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# STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION AND LEADERSHIP AGILITY IN PUBLIC TERTIARY EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS: CRITICAL INSIGHTS ENGAGED

NANCY MATSHE, MAXWELL SANDADA AND DENNIS MARAVANYIKA<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

This article seeks to suggest a framework for strategy implementation through leadership agility in tertiary education institutions so that they can attain their national mandate. A desktop study was conducted which included the search of the theoretical and empirical literature, as well as a documentation review. The search identified only a handful of studies exploring both strategy implementation performance and leadership agility in the public sector context, a gap this article seeks to fulfil. The review of documentation focused on the Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) documents relating to the National Development Strategy and the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education Innovation Science and Technology Development (MoHTEISTD) Strategic Plans. The framework integrates six variables of leadership agility; strategy direction, stakeholder engagement, innovation, ICTs, leader focus and the ability to deal with bureaucracy and political interference. Evidence from the private sector currently indicates a positive impact of leadership agility on strategy implementation. The results indicate that leadership agility has a positive effect on strategy implementation.

**Keywords:** agile leadership, strategic management, tertiary institutions, public sector

## INTRODUCTION

The full potential value of any strategic plan is achieved through effective strategy implementation. Yet, globally, strategy implementation is arguably the most significant drawback of strategic management, with empirical studies alluding to failure rates as high as 90%. While strategic planning has become an ubiquitous practice in Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) public institutions, the implementation is not as effective, which is not surprising given the global trends. The GoZ aims to achieve socio-economic development through national industrialisation and innovation-driven through higher and tertiary education, a philosophy referred to as Education 5.0. It is against this background, that the study designs a framework for strategy implementation through leadership agility.

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Several scholars have expressed concern over the huge strategy implementation gap in the public sector, calling it ‘undesirable’ and declaring the need for substantial and urgent efforts towards the reduction of the gap (Oliver and Schwella, 2018; Bhimavarapu *et al.*, 2020; Brügggen *et al.*, 2021). If the gap is not resolved, the performance of the public sector is seriously affected (Muwowo and Phiri, 2018; Oliver and Schwella, 2018; Amoo *et al.*, 2019; de Oliveira *et al.*, 2019). In that vein, there is need to develop mechanisms, initiatives, frameworks or models for improving strategy implementation in public tertiary institutions. Previous strategy implementation models and frameworks such as the Mckinsey 7S model, Higgins (2005) 8S Model and Okumus (2003) model have not been very helpful, given the status. In the Zimbabwean public tertiary education sector, no model for strategy implementation exists. Moreover, the few studies on strategy implementation in Zimbabwe have focused on other sectors such as Svotswa (2019) SME; Mapetere *et al.* (2021) telecommunications; Guruwo *et al.* (2019) clothing industry; Chigivi and Mahombo (2020) local government. This, therefore, calls for an urgent need for models that can improve strategy implementation in the tertiary education sector in Zimbabwe. In Zimbabwe, while the official unemployment rate in 2020 stood at 16.3%, most of the youth remain unemployed as demonstrated by the fact that 84% of the economically active population is engaged in the informal sector (Zimbabwe Statistical Agent, 2020).

It is evident that the strategy implementation gap in the public sector is so huge and undesirable (Bhimavarapu *et al.*, 2020; Brügggen *et al.*, 2021). In addition, any strategy implementation failure seriously compromises the performance of the institution and is a loss of resources invested during the strategy planning (Muwowo and Phiri, 2018; Oliver and Schwella, 2018; Amoo *et al.*, 2019; de Oliveira *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, this article is an attempt to develop a mechanism for improving the huge strategy implementation gap in the public sector tertiary education institutions in Zimbabwe. The consequence of the tertiary institutions failing to implement their strategies successfully is a failure not only for the higher and tertiary education sector to fully achieve its strategic objectives, but a potential failure for the education sector to contribute meaningfully to socio and economic development of the economy in line with success stories in literature. Zimbabwe will also potentially fail to reduce the national skills deficit.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

