

Strategic management skills to enhance recovery, Growth and resilience of female owned enterprises after the COVI-19 pandemic. A gendered response perspective

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Abstract: The main purpose of this concept paper was to examine strategic management capabilities that are relevant to help female owned enterprises recover, be resilient and growth following the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the business sectors. The purpose of the study was to determine the most effective strategic management capabilities that can revive the female led enterprises in the hospitality sector. The study was anchored on the positivist research philosophy, explanatory research design and adopted a survey as a data collection method. Structured questionnaire was used to collect data. Data was collected from 300 females' business leaders in the hospitality sector and 30 stakeholders in the sector. Correlation and regression analysis of the relationship between the strategic management capabilities and survival of the female led enterprises in the hospitality sector were used. The study shows that strategic implementation capabilities was the most effective in contributing to the survival of the female led enterprises in the hospitality sector in the current business environment. Strategic planning capabilities were the second most effective in promoting revival and growth of the female led enterprises in the hospitality sector. Strategic evaluation capabilities also emerged as one the most relevant in the current business environment in the hospitality sector. The study concluded that the three strategic management capabilities are thus critical to help female leaders in the hospitality sector to revive the performance of their enterprises and set the foundation for growth following the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The paper recommended that female business leaders and other stakeholders invest in the development of the three sets of the strategic management capabilities.

Key words: Strategic planning, strategic implementation, strategic evaluation, business growth, business resiliency

I. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all sectors of the world economy and society and as such organisations continually need to develop new products and services to cope with the complexity and rapid changes in business environments (Xinwei et al., 2018). The current COVID-19 is

a rapidly evolving global challenge and like any pandemic, it weakens the competitiveness of enterprises. This is more on the women owned enterprises which have traditionally faced serious constraints both in crisis economic condition and stable economic conditions. The success of the economy is largely aided by female entrepreneurs. The workplace, business networks, financial institutions, and culture are shaped and redefined by them. Numerous programs have been developed to inspire female business owners. According to studies, men and women have different business experiences. There are significant gender variations in how women experience running their own businesses and how well those businesses succeed (Carter, Anderson & Shaw: 2001). The COVID-19 pandemic had a differential impact on women and male owned enterprises. There is therefore need to develop interventions on women owned enterprises in view of the gravity of impact of COVID-19 on their operations.

The gender of entrepreneurs in developing countries presents particular difficulties. In this aspect, women company owners face more obstacles than their male colleagues, which results in an unfavourable business environment. These obstacles include, among others, gender norms at home, a lack of education and training, and financial resources. The subsequent paragraphs provide further detail on these difficulties.

According to data from World Health Organization (WHO) and Johns Hopkins University, there have been ten million cases around the world, causing company closers, higher levels of poverty and human suffering. The COVID-19 pandemic is a public health emergency that has affected global economic growth and global GDP growth rate drop to 2.4% in 2020. Disruptions in the supply chain, shrinking demand for consumption and investment, significant weakening of economic activities, and damaged market confidence, These changes require well developed strategic management capabilities which may help organisations to integrate and reconfigure both internal and external resources

and skills that are harmony with the business environment to adopt optimal strategies in order to achieve long horizon goals (Adil et al., 2015; O'Reilly & Tushman, 2008). Organisations need diverse interrelated capabilities in all organisational functions to create value for it, where these capabilities difference between organisations according to a lot of internal and external factors (Di Benedetto & Song, 2003).

The hospitality industry has suffered because of restrictions on public gatherings and suspension of airplane operations everywhere in the world. The same amount of stress was experienced by several hospitality businesses. Due to international partial and complete lockdown scenarios, the hospitality industry was most severely impacted. When compared to their pre-COVID-19 contributions, the travel and tourism sector and other related industries now make up a very minor portion of the economy. The travel and tourism industry is still at a standstill because of its vulnerability to the whims of the virus, in contrast to other sectors including health, education, public transit, media, and hospitality that are beginning to reopen in response to COVID-19 SOPs. Enterprises may need to develop strategic management competencies to achieve this.

