



A Behavioral Approach to Modelling Strategy Execution: The Role of Organizational Support and the Moderated Mediation Effect of Engagement and Communication

Francis Chuah^{1*}, Kenny Teoh², Hiram Ting³, Evan Lau⁴

¹School of Business and Management, College of Business, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Sintok, Malaysia, ²Faculty of Economics and Management, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia, ³Institute of Borneo Studies, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, 94300, Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, Malaysia, ⁴Centre for Business, Economics and Finance Forecasting, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, 94300, Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, Malaysia. *Email: francischuah@uum.edu.my

ABSTRACT

Much of the failure in strategy execution in organization is attributed to human factors. While there is abundance of studies which delve into strategy execution, literature pertaining to the behavioral strategy and its impact on strategy execution remains scarce. Interest towards behavioral strategy is recently renewed as a result of the rising concern of the non-progressive rate of successful strategy implementation in the practicing world. This study answers the call for more research on behavioral strategy by examining the role of engagement, a concept drawn from the theory of engagement and work-psychology literature, in explaining the support-execution relationship. Subsequently, the support-execution model of strategy execution is advanced by a joint investigation of the mediating role of strategy engagement as well as the moderating role of strategy communication in the mediated relationship. Using process macro in Statistical Package for Social Sciences, the model was tested with 224 middle level managers selected from the service industry in Malaysia. The result shows that strategy engagement mediates the relationship between organizational support and strategy execution. Moreover, strategy communication is found to moderate the relationship between firstly organizational support and strategy execution, and secondly strategy engagement and strategy execution. The moderated mediation analysis reveals that strategic communication moderates the mediated relationship between organizational support and strategy execution via strategy engagement. Results from the integrated moderated mediation model provide new insights into the interaction of behavioral variables and their effect on strategy execution in contemporary business environment.

Keywords: Organizational Support, Strategy Communication, Strategy Engagement, Strategy Execution

JEL Classifications: M10

1. INTRODUCTION

Strategy execution, a term that is commonly associated with the subsequent process of strategic planning (Bourgeois and Brodwin, 1984; Cater and Pucko, 2010), is now widely regarded as the most important subject in the field of strategic management (Speculand, 2009). Recent statistics shows that the success rate for strategy execution stands between 10% and 30% (Farsight Leadership Organization, 2007; Raps, 2004). Such poor success rate of strategy execution indicates that there is much to be looked into about strategy execution. The effort to better understand strategy execution, however, is not without hurdles. Okumus and Roper

(1999) postulate that one of the few reasons prohibiting the clear understanding of strategy execution is the different perceptions on strategy execution. Scholars from different disciplines are said to have different views and manners in conceptualizing strategy execution in their respective areas.

Given the hurdles in conceptualizing strategy execution, it is not surprising to see that there has been a period of paucity in researching strategy execution. Nonetheless, recent arising awareness on the importance of strategy execution as well as issues surrounding it in the practicing world has once again ushered strategy execution in to become the center of research

attention of scholars of strategic management. There is consensus among them that strategy execution is currently under-researched (Creasap, 2011; Crittenden and Crittenden, 2008; Gottschalk, 2008; Yang et al., 2010) and more investigations are needed to further understand strategy execution. Such exigency is intensified by the assertion that poor strategy execution in the contemporary business environment would impair subsequent strategic planning efforts (Crittenden and Crittenden, 2008).

The present study sets to answer call for more research on strategy execution by revisiting the support-execution model of strategy execution. Building on prior literature, this study introduces a new concept: "Strategy engagement" as a mechanism to articulate the support-execution relationship. Drawing the concept of "engagement" as well as theory of engagement (Kahn, 1990; 1992), support-execution model is reconstructed so that strategy engagement becomes a construct that intervenes the relationship between organizational support and strategy execution.

In addition, the study examines the effect of strategy communication on the integrated model of strategy execution. On the basis of Craig's (1999) communication theory, it is believed that communication plays an essential role in strategy execution in such a way that when communication is high and frequent, execution of a strategy by managers would be better. As such, a moderated mediation model which jointly examines the mediating role of strategy engagement and the moderating role of strategy communication is introduced and developed to facilitate the investigation so as to provide both conceptual and practical contributions to the subject.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Organizational Support

Existing literature on strategy execution across various fields, such as marketing, information system and strategic management, has avowed the importance of top management support in strategy execution or implementation (Bradford and Florin, 2003; Qi, 2005; Ragu-Nathan et al., 2004; Ramaseshan et al., 2013). It is said that support from top management facilitates effort towards realization of organizational benefits and lends credibility to functional managers who are responsible for strategy execution (Bradford and Florin, 2003). Therefore, without the support from top management, business strategies would not be executed effectively and efficiently (Kearns, 2006).