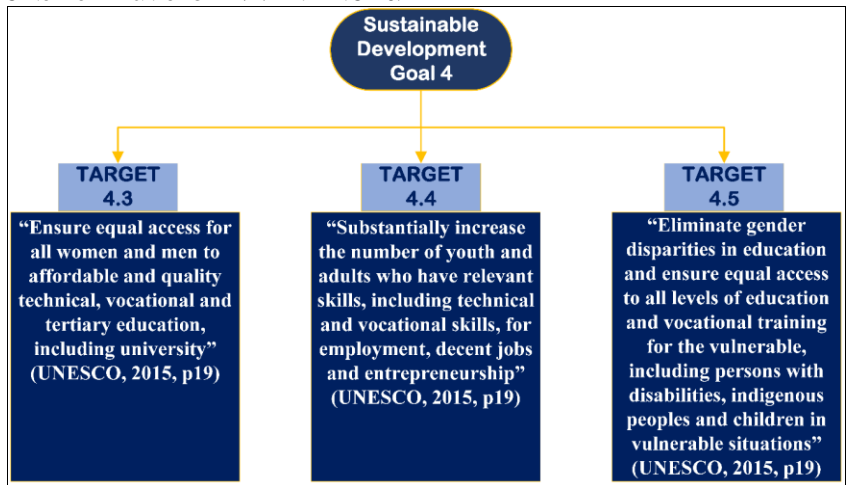
Agility \_ defined as the capacity to react quickly to rapidly changing circumstances (Walter, 2020) \_ has been identified in the private sector as key to successful business performance, in today’s dynamic and uncertain business environment. Similarly, leadership agility has been identified as an enabler of high-performing agile organisations (De Smet *et al.*, 2018).

Aldianto *et al.* (2021) further concluded that leadership agility is critical in driving business resilience in a dynamic and rapidly changing environment. The research question, therefore, is: *Could leadership agility be an answer to improving strategy implementation in tertiary education institutions in Zimbabwe?* Currently, little is known about leadership agility and the nature of its relationship with strategy implementation, particularly in the public sector. It is against this backdrop that this article is aimed at reviewing relevant strategy implementation and leadership agility literature to suggest a leadership agility model for tertiary education institutions.

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is defined by UNESCO-UNEVOC, (2017) as post-secondary education and training which is formal or informal and is acquired in either or both educational institutions or the workplace and it encompasses skills development before employment and during employment.

Globally, TVET has been identified as a critical pillar of the education and social economic development of nations. This is demonstrated by the important role TVET occupies in the SDG4, through taking three (3) of the ten (10) specific targets of SDG4. The inclusion of TVET in SDG4s is an indication of the importance of TVET to the Education 2030 agenda (SDG4 Education 2030, p. 20; Plance, 2020; Marope *et al.*, 2015). Figure 1 shows Specific Targets for TVET in SDG4.

**SPECIFIC TARGETS FOR TVET IN THE SDG4**



**Figure 1:** TVET Specific Targets: Sustainable Development Goal 4 (UNESCO, *Education 2030 Framework for Action*, 2015, p. 18)



Through Targets 4.3; 4.4 and 4.5, SDG4 devotes significant attention to TVET, to achieve economic growth, social equity and sustainability. Through these specific targets, TVET has the potential to address multiple and complex economic, social and environmental challenges faced by today's economies, through skills development in both the youth and adults (UNESCO, 2015). According to UNESCO-UNEVOC Strategy (2016 – 2021; and Marope *et al.* (2015, p.148) one of the major global challenges of today is unemployment, particularly, youth unemployment and employability. The world unemployment rate stood at 5.4% in 2019 (International Labour Organisation, 2020). This situation worldwide will be exacerbated by the economic effects of the Coronavirus Disease of 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic which has led to huge losses of employment worldwide (ILO, 2020; WHO, 2020). The unemployment problem, in particular the youth unemployment and employability, as well as poor-quality and low-paying jobs for the youths, is caused by a lack of opportunities to acquire skills for employability (International Labour Organisation, 2012a). To this end, TVET, which enhances employability through skills development in both the youth and adults is critical for any economy, hence the focus of the study on tertiary education that provides TVET. Therefore, to drive the national objective of human capital skills development for industrialisation and innovation and to address the national critical skills deficit of 68% (Zimbabwe National Critical Skills Audit (NCSA), 2018), TVET provided mainly through tertiary education is critical.

