2026 Volume: 02 Issue: 06 www.ijrpa.com ISSN 2456-9995 Research Article

International Journal Research Publication Analysis

Page: 01-15

# THE FACTORS AFFECTING STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION IN GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS OF SOMALILAND

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**Article Received: 17 May 2026**
**Article Revised: 05 June 2026**
**Published on: 25 June 2026**

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DOI: https://doi-doi.org/101555/ijrpa.1985

## ABSTRACT

This study investigates the key organizational factors affecting strategic plan implementation in selected government institutions of Somaliland. Despite extensive strategic planning initiatives, including National Development Plan I (2012–2016) and Vision 2030, many strategic initiatives in Somaliland's public sector fail to achieve their intended objectives. The study employed a quantitative research approach, with data collected from 138 senior officials drawn from 46 government institutions through structured questionnaires using simple random and purposive sampling. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple linear regression via STATA software. The findings reveal that resource availability ($\beta = 0.4644$, $p < 0.001$), organizational structure ($\beta = 0.4174$, $p < 0.001$), and staff capacity ($\beta = 0.3885$, $p < 0.001$) are significant positive predictors of strategic implementation. Organizational communication also showed a positive and statistically significant effect ($\beta = 0.2821$, $p = 0.001$). Organizational culture exhibited a significant negative effect ($\beta = -0.4374$, $p < 0.001$), indicating cultural misalignment with strategic objectives, while leadership style did not demonstrate a statistically significant direct effect ($\beta = -0.030$, $p = 0.671$). These findings provide practical implications for governance reform and contribute empirical evidence to the literature on public sector strategic management in fragile institutional contexts.

**KEYWORDS:** Strategic Implementation, Organizational Structure, Leadership Style, Resource Availability, Organizational Culture, Organizational Communication, Public Sector Management, Somaliland, Government Institutions.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

Strategic plan implementation is widely recognized as the most critical and challenging phase of the strategic management process. While considerable scholarly attention has been directed toward strategy formulation, mounting empirical evidence demonstrates that organizational strategies fail more frequently due to poor execution than to defective design (Alexander, 1991; Porter, 1980; Hrebiniak, 2006). Effective implementation requires the coordinated alignment of leadership behavior, organizational structure, resource availability, institutional culture, and communication systems all functioning coherently within complex and often unpredictable environments.

In Somaliland a self-declared republic in the Horn of Africa that has operated with de facto independence since 1991 following the collapse of the Somali state the challenge of translating strategic plans into operational outcomes carries particular institutional urgency. Despite the formulation of ambitious national strategic frameworks including the National Development Plan I (2012–2016) and the long-term Vision 2030, many institutional strategies have consistently fallen short of their stated objectives (NDPII, 2017; NPI, 2011). This persistent implementation gap reflects deeply embedded organizational challenges that remain insufficiently addressed in the empirical literature.

Most theoretical frameworks and empirical models of strategic implementation have been developed and validated in stable, resource-rich organizational environments in developed economies, and may not adequately account for the institutional fragility, resource scarcity, and socio-political uncertainty characteristic of contexts such as Somaliland (Mintzberg, 1994). While regional studies from Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, and Tanzania offer more contextually proximate insights, the unique governance structure and political status of Somaliland mean that findings from neighboring contexts cannot be uncritically transposed (Tekle, 2023; Gichohi, 2019; Hassan & Mohamud, 2019).

This study addresses a critical empirical and contextual gap by investigating the organizational factors that shape strategic implementation performance in selected government institutions of Somaliland. Employing a quantitative survey design administered to 138 senior officials across 46 government ministries and agencies, the study examines six independent variables: leadership style, organizational structure, staff capacity, resource availability, organizational culture, and organizational communication. The study aims to provide context-specific, evidence-based insights for policymakers, institutional leaders, and development partners engaged in strengthening Somaliland's public sector governance capacity.

