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**THE CORE DETERMINANTS OF EFFECTIVE STRATEGY
IMPLEMENTATION: THE CASE OF RURAL AND
COMMUNITY BANKS IN GHANA**

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Strategy

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Abstract

Purpose: This study investigates significant factors that influence strategy implementation in the rural banks in Ghana. It focused on leadership commitment, organizational structure, and employee involvement as the core variables influencing strategy implementation.

Methodology: The researcher used random stratification to select fifteen (15) rural banks from the southern belt, (15) from the middle belt, and 360 participants from these rural and community banks in Ghana. The study used a five-point-Likert scale designed questionnaire to elicit information for data analysis.

Findings: The results revealed that some of the moderator variables of the predictor variables significantly influenced strategy implementation. Under leadership commitment; the variables found to be significant in influencing strategy implementation were leadership communicating a clear vision to the understanding of employees with statistical significance accepted at $P=0.001>0.05$, leadership prioritizing the release of resources with statistical significance accepted at $P=0.000>0.05$, and leadership behaviours with statistical significance accepted at $P=0.001>0.05$. Under organizational structure; release of sufficient resources for organisational restructuring had the statistical significance of $P=0.000>0.05$; clearly defined roles and responsibilities $P=0.000>0.05$; Knowledge sharing' $P=0.001>0.05$; employee involvement in the structural reforms $P=0.006 >0.05$, and inability to provide technical information on the job had $P=0.005>0.05$. Under employee involvement: the right environment, good reward systems, and training were variables found to be statistically significant in influencing strategy implementation. The statistical significance was accepted at $P=0.001>0.05$, $P=0.005>0.05$, and $P=0.030>0.05$ respectively.

Contribution to theory, practice, and policy/recommendation: The theoretical contribution made in this study is the investigation into strategy implementation in the rural and community banks in Ghana. There is no current literature that has examined strategy implementation in the rural and community banks in Ghana and examined the key variables used in this study to make predictions and conclusions on factors influencing strategy implementation. The study provides a framework for strategy implementation for the RCBs, with a universal applicability in the varying context of strategy implementation, contributing to the repository of knowledge in strategy implementation. The study recommends that leadership create a conducive environment to encourage creativity and idea generation to facilitate proper strategic activities to advance an effective strategy implementation, a clear vision to establish the nature, form, and content of the organizational structure that will fit the strategy, the release of resources, and a reward package for employee effort in the strategic process.

Keywords: *Strategy implementation, strategy implementation factors, leadership commitment, organizational structure, and employee involvement*

INTRODUCTION

The factors influencing strategy implementation are fragmented and diverse in the environment, context, and form, and the peculiarity of these environments dictates the degree of factor significance in influencing strategy implementation. Many scholars have shown how some factors are more important in influencing the implementation process at different levels of the industry. For instance, Latif, Gohar, and Hussain *et al.* (2016) study projected employee participation as the most significant factor affecting implementation. Nah, Lau, and Kuang (2001) stress teamwork as the most critical ingredient in influencing strategy implementation. The study by Okumus (2003) revealed that coordination and management support are variables that influence strategy implementation, whereas the research findings by Čater and Pučko (2010) indicated poor leadership as a significant factor affecting strategy implementation.

Factors influencing Strategy implementation may be more relevant in specific industry sectors and least important in certain sectors (Alharthy *et al.*, 2017) and differs across countries and continents. For example, in Asia, leadership context was ranked as the highest obstacle influencing strategy implementation whereas, in the American context, the lack of trust among executors can be obstructive to strategy implementation (Hrebiniak, 2008). Therefore, the difference in implementation factors justifies that the stipulated models and frameworks may not necessarily be a solution to solve implementation issues in a particular context (Amoako – Gympah and Acquah, 2008).

According to Amoako – Gympah and Acquah (2008), the application of theories and models used by emerging economies such as Eastern Europe, Asia, Latin America, and Caribbean countries is thought to be applicable in Africa had shown a negative impact after replication of their use, and that theories and models must apply in context (Ansoff (1991). However, Bagiri and Namada (2011) contend that strategic management models application can help businesses in Africa, and in a particular context may require modifications or augmentation to suit the African context, making the constants of strategy implementation differ from the RCBs in Ghana.

Thus, this study conceptualizes the implementation factors in their origin and investigates these factors that significantly influence strategy implementation in the context of rural and community banks in Ghana, taking cognizance of the most recurrent factors seemingly established by most scholars through research.

The focus of this study is to determine the significant factors influencing strategy implementation and come up with a model that will make strategy implementation work in the RCBs. Research findings by varying scholars on strategy implementation factors influenced this study to hypothesize leadership commitment, employee involvement, and organizational structure as the key factors influencing strategy implementation.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

The factors that influence strategy implementation are fragmented and vary in degree of influence across different organizational contexts, countries, and continents. For example, in Asia, leadership is the highest obstacle influencing strategy implementation, whereas, in

America, lack of trust among executors is seemingly the most significant factor influencing strategy implementation (Hrebiniak, 2008). The difference in implementation factors justifies stipulated models and frameworks, which may not necessarily be a solution to solving implementation issues in a particular context (Amoako – Gympah and Acquah, 2008).

Many scholars like (Čater and Pučko, 2010; Hrebiniak, 2008, 2013; Al-Kandi *et al.*, 2013; Rotich and Oduro, 2016) have examined strategy implementation factors without specific attention to the moderator variables that specifically influence strategy implementation. Therefore, the study seeks to determine the degree of influence the experimental variables have on strategy implementation and provide a strategy implementation framework most suitable for rural and community banks in Ghana, and perhaps the most appropriate framework to contribute to strategy implementation.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- (i) To determine leadership commitment behaviors that most significantly influence strategy implementation.
- (ii) To determine organizational structure factors that most significantly influence strategy implementation
- (iii) To determine the most significant factors of employee involvement in the strategic process that influence strategy implementation.
- (iv) To measure the level of association between the variable construct
- (v) To develop a strategic implementation framework for the Rural and community banks in Ghana

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- (i) What leadership behaviors in the RCBs in Ghana influence strategy implementation?
- (ii) Is there any association between the experimental variables and strategy implementation in the RCBs in Ghana?
- (iii) Is there any association between organizational structure and strategy implementation in the RCBs in Ghana?
- (iv) What factors most significantly influence the proper establishment of organizational structure to align with strategy implementation?
- (v) What factors most significantly influence employee participation in strategy implementation?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical foundation of the study

Among the early scholars that released the strategy implementation models were (Hrebiniak and Joyce, 1984; Michael Porter, 1985; McKenzie, 1987; Ansoff, 1988; and Higgins, 2005). Hrebiniak and Joyce (1984) instruct that the basis for successful strategy implementation is understanding the strategy, followed by organizational structural reforms, setting operating-level objectives, and instituting proper reward systems and control mechanisms to support the implementation.