GoZ Education 5.0 philosophy, which is further articulated in the MoHTEISTD 2019-2023 and 2021-25, indicates that the strategy to implement Education 5.0 to enhance TVET, exists. If this is attained, Zimbabwe can achieve socio-economic development which has the potential to lead the entire nation to a middle-income economy by 2030. It is against this background that, this theoretical study seeks to design and present a leadership agility model that can enhance the strategy implementation capacity of tertiary education institutions.

Several scholars consistently view strategy implementation as *the process that turns strategies and plans into action* (Amoo *et al.*, 2019); *the ability to achieve a strategy* (Yang, 2019); *how strategies are implemented and adapted* (Weiser *et al.*, 2020); *the realisation of strategies* (Keoseoglu *et al.*, 2020); *a series of intervention towards desired outcomes* (Greer *et al.*, 2017). There is a consensus among scholars and practitioners today that, without effective strategy implementation, the whole process of strategic planning becomes redundant, worthless and a waste of time and resources (Siddique and Shadbolt, 2016; Hitt *et al.*, 2017; Muijs and Reynolds, 2017; Tawse and Tabesh, 2021; Vigfusson *et al.*, 2021). Similarly, Galpin, (2018, p.35) argues that even if a strategy is advantageous, its full potential value is only achieved through effective implementation. In support of that notion,

Bhimavarapu, Kim and Jie Xiong (2020) argue that it is not important how well-designed a strategy is, what matters is if it will realise its intended objectives. Corroborating the idea, several scholars (Homkes and Sull, 2015; Sage, 2015; Andrews, Benyon and Genc, 2017; Hitt *et al.*, 2017; Obeidat *et al.*, 2017; Oliver and Schwella, 2018) regard strategy implementation as the most critical part of strategic management, as it translates the whole strategic management process into action and has the potential to result in the creation of sustenance and competitive advantage. Unfortunately, according to Iglesias (2015) many strategic plans are window dressing that never gets implemented. Consequently, the success of an organisation is determined only when a firm successfully formulates and implements a value-creating strategy (Charity *et al.*, 2017; Kihara *et al.*, 2016). Taken together, these arguments, place strategy implementation as the most powerful pillar of strategic management and is also the main reason why some firms outperform others.

Leadership agility has received scant academic attention and it remains a modern and under-researched phenomenon (Akkaya, 2020). Little is known about leadership agility and the nature of its relationship with strategy implementation., more so, in the context of public higher education institutions (HEIs) in Zimbabwe. Yet it could be the missing link in strategy implementation in today's rapidly changing business environment. De Smet *et al.* (2018) concluded that leadership agility is an enabler of agile organisations, while Aldianto *et al.* (2021) concluded that leadership agility is critical in driving business resilience in a dynamic and rapidly changing environment. Akkaya, (2020) describes agility as a speedy, flexible, responsive and competent response to the challenges in the environment. Similarly, Walter, (2020) defines agility as the capacity to react quickly to rapidly changing circumstances.