The concept of strategic capabilities is linking with the resource-based view (RBV), where both perspectives focusing on developing the core competencies that cannot be imitated by rivals. Further, the necessitate of optimal use the tangible and intangible organisational resources (Carraresi et al., 2012; Hoon Jang, 2013; Takahashi & Sander, 2017). The term of strategic capabilities was defined as the intricate accumulative knowledge and skills of the organisations which enable them to coordinate their processes and reconfigure their assets to generate economic value and attain sustainable competitive advantage (Day, 1994). Besides Lado et al. (1992) referred to strategic capabilities as the unique internal skills and operations that the organisation owned but not available to its competitors. Moreover, Johnson et al. (2017) argued that strategic capabilities are the specific organisation resources and competencies that contribute to identifying their appropriate strategies in order to achieve superior performance of the organisation. To determine the strategic capabilities in the organisations, researchers suggested four dimensions according to (Isfahani et al., 2012; Parnell, 2011; Seyhan et al., 2017; Spillan et al., 2018), these dimensions are marketing capability, market linking capability, technology capability, and management capability

II. RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW

Strategic management is defined as the process of evaluation, planning, and implementation designed to maintain or improve competitive advantage. The process of evaluation is concerned with the external and internal environments. Planning involves developing business models, corporate direction, competitive tactics, international strategy, acquisitions, and collaborative action. The implementation phase requires leadership to build the appropriate organizational structure, develop management culture, control

the strategic processes, and steer the organization through corporate governance International competition has increased the accessibility that customers have to products around the globe. Intense competition has called for a concerted effort to build strategic action through the process of environmental evaluation, developing a set of strategic plans and implementing them. Literature shows that to be effective and to drive success, managers and leaders of companies require a wide range of strategic management capabilities.

- i. Strategic planning capabilities
- ii. Strategic implementation
- iii. Strategic evaluation capabilities.

(a) *Strategic planning capabilities*

These capabilities enable managers and leaders to develop comprehensive set of strategic plans which shows roadmap for the firm's business-level, corporate level, competitive, international, collaborative, and acquisition strategies. This stage also involves development of a wide range of strategies to propel the company to growth and success.

The business-level strategy defines which customer segments and needs will be addressed, and how the customer need will be satisfied.

Corporate strategy defines how the firm can widen its scale of operation from a single business to a portfolio of businesses, operating in international markets. The strategy helps companies with strategic positioning of their products and brand. Competitive strategy This strategy focuses on how the firm will defend and protect its resources, capabilities, and core competences that have created its current competitive advantage. This part of the plan includes reactive strategies that preserve the current core competences, and proactive responses that develop the firm's competences even further. The development of strategic plans and strategies is only possible after a comprehensive analysis of the internal and external

(b) *Implementation capabilities*

Strategy implementation has been defined in many different ways (e.g., Amoo, Hiddlestone-Mumford, Ruzibuka, & Akwei, 2019). In our work, strategy implementation is defined as a "dynamic, iterative, and complex process" that is comprised of various "activities by managers and employees to turn strategic plans into reality in order to achieve strategic objectives" (Yang et al., 2010, p. 165). Accordingly, we define strategy implementation effectiveness as the extent to which an organization's implemented strategies correspond to its strategic intentions (Lee & Puranam, 2016)

Strategic implementation refers to the process of executing plans and strategies. These processes aim to achieve long-term goals within an organization. Finally, and importantly, the process of strategy implementation is more complicated than formulation (Andrews, Boyne, Law, & Walker, 2011), and many managers and organizations struggle with effective implementation of business strategies (Hrebiniak, 2006). As a

result, strategy implementation effectiveness is a significant source of performance heterogeneity between firms (e.g., Greer, Lusch, & Hitt, 2017), reinforcing the need for a clear understanding of the strategy implementation process.