Yip (1992) categorized strategy implementation framework into four factors; managerial processes, culture, structure, and people. Okumus (2003) grouped implementation factors into four; content that relates to an initiative to formulate strategy; a context that involves the organizational structure and culture; an operational process that revolves around the processes and procedures, resources, communication, and control; and outcome emanating from the implementation. Okumus proposed framework for strategy implementation seemingly aligns with Yip's strategy implementation framework, showing a direct link between strategy formulation and implementation process to produce a positive strategic outcome.

Noble (1992) categorized strategy implementation into two groups; structural and interpersonal; the structural covers organizational capacities resources/capacities, whereas the process is the mode of communication, rules, and guidelines, focusing on organizational structure and implementation processes such as; behavior, opinion, the interaction between employees, leadership, communication, and implementation style amongst individuals. Pettigrew and Whip (1991) categorized strategy implementation into content, process, and context; content relates to the organizational goals and objectives and the strategic outcomes that achieve the organizational goals and objectives; context consists of organizational structure, culture, and business environment; and the process is the plan, resource allocation, personnel, and control. The emphasis by Pettigrew and Whip is on strategy content, strategy context, and strategy process that align with the framework of (Yip 1992; Okumus, 2003).

Skivington and Daft (1991) classified the strategy implementation framework into structural and implementation views; the structural proposes a structural adjustment to organizational elements such as roles and responsibilities, processes, and procedures, whereas the implementation view deals with the managerial response to strategic initiatives. Al Kandi *et al.* (2013) classified strategy implementation framework into three main groups; process and personnel factors that deal with communication in the organization, support from top managers, a structural arrangement such as resource allocation, reward systems, and religion; and project factors that deal with prioritization of decision-making on projects. Hrebiniak (2005b) categorized implementation factors into change management, organizational structure, and leadership and asserts that the synchronization of all these factors predicts effective strategy implementation.

Philosophical underpinnings of strategy implementation

Strategy implementation is the actionable process to get strategy implemented, an activity that directly follows strategy formulation (Mintzberg, 1997), and it is the process that shapes the desired organizational behavior in achieving the strategic content (Ansoff & McDonnell, 1990). Managers are “faced with the straightforward task of simply getting things done” (Hrebiniak, 2005), and the action to execute strategy must work (Hrebiniak, 2006/2008).

According to Nguyen and Nguyen (2016), strategy implementation is the third stage of strategic governance, and implementation commences when strategy formulation and strategic planning process stop. Policies and programs to support strategy (Wheelen and Hunger, 2012), producing annual objectives, resource allocation, programs, and providing motivation packages to staff are variables that drive the implementation (Bordean, Borza, Rus, and Mitra, 2010). Strategy implementation is a managerial activity that needs planning, decision making, and control (Willison and Gilligan, 2013). Decisions are taken at this stage to establish an organizational culture to sustain the strategy, marketing budgets; the company’s budget; and the information systems for organizational effectiveness (David, 2008). Strategy implementation is “a systematic process composed of a logical set of connected activities that enable a company to work” (Cater and Pucko, 2010), a connectivity loop between formulation and control’ (Rajasekar, 2014).

The various philosophies regarding strategy implementation underscore tactical activities to bring organizational strategies into actuality. Thus, strategy implementation is concerned with the intended strategy completion within the time frame, the expected achievement from the performance of the strategic outcome, the level of acceptability, and the method of implementation that produces the desired positive results to improve organizational performance (Candido and Santos, 2015).

Leadership commitment in strategy implementation

The factors influencing strategy implementation are replete with surveys and industry-based studies, specific to strategy formulation, leadership, information availability, accuracy, uncertainty, organizational structure, culture, human resources, and technology. Most researchers consent that each factor affecting strategy implementation is at a different level (Rajasekar, 2014). Leadership is a critical factor in ensuring that employees direct their capabilities towards a successful implementation (Rajasekar, 2014), which is supported by (Čarter and Pučko, 2010; O’Reille *et al.*, 2010; Kaplan and Norton 2006; and Hrebiniak, 2005), and a Vision aligns with a strategy to stimulate a successful strategy implementation (Permana, 2017).

Strategy implementation failure occurs due to poor coordination of employees and poor leadership skills (Beer and Eisenstat, 2000). Strategy implementation is associated with the design of the strategy itself (Ralie and Nienaber, 2015), and the primary factor that affects strategy implementation is the formulation (Hrebiniak, 2013; Rajasekar, 2014), which emanates from leadership responsibility. Poor formulation and planning cannot obscure the inadequacies in strategy implementation (Hrebiniak, 2006), undoubtedly leading to strategy implementation failure.

An Early scholar like (Waldman & Yammarino, 1999) has argued that leadership construct is the ability to maximize the roles and responsibilities to make decisions that help organizations to be successful in a competitive environment. The scholars argued that leadership is irrelevant to an organization and only represents a social construction of groups or individuals (Meindl, 1990), and leadership effectiveness only occurs when an organization transforms from the old strategy to a new one. The new direction brings about change initiatives, and it is in the process of implementing these initiatives that leadership becomes ostensibly experienced in its role to make things happen.

Organizational structure in strategy implementation

Many scholars like (Cater and Pucko, 2010, Hrebiniak, 2005; Mintzberg, 1997; Chandler, 1962) see organizational structure as a panacea to stimulate a successful strategy implementation. Organizational structure always follows a strategy for effective implementation (Chandler, 1962), and changes in the organizational structure are to align with the roles and skills (Zaribaf and Bayrim, 2000) to display how it conducts its affairs (Cater and Pucko, 2010) for effective strategy implementation (Hrebiniak, 2005; Mintzberg, 1997; Chandler, 1962).

