

## Identifying the Critical Factors Affecting Strategy Execution in Egyptian Seaports

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### Abstract

Strategy as a concept received substantial consideration. Despite their capabilities, number of organizations face difficulties in executing their strategies because it is difficult to translate their plans and strategies into the specific actions that are required to produce outstanding business results. The lack of interest in strategy execution can be attributed to number of factors, including the process' higher complexity, the idea that formulation is more glamorous, the small number of academic studies, and real-world difficulties with management, organizational structure, employee resistance, and technology. Two Egyptian ports were tested using a questionnaire and analysis had been conducted using regression analysis. Results proved a significant effect of leadership, organization structure, employee resistance and technology on strategy execution.

**Keywords:** Strategy Execution, Organization Structure, Leadership, Employee Resistance, Technology.

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## تحديد العوامل الحاسمة التي تؤثر على تنفيذ الإستراتيجية في الموانئ البحرية المصرية

### المستخلص

لقد حظيت الإستراتيجية كمفهوم باهتمام كبير. على الرغم من قدراتها ، يواجه عدد من المنظمات صعوبات في تنفيذ استراتيجياتها لأنه من الصعب ترجمة خططها واستراتيجياتها إلى إجراءات محددة مطلوبة لتحقيق نتائج أعمال بارزة. يمكن أن يُعزى عدم الاهتمام بتنفيذ الاستراتيجية إلى عدد من العوامل ، بما في ذلك التعقيد العالي للعملية ، وفكرة أن الصياغة أكثر بريقًا ، وقلّة عدد الدراسات الأكاديمية ، والصعوبات الواقعية مع الإدارة ، والهيكل التنظيمي ، ومقاومة الموظفين. ، والتكنولوجيا. تم اختبار ميناءين مصريين باستخدام استبيان وتم إجراء تحليل باستخدام تحليل الانحدار. أثبتت النتائج وجود تأثير كبير للقيادة والهيكل التنظيمي ومقاومة الموظفين والتكنولوجيا على تنفيذ الاستراتيجية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** تنفيذ الإستراتيجية ، الهيكل التنظيمي ، القيادة ، مقاومة الموظفين ، التكنولوجيا.

## INTRODUCTION

In the latter part of the 20th century, strategy as a concept received substantial consideration (Mumbua and Mingaine, 2015). The formulation of a solid company plan is something that successful CEOs devote a lot of time, attention, and resources to. It is more crucial to be able to implement a strategy than it is to have a good plan since doing so is the only way to realize a strategy's genuine worth (Kaplan and Norton, 2008).

Despite their capabilities, number of organizations face difficulties in executing their strategies because it is difficult to translate their plans and strategies into the specific actions that are required to produce outstanding business results. Egypt has 15 commercial ports spread over the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea, as mentioned, and depicted in Figure 1 on the Egyptian Maritime Sector (MTS) website. Empirical evidence identified the importance of the Egyptian seaports that have a service function in the national economy, adding to facilitation of the international trade. Especially now that a second generation of Far Eastern manufacturers and producers is emerging, looking for a location that not only puts them close to their customers, but also gives them a less expensive option for storing and further processing their goods for the markets in Europe and the Middle East. Along with potentialities resulting from the region's economic legacy, other opportunities for Egyptian seaports include the expansion of the maritime and port services provided to the shipping industry, located halfway between East Asia and Western Europe.

Consequently, the decision makers were encouraged to formulate a comprehensive development strategy for the seaports, to support accommodate mother ships and achieve

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more cargo handling. Practically, decisions and strategies in governmental sector are crafting by policy makers, while who execute these strategies and policies, are managers and employees that may not well understanding the objectives and benefits of it for them or for their organizations. This research will examine the efficient and the different impact of the four factors (Leadership, centralized organizational structure, employees' resistance and technology) foreseeable to be critical on strategy execution in the Egyptian seaports.

Based on the research objective, to explore the problems facing the execution strategy in Egyptian seaports; as well as the impacts of the four selected factors (Leadership, Centralized Organizational structure, Employees' resistance and Technology) on strategy execution, the research gap that this paper covers are the study of the impact of these factors on strategy execution in Egypt, as the previous literature did not study these variables in Egypt, especially in the maritime sector.

### Research Problem

According to some academics, up to 70% of organizational strategic objectives are never carried out. The implementation phase of strategic management is where process failure occurs, according to Mukhalasie (2014). The lack of interest in strategy execution can be attributed to number of factors, including the process' higher complexity, the idea that formulation is more glamorous, the small number of academic studies, and real-world difficulties with management, organizational structure, employee resistance, and technology.

The research problem can be demonstrated in the following statement “*The inadequacy of the academic research and conceptual models that have identified the factors affecting strategy execution in the Egyptian business environment context, so, by investigating the influence of organizational internal variables on strategy execution on the Egyptian seaports, this study intends to close the current gap*”.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were addressed in order to explore the issues with strategy execution, the effectiveness of key factors affecting strategy execution, and its various effects;

- 1- What are the perceived problems that are facing strategy execution in Egyptian seaports?
- 2- What is the perceived efficiency of factors affecting strategy execution in Egyptian seaports?
- 3- What are the impacts of the four critical factors (leadership, centralized organizational structure, employee’s resistance, technology) on strategy execution?
- 4- What is the most effective factor from the four critical (leadership, centralized organizational structure, employee’s resistance, technology) factors on strategy execution?
- 5- What is the appropriate management and ownership model for the Egyptian seaports?

### **Research Significance**

Generally, majority of literatures and models focus on strategy formulation, while few of them dealt with strategy execution. Adding to that the literatures focused on execution and suggested frameworks with its various factors were coming from western countries.

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Additionally, while America became the model for all other countries thanks to the social sciences, the frameworks that resulted could not always be suitable to emerging nations (Shahin, 2011). To show the difficulties that prevent strategy execution in Egyptian seaports, it is crucial to consider how directly the crucial aspects impact strategy execution in the Egyptian business context setting. Furthermore, improper identification of these crucial components may sometimes make it difficult to execute a plan and almost always result in its failure.