### 1.1 Research Objectives

The primary objective of this study is to identify and examine the key organizational factors influencing strategic plan implementation in selected government institutions of Somaliland. The specific objectives are to:

- Assess the effect of leadership style on strategic plan implementation.
- Analyze the impact of organizational structure on strategy execution.
- Investigate the effect of resource availability on strategic implementation.
- Examine the influence of staff (human resource) capacity on strategy implementation.
- Evaluate the effect of organizational culture on strategic implementation.

### 1.2 Research Hypotheses

- H1: Organizational structure has a positive and significant effect on strategic implementation.
- H2: Leadership style has a positive and significant effect on strategic implementation.
- H3: Resource availability has a positive and significant effect on strategic implementation.
- H4: Staff (Human Resource) capacity has a positive and significant effect on strategic implementation.
- H5: Organizational culture has a positive and significant effect on strategic implementation.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### 2.1 Conceptual Definitions

Strategic Implementation: Defined as the process through which strategic plans are translated into actionable organizational activities to achieve intended goals. Hrebiniak (2006) describes it as a series of deliberate interventions concerning organizational structures, personnel actions, and control systems designed to drive performance toward desired strategic ends. Alexander (1985) further defines it as achieving initial strategic aims within budget parameters while realizing anticipated performance returns.

Organizational Structure: The formal system of task and authority relationships that controls how people coordinate actions and deploy resources. Robbins and Coulter (2018) define it as "the formal arrangement of jobs within an organization," while Mintzberg (1979) emphasizes that effective structure aligns with strategy to facilitate communication, decision-making, and performance monitoring.

Leadership Style: The manner in which a leader directs, motivates, guides, and manages a group toward organizational goals, influencing team performance, morale, and culture (Lewin, 1939). Different styles — from participative and transformational to directive and laissez-faire shape the degree to which staff members embrace and commit to strategic initiatives.

Resource Availability: The adequacy and accessibility of financial, human, technological, and material assets required for organizational functioning. Barney (1991) defines resources as all assets, capabilities, and knowledge controlled by an organization to conceive and implement strategies. Grant (2016) emphasizes that resources must be valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable to generate sustained strategic advantage.

Organizational Culture: The pattern of shared values, beliefs, norms, and assumptions that governs employee behavior and attitudes. Schein (2010) defines it as "a pattern of shared basic assumptions that a group has learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration." A culture aligned with strategic objectives enhances commitment and reduces resistance to change (Kotter & Heskett, 1992).

Organizational Communication: The process by which information and understanding are transmitted within and across organizational levels to create alignment, coordination, and responsiveness (Davis, 1971; Allen, 1958). Effective communication ensures that strategic goals and implementation expectations are clearly understood by all employees.

## 2.2 Theoretical Frameworks

This study is anchored in four theoretical frameworks that collectively explain the multi-dimensional nature of strategic implementation.

***The McKinsey 7S Model*** (Waterman, Peters & Phillips, 1980) identifies seven interdependent organizational elements Strategy, Structure, Systems, Shared Values, Skills, Staff, and Style — that must be aligned for effective strategy execution. The model directly informs the multi-variable analytical framework adopted in this study by emphasizing that implementation failure typically arises from misalignment among these elements rather than from a single dysfunctional factor.

***Institutional Theory*** (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Scott, 2001) highlights that organizational behaviors and structures are shaped not only by internal efficiency considerations but also by external regulatory, normative, and mimetic pressures. In Somaliland's public sector, donor requirements, governance reform mandates, and inter-ministerial conventions exert significant institutional pressures that shape strategy implementation practices.

***Change Management Theory*** (Kotter, 1996; Lewin, 1947) frames strategic implementation as an inherently change-intensive process requiring the managed transition of people, systems, and structures from current to desired states. Kotter's (1996) eight-step model emphasizes the importance of urgency, coalition building, communicating the vision, and embedding change in organizational culture — all of which correspond to variables investigated in this study.

***The Resource-Based View*** (Barney, 1991; Grant, 2016) posits that an organization's internal resources and capabilities including financial assets, human capital, technology, and organizational knowledge — constitute the foundational determinants of competitive advantage and strategy execution capacity. This framework directly supports the examination of resource availability and staff capacity as critical implementation variables.