Nonetheless, the notion that top management support is a focal antecedent of strategy execution success has been recently challenged. Study conducted by Sull et al. (2015) reveals that 84% of the respondents who receive support from top management fail to execute strategy successfully. When asked about the impediments for execution success, 30% of the respondents claim that it is due to failure to coordinate with other units, thus resulting in the lack of support from one another.

While it is known that top management support can be an important antecedent of strategy execution, yet in reality, such support alone does not necessarily guarantee the success of strategy execution.

Qi, (2005) advocates that not all avenues of support are directly under the influence of top management. Resources such as effective feedback system, supportive culture as well as appropriate structure for strategy execution are not solely dependent on top management. Rather it involves the interdependency between top, middle and even line management across departments or units within the organizations. Such interdependency between and across different levels of management underscores the magnitude of having support from all levels of management rather than just top management in determining and securing execution success.

Hence, in the context of the present study, organizational support is deemed as a better term to illustrate the support given to middle level managers from all levels of management in the organizations to execute organizational strategy. Accordingly, organizational support is described as the extent to which the organization is involved in, participates in, comprehends and supports the execution of a well-planned strategy (Elysee, 2012; Ragu-Nathan et al., 2004). It is incorporated into the model of the study as the antecedent construct.

2.2. Strategy Engagement

The concept of strategic engagement is derived from Kahn's (1990) notion of engagement which explains how individuals use varying degree of their selves in work role performance physically, emotionally and cognitively (Kahn, 1990. p. 692). Hence, in the context of strategic management, strategy engagement is used to represent how strategy executors use varying degrees of their selves physically, emotionally and cognitively to execute a strategy. Presently, Kahn's (1990) work has received enormous attention from psychological and behavioral related fields of research (Macey and Schneider, 2008; Maslach et al., 2001; Schaufeli, 2012; Shuck and Wollard, 2010). The notion of engagement in strategy execution process, however, is still relatively new and appears to be a potential gap in literature on strategy execution which is worth addressing.

In his theory-generating ethnographic research, Kahn's (1990) view of engagement is that it can be observed through behavioral investment which includes the investment of physical, emotional and cognitive energies into work role performance. It is believed that the inclusion of these three energies into execution of a strategy would more likely lead to successful strategy execution and desired organizational outcomes (Kahn, 1992; Rich et al., 2010).

While acknowledging the importance of investigating the cause-and-effect relationship of strategy engagement and strategy execution, it is worth noting that throughout its development, the concept of engagement is claimed to have overlapped with other motivational and behavioral constructs, such as the concept of commitment and involvement (Kahn, 1990; 1992; Macey and Schneider, 2008; Maslach et al., 2001; Rich et al., 2010; Saks, 2006; Welch, 2011). Nonetheless, recent literature coupled with theoretical advancement suggests that while these terms can be highly associated, they tend to be distinct and are not interchangeable when explaining human behavior from organizational standpoint (Macey and Schneider, 2008; Meyer and Maltin, 2010; Rich et al., 2010; Saks, 2006).

2.3. Theory of Engagement and Organizational Support

Kahn's (1990) theory of engagement suggests that the fulfillment of the three psychological conditions will facilitate engagement, namely psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety and psychological availability. He advocates that the presence of these conditions will stimulate a person's physical, emotional and cognitive presence in the work role. Subsequently, these conditions regulate how individuals habituate and engage in their work role which in turn leads to productive performance.

Moreover, it is believed that support for strategy execution creates the three psychological conditions that would enhance strategy executors' engagement in strategy execution processes, thus leading to successful strategy execution. For example, psychological meaningfulness denotes the feeling that one is receiving in return on investment of physical, cognitive or emotional energies (Kahn, 1990). When an organization provides full support to strategy executors, it creates a sense of meaningfulness towards their role as strategy executors. The sense of meaningfulness will then foster their engagement in their work role.