By examining the factors driving execution in the seaports business, this study seeks to narrow the execution gap between strategy design and strategy. It will bridge the gap by examining the connection between the execution of the plan acting dependently and the main variables (leadership, centralized organizational structure, employee resistance, and technology) operating independently.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Although many think that developing an original and new strategy is essential and sufficient in and of itself to propel a company to success in today's economic environment, making sure that such a plan works is just as crucial. Executives should monitor the implementation of strategy closely to avoid typical mistakes that lead to failure. However, it is largely an analytical and creative process that necessitates synthesis. Implementing a strategy can occasionally be the most challenging and time-consuming aspect of strategic management.

## Strategy Process

Discussions of strategy have origins that date back many years; they are not a recent creation. The approach was reportedly utilized in battle, according to Al-Kandi et al. (2013). The choice of courses of action and the allocation of resources required to attain predetermined goals is one of the oldest definitions of the term "strategy" in business. The determination of a company's core long-term aims and objectives is referred to in this definition as strategy. Setting goals has a lot of importance, but so does actually achieving them.

In addition, Porter defines strategy as the process of developing a distinctive position by carrying out a series of actions. Porter emphasizes that these activities set them apart from rivals by carrying out the same tasks in a unique way or by carrying out distinct tasks from those of competitors. If not, strategy would only serve as a tool for marketing a business and would not help it outperform its rivals.

The strategic management process, according to Mumbua and Mingaine (2015), is an integrated process made up of a variety of managerial decisions and activities that affect an organization's long-term success. It entails surveying the external and internal environments, developing a strategy (long-term or strategic planning), carrying it out, assessing its success, and exercising control. See Figure 1 developed by Daft and Samson (2015).

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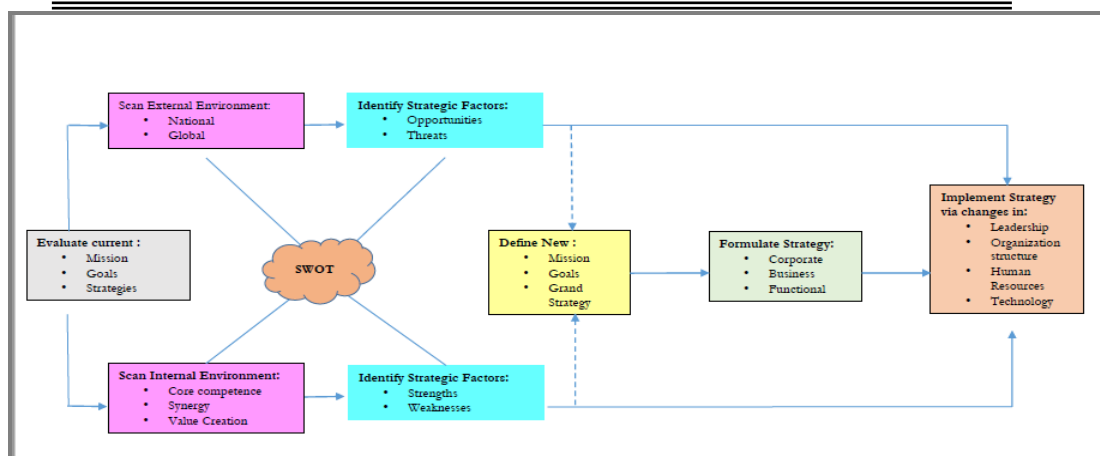


Figure 1: Strategic Management Process  
Source: Daft and Samson

### Strategy Formulation

The process through which an organization chooses the appropriate courses of action to carry out its defined objectives is known as strategy development, according to Mumbua and Mingaine (2015). The success of a company depends on this process because it offers a framework for the actions that will produce the desired outcomes. To ensure that every employee is aware of the organization's goals, vision, and purpose, strategic plans should be shared with them. The process of developing a strategy requires a company to thoroughly examine its changing environment and to be ready for any potential changes.

The company is now in the formulation stage, aiming to change the present goals and tactics to increase success. Even though most competitive advantages are constantly diminished by the efforts of rivals, this includes making an attempt to establish "durable" competitive advantages.



## Strategy Execution

There is no one definition for strategy execution, despite the conceptual descriptions provided by several writers. The idea of implementation and execution is not usually well defined, according to Kandi et al. Execution is frequently used to refer to "putting something into action," "enacting," or "realizing" anything since many studies examine it in a generic sense. Implementing a plan "is a process of overcoming hurdles to change," as stated by McKnight in 2005.

Maas (2008), noted that the various definitions of strategy execution mentioned in a various relevant literature are as follow:

- 1- All the actions and results that result in a strategic choice once the decision has been given the go-ahead to be put into action.
- 2- The dissemination, understanding, acceptance, and implementation of strategic plans.
- 3- The effective application of strategic choices.
- 4- The creation of an operational plan is part of the execution phase.
- 5- Managerial actions known as execution bring organizational activity into line with strategy goal.
- 6- The process of turning plans into tasks for action is known as execution, and it makes sure that these tasks are completed in a way that advances the plan's stated goals.

It is critical to note that several definitions place a strong emphasis on the function of top management and internal factors. Few definitions emphasize the outside world. Surprisingly, not a single definition refers to (non-managerial) employees or their critical role in translating strategic plans into results.

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According to Rajasekar (2014), the process of executing a strategy links strategy formulation and control. While creating a plan might be challenging, putting it into action and making it effective can be much more challenging. Similarly, he concluded that while 80% of organizations had the proper plans, just 14% have been able to successfully implement them. A strategy's implementation, however, is significantly more challenging than its formulation. While the latter involves innovation and commercial acumen as well as an awareness of market dynamics and competitive advantages, the former calls for leadership abilities, meticulous planning, arranging of resources and operations, and ensuring that employees are committed to the new strategy. It should go without saying that businesses that employ strategic planning outperform those that do not, yet these plans usually fall short due to issues that arise during the implementation phase.

Considering the definitions, we can define strategy execution as a dynamic, iterative, and complex process that calls for several managerial and employee decisions and actions that are influenced by a variety of interrelated internal and external factors to actualize strategic plans and achieve strategic objectives. The research will primarily focus on internal issues in this situation, such as leadership, centralized organizational structure, employee opposition, and technology.

