

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION STYLE AND MIDDLE MANAGEMENT EFFORTS IN STRATEGY MANAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION AND PUBLIC ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

Strategy management implementation (SMI) in developing countries studies is becoming an exciting topic; however, there is a barrier to collect data. Furthermore, a possible mechanism relying on SMI in administration history has acknowledged limited empirical consideration. This paper examined the implication of the implementation style and middle management efforts in the relationship between SMI and organisational performance (OP). Data were collected on a sample of 212 Togolese administrators in eight ministries through structured questionnaires. In contrast to earlier studies in industrialised countries within the context of modernisation and democratisation, which suggested that the logical (M1) or logical-incremental (M3) style(s) is locus to drive changes and enhance OP, the finding revealed that the application of incremental style (M2) was associated with better OP than M1 or M3. Public organisations characterised by traditional bureaucracy and lack of administrative reform program implementation opted for M1 will likely strand and decrease performance.

Keywords: strategy management implementation, organisational performance, implementation style, middle management efforts, moderated mediation

INTRODUCTION

The term strategic management (SM) emerged in the academic conception in the 1960s. It spread in diverse fields, including business (profit organisations), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and public sector strategy. Policy design, formulation and implementation, public sector reform, planning, decentralisation, and budgeting have been an important road map in the public sector for some decades. Therefore, in the early 1980s, many countries' public sector organisations also started using strategic management concepts and techniques. Strategic management has become a standard tool in public sector management (PSM) in many countries and across different government tiers.

Public sector strategic management implementation (SMI) was due to a crisis in the 1970s that made much traditional planning obsolete and caused frustration of some management models, including planning, programming, and budgeting system (PPBS), led to heavy demands on information processing and management capacity (Eadie, 1983). The increase of the use of strategic management in the public sector was furthermore in part as a component in several public management reforms with emphasised decentralisation and led to the change from traditional bureaucratic governmental institutions to smaller and more autonomous organisations (Brudney et al., 1999; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004; Tama, 2017). In this context, one could expect that nowadays, planning plays a less prominent role in PSM than before, or planning is still one of the strategies and management tools used in the PSM of our days (Friis et al., 2016). Several researchers tried to explain the strategy and strategic management in the public sector (Meier et al., 2018). Bryson (2004) and Llewellyn and Tappin (2003) argued that it is possible to use many public sector principles. Skietrys et al. (2008) added that it is required to implement basic strategic principles as vision, mission, and strategic plan.

In line with the strategic principle of vision, mission, and plan suggested by Skietrys et al. (2008) with the World Bank agenda for development and poverty alleviation by 2030, many developing countries' governments had designed a New Strategic Management (NSM) plan for performing management in their public sectors. Nevertheless, SM in the public sector is a modern organisation that requires a significant change in response to an accelerating transformation rate in technical, social, political, and economic forces. As it is concerned with deciding what we should do in the future (strategic planning), it shall involve determining how the strategic plan's purpose will be achieved and who will carry them out (resource management). Besides, it entails monitoring and enhancing ongoing activities and operations to ensure that the strategic plan remains on track (control and evaluation).

However, there is a lack of SMI and its impact on organisational performance (OP), especially in developing countries' public sectors (Johnsen, 2018). Poister (1984) and Poister and Streib's (2005) research finding on the study carried out in 1984 on 520 American cities as sample size, and 2005 on a sample of 225 cities revealed 38% and 44% respectively that had implemented strategic planning. Also, Rivenbark and Kelly's (2003) study on 281 small-town as sample size with a population of less than 25,000 found that 33% of public sector organisations used strategic planning at the organisational and program levels. Relying on the same survey material (Poister & Streib, 2005), Johnsen (2018) narrowed their investigation on SMI in Norwegian cities on a sample of 176 local governments. Moreover, 39% had at least one strategic planning document, while 43% did not have a strategic plan and had not yet begun working on a strategic plan. This literature somehow shows the challenges of strategy implementation in developed countries' public sectors. Nevertheless, to our knowledge, no study aimed to measure the impact of strategic management implementation through the combination of a specific choice of SMI style and middle manager effort into SM successful implementation. Therefore, this article entailed answering the following research questions.

1. Does logical implementation style combined with middle management efforts in strategic management implementation result in a positive effect on public organisational performance?
2. Does incremental implementation style, combined with middle management efforts, in strategic management implementation have a weaker effect on organisational performance than a logical implementation style?
3. Does logical-incremental implementation style combined with middle management efforts in strategic management implementation result in higher organisational performance outcomes?
4. Does the absence of specific implementation style and middle management efforts in public organisation strategic management implementation result in a negative organisational performance?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Strategy Management Implementation and Public Organisational Performance

Although strategic decision-making has been the root of military thinking for decades, it has been influenced by the concepts of strategic management over the new public management (NPM) originated from public-choice theory and managerialism (Aucoin, 1990; Ferlie & Ongaro, 2015). This approach has been developed by Porter (2008) and Potter (1980) as a normative plan for better management alongside an analytical concept, which seeks to explain the actual practice in organisations (Mintzberg, 2007).

SMI and OP are inextricably interconnected. This relationship is undeniable because organisational objectives are shaped as a part of its SMI process (Abdel-Maksoud, 2015; Pollanen et al., 2017). Bryson (2012, 2018) defined SMI as an intentional and disciplined effort to produce ultimate decisions and actions that outline and guide what the organisation is, what it does, and why. It is a process of setting goals and coordinating the resources and efforts of group members to achieve those goals successfully by cascading them down after the organisation (from the units to their sub-units until ultimately). Often as fragments of the whole, to distinct workforces, and is done over individual employee goal setting or objective setting through the OP planning phase of strategic management. Grounding on this, Schaefer and Guenther (2016), and Bryson (2012) concluded in their studies that OP is a crucial component of SMI.

Besides, SM is connected with strategic planning for the implementation of over-assessments based on external and internal prerequisites for future development, decision-making procedures, leadership, and other cultural aspects of an organisation (Bryson, 2018; Ferlie et al., 2018; Joyce, 2015; Weiss, 2018). The link between SMI and OP provides enormous benefits, including (1) it generates orientation amongst the organisation goals and its worker interests, (2) it helps the workers to understand that their slighter goals can contribute to something greater than themselves, and (3) it offers connotation to work.

