**Effectiveness of Strategy Implementation Approaches in German Multinational Companies: A Case Study of SAP SE**

# ABSTRACT

**Effectiveness of Strategy Implementation Approaches in German Multinational Companies: A Case Study of SAP SE**

Strategy implementation within an organization will help the organization achieve a competitive advantage in its local and foreign markets (Yaprak et al., 2011). The strategy’s effectiveness, however, depends greatly on the efficiency of its implementation. Challenges such as cultural diversity, economic crises, legal and political differences, and technological changes encountered when a company expands outside its borders may affect the strategy implementation of multinational companies (MNCs). This study will examine which strategy implementation approach is the most effective in German multinational companies. To determine the effectiveness of different German MNC strategy implementation approaches, we need to know the various strategies they have implemented to ensure their organizations’ performance improvement. The MNC selected for this case study is SAP SE, a German MNC that develops software and cloud applications for customer relations and business operations. The study aims to examine the commander approach, organizational change approach, collaborative approach, and cultural approach in SAP SE strategy implementations to see which of the four strategies is the best-used implementation approach and what challenges SAP SE faces in its implementation.

.

**CHAPTER 1**

## 1.1 Introduction

Globalization places a high demand on organizations to expand abroad. To achieve their goals and objectives in a global environment, these expanded organizations need strong management. A central question for strategic managers is how an organization can ensure both short-term and long-term survival and outperform its rivals. Over the last two decades, managers have had to learn about the concept of strategy implementation and to become strategic managers as their organizations embrace a strategic approach to designing and implementing management plans. Strategy formulation is a difficult task, and strategy implementation is even more challenging. Yaprak et al. (2011) observe that various factors affect the strategy implementation process by which plans are transformed into organizational action. Many perceive strategy implementation as a craft, with a history that is fragmented. According to Gilbert and Behnam (2009), strategy implementation has become the essential management challenge corporations face. However, Baroto et al. (2014) argue that strategy execution is not as precise as strategy formulation, and Jofre (2011) agrees with them that implementing a strategy is more difficult than formulating one.

According to Yang et al. (2010), a well-formulated strategy may fail to result in increased organizational performance if the strategy is unsuccessfully implemented. Despite the importance of strategy implementation to corporate success and organizational goal achievement, some organizations may fail to implement their strategies efficiently due to lack of expertise and an inappropriate implementation approach. Strategy implementation that does not receive enough attention at the right organizational level results in failure. Čater and Pučko (2010) agree that a well-crafted strategy is likely to be useless if it is poorly implemented. Globally, organizations adopt different approaches to strategy implementation, and understanding their respective methods can help explain their progress towards expected outcomes. Ideally, multinational companies (MNCs) should use distinct strategies to expand their operations, recognize cultural diversities, and increase their effectiveness in the future. Rajasekar (2014) argues that effective strategy implementation is a significant aspect of MNC success. A strategy may succeed or fail depending on the implementation approach employed, and strategic planning has become a mandatory consideration in strategic decision-making.

Nonetheless, studies have shown that despite the significant emphasis on strategic planning, even large corporations seldom monitor strategy implementation, and researchers have not yet conducted serious empirical implementation studies of Central and Southeast European multinational companies, including those in Germany (Okumus, 2003). The scarcity of literature on strategy implementation and strategic performance management in Germany calls for a greater focus on the MNCs based in the country, especially as contemporary German MNCs have increasing global impacts. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the effectiveness of strategy implementation approaches in German MNCs, using the software-company SAP SE as a case study.

