



# Stakeholder management as a strategic internal capability: An exploration of strategy implementation in Malawian agricultural cooperatives

Thokozani Zylma Madumuse<sup>1</sup>  
Mubanga Mpundu<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>[tzmadumuse@gmail.com](mailto:tzmadumuse@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>[mmpundu@uwc.ac.za](mailto:mmpundu@uwc.ac.za)

<sup>1</sup><https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4791-9041>

<sup>2</sup><https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4009-9151>

<sup>1</sup>University of Zambia, Zambia, <sup>2</sup>University of the Western Cape, South Africa

Recommended Reference: Madumuse, T. Z., & Mpundu, M. (2025). Stakeholder management as a strategic internal capability: An exploration of strategy implementation in Malawian agricultural cooperatives. *African Quarterly Social Science Review*, 2(3), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.51867/AQSSR.2.3.1>

## ABSTRACT

The study endeavours to explore the significance of stakeholder management as a strategic internal capability towards strategy implementation effectiveness within the novel context of agricultural cooperatives. The objective of the study is to explore how internal capabilities within agricultural cooperatives contribute to strategy implementation effectiveness. The objective of the study was to enquire on the following research questions: How do agricultural cooperatives implement strategies? What are the relevant success factors considered when implementing strategy? What are the possible solutions to challenges that hinder strategy implementation? Merging the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory and Stakeholder theory, the research employed a qualitative research design to attain the objective. It combined social constructionism with an interpretivist approach—a typical approach to qualitative research that made it more flexible and inductive. This approach allowed for the adoption of the circumstances in which the research was being undertaken, consequently influencing the research design. The target population was agriculture cooperatives with a sample size of seven cooperatives, purposively sampled communal groups formed within farming communities. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with the selected cooperatives managers and board members as key informant interviews (KII) and farmer-members as focused group discussions (FGDs). Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data collected. The main finding of the research was that leadership within cooperatives is compromised, as decision-making is a collective effort, which affects the implementation of strategy. Strategy consensus is prevalent within cooperatives, attributed to open communication and organisational structure, which enables transparency and shared values through an internal voting system. However, external stakeholders are not involved in the strategy process and consulted during strategy implementation for financial support, creating a chasm between cooperative objectives and stakeholder objectives, which is an unsustainable development that has led to the failure of cooperative strategies due to lack of resources. The autonomy of cooperative members directs the strategic behaviours of the cooperative as the board and managers are monitored and removed if their behaviours are misaligned with the strategic objectives—often misinterpreted due to the different literacy levels of the members. Internal communication within cooperatives has been established to be open, with no perceived hierarchical barriers creating trust and strategic consensus. The paper concludes that there is a need for clear leadership roles and responsibilities, which would enable and empower management to initiate and implement stakeholder management as a strategic internal capability towards strategy implementation effectiveness. The study therefore recommends a restructuring of the cooperatives from the board level to include external representatives on the board and the empowering of managers through a clear organisational structure.

**Keywords:** RBV Theory, Strategy Implementation, Strategic Internal Capability, Stakeholder Management, Stakeholder Theory

## I. INTRODUCTION

Agricultural cooperatives are engaged with multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSP) that have diverse objectives, initiators, models, timeframe, and partner expectations (Maryono et al., 2024). The impact these MSPs (both internal and external) have on the cooperatives cannot be understated in influencing strategic plans. Apart from the internal stakeholders, there are diverse types of external stakeholders who are involved or participate in agricultural cooperatives. The stakeholders range from government to non-government bodies and other donor agencies. These external stakeholders are involved in a variety of ways, offering professional advice, financial assistance (grants and loans), procuring resources, capacity building, and infrastructure development (Madumuse & Mpundu, 2025). However,



agriculture cooperatives in Malawi have failed to leverage on the multi-stakeholder partnerships to build sustainable stakeholder relationships.

Malawian agriculture cooperatives depend on the financial assistance of external stakeholders for the implementation of strategy (Madumuse & Mpundu, 2025). External stakeholders' role in the effective strategy implementation within the cooperatives is vital and calls for strategic internal capabilities to build and manage these stakeholder relationships. To this end, the study is focused on the internal resources and capabilities that aid in implementing strategy within agricultural cooperatives lending itself towards the resource-based view (RBV) an "inside-out" perspective (Connor, 2002), placing the effectiveness of strategy implementation in the custody of practicing managers. Furthermore, agricultural cooperatives as organizations exist as a result of both relationships and resources, bringing to the fore the necessity to incorporate both RBV and stakeholder theory both of which originated from strategic management.

The combination of the two theories would according to Freeman et al.(2021) enable organizations to create sustainable stakeholder relationships – stakeholders are a contingent aspect of the firms existence and they influence the success and survival of the organization. Further, the authors asserts that it accords the organization an ethical perspective (Freeman et al., 2021). Secondly, the resource-based perspective is a framework that enables the organization to create sustainable stakeholder relationships driving it towards success.

RBV theory and stakeholder theory although originating from strategic management diverged in their research with RBV theory emerging as the most commonly used theory in strategic management. However, with recent developments in the strategic management domain there is a call of a reunion of two theories (Freeman et al., 2021). It is with this understanding that this study attempts to provide empirical evidence of the necessity of utilizing the two theories together not only to create an in-depth understanding of strategy management but to further enhance management practice through sustainable stakeholder relationships, as a strategic internal capability.

Most studies in strategic management have focused on international diversification, political risk, strategy formulation, and strategic alliances (White et al., 2016). These are external factors that affect the firm, while the internal workings of the firm have received less attention (White et al., 2016). However, scholars refer to the shifting of research focus between the internal workings of the firm and external factors as the pendulum effect, which is historical and has created tension in the studies of strategic management (Guerras-Martín et al., 2014).

It is acknowledged that elements, including the environment, resources, capabilities, and internal and external components, play important roles in strategic analysis and management. The most strategic management theory, the SWOT analysis, reveals the integration of internal resources, capability factors, and external environmental aspects. Integrating the characteristics of the significant data era, integrating internal and external factors into a thorough analysis, acknowledging the dynamic nature of the environment, and incorporating an "interface" that accommodates industry specifics, organizational traits, and top executive personality assessments are all crucial when creating a universally applicable framework for strategic management theory (Tan & Ding, 2013). However, despite the view of the pendulum effect, it is evident from recent studies that the internal workings of the firm, which include decision-making, culture, and strategy implementation (White et al., 2016; Noble, 1999), have been overlooked or have been least researched.

As such, this study illuminates the internal workings of strategic management, with a focus on strategy implementation through the dual lens of RBV and stakeholder theory- with the intention to emphasize the relevance of merging the two theories. Further, the study enriches empirical evidence within the domain of strategic management in the novel context of agriculture cooperatives in a developing country- Malawi.

## 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Agricultural cooperatives are engaged with multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSP) that have diverse objectives, initiators, models, timeframe, and partner expectations (Maryono et al., 2024). The impact these MSPs have on the cooperatives cannot be understated in influencing strategic plans. Most agriculture cooperatives fail to adequately manage stakeholder expectations leading to stakeholders withdrawing or limiting their involvement within the cooperatives which affects the strategy implementation process as cooperatives are dependent on stakeholders for resources towards effective strategy implementation.