The most widely applied theoretical lens is contingency theory, or the concept of “fit,” which suggests that SI effectiveness is determined by the congruence between a firm’s strategy and different dimensions of the organization and its environment (Chandler, 1962; Galbraith & Nathanson, 1978; Govindarajan, 1988; Miles & Snow, 1978). However, because the concept of fit can be applied in a variety of ways (Drazin & Van de Ven, 1985; Venkatraman, 1989), “fit” or “match” or “alignment” are often used in a ubiquitous and generic manner and the rationale applied to fit is often inductive in nature or relies on logic based on practical experience.

Strategic implementation, in other words, is a technique through which a firm develops. It utilizes and integrates new processes into the structure of an organization. It requires two main capabilities: leadership and strategic management corporate governance. Strategic leadership is necessary to communicate the vision of the firm and objectives of the strategic plans (outlined above) to the management level. motivation, empowerment creativity, and innovation, which often are required to steer firms out of challenging situations.

- i. Exerting strategic leadership
- ii. Resource allocation
- iii. Support policies, Procedures and systems
- iv. Support control systems
- v. Support reward systems
- vi. Support organizational culture

This capability has been the most significant capacity which enables the manager /leader to you turn your strategic plan into action. It gives the manager to execute a new marketing plan to increase sales to implementing a new work management software to boost efficiency across internal teams. Having a strategic plan is great, but unless you have the bandwidth, capacity resources, and support to implement your plan it’s not going to drive actual change in your organization. It involves developing clear and attainable goals. It involves capacity to communicate the vision, mission, goals, to create focus and drive accountability, determine roles and responsibilities and developing strong compatible team. Implementation capabilities also entails the ability to mobilize and allocate resources to different functional areas. Implementation can be successful if there is a power monitoring and evaluation framework.

(c) *Strategic evaluation capabilities.*

Strategy evaluation process identifies the level of strategy implementation (Elshamly 2013), gives early signals about factors that might hinder the success of the strategy by prompting management to ask questions on the execution process or the leaders’ reliability and competency (Carpenter & Sanders, 2009). Strategy evaluation process highlights

firms’ effectiveness in reacting to new challenges (Johnson & Scholes, 2002) that make them achieve their strategic aims. In fact, firms should review their capabilities and competencies for successful implementation of their strategy (Popa et al, 2012). Therefore, strategy evaluation process ensures that firms adapt their strategy to any risk of changes in the environment. Arguably, a robust strategy evaluation process provides information to the management on the cause of failure in achieving the firm’s strategic objective. Indeed, strategy evaluation protects the business from collapse (Dubihlela & Sandada, 2014), prevents firms from taking wrong decisions and helps them to anticipate problems if there is change in the internal and external environment (Elshamly, 2013).

Strategy evaluation can highlight weaknesses in already implemented strategic plans and makes the entire process to start all over. Ivancic (2013) contends that the effective evaluation method is important because the key activity of strategy evaluation is to determine if strategy execution meets the firm objectives. Hunger and Wheelen (2011) submitted that results of strategy evaluation are essential for further action if the process is showing any problems that affect the functioning of the firm towards its goal. Therefore, firms need to evaluate their strategies on a continuous basis (King’ola, 2001; Tunji, 2013), so that corrective action could be taken to eliminate the problems that hinder the achievement of firm objectives (David, 2011). Gonçalves (2009) submitted that periodic evaluations keep the strategic plan flexible and connected to the firm competencies. David (2001) pointed out that ineffective evaluation can limit success or create worse problems for firms. Consequently, management needs to ask the right questions to ensure their effectiveness (Onwe, 2014). Additionally, strategy evaluation process prevents companies from making a wrong decision that could lead to disruptions and serious damage

Empirical literature also indicates that success of female led enterprises is anchored on the development of strong strategic capabilities. Studies by Julian (2013), Karel, Adam, & Radomir (2013) and Julian (2013) have all confirmed the value and significance of strategic planning capabilities, strategic implementation capabilities and strategic evaluation capabilities in a wide range of studies done in both developed and developing economies contexts. In view of the existing literature, this study has contributed to the literature on the role of strategic management capabilities in the success of female led enterprises.

The conceptual framework developed based on the literature is highlighted in the next section.

III. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



The conceptual framework guiding this study is shown above and is a product of the review of existing literature. Three main strategic capabilities emerged from literature namely strategic planning, strategic implementation and strategic evaluation. This study was thus anchored on an examination of the relevancy of the three capabilities in the success and growth of female led enterprises. The application of the three capabilities in the female led enterprises has not received much research attention and hence this study expanded the knowledge base on the domain in the female led enterprises sector.

IV. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- a) To determine the effectiveness of the strategic planning capabilities in reviving the performance of female owned enterprises in the hospitality sector following the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic
- b) To establish the effectiveness of the strategic implementation capabilities in reviving the performance of female owned enterprises in the hospitality sector following the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic
- c) To ascertain the usefulness of strategic evaluation capabilities in reviving the performance of female owned enterprises in the hospitality sector following the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic

V. METHODOLOGY

A positivism research philosophy guided the study. A survey making use of a structured questionnaires was used to collect the data Regressions and correlation constituted the data analysis models. The questionnaire was subjected to validity testing and factors analysis. A total of 300 female business leaders in the hospitality industry participated in the study and were selected using a stratified sampling technique.

VI. FINDINGS

6.1 Reliability results for strategic management capabilities and competitiveness index

Variable	Cronbach's alpha
Strategy development capabilities	0.61
Strategy implementation capabilities	0.60
Strategy evaluation capabilities	0.71

The Cronbach's alpha for the strategic management capabilities shown in table 5.3 ranges between 0.6 and 0.71. This indicates the instrument was reliable because Cronbach's alpha from 0.6 upwards shows that the instrument is reliable in social sciences (Mimi, Sulaimanb, Sern and Sallehd 2014)

The results in tables 5.2 and 5.3 indicate that the questionnaire had a good reliability in terms of internal consistency. This implies that the instrument gave consistent results.

6.2 Correlation analysis

Preliminary linkages between strategic management capabilities and competitiveness of female owned enterprises in the hospitality sector. Pearson Correlation was used to evaluate the relationships between strategic management capabilities and competitiveness of female owned enterprises in the hospitality sector. Correlation coefficient is an important indicator that tests the relationship between variables of study. In addition, the correlation coefficient was also used to determine the strength of the relationship between strategic management capabilities and competitiveness of female owned enterprises in the hospitality sector. This analysis was done to prepare for the multiple regression analysis.

Table 2: Interpretation of the Pearson's correlation

Pearson's r values	Interpretation of the relationship
-0.1 to -0.5/0.1 to 0.5	Strong relationship
-0.5 to -0.3/ 0.3 to 0.5	Moderate
-0.3 to-0.1/0.1 to 0.3	Weak
-0.1 to 0.1	Non/very weak

Source: (Rodgers and Nicewater,1988)

Based on these interpretations of the Pearson's correlation coefficient, results in table 5.15 are analysed.

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 –tailed)

Correlation between strategic management capabilities and competitiveness of female owned enterprises in the hospitality sector is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlation results

Strategic management capabilities and competitiveness of female owned enterprises	Correlation coefficient value
Strategy planning capabilities	0.70
Strategy implementation capabilities	0.77
Strategy evaluation capabilities	0.65

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 –tailed)

Table 2 shows that the strategy planning capabilities is very strongly and positively correlated to competitiveness of female led enterprises in the hospitality sector (correlation coefficient value of 0.70). This may imply that increased development of strategy planning capabilities is critical to boost the competitiveness of female led enterprises in the hospitality sector. This also indicates that business leaders

with well-developed strategic planning capabilities are able to undertake environmental scanning gathering of information, organizing and analyzing information to develop relevant strategies.

The correlation results in Table 2 shows that strategic implementation capabilities have a very strong and positive correlation with the competitiveness of female led enterprises in the hospitality sector used in this study (correlation coefficient=0.77). This implies that the development of strong strategic implementation capabilities by female business leaders is critical in making them competitive and sustainable. Ability to set clear goals and define key variables, determine roles, responsibilities, and relationships, delegate the work, execute the plan, monitor progress and performance, and provide continued support and take corrective action are key strategic implementation capabilities that may make female led enterprises in the hospitality sector competitive. This implies that female leaders who are able to design a go-to-market strategy, execute a strategic plan, will be able to make their enterprises competitive in the current business environment.

