
MEDIATION EFFECT OF EMPLOYEE ADAPTABILITY ON SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION: EVIDENCE FROM TANZANIA'S PUBLIC SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

Successful implementation of strategic plans remains a persistent challenge in public sector organizations. Grounded in Balanced Scorecard theory, this study examines the impact of employee adaptability on strategic plan implementation and the mediating roles of employee morale and employee awareness of organizational goals in Tanzanian public sector organizations. Following a positivist research philosophy, a quantitative explanatory research design was adopted. Data were collected from 223 permanent employees using structured Likert-scale questionnaires. Descriptive statistics and reliability analysis were conducted in SPSS, while regression-based parallel mediation analysis was performed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) in R with 5,000 bootstrap resamples. Results indicate that employee adaptability does not have a significant direct effect on strategic plan implementation when mediators are included. However, it positively influences both employee morale and awareness of organizational goals, which in turn significantly enhances strategic plan implementation. Bootstrapped mediation analysis confirm that these variables fully mediated the relationship between employee adaptability and successful strategic plan implementation. The findings suggest that employee adaptability contributes directly to strategic execution by fostering morale and goal awareness. This underscores the importance of aligning learning and growth capabilities with employee attitudes and strategic alignment mechanisms. The study offers practical implications for policymakers and public sector leaders seeking to improve strategic plan implementation through employee-centred approaches.

Keywords: Employee Adaptability, Employee Morale, Organizational Goals, Strategic Plan Implementation, Balanced Scorecard, Public Sector, Mediation Analysis.

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, the field of strategic management has progressively shifted from an exclusive focus on strategy formulation to a deeper consideration of strategy implementation. This evolution reflects growing recognition that the value of a strategic plan lies not in its design, but in its effective execution. Despite this, strategy implementation remains one of the most persistent challenges in organizational management. Empirical evidence consistently shows that a substantial proportion of strategic initiatives fail at the implementation stage, with global failure rates ranging from 30% to 90% (Candido & Santos, 2019; Wiraeus & Creelman, 2019; Olson, 2022). In the African context, organizational failure rates remain high, with start-up failure estimated at 54%

(Galal, 2023). While implementation challenges in Tanzania are widely acknowledged, the empirical magnitude of implementation failure, particularly in terms of measurable failure rates within public sector organizations, remains largely undocumented.

Although structural and organizational determinants such as leadership, communication systems, skills availability, alignment, organizational structure, and culture have been widely studied as predictors of successful strategy implementation (Nkone *et al.*, 2024), less attention has been given to human behavioural mechanisms that translate strategic intentions into action. Employee adaptability, defined as the capacity of employees to adjust their behaviours, attitudes, and competencies in responding to changing organizational conditions (Weiss & Merrigan, 2021; Wahiba & Wafa, 2024), has emerged as a critical but underexplored capability in strategy implementation research. Widespread recognition exists regarding the importance of adaptability for organizational resilience; however, most investigations focused on its direct effects on performance outcomes, leaving unanswered questions about the mechanisms through which it influences successful strategic plan implementation, particularly in public sector contexts where procedural rigidity and institutional constraints often limit flexibility. In public sector organizations, the effective execution of strategic plans depends not only on employees' capacity to adapt, but also on their morale and awareness of organizational goals, which shape motivation, alignment, and day-to-day implementation behaviour. From this perspective, employee adaptability may operate through behavioural and cognitive pathways – including enhanced morale and goal awareness – that mediate its impact on strategic outcomes. Yet, empirical studies examining these mediation effects remain scarce, representing a significant theoretical and methodological gap in public sector strategy implementation research.

The public sector has institutionalized strategic planning through New Public Management (NPM) reforms, aimed at improving service delivery through performance orientation, accountability, and long-term strategic direction (Kim & Han, 2015; Lapuente & Van de Walle, 2020). These reforms emphasize performance standards, measurement, and result-oriented management (Hood, 1995; Ingrams *et al.*, 2020; Ghosh & Mahavidyalaya, 2021), positioning strategic plans as central tools for guiding action, communicating priorities, and managing resources effectively (Ritson, 2019; Mintzberg *et al.*, 2020; Dlamini *et al.*, 2020). Tools such as the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) further reinforce the logic of causal linkages between organizational capabilities, such as skills, adaptability, commitment, and morale in driving strategy execution (Kaplan & Norton, 1996; Fuertes *et al.*, 2020; Mikula *et al.*, 2020). While the BSC provides the overarching causal logic for linking employee capabilities to strategy execution, the role of employee awareness of organizational goals is further informed by Goal Setting Theory (GST), which explains how goal clarity and understanding influence motivation, alignment, and task performance (Brady, 2024). In Tanzania, strategic planning was introduced in the public sector during 1990s through reforms including the Medium-Term Plan, Performance Management Systems, and Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (Meigaru *et al.*, 2019). Notwithstanding these reforms, implementation of strategic plans remains weak, with persistent challenges such as unimplemented strategic activities and poor alignment between budgets and plans (CAG, 2023).

1.1 Justification of the Study

This study is justified by the limited empirical understanding of how employee adaptability influences strategic plan implementation in the public sector. While adaptability is recognized as a performance driver, the behavioural (morale) and cognitive (goal awareness) pathways through which it affects strategy execution remain underexplored. Examining these mediating mechanisms is relevant in public organizations, where institutional constraints often limit direct effects and employees' attitudes and understanding determine strategy execution. By investigating these pathways, the study extends existing literature beyond direct-effect models and provides practical insights for enhancing strategic plan implementation.

1.2 Research Objectives

The specific objectives of this study were:

- (1) To determine the effect of employee adaptability on successful strategic plan implementation.
- (2) To determine the effect of employee adaptability on employee awareness of organizational goals.
- (3) To determine the effect of employee adaptability on employee morale.
- (4) To determine the effect of employee awareness of organizational goals on successful strategic plan implementation.
- (5) To determine the effect of employee morale on successful strategic plan implementation.
- (6) To examine the mediating role of employee awareness of organizational goals in the relationship between employee adaptability and successful strategic plan implementation.
- (7) To examine the mediating role of employee morale in the relationship between employee adaptability and successful strategic plan implementation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Literature Review

A strategic plan is a formal document that articulates what an organization is, sets direction, and communicates goals and implementation initiatives required to achieve those goals (Nkone, 2025). It links organizational goals with the actions required for execution. Developing an effective strategic plan requires a deep understanding of the organization, enabling careful articulation of its vision, mission, and core values. These foundational elements subsequently guide the formulation of strategic objectives, strategies, expected outcomes, key performance indicators, targets, results, and ultimately, the resources required for execution (Kaplan & Norton, 2004). The alignment and synergy among people, processes, and strategic plan itself are therefore critical for successful strategic plan implementation – the extent to which an organization realizes its intended vision, mission, goals, and objectives.

