STRATEGIC BEHAVIOURS IN MUNICIPAL DECISION-MAKING: A STRATEGIC APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The present study explores an effective strategy implementation in the municipality of Saudi Arabia. The study also recognizes the mediating effect of planning success in the study.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The researchers conducted the study using quantitative methods, which applied the survey questionnaire to get responses from management-level employees working in the municipality Eastern Province Region of Saudi Arabia. Finally, the analysis utilized 274 samples to conclude it.

Findings: Using SEM through AMOS, the study's outcomes significantly affect strategic behaviours, resource allocation, institutional policies and planning success in an effective strategy implementation. Moreover, the planning success factor mediates the association between strategic behaviour, resource allocation and effective strategy implementation. On the other hand, planning success negatively mediates the association between institutional policies and effective strategy implementation.

Research, practical and social implications: The study findings would support cultivating a culture of flexibility and prioritizing collaborative approaches for effective strategy implementation. The results also help efficiently allocate critical resources, prioritize strategic investments, and maintain flexibility in resource reallocation to align with evolving strategic goals. Finally, it guides the development of policies with practical strategies, encourages calculated risk-taking, and establishes robust monitoring mechanisms with transparent communication to ensure successful strategy implementation.

Originality/value: This study fills the gaps in the empirical assessment among Saudi municipalities.

Keywords: effective strategy implementation, resource allocation, strategic behaviour, successful plans, institutional policies, municipality.

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COMPORTAMENTOS ESTRATÉGICOS NA TOMADA DE DECISÃO MUNICIPAL: UMA ABORDAGEM ESTRATÉGICA

RESUMO

Objetivo: O presente estudo explora uma implementação de estratégia eficaz no município da Arábia Saudita. O estudo também reconhece o efeito mediador do sucesso do planejamento no estudo.

Design/Metodologia/Abordagem: Os pesquisadores conduziram o estudo usando métodos quantitativos, que aplicaram o questionário da pesquisa para obter respostas de funcionários de nível gerencial que trabalhavam no município Região da Província Oriental da Arábia Saudita. Por fim, a análise utilizou 274 amostras para concluí-la.

Constatações: Usando o SEM através do AMOS, os resultados do estudo afetam significativamente os comportamentos estratégicos, a alocação de recursos, as políticas institucionais e o sucesso do planejamento em uma implementação eficaz da estratégia. Além disso, o fator de sucesso do planejamento medeia a associação entre comportamento estratégico, alocação de recursos e implementação efetiva da estratégia. Por outro lado, o êxito do planejamento constitui uma medição negativa da associação entre as políticas institucionais e a implementação eficaz da estratégia.

Investigação, implicações práticas e sociais: Os resultados do estudo apoiariam o cultivo de uma cultura de flexibilidade e a priorização de abordagens colaborativas para a implementação eficaz da estratégia. Os resultados também ajudam a alocar recursos essenciais com eficiência, priorizar investimentos estratégicos e manter a flexibilidade na realocação de recursos para alinhá-los às metas estratégicas em evolução. Por último, orienta o desenvolvimento de políticas com estratégias práticas, incentiva a assunção de riscos calculados e estabelece mecanismos de acompanhamento sólidos com comunicação transparente para assegurar uma implementação bem-sucedida da estratégia.

Originalidade/valor: Este estudo preenche as lacunas na avaliação empírica entre os municípios sauditas.

Palavras-chave: implementação efetiva da estratégia, alocação de recursos, comportamento estratégico, planos de sucesso, políticas institucionais, município.

1 INTRODUCTION

In the dynamic landscape of municipal governance, the effective implementation of strategic initiatives stands as a linchpin for sustainable development and community well-being (Mišanková and Kočišová, 2014; Soomro et al., 2021; Shah and Soomro, 2021). As municipalities navigate various challenges, from urbanization and resource allocation to environmental sustainability and citizen engagement, the significance of adept strategy implementation becomes increasingly pronounced (Kalogiannidis et al., 2023). As the fundamental units of local governance, municipalities serve as crucibles for societal progress, wherein strategic planning acts as the catalyst for transformative change (Lowndes and Pratchett, 2012; Santinha et al., 2023). As these entities grapple with the multifaceted demands of modern society, the need for a comprehensive and robust
strategy becomes imperative. However, more than the mere formulation of a strategic blueprint is required; the actual litmus test lies in the seamless execution of these plans (Ahmed Sebaa et al., 2009). Drawing from diverse disciplines such as public administration, urban planning, and organizational management, we aim to dissect the components that underpin successful strategy implementation in municipal settings. The inherent complexity of local governance demands a nuanced approach that acknowledges the interplay of political, economic, social, and technological factors (Chen and Jia, 2023).

