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Modeling the Effects of Media on Affective Commitment to Strategy Implementation

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C H R O N I C L E	Abstract
  	This study investigates the directions and strengths of the relationships among Media based internal communications and affective commitment to strategy implementation in Bank Sepah. This is a descriptive, applied research and Mixed quantitative and qualitative methods were used to collect data. Firstly focus group interviews were used to identify the factors of media effecting affective commitment and generating items for the development of a questionnaire. Secondly the questionnaire was used for data gathering and finally a model for the effects of media on affective commitment to strategy implementation was developed by the help of S*tructural E*quation Model (SEM). Structural equation models were used to validate the measure and test the proposed relationships. 450 questionnaires were distributed among the employees of bank Sepah with more than 5 years' experience and ultimately 410 questionnaires were returned. Findings of this study indicate that media based training, explication of strategy, feedback from employees, appraising favorable behavior and advertisements have positive effect on affective commitment to strategy implementation.

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Introduction

Studies suggest that strategic management, particularly in dynamic business environments, may contribute to company success, not by providing exact plans, but instead by involving personnel, increasing understanding about strategy and hence enabling strategy implementation (Kohtamäki, Rönkkö, Kraus, & Makela, 2012).

Strategic management consists of three separate processes which are interconnected together and influence each other. These processes are – strategic planning, strategic implementation and strategic control. Researches in companies showed that the most important and the most underestimated part is strategic implementation (Mišanková & Kočišová, 2014). Successful strategy implementation is a key for any organization's survival. Many organizations could not sustain their competitive advantages, despite having a robust strategy formulation process, because they lack the processes in implementing the strategies (Rajasekar, 2014) .

Although we have thousands of guides about developing a strategy, very few of them is about how to actually execute one. And the difficulty of achieving executional excellence is a major obstacle at most companies (Sull, Homkes, & Sull, 2015). Therefore defining these difficulties and challenges in strategy implementation are the key issue of interest.

On the other hand researches show that one of the most important factors for overcoming obstacles and achieving success is commitment to strategy implementation (Johansson & Svensson, 2017; Mbaka & Mugambi, 2014; Zijm, Bos, & Jonker, 2016; Okumus, 2003). Organizational commitment is an attitude that shows three dimensions. According to Allen and Meyer (1990) these dimensions are: affective, continuance, and normative commitment (Lau, 2011). Affective commitment refers to emotional attachment among employees to commit in a company. Internal communication strengthens the employees' trust through the enhancement feelings of the messages given from the organization towards employee levels of affective commitment (Marchalina & Ahmad, 2017).

Internal communication has a key role in improving organizational commitments (Duncan & Ouwersloot, 2008). Meaningful communication informs and educates employees at all levels and motivates them to support the strategy (Nebo, Nwankwo and Okonkwo 2015). Communication has assumed a critical significance in the success of any organization that aspires to attain and sustain competitive advantage as well as bring in desired changes in employee's attitudes and performance. While a large amount of literature is available on internal corporate communication (ICC), most of it is ambiguous, conceptual and done from the perspective of developed countries (Sharma & Kamalanabhan, 2014). Meanwhile, effective internal communication can be achieved only by effective media management (Wright, 2016).

Holá and Pikhart believe that organizational media are now perceived as a tool, which – when working efficiently – can become a strong motivator, however, on the other hand a strong distress factor as well. Evolution of social media makes the role of media in internal communications even more crucial. Social media is progressively implemented in work organizations as means of communication among employees. Thus, it is of crucial importance to develop understanding how they empower and limit communicative activities which shape the network through which organizational tasks are accomplished, as it is these very dynamics that enforce and eternalize companies (Ten & Vanyushyn, 2017).

Despite the growing interest in strategy implementation and internal communication, there has been limited research, if any, conducted into the processes required to employ media for enhancing personals commitment to strategy implementation. The main objectives of this paper therefore are aimed at studying and modeling the effects of media on affective commitment to strategy implementation.

Review of Literature

For organizations to remain competitive, they need to embrace strategy implementation which entails putting into place intended strategies towards organizational performance (Mwanthi, 2018).

However Strategy implementation effort may fail if the strategy does not enjoy support and commitment by the majority of employees and middle management (Mbaka & Mugambi, 2014).