Psychological safety, on the other hand, is described as feeling which is able to show and employ one's self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status or career (Kahn, 1990). It is claimed that when support is fully channeled to strategy executors, it creates a sense of safety such that the strategy executors are no longer in fear or in doubt during strategy execution process. When strategy executors feel safe to express themselves in such a process, this will undoubtedly motivate them to be fully engaged in the process to see things out.

Lastly, psychological availability is defined as the sense of having the physical, emotional or psychological resources to personally engage in a particular moment (Kahn, 1990). In this context, physical resources for strategy execution, such as financial supply and manpower (Harter et al., 2002; Wagner and Harter, 2006), are vital in influencing strategy executors' engagement. The level of availability of these resources will determine the level of engagement strategy executors would dedicate to in the strategy execution process.

2.4. The Mediating Role of Strategy Engagement

Kahn's (1990) theory of engagement also provides solid argument that engagement can be identified as a proximal motivational mechanism that can account for distal relationship between a variety of characteristics and organizational factors towards organizational performance and various outcomes (Rich et al., 2010). A study conducted by Rich et al. (2010) demonstrates how engagement mediates the relationship between perceived organizational support, value congruence and core self-evaluation on job performance. Drawing from such findings as well as theoretical support, it is postulated that strategy engagement can be a proximal construct that intervenes the relationship between organizational support and strategy execution. Given the foregoing assumption, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 1: Strategy engagement mediates the relationship between organizational support and strategy execution.

2.5. The Moderating Role of Strategy Communication

Though widely regarded as an important element in strategy execution process (Alexander, 1985; Rapert and Wren, 1998), the lack of empirical evidence and the inconclusive effect of strategy communication on strategy execution in literature suggest that strategy communication is still in need of further investigation (Forman and Argenti, 2005; Yang et al., 2010). Rapert et al. (2002) advocate that strategy communication is important for strategy execution process as it conveys shared understanding of strategic decision across not only top management but as well as personnel at the functional level. In light of the aforementioned, it is believed that strategy executors who have direct and frequent access to strategy communication will tend to outperform strategy executors who are in a more restrictive environment (Rapert and Wren, 1998).

The renewed interest of researchers on engagement brings in an interesting research area which examines the function of communication on engagement. While Westley (1990) postulates that superior-subordinate strategic conversation would have a strong impact on middle-level managers' motivation during strategy execution process, Heide et al. (2002) suggest that communication problems constitute the barriers for strategy execution. Welch (2011) as well as MacLeod and Clarke (2009) surmise that communication is an important tool in enhancing performance through engagement.

Given the theoretical foundation and findings from relevant literature, this study attempts to examine the effect of strategy communication on strategy execution process. It is largely accepted that when sufficient support and communication are provided, strategy executors are likely to perform better. In the same vein, it is also believed that sufficient support and communication allow strategy executors to engage in a more effective manner, thus increasing the chances of success in strategy execution. Subsequently, the following hypotheses are proposed.

Hypothesis 2: Strategy communication moderates the relationship between organizational support and strategy execution such that the relationship is stronger when communication is high.

Hypothesis 3a: Strategy communication moderates the relationship between organizational support and strategy engagement such that the relationship is stronger when communication is high.

Hypothesis 3b: Strategy communication moderates the first stage of the mediated relationship between organizational support and strategy execution via strategy engagement such that the mediated relationship is stronger when communication is high.

Hypothesis 4a: Strategy communication moderates the relationship between strategy engagement and strategy execution such that the relationship is stronger when communication is high.

Hypothesis 4b: Strategy communication moderates the second stage of the mediated relationship between organizational support and strategy execution via strategy engagement such that the mediated relationship is stronger when communication is high.

3. METHODOLOGY

The present study adopted quantitative approach to investigate and thus explain the phenomenon pertaining to strategy execution based on relationships postulated by the hypotheses. It was conducted using sample respondents selected from the Malaysian External Trade Development Corporation services directories. Sample respondents are made up by middle level managers in a corporation. Past literature has generally agreed that the most important individuals who determine the effectiveness of strategy execution are the mid-level managers (Barton and Ambrosini, 2013; Slater and Atuahene-Gima, 2004; Thorpe and Morgan, 2007). Middle level managers from corporation operating in four major service industries in Malaysia was selected to participate in this study.