While alignment among people, processes, and strategy is widely recognized as essential for successful strategic plan implementation, scholarly interest has only recently begun to examine the behavioural mechanisms through which strategies are translated into action. Empirical evidence from the public sector indicates a significant relationship between employee training and successful strategic plan implementation (Nkone, 2025). However, this study further revealed that employee adaptability was not statistically significant in the multi linear regression model when analysed alongside employee morale and employee awareness of organizational goals. This

finding suggests that employee adaptability, in isolation, may not directly drive strategic implementation success. Consequently, it calls for a reconsideration of the commonly held assumption that adaptability alone is sufficient to enhance strategic outcomes, and highlights the need to examine intervening or mediating mechanisms through which adaptability may influence implementation success.

Guided by this logic, this study adopted the BSC theory as its overarching framework to examine the mediation effect of employee adaptability on successful strategic plan implementation due to its strong causal logic linking employee capabilities, performance drivers, and strategic outcomes. The BSC posits that a cause-and-effect relationship exists among its measurement perspectives (Kaplan & Norton, 1992). In particular, the learning and growth perspective emphasizes the importance of developing employee capabilities and organizational readiness as prerequisites for executing strategy effectively. From this perspective, employee skills, adaptability, commitment, morale, and awareness of organizational goals constitute critical enablers that support successful implementation of organizational strategy, with GST providing complementary explanation for how goal awareness enhances motivation and alignment. Figure 1 presents the adopted and modified Balanced Scorecard framework illustrating how the learning and growth perspectives theoretically informs this study.

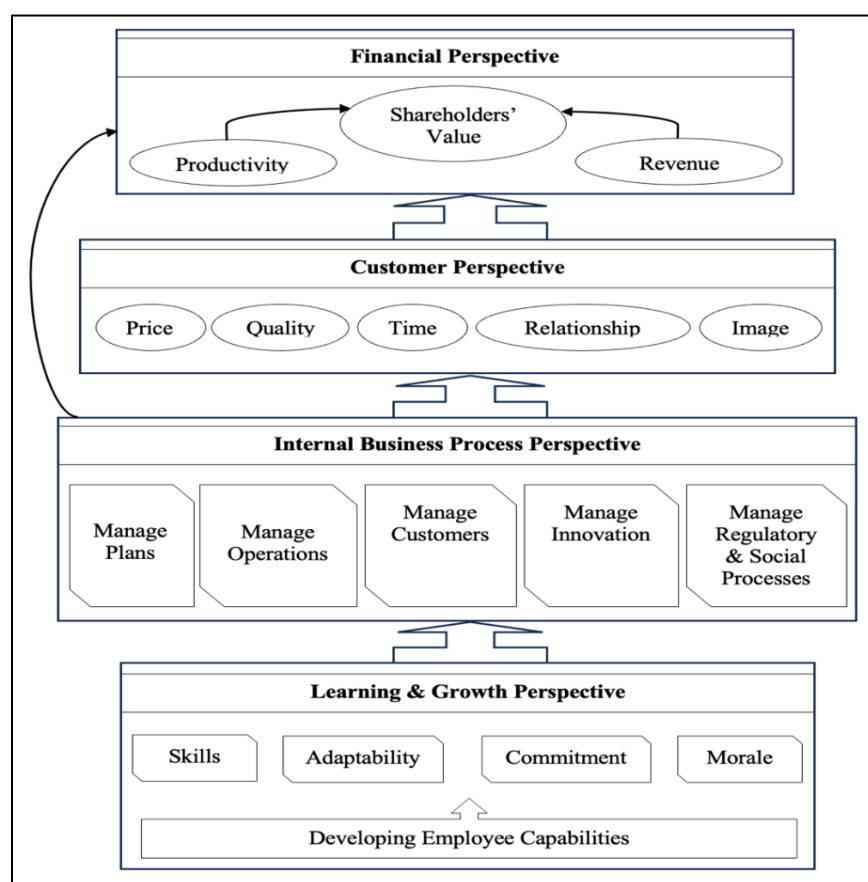


Figure 1: The Balanced Scorecard Framework

Source: Adopted and modified from Nkone (2025).

2.2 Empirical Literature Review

2.2.1 Employee Adaptability and Successful Strategic Plan Implementation

Organizational transitions, driven by technological change, skill upgrading, or structural reforms, requires employees to demonstrate adaptability in their ideas, values, and behaviours (Ployhart & Bliese, 2006). Such adaptability enables individuals to respond to change and contributes to organizational strategic flexibility (Armstrong, 2006). Despite its theoretical relevance, empirical research linking employee adaptability directly to successful strategic plan implementation remains limited. With the exception of Nkone *et al.* (2024), strategy implementation studies in the public sector have predominantly emphasized leadership, communication systems, skills availability, strategic alignment, organizational structure, and culture, rather than adaptability as a core behavioural driver. Nonetheless, empirical evidence from related domains underscores the importance of adaptability for organizational effectiveness. Prior studies associate adaptability with higher job satisfaction and cooperation (Albogami *et al.*, 2024), successful implementation of enterprise systems (Wahiba & Wafa, 2024), individual performance in dynamic environments (Reupert, 2020), and effective navigation of digital transformation initiatives (Sony & Mekoth, 2022). Collectively, these findings suggest that while adaptability is widely recognized as a performance-enhancing capability, its role in shaping strategic plan implementation outcomes, particularly in public sector contexts, remains insufficiently examined.