### Factors Affecting Strategy Execution

Although most writers concur that these components work best when a plan is implemented, each aspect has a unique impact and a particular gravitational pull. For researchers and managers in the field, there are several

models and frameworks that are frequently used in the areas of strategy analysis and formulation. These include SWOT analysis, Porter's generic strategies, portfolio models, product life-cycle theory, industry structure analysis, and competitive analysis. Shadbolt (2016) contends that there isn't a consensus-based, widely accepted, or dominating paradigm for strategy implementation.

Hereinafter the majority of cited internal factors by the various frameworks, which could be categorized as the most affecting on strategy execution: *information availability and accuracy, leadership style, uncertainty, organizational culture, organizational structure, people, human resources, and technology.*

**Table 1: The key execution variables from previous studies**

Authors	Variables
Waterman et al (1980)	Formulation, structure, cultural, resource allocation, people, communication,
Stonich (1982)	Formulation, outcomes, structure, cultural, planning, people, resource allocation,
Herbiniak&Joyce (1984)	Formulation, population management, organization, and feedback
Galbraith&kazanjan (1986)	Structure, individuals, planning, dialogue, and results
Hamhavek&canella (1989)	Structure, incentives, personnel, distribution of resources, and internal and external communication
Pettigrew and Whipp (1991)	Resource allocation, structure, cultural factors, people, leadership, and environment

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Skivington and Daft (1991)	Allocation of resources, organization, personnel, and communication
Schmelzer (1992)	Process factors in the context (environment, formulation, structure, and culture) (operational planning, people, resource allocation)
Bryson& Bromiley (1993)	Environment, resource distribution, dialogue, populace, results, and cultural
Kargar&Blumenthal (1994)	Planning, resource allocation, cultural aspects, communication, structure, and people
Miller (1997)	Allocation of resources, setting, formulation, structure, culture, operational planning, and results
Ghamdi (1998)	Environment, population, distribution of resources, dialogue, and leadership
Okumus (2001, 2003)	Content, methodology, setting, and results
Ali&Hadi (2012)	Personnel, management, organization, planning, and outside variables

Source: Al-Kandi et al. (2013)

### Leadership as One of the Factors Affecting Strategy Execution

A person's capacity to persuade a group of others to accomplish organizational goals in an officially allocated hierarchical function is what is meant by the notion of leadership. The execution process is therefore greatly influenced by the leader. He must guarantee that the rest of the organization is committed to the new plan by convincing the workers that it is essential. To ensure that the workforce will support the strategy, he must also give it a purpose.

The conventional wisdom, according to Roger (2010), holds that senior managers are responsible for formulating strategy

and entrusting the rest of the company with carrying it out afterward. The human body serves as a common metaphor for this process in our knowledge. The body (the organization) follows the instructions given by the brain (top management), which thinks and makes decisions. The two components that make up effective action are formulation in the brain and execution in the body.

Mumbua and Mingaine (2015) took a different approach to this problem; they claimed that in the absence of strong leadership, conflicting agendas will result in poor coordination since staff members will think that top management wants to avoid potentially harmful and humiliating circumstances.

To encourage change in the business or simply to rebuild the organization in accordance with the vision, strategy creation and strategy implementation are regarded as fundamental leadership competencies. According to Jooste and Fourie (2009), the organization's strategic leaders ultimately determine whether a strategy is successfully transitioned from being developed to being implemented; failure to effectively design the process for implementing strategic change is the single most reliable predictor of that change's failure; and organizations can only execute strategy effectively when their strategic leaders are effective.

The leadership role must include the following:

- **Employees Motivation**

According to Neilson et al. (2008), a leader's capacity to drive organizational change, inspire staff, build and strengthen organizational competencies and competitive capabilities, create a strategy-supportive work environment, and meet or exceed performance targets are all necessary for turning strategic plans into actions that deliver on the planned

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performance tests. Yet leaders frequently underestimate the work involved in carrying out a strategy. To guarantee buy-in, leaders routinely neglect to include pertinent stakeholders, particularly the implementers. Middle management is given execution as a lower priority and oversees it. As a result, executing a plan is seen as more routine and intricate than developing a strategy. Mumbua and Mingaine (2015) claim that management skill of employee motivation is essential to the success of plan implementation. If developed plans could not have been put into action, the effort was wasted.

### - **Communication**

According to research on leadership competencies cited by Mapetere et al. (2012), the following abilities are frequently cited for successful strategy execution: integrity/honesty, communication, technical competence, diversity consciousness, others-development, results orientation, change management, problem-solving, interpersonal skills, decision making, political savviness, strategic/visionary thinking, customer focus, business skills, team leadership, and influence.

### - **Values**

According to Azhar et al. (2012), leadership primarily affects three organizational areas: the vision, the actual strategies, and the values. Together, these three elements have an impact on how the company executes its plan.

When a plan is developed or carried out, leadership has the responsibility to establish the values or a corporate culture, according to Siddique and Shadbolt (2016).

## **Organization Structure as One of the Factors Affecting Strategy Execution**

According to Nyamwanza (2013), who examined how organizational structure affects strategy implementation, the process is organized and formal. Ineffective activity coordination is one of the difficulties in strategy execution, according to several research that have explored the connection between organizational strategy and structure.

According to Nilesen et al. (2008), execution is the result of numerous daily choices made by employees who acted in their own self-interest and in accordance with organizational structure dimensions. They highlighted four key building pieces that CEOs might employ to implement strategy: defining decision rights; establishing information flows; coordinating motivators; and creating structural adjustments.

The definition and justification of cross-functional coordination, as well as the relationships and communication between the various departments in an organization, were provided by Brinkschröder (2014). Strategy-structure studies, according to Mumbua and Mingaine (2015), show that an organization's strategies have an impact on its organizational structure.