Whereas SM is popular in academic research, it seems that its implementation is far from global. Joyce et al. (2014) conclude their study on the fact that organisations resist the development of strategic approach are (1) the complexity of stakeholder participation in the public sector (Conteh, 2014), (2) the choice

of politicians and managers to avoid criticism (Weiss, 2017), and (3) the public organisation manager's understanding that SMI ultimately represents more effort than value-added (Kwon et al., 2014). In this concern, no study shows a positive effect of moderate SMI on public organisations (Jimenez, 2014; Johnsen, 2018; Pasha et al., 2018; Reid, 2019; Weiss, 2019). Though, practitioners usually give a positive impression of SM over OP. Therefore, it appears that strategic planning and its management are a well-known means for some practitioners (Johnsen, 2018; Jouppi et al., 2017).

Although framing a coherent strategy is a tough task for a management team, it is even more challenging to implement it and work across the organisation (de Oliveira et al., 2019; Hrebiniak, 2006). Effective SMI must (1) spell out the future track, (2) propose internal action approaches, (3) make the appropriate choices and priorities, (4) effectively manage organisational changes and uncertainties in the external environment, (5) develop the teamwork and capability based on resources, procedures, and people, and (6) develop effective strategies to increase OP (Cole, 2004). SMI requires categorising necessary actions, decisions, and relationships needed to complete the task. According to Mintzberg (2007), organisational SMI follows six management function, such as (1) the development of effective organisational structures, (2) ensuring enough resources to support the process, (3) creating an internal support system, (4) establishing rewards and incentives that align with the strategic goals, (5) forming a corporate culture to adapt to the strategy, and (6) providing strategic leadership. Hence, OP is generally typical to a particular organisation, as it depends on the strategy management choices (Desmidt & George, 2016; Venkatraman & Ramanujam, 1987).

Besides, successful SMI depends on the chosen strategy implementation style. Therefore, the relationship between the particular SMI and its impact on the specific OP relies on its implementation style. The two implementation styles, such as rational or logical and incremental or ad hoc developed by strategic decision-making theories, are mostly applied in public sector researchers. However, researchers including Andrews et al. (2017a) and Parsa (1999), argued that the rational or logical implementation style has a positive impact on organisational performance in term of effectiveness, efficiency, and equity and prioritises getting employees to follow the right processes for familiarising new strategies. They also found that combining the two implementation styles named logical-incremental implementation style reveals having a positive and significant relationship with OP. However, incremental or ad hoc implementation style, according to Andrews et al. (2017a), generates less performance than logical and the logical-incremental styles and is revealed to

emphasises the fluid nature of transformation management and the importance to motivate and support the strategy changes during their implementation, (Hussey, 1999). In their book titled *Exploring Strategic Change*, Balogun and Hailey (2008) is reported that around 70% of organisations that applied incremental implementation style in their NSM implementation failed. The incremental style indicates the ultimate lack of a valid charter on implementing and managing organisational change successfully. Because what is presently available is incompatible theories and approaches, which generally do not have empirical evidence and are often based on unnecessary assumptions about the nature of management contemporary organisational change. However, the research history on the impact of SMI on OP shows that this relationship is influenced not only by the chosen implementation style(s) but the middle management efforts in the implementation process.

Influence of Middle Management in Strategy Implementation and Organisational Performance

Even though strategy planning and its implementation with or without a choice of the specific implementation style are often led by top management (Balogun & Johnson, 2004), middle management plays an exceptional role in ensuring its implementation (Meyer, 2006). Some of the existing literature qualified a middle management role in the strategy management implementation process as mediocre and downplayed compared to the top management (Balogun, 2003; Huy, 2001; MacMillan & Guth, 1985; Meyer, 2006). However, as public sector organisations are complex, through an SMI process, middle management roles as change agents are expected to increase in importance even when top management has already laid down a strategic direction (Balogun & Johnson, 2004). Thus, the strategic implementation to better organisational performance must (1) recognise the degree to which the organisation's weakness will have to be eliminated and (2) depend on the middle management capabilities to handle the change during the implementation process.

The middle management's role is to follow the top management strategic plan and implement it, aligning with the organisational action and strategic intent (Nutt, 1987; Thompson, 1967). Middle management in the strategy implementation process must act out the top management's instructions but with limited discretion. He may apply his knowledge in the strategy implementing process with a strategic intent than merely carrying out the top management instructions. While top management shortlists the strategic intents, middle management should operationalise the strategy in detail, which requires a range

of events to deduce and make sense of the strategy, detail the strategy content, strengthen the information and keep in harmony with employees' emotional needs (Balogun, 2003; Huy, 2002). Often, OP is greatly influenced by what occurs in the middle of the organisation rather than at the top. Therefore, while deducing and making sense of top management strategic intent, middle management can impact the strategic procedure upward (Currie & Procter, 2005; Meyer, 2006;), mutually monitoring the implementation process. The middle management influences OP during the strategy implementation process as he plays the transition role by applying his previous gained experience (Floyd & Wooldridge, 2000). Schilit (1987) added that the upward influence during the strategy implementation process was more prevailing than during the strategy formulation.

Strategic leadership can then take place at the top and any stage of the organisation as middle management can continuously adjust an ongoing strategy. The middle management is usually singled out as the central locus for confrontation to change (Biggart, 1977; Dopson & Neumann, 1998; Dopson & Stewart, 1990). The action of reformulating the strategy in the middle of its implementation is due to the quick change that leads to heightened organisational performance that places a premium on the new ideas engendered at the functional level and generates a change in its strategic accountabilities. Middle managers become agents of change; they stimulate the ability to adjust and implement intent strategies. Middle management plays a facilitator's role, motivating others' change and endorses learning, enhancing members' aptitude to react to change (Nonaka, 1988a, 1994). Besides, he is involved in various interventions to align organisational actions with intent strategy (Nutt, 1987; Sayles, 1993). Therefore, middle management can influence the organisation's orientation with its external environment by adding different thoughts and change-oriented compartments into the strategy implementation process.

Grounded on the literature reviews developed in the previous sections, we deduced the following research framework and hypothesis (H).