Strategic implementation in Saudi municipalities is pivotal in aligning local governance with the national vision articulated in Vision 2030 (Moshashai et al., 2020). This process is integral to effectively managing resources and ensuring optimal allocation for ambitious infrastructure projects and urban development initiatives (Alemahu, 2023). Municipalities are at the forefront of translating urban planning and smart city goals into actionable projects that enhance community well-being. Successful strategic implementation fosters community engagement, administrative efficiency, and governance effectiveness, ultimately contributing to economic growth, environmental sustainability, and social cohesion. Moreover, it necessitates a keen understanding of the unique cultural and social dynamics of Saudi Arabia, emphasizing adaptability to local needs (Thompson, 2021).

Considering this significance, this research explores and elucidates the pivotal role of meticulous planning in the success of strategy implementation within municipal frameworks of the Eastern province of Saudi Arabia. This research aspires to contribute valuable insights to municipal leaders, policymakers, and scholars vested in enhancing governance efficacy through systematically exploring the literature, coupled with empirical evidence and expert perspectives. By recognizing the robust role of planning success, we offer a roadmap for municipalities to navigate the intricate terrain of strategy implementation, fostering resilience, adaptability, and, ultimately, sustainable growth.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature demonstrates a strong correlation between strategic behaviours and the effective execution of organizational strategies. Oyebode and Orji (2023) emphasize the significance of customizing persuasive approach implementation choices to enhance individual efficacy. The application of technological strategies favours the influence of
strategic decisions on construction organizations (Henderson and Ruikar, 2010). Evans et al. (2004) investigate methods for assisting students with emotional and behavioural challenges, highlighting the significance of behavioural interventions in educational environments. The study conducted by Amoo et al. (2023) examines the influence of strategic planning on organizational results across time. The survey conducted by Jafari-Sadeghi et al. (2023) provides evidence of the underlying principles of digital transformation. It verifies the beneficial contribution of entrepreneurs as strategic transformation managers in implementing digital strategies for small and medium-sized multinational businesses. The user's text is empty. Palladan et al. (2016) propose that strategic leadership, organizational innovativeness, and information technology competency are crucial to successful plan execution. The connection between strategic project management and positive behavioural influence is established through strategy (Grundy, 2000). Naranjo-Gil and Hartmann (2007) state that CEOs employ management information systems, and a correlation exists between leadership behaviour and technology infrastructure in executing healthcare strategies. Peng and Litteljohn (2001) provide valuable insights into the crucial significance of organizational communication in successfully implementing strategies.

Lemarleni et al. (2017) examine the impact of resource allocation on the execution of strategies in the Kenya Police Service, providing valuable insights into the public sector. In their study, Masya et al. (2022) investigate the allocation of resources and the execution of strategies in commercial bank branches located in Machakos Sub County. They provide evidence supporting the notion that financial institutions effectively managing resources impact the development and implementation of strategic plans. Abbasi et al. (2022) enhance the existing body of knowledge by examining how to allocate resources effectively to meet different service requirements within a shared resource pool. They emphasize the significance of efficient resource allocation in meeting diverse service needs. The study conducted by Moizer and Tracey (2010) explores the impact of resource allocation on strategy development in social enterprises, emphasizing its influence on the organisation's long-term viability. Chepkosgei and Atambo (2018) found that resource allocation substantially impacts the implementation of strategic planning in public universities, providing helpful guidance. The study conducted by Harun et al. (2019) indicates that the allocation of resources impacts the implementation of strategies inside a religious organization, specifically the Presbyterian Church. The
excellent impact of strategic leadership, strategic resource allocation, and strategic incentives on the performance of public secondary schools has been acknowledged (Nang'ole and Muathe, 2023). Alidrisi and Mohamed (2012) utilize a goal-programming technique to allocate resources for strategic quality management, illustrating how specific methodologies might improve resource allocation practices. Maritan and Lee (2017) comprehensively analyses the correlation between resource allocation and strategy across multiple industries. The study conducted by Nthiwa and Muchemi (2020) found that resource allocation, when used as a strategy implementation practice, has a favourable and significant impact on the performance of audit firms. The research conducted by Cacal et al. (2023) investigates the tactical execution of integrated water resource management and highlights the significance of efficient resource allocation in promoting environmental sustainability.