Misalignment of structure leads to underperformance (Kavale, (2012). These stipulations elicit a positive correlation between organizational structure and strategy, and there is the need to be accompanied by structural reorganization, systems, procedures, leadership behaviors, human resource policies, culture, and values to ensure successful strategy implementation (Seltzer, 2001). The structure is the vehicle to ensure successful strategy implementation. Therefore, an inappropriate organizational structure is likely to lead to implementation failure, which will hurt the organization.

Employee involvement in strategy implementation

One important characteristic of leadership is communicating strategy to all employees in the organization, clearly articulating using internal marketing communication as an effective tool to facilitate the change management process, creating an environment of cooperation where employees' expectations commensurate with the organization's own (Holá and Pickhart, 2014). Employees will actively search for information on any new "product" and process in greater depth and make their conclusions. Therefore, involving employees in the strategic planning process allows greater buy-in and involvement to achieve the desired strategic goals. Employees must be a strategic fit to deliver effective strategy implementation. Effective strategy implementation requires quality people involved in the process (Peng & Little John, 2001), and also, knowledge sharing among employees encourages employee participation in strategy implementation (Hrebiniak 2005).

The study by Ali (2017) confirms employee involvement as a catalyst to promote positive outcomes in strategic goals, which is consistent with the assertion of Miller, Wilson, and Hickson (2004). It reveals that employees are most likely to go the extra mile to achieve strategic goals to improve performance when their activities are aligned. When employees are involved in decision-making and problem-solving, it enhances their performance (Sofijanovna and Zabijakin-Chatleska, 2013). Also, Nketia (2016) stipulates that an organization that engages its

employees in a broader consultation and integration into the strategic process is more likely to witness a high-level commitment to achieve the strategic goals. Employee involvement and reward systems are more likely to stimulate a higher level of performance (Čater and Pučko, 2010).

Empirical literature on factors influencing strategy implementation

Rotich and Oduro (2016) examined factors influencing strategy implementation in commercial banks in Kenya. The study used a cross-sectional research design and adopted a mixed-method research methodology. They sampled 91 respondents from the 486 target population. The data analysis was descriptive statistics, and the result showed that organizational structure, size of the organization, and the complexity of the organizational structure affected the strategy implementation.

Čater and Pučko (2010) examined the activities hindering strategy execution, sampling one hundred and seventy-two (172) companies in Slovenia. The scholars used multiple regression in the analysis. The study discovered that the biggest impediment to strategy implementation was poor leadership, specifically, lack of leadership skills, lack of knowledge sharing by employees, and inadequate pool of skillful employees for specific activities.

Lacy (2009) examined the relationship between affective leadership behaviors and their impact on the cognitive engagement of employees in seven Queensland State Government Departments in Brisbane. The study used Structural Equation Model (SEM) to determine the nexus between engagement dimensions and leadership behaviors. The results indicated that affective leadership behaviors have a considerable influence on employee engagement, determining the willingness of employees to take up extra-role performance. Affective leaders demonstrate their ability to connect with the people across the organization to achieve a common overall organizational goal. Affective leadership significantly impacts employees' cognition about the new strategy and structure, which stimulates greater involvement of employees.

The study by Bae and Lawler (2017) looked at the impact of management values in human resource management (HRM) as a source for creating a competitive advantage. The researchers sampled 138 firms in Korea and examined non-managers. The result showed that firms that value people and see them as a source of competitive advantage are the ones that get their employees to participate in the strategy implementation process to achieve organisational effectiveness and performance.

Nguyen and Nguyen (2016) investigated factors that influence business strategy implementation. The researcher sampled eighty-two (82) garment companies in Vietnam, administering 192 questionnaires to these companies. Data analysis used a regression model. The results revealed that strategy formulation, human resources, communication, culture, and organizational structure are the factors that impact strategy implementation.

Permana (2017) study identified stimulus factors of successful strategy implementation in Indonesian Islamic banking. The study variables were vision alignment, priority with vision, and strategic scope. He administered questionnaires to Indonesian Islamic banks. Data collected were

analyzed using a structural equation model. The results revealed that vision alignment, priority with strategy, and scope were positively related to a successful strategy.

Summary of literature and research gap

The factors influencing strategy implementation are fragmented and diverse in context and form because many scholars have conducted their study in a different context and environment, which dictates the degree of factor significance in influencing strategy implementation.

The various frameworks fail to provide a simplistic view of strategy implementation in a context that seeks to encapsulate all the identified factors, grouped in a more simplistic but comprehensible to address the main driving forces of strategy implementation. The frameworks give a generality view of strategy implementation without obtrusive attention to the specific context and factor significance at which strategy implementation is operating. The frameworks explose too many variables that compound the complexity of actionable delivery of strategy implementation.

Inferring from the reviewed literature shows that a successful strategy implementation begins with leadership commitment, which provides a clear direction to formulate strategies and establish a proper alignment in the organizational structure (Carlopio, 2003; Čater and Pučko, 2010). Leadership drives the core trajectory of the organization in the execution of strategy (Isobel Dole, 2004), responsible for clarifying the shared vision and core values that find their expression in the organizational cultural disposition to underpin operations and different business functions; and promoting information sharing posit in the context of the shared values (Grant, 2002), and committed to the implementation process.

A successful strategy implementation also hinges on a proper organizational structure that creates an environment for strategy execution and responds to the strategic orientation and directly impacts the implementation process and organizational performance. The organizational structure directly aligns with employee participation that largely influences strategy implementation.