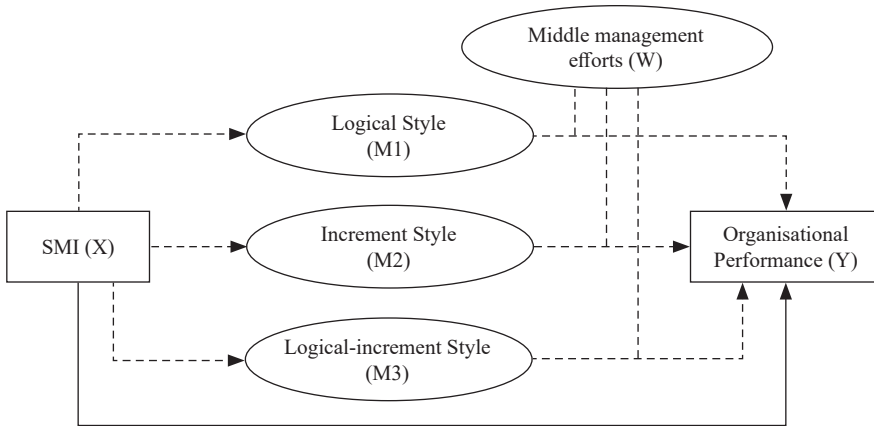


Figure 1. Research framework

- H1: The logical implementation style mediates the relationship between SMI and public OP.
- H1a: Public organisation that combines logical implementation style and middle management efforts in its SMI will achieve a positive impact on its OP.
- H2: The incremental implementation style mediates the relationship between SMI and public OP; however, its effect is weaker than in H1.
- H2a: Public organisation that combines incremental implementation style and middle management efforts in its SMI will achieve a positive impact on its OP; however, the effect is weaker than in H1a.
- H3: The logical-incremental implementation style mediates the relationship between SMI and public OP; however, the effect is higher than in H1 and in H2.
- H3a: Public organisation that combines logical-incremental implementation style and middle manager efforts in its SMI will achieve a positive impact on its OP; however, the effect is higher than in H1a and in H2a.
- H4: Public organisation that implements its program without following any specific implementation style and middle management efforts in the implementation process will experience a negative impact on its OP.

METHODOLOGY

There is a lack of empirical investigation in developing countries' public sector SMI; however, this is not because researchers and scholars paid no attention to this, but because of the barrier to accessing the information. This study aimed to investigate developing countries' issue; the research data were collected in Togolese central government institutions. The data collection process lasted for nine months because of the administrative requirements and procedures of getting permission to conduct a data collection survey in public institutions. At the first stage, the demand was rejected two times and finally granted on the third demand at the Togolese institution of scholarship and internship management under the ministry of high education and research, which has the mandate to deliver a permission letter for data collection in the public sector. On the second stage in each ministry, the potential respondent requested a permission letter from their hierarchy before participating. In addition to the administrative requirements, some potential participants asked for financial compensation before filling in the questionnaire.

The choice of Togo is made not only because it is currently undergoing the implementation of an ambitious NSM called Program Nationale de Développement (PND), seen as a modern organisation that required substantial transformation to enhance public organisation performance. Nevertheless, the Togolese public administration history is fascinating and particular (Kombate & Dong, 2018). Additionally, the Togolese government NSM brings together key players from within and outside the government to support a series of reforms in the public sector. Therefore, the strategic planning tools, techniques, and performance management initiatives have been implemented in many public organisations, especially central government units. However, as with strategic management initiatives in Western countries, Togo's central government was set up to adopt a planning process to make the public sector more performant.

Governance and Reforms Realities in Togo

According to Riggs (1964), any country embarking on modernisation missions should undertake significant reform in its public sector. Furthermore, at the operational level, development administration should be implemented to allow government initiatives that promote economic growth, human resource development, and organisational capacity in promoting equality among citizens for the distribution of opportunities, income, and power (Esman, 1991; Uphoff

& Esman, 1974). However, it is fundamental to know the extent to which the country's public sector reform is substantial, symbolic, or tactical. Nevertheless, since the initiation of New Public Management (NPM), the Togolese government had announced several reforms in the public sector to launch the economic growth by strengthening and modernising public administration in the country. These majors' reforms undertaken are privatisation, downsizing, and corporatisation. Controlling the wage bill by reducing the civil service was the main objective of the Togolese government, leading to between 1982 and 1987, more than 5% of the public's amount decreased (The International Monetary Fund (IMF), 1998). Additionally, the statistics showed that with 31,827 agents in 1992, the public sector had 30,548 in 1997, due to the suspension of contracts in the public sector, the restructuring, the liquidation and privatisation of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) (Bryceson & Bank, 2001) leading between 1994 and 1997, 29 SOEs were liquidated or restructured and privatised. Moreover, the report on public enterprise reforms underlines that in 1998, the country owned 29 SOEs out of 74 in 1984, but only eight were totally under the state's control.

Furthermore, following IMF recommendations, significant reforms were undertaken, including the restructuring and privatisation of Togo's state-owned banks and SOEs by creating a debt collection authority. It resulted in the privatisation of four banks, including Development Bank of Togo (BTD), Togolese Union Banks (UTB), BIA-TOGO, and Industrial and Commercial Bank of Togo (BTCI) are privatised. Moreover, SOEs such as Togo Cotton Company (SOTOCO) and Togo Phosphates Board (OTP) were restructured and privatised. Restructuring public entities into a legal structure with a corporate structure were also applied, including the Togolese Fund Savings incorporated as People's Bank of Savings and Credits BPEC (Ouédraogo, 2011) and the corporatisation of customs and income tax services into a single fiscal administration body, Togolese Revenue Authority (Aklikokou et al., 2017).

These rounds of reforms have resulted in a high unemployment rate, with many civil servants losing their jobs. The non-replacement of retired and deceased personnel and of those who have voluntarily left their jobs is the factor that led to the decrease of qualified and professional employees' rates. However, also, since the year 1990, recruitment in the public service has dramatically decreased.

