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Factors Influence Strategic Implementation: Review Study

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Abstract

Purpose- The purpose of this paper is to explore the Factors Influence Strategic Implementation (FISI). The paper based on reviewing, analyzing previous studies and literature in strategic implementation in particular, and strategic management in general. A total of thirty-two studies have been chosen from renowned electronic, academic and databases resources (e.g. Emerald, Elsevier, ProQuest, Sage, Wiley, google scholar and Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University library/ Saudi Digital Library...etc.) **Design/methodology/approach** – This paper is based on literature reviewer. The methodology for choosing and selecting literature depends on using the key words of: (strategy implementation, execution, or / and action ...etc.). Also, reference list of reviewed studies and literature provided helps for finding more related studies. Based on this criterion, a number of thirty-two studies have been chosen. These studies have explored and showed the relationship between SI and the factors positively or negatively influence the success of SI processes. **Findings-** Despite the large number of studies examining FISI, the results have been inconclusive. Findings are varied and huge. First factor influences SI are the different meanings of SI/SE. Linguistic meaning for SI and SE in dictionaries have been checked and found they are different. Second; the definitions and concepts used for SI/SE created varied dimensions of factors which influence the effectiveness of SI process. Some terms used are found synonymous with implementation such as execution and actualization of goals. Other factors and concepts have been identified that they view SI /SE on some perspectives and approaches. **Research limitations/implications** –It is a reviewed study. A pilot or and applied study would be more viable to strategic implementation process in particular, and strategic management disciplines in general. Lacking big firms or even small in the region of the author is an obstacle for a practical study. Second the number of reviewed studies are few and not covered all type of firms, industries and insufficient number of countries. **Originality/value-** choosing the topic; SI is crucial for all organizations. Second, the chosen and reviewed studies have been selected from different countries and for varied type of industries. These differences will enrich the study with diverse perspectives and findings. The findings and results may be generalized to many different populations. Also, acknowledging in depth the most recurrent factors with highly influential impact to SI factors and barriers would be of great help to strategic management literature.

Keywords: strategic implementation; strategic execution; implementation factors; strategic management.

Introduction

1-1 General Overview:

Most of the organizations might have done excellent environmental scanning and collected valuable data which emerged into accurate report for formulating good strategy plan. These

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strenuous efforts are worthless without successful strategy implementation. Up to date, the majority of organizations in different industries and sectors suffer from SI pitfalls and failures. The reasons and causes behind these pitfalls and failures are diverse and have not been entirely determined and solved. Sull et al, (2015) referred to a recent survey of more than 400 global CEOs found that: (execution excellence was the number one challenge facing corporate leaders in Asia, Europe, and USA, heading a list of some 80 issues, including innovation, geopolitical instability, and top-line growth).

The author of this paper assumes that, the second challenge is the lack of unanimous concept and definition for SI/SE. The concepts and definitions used for strategic implementation (SI) are varied and different in strategic management literature. A Myriad of authors in strategic management discipline used SI interchangeably with strategic execution (SE). Moreover, models, theories and perspectives viewed for and applied to SI/SE in research are also dissimilar and contradicted. All these factors together are suggested influencing the success of SI in institutions and organizations. Example: In Alharthy et al, (2017) it is cited that many definitions of SI exist and it is a challenge to have principal or clear definition for SI concept. Moreover, researchers use both implementation and execution in one research or interchangeably. Other argue that, the two concepts should not be treated as being similar and interchangeable, while other insist that they have the same meaning. Salmanpour, et al, (2021) stated that, one of the factors leads to SI failure is the lack of a clear and accepted concept of SI in the organization. Concerning models; Bourgeois, et al, 1984) discussed in depth five models for SI and concluded that, they are not correct for all companies; their usages depend on organization diversification and a trial for helping towards success SI, such as commander, change, collaborative, cultural and coercive model. The third issue, is that, the attention which has been given to SI is less than strategic formulation Okumus et la, (1999).

This study aims to contribute to strategy management fields by exploring and determining the most important factors influencing SI. Based on all these mentioned issues question is supposed to be raised about these factors and their nature.