Mazolla and Kellermanns (2010) assert that middle management having low or negative commitment to strategies developed by top level management stands as hindrances to effective implementation of strategy (Nkosi, 2015).

Jooste and Fourie (2009) argued that there are many organizations which have various strategies but due to lack of commitments of the policy makers and lack of strategic leadership these strategies do not generate the fruitful results (Mbaka & Mugambi, 2014).

Mbaka and Mugambi in 2014 found that one of the most important factors affecting successful strategy implementation in the Water Sector in Kenya is the Lack of commitment to implementation of the strategy. Kohtamäki et al (2012) defined personnel commitment to strategy implementation as the steering effect of the defined strategy, the commitment of personnel to the implementation of strategic decisions, the alignment of strategy implementation and strategic decisions.

According to Oswald et al., 'Successful strategy formulation and implementation requires the commitment and involvement of managers of all levels (Zijm, Bos, & Jonker, 2016). Likewise Johansson and Svensson (2017) showed that for all concerning stakeholders of the firm, including middle level managers, it is important to have a level of commitment to the implementation process. Dooley et al (2000) found that personnel commitment to strategy implementation; positively affect the success and rapidity of the strategy implementation. Commitment increases personnel motivation, shortens the lead time required for strategy implementation and permits rapid responses to changes in the business environment (Kohtamäki, Rönkkö, Kraus, & Makela, 2012). Employee commitment to strategy implementation is correlated with employee satisfaction; the more committed employees are to their firm's strategy implementation, the higher their level of satisfaction with their firms. Thus, employee commitment to strategy implementation has positive impact on employee satisfaction (Nwachukwu, Chládková, & Olatu, 2018).

On the other hand, internal communication proved to be a very important and effective tool for increasing strategic clarity and commitment to strategy implementation. For instance Gavurová (2010) in her publication defines basic principles which could help to achieve an effective implementation of the strategy of the company. One of these principles is communication of the strategy through the whole company (Mišanková & Kočišová, 2014).

Meanwhile Dudi Permana (2017) showed in his study that strategic clarity has a positive effect on strategic commitment which in turn enhances the Strategy Implementation Effectiveness (Permana, 2017).

Internal communication is generally defined as the communication flow among people within the boundaries of an organization (Sharma & Kamalanabhan, 2014). Rapert et al (2002) all agree that communication is one of the most important parts of strategy implementation. Communication is important both in the formulation process as a means of creating consensus and understanding and in the continuous implementation process and it is imperative successful implementation. Particularly, when vertical communication is frequent, strategic consensus (shared understanding about strategic priorities) is enhanced and an organization's performance improves. Training, knowledge dissemination and learning during the process of strategy implementation are also enhanced through communication (Katamei, Omwono, & Wanza, 2015).

AlAdresi and Darun (2017) carried out a study that focused on determining relationship between strategic human resource management practices and organizational commitment. The main purpose of the article is to investigate the relationship between strategic HRM (SHRM) practices and organizational commitment (OC). Hypothesis was developed considering seven key SHRM practices and OC and subsequently testing based on data from 52 oil and gas companies in Libya. The findings using structural equation modeling revealed that employees are more committed to the organization when they get best SHRM. Internal career ladders on job training and pay for performance were the key SHRM practices identified that influence employee's commitment toward the organization. Further, it was shown that the employees are more concerned of their job security and dynamic working environment. Employees with the help of organizational

support will be able to contribute to enhance OC.

Mich´ele Fenech (2013) undertook a study on internal corporate communication on strategy and employee commitment. The main objective was to examine the employees' needs and preferences of the case company's internal communication channels, specifically internal corporate communication channels that convey the company's corporate strategy. The findings of the study revealed that internal strategy corporate communication (ISCC) was preferred by the employees at the case company, it corresponded to their needs and it contributed to their affective commitment.

Yet, among these works on the internal communication and personnel's commitment, there is no consensus as to what exactly is the role of media in internal branding and it is still unclear by which precise mechanisms media can enhance commitment to exert its effects on strategy implementation.