An organization's work is carried out according to a system of task, reporting, and authority connections called an organizational structure. Structure hence establishes the nature and purpose of an organization's operations. Structure, as shown in an organization chart, also specifies how the components of an organization fit together. Alisa and Senija (2010) pointed out that there are different typologies of structural dimensions as **specialization, standardization, formalization, centralization and decentralization,**

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where Okumus (2003) pointed to another dimensions as hierarchy of authority, complexity, professionalism, and personnel ratios.

### Employee Resistance

The importance role of employees/staff was confirmed too by Higgins' Model (2005) depicted in Figure 2. The model shows that there are eight elements that must be present for a strategy to be executed successfully. The eight factors are listed as follows in Higgins' 8-S model: **strategy, structure, systems, staff, resources, style/culture, shared values, and strategic performance**. The Eight S's model, which Higgins revised in 2005 from the original McKinsey 7S's model developed in 1980. The Eight S's model specifies the crucial function of staff members in the procedure to help with management of the cross-functional execution of strategies.

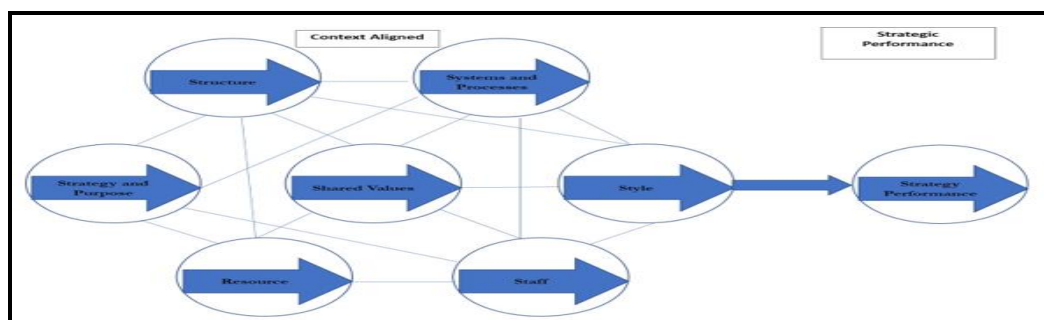


Figure 2: The 8-S model

Source: Higgins' Model (2005)

### Technology

The skill of successfully executing a strategy is one that is always changing, and as the general business environment shifts, so do the best practices for doing so. According to Vester



(2014), technology is crucial to the implementation of every organization's strategy. Technology advancements have the power to fundamentally change an industry's landscape by enabling the production of better, newer products at lower costs and by opening brand-new markets.

According to Muturi (2014), the speed of technological development, which may be detrimental to strategy execution, has an impact on how well plans are carried out. The ability of businesses to process data has increased thanks to new technology, but systems must be created and modified to consider changes in company strategy. This indicates that various system types would be integrated or, if already present, made more advanced to accommodate the change.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research includes two Egyptian seaports in the analysis; one applying the Landlord concept (Port A) and the other one is public/service (Port B). In fact, successful strategy implementation in Egyptian seaports is a crucial requirement for continued success. So, during the past several years, Egypt's marine industry has undergone a thorough policy reorganization, and foreign experts have created a thorough master plan for projects that are planned for the country's commercial ports. Therefore, this study aimed to examine the impact of (**Leadership, centralized organizational structure, Employees' resistance, technology**) as critical factors affect the proposed strategy execution.

Hence, after reviewing the majority of the conceptual and empirical frameworks developed for identifying the factors affecting strategy execution, and for the purpose of this study in the Egyptian environment, the researcher developed the Critical

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Factors Conceptual Model that proposed a relation between the four selected factors (leadership, organization structure, employees' resistance and technology) and strategy execution as illustrated in Figure3.

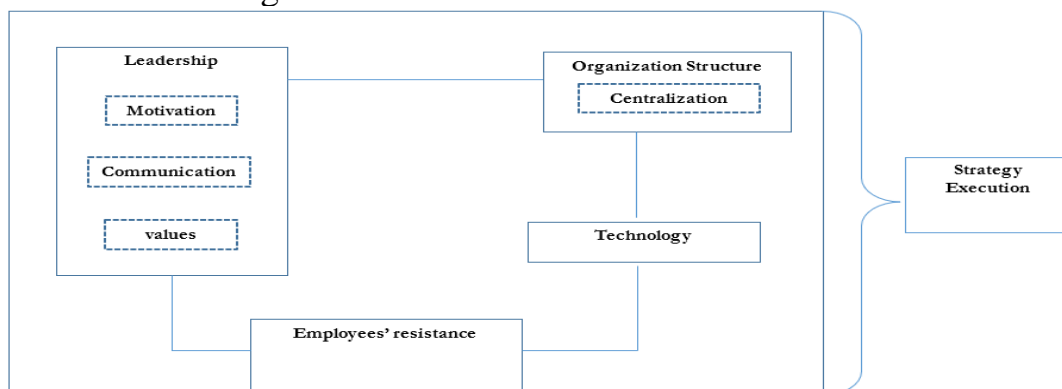


Figure 3: Research Model

The research hypotheses could be stated as follows:

**H<sub>1</sub>: There is significant difference of perceived problems that face strategy execution in Egyptian seaports.**

**H<sub>2</sub>: There is significant difference of perceived efficiency of factors affecting strategy execution in Egyptian seaports**

**H<sub>3</sub>: There is significant difference in perceived impact of critical factors on strategy execution in the Egyptian seaports.**

Additionally, four related hypotheses were put forth and described as follows:

- **H<sub>3-a</sub>**: There is significant positive impact of the critical factor (leadership) on strategy execution in the Egyptian seaports.

- **H<sub>3-b</sub>**: There is significant negative impact of the critical factor (organizational structure) on strategy execution in the Egyptian seaports.
- **H<sub>3-c</sub>**: There is significant negative impact of the critical factor (employee resistance) on strategy execution in the Egyptian seaports.
- **H<sub>3-a</sub>**: There is significant positive impact of the critical factor (technology) on strategy execution in the Egyptian seaports.

This study adopted a descriptive methodology and sought to determine how two Egyptian seaports' managers' perceptions of effective elements affected the execution of their strategies. As a result, the researcher created a questionnaire to gather information for assessing the responses of the respondents.