Efficient institutional policies have a beneficial impact on the implementation of strategies in different situations. Implementing strategic plans in public water sector agencies in Kenya is significantly influenced by institutional dynamics, which affects strategy execution in the public sector (Musyoka and Deya, 2023). In this study, Liu et al. (2023) examine the strategic management of natural resources and the significance of human, technological, and institutional resources in alleviating the negative impacts of the resource curse. Pacey and Keough (2003) examine how institutions' strategies are influenced and implemented by the junction of public policy, institutional structures, and the strategic implementation of broader governmental programmes. In 2013, Graham et al. introduced a framework that outlines how higher education institutions might adopt and implement blended learning. The framework emphasizes the importance of institutional policies in supporting the integration of technology-enhanced teaching methods. Voce (2015) examines institutional policies regarding the electronic management of assessment and highlights the beneficial impact of these rules on adopting assessment practices in higher education institutions. The empirical evaluation conducted by Moser and Moser (2005) suggests that institutional strategies are resilient to the impact of gender mainstreaming success. The study conducted by Mate and Kaluyu (2018) illustrates the effect of institutional pressures on achieving plan implementation within healthcare sectors. McCann and Ortega-Argilés (2014) argue that smart specialization in European regions is interconnected with strategic planning, institutional frameworks, and effective execution. The adoption and implementation of information and communication
technology policies in higher education in South Africa are influenced by national and institutional pathways, which are shaped by ICT policies and strategies (Cross and Adam, 2007). Hou et al. (2021) assert a correlation between employability and higher education within Taiwan's education system. The development of regional innovation strategies in Central Europe is attributed to the significant influence of institutions and regional leadership in producing strategic outcomes (Blažek et al., 2013). Safarov (2019) states that the institutional aspects of open government data implementation in the Netherlands, Sweden, and the UK play a significant role in influencing the development of institutional policies for implementing available data programmes.

Efficient strategy execution is facilitated by successful strategic planning across many situations. Vigfússon et al. (2021) present an extensive analysis of empirical literature that identifies barriers and determinants of success in executing strategies, thereby consolidating knowledge in this domain. The study by Esfahani et al. (2018) investigates the success of strategic planning in Iranian healthcare organisations, providing valuable insights contributing to the broader discussion on healthcare management. The case studies on enterprise resource planning implementation identify the key elements contributing to its success, offering a comprehensive understanding of these factors (Saade and Nijher, 2016).

George (2021) highlights the crucial role of the interdependence of individuals, procedures, and strategies in attaining effective strategy execution in public institutions. This perspective offers a comprehensive understanding of the aspects that impact the effectiveness of implementation. O'Regan and Ghobadian (2007) argue that the characteristics of formal strategic planning give rise to essential considerations concerning its frequency and effectiveness, leading to a reassessment of the importance of appropriate planning in attaining organizational success. The success of small businesses in Mexico highlights the strong connection between strategic planning procedures and positive outcomes, which significantly influences success in the Mexican business environment (Saenz, 2010).

Consequently, the above literature demonstrates the positive effect of the factors such as strategic behaviour, resource allocation, institutional policies and effective planning towards in achieving successful strategy implementation (O'Regan and Ghobadian, 2007; Saenz, 2010; Vigfússon et al., 2021; Esfahani et al. 2018; Alkhodary, 2023; Alkhodary, 2023). Moreover, the mediating role of success planning is also
substantial and meaningful in developing the positive connection between strategic behaviour, resource allocation, institutional policies and successful strategy implementation in diverse regions (Katou and Budhwar, 2006; Fadol et al., 2015; Mohammed and Fisal, 2023; Amoo et al., 2023). However, these associations have not been confirmed before in Saudi municipalities.

As a result, based on these gaps and existing relationships in the literature, the researchers proposed the following model (Figure 1) for confirmation in the municipality context of Saudi Arabia.

Figure 1. Conceptual model of the study

Source: Developed by the authors

3 HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

3.1 STRATEGIC BEHAVIOURS AND EFFECTIVE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

The relevant literature offers a significant relationship between strategic behaviours and the successful implementation of organizational strategies. For instance, Palladan et al. (2016) suggest the pivotal roles of strategic leadership, organizational innovativeness, and information technology capability in fostering effective strategy implementation. Strategic project management and behaviour positive influence are connected through strategy (Grundy, 2000). The study of Thorpe and Morgan (2007) provides the great significance of marketing strategy implementation in achieving success. According to Naranjo-Gil and Hartmann (2007), CEOs utilize management information systems, and there is a connection between leadership behaviour and technological infrastructure in healthcare strategy implementation. Peng and Litteljohn (2001) contribute insights into the critical role of organizational communication in effective strategy implementation. Oyebode and Orji's (2023) examination of persuasive
strategy implementation choices underscores the importance of tailoring strategies for individual effectiveness. The technology implementation strategies positively affects the impact of strategic choices on construction organizations (Henderson and Ruikar, 2010). Evans et al. (2004) explore strategies for supporting students with emotional and behavioral difficulties, revealing the importance of behavioral interventions in educational settings. The evolution of strategic planning’s impact on organizational outcomes (Amoo et al., 2023). Jafari-Sadeghi et al. (2023) demonstrates the micro-foundations of digital transformation and confirmed the positive role of entrepreneurs as strategic transformation managers in driving digital strategies for small and medium internationalizes.