The researcher combines existing literature and known strategy implementation framework and models to conceptualize a more appropriate implementation framework. The researcher, therefore, categorizes factors influencing strategy implementation into three main elements, leadership commitment, organizational structure, employee involvement as the core factors underpinning all other factors influencing strategy implementation. These factors give a clear scope and better understanding of the implementation process and the approach. The researcher also looks at the specificity of factor significance in the context of rural and community banks.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

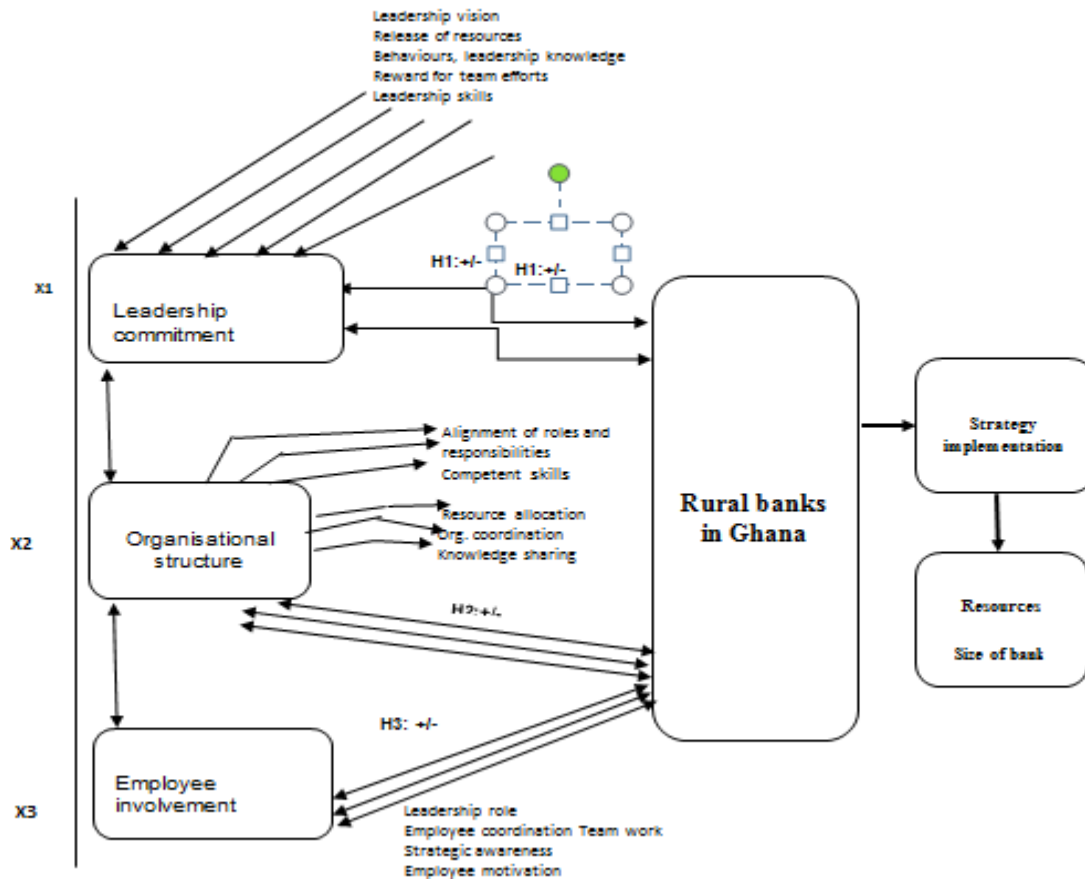
Conceptual framework of the study

The literature review carried out in this study provided the theoretical concepts to strategy implementation to advance the study's conceptual framework and hypotheses, providing the understanding of the research study (Cooper and Meadows, 2006), and reflecting the association between the research variables with the moderating variables, explaining the phenomena under

study. The conceptual framework depicts an association between the research variables and provides a visual presentation to understand the interrelationship between the variables, derived from the theoretical review to reflect an input-output model of the study (Saunders *et al.*, 2016). The conceptual framework illustrates the linkages between theories, concepts, assumptions, expectations, and beliefs that inform the study (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014) and describes the underpinning construct of the study by the visual depiction of the variables under study.

The researcher identifies three experimental variables influencing strategy implementation; leadership commitment, organizational structure, and employee involvement. The framework shows that the independent variables (IV) are directly associated with the dependent variable (DV), and the independent variables (IV), also called the predictors are the main variables in this study, and they also have moderating variables that are interrelated to affect the changes that occur in the independent variables to influence the dependent variable. A variable that is called a moderator is a secondary variable to the study variable (Ezeji, 2004), and the researcher selected them to determine its effect on the independent variable in influencing the dependent variable; strategy implementation as indicated in the conceptual framework, figure 2:

Figure 2: Conceptual framework of the study



To test the above model, we developed the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Leadership commitment is the most significant factor influencing strategy implementation

Hypothesis 2: Organizational structure is the most significant factor influencing strategy implementation.

Hypothesis 3: Employee involvement is the most significant factor influencing strategy implementation.

The study hypotheses were developed from the extant literature exuding three key variables; leadership commitment, organizational structure, and employee involvement as the core factors influencing strategy implementation. The hypotheses have a direct relationship with theory. The researcher tested the statistical significance of these observed variables.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research design

The model for this study is exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory. It explores a contemporary topic on strategy implementation, establishing the core factors that affect effective strategy implementation and providing a clear depiction of the phenomena studied. It identifies the cause-and-effect relationship between variables through the analysis of the situation and uses the blend of both descriptive and inferential statistics to elicit new ideas towards knowledge development in strategy formulation and implementation.

Population and sample size

The population for this study is the rural and community banks in Ghana. The target population came from RCBs in Ghana readily accessible for this research. The researcher sampled thirty (30) rural and community banks from the Middle and Southern Belts of Ghana; fifteen (15) rural banks from the Southern belt and (15) from the Middle belt, using random stratification to select three hundred and fifty-eight (358) participants. The researcher rounded up the three hundred and fifty-eight (358) participants to three hundred and sixty (360), a 0.6% increase in sample size for uniformity and to lessen the rate of non-response.

Data gathering

The study collected primary data for analysis using a questionnaire; with a five-point Likert scale, minimal dichotomous, and multiple choice answers administered to top management, middle management, and employees of the selected rural and community banks in Ghana. The researcher measured the dependent variables and independent variables from the information gained from the survey.