These four major service industries, namely business service industry, financial service industry, franchise service industry and information and communication industry were selected as they contribute approximately 60% of the overall services sector's gross domestic product in Malaysia. Self-administered questionnaire was designed. Items in the questionnaire were measured with a 7-point Likert Scale except for item related to demographic factors. Items measuring all the variables of interest were derived from prior literatures (Bradford and Florin, 2003; Noble and Mokwa, 1999; Rich et al., 2010; Vandenberg et al. 1999).

3.1. Measures

3.1.1. Organizational support

Organizational support was measured using Bradford and Florin (2003) and Ragunathan et al (2004) measures of organizational support. Minor modifications were conducted to suit the context of this study. For example, question such as "The success of SAP implementation efforts was due to the active championing by key senior management person(s) was revised to "The success of the strategy execution was due to active championing by my organization". Respondents were asked to use a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Cronbach's alpha for this measure is 0.88 (Appendix Table 1).

Strategy Engagement: Strategy engagement was measured by Rich et al. (2010) measurement of job engagement. Minor modifications were conducted to ensure its applicability of this study. For example, question such as "I devote a lot of energy to my job" was altered to "I devote a lot of energy when executing a strategy." Respondents were asked to assess the level of agreement towards a given statement. Each item was assessed using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Cronbach's alpha for this measure is 0.89.

3.1.2. Strategy communication

Vandenberg et al. (1999) 6 item measures of managerial communication were used to assess strategy communication. Minor modifications were conducted for the purpose of this study. For example, statement pertaining to "Company policies and procedures are clearly communicated to employees" was changed to "Company strategies are clearly communicated to employees". Respondents were asked to use a 7-point Likert scale to indicate

the extent to which they agree to the given statement. Response choice alternatives ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Cronbach's alpha for this measure is 0.888.

3.1.3. Strategy execution

Strategy execution was measured using Noble and Mokwa's (1999) 5 item measures of successful strategy execution. Respondents are requested to express the extent to which they agree on a given statement on strategy execution based on 7-point Likert scale. The seven point Likert scale range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Cronbach's alpha for this measure is 0.82.

Expert check and pre-test were conducted to secure content validity and that the instructions and items in the questionnaire were comprehensible from the respondent standpoint (Collins, 2003; Hardesty and Bearden, 2004). Once the questionnaire was finalized, it was then distributed to the respondents through mail and online survey in 2015. After 2 months, 224 completed and usable copies of questionnaire were collected. Due to the need to assess moderated mediation effect in the model as shown in Figure 1, Hayes (2013) process macro for Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 was used, instead of software that performed structural equation modelling. As such, Model 59 was utilized to examine all 4 hypotheses in this study.

4. FINDINGS

The demographics of respondents are presented in Table 1. Table 2 shows the results of bivariate correlations as well as the Cronbach's alpha for all the variables under investigation. Collinearity test is performed to assess multi-collinearity issue before performing the regression analysis. All values of variance inflation factor are found to be lower than the suggested threshold value of 10 and 5 (Mooi and Sarstedt 2014).

(O'Brien, 2007; Peter, 2001), indicating that multi-collinearity is not a concern. Moreover, the assessment of common method bias using Harman's single factor test reveals that the single factor test result of variance explained (43%) is below the cutoff value of 50% (Harman, 1976). Hence, common method bias due to collection of data from a single source is not an issue in the study.