According to Joiner (2019) and Joiner and Josephs (2007), leadership agility is achieved firstly when a leader develops over Five Levels of Leadership Agility which he describes as, Expert, Achiever, Catalyst, Co-creator and Synergist. As leaders develop from one stage to another, their mental and emotional capacities and abilities grow, which enables them to deal with more complex and dynamic environments, thereby becoming more agile. In addition, agile leaders can master four competencies which are context setting, stakeholder engagement, creativity and self-leadership (Joiner, 2019). Co-Creators are the ideal agile leaders. They exhibit a sense of shared purpose, believe in collaborations and relationships, have a high capacity for dialogue, exhibit high emotional resilience and can create win-win solutions in the dynamic and often disruptive global economy (Joiner and Josephs, 2007). Unfortunately, Joiner (2019) observes that only 10% of today's leaders have developed Catalyst capacities, resulting in most organisations lacking agile capabilities. This article considers leadership agility from a five-

dimension viewpoint which is; stakeholder engagement, innovation, technology, leadership focus and the ability to deal with bureaucracy and political interferences. The article, therefore, proposes that: *Leadership agility positively influences strategy implementation.*

There is a consensus among scholars and practitioners on the important role of stakeholder engagement in business performance. Stakeholder agility enables organisations to collaborate and partner to share their core competencies, thereby increasing their capabilities to provide products and services that can meet the changing needs and demands of their clients (Aghina, *et al.*, 2018). Various recent empirical studies on the public sector, across the globe, have highlighted the importance of stakeholder engagement in strategy implementation (Cirolia and Berrisford, 2017; Mugambi, 2017; Aguire *et al.*, 2019; Muwowo and Phiri, 2018). Similarly, several studies in the private sector (Alamsjah, 2020; Amoo *et al.*, 2019; Galpin, 2018; Johnson and Scholes, 2016), have also alluded to the same fact that stakeholder engagement and stakeholder buy-in have a positive effect on strategy implementation.

To support stakeholder engagement, agile leaders must have the ability to build effective relationships with stakeholders to improve their organisational performance (Joiner, 2019; Lokman *et al.*, 2019). As such, De Smet *et al.* (2018) challenge agile leaders to come out of silos and embrace a new mindset of partnerships, collaborations, networks and relationship building. This enables the leaders to tap into skills and new ideas, foster inclusion and seek diverse opinions and as a way of embracing innovation (DiFranza, 2021). In support of that view, Joiner (2019) states that the most successful companies are those that create strong, timely alliances and partner effectively with customers, suppliers and other stakeholders. In his review of the role of agility in educational leaders during and the post-COVID-19 pandemic Buffone (2021, p.1) emphasized the importance of partnerships in educational systems reforms. It is, therefore, proposed that: *Stakeholder engagement has a positive effect on strategy implementation.*

Innovativeness includes experimentation, discovery and development of production processes, technologies and new goods or services and it can enhance sustainable competitive advantage and the survival and success of organisations in the increasingly knowledge-driven world (Mohsin *et al.*, 2015; Demartini and Beretta, 2020;). Luqmani, Leach and Jesson (2016) argue that one of today's global challenges is business sustainability and innovation is key to business sustainability. Several other studies have also identified the positive impact of innovation on sustainable business performance (Alhadid, 2016; Agyapong, Agyapong and Poku, 2017; Aldianto, 2021). The challenge is how organisations can maximise their ability to innovate for sustainable value. De Smet (2018) argues that to lead

in dynamic and uncertain environments, agile leaders need to adopt a self-authoring and creative mindset that fosters discovery and encourages innovation and continual experimentation. Similarly, Alhadid (2016) argues that agility enables the capacity of an organisation to innovate, expand its horizons and create ways for the new enhanced process. Other studies (Mutahar *et al.*, 2015; Akay and Demirel, 2017; Samuel *et al.*, 2017;) also identified the ability of transformational leaders to enhance organisational innovation and improve the organisational learning of their employees. It is therefore proposed in the study that: *Innovative agility leads to successful strategy implementation.*