This study endeavours to enquire the extent to which novel context such as agriculture cooperatives can contribute unique knowledge within the strategy management domain. The enquiry seeks to explore the significance of stakeholder management as a strategic internal capability towards strategy implementation effectiveness.

Research on strategy implementation is broad and fragmented. Further, the emphasis placed on the Western context in most empirical research calls for conscious attention to the underexplored context of developing economies such as African countries.



Although a notable shift in recent empirical studies has focused on developing countries in Africa in the hospitality, banking, and tourism sectors (Abass et al., 2017; Aladag et al., 2020; Köseoglu et al., 2018), there remains a significant gap for studies to be carried out in other predominate sectors which drive the economies of developing countries such as agriculture.

Further, the focus of strategy implementation studies is on IOFs such as private and multinational firms, and the focus of strategy implementation studies is on IOFs, such as private and multinational firms, except public entities. However, there is limited research on cooperatives within the strategy implementation domain and in the broader context of management research. With the growing attention on cooperatives, management research must extend the scope of organizations to study further the phenomena and operations of cooperatives towards the formation of new organizational theory.

Cultural, industry, and country differences need to be further analyzed where strategy implementation is concerned and establish how strategic theories and paradigms can be integrated (Vigfusson et al., 2021; Tawse & Tabesh, 2021). The SI effectiveness framework needs more empirical evaluation to increase validation and an increase in field study where SI in general is concerned. Lastly, the different levels (strategic, business, and operational levels) of analysis need to be further explored for better understanding (Tawse & Tabesh, 2021).

## 1.2 Research Objective

The objective of the study is to explore how internal capabilities within agricultural cooperatives contribute to strategy implementation effectiveness.

## 1.3 Research Questions

- (i) How do agricultural cooperatives implement strategies?
- (ii) What are the relevant success factors considered when implementing strategy?
- (iii) What are the possible solutions to challenges that hinder strategy implementation?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Theoretical Review

#### 2.1.1 Resource-Based View Theory

The study is focused on the internal resources and capabilities that aid in implementing strategy within agricultural cooperatives. To this end, the resource-based view (RBV) anchors the research with an “inside-out” perspective (Connor, 2002), placing the effectiveness of strategy implementation in the custody of practicing managers.

RBV is a theory about the nature of firms and provides a platform of understanding organizations (Barney et al., 2011; Lockett & Thompson, 2009). The theory delves into explaining, explicitly describing and predicting the connectedness of organizational relationships (Barney et al., 2011). The relevance of the RBV theory for the study is its approach to a firm as an integration of resources and capabilities, which are physical, financial, human, and intangible assets.

The resource-based theory is engaged in conversation in the disciplines of organizational economics, industrial organization, and strategy research. The focus in organizational economics is the “new combinations of resources,” which the Schumpeterian perspective identifies as the means to achieving sustained competitive advantage (Mahoney & Pandian, 1976). The firm as defined by Connor (2002) integrates administrative organization and productive resources translating into transaction cost. In essence, the organizational economics literature with regards to RBV is vast and diverse with an array of organizational innovation characteristics, issues about asymmetric information connected to consumer trust, and resource commitments linked to first-mover advantages and aligned with firm-specific knowledge of buyers, sellers and worker capabilities.

On the other hand, the industrial organization literature focused on utilizing firm resources in the external environment with Porter in 1980, who introduced Porter's Five Forces framework, which assesses the industry-regarding the barriers to entry. A perspective shared with the Harvard School of Thought contrasted with the Chicago School, which argued of the effectiveness of the isolated factors such as economies of scale, advertising, and research and development (R&D) that these cannot poise as barriers of entry (Mahoney & Pandian, 1976)- a compelling argument that was not indulged as it was beyond the scope of this study.

The strategy literature positions the firm's internal resources as the determinant of competitive advantage. The RBV approach in the strategic management decision-making context is towards the firm's strategic capability (Connor, 2002), maximizing the inimitable resources termed core competencies. Connor (2002) amplified the firm-level view of RBV by arguing that an organization's success is determined by managers from a firm perspective and not from an industry perspective.



### 2.1.2 Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder theory (ST) envisages managers as the custodians of stakeholder interests by ensuring the organization or business creates value for the respective stakeholders. Stakeholder theory acknowledges the co-dependence between the organization and stakeholders in that, stakeholders depend on the organization to actualize their personal goals whereas the organization depends on the stakeholders for existence (Bridoux & Stoelhorst, 2022; Freeman et al., 2021; Mahajan et al., 2023). Freeman who is acclaimed the father of stakeholder theory influenced the paradigm shift from instigating organizations change from focusing only on shareholders to extend the perspective to encompass all individuals or entities who influence or are influenced by the organizations mission – cumulatively termed stakeholders (Mahajan et al., 2023).

Organizations have a moral obligation to realize the interests of all stakeholders beyond the financial factors to include ethical considerations which would then be incorporated into the decision-making of the organization. Further to which, effective management of stakeholders is considered to contribute to the long-term profitability of a business (Bridoux & Stoelhorst, 2022; Mahajan et al., 2023).

Considering the different perspectives of ST it can be arguably defined as “stakeholder theory is a theory that explicitly incorporates an economic dimension (value creation), a social dimension (managing relationships) and a moral dimension (fairness)” (Bridoux & Stoelhorst, 2022). A shift from the definition of shareholder theory perspective which focused on the maximization of shareholder value in terms of dividends- financial performance (Mahajan et al., 2023). This paper adopts the proposed stakeholder theory definition.

There are three dimensions of stakeholder theory: descriptive work, normative work and instrumental work. The descriptive work focuses on the outlined parameters for managers regarding what they do when managing stakeholders; normative work identifies the moral and philosophical principles as the guiding tool for managers decision- making; and lastly the instrumental work is the linkage of stakeholder management and firm performance (Bridoux & Stoelhorst, 2022). Despite the divergence of stakeholder theory from strategic management, the instrumental stakeholder theory aligns stakeholder theory towards strategic management and recent work has seen the rejoining of the themes from the economic perspective of strategy and the ethical perspective stakeholder theory, an apparent occurrence as both the RBV theory and stakeholder theory originated from the strategic management domain (Freeman et al., 2021; Bridoux & Stoelhorst, 2022).

Stakeholder and RBV theory both originated from strategic management however there was a divergence which created a chasm between the two. However, with recent developments in the strategic management domain there is call of a reunion of two theories. The combination of the two theories would according to Freeman et al., (2021) enable organizations to create sustainable stakeholder relationships – stakeholders are a contingent aspect of the firms existence and they influence the success and survival of the organization. Further, it accords the organization an ethical perspective (Freeman et al., 2021). Secondly, the resource-based perspective is a framework that enables the organization to create sustainable stakeholder relationships driving it towards success.

It is with this understanding that this study attempts to provide empirical evidence of the necessity of utilizing the two theories together not only to create a depth in understanding strategy management but to further enhance management practice through sustainable stakeholder relationships, as a strategic internal capability.