## 1.2 Background

Organizations currently operate in a dynamic environment as a result of increasing globalization and the advancement of information technology. Those operating internationally, particularly MNCs, face critical challenges when expanding their operations to other national markets, and thus need to adapt their operations to each environment. These organizations encounter crucial issues such as cultural diversity, economic crises, legal and political differences, and technological changes. Lehner (2004) suggests that, within a global market, MNCs must formulate and implement strategies that ensure their survival in the long-term. Strategy implementation involves acting on the formulated strategies to ensure that organizational performance improves. According to Yaprak et al. (2011), strategy implementation is the operationalization of activities within an organization to achieve a competitive advantage. However, the effectiveness of the strategy highly depends on the efficiency of its implementation. Baroto et al. (2014) argue that strategy implementation involves the development of a responsive internal organizational structure which nurtures and builds competencies and skills, including through the selection of people for different vital positions. Yang et al. (2010) define strategy implementation as the process in which both policies and strategies are translated into actions through the development of budgets, programs, and procedures. The implementation of a plan is challenging, since it may require more time than strategy formulation.

Baroto et al. (2014) also affirm that strategy implementation research is generally tricky because it entails examining the time frame and addressing methodological and conceptual challenges. Indeed, this process involves several variables which interact with each other. Typically, strategy implementation involves putting into practice the appropriate strategy, configuring the culture and structure of the organization, and resourcing the plan to fit the strategy and manage the changes. Čater and Pučko (2010) note that successful strategy implementation relies heavily on the information acquired during the analysis stage of strategy formulation. According to Rajasekar (2014), even though analysis is significant, strategy implementation is the most complex part of strategic management and is expected to consume the most time.

Effective strategy implementation requires creative skills, unique leadership, attention to detail, communication, and precision, and necessitates breaking down complex activities into simpler activities. In many organizations, strategy implementation remains problematic for reasons such as lack of communication or commitment, weak management, misunderstanding of the strategy, poor coordination, unaligned organizational resources, and uncontrollable environmental factors.

For the MNCs, strategy implementation remains crucial, since the choice of approach affects the outcomes of the whole process. Generally, different organizations adopt different approaches to align their practices with their strategic plans. Yang et al. (2010) point out that making a strategy work effectively cannot be a straightforward task and that the relationship between strategy implementation and strategy formulation is not linear. Yaprak et al. (2011) argue that approaches to strategy implementation create a vision for the future of the organization as well as the methods needed to achieve the goals that have been set. MNCs face a particularly challenging environment that requires preparedness; thus, effective strategy implementation creates opportunities for these companies to grow and improve their performance.

The expansion of the international economy has led to the growth of companies operating on different national markets. MNCs are essential corporations that have invested heavily in foreign countries and are fully involved in the management of their offshore assets. Jofre (2011) defines MNCs as those organizations that have been able to establish similar functional business units in various countries. Gilbert and Behnam (2009) argue that MNCs are characterized by the predominance of large organizations with high sales volumes, which at times exceed the size of some countries’ economies. MNCs possess new technologies, special skills, key market players, and tend to offer differentiated products.

In most cases, MNCs roll out their global plans and tend to control their subsidiaries from head offices. According to Lehner (2004), MNCs keep broad strategic plans and focus more on the 80/20 rule, which emphasizes the locations that create about 80% of the organization’s value. Hence, they can evaluate the factors that may potentially influence the successful implementation of a strategy. In developed economies, MNCs are numerous and covered by collective agreements. In Germany, more than 500 MNCs compete for market share, resources, and customers, both domestically and on the global market. The steep competition requires an organization to use strategic planning to achieve its mission and vision. MNCs whose strategic managers are unable to analyze both internal and external environments face critical challenges in strategy implementation. Baroto et al. (2014) caution that MNCs need successful strategy implementation, but that implementation can fail 75% of the time and that problems often occur during implementation. Most organizations focus less on strategy formulation and more on strategy implementation, which is complex and requires better alignment with organizational resources.

At the international level, strategic planning is indispensable, and MNCs operating in any location need strategic management to implement their strategies successfully. Strategy implementation may fail if the chosen approach is inappropriate, or as a consequence of poor communication, coordination, or resource alignment. Although Gilbert and Behnam (2009) have emphasized the effectiveness of strategy implementation in organizations, MNCs have lagged in implementing their strategies, disregarding the challenges they encounter.