Despite this series of reforms, the "equilibrium thesis" is not applicable because bureaucracy in the urban and rural organisation is weak, lacks resources, technical expertise, and professional development (Kombate & Dong 2018). Additionally, the autocratic rule in Togo State led to boss-dominated bureaucracies, where senior bureaucratic positions are employed by supporters

and friends of anocratic political leaders, thus limiting the competition to the power. Moreover, at the lower level of professional development, the bureaucracy has been gradually transformed into a ruling party's collaborator, who controls the country's power. Therefore, the evidence is even though the intended reforms are substantial, they are suffering from design flaws, errors in implementation, or even illogical actions taken for political reasons (Aklikokou et al., 2017; Kombate & Dong, 2018). Kombate and Dong (2018) argued that the Togolese PSM needs to be transformed and revitalised to improve the administrative abilities to implement the policy and deliver public services essential for good governance.

Data Collection and Material

This study's data were collected through the structural questionnaires adopted from Andrews et al. (2017b), Salkic (2014), Judge and Stahl (1995), and Genc (2017). For cross-cultural research (Brislin, 1970), the questionnaires were initially translated into French and distributed to a small sample of 30 participants. The data collected from this small sample helped us to re-edit and fix the questionnaires. The final version of the questionnaires was joined together with the personal statement that explains the research purpose and the two letters of permission. Few of the respondents accepted an appointment to fill the questionnaires. In many cases, the secretaries or staff members assisted us by collecting the questionnaires and handing them to the targeted respondents. A permanent contact through the phone with this third party was set for following up and updating till the successful completion.

Two hundred and twelve questionnaires were filled and returned to us out of 500 questionnaires distributed, leading to a lower response rate of 42%, including 80.7% male and 19.3% female. The study population included deputy general secretaries, heads of department and heads of the unit from eight ministries, including the ministry of planning, the ministry of public work, the ministry of high education and research, the ministry of technical education and professional training, the ministry of transport and infrastructure, the ministry of primary education, the ministry of commerce, and the ministry of territorial administration, decentralisation, and local authorities.

Measurement of the Studied Variables

Besides the study dependent variable, OP and the independent variable, SMI, the literature that arose in this study involved two types of interacting variables (mediation and moderation) in the relationship between the SMI and OP.

The first is the mediating variable, strategy implementation styles, which include rational or logical implementation style (M1), incremental implementation style (M2), and logical-incremental implementation style (M3). The second is the moderator variable, middle management efforts (W), which seems significant to harmonise the external and internal environment to support the strategy implementation (Andrews et al., 2006; Laurence & Meier, 1999; Judge & Stahl, 1995).

The different measurement scales applied in this study have excellent psychometric qualities; they are borrowed from the literature and adapted to the research context. For all variable sizes, respondents were asked to answer the 22 survey questionnaires based on the research variables' using the 5-point Likert-type scale (from 1: strongly disagree to 5: strongly agree). However, the reliability test using the coefficient of Cronbach's alpha shows in Table 1 indicated that alpha (SMI): 0.718 > 0.7; alpha (OP): 0.797 > 0.7; alpha (M1, M2, and M3): 0.800 > 0.7; and alpha (W): 0.725 > 0.7, concluded that all items are reliable (Cortina 1993).

Table 1
Items Cronbach's alpha coefficient

Variable	SMO		OP		M1, M2, and M3		W	
Element	Cronbach's alpha	No. of items	Cronbach's alpha	No. of items	Cronbach's alpha	No. of items	Cronbach's alpha	No. of items
Value	0.718	3	0.797	6	0.800	10	0.725	3

Organisational Performance Indicator

Early research on SMI and OP's relationship was conducted in industrialised, democratised, decentralised countries with modern administration and developing countries have been largely ignored. Although harsh criticisms of the SMI and equivocal empirical conclusions about its dimensions, roles, and contributions to the OP, most academicians, researchers, and professional managers argued that the major problems of accessing the company performance rely on the chosen appropriate measurement tool to use when evaluating it. Falshaw et al. (2006) stated in their study titled "Evidence on formal strategic planning and organisational performance" that research limitations "validity of measure may be an issue." Besides, Glaister et al. (2008) added that "it is generally recognised that it is difficult to choose a single measure of OP." The authors manifested this by citing notes (Greenley, 1994; Rudd et al., 2008). Existing literature in SMI lists several quantitative and qualitative goals

that can be set to guide performance over time (Ali, 2018; B. Foster et al., 1993; C. Foster et al., 1993; Thompson Jr & Strickland III, 1992; Wheelen & Hunger, 1993).

Also, Shrader and Simon (1997) argued that dependent variables performance had been measured in many ways in the literature, including sales, profits, productivity, income, dividends, cash flow, the return on investment, earnings per share, as well as other financial ratios. Although SMI has multiple objectives and is subject to various performance indicators, the political environment defines some more important objectives than others (O'Toole Jr & Meier, 2004). The main reason comes from research in the private sector, which suggests that a higher level of service quality, quantity, and effectiveness is positively associated with the OP (Gupta & Zeithaml, 2006). These concepts have been viewed as a major antecedent of OP in the private sector (Grönroos, 1982; Jamal & Anastasiadou, 2009). Likewise, they have also received increasing attention in the public administration literature; reducing government costs on the one hand and increasing public pressure on the other have resulted in impetus to modernise and improve public OP (Bolton et al., 2003; Coplin et al., 2002; Rhee & Rha, 2009).

Therefore, improving the OP became a crucial issue for the public sector (Radnor & McGuire, 2004). And since it has been argued that the fundamental process of public service delivery is similar to that of the private sector; also, private sector practices are often used to improve public OP (Galloway, 1998). Moreover, assimilation between private and public sector organisation management practices has been observed (Caemmerer & Banerjee, 2009), and the evidence has shown that there is no difference between private and public managers perception of their organisation OP (Caemmerer & Dewar, 2013).