### 2.2 Empirical Review

Literature surrounding agriculture cooperatives are mostly centred on the functionality of the cooperatives, performance and the economic contribution these organizations make in their respective countries. In the compilation of studies, Okem (2016) focused on the definition surrounding cooperatives, factors that contribute to the inefficiencies of the corporates leading to the collapse of some cooperatives, like the case of Coffee Cooperative in Cameroon (Okem, 2016). Factors identified in the study which lead to the collapse of the coffee cooperatives in the liberalization period in Cameroon were external factors which was the withdrawal of government support through subsidies which left the cooperatives exposed to market dynamics and the organizational structure and strategies could not withstand the macroeconomic policy shift. To this end, the study explored cooperatives from the structural and economic perspective and not from the management paradigm.

Other studies that explore agricultural cooperatives through the lens of sustainability, Candemir et al. (2021) in the study explored the role of agriculture cooperatives in sustainability a study which linked literature review to empirical findings to establish the “non-negligible role” cooperatives play in farm sustainability by analysing the economic behaviour of the organization (Candemir et al., 2021). Related studies which explored the theme of sustainability in agriculture cooperatives was a study done by Francesconi and Wouterse (2021) which focused on Land Sharing Cooperatives. An exploratory study which unearthed factors within Sub-Saharan Africa agriculture cooperatives with regards to the longevity of cooperatives through the calculation of the average age of cooperatives. The study brought to the fore the survival rate of cooperatives, the study unearthed that the average age of agricultural cooperatives



in SSA countries like Madagascar, Kenya, Uganda, Malawi and Rwanda was 9.2 years (Francesconi, 2021). The survival rate of the agricultural cooperatives revealed in the study beckons further research questions as to what factors contribute to the low survival rate of cooperatives in other countries in comparison to the high survival rate in other countries like Kenya which has the average survival rate of agriculture cooperatives of 23.2 years.

Studies have emerged which have identified systemic challenges which contribute to the survival rate of agricultural cooperatives. Maganga (2017) and Borda-Rodriguez & Johnson (2019) in their respective studies identified factors which influence the survival rate of cooperatives with a focus mainly on the causes of the low survival rate. The identified factors ranged from internal factors to do with poor management expertise, governance, top-down approach of establishment to external factors such as poor policy framework, regulation and supervision and limited access to credit among others (Borda-Rodriguez & Johnson, 2019). These studies however, focused on the overall performance of cooperatives and did not intend to analyse the role of phenomena such as managerial related aspects.

In a recent study Madumuse and Mpundu (2025) explored Malawian agricultural cooperatives in the context of strategy implementation (SI), a contribution of empirical studies within the management domain from a novel context. The exploratory study unearthed barriers within the agricultural cooperates which hinder the organization to effectively implement strategy. The study identified an existing strategy process within the agricultural cooperatives which is compromised due to “lack of understanding of strategy, financial resources, inadequate infrastructure, governance, organizational structure, and low literacy levels” (Madumuse & Mpundu, 2025). However, another key factor identified as a barrier to SI in the study was the role of external stakeholders. Acquiesce with the fact that agriculture cooperatives in their nature are involved with a multiplicity of stakeholders which range from government, non-governmental entities, donors, private sector (Maryono et al., 2024) it is imperative for managers within the cooperatives to know how to manage multiple stakeholders. As such, multiple stakeholders within agricultural cooperatives are a dualistic factor in the sense that it can pose both as a barrier and as a success factor towards effective strategy implementation. As such, empirical studies would be relevant to study further how stakeholder theory can be a beneficial factor in the effectiveness of strategy implementation within cooperatives, to which end this study endeavours to explore.

### 2.3 Conceptual Framework

The study will use a strategy implementation approach, as the effectiveness or the success of strategy is determined by the strategy implementation process- it decisively influences organizational success or failure (Tawse & Tabesh, 2021). Strategy implementation research has a dual dimension, which looks at SI from the structural view and from the interpersonal process view. The structural view focuses on the organizational structure and control mechanisms and the effect on the implementation processes and outcomes. On the other hand, the interpersonal process view focuses on the behaviours, cognitive processes, and relationships within the organization between managers and employees and the impact these have on the implementation process and outcome (Noble, 1999).

The conceptual framework captures the interpersonal view from Noble (1999) perspective extending the relationships beyond employees and managers to include external stakeholders with the justification that an organization is built on relationships with all stakeholders both internal and external (Freeman et al., 2021). The interpersonal process view focuses on strategic consensus, leadership, strategic behaviours, communication and interaction processes (Noble, 1999; Noble & Mokwa, 1999) which aid in the management of stakeholder relationships invariably influencing the effective implementation of strategy- a performance measure. These factors are viewed as internal capabilities through the RBV lens, which are inimitable and are implemented by the managers who through these strategic capabilities ensure the success of the firm (Connor, 2002).



**Figure 1**  
*Conceptual Framework*



### III. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Research Philosophy

The research methodology designed for the study is based on social constructionism with an interpretative approach. The focus is on understanding how managers in agricultural cooperatives construct strategy and interpret strategy implementation. The combination of social constructionism and interpretivism is a typical approach to qualitative research, which makes it more flexible and inductive- it adopts the circumstances in which the research is being undertaken and influences the research design, likewise rendering it a reflexive process (Maxwell, 2013).

#### 3.2 Research Design

The research employed a case-study design with a qualitative research approach to attain the objective. Qualitative research reveals multifaceted factors, persona, and other complexities that would not otherwise be captured through conventional statistical approaches, which are common in quantitative methods (Gummesson, 2006). In-depth interviews were conducted guided by a semi-structured questionnaire with key informants (board members and managers) and focused group discussions (FGDs) with member-farmers to gain deeper insight into the phenomena.

#### 3.3 Location of Study

The core of the research dealt with agricultural cooperatives, which are communal groups formed within farming communities. These cooperatives are demographically diverse. Due to the group's makeup, women tend to be less participative in group discussions than men. As such, the researcher sought to create a conducive environment for incorporating their views while ensuring that no pressure was applied.

Agriculture cooperatives are found in primarily rural and semi-rural areas within village communities. As such, the cultural and social aspects had to be considered during the data collection, acknowledging the leaders within the cooperatives and allowing the leaders to set the stage for the interviews.

The study was conducted with members of the cooperative who play the role of board members, managers or leaders within the respective cooperatives. It was carried out on-site to allow the researcher to observe the cooperatives' behavioural patterns and encourage the members' participation in the study. The geographical location of the sites was deliberately selected to include all three regions within the country, North, Central, and South. The following sites were selected: Mzuzu, Lilongwe, Dedza, and Chikwawa.

#### 3.4 Target Population

The study's population targeted registered agriculture cooperatives, which have been operational for over 5 years. The average number of years in operation for the cooperatives was 15 years. As such, these cooperatives participated in the preliminary training offered through the Ministry of Industry and Trade; they have established functional positions within the cooperatives and have existing trade, placing it in a position of going concerned. Such cooperatives can articulate their purpose, management, processes, challenges, performance, member involvement, and values.

Further, the selected cooperatives possessed heterogeneous attributes, each unique to the other either in formation or type. Table 1 summarizes the characteristics of the cooperatives selected for the study.