Strategy implementation in MNCs requires strong managerial roles. MNCs operate in countries with different legal, socioeconomic, technological, and political environments. In Germany, researchers report a number of strategy implementation similarities among the MNCs, and according to Yang et al. (2010), German MNCs run their operations differently from MNCs from other countries. For instance, whereas American MNCs offshore both distribution and production to the home country, German MNCs usually offshore distribution activities, while all activities related to production take place in Germany. The specificity of operational activities in German MNCs implies a difference in strategy implementation linked to organizational culture and structure. German MNCs are profoundly affected by changes occurring in the home country, including tightening financial system regulations, with the result that many German MNCs select strategies that allow them to alter their rules in competitive environments.

Various recommendations exist to increase the effectiveness of MNCs’ strategy implementation processes. According to Yaprak et al. (2011), some have perceived strategy implementation as a straightforward process relying on simple and easily adaptable tools. Jofre (2011) adds that environmental analysis should precede strategy implementation. Environmental analysis involves benchmarking, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis (SWOT), and performance measurement systems. Even though German MNCs have been using these approaches, Rajasekar (2014) suggests that the cultural particularities of host countries have played a significant role in moderating the effectiveness of the German strategy implementation techniques. According to Gilbert and Benham (2009), German MNCs are supposed to integrate simple tools and processes with advanced techniques, including the use of technology, to initiate conversation and monitor progress in strategy implementation. Most German MNCs have failed to implement their strategies because they did not adopt the appropriate approach.

The objective of this study is to determine the approaches through which the executives and boards of directors of MNCs headquartered in Germany can improve strategy implementation to create shareholder value. The research will use SAP SE as a case study and collect empirical data from the company in a qualitative research method that explores SAP SE’s strategy implementation approach. Empirical data collection is considered valid for research on concepts based on observational experiences in the field. SAP SE is a German MNC that develops software and cloud applications for customer relations and business operations. It faces critical challenges in implementing its foreign investments strategy.

**CHAPTER 2**

## 2.1 Problem Statement

For an organization to prepare for the future and fulfil both its mission and its vision, strategy implementation is indispensable. However, most of this process requires changes within the organization, which stakeholders may resist. Lehner (2004) suggests that strategy implementation is all about managing change and resistance. Yang, Guo-Hui and Eppler (2010) note that strategy formulation entails visionary and theoretical perspectives. Nonetheless, strategy implementation is an administrative process and involves enacting change by changing the culture, working with and motivating people, and organizing. Organizations operating on the global market face a very dynamic business environment, which creates problems that may affect business operations in the future if they are not anticipated and managed. Hrebiniak (2008) points out that the execution of a strategy involves control, motivation, and the balancing of power politics. According to Rajasekar (2014), the global market on which MNCs operate is unpredictable, which complicates the strategy implementation process. However, strategy implementation has been perceived as less important than strategy formulation. MNCs face a very challenging business environment, and formulating a strategy is easier than implementing it. Consequently, these organizations need a proactive strategic management team that can develop and implement a strategy successfully.

A number of studies conducted on strategy implementation have shed light on the significant role of strategic management within an organization. Gilbert and Behnam (2009) examined strategy management processes regarding deficits, future perspectives, and status quo in German MNCs. They noted that the status quo and shortages profoundly affected the strategy management process and thus the general performance of the German MNCs. Rajasekar (2014) conducted a similar survey within the service industry, focusing on a selection of companies in Oman. He identified leadership as the primary determinant of successful strategy implementation in an organization. Kathrin (2016) also sought to establish which factors are critical to the successful implementation of a sustainable strategy. Her study showed that proper planning, communication, implementation models, and stakeholder-oriented strategies were the critical determinants of successful strategy implementation. Guruwo et al. (2017) conducted a study to establish the effectiveness of strategy implementation on organizational performance. They found that the effective implementation of a strategy profoundly changes organizational performance and is mainly affected by internal factors. In their systematic literature review, Sageder and Feldbauer-Durstmuller (2018) noted that management control in MNCs is affected by internal and external environmental factors, which result in poor strategy implementation if these factors are not well-scanned.