**2.3 Empirical Literature**

Tekle (2023) investigated strategic implementation at the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia using quantitative data from 231 employees. Regression analysis revealed that leadership, human resources, resource availability, and strategic communication all significantly and positively influence implementation, with communication emerging as the most influential factor. Messah and Mucai (2023) examined factors influencing strategic management plan implementation in Kenyan government tertiary institutions, finding that managerial behavior and resource allocation exerted the strongest positive effects, while institutional policies and reward systems showed comparatively weaker influences.

Gichohi (2019) demonstrated that leadership commitment, clear communication of strategic objectives, and adequate funding were the strongest predictors of effective implementation in five Kenyan government counties, while bureaucratic delays and political interference constituted recurring obstacles. Mekonnen and Tessema (2020) found that organizational resistance to change, low staff motivation, and inconsistent budgeting were primary barriers to strategy execution in Ethiopian federal ministries.

Hassan and Mohamud (2019), examining Mogadishu's public sector, found that limited human capacity, weak monitoring systems, political instability, and insufficient financial resources constituted the most pressing constraints in a fragile governance context. Most directly relevant to the present study, Jama and Ibrahim (2022) identified frequent leadership turnover, inadequate funding, limited technical capacity, and weak strategic culture as primary impediments to strategic plan implementation in Hargeisa's public institutions — findings that directly motivated the quantitative investigation undertaken in this study.

### 2.4 Research Gap

Despite growing interest in strategic implementation in African public sectors, critical gaps remain unaddressed in the Somaliland context. Most existing frameworks are derived from stable, institutionally mature environments and do not adequately account for the governance complexities inherent to a fragile state. Empirical studies specific to Somaliland are sparse and predominantly qualitative, limiting the generalizability of findings. No quantitative multi-variable study has systematically examined the simultaneous influence of structural, cultural, leadership, resource, and communication factors on strategic implementation across Somaliland's government ministries and agencies. This study addresses this gap directly by providing robust quantitative evidence from a comprehensive cross-institutional sample.

## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed a quantitative research approach to facilitate the collection and statistical analysis of numerical data, allowing for pattern identification, hypothesis testing, and generalization of findings across public institutions. A combination of descriptive and explanatory research designs was applied: the descriptive design documented current perceptions of strategic implementation practices, while the explanatory design examined causal relationships between the independent organizational variables and the dependent variable of strategic implementation.

The target population comprised senior officials from 52 national-level government institutions in Somaliland, including 28 ministries and 24 agencies. Using Yamane's (1967) formula at a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, a sample of 46 institutions was selected through simple random sampling. Within each institution, two to three senior officials Directors, Planning Directors, and Senior Experts were selected purposively, yielding 138 respondents in total.

Data were collected using structured questionnaires with items organized by study variable and measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). The instrument was adapted from previously validated questionnaires used in analogous studies and refined through expert review and a pilot test with 30 respondents from institutions excluded from the main sample. Content validity was established through systematic literature review and expert consultation. Cronbach's Alpha for all constructs exceeded the 0.70 threshold, confirming acceptable internal consistency.

Quantitative data were analyzed using STATA statistical software. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies) characterized respondent demographics and variable distributions. Pearson correlation analysis assessed bivariate associations, and multiple linear regression tested the joint predictive influence of the six independent variables on strategic implementation, generating beta coefficients and significance levels for hypothesis testing.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The demographic analysis reveals a sample predominantly composed of male respondents (78.26%), reflecting existing gender disparities in senior public sector positions in Somaliland, while 21.74% were female. In terms of educational attainment, 84.06% of respondents held Master's level qualifications, underscoring the high educational profile of the sample and enhancing the credibility of institutional perceptions reported. A further 14.49% held Bachelor's degrees, with 0.72% each holding diplomas and PhDs.

With respect to management level, Experts constituted the largest group (35.51%), followed by General Directors (26.81%) and Planning Directors (13.04%), ensuring that data captured perspectives from both technical and executive levels. The mean age of respondents was 34.24 years (SD = 5.54), with an average organizational tenure of 6.12 years and average experience in current positions of 5.41 years. Critically, 98.55% of respondents confirmed that their institutions maintain a formal strategic plan, demonstrating that strategic planning is institutionally established across Somaliland's public sector.