**Table 1**

*Selected Agriculture Cooperatives*

Cooperative Name	Location	Type of Coop	Year Established	Total Membership
Nkhata Bay Highlands Coffee Cooperative	Mzuzu	Coffee Producer	2006	225 (Mix of both men and women)
Mtoto Poultry Cooperative	Mzuzu	Poultry Producing	2002	58 (All women)
Nkhate Cooperative	Chikwawa	Rice Production	2007	157 (men, women and youth)
Phata Cooperative	Chikwawa	Sugarcane Production	2011	1150 (Mix of both men and women)
Chitsanzo Dairy Cooperative	Dedza	Dairy Producing	2010	205 (mix men, women and youth)
Kapilimutu Cooperative	Dedza	Cereals producing (beans, maize, soya)	2012	40 (mix men and women)
Gwiritse Cooperative	Lilongwe	Cereals producing (beans, maize, soya, sunflower)	2017	336 (273 women and 93 men)



### 3.5 Sample Size

The sample was selected using purposeful selection or purposive sampling. Unlike in quantitative studies in which probability sampling is implemented, the nature of this study requires that a specific setting and individuals who can articulate the relevant information required for the study be approached.

A heterogeneous sample was relevant to capture the diverse range of information to ensure the conclusion adequately captures the wide range of variation. Purposive sampling is advantageous in attaining this. The study sample was set to seven agriculture cooperatives, including a diverse range of cooperatives that have a heterogeneous representation. This further accorded the possibility of particular comparison to highlight the differences that occurred in settings and individuals (Maxwell, 2013).

The in-depth interviews were with five key informants (KII) and two focused group discussions (FGD) to uncover the study's focus on the cooperatives' respective board members, managers, sometimes referred to as leaders and member-farmers.

#### 3.5.1 Inclusion Exclusion Criteria

A selection criterion for the individuals selected in the cooperatives was their knowledge of the organization's management and their conversance with the processes within the cooperative. Participants in the study were not excluded based on age, gender, race, level of education, or marital status.

#### 3.5.2 Instruments for Data Collection

The choice of data collection instruments determines the validity and reliability of the data that will be collected (Cohen et al., 2011). To ensure data quality and accuracy, the study used interview guides and observations to collect data from respondents.

#### 3.5.3 Interview Guide

The study incorporated in-depth semi-structured interviews to understand the beliefs and social aspects of the cooperatives. This enabled the participants to have the freedom to express themselves and share some further insights while some questions were asked specifically.

The researcher, in the process of the study, ensured a working research partnership with the participants through the incorporation of interpretive and participatory action methods in which the researcher engaged the participants prior to the interview and further engaged them after data analysis to compare the findings with the views expressed during data collection. This was to enable knowledge generation among participants about the strategy implementation processes within their respective organizations.

### 3.6 Data analysis techniques

Data from in-depth interviews were recorded in voice format using voice recorders and then transcribed for further analysis in text format. The documents were reviewed, analyzed, and placed in a localized repository for effective and efficient handling and usage.

This study's data analysis followed a thematic analysis. This analysis allowed for the identification of themes and patterns and allowed the researcher to explore more information about the social context and the factors that affect strategy implementation in a cooperative setting (Cohen et al., 2011).

### 3.7 Data Quality Assurance

While the various stages of the research had inherent validation mechanisms, deliberate procedures for validation enhanced the accuracy and credibility of the findings (Cohen et al., 2011). Various procedures were undertaken in the research to ensure the validity of the findings. Pilot testing enhanced the strength of the data collection tools, providing the researchers with an opportunity to revise and reflect on the various components to ensure measurement validity. Consistency in data collection and coding was ensured through regular member-checking and cross-validation.

### 3.8 Ethical Considerations

The data collection process followed ethical procedures to ensure the participants were not exploited nor mistreated in the course followed ethical procedures to ensure the participants were not exploited or mistreated during the study. Researchers have the moral responsibility to protect research participants while building trust, ensuring the integrity of the study, and averting malpractice and impropriety, which may misrepresent the organization. As such, the researcher followed the ethical protocol to seek respondent consent before the inquiry and to ensure the confidentiality and safety of the data.



## IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Leadership

Empirical evidence provided through interviews shows the level of involvement of cooperative members, board, executive management, and committees in the strategy process. In most of the cooperatives, there is no distinct demarcation of duties with regards to strategy formulation and strategy implementation a contrast to literature in which there is a general consensus that strategy formulation is the mandate for top managers whereas custodians of strategy implementation are middle managers.

The level of involvement in the strategy process begins at the formulation stage in which members convene to establish the strategic objectives they intend to implement. The leadership role of strategy formulation and implementation is undertaken by all the members of the cooperative as one of the managers was quoted: “The owners of the cooperative. In the first meeting they are given a picture of how you want to work and your goals to be implemented.” The implementation of the agreed strategy is delegated to the different committees established by the members to oversee implementation activities - “there are different departments involved in the cooperative.” In one of the cooperatives, it was established the board instead of undertaking the role of governance is involved in the operations of the cooperatives with one of the board members quoted, “The board deals in the daily work but all of the members are involved in the making of plans.” The integration of roles and responsibilities with regards to strategy implementation introduces new perspectives in which the board undertakes the role of ensuring strategy is implemented apart from the management and the members: “the leadership with the CDM (cooperative development manager) on other strategy.”

The lack of distinctiveness between the roles and responsibilities in the strategy process creates a blurred line between strategy formulation and strategy implementation. The strategy process presents an incrementalist perspective in which the members decide on an initial course of action or strategic plan which changes “in-flight” as new plans emerge: “we have meetings, and sometimes we vote when people have different ideas to be implemented.” This presents a novel phenomenon in which the strategy is determined by the members and changed at the point at which members feel there is need for a change or review thus the overall responsibility is not placed on the managerial function but on all members - “the plans are read and everyone follows how each and every plan is moving till we implement it if we face problems we note down which ones have not been implemented till the results are shown.” However, there were two cooperatives exclusively in which the structure gives the function of strategy formulation and strategy implementation to the leadership, in which case it is the board and management, “the structure allows management to make plans.” In which case, the board formulates the strategy and works with the manager to ensure the strategy is implemented with the coordination of members: “we (management) implement what has been approved.”

Leadership within cooperatives do not have the autonomy for decision-making, instead members of cooperatives are empowered to make decisions, implement strategic plans, and be able to select and remove the board when the actions of the board do not correspond with the strategic intent of the cooperative: “we changed the board right now we have new leaders, after noticing that the old board was working as a private entity, not a cooperative and members reacted right now things are okay.” As such, the board reports to the membership bypassing the managerial function, “it is a business where proper engagement between board members and cooperative members is essential; they both need to work together.”

The autonomy of cooperative members inasmuch as it is viewed as an advantage with regards to managing the board and management self-interest which affects strategy implementation, it poses as a challenge created by misinterpretations of strategic plans and processes due to the existing diverse literacy levels and incompetence to implement the plan: “a management team of farmers cannot manage a firm... Understanding a business model is not easy, especially with finance issues. When it comes to paying, most farmers are illiterate, so understanding becomes difficult, and communication flow is a problem.”

This brings to the fore the discussion of dynamic capability theory (DMC) a critical element to the SI implementation process. DMC theory delves into explaining the capability differences that separate organizations that effectively execute strategy and those that fail to do so. The theory focuses on managers who are the executors of strategy by explaining the quality of managerial decisions in the context of strategic change and organizational performance. In the context of agriculture cooperatives, the dynamic capability is spread across with members who have diverse capabilities which become barriers towards strategy implementation- “there are many challenges in the implementation...”