1-2 Study question and Objective:

The fundamental objective for this study is to find an acceptable answer for this question: What factors are mostly influencing the success of SI. The factors and reasons found in SI in particular and strategic management literature in general are many and varied, some of them are similar and repeated, while others are differed. The role of variant terms and concepts used in defining SI or SE is another issue attached to this question. The author assumes these different terms have created obstacles and hinders for SI success. Consequently, the trials of this paper, will help pinpointing and breaking down these used terms and words to clarify the positive or and negative impacts for SI success or failure. Also, acknowledging in depth the most recurrent factors with highly influential impact to SI factors and barriers would be of great help to strategic management literature. Furthermore, this paper thought there are some other important reasons and factors are not

mentioned, or not being given much attention, such as: political factors and management conflicts within and between leaders, top-management leaders and employees at lower levels. Dasan (2022) stated that, (organizations' diseases can impact SI. Those diseases such as: resistance, group-thinking and underperformance). Further, the SI process has not been given much attention as strategic formulation process.

The structure of this paper is as follows: first chapter is an introduction outlining general overview for definitions and concepts used in strategic management literature and SI influential factors. Also, study question and objectives are included. The second chapter is a literature review, this chapter tries to come up with synonymous definitions and concepts for SI, and the factors influencing the success of SI. Chapter three contains research methodology. Chapter four is about the selected research studies with their findings explained and discussed within the context of this study. Chapter five is containing the findings and discussions.

Literature Review:

2-1 Definitions and concepts for Implementation and Execution:

The author of this paper has checked the linguistic meaning of implementation and execution in three world-wide dictionaries and taken the first meaning as per the following:

- 1- Implementation means 1- the act of starting to use a plan or system. Execution means 1- the legal punishment of killing someone (**Cambridge Dictionary**)
- 2- Implementation means 1- an act or instance of implementing something: the process of making something active or effective. Execution means: 1- the act or process of executing: PERFORMANCDE (**Merriam Webster Dictionary**).
- 3- Implementation means: 1- the act of making something that has been officially decided start to happen or be used. Execution means: 1-the act of killing somebody, especially as a legal punishment (**Oxford Learner's Dictionaries**)

The SI concept in strategic management in particular and management literature in general has not been solved yet. As per literature and the reviewed studies, there are many definitions and concepts for SI, and they use different terms and words to describe what meant by SI. Even though, some authors use strategic execution (SE) interchangeably or other terms equally (action, actualization, ...etc). Most authors do not differentiate SI from SE (Srivastava, 2014), example; Srivastava treated SI as SE. These diverse definitions and unsteady usage of SI/SE create varied dimensions for SI and subsequently being factors that influence its effectiveness of implementation process. Also, it is observed by Radomska, & Kozyra (2020), that, a distinction between the scope of SE and SI is exist. Where the later, is aimed at turning implemented strategy into commercial success and SI consists of all the decisions and activities required to turn sets of strategic choices into reality.

Ben et al, (2021) defined SI as a series of steps, programs, investments, and moves that occur over

an extended period of time. Sashittal, et al, (1996) explained, that “implementation involves translating strategic intentions into action steps, assigning relevant tasks and actions to people ensuring that, the tasks are executed as intended and accomplishing predetermined objectives”. They also, added that, some terms are used synonymous with implementation such as execution and actualization of goals. Also, it is cited in MacLennan & Markides (2021), the definition of SI as, “managerial interventions that, align organizational action with strategic intention” and “the process of indirectly manipulating the pattern of resource and market interactions an organization has with its environment in order to achieve its overall objective”. Čater & Pučko (2010) defined SI as a systematic process composed of a logical set of connected activities that enable a company to make a strategy work. Ndambiri, (2015) cited Merchant (2005) who defined SI as the process of rolling out an organization’s long-term plans through a series of outlined actions aimed at achieving definite targets. Charan and Burck (2011) cited in Reddy and Scheepers (2019) defined SE as a distinct set of behaviors and techniques organizations need to master in order to have competitive advantage. Radomska, & Kozyra, (2020) considered implementation process as a set of integrated factors. These factors should be an effective aggregated factors in their construct and regarded the implementation process as an execution-as-learning concept. Schaap (2006) operationally defined SI as those senior-level leadership behaviors and activities that will transform a working plan into a concrete reality

The above examples of different definitions for SI/SE approved the real existence of these variation. This in coincidence with many authors’ findings (table#1) and statements, such as Li, Y.et al, (2008) who assured of no universally accepted definition of SI. They have identified three conceptions based on three approaches each of them defines SI from two perspectives: **process** and **behavior**, or from combining both of the two terms. First approach based on process perspective and treat SI as a sequence of carefully planned consecutive steps. The second approach as a series of more or less concerted actions or and interventions which examine these actions from behavior perspective. The third is a combination of both; the process and behavior perspective and called it a hybrid perspective.