- Part I: Problems Facing Strategy Execution in the two Egyptian Seaports contains twelve questions.
- Part II: Employees perceived efficient factors affects strategy execution in Egyptian Seaports, it contains four dimensions (Leadership, Centralized organization, Employees' resistance, Technology):

Internal reliability is tested using Cronbach's alpha, which is a measure of internal consistency used in statistics. All alpha values are greater than 0.7, indicating adequate reliability.

**Table 2: Cronbach's alpha for constructs of the questionnaire**

Study Variables		No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
<b>Problems Facing Strategy Execution</b>		<b>12</b>	<b>0.967</b>
<b>Dimensions for factors affects strategy execution</b>	<b>Leadership</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0.864</b>
	<b>Centralized organization</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0.949</b>
	<b>Employees' resistance</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0.945</b>
	<b>Technology</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0.866</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>25</b>	<b>0.689</b>
<b>Employees' Strategy Execution</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>0.826</b>

The current research considers respondents' gender, age, educational background, administrative level, and experience at the two Egyptian seaports (Port (A) and Port (B)). The percentage of males is (86.4%) with a total 190 respondent, and for females is (13.6%) with a total 30 respondent. About the third of respondents were below 40 years (40.9%) with a total 90 respondent, and the percentage of respondents' age between 40-50 years is about (34.1%) with a total 75 respondent, while the percentage of respondents above 50 years is (25%) with a total 55 respondent. More than half of respondents were university level qualification with the percentage of (63.6%) with a total 140 respondent, and the percentage of respondents with average qualification is (27.3%) with a total 60 respondent, while the percentage of respondents with post graduate qualification is (9.1%) with a total 20 respondent.

The sample's projected respondents' distribution based on the administrative level variable, respondents that represent (Line Staff Managers) have the highest percentage (47.7%) with a total 105 respondent, followed by respondents represent general managers level have with the percentage of (40.9%) with a total 90 respondent, and the top managers have the percentage of (11.4%) with a total 25 respondent. The respondents with the experience (less than 10 years) have percentage of (18.2%) with a total 40 respondent, the highest percentage were for respondents with experience (from 10 to 15 years) they have percentage of (57.3%) with a total 126 respondent, and the respondents with experience (more than 15 years) have the percentage of (24.5%) with a total 54 respondent.

**Table 3: Descriptive Analysis of Respondents' Profile**

	Frequency	Percentage%	Total
<b>GENDER</b>			
Male	190	86.4%	220
Female	30	13.6%	
<b>AGE</b>			
Below 40 years	90	40.9%	220
40-50 years	75	34.1%	
Above 50 years	55	25.0%	
<b>QUALIFICATION</b>			
Average	60	27.3%	220
University Level	140	63.6%	
Post Graduate	20	9.1%	

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ADMINISTRATIVE LEVEL			
Line Staff Managers	105	47.7%	220
General Managers	90	40.9%	
Top Managers	25	11.4%	
EXPERIENCE			
Less than 10	40	18.2%	220
From 10 to 15 years	126	57.3%	
More than 15 years	54	24.5%	

### DATA ANALYSIS

The strategy execution was the dependent variable in a multiple regression model with the four critical factors acting as independent variables. The results are shown in Table 4, and they demonstrate that the model is significant through (P value = 0.000), which is less than (0.05), and confirmed by (F Calculated = 206.58), which is greater than (F Tabulated = 2.414), and their effect is assessed through coefficient of determination ( $R^2=3$ ), which indicates that the four critical factors have a high effect.

**Table 4: Multiple regression between critical factors and strategy execution**

Variables	Source	DF	SS	MS	F Calculated	P value
Critical Factors	Treatment	4	107.994	26.999	206.58	0.000
	Error	215	28.099	0.131		
	Total	219	136.093			

To demonstrate the validity of the fourth primary hypothesis, the researcher will run four basic regression models with the execution of the plan as the dependent variable and each of the four crucial components as the independent variable. The findings will be briefly analyzed as follows:

- A simple regression model was conducted between the factor Leadership as an independent variable and the execution of the strategy as a dependent variable, and the findings are reported in Table 5:
  - The P value of 0.000, which was less than (0.05), and the F tabulated value of 149.83, which was more than (0.05), both indicate that the regression model was significant (F tabulated value of 2.414).
  - Pearson correlation coefficient between the critical factor (Leadership) and the strategy execution has positive value equal (0.665) at level of significance equal (0.000) and this validate that increasing of respondents' perceived values of strategy execution, when respondents' perceived values of the factor (Leadership) increase.
  - The regression model was significant since it had a P value of 0.000, which was less than (0.05), and a F tabulated value of 149.83, which was more than (0.05). (F tabulated value of 2.414).

The previous results prove the validity of first sub hypothesis which states "**There is a significant positive impact of the critical factor (leadership) on strategy execution in the two Egyptian seaports**"

**Table 5: Simple regression between factor Leadership and**

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### strategy execution

Critical Factors	Source	DF	SS	MS	F Calculated	P value
(Leadership)	Treatment	1	55.437	55.437	149.83	0.000
	Error	218	80.656	0.370		
	Total	219	136.093			

Simple regression model was done between the factor centralized organization structure as independent variable and the strategy execution, and the results shown in Table 6 proved the following:

- The regression model was significant as shown by a P value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05, and by a F calculated value of 448.37, which is higher than a F tabulated value of 2.414.
- Pearson correlation coefficient between the critical factor (Centralized organization structure) and the strategy execution has negative value equal (-0.820) at level of significance equal (0.000) and this validate increase of respondents' perceiving of strategy execution as respondents' perceived value for the factor (Centralized organization) decrease.
- According to the coefficient of determination ( $R^2=0.673$ ), this important component has a negative and significant impact on how well a plan is carried out.
  - The previous results prove the validity of second sub hypothesis which states "**There is a significant negative impact of the critical factor (centralized organizational structure) on strategy execution in the two Egyptian seaports**"



**Table 6: Simple regression between factor centralized organization and strategy execution**

Critical Factors	Source	DF	SS	MS	F Calculate	P value
(Centralized organization)	Treatment	1	91.571	91.571	448.37	0.000
	Error	218	44.522	0.204		
	Total	219	136.093			

- Simple regression model was done between the factor employees' resistance as independent variable and the strategy execution as dependent variable, and the results shown in Table 7 proved the following:
  - The regression model was significant with a P value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05, and was further supported by a F calculated value of 406.54, which is higher than a F tabulated value of 2.414.
  - Pearson correlation coefficient between the critical factor (Employees' resistance) and the strategy execution has negative value equal (-0.807) at level of significance equal (0.000) and this validate that increasing of respondents' perceiving value of strategy execution, when respondents' perceived value for the factor (Employees' resistance) decrease.