Although numerous studies have looked at strategy implementation in different organizations, very few have focused on the effectiveness of strategy implementation approaches in MNCs. MNCs play important roles on the international market; however, they fail to effectively implement strategies that can help resolve their future operational and economic issues. The lack of academic research results in a knowledge gap for scholars and an implementation gap for MNCs of ways to solve the unique strategy implementation problems they face. Taking stock of the lack of information on the effectiveness of strategy implementation approaches in German MNCs in particular, this study aims to close the gap by answering the question of which strategy implementation approach in German MNCs is the most effective, using SAP SE as a case study.

**CHAPTER 3**

## 3.1 Objectives

The proposed study will investigate the effectiveness of several approaches to strategy implementation in German MNCs.

Particularly, the study has the following sub-objectives:

i. To study the different approaches for strategy implementation in German MNCs;

ii. To find out whether a commander approach is useful for strategy implementation in German MNCs;

iii. To determine the effectiveness of an organizational change approach in strategy implementation in German MNCs;

iv. To examine the effectiveness of a collaborative approach in strategy implementation in German MNCs;

v. To evaluate the effectiveness of the cultural approach in strategy implementation in German MNCs.

**CHAPTER 4**

## 4.1 Preliminary Literature Review Objectives

In our current economies, many organizations seek ways to boost their business to remain competitive on the market. According to Čater and Pučko (2010), organizations do not attempt to achieve results today, but rather set strategic plans designed to help them succeed in the longer term. Organizations at all levels generally operate within an ever-changing environment in which political, social, economic, legal, and technological aspects are in constant flux. Yang et al. (2010) argue that, for organizations to ensure their survival in the future, they must carry out environmental scanning. In international markets, organizations face critical issues they must address strategically if they are to fulfill their mission. MNCs in particular face a turbulent market and implementing any strategy they formulate may prove difficult. Strategy implementation, according to Lehner (2004), is an internal activity that is affected by organizational structure, culture, and the managers’ leadership styles. Strategic management comprises three major separate processes that influence each other and are interconnected: strategic planning, strategic implementation, and vital control. Strategy implementation, as part of strategic management, necessitates an appropriate choice of implementation approaches. Yaprak et al. (2011) demonstrate that employees and managers facilitate the successful implementation of a strategy. However, strategy implementation is also affected by organizational culture and leadership skills. In the case of MNCs, Rajasekar (2014) observes that strategy implementation is not a simple task because it has to apply to all the subsidiaries operating in foreign countries. Baroto et al. (2014) note that managers need to seek ways to address the purpose of strategic planning and how it will benefit the key stakeholders.

The business environment in which MNCs operate affects the internal implementation of their strategies. According to Guruwo et al. (2017), these organizations face critical issues in implementing their policies that are related to organizational culture, structure, and leadership. The success of a strategy implementation process depends on the approach the organization adopts. According to Radomska (2014), tactics used to implement a strategy include persuasion, participation, and intervention. A participation approach to strategy implementation involves articulating strategic goals and nominating a task force to propose and develop options for implementation. Yang, Guo-Hui, and Eppler (2010) note that a persuasion approach entails using parties to win organizational employees’ consent to the strategic action. Its opposite, an edict approach, as described by Maotwanyane (2017) , relies on the power of managers to give directives on how a plan is to be implemented. Čater and Pučko (2010) caution that the edict approach may result in strategy implementation failure due to a lack of approval and participation from stakeholders. An intervention approach is preferred because it involves all the stakeholders.

According to Anyango (2007), five methods can help advance strategy implementation: the collaborative approach, the commander approach, the change model, the creative model, and the cultural model. The commander approach only addresses the strategic position and acts as a guide for managers to chart the future of an organization. The CEOs of MNCs can use this approach to forecast the opportunities and challenges the organization may face. The managers of MNCs, according to Rajasekar (2014), must use both competitive and economic analyses when planning for resource allocation to implement the commander strategy successfully.