Also, in (Okumus and Roper 1999) the issue of SI has been seen and viewed from different approaches such as: planning, learning, contingency, configuration and complexity approach. The planning approach views SI as tactical processes and an activity that is carried out by staff in the middle and lower-levels of organization. The learning approach regards SI as an incremental trial-and-error. And the contingency approach regards SI as matching with the environment situation and cannot be uniformed for all situation, but according to the current moment of implementation. And it is viewed from configurational as combining all these approaches. Where complexity approach is considering firms as adaptive and nonlinear operating systems that influenced by any small change or development within or outside them. This required decision makers to continuously identify and evaluate any merging patterns.

The third issue, is that, strategies frequently fail not because of inadequate strategy formulation, but because of insufficient implementation, strategy implementation has received less research attention than strategy formulation (Li, Y., Guohui, S., & Eppler, M. J. (2008). Other researchers justified that, the reasons why strategic researchers have paid less attention to the area of SI, might be those researchers they have viewed strategy implementation as “a mere detail of the planning process”. Okumus, F., & Roper, A. (1999) Okumus, F., & Roper, A. (1999)

The author of this paper notes that, all these varied concept and definition sentences, are stand-alone definitions, or based on, and viewed by different approaches and perspectives. They have created big confusion, for not only for clear and unified definition, but also, for their derived and surrounding factors influencing SI. It is noted that, all these definitions for SI are either attached to internal or and within the organization factors, and mainly the role of top management which is widely revealed. As cited in Li., et al, (2008) that, a few definitions stress the external organization factors. However, Li, et al, defined SI as “a dynamic, iterative and complex process, which is comprised of a series of decisions and activities by managers and employees and affected by a number of interrelated internal and external factors – to turn strategic plans into reality in order to achieve strategic objectives”. Lowy, A. (2015) explained that, there are six issues, which must be handled when, comes to strategy execution. Lowy titled them as “the six dilemmas”: time and resources, integration, leadership, confidence, morale and change. Also, Beer & Eisenstat (2000) quoted six killers of SI, as well.

2-2 Research model:

The study model is composed of the four phases known in strategic management: environmental scanning and assessment, strategy formulation, strategy implementation and strategy control and evaluation. As assumed in this study, SI concept and definition influence SI. Other factors found in selected studies and reviewed literature also influence SI. In addition to strategic formulation process (figure # 1).

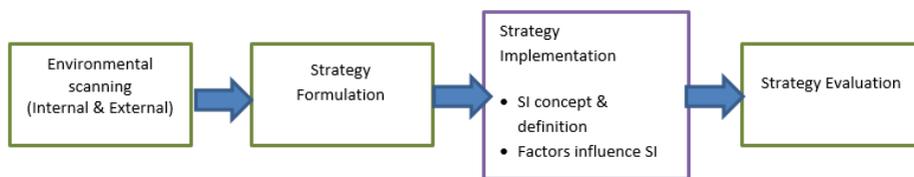


Figure 1 Factors influence SI (study model established by the author)

2-3 Factors Influence Strategic Implementation (FISI):

The FISI are those circumstances, elements, facts or influence that contribute to the result of strategic implementation process. Table# 1 is showing the sample of selected studies covering

the model constructs. These studies are showing factors influencing SI. They are varied and different. The thirty-two studies chosen for this study have found a range of diverse factors influence SI (see tables 1 and 2). The article of Zagotta & Robinson (2002) demonstrated seven keys to successful strategy execution: 1- quantify the vision, 2- communicate strategy through mantras, 3- plan results, not activities, 4- plan what you are not going to do, 5- open strategy to the organization, 6- automate status and progress management, and 7- create a virtuous circle of execution and strategy. Also, the study of Beer, M., & Eisenstat, R. A. (2000) quoted six killers of SI that frequently mentioned in the literature: 1- top-down or laissez-faire senior management style, 2- unclear strategy conflicting priorities, 3- an effective senior management team, 4- poor vertical communication, 5- poor coordination across functions, business or borders and 6- inadequate down-the-line leadership.