2.2.2 Employee Adaptability and Employee Awareness of Organizational Goals

Research explicitly examining the linkage between employee adaptability and employee awareness of organizational goals is still emerging and remains relatively underdeveloped. One of the few relevant studies is Yean *et al.* (2022), who examined the mediating role of employee adaptability in the relationship between managerial climate factors, particularly; trust and goal clarity, and employee readiness for change in public sector organizations. Their findings indicate that trust and clarity of organizational goals significantly enhance employee adaptability, which in turn facilitates employees' readiness to embrace change. These results suggest that clear communication and employee awareness of organizational goals serve as important cognitive enablers of adaptability, reinforcing the role of goal awareness in shaping adaptive employee behaviour.

2.2.3 Employee Adaptability and Employee Morale

Compared to other dimensions of employee behaviour, the relationship between employee adaptability and employee morale has received limited direct empirical attention. Nevertheless, related studies suggest a strong conceptual and empirical linkage between adaptability and positive employee attitudes. For instance, Tabala *et al.* (2025) found that individual adaptability significantly enhances psychological well-being, indicating that adaptable employees exhibit greater optimism, confidence in handling challenges, and resilience – attributes closely associated with higher morale. Similarly, Kumi *et al.* (2025) reported that career adaptability, conceptualized as a psychological resource, increases employees' willingness to embrace new technologies and engage in adaptive behaviours, thereby supporting effective communication and collaboration. In addition, Chang (2024) demonstrated that workforce flexibility improves organizational adaptability and productivity while enhancing employee satisfaction and loyalty. Collectively,

these findings suggest that adaptability-related constructs play a meaningful role in fostering employee morale, even though direct empirical evidence on this relationship remains scarce.

2.2.4 Employee Awareness of Organizational Goals and Successful Strategic Plan Implementation

Employee awareness of organizational goals is a critical determinant of productivity and strategic plan implementation, as it provides employees with a clear sense of direction and role clarity (Brady, 2024). Empirical evidence supports this relationship. For example, Gande and Hlophe (2023) found that awareness of organizational strategy was essential for the successful achievement of strategic initiatives, while Dasan (2022) reported that ineffective communication of strategy significantly hindered implementation. Similarly, Gogoi and Bauah (2021) demonstrated that employees' understanding of organizational goals had a positive and significant effect on performance. Collectively, these findings underscore the importance of goal communication and employee awareness in translating strategic intent into successful implementation.

2.2.5 Employee Morale and Successful Strategic Plan Implementation

Although empirical research on strategy implementation has expanded, most studies have focused on leadership, communication systems, skills availability, strategic alignment, organizational structure, and culture, with relatively limited attention given to employee morale (Nkone *et al.*, 2024). Existing evidence nonetheless suggest that morale plays an important role in shaping implementation-related outcomes. For instance, Mallik *et al.* (2019) identified employee as a psychological driver that fosters positive work behaviour and enhances organizational performance. Similarly, Alwi & Shaiq (2021) found that employee satisfaction – reflecting job contentment, growth opportunities, and workplace experience – significantly influences organizational productivity. Likewise, Amrutha (2022) reported that high employee morale strengthens organizational success by increasing employee commitment, particularly when employees perceive their contributions as valued. Collectively, these findings suggests that employee morale constitutes a critical behavioural mechanism through which strategic intentions may be translated into successful strategic plan implementation.

2.2.6 Mediating Role of Employee Awareness of Organizational Goals in the Relationship between Employee Adaptability and Successful Strategic Plan Implementation

Existing literature suggests that employee adaptability and employee awareness of organizational goals are important enablers of successful strategic plan implementation, although their combined explanatory mechanisms remain underexplored. Research on employee adaptability show that adaptable employees can respond to strategic change, realign work behaviours, and support implementation processes in dynamic organizational environments (Pulakos *et al.*, 2000; Griffin *et al.*, 2007). However, adaptability alone may be insufficient for effective strategy execution unless employees clearly understand organizational goals. Strategic management research indicates that employee awareness and understanding of organizational goals enhance strategic actions, coordination, and performance outcomes (Locke & Lutham, 2002; Nkone, 2025). Empirical evidence further suggests that goal-related constructs such as strategic clarity and strategic sight function as intervening mechanisms through which organizational capabilities

translate into effective strategic action (Jia *et al.*, 2020). Despite these insights, limited empirical research has explicitly examined employee awareness of organizational goals as a mediating mechanism linking employee adaptability to successful strategic plan implementation, highlighting a clear gap that this study seeks to address.

2.2.7 Mediating Role of Employee Morale in the Relationship between Employee Adaptability and Successful Strategic Plan Implementation

Research on strategic plan implementation highlights that both employee adaptability and employee morale influence successful execution of organizational strategy. Empirical evidence from the Tanzanian public sector indicates that employee adaptability significantly affects strategic plan implementation, emphasizing the role of flexibility and responsiveness in achieving strategic outcomes (Nkone *et al.*, 2024). Similarly, employee morale positively impacts implementation success, particularly where organizational commitment and motivation drive execution (Nkone *et al.*, 2025). Despite these findings, limited research has examined how employee morale mediates the relationship between adaptability and strategic plan outcomes. Evidence from related HR contexts suggests that internal employee factors, such as engagement and morale, can transmit the effects of strategic constructs into performance outcomes (Gede, 2025). Together, these insights support the conceptual rationale for investigating employee morale as a mediator linking adaptability to strategic plan implementation, addressing a notable empirical gap.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

This study adopted a parallel mediation model in which employee adaptability is conceptualized as a foundational human capability influencing successful strategic plan implementation. Specifically, employee morale and employee awareness of organizational goals are modelled as parallel mediators through which adaptability exerts its indirect effects on implementation outcomes, alongside any direct influence. Guided by this framework, the study examined how adaptability is translated into successful strategic plan implementation through these behavioural and cognitive mechanisms within selected public sector organizations.