### 4.2 Strategic Consensus

The strategy process within cooperatives is a collective effort between all members of the cooperative. There is an established voting system which allows members to vote for a specific strategy direction- “we have meetings, and



sometimes we vote when people have different ideas to be implemented.” As such, strategic consensus is achieved at the beginning of the strategy process, “in the first meeting they are given a picture of how you want to work and your goals to be implemented.... as a cooperative, you cannot implement plans when members do not know them”; after which members express their concession through their voting rights, leading to the establishment of different committees assigned to oversee the various aspects of the SI process. During the strategy implementation process, the board and managers are obliged to remain transparent and accountable to the members failure which would lead members to vote out the leadership: “We changed the board right now we have new leaders, after noticing that the old board was working as a private entity, not a cooperative and members reacted right now things are okay.”

Members of cooperatives are empowered to make decisions, implement strategic plans, and be able to select and remove the board when the actions of the board do not correspond with the strategic intent of the cooperative: “it is a business where proper engagement between board members and cooperative members is essential; they both need to work together,” the cooperation among all the members within the cooperative is attained through the frequent cooperative meetings which are held every week in most cooperatives and quarterly in others. The meetings intend to gather ideas or plans, update and inform members on the progress being made, challenges, and any new developments, and get members' feedback on the current plans. These meetings help to ensure “all members are involved.”

There is a clear element of trust which is embedded in the formation of strategic consensus – as members possess shared core values. Members within cooperatives have to trust each other and the leadership to believe every individual is aware of the plans and objectives of the cooperative through open communication. The absence of trust is reflected in the behaviour of the members, with some individuals “side line” themselves when they perceive the decisions undertaken are for the benefit of a few: “since we changed management, people are comparing the old and new leadership; as such, those who were benefiting then think they are not benefiting now. “The mistrust of leadership by members would motivate members to vote for the current board or leader who is perceived not to have the interest of the cooperative at the fore or is implementing plans without the knowledge of the members: “we changed the board right now. We have new leaders. After noticing that the old board was working as a private entity, not a cooperative, and members reacted right now, things are okay. “Trust and commitment within organizations can be described as a dichotomy in which the absence of one affects the other. The element of trust enables members to be cooperative and this in turn creates a climate for strategic consensus.

Further, the current cooperative organizational structure enables all members to be involved in the strategy process thus making “all members decision makers.” This structure influences strategic consensus as decisions are made unilaterally- “we have meetings, and sometimes we vote when people have different ideas to be implemented.” However, there was notably one cooperative in which it was established that “the board and executive are the decision makers.” The monopoly of decision making by the board was further observed during the interview, as the chairperson was the only one present, unlike the other cooperatives, which involved several members (were not part of the interview but were present) during the interview process.

The shared meaning of the strategic direction is an internal process which is exclusive of external stakeholders. The involvement of external stakeholders within cooperatives is in the capacity of financiers and in advisory roles: “they come to visit and when they notice we are doing well they continue supporting us when they notice failures they stop coming.” The stakeholder’s level of involvement within the cooperatives is not structured, with no defined objectives. However, cooperatives' strategic plans are dependent on the stakeholder’s financial involvement for implementation- “they are actively participating in the sense that they would come and advise on areas of expertise and ensure we are in line with government for the use of their funding.”

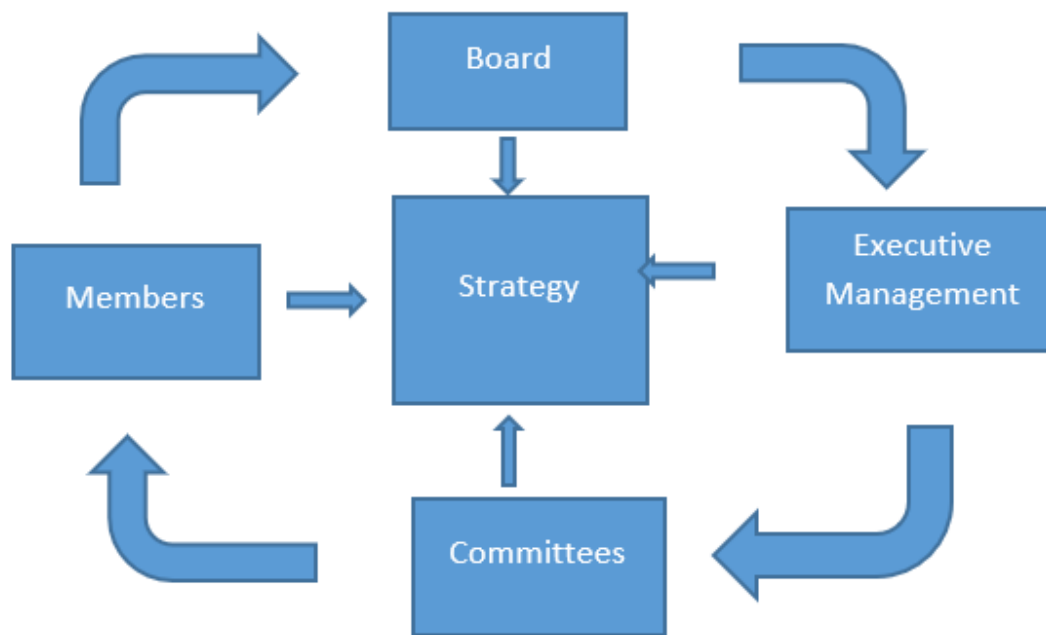
### 4.3 Communication and Interaction Processes

The interaction and communication managers carry out within the organization may be formal and informal. In each form, the manager's objective is to motivate, influence, or sell strategic direction to the followers to attain a specific strategy implementation outcome. As such, the core activity to effectively attain this managerial interpersonal objective is through communication.

The empirical evidence collected from the cooperatives reflected the reliance on regular meetings to share information from strategy formulation and through the implementation process – “we have quarterly meeting where members are informed of developments, we have zone meetings, we have sub-committees who inform members when the SP is off. By making contributions from members, we know members know what is happening.” Except for one cooperative in which communication channels reflect a vertical flow (top down) of information, strategy formulation is managed at the top and information cascades down to the rest of the members.

Within the cooperatives, there is continuous flow of information throughout the strategy process, as all members of the cooperatives are involved through the “different departments or committees” set up by the members themselves. “We call for meetings. We discuss in meeting and receive reports from sub committees as routine updates.”