As a result, several findings confirmed the meaningful contribution of strategic behaviors, encompassing leadership, communication, technology choices, and personalized approaches, influence the effective implementation of organizational strategies across diverse sectors. However, among management staff of Saudi Eastern Province Region is still needs confirmation. Hence:

**H1. Strategic behaviours play a significant role in developing effective strategy implementation.**

### 3.2 RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND EFFECTIVE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Resource allocation predicts effective strategy implementation. In the study by Harun et al. (2019), resource allocation enhances the strategy implementation within a religious organization. Masya et al. (2022) explore resource allocation and strategy implementation in commercial bank branches in Machakos Sub County and confirm the effect of financial institutions managing resources in developing strategic plans. Abbasi et al. (2022) contribute to the literature by addressing allocation policies to meet heterogeneous service requirements under resource pooling, emphasizing the importance of efficient resource allocation in fulfilling diverse service needs. Moizer and Tracey's (2010) study on social enterprises delves into the role of resource allocation in strategy-making, highlighting its effects on organizational sustainability. Lemarleni et al. (2017) focus on the effects of resource allocation on strategy implementation within the Kenya Police Service, offering insights into the public sector. Alidrisi and Mohamed (2012) adopt a goal-programming approach to resource allocation for strategic quality
management, demonstrating how specific methodologies can enhance resource allocation practices. In the exact direction, Maritan and Lee (2017) provide a broader perspective by examining the relationship between resource allocation and strategy across various industries. The impact of resource allocation as a strategic implementation practice on the performance of audit firms is positive and significant (Nthiwa and Muchemi, 2020). According to Chepkosgei and Atambo (2018), the influence of resource allocation on strategic planning implementation in public universities is significant and offers valuable directions. Harun et al.'s (2019) work on the Presbyterian Church suggests that resource allocation influences strategy implementation affected by a religious organization. Likewise, the role of strategic leadership, strategic resource allocation, and strategic incentives in the performance of public secondary schools is noticed as positive (Nang’ole and Muathe, 2023). The study of Cacal et al. (2023) examines the strategic implementation of integrated water resource management and provides the importance of effective resource allocation in environmental sustainability. Overall, the literature provides a positive link between resource allocation and the successful implementation of organizational strategies. Based on these relationships:

**H2. Resource allocation plays a significant role in developing effective strategy implementation.**

### 3.3 INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES AND EFFECTIVE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Effective institutional policies positively enhance strategy implementation across various contexts. According to Messah and Mucai (2011), the implementation of strategic plans in government tertiary institutions can be reinforced by institutional policies within educational institutions. Pacey and Keough (2003) provide the intersection of public policy, institutional structures, and strategic implementation of broader governmental policies on the strategies adopted and executed by institutions. Mate and Kaluyu's (2018) study demonstrates the effect of institutional pressures on the success of strategy implementation among healthcare sectors. According to McCann and Ortega-Argilés (2014), smart specialization in European regions is related to strategy, institutions, and implementation. ICT policies and strategies in higher education in South Africa impact national and institutional pathways for adopting and implementing information and communication technology policies (Cross and Adam, 2007). Graham et al. (2013)
proposed a framework for institutional adoption and implementation of blended learning in higher education that has the role of institutional policies in facilitating the integration of technology-enhanced pedagogies. Voce (2015) reviews institutional policies for the electronic management of assessment and demonstrates a positive role of policies in shaping the implementation of assessment practices in higher education institutions. In the empirical evaluation of Moser and Moser (2005) the robustness of institutional policies is suggested towards the influence of the success of gender mainstreaming. Hou et al. (2021) claim the relationship between employability and higher education in Taiwan's higher education system. Regional innovation strategies in Central Europe are developed due to the meaningful role of institutions and regional leadership in generating strategic outcomes (Blažek et al., 2013). According to Safarov (2019), the institutional dimensions of open government data implementation in the Netherlands, Sweden, and the UK help shape institutional policies on implementing open data initiatives. More recently, in Kenya, the influence of institutional dynamics on the implementation of strategic plans in public water sector agencies impacts strategy execution in the public sector (Musyoka and Deya, 2023). Liu et al. (2023) discuss the strategic management of natural resources and the role of human, technological, and institutional resources in mitigating the resource curse.

Consequently, the relevant literature unveils the pivotal role of institutional policies in shaping the implementation of strategies across diverse sectors, including education, healthcare, regional development, gender mainstreaming, and natural resource management. However, its role in the municipality still needs further exploration. Hence:

**H3. Institutional policies play a significant role in developing effective strategy implementation.**

**3.4 PLANNING SUCCESS AND EFFECTIVE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION**

Successful strategic planning promotes effective strategy implementation in several contexts. The importance of managerial and stakeholder involvement as mediators in the impact of formal strategic planning on successful strategy implementation within municipal government, highlighting the collaborative dimension crucial for success (Afandi et al., 2018). George (2021) emphasizes the interconnectedness of people, processes, and plans as pivotal elements in achieving successful strategy implementation within public organizations, providing a holistic
perspective on the factors influencing implementation success. A case-study approach in examining strategic success factors in enterprise resource planning (ERP) design and implementation contributes valuable insights into the intricate dynamics of successful ERP initiatives (Dowlatshahi, 2005). According to O'Regan and Ghabadian (2007), the nature of formal strategic planning raises critical questions about its periodicity and efficacy, prompting a reevaluation of the role of proper planning in achieving organizational success. Small business success in Mexico emphasizes the correlation between strategic planning processes and favourable outcomes and influencing success in the Mexican business landscape (Saenz, 2010). Vigfússon et al. (2021) provide a comprehensive review of empirical literature that identifies obstacles and success factors in strategy implementation, consolidating knowledge in the field. Esfahani et al.’s (2018) examination of strategic planning success in Iranian healthcare organizations offers sector-specific insights, contributing to the broader discourse on healthcare management. The critical success factors in enterprise resource planning implementation through case studies provide a synthesized understanding of ERP success factors (Saade and Nijher, 2016).

As per the assessment of Alkhodary (2023), sustainability integration and strategic management highlight their role in long-term business success through success planning (Alkhodary, 2023). To sum it up, successive planning is the source of enhancement of strategy implementation. Thus, based on these associations, we suggest:

**H4. Planning success plays a significant role in developing effective strategy implementation.**

3.5 PLANNING SUCCESS AS MEDIATOR

The domain literature mentions the mediating role of planning success among various strategic factors across different organizational contexts. For example, Narimani et al. (2013) suggest the impact of organizational citizenship behaviour on enterprise resource planning success through the mediation of Total Quality Management (TQM) in enhancing planning success within the organizational context. The cultural differences in planning-success relationships in small enterprises shed light on culture's mediating influence on the relationship between planning and success in different national contexts (Rauch et al., 2000). Idar et al. (2012) examine the mediating effect of market orientation on the relationship between strategic planning practices and performance in Malaysian
SMEs, which suggests the positive role of market orientation in linking planning practices to organizational outcomes. According to Afandi et al. (2018), the municipal government in Cirebon, West Java, investigated the mediating role of managerial and stakeholder involvement in the relationship between formal strategic planning and strategic implementation success, showcasing the importance of involving key stakeholders in successful planning and implementation processes. The mediating effect of organizational culture and knowledge sharing on the relationship between transformational leadership and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems success in China is claimed by Shao et al. (2012). Buller and McEvoy (2012) examine the sharpening line of sight between strategy, human resource management, and performance, which stresses the mediating role of effective human resource management in translating strategic objectives into organizational performance outcomes. The mediating model of human resource management systems on organizational performance in the Greek manufacturing context suggests the role of HRM systems in mediating the relationship between strategic factors and organizational outcomes (Katou and Budhwar, 2006). In the perception of Fadol et al. (2015), the mediating role of the extensiveness of strategic planning on the relationship between slack resources and organizational performance reveals that the thoroughness of planning mediates the impact of resource availability on performance. In the study of Mohammed and Fisal (2023), the mediating effect of strategic excellence on the nexus between green human resource management processes and educational institutions' sustainability suggests strategic excellence's role in translating green HRM practices into sustainable outcomes. Based on a comprehensive review, the strategic planning factor is confirmed to be the mediating predictor of developing a connection between strategic factors and successful strategy implementation (Amoo et al., 2023).

Consequently, the relevant body of literature highlights the mediating role of planning success in the relationships between various strategic factors, such as organizational citizenship behaviour, cultural differences, market orientation, managerial involvement, corporate culture, knowledge sharing, human resource management, and strategic excellence, underscoring the importance of effective planning in translating strategic intentions into successful organizational outcomes across diverse contexts. However, in the context of Saudi Municipality phenomena, it needs serious concentration for confirmation. Therefore:
H5. Planning success mediates the connection between strategic behaviours and effective strategy implementation.

H6. Planning success mediates the connection between resource allocation and effective strategy implementation.

H7. Planning success mediates the connection between institutional policies and effective strategy implementation.

4 METHODS

4.1 MODES OF ENQUIRY

The study utilized a rigorous quantitative methodology to investigate the complexities of the suggested research subject. The method mentioned, highly recognized for its excellence, occupies a prominent position in social, management, and business research (Almalki, 2016). The intentional selection of a quantitative methodology demonstrates a dedication to accuracy and impartiality, harmonizing effortlessly with the scientific rigour required by modern research criteria (Bakar, 2003). Quantitative approaches provide a reliable framework for analyzing data and generating significant insights due to their systematic and structured approach. This methodology allows for transforming observations and variables into numerical data, making it easier to conduct statistical analysis beyond simple qualitative interpretations (Wagner, 2010). The researcher's choice of this method highlights their commitment to producing unbiased and measurable results, contributing to the broader academic conversation and providing significant implications for theory and practice. Within the literature, several scholars such as O'Regan and Ghabadian (2007), Saenz (2010), Vigfússon et al. (2021), Esfahani et al. (2018), Alkhodary (2023), and Alkhodary (2023) have employed a consistent approach to investigate issues related to strategic behaviour, strategy, and planning across different locations and cultures.