By its gradual development, it is now perceived as a tool, which – when working efficiently – can become a strong motivator, however, on the other hand a strong distress factor as well. Functioning internal communication becomes an important work condition and its content is connected to marketing, human resources and managerial work with its most important aims, i.e. to focus on ensuring information support, setting

desired work performance and staff attitudes. (Holá & Pikhart, 2014)

Material and methods

This is a descriptive, applied research. To design the model of the impacts of media on affective commitment to strategy implementation, firstly we used focus group interviews to overcome the inadequacies of available literature and develop measures on the basis of a systematic approach. Secondly a questionnaire was used for data gathering and finally a model for the impacts of media model of the impacts of media on affective commitment to strategy implementation was developed by the help of Structural Equation Model (SEM).

Focus group:

A Focus group study is a carefully planned series of discussions designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment (Krueger and Casey 2000).

Focus groups are used in some studies as one of the research methodologies because of their ability to actually generate items for the development of a questionnaire. This approach is commonly used according to the literature (Masadeh 2012). In this research the focus group aimed at developing and formulating an
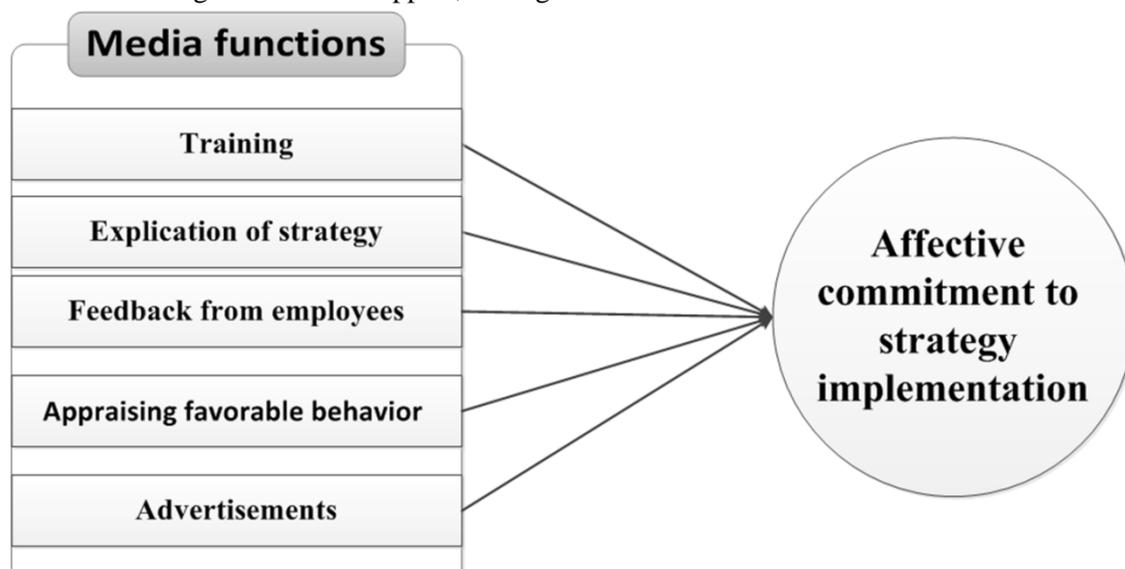

Figure 1: Research conceptual mode

processes for work performance, making conditions for cooperation and climate for

appropriate questions list for use in the questionnaire survey from the findings.

Therefore two focus group discussions were held in this research. These groups consisted of 7 bank experts with more than 5 years' experience in marketing and public relations.
Findings of these focus groups studies revealed 5 dimensions of Media's effect on personals commitment to strategy

primary model and questionnaire. The scale for measuring affective commitment was borrowed from Allen and Meyer (1996).

Research hypotheses
H1: Employees' training via media has positive influence on their affective

Table 1: Cronbach's alpha(α)

Variable	Number of questions	Cronbach's alpha coefficient
Training	3	0.72
Explication of strategy	2	0.84
Feedback from employees	2	0.95
Appraising favorable behavior	2	0.96
Advertisements	3	0.82
affective commitment to strategy	8	0.97

implementation. Therefore the scale for measuring factors in this research was concluded from these focus groups studies. Findings are summarized as follows:
1- Training
2- Explication of strategy
3- Feedback from employees
4- Appraising favorable behavior
5- Advertisements