In this study, OP refers to public managers' perceptions of organisational effectiveness (Andrews et al., 2017b). Several scholars and researchers aimed at strategic management implementation measured OP from a managerial effectiveness perspective (Gerowitz, 1998; Kombate et al., 2021; Moynihan & Pandey, 2005). Concerning performance measurement criteria, Andrews (2010) suggests using a set of measures to describe OP because it is not possible for one measure to meet all the relevant criteria. Therefore, to measure OP in this paper, we use the six performance measurement indicators (Andrews, 2010), such as quality, quantity, cost, effectiveness, citizen satisfaction, and equity, as they fit the strategic management implementation measurement criteria prevailing in the Togolese public sector organisation. The variable OP in

this study was adopted from (Andrews et al., 2017b) and the indicators were measured applying the 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

Control Variable

Control variables are essential factors in experimental research design and refer to contributing factors that are corrected or eliminated to identify the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Therefore, a failure to isolate the controlled variable, whatever the experimental design is, will seriously compromise internal validity. This monitoring can lead to confounding variables that damage the experience, waste time and resources, and damage the researcher's reputation. Thereby, referring to the theory of upper echelon (Carpenter et al., 2004; Hambrick, 2007; Hambrick & Mason, 1984; Hambrick et al., 2019), the study used individual personal characteristics as control variables which include age, level of education and work experience.

To measure the control variables, they were used as dichotomous variables (Muthén, 1978) in the statistic model. Therefore, participants' age was categorised into five age groups (18–29, 30–39, 40–49, 50–59, and 60 years old and above). Additionally, participants' working experience in the year(s) was categorised into five age groups (0–1, 2–5, 6–10, 11–20, and above 20 years). Both age and work experience were therefore treated as an ordinal scale. According to Ng and Feldman (2010), elder personal and individuals with excellent work experience shelter to have a more positive viewpoint on the organisational performance and are likely to overestimate OP compared to the reality. Besides, referring to Mathieu and Zajac (1990) argued that individuals with higher education are likely to underestimate the organisation's performance in which they are working. Therefore, the education level was also categorised into four groups: bachelor, master, doctorate, and others. A dichotomous code 1 was used for those with postgraduate education and 2 for otherwise included in the statistic model. The results of the descriptive statistics of the control variable are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Descriptive statistics

	<i>N</i>	Mean	Std. deviation
Age	212	1.98	0.892
Work experience	212	3.78	1.022
Level of education	212	0.96	0.940
Valid <i>N</i> (listwise)	212		

Data Processing and Analysis

The study data collection, processing, and analysis were done with SPSS 24 software and Process version 3, model 14, to test the partial moderated mediation on M to Y (Hayes, 2018). Indeed, the descriptive analysis makes it possible to standardise all study variables and present the control variables' descriptive statistics. Scale analysis makes it possible to ensure the survey questionnaire's reliability, while regression analysis using linear approach makes it possible to test the significance of the model 1 and model 2 and compare the variance in the two models. Finally, SPSS syntax was used to plot the conditional effects.

FINDINGS

Significance and Comparison of the Mediator Variables

According to Hayes (2018) book entitled *Introduction to Mediation, Moderation, and Conditional Process Analysis: A Regression-Based Approach*, a mediation variable is said to be statically significant if one or both of the paths that define the indirect effect are significant, i.e., the product of the two paths (ab) is significantly different from zero. Therefore, looking at the regression-based paths analysis results shown in Figure 5, the study concluded that the indirect effects of the three mediating variables $M1$, $M2$, and $M3$ are all statically significant at 0.95 level of confidence; hence hypothesis 1 is supported.

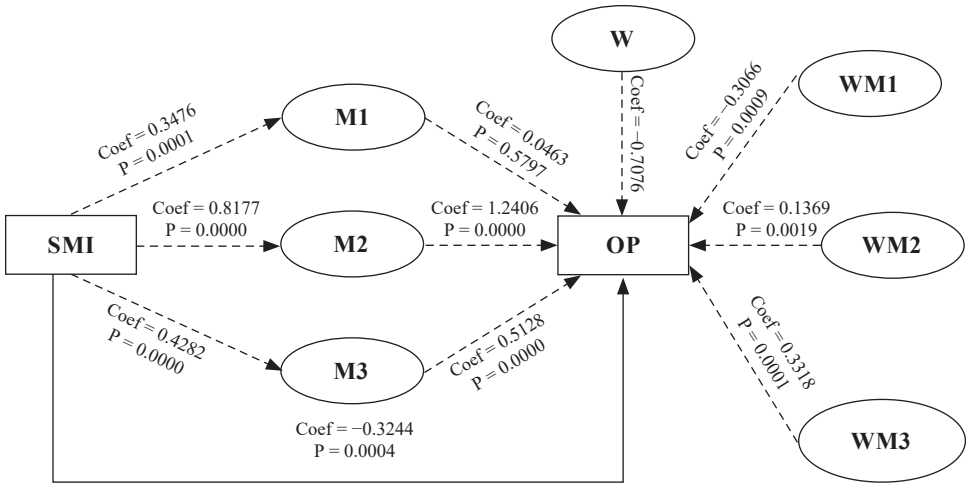


Figure 5: Results of the model pathways analysis

To check for the theory of SMI style that leads to higher performance of the public organisation, we opted for a comparison of the specific indirect effects of the mediating variables (Afifi et al., 2008; Hayes, 2018; Smith et al., 2007; Southwell & Torres, 2006). Further, to eliminate the possibility of bias that may occur when various interrelated mediator variables are tested independently by applying the statistical approach of Preacher and Hayes (2008), all were included in a single model that allows them to pit against each other (Hayes, 2009). Thus, the statistics results show in Table 3 that *M2* has the most substantial indirect effect (ab: 1.0137) compared to *M1* (ab: 0.0161) and *M3* (ab: 0.2196). Consequently, H2 and H3 are not supported. Also, a significant negative relationship was found ($\beta = -0.3244, p < 0.05$) in SMI and OP. Thus, H4 is accepted. Therefore, the study concluded that Togolese public organisation SMI associated with *M2* would result in a higher OP than those applying *M3* or *M1*.