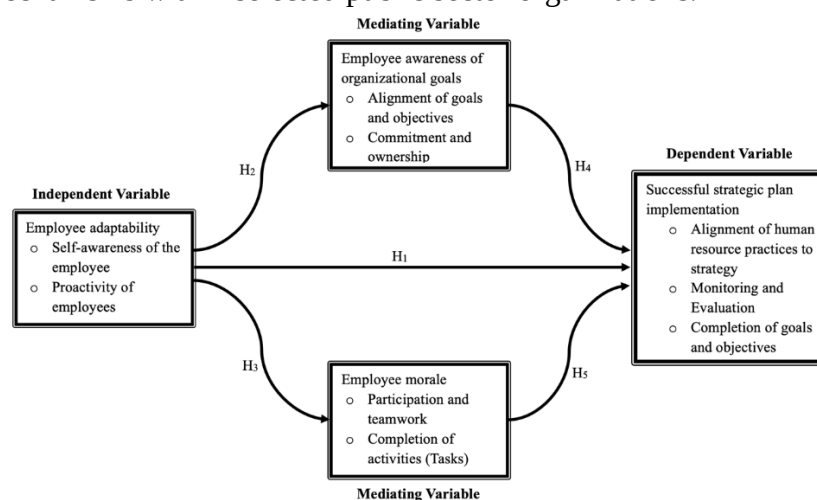


Figure 2: Parallel Mediation - Employee Adaptability on Strategic Plan Implementation

Source: Literature Review – Conceptualized and drawn by the Researcher, 2026.

2.4 Research Hypotheses

Based on the review of literature and the conceptual framework formulated for this study, the following **Alternative Hypothesis (Ha)** and **Null Hypothesis (Ho)** were developed.

2.4.1 Direct Effect

Employee adaptability equips employees with the ability to adjust to new strategic directions, cope with uncertainties, and realign their behaviour with organizational priorities (Nkone *et al.*, 2024). In public sector organizations, where procedural rigidity and constrained resources often hinder strategy execution, adaptable employees are more likely to translate formal plans into actionable outcomes. Prior literatures suggest that adaptability enhances implementation capacity by reducing resistance to change and improving task alignment (Armstrong, 2006). Therefore, employee adaptability is expected to positively influence successful strategic plan implementation. Based on this rationale, the study hypothesized that:

H_{1a}: Employee adaptability has a positive and significant effect on successful strategic plan implementation in the public sector.

H_{1o}: Employee adaptability has no positive and significant effect on successful strategic plan implementation in the public sector.

2.4.2 Employee Adaptability to Mediators

Employee adaptability involves cognitive flexibility and openness to learn, which enhances employees' understanding of new strategic direction and organizational priorities. Adaptable employees are more likely to seek clarification, internalize strategic objectives, and align their roles with organizational goals, thereby improving goal awareness during strategy implementation (Yean *et al.*, 2022). Based on this rationale, the study hypothesized that:

H_{2a}: Employee adaptability has a positive and significant effect on employees' awareness of organizational goals.

H_{2o}: Employee adaptability has no positive and significant effect on employees' awareness of organizational goals.

Moreover, employee adaptability is not only a technical capability but also a behavioural and cognitive resource. Adaptable employees can better cope with change, which enhances their motivation and commitment (morale). Adaptable employees are better equipped to cope with uncertainty, role change, and evolving performance expectations, which reduces stress and enhances psychological well-being (Tabala *et al.*, 2025). This capacity to adjust positively influences employee's motivation, confidence, and commitment to organizational goals, thereby strengthening morale. Within public sector settings marked by frequent reform initiatives and persistent resource constraints, adaptability plays a crucial role in sustaining positive employee attitudes and psychological readiness for change. Based on this rationale, the study hypothesized that:

H_{3a}: Employee adaptability has a positive and significant effect on employee morale.

H_{3o}: Employee adaptability has no positive and significant effect on employee morale.

2.4.3 Mediators to Strategic Plan Implementation

Employees' awareness and understanding of organizational goals facilitate alignment between individual actions and strategic priorities. When employees clearly understand what the

organization seeks to achieve, they are better positioned to implement strategic activities consistently and effectively. Goal awareness is therefore a critical cognitive mechanism in strategy execution (Sides & Cuevas, 2020). Based on this rationale, the study hypothesized that:

H_{4a}: Employees' awareness of organizational goals has a positive and significant effect on successful strategic plan implementation.

H_{4o}: Employees' awareness of organizational goals has no positive and significant effect on successful strategic plan implementation.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of strategy execution depends on employees' engagement and alignment with organizational objectives (Amrutha, 2022). Employees with high morale are more likely to contribute discretionary effort, persist through challenges, and actively support strategic initiatives. Based on this rationale, the study hypothesized that:

H_{5a}: Employee morale has a positive and significant effect on successful strategic plan implementation.

H_{5o}: Employee morale has no positive and significant effect on successful strategic plan implementation.

2.4.4 Mediation Effect

Employee adaptability may influence strategy implementation through employees' cognitive mechanisms. From learning and growth perspective of the BSC, adaptable employees are more likely to understand, internalize, and align their actions with strategic goals. This enhanced awareness enables them to make informed decisions and adjust their behaviour in line with organizational priorities (Brady, 2024), thereby serving as a mediating mechanism through which employee adaptability translates into successful strategy implementation. Based on this rationale, the study hypothesized that:

H_{6a}: Employees' awareness of organizational goals mediates the relationship between employee adaptability and successful strategic plan implementation in the public sector.

H_{6o}: Employees' awareness of organizational goals does not mediate the relationship between employee adaptability and successful strategic plan implementation in the public sector.

Similarly, while employee adaptability may directly influence strategy implementation, its full effect is likely to be transmitted through employees' attitudes. Drawing on the BSC's learning and growth perspective, employee adaptability is expected to enhance employee morale by fostering flexibility, confidence, and positive work attitudes (Nkone *et al.*, 2024). Improved morale, in turn, facilitates commitment and discretionary effort, thereby mediating the relationship between employee adaptability and strategy implementation beyond its direct effect. Based on this rationale, the study hypothesized that:

H_{7a}: Employee morale mediates the relationship between employee adaptability and successful strategic plan implementation in the public sector.

H_{7o}: Employee morale does not mediate the relationship between employee adaptability and successful strategic plan implementation in the public sector.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted at the Medical Stores Department (MSD), National Health Insurance

Fund (NHIF), Tanzania Medicine and Medical Devices Authority (TMDA), National Institute for Medical Research (NIMR), and National Public Health Laboratory (NPHL) – public sector organizations under the ministry of health in Tanzania. Drawing on Saunders *et al.* (2019), this study adopted a positivist research philosophy, as it facilitates development of theory-driven hypotheses that can be empirically tested and either confirmed or refuted. A quantitative research approach was also employed because it allows for objective measurement of relationships among variables and enables hypotheses to be statistically tested using numerical data. An explanatory research design was used to examine the relationship between employee adaptability and successful strategic plan implementation. A survey research strategy was applied, and data were collected using structured five-point Likert-scale questionnaires (see Table 1), adopted from previously validated studies. Mean scores derived from the scale were interpreted according to the levels of agreement presented in Table 2.