Research methodology:

3.1 Samples:

A total of thirty-two related studies have been chosen from renowned electronic academic resources and databases whom are accessible and allowed to the author (e.g. Emerald, Elsevier, ProQuest, Sage, Wiley online and PSAU/SDL,...etc). The selected samples of study were conducted in difference countries of the globe and for varied industries. The method for choosing and selecting depends on using the key words and terms whether independently or jointly, such as: (strategy, implementation, or and execution, action plan, factors, influence/affect ...etc.). Also, the references list of reviewed studies and literature provided great help for finding more related studies. These selected studies are put into sequential according to publishing date starting by most current year then backward (table #1). Based on this criterion a number of thirty-two studies have been chosen and due to the fact that, they have explored and showed the relationship between SI/SE and factors which positively or negatively influence the SI/SE processes. Tables are used and divided into columns and rows containing author/s and study titles, factors influencing SI/SE, and remarks. These studies have been reviewed and analyzed in depth. The author's empirical experiences, practitioners, and academic peer's perspectives were put into much consideration and usage.

Selected Previous Studies:

Table # 1 gives a summarized data for selected studies. These selected and reviewed studies are from different countries: Kenya (4), USA (3), India (3), Saudi Arabia (2), Turkey (2), Indonesia (2) Poland (2), Iran (2), Middle East (2), and one for each of China, Canada, Malaysia, Singapore, Latin America, Finland, Netherland, Jordan, Slovenia, and Ice Land.

- 1- Study of Ocaik et al, (2022) found the following barriers undermining SI: 1- low employee motivation, 2- an exclusive focus on financial performance and 3- lack of consensus among decision makers.

- 2- Study of Ntoiti, & Makau (2022) determined four factors influence SI, 1- resource allocation, 2- organizational culture, 3- leadership, and 4- organization structure.
- 3- Study of Dasan (2022) found the following SI drivers: 1- having a coordinated body for SI, such as project manager office or SE office. 2- Support from information technology. 3- Clear strategic direction from TOP management and leaders.
- 4- Study of Ben, et al, (2021) found factors which have positive significant influence on SI: 1- top management support, 2- strategic communications, 3- strategic evaluation and 4- strategic change.
- 5- Study of Tawse, A., & Tabesh, P. (2021) found factors contributed by managers to the successful of SI: 1- Managerial actions (communicate, adopt, and enact), 2- Conditions of SI effectiveness (commitment, competency, and coordination), 3- Dynamic managerial capabilities (managerial cognition, managerial social capital and managerial human capital).
- 6- Study of Vigfusson, K., Johannsdottir, L., & Olafsson, S. (2021) found 16 Obstacles and 18 success factors to strategy implementation. The obstacles to SI are: 1-inadequate leadership, 2-goals and tasks not defined, 3-management style and lack of support, 4-unclear strategy, 5-external barriers, 6-inadequate change management, 7-cultural problems, 8-no guidelines to implement, 9-poor communication, 10-lack of time, 11-lack of resources, 12-unexpected problems, 13-limited commitment and understanding, 14-inadequate staff capabilities, 15-limited alignment and coordination and 16- IT do not support or monitor strategy.
- 7- Study of Radomska & Kozyra (2020) found six factors influence SI: 1- leadership, 2- employees, 3- process, 4- measure, 5- resources, and 6- strategy content.
- 8- The study of PATRICK, K. K. (2020) examined four factors influence SI. These factors are: 1- Resources, 2- top management commitment, 3- business dynamics and 4- communication.
- 9- Study of Reddy & Scheepers (2019) found nine cultural dimensions that influence SE: 1 is an achievement orientation (achievement orientation meant here is the extent to which an organization supports and rewards group members for striving for continuous improvement and excellence in performance), second is future planning orientation. Others such as: (2- uncertainty avoidance; 3-gender egalitarianism; 4-assertiveness; 5-institutional collectivism; 6-in-group collectivism;7- human, 8-future and achievement orientation; and 9-power distance)
- 10- Study of Zaidi et al, (2018) found the following factors help the success of SI: 1- understanding vision and mission, 2- strategic action plan, 3- resource allocation, 4- employee training, 5- employees' involvement in decision making and 6- reward system.