Table 3
OLS regression base paths analysis

	Strategy Management (IV)			Performance (DV)							
	<i>M1</i>	<i>M2</i>	<i>M3</i>	<i>M1</i>	<i>M2</i>	<i>M3</i>	<i>SMI(X)</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>M2*W</i>	<i>M3*W</i>	<i>M1*W</i>
Coef	0.3476	0.8177	0.4283	-0.0463	1.2406	0.5128	-0.3244	-0.7076	0.1369	0.3318	-0.3066
se	0.0881	0.0398	0.0997	0.0834	0.1557	0.0998	0.0905	0.1164	0.0435	0.0825	0.0908
t	3.9466	20.5392	4.2951	-0.5547	7.9700	5.1362	-3.5827	-6.0773	3.1432	4.0205	-3.3753
p	0.0001	0.0000	0.0000	0.5797	0.0000	0.0000	0.0004	0.0000	0.0019	0.0001	0.0009
LLCI	0.1740	0.7392	0.2317	-0.2107	0.9336	0.3159	-0.5029	-0.9372	0.0510	0.1691	-0.4858
ULCI	0.52130	0.8961	0.6248	0.1182	1.5475	0.7097	-0.1458	-0.4780	0.2228	0.4946	-0.1275

Note: *p* < 0.05

Significance and Comparison of the Moderated Mediation Effects

The study relies on the moderated mediation index’s bootstrap results to conclude the moderated mediation effect’s statistical significance (Preacher et al., 2007). According to Hayes (2018), in the absence of *p*-value, there is a statistical significance if zero is not part of the confidence interval. Thereby, looking at the results in Table 3, zero is excluded of the confidence interval of the focal factor logical implementation style (L or *MI*), $0 \notin [-0.1951, -0.0332]$, neither to the confidence interval of the focal factor incremental implementation style (In of *M2*), $0 \notin [0.0480, 0.1946,]$ nor to the confidence interval of the focal factor logical-incremental implementation style (*RI* or *M3*), $0 \notin [0.0667, 0.2422]$.

Table 4
Index of moderated mediation

	Index	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI	Conclusion
SM → <i>M1</i> → Per	-0.1066	0.0412	-0.1951	-0.0332	Significant
SM → <i>M2</i> → Per	0.1119	0.0370	0.0480	0.1946	Significant
SM → <i>M3</i> → Per	0.1421	0.0449	0.0667	0.2422	Significant

Besides, referring to Hayes (2018), a conditional effect may be non-significant when the interaction effects are significant; however, Hayes added that the moderator value defining the Johnson-Neyman significance region is significant if the interaction effects are significant. Based on the finding shown in Table 5 (in Appendix A), the study concluded that there is a statistical significance of the moderated mediation of the individual combination of *M1*, *M2*, and *M3* with middle management effort (*W*) relationship SMI and OP. As the tests of the highest order unconditional interactions in Table 6 show that the interaction between logical implementation style and middle management effort (*M1*W*) explained 3% ($R^2\text{-chng} = 0.0299$ significant at $p < 0.05$), the interaction between incremental implementation style and middle management effort (*M2*W*) explained 2.7% ($R^2\text{-chng} = 0.0265$ significant at $p < 0.05$), and the interaction between logical-incremental implementation style and middle management effort (*M3*W*) explained 4.4% ($R^2\text{-chng} = 0.0436$ significant at $p < 0.05$), which confirmed that there is no variance of the independent variable.

Table 6
Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s)

	<i>M1*W</i>	<i>M2*W</i>	<i>M3*W</i>
R ² -chng	0.0299	0.0265	0.0436
F(HC4)	11.3924	9.8798	16.1644
df1	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
df2	199.0000	199.0000	199.0000
<i>p</i>	0.0009	0.0019	0.0001

Note: $p < 0.05$, R²-chng = The test of highest order unconditional interaction and shows R-square increase due to interaction (s):. R²-chng F df1 df2 p, F(HC4) = The heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors, df1 = The number of treatment levels - 1, df2 = The number of observations - number of groups, p = The p -value calculated.

In this work, we relied on the method suggested by Preacher et al. (2007), the standard deviations above (+1SD) and below (-1SD) of the mean of moderator factor, which is W , to deduct the interpretation of the results grounding on Muller et al. (2005). They argued that the interaction coefficient should depart from zero in a moderated mediation model. Thereby, looking at Figure 2 in the appendix that defines the conditional effect of the focal predictor $M1$, visualising the fact that at 1SD below the mean of W in the SMI applying $M1$, as the process of implementation goes forward, the OP increases. Nevertheless, the effect is not practically that strong compared to $M2$ in graph 2. At the 1SD above the mean of W in the SMI applying $M1$, as the implementation process goes forward, the OP decreases negatively. A similar situation is observed at the mean of W but with a weak effect. Thus, the H1a is conditioned to acceptance if 1SD is below the mean of W and rejection at mean and 1SD above mean of W .

Figure 3 (in Appendix) defines the conditional effect of the focal predictor $M2$, visualising that at 1SD below the mean of W , the organisation applying $M2$ in SMI shows that as the implementation process goes forward, the OP increases. But at the magnitude higher than in $M1$. A similar situation is observed at mean and 1SD above mean of W . As a result, H2a is not supported.

Figure 4 (in Appendix) defines the conditional effect of the focal predictor $M3$, visualising that at 1SD below the mean of w shows that the OP increases as the implementation process goes forward. However, the magnitude is weaker than in $M2$. The same situation is observed at the mean and 1SD above the mean of W . Consequently, H3a is not supported.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Although public sector organisation SMI has been well documented in industrialised western countries and some asian countries' public sectors within the context of modernisation and democratisation (Demirkaya, 2015; Glaister et al., 2008; Koufopoulos et al., 2005; Rudd et al., 2008), less attention had been paid to the developing countries lacking administrative reform. This study aimed to shed light on the relationship between SMI and public OP in a developing country. Secondly, to present the partial moderated mediation model that highlighted the intervening factors that potentially influence SMI and the OP relationship. The study finding shows that SMI and OP's relationship is mediated by the *M1*, *M2*, and *M3*. However, the combination of SMI with *M2* results in a higher OP than with *M1* or with *M3*. This finding is not consistent with the existing literature, which showed that *M1* was the best compared to *M2* (Andrews et al., 2017a, Bryson, 2012; Elbanna et al., 2016;). Though this comes in support of Veliyath and Shortell (1993), whose finding showed that among 406 United States of America hospitals, those in which SMI was associated with incremental implementation style were more likely to succeed than those applying logical implementation style.