The organizational change approach is another critical model for the implementation of a strategy. Guruwo et al. (2017) caution that regulatory changes are associated with resistance, which must necessarily be addressed for the plan to succeed. The change model emphasizes organizational incentive compensation, structure, and control systems that can appropriately facilitate strategy implementation. Yaprak, Xu, and Cavusgil (2011) assert that during the strategy implementation process, the organizational power structure significantly influences decisions regarding the allocation of resources required for the execution of the strategy. According to Baroto, Arvand, and Ahmad (2014), well-prepared strategy plans may fail if the implementers do not confront the complex political and organizational obstacles that have the potential to interfere with strategy implementation. Guruwo et al. (2017) report that many researchers propose various models for organizations to follow to implement their strategies successfully. According to Dorrenbacher and Geppert (2009), an appropriately articulated plan can be successful if it is applied. Once a strategy has been articulated, the primary organizational and operating structures must be designed, operating-level objectives must be set, and adequate incentives and control systems that can support the implementation process must be created. Organizations that have a well-stipulated strategy implementation process are able to switch between organizational design and planning design from the higher levels of the organization down to the lower levels. Guruwo et al. (2017) observe that the organizational change approach is appropriate when a strategy aims to change the organization’s structure.

However, change must be managed to ensure that all employees are informed of and work towards the success of the strategy. Organizational structure is directly related to the success of strategy implementation; thus, it is necessary to integrate the plan within the organizational structure. In most cases, organizational structure changes are required for the change strategy to be implemented successfully. Baroto et al. (2014) argue that the scope of an organization (market share, operations, and the geographical region it serves) defines the extent to which an organizational change approach may be required to implement a strategy. MNCs are profoundly affected by such changes, since many of their subsidiary companies may resist or be negatively affected by the head office’s directives on structural change. However, internal environmental analysis can allow these large organizations to understand that they need to adopt an organizational change approach.

Yang et al. (2010) establish that a collaborative approach to strategy implementation focuses primarily on the decision-making process of a group (senior-level management, in particular). Usually, the collaborative approach requires top management participation in the strategy formulation process to ensure other stakeholder commitment. Anyango (2007) suggests that senior organizational managers play a critical role in the strategic management process and are able to foresee all the opportunities and challenges available in the business environment. Strategy implementation, according to Rajasekar (2014), is an internal activity that must involve all the employees and the other key stakeholders. For Gilbert and Behnam (2009), a collaborative approach to strategy implementation involves the entire organization. Although it may seem similar to the organizational change approach, the collaborative approach also incorporates retreats, various laboratories, and seminars with external experts, which can facilitate both change and organic processes. Strategic plans require collaborations and consultations with experts to evaluate the effectiveness of the intended strategy and highlight ways in which it may affect the entire organization in the future. Čater and Pučko (2010) explain that a collaborative approach demands the creation of a task force without lines of authority as an additional element of the organizational structure. Guruwo et al. (2017) show that a collaborative approach to strategy implementation is sufficient to achieve successful strategy implementation, pointing out its participative nature and clear communication of strategic goals. However, this approach has shortcomings in that it is unable to take into account an organization’s economic perspective. Ideally, any organization ought to understand the purpose of the strategy, its economic implications, and the workforce required to implement it successfully. Maotwanyane (2017) argues that a collaborative approach to strategy implementation is useful for organizations that operate within one jurisdiction, but not for international corporations. MNCs, in particular, find it challenging to collaborate because they face differing business environments.

Several authors have considered a cultural approach to strategy implementation. Organizational culture, according to Yang et al. (2010), corresponds to the shared norms, values, and attitudes that have the potential to create individual prosperity within a corporation. Hrebiniak (2008) finds that a common culture-related issue at an organizational level is lack of trust, which leads to inadequate or poor knowledge and information sharing among the employees during strategy implementation. Strategy implementation is dependent on the organizational culture, which influences the way employees respond to changes. In most cases, culture affects the operations of an organization and determines workplace behavior. Using a cultural approach to implement a strategy might be easy since it requires the involvement of all the employees, irrespective of their position. Rajasekar (2014) states that the cultural approach may either build on the existing culture if it strongly supports the intended strategy, or try to change the culture and create an environment in which the strategy will receive the necessary support.