Technological capabilities enable agility through the provision of a fast, flexible, responsive, reliable and effective flow of information across the company (Alhadid, 2016; Akkaya, 2020; Aldianto *et al.*, 2021). Furthermore, technology can enhance the agility levels of organisations through speed and high information capacity (YaşarUğurlu, Çolakoğlu and Öztosun, 2019). According to Guthrie (2019), the development of ICTs in HEIs facilitates new forms of learning and new teaching techniques, which leads to improved quality of the knowledge provided to students ICTs also facilitate information sharing with stakeholders and partners, thereby enhancing flexibility in stakeholder agility (Alhadid, 2016). The great impact of ICTs, through the rapid spread of information across the globe will transform the world in a much bigger way than the Industrial Revolution (Guthrie, 2019). The study hypothesises that: *Technology agility has a positive impact on strategy implementation.*

An agile mindset is essential for agile leadership (Joiner, 2019). However, agile is not something one does, but something one is (Denning, 2018). Agile leaders must focus and change themselves first, before others (*ibid.*). Unfocused agile leaders are good visionaries and change agents but may lack dedication to fully execute and complete prior projects before starting new projects, leading to chaos and instability for their organisations (Coleman, 2017). For an agile leader to withstand the challenges of a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) business environment, Joiner (2019) concluded that the leader needed to develop and practise self-awareness and motivation, which is essential for the development of cognitive and emotional capacities. Similarly, a study by Gallup's executive leadership research programme spanning over four decades across the globe in both public and private sectors, identified key leadership traits and preparedness, focus and consistency were among the key traits. The study, therefore, formulates the hypothesis: *Leadership focus leads to successful strategy implementation.*

The ability of public administrators in executing their responsibilities is affected by political interference and bureaucracy (Mfuru *et al.*, 2018).

While African public universities face a mirage of operational challenges, political interference and bureaucracy on student access, curriculum content, teaching methods, harassment of academic staff, student leadership, widespread academic corruption, student disturbances, inadequate funding and poor remuneration were consistent in African universities (Oanda, 2016; Asimwe and Steyn, 2017; Kwateng, 2020; Mugoniwa, Tsimba, Mutembedza, 2021; Nwafor and Joseph, 2021; ). The effect of political interference on the public sector includes poor service delivery, abuse of power, inexcusable delay, maladministration, improper conduct, poor and lack of commitment among public staff and when the administrative institution is politicised chances for corruption increase (Figaji 2016; Gevers 2016; Oanda, 2016; Sebola 2017; Mfuru *et al.*, 2018). For HEIs to achieve their global expectations of knowledge advancement, their research and teaching ought to be independent both ethically and intellectually and free from all forms of political authority and economic power (Nwafor and Joseph, 2021). Therefore, *the ability to deal with bureaucracy and political interference positively affects strategy implementation.*

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Literature and document review approaches were used to get detailed information on leadership ability and strategy implementation. The literature review was conducted through the Google Scholar search engine and databases such as Ebsco, Emerald Group Publishing, JSTOR and Wiley Online Library. The review of documentation included The Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) documents relating to the National Vision 2030, National Development Strategy1, Higher and Tertiary Education such as the Manpower Development Act and Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education Innovation Science and Technology Development (MoHTEISTD) Strategic Plans and MoHTEISTD documents relating to Education 5.0 Philosophy. Strategic implementation theories (systems theory and resource-based view) and leadership agility theories (transformational leadership theory, adaptive and dynamic capabilities theories) were reviewed to have a better understanding of both the strategy implementation and leadership agility variables. It also helped to identify indicators of the variables and the relationship between the variables. By having insights into each variable, it was easy to develop a tentative model for leadership agility, which integrates six variables of leadership agility; strategy direction, stakeholder engagement, innovation, ICTs, leader focus and the ability to deal with bureaucracy and political interference.