Several researchers and scholars argued that *W* is crucial for a SMI (Westley, 1990; Wooldridge & Floyd, 1990). Therefore, to refine and extend our study's pioneering, as recommended by Aguinis et al. (2017), middle management effort was included in the model as a moderator factor combined with strategy implementation styles (the mediator factor). As a result, the Johnson-Neyman technique (Johnson & Fay, 1950; Johnson & Neyman, 1936) of the moderated mediation show that at all levels, including mean, 1SD below mean, and 1SD above mean of *W*, the conditional indirect effect in the focal factor *M2* is associated with higher OP than in *M1* and *M3*. The finding supports Stewart and Kringas (2003) deduction on case research of six Australian public organisations SMI, which show that the more intense is the in SMI, the higher the OP.

The study concluded that SMI linked with better OP heavily relies on the chosen implementation style and the middle management efforts in the implementation process. However, it turned out that while in *M2*, management relies on previous experience to guide and adjust the strategy in the implementation process; *M1* consists of the radical change of management practices. Therefore, SMI applying the notion of rationality and diagnosis follows prescription and

action. Consequently, *MI* will translate into a higher *OP* if it clarifies the goals, which are the root of facilitating the coordination and integration of ongoing activities (Thorpe & Morgan, 2007) and its readiness in terms of resources, materials, and high technical experts that able to run planned activities.

Public organisation *SMI* that applies *MI*, associated with *OP*, is linked with the country economy, finance, and administrative reforms (Elbanna et al., 2016; Thorpe & Morgan, 2007). Modernising the public sector by applying appropriate reform in the administration is first and foremost to make the public organisations more performing in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, and equity and empower them to benefit from good governance (Kombate et al., 2021; Wazani & Souaf, 2017). Hence, this provides any country with a modern administration with the necessary skills, aptitudes, educational background, and professional experience at suitable positions capable of supporting its national development plan on economic and social development. Additionally, complex modern organisations' abilities to achieve their goals can be enhanced through management structures and practices that debureaucratise organisational systems (Aucoin, 1990).

Additionally, the Togolese government's idea of budget constraints found its origin in the political arena connected to Niskanen's thesis (Breton & Wintrobe, 1975), which is mainly influenced when budget constraints were a significant concern in many countries. However, this practice led to a dramatic downsizing and a decrease in recruitment in the public sector. Furthermore, in bureaucracy, top positions are occupied by friends and collaborators of political elites. The traditional bureaucracy, dynamic on which the former is considered stronger than the later in strategic decision making (Kombate & Dong, 2018), induce the *SMI* based on previous experience. Furthermore, the success of *MI* might rely on the organisation's recruitment policy of the person with some critical responsibilities in strategy management. Thus, I deduce that this finding's particularity is founded on its context of a developing country characterised by the absence of reform in the public sector and non-proper public administration practice. Hence, this study's results are different from existing empirical findings in western and asian modern countries where proper reforms had been addressed in the administration, facilitating the government national development plan implementation based on radical change.

Furthermore, the findings lie that this study was carried out in a developing country, Togo, with different economic contexts. And knowing that resources are crucial in driving *SMI*, developing country like Togo with specific characteristics like weak bureaucracy with lack of resources, technical expertise, and

professional development (Kombate & Dong, 2018) may likely be obstacles in applying logical (radical) implementation style. Thus, our study opens the way to other research that could be interested in developing countries.

STUDY LIMITATIONS

As a follow-up on existing literature in industrials, modernised administration, democratised, and decentralised countries, the study brings a new contribution by checking and comparing how the strategy implementation style *M1*, *M2*, and *M3* individually associated with middle management efforts affecting the relationship between SMI and OP. In the theoretical framework, we have exposed how these different approaches on which the work is generally based on how each combination practices could affect the public sector OP.

All research has its limitation, and this paper is not an exception to this rule, especially since SMI in developing countries represents a new field of research that is still in the exploratory stage. The model resulting from the previous studies' perspective of SMI is, it must be said, a bit unsophisticated because it ignores the different interacting variables that could influence the relationship between SMI and OP. Although internal factors may affect OP, it is also subject to variations depending on the country's economic, financial, social, bureaucracy and administration reforms, democracy, decentralisation realities and disturbances in the external environment, and they may vary depending on certain characteristics. These give the public sector organisation SMI the character of heterogeneity. However, these various factors were not considered in this study.

It should also be remembered that the results were obtained from an instantaneous cut of the reality of the dismemberment public organisations of eight ministries and that they cannot give rise to any causal link regarding the meaning of the identified relationships. The important question is whether developing country public organisations perform less because they apply for *M2* in their SMI or apply *M2* because they are more familiar with it. Additionally, the study sample comprises the central government institutions, which therefore share certain affinities. This situation prevents us from any generalisation outside the restricted and non-probabilistic universe that constitutes our sample.

Despite these limitations, this study still paves the way for future research. The future search needs to improve the understanding of implementation style and middle management role in SMI by examining how they control certain variables, e.g., country economy, finance, administrative reforms, etc. It is also crucial for future studies to verify the possible interaction between the public organisation SMI, human resource management practices implemented, and the performance obtained in various aspects. It would as well be interesting to see if we can observe, in the context of SMI, different sets (configurations) of practices whose implementation would be preferable depending on whether it is, for example, one or weakly innovative. Finally, it seems essential to us to use statistical methods such as the structural equation to verify the intermediate role that certain performance indicators (for example, employee productivity) can play when measuring the impact of SMI.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Table 5
Conditional indirect effects of the focal predictor at values of the moderator

	Focal predictor: M1			Focal predictor: M2			Focal predictor: M3		
W	-0.9971	0.0000	0.9971	-0.9971	0.0000	0.9971	-0.9971	0.0000	0.9971
Effect	0.2616	-0.0441	-0.3498	1.1031	1.2396	1.3761	0.1796	0.5105	0.8414
se(HC4)	0.1290	0.0835	0.1171	0.1533	0.1556	0.1694	0.1033	0.0996	0.1507
t	2.0285	-0.5285	-2.9885	7.1955	7.9668	8.1245	1.7382	5.1238	5.5813
P	0.0438	0.5977	0.0032	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0837	0.0000	0.0000
LLCI	0.0073	-0.2087	-0.5807	0.8008	0.9328	1.0421	-0.0242	0.3140	0.5441
ULCI	0.5160	0.1205	-0.1190	1.4054	1.5464	1.7101	0.3833	0.7069	1.1386
Johnson-Neyman technique	Moderator value(s) defining Johnson-Neyman significance region(s):			There are no statistical significance transition points within the observed range of the moderator found using the Johnson-Neyman method.			Moderator value(s) defining Johnson-Neyman significance region(s):		
	Value	% below	% above				Value	% below	% above
	-0.9544	15.1659	84.8341				-2.8332	1.4218	98.5782
	0.4253	72.9858	27.0142				-0.9368	15.1659	84.8341