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents.**

| Variable | Category | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Female | 30 | 21.74% |
| | Male | 108 | 78.26% |
| Education | Degree Level | 20 | 14.49% |
| | Diploma | 1 | 0.72% |
| | Master Level | 116 | 84.06% |
| | PhD | 1 | 0.72% |
| Strategic Plan | Yes | 136 | 98.55% |
| | No | 2 | 1.45% |
| Management Level | Expert | 49 | 35.51% |
| | General Director | 37 | 26.81% |
| | Planning Director | 18 | 13.04% |

| Variable | Category | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Deputy Director | 10 | 7.25% |
| | Director Admin & Finance | 10 | 7.25% |
| | Senior Expert | 8 | 5.80% |
| | HRM Director | 1 | 0.72% |

***Source: Primary data, 2025.***

### 4.2 Descriptive Analysis of Key Variables

Table 2 presents the mean scores and standard deviations for each study variable. Organizational structure recorded a mean of 3.45 (SD = 1.35), reflecting moderate respondent confidence in structural arrangements, with the highest-rated item being that structure adequately supports implementation (M = 3.68) and the lowest being information flow (M = 3.22). Leadership style averaged 3.37 (SD = 1.32), with leadership appropriateness rated highest (M = 3.44) and management commitment rated lowest (M = 3.31). Staff capacity yielded a mean of 3.36 (SD = 1.26), with capability and competence items rated higher (M = 3.49) than motivation (M = 3.22) and active participation (M = 3.27).

Resource availability registered the lowest mean among all variables (M = 2.93, SD = 1.38), with strategic alignment of resource allocation rated particularly low (M = 2.76). Organizational culture averaged 3.09 (SD = 1.35), with management's understanding of organizational values rating the lowest (M = 2.89). Organizational communication recorded a mean of 2.94 (SD = 1.31), with inter-departmental communication timeliness (M = 2.70) and top management communication effectiveness (M = 2.75) rated as the weakest items.

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables.**

| Variable | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Organizational Structure | 138 | 3.45 | 1.35 |
| Leadership Style | 138 | 3.37 | 1.32 |
| Staff (Human Resources) | 138 | 3.36 | 1.26 |
| Resource Availability | 138 | 2.93 | 1.38 |
| Organizational Culture | 138 | 3.09 | 1.35 |
| Organizational Communication | 138 | 2.94 | 1.31 |
| Strategic Implementation (DV) | 138 | 3.32 | 1.28 |

***Source: Primary data, 2025.***

### 4.3 Correlation Analysis

Table 3 presents Pearson correlation coefficients among all study variables. Organizational culture demonstrated the strongest inter-variable correlations, particularly with organizational structure (r = 0.666), resource availability (r = 0.659), and staff capacity (r = 0.617), confirming its role as a foundational construct embedded across multiple organizational dimensions. Organizational structure showed a moderate-to-strong correlation with strategic implementation (r = 0.583), and staff capacity correlated equally strongly with the dependent variable (r = 0.583). Resource availability also demonstrated a notable correlation with strategic implementation (r = 0.563).

Leadership style displayed the weakest associations in the matrix, correlating most feebly with organizational communication (r = 0.156) and resource availability (r = 0.162), suggesting that leadership's influence on implementation may operate primarily through indirect, mediated pathways rather than direct linear relationships. These patterns collectively indicate that culture, structure, staff, and resources constitute the central pillars of implementation capacity, while leadership exerts a more contextual and indirect role.