- 11- Study of Alharthy et al, (2017) found the highest ratio affecting SI: first actors group have high impact on SI: 1-Leadership, 2-Commitment, 3-Sponsorship, 4-Governance, 5-Authority, 6-Talent Management, 7-Sufficient resources and Alignment. The second factors group have less impact are: 8-Clear Objectives, 9-Communication, 10-Engagement, 11-Involvement, 12-Buy-in, 13-Accountability and Motivation.
- 12- Study of Obeidat, et al, (2017) found factors affecting SI as per following: 1-resource availability, 2-communication, 3-operational planning, and 4-control and feedback.
- 13- Study of Gębczyńska, A. (2016) found barriers constraining deployment methods applied in SI:1- lack of uniform rules of conducts, 2- the time-consuming nature of implementation, 3- considerable financial expenditures and 4- complicated implementation methods.
- 14- Study of Yuen, K. F., & Lim, J. M. (2016) found barriers to SI as per the following: 1-lack of resources, 2- lack of strategic vision, 3-lack of measurement system, 4- high regulatory standards, and 5-low willingness to pay for CSR are significant barriers to implementing strategic CSR in shipping
- 15- Study of Sull et al, (2015) found most five pernicious myths in SI, they are as follows: 1- execution equals alignment, 2- execution means sticking to the plan, 3- communication equals understanding and 5- execution should be driven from top.
- 16- Study of Ndambiri (2015) found four barriers to SI. They are: 1-translating vision into strategy, 2- business process (includes systems such as: control systems reward and disciplinary systems, resource distribution and allocation) are the biggest barriers to SI. In addition to: 3- leadership, and 4- people's behavior. All these must be aligned with the strategy.
- 17- Study of Sabourin (2015) found five drivers for SI (or strategy of execution) as following: 1-clarifying and aligning the objectives, 2- driver of emotion: obtain a commitment by the development of real convictions, 3- translating your objectives into concrete projects with your employees, 4- driver of immediate action: facing the exigencies with immediate actions, 5- driver of integrity: execute your objectives in the integrity of your values.
- 18- Study of KILIÇ, M., & AKTUNA, A. (2015) found six obstacles: 1-translation of strategic objectives to employees, 2- motivation, 3- resistance, 4- development hell, 5- groupthink and 6- underperformance
- 19- Study of Srivastava, A. (2014) identify seven variables of adaptation: 1- Adapt the target, 2-modify strategies, 3- reformulate strategic plans, 4-redefine operational plan, 5-reassess capabilities, 6- adaptive culture, 7-incorporating reflections (acquired learning and knowledge).

- 20- Study of Brinkschröder, (2014) found Key factors for SI as follow: 1- strategy (formulation & planning and strategic consensus), 2- structure (cross-functional coordination, resources allocation, control by management and communication), and 3- behavior (commitment of workforce, leadership of managers, and cultural context).
- 21- Study of Al-Kandi, et al., (2013) found factors influence SI in Saudi Arabian banks as follow: 1- process and personnel factors (involvement and communication, 2-project factors, (time priority of decision and 3- organizational factors (top management support, religion and organizational structure).
- 22- Study of Pella, D. A., Sumarwan, U. & Daryanto, A. (2013) found factors inhibiting SI as follow: corporate scorecard, KPI, information technology, competence, performance appraisal, strategy management office, financial capability, mission statement, stretching target, action plan, leadership, improvement, structure, culture, change management
- 23- Study of Alamsjah, F. (2011) found factors influencing SI as per the following: 1- corporate culture, 2- clear strategy, 3- communication, 4- execution plan, 5- competencies, 6- documentation, 7- performance management.
- 24- Study of Čater, T., & Pučko, D. (2010) found thirteen FISI as per the following: 1- reward systems do not stimulate SI, 2- strategy is not properly communicated to lower levels, 3- managers lack leadership skills for SI, 4- strategy is poorly defined, 5- top management is not actively engaged in SI, 6- short-range orientation dominates the company, 7- managers lack capabilities to implement change management, 8- managers lack ideas how to persuade employees to executive the strategy, 9- strategy conflicts with existing organizational power structure, 10- strategic analysis is not properly concluded, 11- there are no guidelines or a model to guide strategy execution efforts, 12- employees are reluctant to share knowledge with colleagues, 13- managers do not trust information generated outside their units.
- 25- Study of Sorooshian et. Al, (2010) found the following SI drivers: 1- structure, 2- leadership style, and 3- resources.
- 26- Study of Li, Y., Guohui, S., & Eppler, M. J. (2008) found nine factors influence SI, they are: 1- strategy formulation process. The way strategy formulated affects SI. 2- strategy executors: who execute the strategy, top, middle, lower or non-management. 3- organizational structure which should be aligned and matched with the strategy and then its implementation. 4- communication activities, 5- level of commitment for the strategy, 6- consensus relating to strategy, 7-relationship among different units/departments, 8- employed implementation tactics and 9- administrative systems, it is the design of firm structure (centralized or decentralized...etc)
- 27- Study of Kazmi (2008) Proposed three themes as important factors for SI. Under each theme