Table 2 shows that the correlation between strategic evaluation capabilities and competitiveness of female led enterprises in the hospitality sector is very strong and positive (correlation coefficient of 0.65). This implies that development of strategic evaluation capabilities by female business leaders in the hospitality sector will leads to competitiveness. This shows that female leaders in the hospitality sector who are able to undertake strategy evaluation, assesses how well a chosen strategy has been implemented and how successful or otherwise the strategy is will enhance the competitiveness of the enterprises. Ability to do strategy evaluation entails reviewing and appraising the strategy implementation process and measuring organizational performance which all leads to better performance. This leads to competitiveness of the entire enterprise.

In summary, the correlation Table 3 shows possible association between three strategic management capabilities and competitiveness of female led enterprises operating in the hospitality sector. These initial relationships are further analysed through regression analysis in the next section

6.3 Regression analysis results

Regression analysis examined the relationship between strategic management capabilities required by female business leaders in the hospitality sector. The results presented in this section test the hypotheses linking strategic management capabilities and competitiveness of female led hospitality enterprises.

6.3.1 Hypotheses

H1.1 The development of strategic planning capabilities may boost the competitiveness of female leaders in the hospitality sector.

H1.2 The development of strategic implementation capabilities by female leaders in the hospitality sector may lead to competitiveness of their enterprises

H1.3 The development of strategic evaluation capabilities by female leaders in the hospitality sector may lead to competitiveness of their enterprises

6.3.2 Summary of regression output

Table 4: Regression model summary

Model	R	R2	Adjusted R2	Std. Error of the Estimate	P
1	0.76	0.75	0.85	0.112	0.000

(a) Predictors: (Constant), strategic planning capabilities, strategic implementation capabilities, strategic management capabilities and technological capabilities

R2-square (coefficient of determination) indicated in Table 3 is used to evaluate model fit. According to table 5.16, about 75% of the changes in competitiveness of the female led hospitality enterprises could be attributed to the effects of the three proposed strategic management capabilities. This shows that the strategic management capabilities are indeed critical to the competitiveness of the female led hospitality enterprises.

Table 5 Regression coefficients

Model-1	Unstandardized Coefficients		Sig	VIF
	B	Std. Error		
(Constant)	2.778	0.118	0.000	
Strategic planning capabilities	1.332	0.067	0.000	1.113
Strategic implementation capabilities	2.230	0.127	0.000	1.221
Strategic evaluation capabilities	1.103	0.130	0.000	1.001

(a) Dependent Variable: Business Survival

Multicollinearity was tested among the three strategic management capabilities in terms of assessing their influence on each other. The VIF was used to test for the possibilities of Multicollinearity and the VIF values of the three strategic management capabilities is around 1 which shows that there was no correlation among the independent variables. This shows that each capability had an independent effect on the survival of female led hospitality enterprises and this implies that the results are more valid.

6.3.3 Regression analysis

The following null hypotheses were developed and tested in this study.

H0.11: Strategic planning capabilities have no significant positive influence on the survival of female owned business enterprises in the hospitality sector

H0.12: Strategic implementation capabilities have no significant positive influence on the on the survival of

female owned business enterprises in the hospitality sector

H0.13: Business management capabilities has no significant positive influence on the survival of female owned business enterprises in the hospitality sector

According the result in the table, the r -value=0.000 which is < 0.005 for the relationship between strategic planning capabilities and survival of female owned business enterprises in the hospitality sector. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted which states that strategic planning capabilities have a significant positive influence on the competitiveness of female owned business enterprises in the hospitality sector. This result implies that developing strategic planning capabilities in female business leaders in the hospitality sector will lead to survival and sustenance of the enterprises.