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- The coefficient of determination ( $R^2=0.651$ ) indicates that the impact of this important element on strategy implementation is negative and significant.
- The previous results prove the validity of third sub hypothesis which states "**There is a significant negative Impact for the critical factor (employees' resistance) on strategy execution in the two Egyptian seaports**"

**Table 7: Simple regression between factor employees' resistance and strategy execution**

Critical Factors	Source	DF	SS	MS	F Calculated	P value
(Employees' resistance)	Treatment	1	88.589	88.589	406.54	0.000
	Error	218	47.504	0.242		
	Total	219	136.093			

The following was established using a simple regression model with the factor technology as the independent variable and the execution of the strategy as the dependent variable. The findings are displayed in Table 8:

- The regression model was significant with a P value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05, and was supported by a F calculated value of 172.55, which is higher than a F tabulated value of 2.414.
- Pearson correlation coefficient between the critical factor (technology) and the strategy execution has positive value equal (0.638) at level of significance equal (0.000) and this validate increase of respondents' perceiving of strategy

- execution as respondents' perceived value for the factor (technology) increase.
- This crucial component has a favorable and modest impact on how well a plan is executed, according to the coefficient of determination ( $R^2=0.407$ ).
  - The previous results prove the validity of first sub hypothesis which states "**There is a significant positive Impact of the critical factor (technology) on strategy execution in the two Egyptian seaports**"

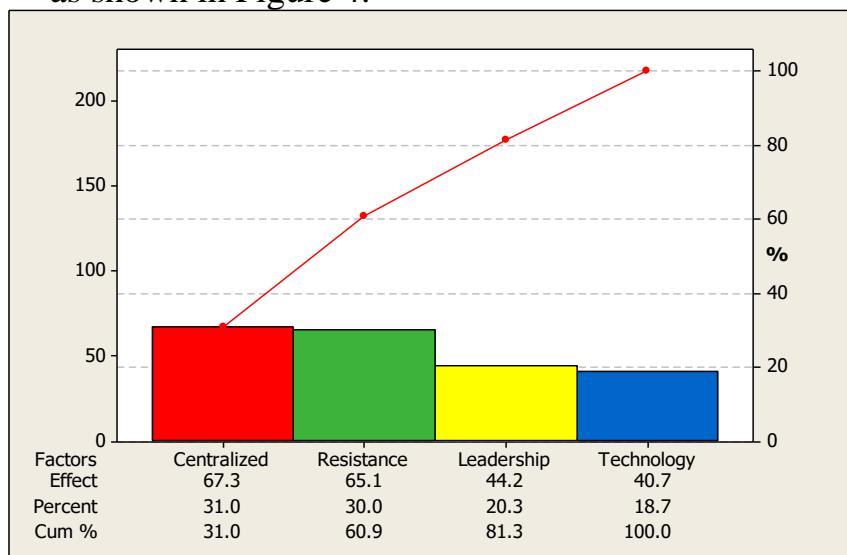
**Table 8: Simple regression between factor technology and strategy execution**

Critical Factors	Source	DF	SS	MS	F Calculated	P value
(Technology)	Treatment	1	60.127	60.127	172.55	0.000
	Error	218	75.966	0.348		
	Total	219	136.093			

- There is a significant difference between respondents perceived strategy execution in Egyptian Seaports and (Port (A) seaport) has higher perceived strategy execution than (Port (B)).
- Pearson correlation coefficient between the two critical factors (Leadership, and Technology) and the strategy execution has positive value equal (0.665, 0.638) respectively, and for the other two critical factors (Centralized organizational structure and Employees' resistance) and the strategy execution has a negative value equal (-0.820, -0.807) respectively all at level of significance equal (0.000),
- Acceptance the fourth main hypothesis and the four supporting hypotheses that confirm there is a significant

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Impact for critical factors on strategy execution in the two Egyptian seaports, with the factor Centralized organization having the highest effect ( $R^2=0.673$ ), followed by the factor Employees' resistance ( $R^2=0.651$ ), then the factor Leadership ( $R^2=0.442$ ), and finally the factor Technology having the lowest effect ( $R^2=0.407$ ), as shown in Figure 4.



**Figure 4: Effects of critical factors on strategy execution**

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The analytical methods and testing of the hypotheses developed in this study, generate new deep insights on the research gap, and they enabled answering to be drawn of each research questions through evaluating the problems and the impact of the critical factors affecting strategy execution as follow:

### **Answering for the first research question about the perceived problems that are facing strategy execution in Egyptian seaports:**

Despite this agreement, there are disparities in how important each of the concerns is dependent to the management model used on the ports under investigation.

As a result, more respondents at the Egyptian seaports (Port A and Port B) considered the issues raised in the statements to be serious obstacles to the implementation of strategy in their businesses. And it is evident that ports embracing the public/service port idea like Port B are having more issues influencing the process of strategy implementation than ports adopting the opposite approach (the landlord concept as Port A). Additionally, it is established that various management groups within the same port authority have varying effects of execution obstacles. As a result, the issues were arranged as follows:

- Since government initiatives are mostly supported by yearly budget cycles, **a lack of financial means to carry out the plan** is thought to be the biggest issue. Multi-year initiatives, especially capital projects like terminal building, may suffer as a result. Costs increase over time, political agendas shift under new regimes, income sources dry up, and the project manager may transition to other tasks or retire. As a result, project funding is less assured in the public sector. Whereas the majority of respondents concurred that most planned strategies do not take into account the available financial resources, particularly in public ports that depend on government funding, landlord ports, on the other hand, depend on investor funding for the proposed projects, leading to quicker and easier execution.