set of activities: 1- activating strategies (project management, procedural management, and resource allocation), 2- managing change (project implementation, leadership implementation, behavioral implementation) and 3- achieving effectiveness (functional implementation and operational implementation)

- 28- Study of Brenes et al, (2008) found five dimension as key success factors for SI. These are: 1- Strategy formulation process, 2- systematic execution, 3- strategy control and follow-up, 4- CEO's leadership and suitable, motivated management and employees and 5- corporate government leading the change.
- 29- Study of Schaap, J. I. (2006) found the following factors influencing SI: 1- Strategic consensus, 2- Communication, 3- rewards to success of employed strategy, and 4- deploying clear plans.
- 30- Study of Rahimnia Alashloo, et al, (2005) found 32 factors affecting SI. The most important of them are nine and these are: 1- lack of exact strategic planning, 2- unsuitable training program, 3- insufficient resources allocation, 4- political factors in regard to retention and distribution of power, 5- organizational culture is incompatible, 6- major problem were not identified before implementation, 7- lack of suitable communication in the university, 8- inadequate employees' connection to the vision and 9- unsuitable personnel management for developing incentives.
- 31- Study of Shah, A. M. (2005) Found the following factors influence SI as follow: inadequate Management Skills, Poor Comprehension of Roles Inadequate Leadership and Direction Provided by Departmental Managers, Ill-defined Key Implementation Tasks and Activities, Lack of Employee Commitment, Inadequate Training and Instructions given to Lower-level Employees, Insufficient Coordination Across Departmental Boundaries, Insufficient Capabilities of Employees, Unclear Lines of Accountability, Poor Information Systems and Ineffective Monitoring
- 32- Study of Aaltonen, P., & Ikävalko, H. (2002) found factors effect SI such as: communication, 2- lack of understanding of strategy, 3- linking of strategy to goals and objectives, 4- conflicting activities and events, 5- lack of alignment between strategy and organization compensation system

Findings and discussions:

5-1 Findings:

Definitions of SI/SE:

Linguistically, there is a clear difference between SI from SE (Cambridge Dictionary and Oxford Learner's Dictionary). Where SI in both of the dictionaries means the act of using a plan or

implementing and making something active or and effective. The later (SE) means legal punishment or act of killing. Imagine if a strategic plan is to be implemented in a judicial court or a firm dealing with judicial systems. What to use implementation or execution term. It is a confused for those who responsible to or for implementing the plan. The term execution is more attached to the mind of those who work or specialize in judicial systems than those who are consultant or specialize in strategic management or in other field of specialty.

As per my understanding of the reviewed literature, reading and analyzing of thirty-two studies (table# 2), it is clear that, the concepts and definitions for SI/SE are varied. Whether these variations in linguistic dictionaries or within the literature and disciplines of strategic management. The variations have great impact in conceptualizing, understanding and using these different terms and definitions. Prior and During the SI process, teams who responsible for drafting, formulating and implementing a strategy plan would be having different concepts and definitions in their minds. This is based on their background of managerial cognition and knowledge-structures, these differences will be embedded as discipline and approach for the same SI process within same course of action in one area or other of an organization. However, how SI or SE conceptualized and understood within the conditions of SI process. Definitely, this will create confusion between and within this team.

Also, the concepts and definitions used for implementation whether are standing alone words and phrases, viewed or based on other perspectives have created rigorous obstacles for SI. Such as processing, planning, behavior, Li, Y. et al, (2008), or as viewed by (Okumus and Roper 1999) within different approaches such as: planning, learning, contingency, configuration and complexity approach. The planning approach. Charles (1999) confirmed that, the diversity and different perspectives defining implementation concept are the major reason for the lack of a cohesive body of contemporary SI research.