Baroto et al. (2014) also affirm that organizational culture creates support and an enabling environment for a strategy, and is thus a core component of its implementation. According to Maotwanyane (2017), shared values and norms can significantly determine how successful a strategy implementation process will be. Čater and Pučko (2010) note that, for a strategy to be implemented successfully, cultural values and norms within an organization must be compatible with the strategy’s intention. Guruwo et al. (2017) argue that culture is directly related to strategy implementation, in that corporate culture must be compatible with a strategy’s intentions for the latter to be implemented successfully. According to Anyango (2007), culture tries to explain the behavioral patterns exhibited by employees and managers in the workplace. Rajasekar (2014) argues that cultural practices constitute internal marketing, in particular for persuasion and strategy implementation, through references to general ideas, norms, higher values, and personal friendships.

In conclusion, the implementation of a strategy is dependent on various aspects, such as leadership, culture, structure, and the business environment. However, the main determinant of effective strategy implementation is the approach an organization adopts. Different researchers examine various strategy implementation approaches, but the most recent studies include commander, cultural, structural, and collaborative approaches. Strategy implementation in MNCs requires critical analysis of the economic environment and selection of an appropriate approach, which varies according to the nature of the plan, the size of the organization, and its cultural and structural perspective.

# 

**CHAPTER 5**

## 5.1 Methodology

The proposed study will seek to determine the effectiveness of strategy implementation approaches in German MNCs, using SAP SE as a case study. Methodology provides a framework for data collection and data analysis. This section will address study design, study population and sampling, data collection methods and instruments, data analysis methods, mechanisms to ensure the quality of the study, study period, timeline for completion of the project, participants, and ethical considerations.

## 5.2 Study Design

Mackey & Gass (2015) define research design as the advanced planning approaches adopted in research projects to collect data and the techniques employed to analyze data analysis in accordance with the research objectives. This study will use a qualitative research method that will allow in-depth exploration to determine the unique attributes of strategy implementation in Germany. The proposed study will adopt a descriptive research design for data collection and analysis that allows SAP SE employees to describe their own behaviors, emotions, and opinions in connection with SAP SE strategy implementation. The study will rely on primary data that the researcher will collect directly from the participants—top managers in SAP SE’s local branches—using both structured questionnaires and interviews.

## 5.3 Study population and sampling

According to Lola et al. (2016), a study population is composed of all the elements that potentially meet the criteria for inclusion in the study. Essentially, it is a group of objects, events, or individuals that possess similar observable features. For this study, the target population will be the employees of German MNCs. More than 500 German MNCs operate in Germany and other countries, and suffer from faulty strategy implementation as a consequence of the approach they have adopted. Given their large number, a sample is required for the research. According to Derfuss (2016), sampling consists of drawing a subset of the study population to act as a representative. The study will be conducted at SAP SE, an MNC in Germany. In this study, a sample of 50 top managers at SAP SE will be selected. Results from the sample will be generalized to the whole population in the conclusions of the study (German MNCs).

## 5.4 Data collection methods and instruments

As noted above, the proposed research is qualitative and descriptive, and thus primarily uses observation techniques without altering the behavior of the participants. The data collection methods and instruments will be structured questionnaires and interviews. The participants will first be informed about the research and invited by the researcher to take part in the study. All participants in the study will receive structured questionnaires featuring both open-ended and closed-ended questions. Since the participants will be top managers with busy schedules, the researcher will either call them or book an appointment for data collection. Structured questionnaires will be given to all the participants and collected once the participants have completed them.

Additionally, the participants will be required to take part in a one-on-one interview with the researcher. The discussion will rely on a set of questions relating to the effectiveness of German MNCs’ approaches to strategy implementation. The researcher will ask the questions and allow the participant to answer them orally. The researcher will take notes during each interview while audio recording the conversation to ensure the validity and reliability of the study.

## 5.5 Data analysis methods

The data collection instruments will be pilot-tested to verify that validity and reliability standards are met for study quality. The researcher will also commit to report the participants’ inputs rather than her own opinions on their responses and invite the participants to review their comments and confirm their accuracy. The researcher’s note-taking and audio recording will enhance data quality.