The open communication platforms allow members to share their ideas freely through regular meetings and vote on decisive actions before a plan is accepted with constructive discussions. All members within the cooperative share the same perception of the strategic plan, implementation, and timelines. In light of this, the cooperatives which were engaged expressed the shared perceptions of strategic plans among the members through the regular meetings. Apart from regular meetings, the cooperatives have established other channels of communication-“we have the posters of the plan posted on the wall and people use the poster to learn and understand what it is talking, we also have minutes of the meeting.” Cooperatives approach to communication and interaction processes is progressive with the continuous improvement approach: “...we are also thinking of introducing a suggestion box at the office for members to put ideas and complaints.” The interaction processes within the cooperatives does not adhere to hierarchy as members interact with the board and managers – creating a circular flow of information/ communication within the cooperatives depicted below:



**Figure 2**  
*Interaction Processes*

#### 4.4 Strategic Behaviours

Managers behaviours within cooperatives are monitored by the members towards which if the managers or board members behaviour is not aligned with the strategic objectives or are perceived to lead to the implementation of unintended strategy, members express their voting rights to vote out the manager or board member –“we changed the board right now we have new leaders, after noticing that the old board was working as a private entity, not a cooperative and members reacted right now things are okay.” Although, this creates problems of comparison and affects cooperation within the cooperatives with some members aligning with old leadership and others with the new: “since we changed management, people are comparing the old and new leadership; as such, those who were benefiting then think they are not benefiting now.” This creates a complex phenomenon which influences members to become inactive participants and “sideline” themselves. There were no clear indications on the actions which would be undertaken in cases in which members strategic behaviours were misaligned with the strategic objectives.

The organizational structure of the cooperatives sets the tone of cooperation within the cooperatives in which the “owners” who are the members monitor and evaluate leadership behaviour from the board to the manager, it is referred to as “a way of business,” – “it is a business where proper engagement between board members and cooperative members is essential; they both need to work together.” However, it was noted that the lens through which members use to analyze leadership behaviour is based on their understanding of strategy and how they interpret the process which is often limited by misinterpretations evidenced by the quote by one of the members in reference to an incident in which a manager was voted out – “the manager was running this as a private entity and not a cooperative” The presence of misinterpretation influenced by different literacy levels perceives managerial actions as leading to unintended strategy objectives.



## 4.5 Discussion

### 4.5.1 Leadership

Leadership construct has dualistic characteristics within the domain of strategy implementation as it can both hinder SI effectiveness or drive the success of strategy implementation (Vigfússon et al., 2021). The managers' leadership style determines the level of delegation and type of decision-making throughout the implementation process, which influences the followers' motivation level (Vigfússon et al., 2021; Noble, 1999). Managers' transformational and instrumental leadership and implementation style directly impact SI effectiveness (Tawse & Tabesh, 2021). Within the agricultural cooperatives, it was established that the managerial role was determined by the members- if members perceived the managers' behaviour to be divergent from the cooperative's objectives, the manager or board would be voted out. However, in most cases the perceived divergence was not from the strategic direction but the misunderstanding of strategy processes among the members.

The leadership role within cooperatives is compromised as the manager unlike in investor-owned firms shares the responsibility of strategy implementation with the members. The spillover effect of this shared responsibility is the lack of effective strategy implementation as the perceived strategic direction by members is usually contradictory to the managers (leading to a loss of trust between leadership and members) – the contrary views are attributed to the different literacy levels. In their study, Maganga (2017) established the necessity of trust within agricultural cooperatives in the context of ordinary members (farmers) and literate managers and board members- the knowledge asymmetry that may exist between members and their perceived literate leaders is precarious with the possibility of building mistrust in cases which members feel the leaders are not accountable enough (Maganga, 2017).

### 4.5.2 Stakeholder Management (SM)

Agricultural cooperatives are engaged with multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSP) that have diverse objectives, initiators, models, timeframe, and partner expectations (Maryono et al., 2024). The impact these MSPs (both internal and external) have on the cooperatives cannot be understated in influencing strategic plans.

### 4.5.3 Internal Stakeholders

Empirical evidence provided through interviews shows the level of involvement of cooperative members, board, executive management, and committees in the strategy process. In most of the cooperatives, there is no distinct demarcation of duties with regards to strategy formulation and strategy implementation a contrast to literature in which there is a general consensus that strategy formulation is the mandate for top managers whereas custodians of strategy implementation are middle managers (Noble, 1999; Christie & Tippmann, 2024a; Wooldridge & Floyd, 1990).

The level of involvement in the strategy process begins at the formulation stage in which members convene to establish the strategic objectives they intend to implement. The integration of roles and responsibilities with regards to strategy implementation introduces new perspectives in which the board undertakes the role of ensuring strategy is implemented apart from the management and the members.

The lack of distinctiveness between the roles and responsibilities in the strategy process creates a blurred line between strategy formulation and strategy implementation. The strategy process presents an incrementalist perspective in which the members decide on an initial course of action or strategic plan which changes “in-flight” as new plans emerge (Van Der Maas, 2008). Members of cooperatives are empowered to make decisions, implement strategic plans, and be able to select and remove the board when the actions of the board do not correspond with the strategic intent of the cooperative. The autonomy of cooperative members inasmuch as it is viewed as an advantage with regards to managing the board and management self-interest which affects strategy implementation, it poses as a challenge created by misinterpretations of strategic plans and processes due to the existing diverse literacy levels and incompetence to implement the plan

This brings to the fore the discussion of dynamic capability theory (DMC) a critical element to the strategy implementation process. DMC theory delves into explaining the capability differences that separate organizations that effectively execute strategy and those that fail to do so. The theory focuses on managers who are the executors of strategy by explaining the quality of managerial decisions in the context of strategic change and organizational performance (Tawse & Tabesh, 2021). The application of the DMC theory in the context of agricultural cooperatives would help explain the existing challenges with the quality of managerial decisions, which are often undertaken by members.

On the other hand, it has been established in the study that there are high strategy commitment levels within the cooperatives attributed to the transparency and trust that within the cooperatives. The flow of information within the cooperative enables members to offer feedback on the strategy process from formulation to implementation. This level of involvement and the manager's astute capability in internal communication influenced openness, built trust within the cooperative as members are confident that the managers or leaders lack “self-interest.” One of the challenges or



impediments mentioned in literature which deter strategic objectives is managers' "self-interest" (Christie & Tippmann, 2024b), a factor that can be overcome through an enabling environment created through the organizational culture.

#### 4.5.4 External Stakeholders

There are diverse types of external stakeholders who are involved or participate in agricultural cooperatives. The stakeholders range from government to non-government bodies and other donor agencies. From empirical evidence, stakeholders are involved in a variety of ways, offering professional advice, financial assistance (grants and loans), procuring resources, capacity building, and infrastructure development.

The key assumption of the stakeholder theory (Freeman et al., 2021) is that the organization or firm exists to create value for stakeholders with the assistance and cooperation of the stakeholders themselves (Minoja, 2012). From the cooperative's perspective, stakeholders are viewed as partners who aid the cooperative without the cooperative in turn creating value for the stakeholders. A cycle which has created a dependency syndrome among most of the cooperatives, with strategic plans being solely dependent on the stakeholder's financial involvement for implementation. This approach is unsustainable for the cooperatives.

The existing gap between cooperatives objectives and stakeholder's objective needs to be abridged which would allow cooperatives to attain the appropriate level of support and partnership from stakeholders. Likewise, stakeholder involvement within cooperatives will be guided by the appropriate governance structures set in place to yield favourable returns for both the cooperatives and the stakeholders.