The study population comprised a target population of 541 permanent staff, from which a sample of 230 respondents was selected using systematic random sampling based on Yamane formula. To examine both direct and indirect effects among the study variables, a regression-based parallel mediation analysis was performed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) in R with 5,000 bootstrap resamples due to its robustness in estimating indirect effects without assuming normality of the sampling distribution. This approach is particularly suitable for mediation analysis involving behavioural constructs and aligns with the BSC's causal logic linking employee capabilities, performance drivers, and strategic outcomes. Bias-corrected confidence intervals were used to determine the statistical significance of mediation effects.

Table 1: Likert Response Labels for the Study

Options	1	2	3	4	5
5-points	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

Source: Adopted and modified from Taherdoost (2019).

Table 2: Weighted Mean – Level of Agreement

S/n	Weighted Mean	Level of Agreement
1	4.3 - 5	Very High
2	3.5 – 4.2	High
3	2.7 – 3.4	Average
4	1.9 – 2.6	Low
5	1.8 and less	Very Weak

Source: Adopted and modified from Nassar *et al.* (2021)

4. RESULTS

4.1 Response Rate

A total of 230 questionnaires were distributed to staff at MSD, NHIF, TMDA, NIMR, and NPHL, of which 223 were duly completed and returned, representing a response rate of 96.9%. According to Easterby-Smith *et al.* (2012), survey response rates exceeding 30% are generally considered acceptable, indicating that the obtained rate in this study is more than adequate for reliable analysis.

Table 3: Response Rate

S/n	Organization	Questionnaires	Questionnaires	%
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		Distributed	Completed	
1	MSD	78	71	91
2	NHIF	83	83	100
3	TMDA	38	38	100
4	NIMR	14	14	100
5	NPHL	17	17	100
Total		230	223	96.9

Source: Data Analysis, 2026.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics Results

The study examined four key constructs: Employee Adaptability (EA), Employee Morale (EM), Employee Awareness of Organizational Goals (EAO), and Successful Strategic Plan Implementation (SP). Each construct was measured using a Likert scale comprising between eleven (11) and thirteen (13) items in the questionnaire. Following reliability analysis, all constructs retained their original scale items, with standardized indicator loadings ranging from 0.513 to 0.823. Indicators with loadings below 0.70 were retained because their removal did not improve composite reliability or average variance expected, and they were theoretically justified (Kline, 2016; Hair *et al.*, 2017, 2022). The result further indicated that the overall mean scores for all constructs fell within the agreement range (3.5 and above), as presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Likert Scale Summary Statistics

Scale(Construct)	Mean	Std. Deviation
Effect of Employee Adaptability	4.039	0.155
Effect of Employee Morale	3.938	0.068
Effect of Employee Awareness of Organizational Goals	4.100	0.118
Successful Strategic Plan Implementation	3.995	0.054

Source: Data Analysis, 2026.

4.3 Inferential Results

The measurement model was assessed for reliability and convergent validity. The results are presented in Table 5. Internal consistency reliability was satisfactory, with Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.851 to 0.941 and rhoC (composite reliability) ranging from 0.880 to 0.949, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. Convergent validity was evaluated using Average Variance Extracted (AVE), with values ranging from 0.402 to 0.587. While AVE for employee adaptability was slightly below the recommended 0.50 threshold, the construct demonstrated acceptable reliability and was retained for further analysis. RhoA values ranged from 0.858 to 0.943, further confirming the reliability of the constructs. Overall, the results indicate that the constructs are reliably measured and suitable for structural model assessment.

Table 5: Measurement Model Results

	alpha	rhoC	AVE	rhoA
EA	0.851	0.880	0.402	0.858
EM	0.917	0.930	0.528	0.921
EAO	0.935	0.944	0.564	0.939
SP	0.941	0.949	0.587	0.943

Source: Data Analysis, 2026.

The structural model was evaluated using R^2 , adjusted R^2 , and path coefficients. The results are presented in Table 6. The model explained 72.7% of the variance in strategic plan implementation (SP) (Adj. $R^2 = 0.723$), 33.9% of the variance in employee morale (EM) (Adj. $R^2 = 0.336$), and 30.8% of the variance in employee awareness of organizational goals (EAO) (Adj. $R^2 = 0.305$), indicating moderate to substantial explanatory power.

Path analysis revealed that EA had a strong positive effect on EM ($\beta = 0.582$) and EAO ($\beta = 0.555$), but its direct effect on SP was negligible ($\beta = 0.025$). In contrast, EM ($\beta = 0.446$) and EAO ($\beta = 0.466$) both exerted moderate positive effects on SP. These results suggest that EA influences SP primarily through its impact on employee morale and awareness of organizational goals, consistent with the proposed mediation model.

Table 6: Structural Model Results

	SP	EM	EAO
R^2	0.727	0.339	0.308
Adj R^2	0.723	0.336	0.305
EA	0.025	0.582	0.555
EM	0.446	NA	NA
EAO	0.466	NA	NA

Source: Data Analysis, 2026.

Bootstrapped path analysis was conducted with 5,000 resamples to assess the significance of the structural relationships. The results are presented in Table 7 and graphically in Figure 3. EA had significant positive effects on EM ($\beta = 0.58$, 95% CI [0.50, 0.67]) and EAO ($\beta = 0.56$, 95% CI [0.46, 0.66]). In turn, EM ($\beta = 0.45$, 95% CI [0.30, 0.58]) and EAO ($\beta = 0.47$, 95% CI [0.35, 0.58]) significantly predicted strategic plan implementation. However, the direct effect of EA on SP was negligible and non-significant ($\beta = 0.03$, 95% CI [-0.08, 0.13]), indicating that the influence of EA on SP occurs indirectly through EM and EAO.