Structural equation modeling (SEM)
Structural equation modeling (SEM) is a general term used to describe a large number of statistical models for evaluating the validity of substantive theories with empirical data. The author used SEM to evaluate whether this study's theoretical model is plausible when compared to the observed data. This process allows the author to represent the hypothetical constructs explicitly and distinguish the key relationships among marketing strategy, customer satisfaction, and loyalty (Chen 2016).
Findings of the focus group discussions show that media can positively influence personnel's commitment to strategy implementation through Training, Explication of strategy, disseminating the Feedback from employees, Benchmarking and Advertising. To test the hypotheses, a field survey in the form of a questionnaire with a total of 35 measurement items was conducted. Findings of the focus group discussions were used to develop

commitment to strategy implementation.
H2: Explication of strategy via media has positive influence their affective commitment to strategy implementation
H3: Disseminating the employees' Feedback via media has positive influence their affective commitment to strategy implementation
H4: Appraising favorable behavior of employees via media has positive influence their affective commitment to strategy implementation
H5: Brand and product advertising of bank Sepah via media has positive influence on their affective commitment to strategy implementation.

Population and Sample
The study population included all staffs of Bank Sepah in Tehran, who have direct contact with the customer.
Stratified random sampling was done and the required data were collected. To collect the data, with the whole five item Likert questionnaire from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" was used. Bentler and Chou (1987) suggest a ratio as low as 5 to 10 cases per variable would be sufficient Sample Size when latent variables have multiple indicators (Chan, Lee, Lee, Kubota, & Allen, 2007). Therefore 450 questionnaires were distributed among the employees of bank Sepah with more than 5 years' experience and ultimately the number of 410

questionnaires were returned (return rate of 91%).

Results
Validity and reliability

Reliability assessments are used to test the stability or consistency of research results. Measurement reliability addresses the consistency of the instrument's measurement: other researchers must be able to perform exactly the same experiment under the same conditions and generate the same results. This can be tested by using correlations or methods such as Cronbach's α. This, the most common method for internal consistency reliability analysis, is the average of all possible split-half correlation coefficients, the value of which varies from 0 to 1. Cronbach's α > 0.7 indicates satisfactory internal consistency reliability (Chen 2016).

To assure the reliability and validity of the measurements, Cronbach's alpha(α) and a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). the value of the factor loadings is above 0.5 and coefficient is above 0.70 for all variables, so it follows that the questionnaire has appropriate reliability. Table2 shows Cronbach's alpha values for each of the variables.

- **KMO and Bartlett's Test**

To investigate the appropriateness of factor analysis, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test statistics were used which are shown in Table 2 respectively. If the KMO

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is also statistically significant. Therefore, the instrument has confirmed reliability and validity.

Table 3: The goodness-of-fit statistics

Measure	*Recommended Value*	Model Value
$\dfrac{x^2}{df}$	$1 < \dfrac{x^2}{df} < 5$	2.092
RMSEA	RMSEA≤0.08	0.074
NFI	NFI≥0.8	0.97
GFI	GFI≥0.8	0.95
AGFI	AGFI≥0.8	0.83
PGFI	PGFI≥0.5	0.54
CFI	CFI≥0.9	0.97

The goodness-of-fit statistics revealed that the model fits the data reasonably well: The x^2/df value of 2.5 indicates a satisfactory level as it is below the recommended 3.0 (Bollen and Long, 1993). Other representative indexes also suggest that the results of the structural model analysis are a good fit of the proposed model to the data (table3).

Hypotheses testing

All of the paths estimated were significant and significant level of all variables was more than 1.96. That is, the relationship between media functions and affective commitment to strategy implementation was significant at 99%. In addition, coefficient of the path between the variables show that Employees' training, Explication of strategy, Disseminating the employees' Feedback, Appraising favorable behavior of employees Brand and product advertising of bank Sepah

Table 1 : KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.921
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	286.432
	Df	96
	Sig.	.000

value is higher than 0.6, it is considered as adequate (Kaiser & Rice, 1974). A value of greater than 0.5 is desirable. Bartlett's test measures the correlation of variables. A probability of less than 0.5 is acceptable.

According to our analysis, the value of KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy is .921 that is higher than 0.06 which indicates the value of Kaiser-Meyer is acceptable, and the value of

are the most effective aspects of media functions respectively.

Discussion

The strategy literature claims that between 50% and 80% of strategy implementation efforts fail. According to Bell, Dean, and Gottschalk (2010), strategy execution is commonly the most complicated and time-

consuming part of strategic management, while strategy formulation is primarily an intellectual and creative act involving analysis and synthesis (Rajasekar, 2014). Given the significance of this area, the focus in the field of strategic management has now shifted from the formulation of strategy to its implementation (Okumus, 2003).