4.2 DATA COLLECTION, RESPONDENTS AND SAMPLE SIZE

The data were collected through a survey questionnaire adopted from the domain literature. Convenience sampling was chosen for its ease and cost-effectiveness, allowing quick access to readily available participants. This method is time-efficient, practical for preliminary studies, and suitable when extensive resources or a genuinely representative sample are challenging to obtain (Etikan et al., 2016). The researchers targeted
management-level employees in the municipality of the Eastern Province Region of Saudi Arabia. The decision to focus on management-level employees in the Eastern Province Region of Saudi Arabia is rooted in the recognition of the pivotal role played by this stratum in shaping policies, implementing initiatives, and ensuring operational efficiency within the local government (Almarshad, 2015). By honing in on this specific group, researchers aim to unravel the intricacies of decision-making processes at the managerial level, gaining insights into strategic priorities, challenges, and operational dynamics unique to the Eastern Province Region (Abdulaal, 2012). This targeted approach allows for a nuanced examination of how policies are formulated and executed, the impact on the local community, and the relationships maintained with various stakeholders. By tailoring inquiries to the local context, the research endeavours to provide a comprehensive understanding of the region’s governance and practical recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of municipal services and fostering robust stakeholder engagement (Ajbar and Ali, 2015). Finally, the researchers succeeded in gathering 274 samples. Hence, we proceed with these to get outcomes.

4.3 MEASURES

The research methodology involved the utilization of a comprehensive five-point Likert scale in the administered questionnaire to capture the nuanced responses of the targeted respondents. Key factors such as strategic behaviour, resource allocation, and institutional policies were meticulously evaluated through seven items each. Additionally, the measurement of planning success encompassed three items, while the assessment of effective strategy implementation comprised eight items. The selection of these specific items draws on the established work of scholars like Ajbar and Ali (2015), Nkosi (2015), Analoui et al. (2010), Mumbua and Mingaine (2015), and Ansari et al. (2012), who have previously employed and validated these items across diverse regions and cultural contexts. This methodological approach ensures a robust and validated foundation for gauging the multifaceted dimensions of strategic management, reflecting the broader applicability of the research findings.
5 ANALYSIS RESULTS

5.1 MEASUREMENT MODEL

Using the Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) software, we utilised route analysis. Path analysis using AMOS is a crucial instrument and statistical process for cutting-edge research. The principle is essential for conveying fundamental analysis and comprehensibly providing succinct guidance to readers (Kock, 2014). The measurement model was observed to assure convergent validity and discriminant validity analysis, as stated by Yun and Kang (2018). Firstly, we performed factor loading to verify the significance and association between items and their underlying constructs (Hair et al., 2020). Consequently, we noted that all the components exceeded the recommended values of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2020). In addition, we have achieved a composite dependability score above 0.50, which is regarded as excellent according to Hair et al. (2020). In addition, we analyzed the average variance extracted (AVE) and determined that its values exceeded the threshold of 0.50, which is considered acceptable according to Yun and Kang (2018). Ultimately, the Cronbach's α coefficient is utilized to assess the dependability of the internal consistency of the items. The reliability test results, as measured by Cronbach's α coefficients, exceed 0.70, indicating strong reliability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Loading</th>
<th>AVE</th>
<th>CR</th>
<th>Alpha (α)</th>
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<td>IPS5</td>
<td>0.852</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IPS6</td>
<td>0.822</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IPS7</td>
<td>0.800</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning success</td>
<td>PS1</td>
<td>0.897</td>
<td>0.747</td>
<td>0.899</td>
<td>0.798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PS2</td>
<td>0.867</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PS3</td>
<td>0.828</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ESI1</td>
<td>0.897</td>
<td>0.704</td>
<td>0.943</td>
<td>0.872</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We conducted a discriminant validity (DV) assessment to determine the level of relationship between constructs (Hair et al., 2020). We employed Fornell and Larcker's (1981) criterion, which requires that all factor correlations be lower than the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) estimates. This illustrates the high correlation between the components and their corresponding indicators compared to other constructs. Thus, it implies a favourable dependent variable (Hair et al., 2020). Awang (2014) found a correlation between exogenous components below 0.85. Consequently, the dependent variable of the entire model constructs is satisfied, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Discriminant validity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>SBs</th>
<th>RA</th>
<th>IPs</th>
<th>PS</th>
<th>ESI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SBs</td>
<td>0.836</td>
<td>0.475</td>
<td>0.111</td>
<td>0.089</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA</td>
<td>0.475</td>
<td>0.396</td>
<td>0.167</td>
<td>0.087</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPs</td>
<td>0.111</td>
<td>0.396</td>
<td>0.164</td>
<td>0.070</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS</td>
<td>0.089</td>
<td>0.087</td>
<td>0.164</td>
<td>0.070</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESI</td>
<td>0.089</td>
<td>0.087</td>
<td>0.164</td>
<td>0.070</td>
<td>0.081</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Estimated by the scholars
Note(s): SBs=strategic behaviours; RA=resource allocation; IPs=institutional policies; PS=planning success; ESI=Effective strategy implementation