## **RESULTS**

It is evident that strategy implementation challenges exist in public tertiary education in Zimbabwe (Kangonyo, 2015; Katsande, 2016; MoHTEISTD, 2016; Dube and Xie, 2018; Shereni, 2020; Mugoniwa *et al.*, 2021 UNESCO, 2017), a potential threat to the attainment of Education 5.0, which is the

industrialisation and innovation agenda of the Zimbabwe National Vision 2030. Furthermore, if this problem is not resolved, the national skills deficit of 68% (NSCA, 2018) will not be closed as this depends on the performance of higher and tertiary education to provide relevant skills for industry and commerce. As such, ineffective strategy implementation potentially fails in the tertiary education sector to contribute meaningfully to the socio-economic development of the economy in line with success stories in literature.

The Zimbabwean education system comprises 13 years of primary and secondary education and post-secondary education called Higher and Tertiary education. Higher education refers to university education which is degree awarding (Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education Act (ZIMCHE, 2006). On the other hand, tertiary education encompasses TVET) which are generally provided through polytechnic colleges, teachers' education colleges, vocational and industrial training centres (VITCs) and all other post-secondary colleges providing certification (Manpower Planning and Development Act Amendment, 2020). There are nine (9) public polytechnic colleges spread throughout the ten provinces of the country, eleven (11) public teacher education colleges and three (3) private ones. It is largely through the tertiary education institutions that provide TVET, that technical skills will largely be achieved.

The GoZ is set to achieve socio-economic development through industrialisation, modernisation and innovation that is driven through higher and tertiary education (GoZ, National Development Strategy 1, 2021-2025). The stance by the GoZ to drive national development through education is in line with global trends, which emphasize the fundamental role of education for social and economic development and growth (World Bank Education Strategy, 2020, pp.13; Sustainable Development Goal on Education ((SDG4), 2030)). To drive the national agenda, the GoZ the MoHTEISTD, reconfigured the existing higher education philosophy which consisted of Education, Research and Community, to incorporate Innovation and Industrialisation, a philosophy known in Zimbabwe as Education 5.0. (GoZ, MoHTEISTD Strategy Plan, 2021-2025; GoZ, Education 5.0 Doctrine, 2018). The philosophy is a complete paradigm shift from the colonial education philosophy which restricted human skills development for the black majority, leading to limited social economic development (Nziramanga, 1999). The new Education 5.0 philosophy is premised on a heritage-based education, focusing on innovation and industrialisation through education that leads to knowledge development using own national resources for own national solutions (GoZ, MoHTEISTD Strategy Plan, 2019-2023; GoZ Education 5.0 Doctrine, 2018). This philosophy places great emphasis on technical education. Zimbabwe National Critical Skills Audit (NCSA) (2018) identified a skills deficit of 68% in technical skills.

To develop the model, the study adopted the indicators for strategy implementation developed by Mnjama and Koech (2019) which are strategy control, rate of strategy implementation and strategy evaluation. For leadership agility, indicators used are stakeholder agility, innovation agility, leader Focus and Technology which were adapted from various scholars as indicated in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Variables and their indicators (*Researcher's compilation*)

<b>Dimension/variable</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
Strategy implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy Control Systems</li> <li>• Rate of Strategy Implementation</li> <li>• Strategy evaluations</li> </ul> <i>(ibid., 2019)</i>
Stakeholder engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• partnerships, collaborations and networks (Joseph &amp; Joiner, 2007, Joiner 2019, De Smet, 2018)</li> <li>• Collaborations (DiFranza, 2019)</li> <li>• Relationships (Lokman <i>et al.</i>, 2019; Aghina <i>et al.</i>, 2018; Buffone (2021)</li> </ul>
Innovation agility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• R&amp;D Kihara <i>et al.</i>, 2016)</li> <li>• Introduce new products (Dabi'c <i>et al.</i> 2021)</li> <li>• Development of existing technology and introduction of new products (Aldianto, 2021)</li> </ul>
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge and skills</li> <li>• Tools, machines and equipment</li> <li>• R&amp;D funding</li> <li>• Infrastructure</li> </ul> <i>Kihara et al. (2016)</i>
Leadership focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• self-awareness and personal developmental motivation (Joiner, 2019)</li> </ul>
Ability to deal with bureaucracy & political interference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inadequate funding, excessive rules (Bakare, 2021)</li> <li>• Inadequate Infrastructure (Asiimwe and Steyn, 2017)</li> <li>• Student demographics (Guthrie, 2019)</li> <li>• Decision Making (Mfuru <i>et al.</i>, 2018)</li> <li>• Appointments of key positions (Sebola 2017; Oanda, 2016)</li> </ul>