Variable description

The study builds on the earlier work of (Odita & Bello, 2015; Kumar, 2015; and Abu Bakar & Zainol, 2015), who used a similar approach to assess the nexus between strategy formulation and implementation. The equation for the econometric model to determine factors influencing strategy implementation is:

$$(i) \pi_{it} = \alpha + \partial\pi_{it-1} + \sum_{j=1}^J \beta_j X_{it}^j + \sum_{l=1}^L \beta_l X_{it}^l + \sum_{k=1}^M \beta_m X_{it}^m + u_{it}, \quad u_{it} = \mu_i + v_{it}$$

Where the Dependent Variable:

Measures strategy implementation at the time and N denotes the number of cross-sectional observations, and T the length of the sample period. The model further consists of a constant term, measured by the scalar, and a vector of slope parameters that estimate the sign of the independent variables.

The most important task of the study is to test the significance of the study at a 5% significant level in determining the effect of the independent variables; leadership commitment,

organizational structure, and employee involvement on the dependent variable, which helps in achieving the objectives of the study. The multiple regression equation and variable description are as follows:

$$SI_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 LC_{it} + \beta_2 OS_{it} + \beta_3 EMP_{it} + \epsilon \quad (1)$$

Variables description

Variables	Description	Type of measure	Apriori /Expected sign
Dependent Variable			
<i>SI_{it}</i>	Strategy implementation		
Independent Variable			
<i>LC_{it}</i>		1 = Yes 0 = No	+
<i>OS_{it}</i>		1 = Yes 0 = No	+
<i>EMP_{it}</i>		1 = Yes 0 = No	+

Data analysis

The researcher employs three data analyses, descriptive and inferential, correlation, and regression analysis using SPSS version 21 to process the collected data. The researcher used descriptive and inferential statistics to draw inferences and conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1: Response rate

Response	Frequency	Percent
Returned	282	78.33%
Unreturned	78	21.67%
Total	360	100%

Table 2: Descriptive analysis of the key construct

	Mean score	SD
Leadership commitment	3.73	.876
Organisational structure	3.86	.699
Employee involvement	2.31	.716

The results indicate that the organizational structure has the highest means score (=3.86) while the least means score was employee involvement (= 2.31), showing the disagreement and neutrality among respondents regarding the employee involvement in the strategic process.

Organizational structure has an average mean score of 3.86. All the measuring items scored between 3.86 and 3.96. Leadership commitment has an average mean score of 3.73, employee involvement is 2.31, depicting the lowest mean score responses, reflecting disagreement and neutrality among respondents. The implication is that the respondents disagreed or preferred to stay neutral with the questions. The highest mean score for the measurement item is 3.86 with an SD of .699, and the lowest-scoring is 2.31 with .296 SD, depicting some variations in responses.

Scale reliability of the study construct

We conducted a reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha. Varying ideas regarding acceptable values of alpha range from 0.70 to 0.95 (Bland and Altman, 1997), with values of 0.8 being considered desirable for Cronbach alpha in most studies (Mallery, 2003).

The factors in the study construct showed internal consistency, with most of the alpha values exceeding 0.8, an average score of .939, with leadership commitment items showing slightly less at .938. The Cronbach alpha results show the reliability of the study constructs in Table 2.

Table 3: Cronbach alpha results showing the reliability of the key construct.

Variable	Cronbach alpha	No. of items
Leadership commitment	.938	4
Organisational structure	.939	4
Employee involvement	.939	4

Table 4: the average variance extracted method (AVE) tested the discriminant validity of the study construct.

	Mean score	SD
N		6
Average Extracted Variance		0.677067
Component Reliability		0.925056

Table 5: correlation coefficient between the key construct related to strategy implementation

Variable	Leadership commitment	Organisational structure	Employee involvement
Leadership commitment	1.00	0.552**	0.687***
Organisational structure	0.552**	1.000	0.516**
Employee involvement	0.687	0.516	1.00

The correlation result shows an association between the study variables. For example, the organizational structure has a moderate positive correlation with leadership when it is committed to the implementation process to ensure better organizational structure to execute strategy implementation. There is a positive correlation between employee involvement and leadership commitment, which depicts leadership role as a tool in ensuring full participation of employees

in the strategic process to make strategy execution successful in the rural and community banks in Ghana. The correlation matrix also infers a positive association between organizational structure and employee involvement. It represents that structural reforms without employee involvement are precarious to effective strategy implementation. Table 5 shows multiple regression of the study constructs in strategy implementation.

Table 6: multiple regression of the key construct

Variables	Coefficient	STD. Err.	T	P>t
L1	0.1581869***	.0470115	3.36	0.001
L2	0.104511*	.0553728	1.89	0.060
L3	-0.1626842***	.0501599	-3.24	0.001
L4	0.0174966	.0525217	0.33	0.739
L5	-0.0718803	.0476494	-1.51	0.133
L6	-0.2414114***	.0612011	-3.94	0.000
O1	-0.1965205***	.042581	-4.62	0.000
O2	0.3156842***	.04669	6.76	0.000
O3	-0.1029907*	.0617801	-1.67	0.097
O4	0.2342552***	.0486171	4.82	0.000
O5	-0.1469938***	.0521312	-2.82	0.005
O6	0.1435873***	.0515606	2.78	0.006
E1	0.1507282***	.0433898	3.47	0.001
E2	0.1196374***	.0422998	2.83	0.005
E3	0.0608897	.0466597	1.30	0.193
E4	0.1161712**	.0487187	2.38	0.018
E5	-0.1284394**	.0532309	-2.41	0.017
E6	-0.1075295**	.0491789	-2.19	0.030
Constant	0.1252212*	.0625901	2.00	0.047
Test statistics				
Number of observations	270			
Prob > F	0.0000			
R-squared	0.7972			
Adj R-squared	0.7576			
Root MSE	.24566			

The F-Statistic gives the general significance of the regression model at a 95% confidence interval. When F is 0.000 and < 0.05, it indicates strong evidence to state that the study results did not happen by chance. The model shows significant variables with a low p-value and a high

adjusted R² value of 0.7576, depicting a 76% explanation of the changes in the response variable explained by the predictor variables, showing more precision in the prediction of the high R-squared model than a low R-squared.