**Table 3: Pearson Correlation Matrix.**

| Variable | Structure | Leadership | Staff | Resources | Culture | Comms | Strategy |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Org. Structure | 1.000 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Leadership | 0.321 | 1.000 | — | — | — | — | — |
| Staff | 0.400 | 0.291 | 1.000 | — | — | — | — |
| Resources | 0.489 | 0.162 | 0.450 | 1.000 | — | — | — |
| Org. Culture | 0.666 | 0.284 | 0.617 | 0.659 | 1.000 | — | — |
| Org. Comms | 0.350 | 0.156 | 0.400 | 0.350 | 0.480 | 1.000 | — |
| Strategy Impl | 0.583 | 0.210 | 0.583 | 0.563 | 0.410 | 0.480 | 1.000 |

***Source: Primary data, 2025. All significant correlations at $p < 0.05$ level (2-tailed).***

### 4.4 Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression was conducted to examine the simultaneous predictive effects of the six independent variables on strategic implementation. The overall model was statistically significant, confirming that the set of organizational factors jointly explains a meaningful portion of the variance in implementation outcomes.

**Table 4: Multiple Regression Analysis — Determinants of Strategic Implementation.**

| Variable | Coefficient (β) | Std. Error | p-value | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Organizational Structure | 0.4174 | 0.0802 | 0.000*** | H1 — Accepted |
| Leadership Style | −0.0300 | 0.0704 | 0.671 | H2 — Rejected |
| Staff Capacity | 0.3885 | 0.0983 | 0.000*** | H4 — Accepted |
| Resource Availability | 0.4644 | 0.0809 | 0.000*** | H3 — Accepted |
| Organizational Culture | −0.4374 | 0.1122 | 0.000*** | H5 — Rejected |
| Org. Communication | 0.2821 | 0.0797 | 0.001** | — |
| Constant | −0.3156 | 0.3262 | 0.335 | — |

***Source: Primary data, 2025. *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$.***

### 4.5 Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Resource availability emerged as the strongest positive predictor of strategic implementation ($\beta = 0.4644$, $p < 0.001$), confirming H3 and reinforcing the Resource-Based View (Barney, 1991). The descriptive results contextualize this finding: financial resource sufficiency (M = 2.98), core competency alignment (M = 2.98), and particularly resource-strategy alignment (M = 2.76) all scored below the midpoint, pointing to both the inadequacy and misalignment of resources as primary implementation constraints. These findings parallel those of Tekle (2023), Gichohi (2019), and Hassan and Mohamud (2019), who similarly identified resource constraints as the foremost barrier to public sector strategy execution in the region.

Organizational structure demonstrated the second strongest positive effect ($\beta = 0.4174$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H1. The moderate mean scores for information flow (M = 3.22) and decision-making appropriateness (M = 3.38) suggest that while structural frameworks exist, their effectiveness in enabling the free flow of strategic information across departmental boundaries remains limited. This aligns with Mintzberg's (1979) structural contingency argument that structure must be dynamically aligned with strategy rather than statically maintained.

Staff capacity exerted a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.3885$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H4. However, the notably lower mean scores for motivation (M = 3.22) and active participation (M = 3.27) compared to capability (M = 3.49) suggest that the primary human resource deficit is motivational rather than technical. This finding underscores the need for motivational management strategies beyond technical training, consistent with Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory which distinguishes between competence (hygiene factor) and motivation (motivator factor).

Organizational communication showed a positive and significant effect ($\beta = 0.2821$, $p = 0.001$), though descriptive analysis reveals it as the weakest-performing variable along with resource availability. The low ratings for inter-departmental communication timeliness ($M = 2.70$) and top management communication effectiveness ($M = 2.75$) indicate that information asymmetries and communication breakdowns constitute significant structural barriers to implementation coordination.

Organizational culture produced a statistically significant but negative coefficient ($\beta = -0.4374$, $p < 0.001$), leading to the rejection of H5. Rather than facilitating implementation, the prevailing institutional culture appears to function as a barrier. The lowest cultural item management's understanding and smooth operation within the organizational value system ($M = 2.89$) reveals a leadership-culture misalignment that may actively resist the behavioral changes required for effective strategy execution. This finding aligns with Kotter (1996), who warns that cultures resistant to change can nullify even structurally and financially sound strategies.