Usage of SI/SE:

The table # 2 shows the number of study use SI, SE or both of the terms interchangeably and within their study context as a key word. 13 studies out of the total sample (32 studies) use SI in their study. 18 out of 32 studies use both SI and SE interchangeably in their study context. Only one study out of these thirty studies use SE. This is to some extent in coincidence with the study of Li, Y., Guohui, S., & Eppler, M. J. (2008) in which they confirmed that most of their 60 reviewed studies used SI as key words and very few used the SE. Some studies do not differentiate SI from SE in these 60 studies and some researchers use SE as synonym of SI. To the author thoughtful; using SI and SE interchangeably in one study context with no doubt cause confusion and might impact the smooth cognition of SI process. Another evidence is that, the lowest or non-exist user for SE (only one study used SE) is an approval for undesirable usage for the term SE in the disciplines of strategy management.

Table 2 number of studies used SI, SE, or both SI & SE as key word

#	Description	Number of studies	Remarks
1	Number of studies used SI	13	SI only used within study context
2	Number of studies used SE	1	SE only used within study context
3	Number of studies used both SI & SE interchangeably	18	SI & SE both used within study context
	Total	32	Total selected studies

The important note is that, one study use SE alone as a key term and concept within the study context. However, still the confusion is existing since the majority of the selected study use both SI and SE simultaneously and they have not differentiated between them. This is in coincidence with many scholars use the concepts as synonyms (Hrebiniak, 2006).

Factors impacting SI/SE

Table # 3 shows the most factors influencing SI/SE and their frequent occurring among the selected studies and reviewed literature. 13 studies found communication as one of the factor influences SI/SE. The author notes that, communication found in each study as factor among other factors such as: resources, strategy communication, objectives, goals. As if these factors are connected and aligned with the activities and processes of communication. Strategy, resource, objectives and goals are definitely need to be communicated and cascaded down or up to all organization’s division, departments, units, sections and employees; that is to say communication to and with all organization’s stakeholders. They must be cleared to and understood by all these stakeholders. This approach could be initiated by involving the entire organization’s employees within and stakeholders’ outside and then being committed to the strategy plan and its implementation. This result supports the finding of Vigfússon et la, (2021) which considered frequent and clear communication as the first dualistic factor for SI. Also, Alamsjah (2011) found that it is not enough just to have a clear strategy, the strategy must be communicated through the organization and be translated into implementation plans.

The resource allocation is found to be the similar with communication as most repeated factor influences SI/SE in selected studies and literature reviewed. According to the concept of Resource Based Theory Penrose (2009), resources are the focal factors for any organization to gain competitive advantages. Strategic leadership is found to be the second factor (11 studies) that influences SI. Then, employee involvement, culture, top management support, structure and clear strategy are factors followed respectfully. The author of this study notes that, these factors derive from and hover around the leadership. Therefore, the focal point is the strategic leadership, since the major duties and responsibilities for leadership’s decisions are: to acquire, develop and allocate the resource required for SI process, especially the scare resources. Also, the structure and culture are both critical duties for strategic leadership level. They required to

be well cascaded down through the organization (designed, distributed and delegated). Also, the author notes that, whenever mentioned resource allocation there are: leadership, culture and strategy content mentioned synonymously within these studies as factors influence SI.

Table# 3 shows the factors influencing SI/SE and their frequent usages.

Frequent Factors	N. of Frequent	Remarks
Communication	13	13 studies found communication influencing SI/SE
Resource allocation	13	
Leadership	11	
Culture	9	
Top management support / commitment	8	
Structure	7	
Clear strategy	6	
Reward systems	4	
Employees training	3	
Strategic consensus	3	
Employees involvement	2	

This finding indicates to an important existence of strategic leadership during the SI process. The more success of strategic leadership is the more success of structure, strategic content, resource allocation, and building a solid culture which connecting and aligning all these factors to enhance the success of SI. This could be in congruence with Charles (1999) proclaiming that, the aspects of firm such as culture, organizational structure and leadership style may have a profound effect on implementation processes. Also, salient factors such as the industry and firm size influence SI.