## 5.6 Study period

This study will be completed over five months. This five-month period should allow the researcher to collect data from the participants, who are top managers working in busy offices at SAP SE, and to do data analysis, writing, and printing. Table 1 below shows the project activities timeline.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Activities** | **Duration** |
| Proposal writing | One month |
| Sample selection and formal consent | Two weeks |
| Data collection | Two months |
| Analysis | Two weeks |
| Interpretation | One week |
| Writing | One month |
| Presentation | One week |

## 5.7 Participants in the study

The study participants will be top managers from SAP SE, a German MNC. For this study, interviews will be conducted and structured questionnaires will be distributed in 50 local branches of SAP SE in order to find out the effectiveness of strategy implementation approaches in German MNCs. Top managers are critical assets in the organization, particularly in decision-making. They also play a significant role in strategy implementation. Thus, collecting data from them will provide information that may help identify appropriate strategy implementation approaches among the German MNCs

## 5.8 Ethical Considerations

The researcher will have to obtain a researcher letter from the university indicating that the data collected will be used for academic purposes only. The researcher will also seek a formal letter from SAP management allowing her to collect data from the top managers. Each manager will have consented to participate in the study. Each participant will be guaranteed confidentiality for any information he/she may provide and will also receive a privacy notification describing the measures that will be taken to secure all personal information.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anyango, R. A. (2007). Challenges of strategy implementation: a survey of multinational manufacturing companies in Kenya.

<http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/bitstream/handle/11295/7450/ABSTRACT.pdf?sequence=3>

Baroto, M. B., Arvand, N., & Ahmad, F. S. (2014). Effective strategy implementation. Journal of Advanced Management Science Volume, 2(1), 50-54.

<http://www.joams.com/uploadfile/2013/1225/20131225044203610.pdf>

Čater, T., & Pučko, D. (2010). Factors of effective strategy implementation: Empirical evidence from Slovenian business practice. Journal for east European Management Studies, 207-236.

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/260099461_Factors_of_effective_strategy_implementation_Empirical_evidence_from_Slovenian_business_practice>

Derfuss, K. (2016). Reconsidering the participative budgeting–performance relation: A meta-analysis regarding the impact of level of analysis, sample selection, measurement, and industry influences. The British Accounting Review, 48(1), 17-37.

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282628708_Reconsidering_the_participative_budgeting-performance_relation_A_meta-analysis_regarding_the_impact_of_level_of_analysis_sample_selection_measurement_and_industry_influences>

Dorrenbacher, C. & Geppert, M. (2009). Micropolitical strategies and strategizing in multinational corporations: The case of subsidiary mandate change. In, Costanzo, LA & MacKay, RB (Eds.), Handbook of research on strategy and foresight. Edward Elgar Publishing.

<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.474.9644&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

Draper, J., Young Thomas, L., & Fenich, G. G. (2018, January). Event management research over the past 12 years: What are the current trends in research methods, data collection, data analysis procedures, and event types?. In Journal of Convention & Event Tourism (Vol. 19, No. 1, pp. 3-24). Routledge.

Gilbert, D. U., & Behnam, M. (2009). Strategy process management in multinational companies: status quo, deficits and future perspectives. Problems and Perspectives in Management, 7(1), 59-74.

Guruwo, P. T., Chiguvi, D., Guruwo, J., & Bag, P. (2017). The Effectiveness of Strategy Implementation on Organizational Performance: A Case Study of Clothing Retail Outlets in Zimbabwe.

Hrebiniak, L. (2008). Making strategy work: Overcoming the obstacles to effective execution. Ivey Business Journal, 1 – 7. Wharton School Publishing. Okumus, F. (2003). A framework to implement strategies in organizations. Management Decisions, 41(9), 871-882.

Jofre, S. (2011). Strategic Management: The theory and practice of strategy in (business) organizations.

Lehner, J. (2004). Strategy implementation tactics as a response to organizational, strategic, and environmental imperatives. Management revue, 460-480.