Table 7: Bootstrapped Structural Model Results

	Original Est.	Bootstrap Mean	Bootstrap SD	T Stat.	2.5% CI	97.5% CI
EA -> EM	0.58	0.59	0.04	13.10	0.50	0.67
EA -> EAO	0.56	0.57	0.05	10.84	0.46	0.66
EA -> SP	0.03	0.03	0.05	0.48	-0.08	0.13
EM -> SP	0.45	0.45	0.07	6.06	0.30	0.58
EAO -> SP	0.47	0.47	0.06	7.95	0.35	0.58

Source: Data Analysis, 2026.

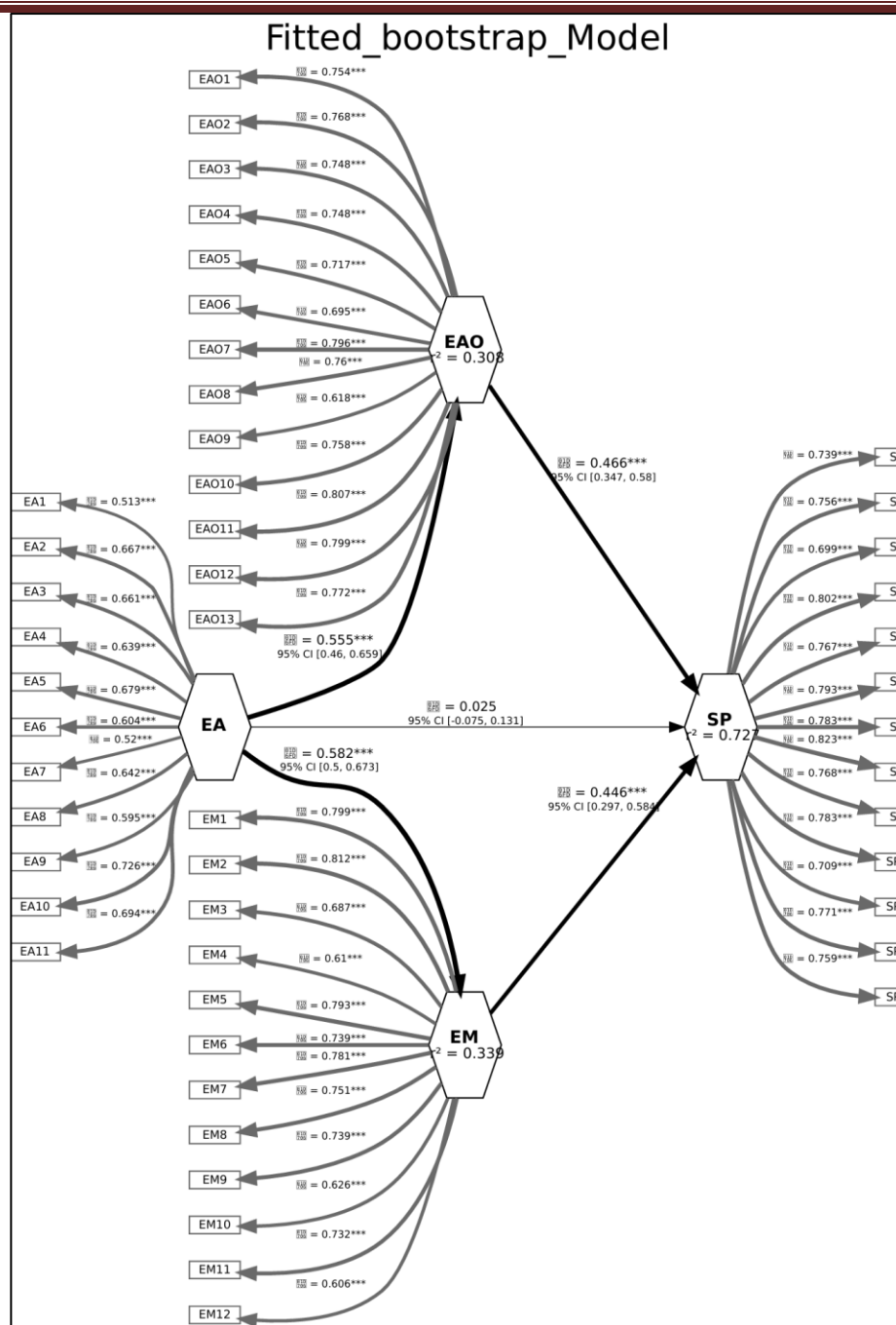


Figure 3: Fitted Bootstrap Parallel Mediation Model

Source: Data Analysis, 2026.

5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Employee Adaptability and Successful Strategic Plan Implementation (H₁)

The study found that employee adaptability does not have a statistically significant direct effect on successful strategic plan implementation when employee morale and employee awareness of

organizational goals are included in the model. This finding leads to the rejection of H_{1a} and acceptance of H_{1o} . Nkone (2025) had similar result indicating that employee adaptability did not have statistically significant positive effect on the successful implementation of strategic plans in the public sector. This result suggests that adaptability alone is insufficient to translate into successful implementation outcomes unless it is channelled through appropriate organizational and behavioural mechanisms. Within the BSC framework, this implies that learning and growth capabilities (such as adaptability) must be aligned with internal process enablers to produce performance outcomes. The finding challenges linear assumptions that adaptable employees automatically deliver strategic results, highlighting the importance of mediating organizational factors.

Within Tanzanian public institutions, characterized by rigid hierarchies and formalized procedures, the direct impact of employee adaptability on strategy execution may be constrained, underscoring the role of mediating behavioural and cognitive mechanisms. These findings set the stage for examining how employee morale and awareness of organizational goals mediate the effect of adaptability on strategic plan implementation.

5.2 Employee Adaptability and Employee Awareness of Organizational Goals (H_2)

The findings indicate that employee adaptability positively and significantly influences employee awareness of organizational goals, supporting H_{2a} and rejecting H_{2o} . While empirical studies directly examining this relationship are limited, the results align with Yean *et al.* (2022) who found that trust and clarity of organizational goals are key antecedents of adaptability. This suggests that adaptable employees are more capable of understanding, internalizing, and aligning their actions with organizational goals. From a BSC perspective, employee's learning and growth capabilities enhance strategic alignment by linking individual competencies to organizational objectives. In public sector organizations in Tanzania, where procedural constraints and hierarchical structures prevail, alignment through awareness is particularly critical, as adaptability alone may not suffice unless employees are engaged with strategic priorities. These findings highlight the cognitive pathway through which adaptability translates into strategic plan execution, providing a theoretical justification for examining employee awareness as a mediator in the relationship between adaptability and successful implementation.