- **The use of tactics that go against the established power structure.** According to the literature review, the type of organizational structure is crucial to understanding when developing a strategy to take into account the organization's level of delegation and the power of the structure during the execution phase. This is because the organizational structure has a significant impact on how well a strategy is carried out. This was supported by the survey findings, which revealed that the respondents saw the second biggest execution obstacle as the implementation of a plan that is at odds with the established power structure. At the same time, all statements relating to organizational structure issues had higher mean values than those related to the other issues. Where the organizational structure in (port B) is centralized, and all details must be referred to the top managers and that affects strategy execution negatively.
- **Inability to successfully handle change or get over personal reluctance to it,** is seen as the third main problem that faced execution, and this is supported not only through the literature but also by the respondents' opinions who saw that employees' resistance especially in public ports, where managers fail in managing this resistance effectively, is seen as the stumbling block in the way of successful strategy execution. According to respondents, employees' resistance is attributed to their fear of change along with the lack of communication and poor leadership ability to persuade them with importance of the new strategies.
- **Lack of upper management support to strategy execution, this problem,** is seen as the main fourth problem in Egyptian seaports especially in public ports as (Port B),

where the role of leadership was seeing pivotally in strategy execution. When leader fail to communicate and motivate employees, strategy will be resisted, and when leaders do not follow to the organization's values this led to misleading way for the strategy. So that, leadership is backbone of successfully strategy execution. Some respondents illustrated that missing of upper management support sometimes reveals to conflict of interest between managers and due to subjectivity.

- **Lack of appropriate technology**, is perceived to be an effective problem in a dynamic sector like seaports that are working in such opened and innovative environment, where technology is crucial, and competitiveness is high. Literature and respondents witnessed that lack of technology during the execution stage will increase the misleading of information and making strategy execution a very hard duty for all the organization employees. Hence, private sector in landlord port, that adopt new technology are succeed in making strategy execution easier using state of the art technology, than the public ports that lack of these new technology.

**The answers for second, third, fourth and fifth research questions about the perceived efficient and impact of the four critical factors (Leadership – Central Organizational Structure- Employees' resistance - Technology), and the most effective factor of them on strategy execution, will addressed through the evaluation of each factor in light with the statistical interpretation as follow:**

In terms of the critical factors affecting strategy execution, the respondents perceived that the four mentioned factors to

be real critical factors and effective for strategy execution in their organizations.

- **Evaluating the perceived efficiency and impact of centralized organizational structure on strategy execution**

According to the literature, the public sector is characterized by centralized organizational structure coupled with bureaucracy, which stands for hierarchy and processes. Through the statistical interpretation, it is clear that the most critical factor affecting strategy execution in Egyptian seaports – especially in public ports as Port B- is the centralized organization structure with its rigid policy and centralized decision making that affect autonomy and execution time frame, and its negatively impact on strategy execution. Adding to failure in achieving buy-in between employees due to centralized thinking and ignoring the others. In addition, respondents agreed that centralized organizational structures are inappropriate for a dynamic industry like Egypt's seaports because they make it more difficult to establish long-term direction. In contrast, ports adopted the Landlord concept, used decentralized organizational structure, and flat structure that increase the productivity and decrease the communication barriers, and this makes strategy in isolation from the bureaucracy of public sector.

The respondents explained that centrally made decisions are less owned by the workers is jeopardizing execution of strategies, which confirms the validity of the study hypotheses that presumed negative relationship between centralized structure and strategy execution. On the other



hand, decentralization of decision making gives more authority to lower-level employees, which makes them feel the ownership of decision regarding strategy. Decentralized choices are more sensitive to consumer requirements and changes in the company environment, according to the respondents in (Port A), who also stated that they are more inspiring to employees. Decentralized decision-making models also foster collaboration and synergy between managers and employees, which improves plan execution. Overall, centralized decision-making structures negatively influenced decision making, thus adversely affecting the execution of strategies. Because of the inefficiencies in decision-making caused by centralization of operations, Egyptian seaports are at a significant competitive disadvantage compared to their rivals in the Mediterranean and Red Sea.

- **Evaluating the perceived efficiency and impact of employees' resistance on strategy execution**

It is not unexpected that employee resistance is the predominant factor, as shown by the research, where several writers have emphasized the capacity to manage resistance throughout the execution time as one of the key challenges of strategy implementation. According to the statistical analysis, employee resistance to change is the second most important issue impeding successful implementation.

The study found that opposition among employees does pose a problem for the implementation of strategy at Egyptian seaports. This was demonstrated by a substantial negative association between employee resistance and the successful implementation of the plan at the Egyptian Maritime Sector.

According to pertinent literature, execution attempts frequently fall short when employees' resistance is overlooked, and preventative strategies are not used right once. It is essential to remember that obstacles to strategy implementation might cause the formulated strategy to fail entirely. Like how they expressed themselves in the surveys that were conducted, the respondents also indicated that lower managers and employees are thought to be the last to even be aware of the company strategy.

This is attributed to managers' ignorance of the importance of personnel to the success of a plan. In this sense, the lack of employee support for any strategic endeavor would undoubtedly lead to employee opposition, which will ultimately lead to strategy failure. Hrebiniak (2005), who identified the difficulty to obtain buy-in as a barrier to plan implementation, also highlighted these findings.

Line managers at Port B therefore see the obvious lack of staff participation as one of the primary causes for the plan execution efforts almost being deceptive. especially in the absence of the efficient motivating and assessment procedures utilized by private operators in landlord ports.

- **Evaluating the perceived efficiency and impact of leadership on strategy execution:**

According to respondents, management's approach to employee motivation and communication makes a difference in whether a plan is successfully implemented or not. Thus, this emphasizes how closely leadership behaviors and strategy implementation are related.

A plan's execution is positively impacted by leadership, according to the study. Additionally, this was amply

supported by the literature and statistical analysis, which showed that leaders must be visionary, able to connect with their teams on a personal level, and mindful of their people at all times.