Lola, M. S., Alwi, W. S. W., & Zainuddin, N. H. (2016). Sample Selection Model with Bootstrap (BPSSM) Approach: Case Study of the Malaysian Population and Family Survey. Open Journal of Statistics, 6(5), 741-748.

Mackey, A., & Gass, S. M. (2015). Second language research: Methodology and design. Routledge.

Maotwanyane, G. K. (2017). Addressing the strategy implementation gap with a liabilities approach (Doctoral dissertation, University of Pretoria).

<https://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/67788/Maotwanyane_Addressing_2017.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

Radomska, J. (2014). Linking the main obstacles to strategy implementation with the company’s performance. Procedia- Social and Behavioral Sciences, 150, 263-270.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877042814051039>

Rajasekar, J. (2014). Factors affecting effective strategy implementation in a service industry: A study of electricity distribution companies in the Sultanate of Oman. International Journal of Business and Social Science, 5(9).

<http://ijbssnet.com/journals/Vol_5_No_9_1_August_2014/15.pdf>

Saccenti, E. (2017). Correlation patterns in experimental data are affected by normalization procedures: consequences for data analysis and network inference. Journal of Proteome Research, 16(2), 619-634.

Yaprak, Xu, & Cavusgil. (2011). Effective Global Strategy Implementation. Management International Review, 51(2), 179-192. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11575-011-0071-6>

Yang, L., Guo-Hui, S., & Eppler, M. J. (2010). Making strategy work: A literature review of the factors influencing strategy implementation.

**Appendix 1: Questionnaire**

This questionnaire has been designed to test the perception of the effectiveness of strategic implementation of SAP SE. Please tick the required boxes appropriately.

Demographic information

1. What is your age bracket?

21-30 [ ] 31-40 [ ] 41-50 [ ] 51-60 [ ] Above 60 [ ]

2. What is your gender?

Male [ ] Female [ ]

3. Where do you work?

Head office [ ] Branch [ ]

4. How long have you been working in strategic implementation?

1 month [ ] 6 months [ ] 24 months [ ] More than 24 months [ ]

5. What is your current position?

Chairperson [ ] Managing Director [ ] Chief Executive Officer [ ] Chief Financial Officer [ ] Chief Operating Officer [ ] Executive Director [ ] General Manager [ ]

6. What is your current area of specialty?

Marketing [ ] Board [ ] Finance [ ] Human Resources [ ] Operations [ ] Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

7. What is your highest academic qualification?

Doctorate [ ] Masters [ ] Honors [ ] Bachelors [ ] Diploma [ ] Certificate [ ] Cambridge [ ]

Strategic implementation approach

8. Which strategic implementation approach is best used by the organization?

Growth into newer markets [ ]

Consolidation [ ]

Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

9. How do you rate the implementation of the strategy?

Very effective [ ]

Effective [ ]

Unaware [ ]

Ineffective [ ]

Very ineffective [ ]

Challenges faced by SAP SE in the implementation of its strategy

10. In which area(s) does SAP SE face challenges in implementing its strategy through local branches?

Resistance from the local branches [ ]

High cost [ ]

Operational restrictions [ ]

Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

11. How effective is SAP SE’s strategy implementation in improving financial performance?

Very effective [ ]

Effective [ ]

Unaware [ ]

Ineffective [ ]

Very ineffective [ ]

12. How effective is the organizational change approach for strategy implementation at SAP SE?

Very effective [ ]

Effective [ ]

Unaware [ ]

Ineffective [ ]

Very ineffective [ ]

13. How effective is the organizational change approach for strategy implementation at SAP SE?

Very effective [ ]

Effective [ ]

Unaware [ ]

Ineffective [ ]

Very ineffective [ ]

14. How effective is the collaborative approach for strategy implementation at SAP SE?

Very effective [ ]

Effective [ ]

Unaware [ ]

Ineffective [ ]

Very ineffective [ ]

15. How effective is the cultural approach for strategy implementation at SAP SE?

Very effective [ ]

Effective [ ]

Unaware [ ]

Ineffective [ ]

Very ineffective [ ]

Thank you for your responses!