Based on the table, it can be shown that the R -value=0.000 which is < 0.005 for the relationship between strategic implementation capabilities and survival of female owned business enterprises in the hospitality sector. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted which states that strategic implementation capabilities have a significant positive influence on the survival of female owned business enterprises in the hospitality sector. This result implies that developing strategic capabilities such as resource mobilisation, structures, delegation of duties and responsibilities and execution of duties and operations in female business leaders in the hospitality sector will lead to survival and sustenance of their enterprises.

The table on the regression summary shows that the r -value=0.000 which is < 0.005 for the relationship between strategic evaluation capabilities and survival of female owned business enterprises in the hospitality sector. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted which states that strategic evaluation capabilities have a significant positive influence on the survival of female owned business enterprises in the hospitality sector. This result implies that developing skills to evaluate strategies such as setting goals, assessing how well your business has performed, relative to its goals, reflecting on achievements and shortcomings, and re-examining the goals themselves, which may have been set at a different time, under different circumstances will lead to survival and sustenance of their enterprises.

6.4 Discussion

The main objective of this study was to establish the nature and scope of strategic management capabilities that may have a greater influence on the survival and growth of the female led business enterprises in the hospitality sector following the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. More importantly, the paper sought to determine the most effective strategic management capability that may restore the capacity

utilisation of the female owned enterprises in the hospitality sector.

This study showed that the most important strategic management capabilities for female leaders in the hospitality sector were the strategic implementation capabilities (with a beta value of 2.3 table 4). The study showed that the development of the strategic implementation capabilities will enhance the performance and survival of the female led business enterprises in the current business environment by helping the leaders mobilise resources and competences that helps the enterprises to compete in its business environment. They also help the leaders to maximise on its strengths and be a source of competitive advantage. This finding support views proposed by Khan, R., & Huda, F. (2016) who indicated strategic implementation capabilities help business leaders to integrate the five key components necessary to support implementation namely people, resources, structure, systems, and culture. When all the components must be in place it is possible to in order to move from creating the plan to activating the plan. Strategic implementation capabilities drives operations and hence leads to the attainment of the performance goals and targets (Mackay and Zundel 2016).

According to the findings of this study strategic planning capabilities are the second most important set of capabilities (a beta value of 1.3 table 4) can lead to the survival and growth of the female owned enterprises. This finding supports views raised by Karel, Adam & Radomir (2013) who argued that strategic planning capabilities allows leaders to develop relevant, effective and sustainable strategies that me bring competitiveness to the enterprise. According to Wolf and Floyd (2017) strategic planning capability allows managers to be able to analyse the organization's mandate, mission, and values; analysis of the organization's internal and external environment and develop relevant strategies that leads to competitiveness in the business environment.

Strategic evaluation capabilities emerged as the third most important capabilities (beta value of 1.2). They are therefore critical capabilities required by female led in the hospitality sector to enhance the survival and competitiveness of their enterprises following the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. By establishing a strategic control process as a part of management, organizations can rethink strategies and take immediate actions in case of undesired or unintended outcomes This finding supports views raised by Kane, C. Gerald, Doug Palmer, Anh N. Philips, David Kiron, and Natasha Buckley (2015) who indicated that strategy evaluation is the process by which the management assesses how well a chosen strategy has been implemented and how successful or otherwise the strategy is. To simply put, strategy evaluation entails reviewing and appraising the strategy implementation process and measuring organizational performance. These attributes lead to competitiveness, growth and survival of enterprises.

6.5 Conclusions and recommendations

This paper concluded that to enhance the effectiveness of female business leaders' ability to achieve competitiveness, promote growth and survival of their enterprise, there is need to develop three critical strategic management capabilities in the form of strategic planning, strategic implementation and strategic evaluation. This shows that capacitating female business leaders with the three strategic management capabilities is critical to help them revive their enterprises following the devastating effects of the VOCID-19 pandemic.

6.6 Theoretical contribution of the paper

The paper has contributed to literature on female business strategic management capabilities domain by showing the three critical strategic management capabilities required by female leaders to help their enterprises survive the current challenges and grow them.

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