Figure 1: Theoretical framework for the moderated mediation model

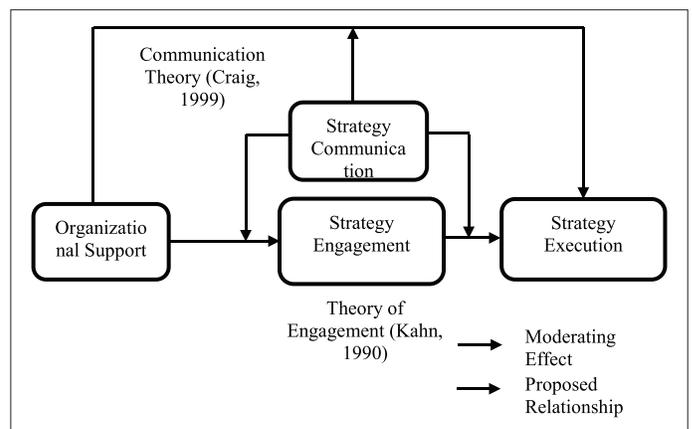


Table 1: Descriptive statistics of respondents

Variable	Frequency (%)	Total
Gender		
Male	134 (59.8)	59.8
Female	90 (40.2)	100.00
Age		
20-24 years	15 (6.7)	6.7
25-29 years	68 (30.4)	37.1
30-34 years	38 (17.0)	54.0
35-39 years	33 (14.7)	68.8
40-45 years	26 (11.6)	80.4
45-49 years	25 (11.2)	91.5
50-55 years	12 (5.4)	96.9
55 years and above	7 (3.1)	100.00
Education		
Secondary school	22 (9.8)	9.8
Diploma	29 (12.9)	22.8
Degree	122 (54.5)	77.2
Master	39 (17.4)	94.6
Doctorate	5 (2.2)	96.9
Professional	7 (3.1)	100.00
Years of management experience		
1-4 years	86 (38.4)	38.4
5-8 years	42 (18.8)	57.1
9-12 years	29 (12.9)	70.1
13-16 years	26 (11.6)	81.7
17-20 years	21 (9.4)	91.1
21-24 years	11 (4.9)	96.0
25-28 years	5 (2.2)	98.2
29-31 years	1 (0.4)	98.7
32 years and above	3 (1.3)	100.00
Types of industry		
Business services	161 (71.9)	71.9
Financial	28 (12.5)	84.4
Franchise	11 (4.9)	89.3
Information and communication	24 (10.7)	100.00

Table 2: Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations

Variable	Mean±SD	1	2	3	4
Organizational support	4.97±0.83	0.89			
Strategy engagement	5.33±0.71	0.59**	0.95		
Strategy communication	4.76±0.89	0.83**	0.48**	0.89	
Strategy execution	5.06±0.74	0.79**	0.63**	0.77**	0.83

Figures in parentheses are Cronbach's alpha, **P<0.01

The first hypothesis postulates that strategy engagement mediates the relationship between organizational support and strategy execution. Mediation analysis is conducted using bias-corrected bootstrapping procedure, a technique which is implemented in Hayes (2013) process macro for SPSS. The results for the mediation analysis are depicted in Table 3. The mediation effect is found to be significant at 95% confidence interval (CI) with both lower and upper limits of the CI having No 0 straddled in between. It indicates that the indirect effect of organizational support on strategy execution through strategy engagement is positive and significant ($\beta = 0.16, P < 0.05$). Thus, it can be concluded that strategy engagement mediates the relationship between organizational support and strategy execution.

Table 4 presents the results of moderation analysis. It is used to assess the moderating effect on the mediation. It is found that hypothesis 2 ($\beta = 0.01, P < 0.05$) and hypothesis 4a ($\beta = -0.1, P < 0.05$) are supported while hypothesis 3a is not supported. In assessing the moderated mediation relationship, the conditional indirect effect output as illustrated also in Table 4 is referred. Both hypotheses 3b and 4b examine the moderated mediation effect of strategy communication. Since hypothesis 3a is found to be insignificant, there is no need to examine the relationship postulated in hypothesis 3b. Hypothesis 4b, however, is to be tested since hypothesis 4a is found to be significant.

The results of the assessment indicate that strategy communication moderates the mediated relationship of organizational support and strategy execution via strategy engagement at three levels of strategy communication: The mean (0.00), one standard deviation above the mean (0.828) and one standard deviation below the mean (-0.828). The mediated relationship is positive and significant at three levels of strategy communication low ($\beta = 0.17, P < 0.05$), mean ($\beta = 0.12, P < 0.05$), high ($\beta = 0.07, P < 0.05$). The proposed moderated mediation hypothesis 4b, however, is not supported. The drop in the beta coefficient value at the increase of the level of communication implies that the moderating effect of communication on the mediated relationship is negative, such that the higher the communication is, the weaker the mediated relationship becomes.