#### 4.5.5 Stakeholder Management: Strategic Internal Capability

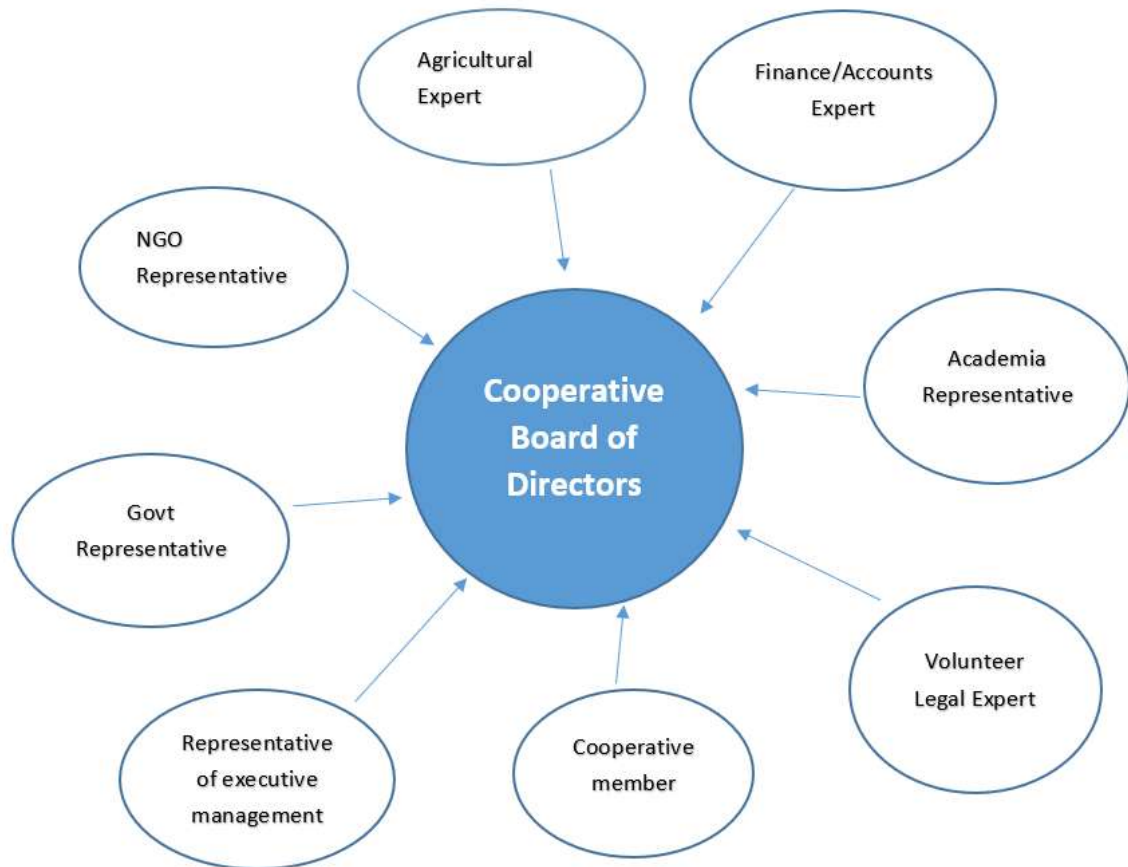
A strategic internal capability is one which enables an organization to create a core competence which is valuable, rare and inimitable (VRI). The strategic internal capability within cooperatives to manage stakeholders would create a core competence, which is invariably an integral part of organizational culture (Minoja, 2012).

The conspicuous reality is cooperatives lack adequate resources to enable the implementation of strategy yet the organizations are exposed to multiple stakeholders. It is therefore, in this vein which iterates for "inter-organisational collaborations" the collaboration between cooperatives and other external stakeholders. Cooperatives can leverage on the multiple stakeholder partnerships through resource pooling, which however would require the alignment of stakeholder interests, motives and values to the cooperatives (Ozdemir et al., 2023). Stakeholder theory emphasis the need for the focal organization to proactively consider the values and interests of the stakeholders which should be reflected through the organization's strategy.

Stakeholder theory's perspective on strategy is the vital contribution sustainable stakeholder relationships influence firm performance (Freeman et al., 2021). The resource-based theory and stakeholder theory are conjoined at this point at which the building and maintenance of sustainable stakeholder relationships are dependent on the internal capabilities of the organizations to leverage and incorporate multiple stakeholder interest and values throughout the strategy implementation process.

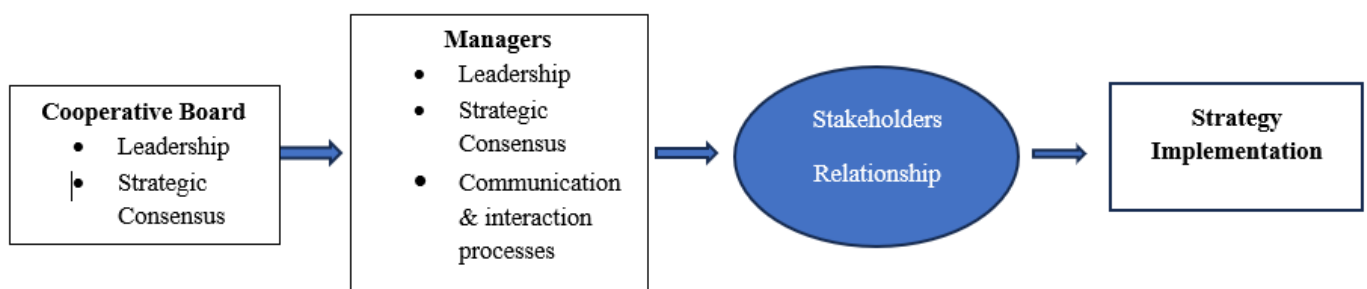
To effect stakeholder management within the organization, cooperatives would endeavour to incorporate multiple stakeholders on their boards, which will enable engagement between cooperatives and stakeholders. The board is to be governed by the umbrella body Malawi Federation of Cooperatives (MAFECO) to ensure fair representation and to create a platform that will regulate control while influencing the strategy implementation effectiveness within the cooperatives. Managers within cooperatives to be empowered with the mandate to extend the flow of information to stakeholders – maintain open communication, be transparent and accountable towards the stakeholders.

Incorporating corporate governance discipline, the role of the board of directors is to assist in resource allocation for effective strategy implementation while avoiding role conflict with executive management. Although the role of boards in strategy formulation and implementation is underexplored in governance literature (Maganga, 2017), this would provide an avenue for empirical research through a longitudinal study of the impact boards would have on effective SI. Following the guidelines from the Corporate Governance Code, the composition of the cooperative board of directors is to reflect diversity of qualifications, gender, age, and skills, which would ensure competence through the strategy process. A proposed board of directors for cooperatives is shown in Figure 3 below:



**Figure 3**  
Proposed Cooperative Board of Directors

The cooperative board of directors would empower the managers as leaders within the organization to build strategic consensus between both internal and external stakeholders through communication and interaction processes which would align strategic behaviours with the strategy direction.



**Figure 4**  
*Cooperatives Stakeholder Relationship Management*

## V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Conclusion

For the longest time, the managerial role within an organization has been to ensure the strategic objectives handed down by top management are communicated and executed throughout the organization by ensuring resources are aligned towards the successful implementation of the strategy. However, the study has highlighted an essential responsibility that is often overlooked by organizations of stakeholder management. The study has established that both internal and external stakeholders influence the implementation of strategy in a variety of ways as such, organizations



need to be aware of the different stakeholders and their respective values and needs to ensure stakeholder value is achieved and retained through the strategy implementation process.