## DISCUSSION

The national vision of the GoZ is to attain a middle-income economy by 2030, through skilled human capital development, to be driven by higher and tertiary education (GoZ, National Development Strategy 1, 2021-2025). It is, therefore, of paramount importance that public tertiary education institutions successfully implement their strategic plans to attain their strategic objectives so that the GoZ achieves its national vision. This is in line with literature which states that the whole process of strategic planning is deemed unworthy if the formulated strategies are not implemented successfully (Siddique and Shadbolt, 2016; Obeidat *et al.*, 2017; Galpin,

2018). However, regardless of its significance to the performance of organisations, strategy implementation has long been classified in the literature as a mammoth task resulting in significant failures of the process (Andrews *et al.*, 2017; Wheelen *et al.*, 2017). Globally, the strategy implementation failure rate is estimated to be as high as 60% to 90% (Childress, 2013; Cruz, 2013; Oliver and Schwella, 2018; Verweire, 2018; Cândido and Santos, 2019;). In Africa, several empirical studies in the public sector (Kamande, 2015; Njoroge *et al.*, 2015; Mugambi, 2017; Mawowo and Phiri, 2018; Kombate *et al.*, 2021; Taylor *et al.*, 2018) have shown the same trend of huge strategy implementation failure.

In Zimbabwe, the State Enterprise Regulatory Authority (SERA) (2017) has stated that public entities perform poorly as they struggle to achieve their strategic plans. Similarly, Chigivi and Mahombo, (2020) identified poor strategy implementation in local government in Zimbabwe. Other empirical studies on higher education in Zimbabwe (Mugoniwa *et al.*, 2021; Muramba, 2017) have also demonstrated poor execution of strategic plans. Studies on tertiary education in Zimbabwe (Shereni, 2020; Dube and Xie, 2018; UNESCO, 2017; MoHTEISTD, 2016; Katsande 2016; Kangonyo, 2015) indicate that both poor strategic plans and poor strategy implementation have led to poor standards of TVET)

## **CONCLUSION AND THE FRAMING OF A THEORETICAL MODEL**

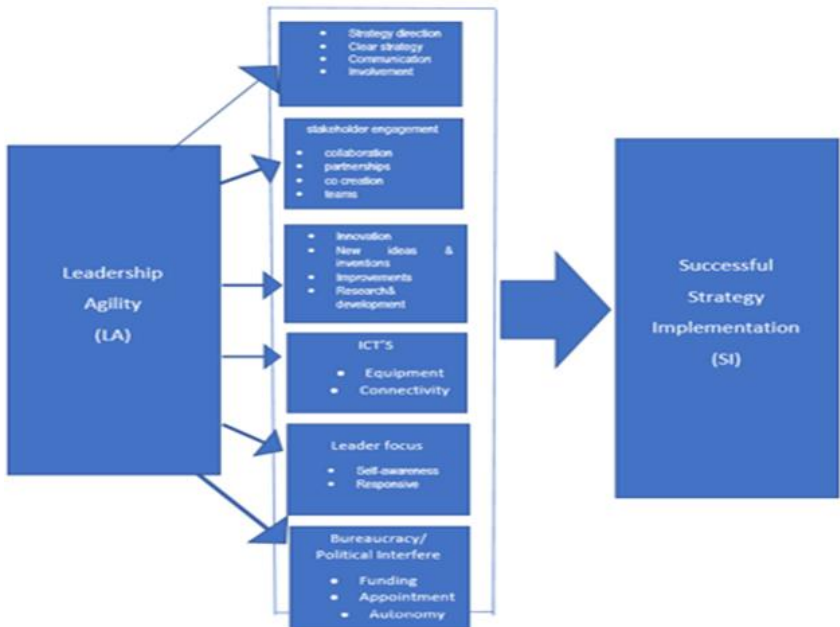
As alluded to in the introduction earlier, no model exists in the Zimbabwe public tertiary education sector for leadership strategy implementation guidance and prior models have not assisted given the existing strategy implementation failure rate of up to 90% both in the public sector and private sector.