Leadership commitment to strategy implementation

The first hypothesis H1: Leadership commitments significantly influence strategy implementation. We included six variables in the regression model. The findings revealed that leadership vision, behaviors, and release of resources were highly significant in contributing to the links in the strategic process implementation in the RCBs in Ghana. Table 4 shows the results of the regression analysis. The results show that leadership vision, leadership behaviors, and the release of resources (L1, L3, and L6) influence strategy implementation in the RCBs. The results show strong statistical significance of ($0.001 < 0.05$, $0.001 < 0.05$, and $0.000 < 0.05$ respectively). The variables explored under this construct were statistically significant except (L2), (L4), and (L5). Though (L2) was not statistically significant, showing a trend in the implementation process. Clear vision, prioritizing the release of resources, and leadership behaviors to the implementation process seemingly influence the successful strategy implementation in the RCBs, confirming (Chandler, 1962; Ansoff, 1965, and Permana, 2017). Inferring from the results, when leadership communicates its vision to employees to their understanding, they are likely to buy into the strategic process and participate in the strategy implementation. Prioritizing the release of resources is necessary for a successful strategy implementation process. It is impossible to pursue strategy implementation without the availability of resources. These findings support the works of (Cater and Pucko, 2010; Rajasekar, 2014; Mwangi and Wekesa, 2016).

ANOVA was conducted under this construct to reject or accept the null hypothesis, testing whether the regression model with leadership commitment in strategy implementation as an intervening variable and interaction term between leadership behaviors and strategy implementation process explains zero variance in effective strategy implementation. The result indicates that the F statistics was 2.38 and statistical significance was 0.03, which is < 0.05 , and we accept H1 and conclude that leadership commitment is a factor that influences strategy implementation.

Organizational structure and strategy implementation

The second hypothesis H2: Organizational structure significantly influences strategy implementation. The variables used under organizational structure were statistically significant. They had a direct effect on strategy implementation except for the supervision of management. For example, “sufficient resources for organizational structure” had a coefficient of -0.1965205, standard error of .042581, t – statistic of -4.62, and a p-value of $0.000 < 0.05$, depicting strength in statistical significance. The finding is in line with the works of (Jansen, 2016; Al Kandi *et al.*, 2013; Noble, 1999). The result suggests that proper organizational structure must align with the strategy implementation. It also requires sufficient resources to recruit the right skills to facilitate strategy implementation. Thus, structural adjustment within the organization during the strategy implementation is necessary to bring positive outcomes. The findings under the organizational structure revealed that “Clearly defined roles and skill alignment” has a

coefficient of .1581869, the standard error is .0470115, t- statistics is 3.36, the p-value is $0.001 < 0.05$ showing statistical evidence to accept that when new roles are clearly defined and aligned with strategy, employees are more likely to indulge in active participation in strategy implementation. This finding aligns with (Ajagbe, Bih, Olujobi, and Udo, 2016; Kavale, 2012; Zaribaf and Bayrim, 2000; Skivington and Daft, 1991). It also accentuates Chandler's dictum of strategy follows the structure.

Sharing knowledge was statistically significant with a coefficient of 0.2342552, a standard error of .0486171, t – statistics of 4.82, and a p-value of 0.000, showing that knowledge sharing encourages learning among employees, which helps in their roles and responsibilities. Employee involvement in the structural adjustment had a coefficient of 0.1435873, the standard error is .0515606, t –statistics is 2.78, and the p-value is 0.006, depicting a statistical significance.

When employees are involved in the decision-making of identifying their skills to align with the assigned roles and responsibilities, they are most likely to perform well to achieve the strategic goals of strategy implementation. Though supervision of management has a p-value of $0.097 > 0.05$, which is not significant, there seems to be a trend in the implementation process. We reject the null hypothesis, and H2 is accepted.