5.3 Employee Adaptability and Employee Morale (H_3)

The results indicate that employee adaptability positively and significantly affects employee morale, supporting H_{3a} and rejecting H_{3o} . This aligns with Tabala *et al.* (2025) who found that adaptability enhances morale by fostering positive expectations of success, building confidence in managing demanding tasks, and supporting resilience in overcoming setbacks. Theoretically, adaptable employees are able to cope with change, uncertainty, and evolving strategic demands, which strengthens their motivation, engagement, and commitment. Within the BSC framework, these human capital capabilities play a key role in translating individual potential into behaviours that support organizational strategy execution. Given the hierarchical and bureaucratic nature of Tanzanian public sector organizations, employee morale becomes especially critical in channelling adaptability into actionable commitment, reinforcing the importance of behavioural mediators in strategy implementation.

5.4 Employee Awareness of Organizational Goals and Strategic Plan Implementation (H₄)

The study found that employee awareness of organizational goals positively and significantly influences successful strategic plan implementation, supporting H_{4a} and rejecting H_{4o}. This indicates that when employees clearly understand organizational goals, they are more likely to align their actions with strategic expectations. These findings are consistent with Brady (2024) and Gande and Hlophe (2023) who demonstrated that goal awareness enhances productivity and facilitates the successful achievement of strategic initiatives. From BSC perspective, this reflects effective strategy translation, where organizational vision and objectives are communicated and cascaded throughout the organization to guide execution. Considering the rigid structures and formal processes typical of Tanzanian public institutions, clear awareness of organizational goals serves as a crucial cognitive mechanism, enabling employees to internalize strategy and coordinate their efforts toward successful implementation.

5.5 Employee Morale and Strategic Plan Implementation (H₅)

The results indicate that employee morale positively and significantly influences successful strategic plan implementation, supporting H_{5a} and rejection of H_{5o}. Although empirical research on morale in strategy implementation remains limited, these findings align with the findings of Mallik *et al.* (2019) who described morale as a psychological driver that fosters positive employee behaviour and enhances organizational performance. Similarly, Nkone *et al.* (2024) found that high employee morale significantly improves strategic plan execution in the public sector. Morale strengthens commitment, teamwork, discretionary effort, and persistence, all of which are critical for overcoming implementation challenges. From BSC perspective, these outcomes reflect the internal process and learning and growth dimensions, which emphasize employee motivation and engagement as essential drivers of effective strategy execution. In the context of Tanzanian public sector bureaucracy, marked by strict hierarchies and procedural protocols, high morale functions as a key behavioural mechanism that channels employee adaptability into tangible strategic results, explaining the observed full mediation effect.

5.6 Mediating Role of Employee Awareness of Organizational Goals (H₆)

The fitted bootstrap mediation analysis revealed that employee awareness of organizational goals significantly mediates the relationship between employee adaptability and successful strategic plan implementation, leading to the acceptance of H_{6a} and rejection of H_{6o}. The absence of a statistically significant direct effect of employee adaptability, alongside a significant indirect effect through awareness, indicates full mediation effect. This finding suggests that employee adaptability contributes to successful strategic plan implementation only when it is translated into a clear understanding and internalization of organizational goals. From a BSC perspective, this reinforces the proposition that learning and growth capabilities must be effectively converted into strategic alignment and shared understanding before they can influence performance outcomes.

Theoretically, this results challenges assumptions of a direct, linear relationship between employee capabilities and strategic outcomes. Instead, it highlights the central role of employee cognition and sense-making in strategy execution. While empirical research directly examining employee awareness of organizational goals as a mediator between adaptability and strategic plan implementation is limited, existing strategic management literature emphasizes that employees'

understanding of strategic objectives significantly shapes coordination, commitment, and goal-directed behaviour (Locke & Latham, 2002; Nkone, 2025). Studies further demonstrate that awareness-related constructs, such as strategic goal clarity and strategic goal sight, function as intervening mechanisms through which organizational capabilities are transformed into effective strategic action (Jia *et al.*, 2020).

From institutional and cultural standpoint, particularly within public sector organizations, formalized structures, hierarchical decision-making, and procedural rigidity can constrain the direct impact of individual adaptability on strategic outcomes. In such contexts, adaptable employees may possess the capacity to respond to change, but without clear awareness of organizational goals, their efforts may remain fragmented or misaligned with strategic priorities. Employee awareness of organizational goals therefore acts as a critical cognitive bridge, ensuring that adaptability is purposefully directed toward organizational objectives rather than isolated or ad-hoc initiatives.

By empirically demonstrating the full mediating role of employee awareness of organizational goals, this study extends the BSC literature and strategy implementation research by identifying a previously underexplored cognitive alignment pathway through which employee adaptability translates into successful strategic plan implementation. This finding underscores the importance of deliberate strategy communication, goal cascading, and continuous strategic dialogue as institutional mechanisms that enable adaptable human capital to contribute meaningfully to strategic success.

5.7 Mediating Role of Employee Morale (H₇)

Similarly, the findings indicate that employee morale significantly mediates the relationship between employee adaptability and successful strategic plan implementation, leading to acceptance of H_{7a} and rejection of H_{7b}. The presence of a non-significant direct effect of employee adaptability alongside a statistically significant indirect effect through employee morale confirms a full mediation effect. This suggests that adaptable employees contribute to successful strategic plan implementation primarily by fostering higher morale – manifested through motivation, commitment, and sustained effort – rather than through direct behavioural adaptability alone. This finding reinforces the BSC logic that human capital capabilities influence performance outcomes indirectly by shaping employee attitudes, engagement, and discretionary effort that support internal strategic processes.