5. DISCUSSIONS

The assessment of relationship via regression analysis produces somewhat mixed results. In line with Kahn's theory of engagement, this study found that strategy engagement mediates the relationship between organizational support and strategy execution. This ascertains the role of strategy engagement as a crucial mechanism in explaining the distal relationship between organizational support and strategy execution. The use of the theory of engagement facilitates the decomposition of the support-execution relationship by allowing a more detailed explanation on how organizational support can result in successful strategy execution through strategy engagement. As such, the present study contributes to the subject matter by deepening the understanding of support-execution relationship established from prior literature (Kearns, 2006; Ragu-Nathan et al., 2004) as well as further illustrating the behavioural process of strategy execution.

The study also gathers support for the moderating effect of strategy communication. The results from the conditional direct effect indicate that when communication is higher, the direct effect of organizational support on strategy execution becomes stronger. These results are consistent with prior literature which asserts that employees who are exposed to an open and supportive communication climate tend to outperform employees who function in a restrictive communication climate (Rapert and Wren, 1998). Hence, it can be surmised that middle level managers could execute strategy more successfully when there is organizational support coupled with effective communication strategy. Understandably, these managers are at the functional or departmental level, not only having to deal with top management,

but also needing to coordinate with other managers in a vertical manner and staffs at the operational level. It explains why strategy communication is pivotal to ensuring organizational support would lead to successful strategy execution.

However, on the moderated mediation relationship, the results suggest that strategy communication moderates the mediated relationship between organizational support and strategy execution via strategy engagement. The moderation effect, however, is negative. One of the possible reasons for this would be the impact of cultural factor. Malaysia is well recognized for its high power distance and collectivism (Sweetman, 2012). When communication takes place in a high power distance environment, the conveyed information would normally be perceived as a set of instructions to follow and abide. This implies that when frequent communication is in place, middle level managers would basically follow instructions and no longer need to be physically, emotionally and cognitively engaged in their work role duties. In other words, they would likely be reactive, rather than proactive in executing strategy in the organizations. Such behaviour might

be sufficient to make sure things go well as planned and strategy is successfully executed in the short run. Nevertheless, the lack of engagement of middle level managers in the long run will prove to be detrimental to strategy execution and organizational success as they become used to listening to instructions and communicating what is necessary to maintain status quo. This could well be the reasons why many organizations started well but performed poorly after some time. When communication is carried out in the absence of engagement, it is most likely that middle level managers would lose their motivation gradually and take what has been communicated as a routine. Given the fact that the contemporary business environment is becoming increasingly dynamic, such perennial conundrum will surely jeopardize strategy execution.

It is essential to note that strategy engagement is relatively new in the strategic management literature even though its core term “engagement” has been widely debated in the field of psychology as well as human resource development. The purpose of this study is to incorporate strategy engagement into the support-execution model of strategy execution such that the knowledge on what constitutes successful strategy execution can now be extended. The integration of strategy communication into the model permits the investigation of the interaction effect between strategy communication, organizational support, strategy engagement and strategy execution. Besides, by utilizing Hayes (2013) process via SPSS, the integrated moderated mediation model provides insights on the simultaneous interaction of these variables, which is a significant addition to knowledge of past studies that used and tested mediation or moderation independently.

6. CONCLUSION

This present study consists of several limitations which could serve as guidelines for future research. The types of strategies executed by the middle level managers are not taken into consideration.

Table 3: The mediation results (n=224)

Predictors	Model 1 strategy engagement β (SE)	Model 2 strategy execution β (SE) ^a	
Independent variables			
Organizational support	0.50(.05)**	0.57 (0.043)**	
Strategy engagement	-	0.25 (0.051)**	
R ²	0.59	0.82	
Bootstrap indirect effects on execution (through engagement)^b	β (SE)	LL 95% CI	UL 95% CI
Organizational support	0.13(.03)*	0.07	0.20

LL: Lower limit; UL: Upper limit; CI: Confidence interval. Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported with standard error in parentheses. ^aDirect and total effect.