- **Evaluating the perceived efficiency and impact of technology on strategy execution**

According to the literature study, new technologies are always being developed, and these innovations have a positive impact on workplace comfort and competitiveness. As a result, corporations develop strategies that take advantage of the new technology and implement them. Every organization sets yearly or longer-term goals based on its organizational structure and supports them with new technology methods of operation so that they can be completed on schedule.

The statistical interpretation showed that technology has a direct relation to strategy execution. It helps in reducing the cost and increase the efficiency and profitability. Similarly, technology has positive impact on making strategies and its execution/ processing. The strategic environment has been drastically changed by new technologies, creating both significant new opportunities and, on the other hand, threats to service organizations like the Egyptian sea ports authorities. These results suggest that any corporation must continually embrace technology and make it a significant part of its business plan if it is to succeed in an environment of such fast change.

**To conclude** from the study findings, the Port (A) that adopted the landlord management model, which initiated in the Egyptian ports sector to establish an effective reform strategy in 2002, where the private sector is involved in the

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port services and operations, under licensing and/or concession agreements, with complete separation between property and management, was succeeded in executing the proposed strategy. While -the public port- port (B) relatively suffering from high bureaucracy and employees' resistance due to centralized organizational structure and low communication. Hence, the Egyptian Seaports Authorities should apply reform strategy, by involving the private sector in management and operation, and enhancing more the working under modern Landlord principles within a state-owned infrastructure. This provides an efficient user friendly, speedy, competitive and cost-effective service through privately operated services.

Inspiring strategy only is not guarantee to success, unless the consideration of all the internal factors in the organization, which interpreting the success of (Port A) in executing the planned strategy, where the execution was synchronized with reform process by involving the private sector in management and operating, consequentially liberalization from the public sector bureaucracy and centralization. Adding to shift of all execution burdens from the state.

Need for professionally qualified port managers, as well as skilled operators and technicians, to replace substandard staff and unskilled manual laborers, are paramount.

Adjustments to organizational structures are necessary to allow for the use of information technology in communications and decision-making.

Prudent steps are to be taken to avoid the resistance negative impact of the change from the present situation of Egyptian ports toward modern, efficient, self-sustaining ports.

The analysis of these findings shows that there is a considerable discrepancy between respondents' perceptions of the effectiveness of variables influencing strategy implementation in Egyptian seaports (Ports (A) and (B)). Hence, (Port (A) port) has higher perceived efficiency of factors affecting strategy execution than Port (B), and **this prove the validity of the second main hypothesis, and to confirm and validity of this result the researcher prove the four sub-hypotheses emanating from this hypothesis as follows:**

These results prove that there is a significant difference between respondents' perceived efficiency of factor (leadership) affecting strategy execution in Egyptian seaports (Port (A) and Port (B)), where Port (A) has higher efficiency for this factor than Port (B) and **this prove the validity of the first sub hypothesis of the second main hypothesis.**

These results prove that there is a significant difference between respondents' perceived efficiency of factor (Centralized organization structure) affecting strategy execution in Egyptian seaports (Port (A) and Port (B)), where Port (A) has low value for this factor that mean higher efficiency for this factor than (port B) and **this prove the validity of the second sub hypothesis of the second main hypothesis.**

These results prove that there is a significant difference between respondents' perceived efficiency for factor (Employees' resistance) affecting strategy execution in Egyptian seaports and (Port (A)) has higher efficiency for this factor than (Port (B)) **and this prove the validity of the third sub hypothesis of the second main hypothesis.**

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These results proved that there is a significant difference between respondents' perceived efficiency of factor (Technology) affecting strategy execution in Egyptian Seaports (Port (A) and Port (B)), and Port (A) has high efficiency for this factor than (Port (B)) and **this prove the validity of the fourth sub hypothesis of the second main hypothesis.**

### RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

To help the decision-makers execute the approach better at the two ports, the paper proposes an action plan in Table 9.

**Table 9: Action Plan**

Area of Action	Action	Stakeholders	Timeline	Port
Review seaports master plans	Review strategies and plans, to ensure consistency between the organization internal dimensions with the planned strategies.	Ministry of Transport Seaports Authorities Suez Canal Zone	Short Term	Port (B)
Improve Governance	Introducing new governance procedures that enabling review and follow up strategy execution, with total separation between executing, monitoring, and accountability.	Ministry of Transport Ministry of Justice	Short – med Term	Port (B)
	Constitute working group to explore bold reform of public private	Ministry of Transport, Maritime	Short Term	Port (B)

	partnership in Maritime sector	Sector, Seaports Authorities, Suez Canal Economic Zone		
Investment and administrative laws	Repeal/ and or modify of old law	Ministry of Investment Ministry of Justice Ministry of Transport	Short Term	Port (B)
Stakeholders' involvement	Increase the effectiveness of stakeholders' involvement mechanisms in a transparent manner in planning and executing strategy.	Ministry of Transport, Seaports Authorities, Suez Canal Economic Zone	Short Term	Port (A)
Technology	Integrated information systems used to enhance the efficiency of seaports strategies execution – and improve turnover.	Ministry of Transport Seaports authorities Suez Canal Economic Zone	Short to Medium Term	Port (B)
Human Resource development	A training program must be prepared to employees, to make them willing to accept the change to avoid resistance.	Ministry of Transport Suez Canal Economic Zone	Short to medium Term	Port (B)
Management framework	Develop streamlined environmental management regime	Ministry of Transport Suez Canal	Medium to Long term	Port (B)

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	and strategic assessment process to execute strategy easier.	Economic Zone		
Strategy execution review	Develop strategic KPIs to support ports strategy execution efficiency linked to the strategy intermediate objectives and outcomes	Ministry of Transport Suez Canal Economic Zone	Medium to Long term	Port (A)
National Seaports strategy	A new national seaports strategy shall be proposed to strengthen the effectiveness of the strategy execution within which commercial decisions are made while ensuring that other significant issues, including defense requirements, quarantine, border security and safety are addressed.	Ministry of Transport Suez Canal Economic Zone	Long term	Port (B)



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