5.2 STRUTURAL MODEL

We used path analysis to evaluate hypotheses. The analysis confirmed a significant positive effect of strategic behaviour, resource allocation, institutional policies and planning success on effective strategy implementation [(H1=Est: =0.345; CR=7.027; p<0.01) (H2= Est: = 0.398; CR=7.540; p<0.01) (H3=Est: = 0.232; CR=3.556; p<0.01) (H4=Est: 0.554; CR=11.252; p<0.01)]. As a result, H1—H4 are supported (Table 3 and Figure 2).

Table 3. SEM estimations [direct paths]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>Relationships</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>CR</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>SBs → ESI</td>
<td>0.345</td>
<td>0.049</td>
<td>7.027</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2</td>
<td>RA → ESI</td>
<td>0.398</td>
<td>0.053</td>
<td>7.540</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3</td>
<td>IPs → ESI</td>
<td>0.232</td>
<td>0.065</td>
<td>3.556</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4</td>
<td>PS → ESI</td>
<td>0.554</td>
<td>0.049</td>
<td>11.252</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With regard to indirect paths, the analysis confirmed a mediating effect of planning success in developing the connection between strategic behaviour and effective strategy implementation (H5=Est: 0.087; CR=3.217; p<0.01) and resource allocation and effective strategy implementation (H6=Est: 0.092; CR=3.38; p<0.01), which accepted H5 and H6. On the other hand, the analysis confirmed a negative mediating effect of planning success in developing the connection between institutional policies and effective strategy implementation (H7=Est: -0.004; CR=0.402; p>0.01). Consequently, H7 is not supported (Table 4 and Figure 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>Relationships</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>CR</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H5</td>
<td>SBs → PS → ESI</td>
<td>0.087</td>
<td>0.027</td>
<td>3.217</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H6</td>
<td>RA → PS → ESI</td>
<td>0.092</td>
<td>0.027</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H7</td>
<td>IPs → PS → ESI</td>
<td>-0.004</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>0.402</td>
<td>0.688</td>
<td>Not Supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Estimated by the authors

Note(s): SBs=Strategic behaviours; RA=Resource allocation; IPs=Institutional policies; PS=Planning success; ESI=Effective strategy implementation; SE=Standard error; CR=Critical ratio; p=Significance level ***p<0.05
6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The present study explored an effective strategy implementation in the municipality of Saudi Arabia. The results suggest a positive effect of strategic behaviour, resource allocation, institutional policies, and success planning on effective strategy implementation among municipality employees in Saudi Arabia. These results are accorded by several scholars like Henderson and Ruikar (2010), Evans et al. (2004), Amoo et al. (2023), Jafari-Sadeghi et al. (2023), Alidrisi and Mohamed (2012), Maritan and Lee (2017) Nthiwa and Muchemi (2020), Chepkosgei and Atambo (2018), Hou et al. (2021), Blažek et al. (2013), Safarov (2019), Saenz (2010), Vigfússon et al. (2021) Saade and Nijher (2016) and Alkhodary (2023), who proposed the same findings in diverse regions. The positive effects of strategic behaviour, resource allocation, institutional policies, and success planning on effective strategy implementation among municipality employees in Saudi Arabia can be delved into further to understand the specific mechanisms at play. Strategic behaviour contributes to success by fostering employee engagement and a sense of purpose. When employees understand and actively align their efforts with the municipality's strategic goals, it creates a cohesive workforce, driving implementation forward. Optimal resource allocation promotes efficiency by ensuring that resources are deployed where they are most needed, preventing bottlenecks and shortages that could hinder progress. Institutional policies play a crucial role by providing employees with clear guidelines and expectations, reducing ambiguity and promoting a shared understanding of the strategic objectives.

Moreover, these policies contribute to organizational consistency, ensuring that decisions and actions are harmonious across various departments. Success planning, emphasizing goal-setting and performance measurement, provides employees with a roadmap for success and allows the municipality to track progress, make informed adjustments, and celebrate achievements. Combining these factors creates a comprehensive framework that fosters a conducive environment for successful strategy implementation, addressing individual and organizational aspects within the unique context of Saudi Arabian municipalities.