The article has examined the role that leadership agility plays in strategy implementation. Extant literature has shown that in general, the components of leadership agility, namely leadership focus, technology, innovation, stakeholder engagement and the ability to deal with bureaucracy and political interference have a positive effect on strategy implementation. However, it is suggested that empirical research be conducted to produce evidence that helps in validating the proposed framework.

A theoretical model was developed based on the reviewed literature. The model hypothesises that leadership agility can drive effective and successful strategy implementation. Leadership agility is driven by the following dimensions: strategy direction, stakeholder engagement, innovation,



technology and leadership focus, the ability to deal with bureaucracy and political interference and the public sector can positively influence strategy implementation. The relationship is illustrated in Figure 2.



**Figure 2:** Theoretical model of leadership agility influence on strategy implementation

The relationships demonstrate that leadership agility as measured by strategy direction, partnerships, innovation, ICT, leadership focus and ability to deal with political interference and bureaucratic processes, positively influences strategy implementation. The effect of leadership agility on strategy implementation and the recommendations, thereof, are summarised in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Variables of the framework (Authors, 2022)

Aspect in Agility	Emerging Discussion	Authors	Options
Strategy Direction	Literature suggests that while the public sector has strategic plans, the implementation is not as successful.	de Oliveira <i>et al.</i> , (2018); Verweire, (2018); Muwowo and Phiri, (2018); Kihara, <i>et al.</i> , (2016); Njoroge <i>et al.</i> , (2015)	Agility in strategy implementation is an enabler

Stakeholder engagement in strategy implementation	Evidence suggests stakeholder engagement is key in sharing resources and a way of financing projects.	Buffone, (2021); Love, (2020); Guthrie, (2019); Aghina <i>et al.</i> , (2018); Raporu, (2016)	The public sector should embrace partnerships, collaborations and the engagement of all stakeholders.
How innovation affects strategy implementation	Evidence suggests that innovation culture is minimal in the public sector	De Smet, (2018); Teece <i>et al.</i> , (2016)	An innovative environment is a key to agility; hence the public sector is encouraged to create an innovative environment.
Effect of technology on strategy implementation	Literature suggests that investment in ICT soft and hard infrastructure is key to agility in the public sector and this is lagging.	Kihara <i>et al.</i> , (2016); Alhadid, (2016); Akkaya, (2020); Aldianto <i>et al.</i> , (2021)	The availability of resources for ICT infrastructure is required.
Leadership focus on strategy implementation	Evidence from the literature suggests that an agile mindset, focused, decisive and quick and flexible decision-making is lacking in the public sector	(Joiner, 2019); De Smet, (2018)	Bureaucracy, redtape and rigidity must be eliminated to enable leaders to make quick and flexible decisions. Leadership must be given the leeway to think, innovate and act speedily. Leaders should change their mindset and embrace agility,
Ability to deal with bureaucracy and political interference in strategy implementation	Evidence from the literature points out that most leaders in the public sector are usually politically loyal to their appointing authority. This makes them more allegiant to the appointing authority than to what needs to be done to situations. Achieving agility in this case becomes a difficult task.	Bakare, (2021); Asimwe and Steyn, (2017); Guthrie, (2019); Mfuru <i>et al.</i> , (2018)	Objective, merit-based and independent appointments are needed. Autonomous governance structures are needed.

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