From a theoretical standpoint, this result underscores the psychological mechanism through which adaptability translates into strategic outcomes. Adaptable employees are better equipped to cope with uncertainty, role changes, and evolving strategic demands, which reduces stress and resistance while enhancing confidence and optimism. These psychological benefits elevate morale, creating a work climate conducive to cooperation, persistence, and proactive problem-solving during strategy execution. In the absence of such positive morale, adaptability may remain latent and fail to generate meaningful strategic impact. Institutionally and culturally, this finding is particularly salient in public sector contexts characterized by bureaucratic structures, formalized procedures, and limited extrinsic incentives. In such environments, the successful execution of

strategic plans often depends less on individual initiatives alone and more on collective motivation, commitment to public service values, and willingness to sustain effort despite resource constraints and procedural rigidity. Employee morale thus functions as a critical motivational conduit, enabling adaptable capabilities to be mobilized effectively in support of strategic objectives.

Although empirical research directly examining employee morale as a mediator between adaptability and strategic plan implementation remains limited, related evidence support this explanatory logic. Nkone *et al.* (2025) demonstrated that employee morale positively influences strategic plan implementation in public sector institutions, emphasizing the role of commitment and motivation in execution success. Complementary evidence from broader human resource research shows that internal employee factors such as engagement can mediate the relationship between strategic alignment and organizational performance (Gede, 2025). Extending these insights, the present study provides empirical evidence that employee morale constitutes a key psychological pathway through which employee adaptability is translated into successful strategic plan implementation.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

This study concludes that employee adaptability is a critical antecedent of successful strategic plan implementation in public sector organizations; however, its influence is indirect rather than direct. The findings demonstrate that employee adaptability contributes to successful strategic plan implementation through two key mediating mechanisms: employee morale and employee awareness of organizational goals. Grounded in the BSC theory, the study shows that learning and growth capabilities must be effectively translated into positive employee attitudes and strategic alignment mechanisms to generate implementation outcomes. By empirically establishing the full mediation roles of employee morale and goal awareness, this study advances strategic management and public sector implementation literature by clarifying the behavioural and cognitive pathways through which employee adaptability drives strategic success.

6.2 Implications

6.2.1 Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to strategy implementation and public sector management literature in several ways. Firstly, by demonstrating that employee adaptability does not directly influence successful strategic plan implementation, the study challenges linear and capability-centric assumptions prevalent in prior research. Instead, it provides empirical evidence that adaptability operates through behavioural (employee morale) and cognitive (employee awareness of organizational goals) mechanisms. Secondly, the study extends the application of the BSC theory by empirically validating its causal logic within a public sector context, confirming that learning and growth capabilities must be translated into strategic alignment and positive employee attitudes before influencing implementation outcomes. Finally, by establishing full mediation effects, the study advances strategy implementation research beyond direct-effect models and deepens understanding of how employee-level mechanisms transmit organizational capabilities into strategic results.

6.2.2 Policy Implications

From policy perspective, the findings suggest that public sector reforms aimed at improving strategic plan implementation should move beyond structural and procedural interventions alone. Policies that prioritize employee adaptability without equal emphasis on morale and strategic awareness are unlikely to yield sustained implementation success. Public sector policy frameworks should therefore institutionalize strategic communication, employee engagement, and psychological support as integral components of strategy implementation, particularly in bureaucratic environments where employee attitudes and understanding play a critical role in translating strategic intent into action.

6.2.3 Managerial and Practical Implications

For public sector leaders, the study highlights that adaptability should not be treated as a standalone competency. Managerial focus should instead be directed toward converting adaptable behaviours into shared strategic understanding and positive employee morale. Practically, this requires continuous communication and cascading of strategic goals, leadership practices that reinforce motivation and participation, alignment of adaptability-focused training with strategic objective performance indicators, and the use of performance management systems such as PEPMIS as strategic alignment tools than appraisal mechanisms alone.

6.3 Methodological Limitations

Despite its contributions, this study is subject to several methodological limitations that should be acknowledged when interpreting the findings. Firstly, the study relies on self-reported survey data, which may be susceptible to common method bias and social desirability effects. Although self-reported measures are widely used in strategy implementation and public sector research, particularly when assessing employee behavioural and cognitive constructs such as morale, and goal awareness; they may inflate observed relationships. To mitigate this concern, the study employed validated measurement scales and conducted reliability and validity assessments. Nonetheless, future research could complement survey data with objective indicators, supervisor ratings, or archival performance data to reduce potential bias.

Secondly, the use of cross-sectional research design limits the ability to make strong causal inferences. While the theoretical framework and mediation analysis are grounded in established causal logic drawn from the BSC theory, the cross-sectional nature of the data captures relationships at a single point in time. As a result, temporal ordering among employees cannot be definitely established. Future studies are encouraged to adopt longitudinal designs to better capture causal dynamics and changes in implementation processes over time. Thirdly, the operationalization of successful strategic plan implementation is based on perceptual measures, reflecting employees' assessment of implementation effectiveness rather than objective performance outcomes. While perceptual measures are appropriate for capturing implementation processes, especially in public sector contexts where objective indicators may be fragmented or difficult to access, they may not fully capture concrete implementation outputs such as budget alignment, service delivery metrics, or performance scorecards. Future research could enhance measurement robustness by integrating objective implementation indicators alongside perceptual assessments.

Taken together, these limitations do not invalidate the study's findings but instead define the scope and boundaries of interpretation. Addressing these methodological issues in future research would further strengthen empirical understanding of the mechanisms linking employee adaptability to successful strategic plan implementation.

6.4 Recommendations

6.4.1 Policy and Managerial Recommendation

- 1) Public sector organizations should institutionalize continuous and structured communication of strategic goals to ensure employee adaptability is translated into shared understanding and coordinated action.
- 2) Strategic implementation frameworks should embed employee motivation, recognition, participatory decision-making, and supportive leadership practices to strengthen morale and commitment.
- 3) Capacity building initiatives aimed at enhancing adaptability should be explicitly aligned with strategic objectives, key performance indicators, and implementation milestones to reinforce the linkage between learning and strategy execution.
- 4) Performance management tools such as PEPMIS should be leveraged as strategic alignment platforms for reinforcing priorities and monitoring employee engagement, in addition to appraisal purposes.

6.4.2 Recommendations for Further Research

Future research may examine additional mediating variables such as leadership style, organizational culture, employee commitment, or organizational climate to deepen understanding of the mechanisms linking adaptability to strategic outcomes. Longitudinal research designs are also recommended to capture dynamic changes in employee adaptability, morale, and goal awareness over time. Furthermore, comparative studies across public and private sectors or different national contexts could further test the applicability of the BSC theory in strategy implementation research.

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