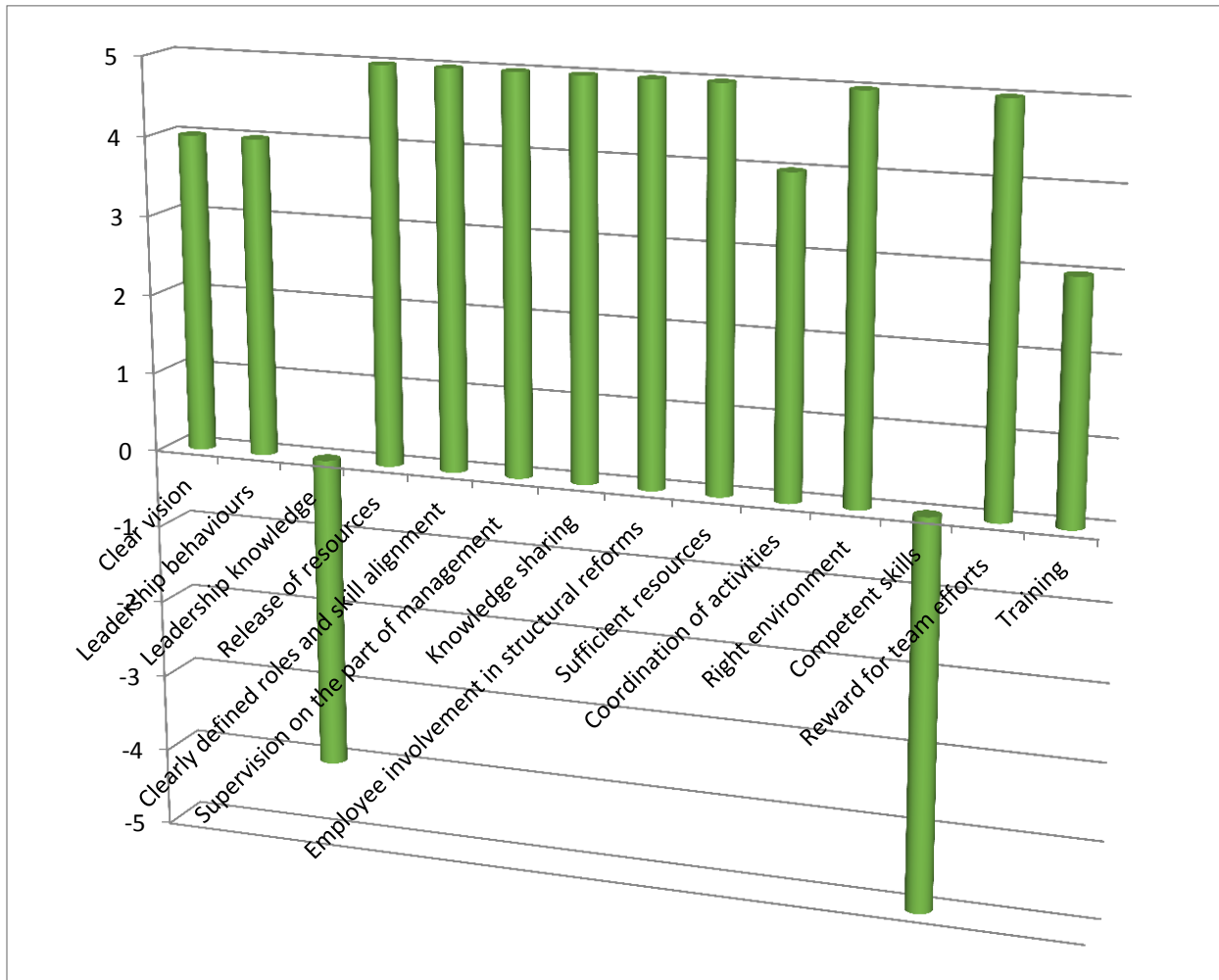
Employee involvement

The third hypothesis is: Employee involvement significantly influences strategy implementation. The results showed that the right environment, reward for team efforts, and employee training were statistically significant with p-values 0.001, 0.005, and $0.030 < 0.05$. Employees work better in a good and positive environment. They are more likely to share and impact knowledge when they receive continuous training on the job, supported with reward systems. Competent skills, coordination of activities, and strategic awareness were not statistically significant, with p-values of 0.018, 0.017, and 0.193. The researcher conducted an ANOVA test for this construct. The F-Statistic from the ANOVA test explains the overall significance of the regression model at a 95% confidence interval. We reject the null hypothesis when the p-value < 0.05 . The results showed an F- statistic of 4.96 with a statistical significance of a p-value of $0.000 < 0.005$. We, therefore, reject the null hypothesis and state that employee involvement in the strategic process significantly influences strategy implementation. H3 is accepted. The findings support the works of (Rajasekar, 2014; Ali, 2017; Nketia, 2016; Sofijanovna and Zabijakin-Chatleska, 2013, and Čater and Pučko, 2010).

The most significant factors influencing strategy implementation

The study sets out to determine the specific factors that most significantly influence strategy implementation in rural and community banks in Ghana. The ranking of factor significance is (-2), the lowest to (5), the highest. A statistic of 0.000 is ranked (5), and any statistical significance greater than 0.05 receives a negative rank and does not include a statistical significance higher than 0.08 as indicated in figure 2:

Figure 2: Ranking of strategy implementation factors



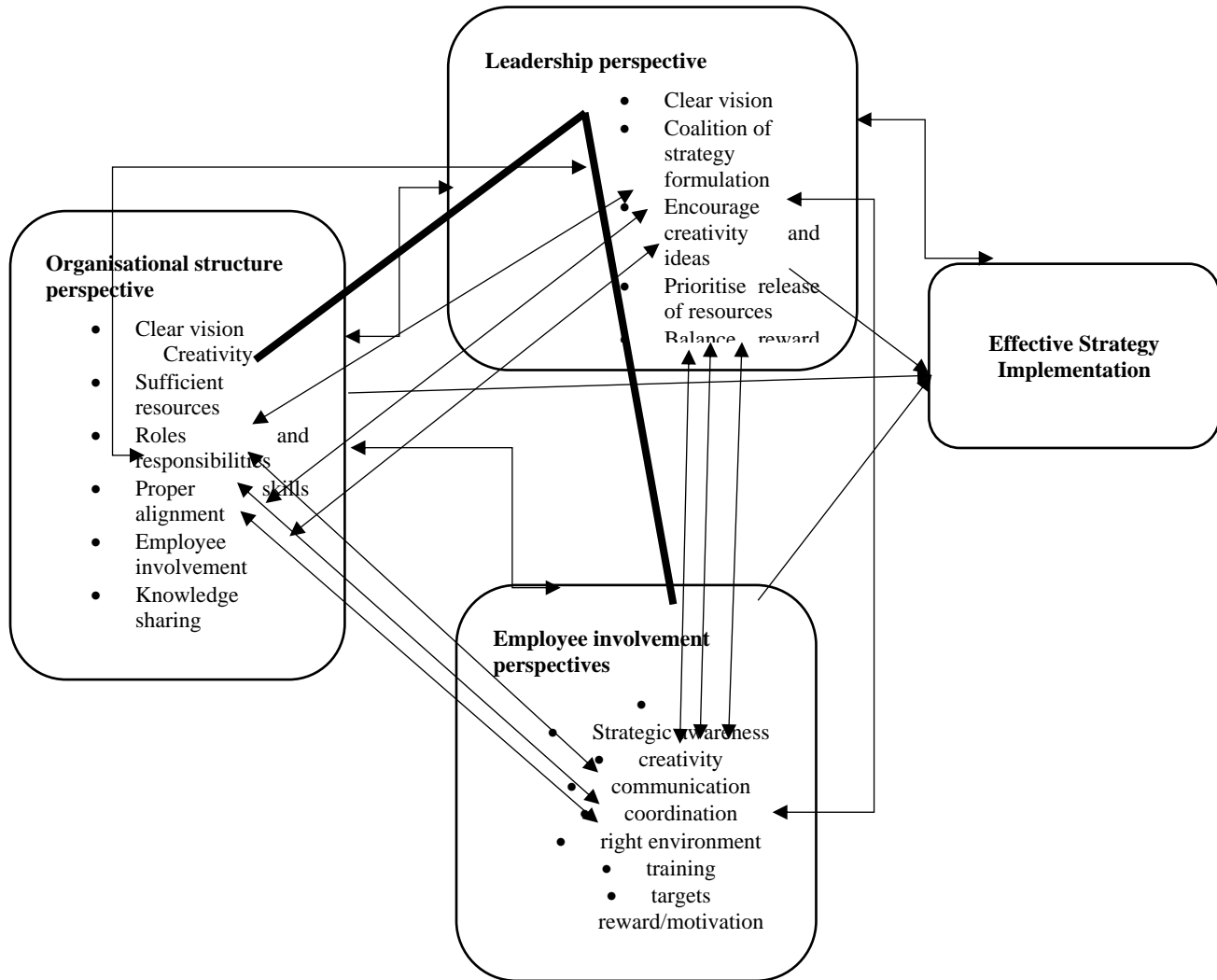
The study focused on three key factors; leadership commitment, organizational structure, and employee involvement. These were the key factors that influenced strategy implementation in the RCBs. The findings, however, show that some of the sub-variables of these factors most significantly influence strategy implementation than others. The significant factors influencing strategy implementation under leadership are vision, behaviors, and release of resources. Sufficient resources, well-defined roles, skills alignment, knowledge sharing, and employee involvement in the structural reforms are variables that most significantly influence strategy implementation under the organizational structure. Under employee, the variables to get the employees involved in the strategic process are creating the right environment, rewarding team efforts, and consistent training. These were the variables that significantly influenced strategy implementation under the study construct.