## 5.2 Recommendations

This research can be considered as an empirical contribution towards the conversation of merging RBV theory and stakeholder theory into strategy implementation. As such, it has unearthed different areas which can be further explored. Insights such as the organizational structure of cooperatives and its impact on strategy implementation can be further explored to establish the alignment of organizational structure with strategic objectives of multiple stakeholders to attain SI effectiveness. Strategist would be implored to further interrogate the role of the board in the building and maintenance of sustainable stakeholder relationships towards the implementation of strategy.

## REFERENCES

- Abass, M. K., Munga, J., & Were, E. (2017). The relationship between strategy implementation and performance in county governments of Kenya: A case study of Wajir County government. *International Academic Journal of Human Resource and Business Administration*, 2(3), 381–401.
- Aladag, O. F., Köseoglu, M. A., King, B., & Mehraliyev, F. (2020). Strategy implementation research in hospitality and tourism: Current status and future potential. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 88(6), 102556.
- Barney, J. B., Ketchen, D. J., & Wright, M. (2011). The future of resource-based theory: Revitalization or decline? *Journal of Management*, 37(5), 1299–1315. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206310391805>
- Borda-Rodriguez, A., & Johnson, H. (2019). Inclusive development and cooperatives. *The European Journal of Development Research*, 8(4), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41287-019-00249-9>
- Bridoux, F., & Stoelhorst, J. W. (2022). Stakeholder theory, strategy, and organization: Past, present, and future. *Strategic Organization*, 20(4), 797–809. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14761270221127628>
- Candemir, A., Duvaleix, S., & Latruffe, L. (2021). Agricultural Cooperatives and Farm Sustainability – a Literature Review. *Journal of Economic Surveys*, 35(4), 1118–1144. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joes.12417>
- Christie, A., & Tippmann, E. (2024a). Intended or unintended strategy? The activities of middle managers in strategy implementation. *Long Range Planning*, 57(1), 102410. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lrp.2023.102410>
- Christie, A., & Tippmann, E. (2024b). Intended or unintended strategy? The activities of middle managers in strategy implementation. *Long Range Planning*, 57(1), 102410. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lrp.2023.102410>
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research methods in education* (7th ed.). Routledge.
- Connor, T. (2002). The resource-based view of strategy and its value to practising managers. *Strategic Change*, 11(6), 307–316. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jsc.593>
- Francesconi, G. N. (2021). The potential of land shareholding cooperatives for inclusive agribusiness development in Africa. *February*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/apce.12314>
- Francesconi, G. N., & Wouterse, F. (2021). The potential of land shareholding cooperatives for inclusive agribusiness development in Africa. *Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics*, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1111/apce.12314>
- Freeman, R. E., Dmytriiev, S. D., & Phillips, R. A. (2021). Stakeholder theory and the resource-based view of the firm. *Journal of Management*, 47(7), 1757–1770. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206321993576>
- Guerras-Martín, L. Á., Madhok, A., & Montoro-Sánchez, Á. (2014). The evolution of strategic management research: Recent trends and current directions. *BRQ Business Research Quarterly*, 17(2), 69–76. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brq.2014.03.001>
- Gummesson, E. (2006). Qualitative research in management: Addressing complexity, context and persona. *Management Decision*, 44(2), 167–179. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00251740610650175>
- Köseoglu, M. A., Yazici, S., & Okumus, F. (2018). Barriers to the implementation of strategic decisions: Evidence from hotels in a developing country. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 27(5), 514–543.
- Lockett, A., & Thompson, S. (2009). The development of the resource-based view of the firm: A critical appraisal. *Journal of Management*, 11(1), 9–28. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2370.2008.00252.x>
- Madumuse, T., & Mpundu, M. (2025). Obstacles to effective strategy implementation: Insights from agricultural cooperatives in Malawi. *Advanced Research in Economics and Business Strategy Journal* (Forthcoming). <https://www.asjp.cerist.dz/en/PresentationRevue/757>
- Maganga, D. L. (2017). Performance improvement in complex organizations: The case of smallholder agricultural cooperatives in Malawi (Doctoral dissertation, University of Bolton).
- Mahajan, R., Lim, W. M., Sareen, M., Kumar, S., & Panwar, R. (2023). Stakeholder theory. *Journal of Business Research*, 166(December 2022), 114104. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2023.114104>



- Mahoney, J. T., & Pandian, J. (1976). The resource-based view within the conversation of strategic management author(s): Joseph T. Mahoney and J. Rajendran Pandian. *Strategic Management Journal*, 13(4), 223–242. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2486455>
- Maryono, M., Killoes, A. M., Adhikari, R., & Abdul Aziz, A. (2024). Agriculture development through multi-stakeholder partnerships in developing countries: A systematic literature review. *Agricultural Systems*, 213(October 2023), 103792. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.agsy.2023.103792>
- Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (3rd ed.). SAGE.
- Minoja, M. (2012). Stakeholder management theory, firm strategy, and ambidexterity. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 109(1), 67–82. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-012-1380-9>
- Noble, C. H. (1999). The eclectic roots of strategy implementation research. *Journal of Business Research*, 45(2), 119–134. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0148-2963\(97\)00231-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0148-2963(97)00231-2)
- Noble, C. H., & Mokwa, M. P. (1999). Implementing marketing strategies: Developing and testing a managerial theory. *Journal of Marketing*, 63(4), 57–73. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224299906300406>
- Okem, A. E. (2016). Theoretical and empirical studies on cooperatives lessons for cooperatives in South Africa. Springer International Publishing.
- Ozdemir, S., Carlos, J., Arroyabe, F. de, Sena, V., & Gupta, S. (2023). Stakeholder diversity and collaborative innovation: Integrating the resource-based view with stakeholder theory. *Journal of Business Research*, 16(4), 1–17.
- Tan, L., & Ding, J. (2013). The frontier and evolution of the strategic management theory: A scientometric analysis of *Strategic Management Journal*, 2001–2012. *Nankai Business Review International*, 4(1), 4–8. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/NBRI-01-2015-0001>
- Tawse, A., & Tabesh, P. (2021). Strategy implementation: A review and an introductory framework. *European Management Journal*, 39(1), 22–33. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2020.09.005>
- Van Der Maas, A. (2008). Strategy implementation in a small island community: An integrative framework (Doctoral dissertation, Erasmus University Rotterdam).
- Vigfússon, K., Jóhannsdóttir, L., & Ólafsson, S. (2021). Obstacles to strategy implementation and success factors: A review of empirical literature. *Strategic Management*, 26(2), 12–30. <https://doi.org/10.5937/straman2102012v>
- White, G. O., Guldiken, O., Hemphill, T. A., He, W., & Sharifi Khoobdeh, M. (2016). Trends in international strategic management research from 2000 to 2013: Text mining and bibliometric analyses. *Management International Review*, 56(1), 35–65. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11575-015-0260-9>
- Wooldridge, B., & Floyd, S. W. (1990). The strategy process, middle management involvement, and organizational performance. *Strategic Management Journal*, 11(3), 231–241.