^bBootstrap sample size=5000. *P<0.05; ** P<0.01

Table 4: The moderation and moderated mediation results (n=224)

Predictors	Model 1 strategy engagement β (SE)	Model 2 strategy execution β (SE) ^a	
Independent variables			
Organizational support (OSU)	0.58 (0.17)**	-0.16 (0.17)	
Strategy engagement (EG)	-	0.70 (0.18)**	
Strategy communication (SCOM)	-0.01 (0.17)	0.38 (0.15)**	
OSU*SCOM	-0.01 (0.03)	0.10 (0.03)**	
EG*SCOM	-	-0.10 (0.04)*	
R ²	0.60	0.85	
Conditional direct effect on strategy execution at three levels of strategy communication^b	β (SE)	LL 95% CI	UL 95% CI
Organizational support			
-1 SD (-0.828)	0.22 (0.07)*	0.09	0.35
Mean (0.00)	0.31 (0.06)*	0.18	0.43
+1 SD (0.828)	0.40 (0.08)*	0.25	0.54
Conditional indirect effect on strategy execution (through strategy engagement) at three levels of strategy communication^b	β (SE)	LL 95% CI	UL 95% CI
Organizational support			
-1 SD (-0.828)	0.17 (0.06)*	0.07	0.31
Mean (0.00)	0.12 (0.03)*	0.07	0.20
+1 SD (0.828)	0.07 (0.04)*	0.00	0.17

LL: Lower limit; UL: Upper limit; CI: Confidence interval. SD: Standard deviation, M: Mean. Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported with standard error in parentheses.

^aDirect and total effect. ^bBootstrap sample size=5000. *P<0.05; **P<0.01

Future research might consider looking into differences in the level of engagement of managers in relation to the type of strategies that they are executing. Additionally, the potential effect of several demographic factors is not taken into account in the assessment of relationship. The possible use of control variables such as firm size and managers' years of experience in executing strategy might be pivotal to controlling the effect of the variables of interest in the framework. Similarly, a multi-group analysis can be utilized to investigate if there are differences in the level of engagement amongst different groups of managers, and if the support provided by organization differs across organizations of different sizes and would lead to different outcomes of strategy execution.

Nonetheless, it is worthy to note that the present behavioural model of strategy execution is developed based on theoretical arguments. In reality, the relationship among the variables could be far more complex and dynamic. Hence, the present model could be further extended by adding in relevant contextual or contingency factors related to strategy execution, such as organizational structure and culture. Qualitative findings elicited from case studies and focus groups would help gain insights into specific phenomena and thus complement future quantitative studies on strategy execution. Such endeavours from different perspectives and paradigms would surely enhance both the conceptual and pragmatic understanding of the subject matter in the contemporary business environment.

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APPENDIX

Appendix Table

Appendix Table 1: Instruments used for the study

Construct	Items	Cronbach's alpha
Organizational support	My organization's involvement with strategy execution activities is strong	0.88
	My organization support the execution of its strategies	
	My organization has provided adequate financial and other resources to the strategy execution effort	
	The success of the strategy executio effort is due to the active championing by my organization	
	My organization is responsive to manager's concern and suggestion regarding its strategy	
Strategy engagement	My organization take steps to remove barriers that inhibit the strategy execution process	0.89
	Physical engagement	
	I work with intensity when executing a strategy	
	I exert my full effort when executing a strategy	
	I devote a lot of energy when executing a strategy	
	I try my hardest to execute a strategy	
	I try as hard as I can to execute a strategy	
	I exert a lot of energy to execute a strategy	
	Emotional engagement	
	I am enthusiastic in the strategy I execute	
	I feel energetic when executing strategy	
	I am interested in the strategy I execute	
	I am proud of the strategy I execute	
	I feel positive about the strategy I execute	
	I am excited about the strategy I execute	
	Cognitive engagement	
	My mind is focused when I am executing a strategy	
I pay a lot of attention to the strategy I execute		
I focus a great deal of attention on the strategy I execute		
I am absorbed by the strategy I execute		
I concentrate on the strategy I execute		
I devote a lot of attention on the strategy I execute		
Strategy communication	Company strategy are clearly communicated to employees	0.88
	Organization give sufficient notice to managers prior to making changes in strategy	
	most of the time I receive sufficient notice of changes on strategy	
	Organization tends to stay informed of managers need during strategy execution	
	The channels of strategic communication across organization is effective	
Strategy execution	Organization communicates a clear strategy and how each division contributes to execute that strategy	0.82
	The strategy was an example of effective strategy execution	
	The organization strategy execution effort was disappointing (R)	
	The execution of the strategy was generally considered a great success in the organization	
	I personally think the execution of the strategy was a success	
	The execution of the strategy was considered a success in my area	