THE PROPOSED STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION MODEL

Drawing from the empirical results of this study, the researcher categorizes effective strategy implementation into three perspectives; leadership perspective, organizational structure perspective, and employee involvement perspective. Leadership perspectives describe leadership's pivotal role in the strategic process. Specifically, leadership clear communicated vision, an exhibition of behaviors based on inclusivity, and collaboration with stakeholders in the strategic process. The findings reveal that prioritizing the release of resources timely is a conduit to facilitate strategy implementation. Organizational structure perspective talks about the availability of adequate resources to put proper infrastructure, hire skillful employees to take up strategic roles and responsibilities, properly aligned skills with roles and responsibilities to facilitate employee involvement in the structural reforms, and encourage knowledge-sharing to enhance organizational learning and the skills of employees to secure institutionalized processes and procedures. Employee perspective displays the significance of leadership creating strategic awareness to stimulate employee involvement. Leadership must develop the right environment to facilitate creativity and coordination among employees. Employees must be motivated by an appropriate reward system. Employees will work better when rewarded through proper reward systems. There should be continuous training to improve knowledge and skills. Supervisors should supervise and monitor targets to determine if targets are achievable or need some readjustments.

The researcher classified strategy implementation into leadership perspective, organizational structure perspective, and employee involvement perspective presented in figure 3. Perspectives of strategy implementation are an extension of the model by Skivington and Daft (1991), who classified implementation factors into structural view and implementation view.

Figure 3: Perspectives of Effective Strategy Implementation



Source: Ackah construct 2021

CONTRIBUTION TO THEORY AND PRACTICE

The theoretical contribution made in this study is the investigation into strategy implementation in the rural and community banks in Ghana. There is no current literature that has examined strategy implementation in the rural and community banks in Ghana and examined the key variables used in this study to make predictions and conclusions on factors influencing strategy implementation. Therefore, the study contributes to the repository of knowledge in strategy implementation. The study offers a framework for strategy implementation for the RCBs to

achieve an effective strategy implementation, which has universal applicability in the varying context of strategy implementation.

The study results have several implications for the top management of the RCBs and underpin the policies shaping the strategy implementation process. Leadership should encourage creativity and idea generation, a conducive environment to facilitate proper strategic activities to advance an effective strategic management process in the organization. Since most RCBs are not big organizations, consistent team brainstorming can encourage creativity and idea generation, departments and unit departments can be encouraged to form these teams. Organizational restructuring is required to make the strategy work. Leadership must have a clear vision and adequate resources to shape the nature, form, and content. Employee involvement in the strategic process facilitates strategy implementation, and Leadership must create an enabling environment to encourage creativity and ideas, supported with reward systems to motivate employees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that leadership be committed to the strategic process by demonstrating a clear vision and purpose, properly communicating strategies to all employees at levels throughout the organizational spectrum, and institutionalizing and operating an open-door policy where creativity and knowledge sharing are encouraged.

Strategy implementation should not bring anxiety to employees, but leadership must create a more conducive environment where employees will be encouraged to give their best. Therefore, the study recommends that leadership creates a strategic environment that is not repressive but consistent and reliable with their actions, and it must be a stipulation in the overall cooperate objectives of the organization.

Leadership must also demonstrate a commitment to strategy implementation by ensuring timely release of resources towards implementation processes. The study also recommends recognition for hard work and good reward packages to motivate employees towards strategy implementation.

When the need arises for structural adjustments during strategy implementation, management must make sure that they have a clear vision of the structure required, and new roles and responsibilities must align with the strategy. The RCBs must assign roles and responsibilities to adequate and competent staff to facilitate strategy implementation. Leadership must consider organizational restructuring when there are enough funds for implementation. The study recommends institutionalizing proper procedures, processes, and information sharing among staff to elicit an effective organizational structure to underpin successful strategy implementation.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study surveyed 360 people from 30 rural banks from the southern and middle belts, excluding the northern belt of Ghana. The respondents were 270 out of the 360 rural and community banks surveyed. There are 40 rural and community banks across Ghana. Therefore, the sample size for the study may be limited. Also, gathering data from these rural banks was

extremely difficult. It was impossible to interview the senior managers who could express further information on the study phenomena. Thus, similar research could expand the scope of the survey to include more participants from the RCBs, which may provide diversified results to enhance the contribution to knowledge.

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APPENDIX 1: EXPLANATION TO VARIABLES

Variable	Meaning
L1	leadership vision
L2	Leadership knowledge
L3	Leadership behaviours
L4	Leadership did not micromanage employees
L5	Leadership encouraged suggestions and creativity
L6	leadership prioritized the release of resources
O1	Sufficient resources
O2	Clearly defined roles and responsibilities
O3	supervision on the part of management
O4	Knowledge sharing
O5	Clear vision for structural reforms
O6	Employee involvement structural reforms
E1	Strategic awareness
E2	leadership created the right environment
E3	Competent skills
E4	Coordination of activities among individual staff and departments
E5	Good reward system
E6	Training