5-2 Discussion:

The objective of the study is to find the factors influence the success of SI for 32 selected studies of strategic implementation in particular and literature of strategic management in general. It is found that, linguistically the definitions for SI and SE are varied which result into confused usages for them in strategic management discipline. Li, Y.et al, (2008) assured of no universally accepted definition of SI. Also, the findings shed the lights on the most repeated FISI. These factors are also found to be varied, and viewed from different perspectives, first: the concepts and definitions of implementation. These concepts and definitions of implementation whether

are standing alone words and phrases, viewed or based on other perspectives such as processing, planning, behavior, Li, Y. et al, (2008), or as viewed by (Okumus and Roper 1999) from different approaches such as: planning, learning, contingency, configuration and complexity approach. They have different impact according to cognition, understanding and believing of the decision makers or and the teams responsible for SI in or within certain sectors or industry. For example: if decision makers or the teams for SI in medical health care sector (i.e. hospitals) they are mostly near to view SI from the perspectives of processing or contingency as they will be impacted by their field work. Also, planning perspective could be more acceptable for decision makers or SI teams coming from the field of management (planning thinking). What to say is that, based on the indoctrining origination of the DMs or SI teams and the SI context are determined factors for the success of SI.

Also, viewing the SI/SE concepts based on some perspectives are determined and found in these reviewed studies. Li et la, (2008) have identified three concepts for SI term, such as process, planning, and behavior. The first is based on a process perspective which viewed SI as a sequences of planned steps and phases. The second as behavior perspective which handles SI as series of decisions and actions which involved human behavior and activities for achieving successful result. And the third one is a combination of both process and behavior perspectives. Also, Carrington et al, (2022) in their book came up with four important factors influencing the success of SE, these are 1- alignment, 2- ability, 3- architecture and 4- agility.

The subject of contradiction in using SI or and SE as concept and term for *STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION OR STRATEGIC EXECUTION* practices might be implanted and inserted into those who authorized and responsible for successful strategic implementation to achieve good organization performance. This required a thorough commitment to what they believe in as implementing or executing managers...to sense the two terms, they are different, and if I have to choose as strategic implementer or an executor, definitely I will choose to be called implementer than executor.

As differences between SI and SE have not been cleared and settled in the strategic management literature, such as a myriad of scholars use both concepts as synonyms (Hrebiniak, 2006). Also, Li, Guo-Hui and Eppler (2010) report in their research that there seemed to be a consensus of using strategy implementation as a key word in the field of strategy implementation/execution, and that few generally use strategy execution concept (Li et al., 2010), (These cited in Vigfússon, K., Jóhannsdóttir, L., & Ólafsson, S. (2021). Also, a study of Ali (2023) found that a strategic consensus has direct impact on strategic implementation.

The second factors influencing SI as elements, facts or influence contribute to SI success and effectiveness. As these factors are many and varied, some have been recurrent in these studies regardless their incomparable contextual and type of industry.

5-3 Conclusion:

From the study findings, it is determined and concluded that, the issue of factors influence SI are not yet settled whether in their nature, type and number. Foremost, the concepts and definitions for SI in strategic management literature has not been agreed upon. Also, the usages of SI /SE are still confused, 18 out of 32 reviewed studies used SI / SE interchangeably even within one study context. As indicated most authors do not differentiate SI from SE. All these factors influence and determine the success of SI and the performance of the organization.

Secondly, the most factors influence SI in reviewed studies and literature are in sequential as per the following: communication, resources, leadership, culture, top management commitment, structure, clear strategy, reward systems, employees' training and employees' involvement. The study recognized that, communication and resources are alike found to be more impacting and influencing the SI process. Then leadership and culture. According to my understanding there are significant relationship between acquiring and distribution resources, communicating and leadership. Leaders of firms are directly responsible for resources allocation, especially prior and during strategy implementation processes. Also, communication is a major part of the structure and the structure is a top managers' responsibilities. Thirdly, there are other explicit and implicit factors viewed and seen SI by and based on other concepts and term such as: leadership, planning, learning, contingency, configuration, process, behavior, alignment, architecture, agility...etc. All these have direct or indirect influence on SI. For example, how to view and see SI from perspective of leadership, planning, process and behavior and then their influence to the SI processes. Lastly, is the fact raised in strategic management literature whereas the attention which has been given to SI is less than what is given to strategic formulation Okumus et la, (1999).

5-3 Recommendations:

- 1- Conducting a study focuses on factors affecting SI of specific industries or and a comparison study for several industries.
- 2- Conducting study handling salient factors that influence SI like industry and firm size.

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