful strategy implementation in the Provincial Department | 0.724 | 0.365 | 5 |
| Overall | 0.879 | 0.279 | 19 |

The values of Cronbach's Alpha are acceptable for both scales if they are greater than the minimum acceptable value of 0.6 (Babin & Zikmund, 2015). However, the following scales can be interpreted:

- For a coefficient between 0.7 and 0.8, reliability is considered good.
- For a coefficient between 0.6 and 0.7, reliability is considered fair.
- For a coefficient below 0.6, reliability is considered poor.

Therefore, the value of the average inter-item correlation is greater than the minimum acceptable value of 0.3 (Babin & Zikmund, 2015). The Cronbach's Alpha of this study is 0.879 and the average inter-item correlation is 0.279, which is the acceptance value of Cronbach's Alpha and average inter-item correlation.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The success and survival of an organisation depends on the successful implementation of strategies. A remarkable and superior organisational performance goes hand in hand with effective strategy implementation. Therefore, senior managers should strongly contemplate strategy implementation as it has a huge impact on the overall organisational performance. In addition, senior management of the Limpopo Provincial Department (LPD) should fruitfully disburse the scarce resources in order to attain the strategic objectives of the organisation. Furthermore, proper systems and processes should be in place in order to drive the strategy implementation in the department. This article further suggests that the senior managers should engage employees in the decision-making process in order to respond to the desires of various stakeholders. In addition, senior management should enforce policy and procedure implementation and ensure compliance with prescripts. Policies and procedures need to be reviewed on an annual basis to realise the strategic objectives of the department. The strategies of the department should be directly linked with the vision statement, mission statement, organisational structure and organisational culture so as to benefit strategy implementation efforts. The article recommends that team-work needs to be in place to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of implementation of strategies in the LPD and public sector in general. Therefore, the tight engagement of team members is pivotal to accelerate the execution process.

It is further recommended that a competent senior management be appointed to ensure effective strategy implementation. Regular communication is essential to steer the implementation processes. Hence, effective communication channels and strategies should be in place to enable speedy policy and strategy execution.

This article further recommends the appointment of a competent senior management who is capable of avoiding party politics during working hours and thereby improving strategy implementation processes in the public sector. Furthermore, employees should be motivated by means of appropriate reward systems. This would involve the payment of incentives in the form of performance bonuses and recognition by means of non-financial rewards such as awards. Future research should investigate the impact of reward systems on strategy implementation, and how the praxis, practices and processes (strategy-as-practice) emerge in the public sector.

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