Note: $p < 0.05$

Appendix B

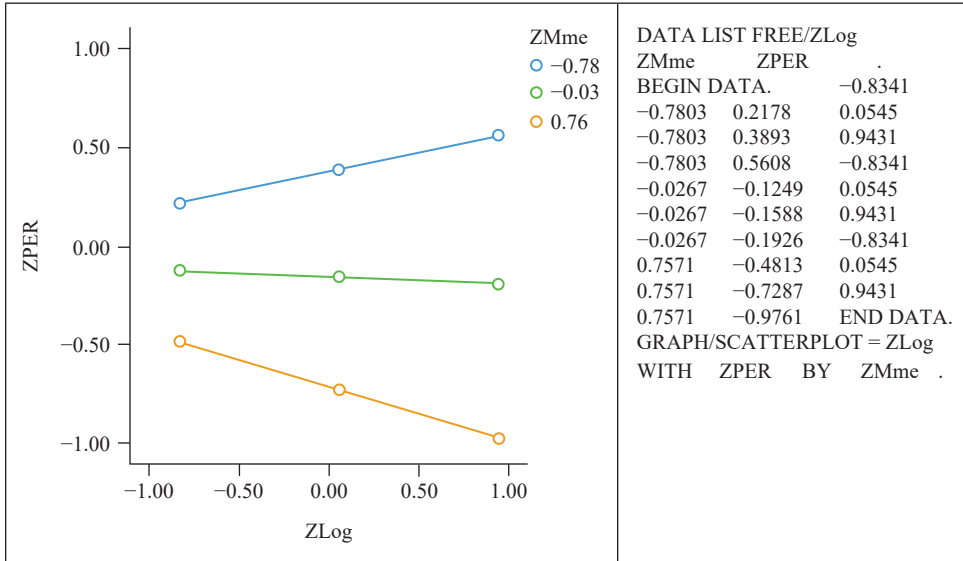


Figure 2. Conditional effect of the local predictor logical implementation style (M1)

Appendix C

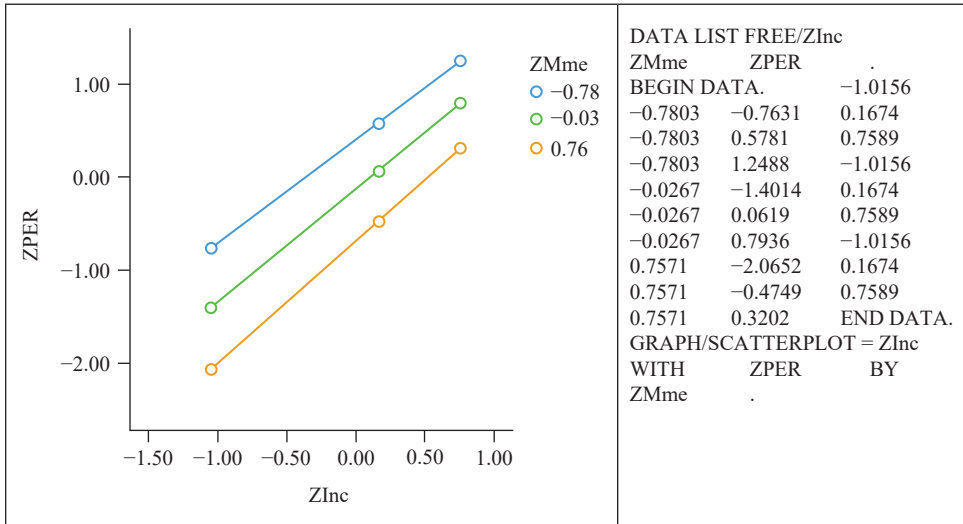


Figure 3. Conditional effect of the local predictor incremental implementation style (M2)

Appendix D

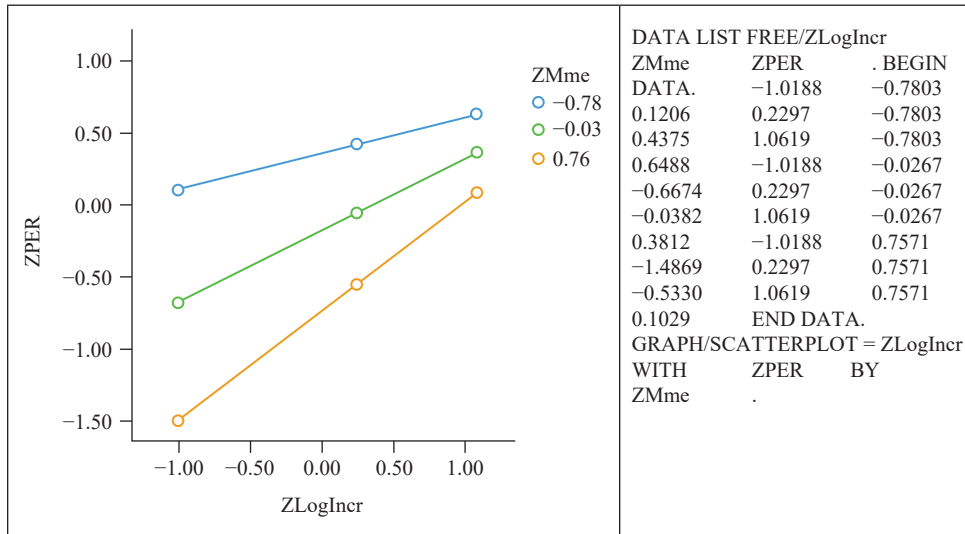


Figure 4. Conditional effect of the local predictor logical-incremental implementation style (M3)

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