The identification of planning success as a mediating factor in the relationship between strategic behaviour, resource allocation, and effective strategy implementation in Saudi Arabian municipalities suggests that the effectiveness of strategic initiatives is intricately tied to the quality and execution of planning processes. The mediating role of
planning success can be attributed to its ability to align and coordinate strategic behaviour and resource allocation, ensuring that actions and decisions are in harmony with overarching strategic goals. Additionally, planning success promotes efficiency and goal orientation, guiding optimal resource utilization and providing a clear roadmap for employees. The adaptability and flexibility embedded in successful planning are crucial in navigating the dynamic implementation landscape. Interestingly, the non-mediation of institutional policies implies that their impact on strategy implementation may be more direct and less contingent on the intermediary role of planning success, possibly reflecting the specificity and rigidity of policies in this context. Overall, these findings underscore the significance of a well-crafted and adaptable planning process in translating strategic intent into successful implementation within the unique municipal context of Saudi Arabia.

In conclusion, the comprehensive findings underscore a positive nexus between strategic behaviours, resource allocation, institutional policies, and the success of planning in facilitating effective strategy implementation within the Saudi Arabian municipal context. Particularly noteworthy is the mediating role played by planning success, illuminating its pivotal function in orchestrating and harmonizing strategic behaviours and resource allocation toward realizing strategic objectives. However, the nuanced nature of this mediation is further highlighted by the observed negative mediation between planning success and the association of institutional policies with effective strategy implementation. This suggests that during strategic behaviours and resource allocation, they benefit from the mediating influence of successful planning. The relationship between institutional policies and strategy implementation appears to be more direct or possibly faces complexities that diminish the intermediary role of planning success. These insights emphasize the intricacies of successfully executing strategic initiatives, shedding light on the unique interplay of factors shaping strategy implementation effectiveness in the Saudi Arabian municipal landscape.

7 IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTS OF THE FUTURE RESEARCH

While our study contributes valuable insights into the dynamics of strategy implementation in Saudi Arabian municipalities, certain limitations warrant consideration: The study focuses on a select set of factors: strategic behaviors, resource
Strategic Behaviours In Municipal Decision Making: A Strategic Approach


allocation, institutional policies, planning success, and effective strategy implementation, offering a focused yet partial view of the broader strategic management landscape. The absence of an explicit theoretical underpinning for the conceptual model prompts a call for future research to explore and integrate established theories that could enhance our findings' depth and academic robustness. The conclusion is drawn from a sample size of 274, representing a specific snapshot of the municipal workforce.

The practical implications of these findings suggest actionable strategies for municipalities in Saudi Arabia to bolster the effectiveness of their strategy implementation processes. This includes investing in enhanced planning processes, implementing targeted training programs to align employees with strategic objectives, optimizing resource management, reviewing and adapting institutional policies for flexibility, and establishing robust monitoring mechanisms for continuous feedback and adjustments. Theoretically, the study highlights the need for dynamic mediation frameworks to capture the nuanced role of planning success. Additionally, it calls for a deeper exploration of policy implementation models that consider direct impacts and potential moderating variables. The study underscores the importance of integrating cultural and contextual factors in strategic management research and prompts investigations into the temporal aspects of planning success. The interplay of elements observed in the study suggests an opportunity for theoretical frameworks to delve into the intricate dynamics shaping the success of strategy implementation. Overall, these implications provide practical guidance for municipalities while pointing to avenues for refining strategic management theories to better align with the complexities of the Saudi Arabian municipal context.

The identified limitations in our study pave the way for promising avenues of future research in strategy implementation within the Saudi Arabian municipal context. Firstly, future research could adopt a more comprehensive approach to address the limitation of a limited set of factors, exploring additional variables that might influence effective strategy implementation. This may involve investigating the role of leadership styles, organizational culture, and external environmental factors to provide a more holistic understanding of the dynamics at play. Secondly, to enhance the study's theoretical foundation, researchers could embark on endeavours to integrate established strategic management theories into the conceptual model. Applying theories such as the Resource-Based View, Institutional Theory, or Contingency Theory could provide a
robust theoretical framework, offering a deeper understanding of the relationships among the studied variables and enriching the theoretical contributions of future research. Moreover, to address the sample size limitation, future research could involve larger and more diverse samples spanning various municipalities and regions within Saudi Arabia. This would not only bolster the statistical power of the findings but also enhance the generalizability of the results to a broader spectrum of municipal contexts. Besides, considering the absence of a temporal dimension in the study, future research could explore the longitudinal aspects of strategy implementation. Investigating how the relationships between strategic behaviours, resource allocation, institutional policies, planning success, and effective strategy implementation evolve could provide valuable insights into the sustainability and adaptability of strategic initiatives. Lastly, recognizing Saudi Arabian municipalities’ specific cultural and contextual context, future research might delve deeper into the cultural nuances and their impact on strategy implementation. This could involve exploring how cultural factors influence employee behaviours, decision-making processes, and the reception of institutional policies.

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