Leadership style did not show a statistically significant direct effect on strategic implementation ($\beta = -0.030$, $p = 0.671$), leading to the rejection of H2. This counterintuitive finding is consistent with the correlation results, which showed leadership as the weakest correlate of most other variables. A parsimonious interpretation is that leadership exercises its influence through mediating variables particularly organizational culture and staff motivation rather than through a direct statistical pathway. This mediation hypothesis warrants future empirical testing through structural equation modeling.

**Table 5: Hypothesis Testing Summary.**

| Hypothesis | Expected Direction | Actual β | p-value | Result |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| H1: Org. Structure → Strategic Impl. | Positive / Significant | Positive (0.4174) | 0.000 | Accepted |
| H2: Leadership Style → Strategic Impl. | Positive / Significant | Negative (−0.030) | 0.671 | Rejected |
| H3: Resource Availability → Strategic Impl. | Positive / Significant | Positive (0.4644) | 0.000 | Accepted |
| H4: Staff Capacity → Strategic Impl. | Positive / Significant | Positive (0.3885) | 0.000 | Accepted |
| H5: Org. Culture → Strategic Impl. | Positive / Significant | Negative (−0.4374) | 0.000 | Rejected |

***Source: Author's analysis based on primary data, 2025.***

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

This study provides comprehensive empirical evidence on the organizational factors determining strategic implementation success and failure in Somaliland's government institutions. Four overarching conclusions emerge.

First, resource availability is the most influential positive determinant of strategic implementation in Somaliland's public sector. The chronic inadequacy and misalignment of financial and material resources with institutional strategic priorities constitutes the foremost barrier to effective strategy execution. Strengthening domestic revenue mobilization and improving the strategic alignment of budget processes are therefore the most impactful leverage points for governance reform.

Second, organizational structure plays a critical enabling role. Institutions with clear roles, accountable reporting lines, and policy-guided decision-making processes demonstrate significantly stronger implementation capacity. However, structural weaknesses in information flow and cross-departmental coordination remain significant constraints that structural reform must address.

Third, staff capacity particularly employee motivation and participatory engagement represent a specific and addressable vulnerability. While technical competence is moderately strong, motivational deficits may suppress the discretionary effort and adaptive performance that sustained strategy execution demands. Targeted incentive and recognition programs are warranted.

Fourth, organizational culture in its current form appears to function as a barrier rather than an enabler of strategic implementation. The misalignment between management behavior, institutional values, and strategic priorities requires deliberate cultural transformation programs that promote accountability, collaboration, and performance orientation.

These conclusions advance the empirical literature on public sector strategic management in fragile institutional contexts, providing a replicable, quantitative evidence base for governance reform in Somaliland and comparable settings across the Horn of Africa.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Resource Mobilization: The Government of Somaliland should prioritize domestic revenue generation and negotiate result-based funding agreements with development partners to ensure sustained resource flows aligned with strategic priorities. Budget planning processes should be directly linked to institutional strategic plans to eliminate misalignment between allocated resources and strategic objectives.

- Structural Reform: Government institutions should conduct organizational design reviews to eliminate bureaucratic redundancies, clarify reporting lines, and establish structured cross-departmental coordination mechanisms that facilitate the information flows essential for strategy execution.
- Staff Motivation and Capacity Development: Human resource policies should incorporate transparent performance evaluation systems, career development pathways, and recognition programs that activate intrinsic motivation among civil servants. Training programs should move beyond technical competency to encompass strategic thinking, adaptive performance, and participatory leadership skills.
- Communication Systems: Institutions should invest in formal communication protocols including strategy implementation briefings, digital reporting dashboards, and multi-directional feedback mechanisms to ensure consistent, timely, and transparent information flow across all organizational levels.
- Cultural Transformation: Leadership should commission institutional culture assessments and implement structured change management programs, drawing on frameworks such as Kotter's (1996) eight-step model, to realign organizational values and behavioral norms with strategic imperatives and reduce cultural resistance to implementation.
- Leadership Development: Leadership development programs should emphasize transformational and participative competencies motivating, communicating, and modeling strategic values rather than directive or hierarchical control approaches, given that leadership's primary influence on implementation appears to operate through mediating cultural and motivational pathways.

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