2015). This study is focused on the role of media in improving commitment to strategy implementation and tries to fill the knowledge gap between media management and strategy implementation in bank Sepah.

The findings show that media can effect

Table 4: Hypotheses testing

| Hypotheses	path coefficient	Significant level	result
Employees' training via media has positive influence on their affective commitment to strategy implementation.	0.94	14.13	Approved
Explication of strategy via media has positive influence their affective commitment to strategy implementation	0.93	13.75	Approved
Disseminating the employees' Feedback via media has positive influence their affective commitment to strategy implementation	0.9	17.15	Approved
Appraising favorable behavior of employees via media has positive influence their affective commitment to strategy implementation	0.67	12.13	Approved
Brand and product advertising of bank Sepah via media has positive influence on their affective commitment to strategy implementation.	0.91	12	Approved
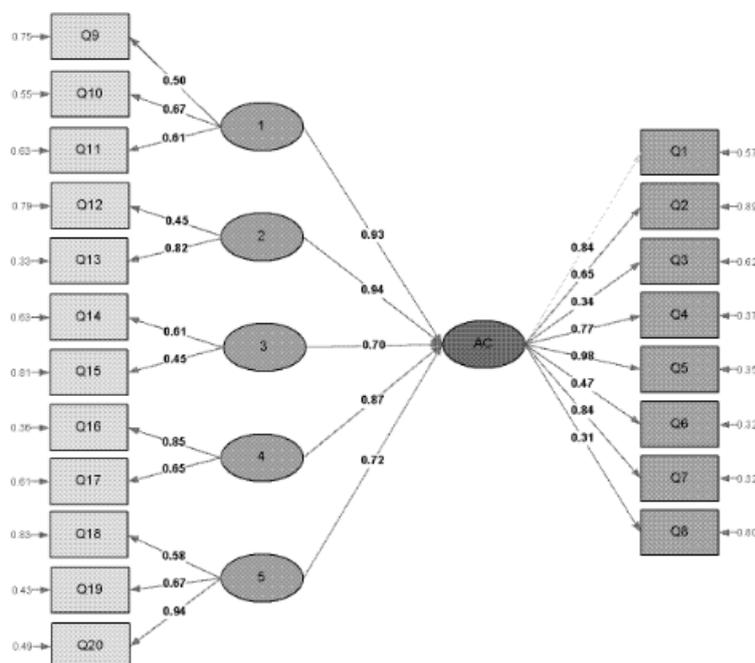
Figure 2: Path diagram (output of lisrel)

Mazolla and Kellermanns (2010) assert that middle management having low or negative commitment to strategies developed by top level management stands as hindrances to effective implementation of strategy (Nkosi,

positively on affective commitment of employees to strategy implementation by employees' training and explication of strategy. Training is one of the important activities that directly impact employee performance. Training is to offer skills and techniques required to perform the job at the appropriate level, while reward reinforces good behaviors (Lee, Kim, & Kim, 2014).

Therefore employees, training and explication of strategy contribute to the strategic clarity. The strategic clarity may be the most critical determinant of middle manager's implementation effort to reach strategy implementation effectiveness (Gaertner, Gaertner, & Akinnusi, 1984). Also, that strategic clarity will influence the inception, development and strategy implementation (Dunham & Puente, 2008).

Disseminating the employees' feedback is another function by which media can improve employees' affective commitment to strategy

implementation. Collection of feedback from all organizational levels as well as from outside the organization enables management to assess the suitability of the current program to the organization and highlights any necessary changes to be made (Mahnert and Torres 2007). Likewise the organizational commitment model of Meyer and Allen indicates that affective commitment is influenced by factors such as job challenge, role clarity, and goal clarity, and goal difficulty, receptiveness by management, peer cohesion, equity, personal importance, feedback, participation, and dependability (Andrew, 2017).

Another factor identified in this study was appraising favorable behavior of employees. An effecting rewarding program can enhance employee morale while motivating employees to perform at the desired level (Lee, Kim, & Kim, 2014).

Last but not least was brand and product advertising. Celsi and Gilly (2010) showed that advertising have a strong effect on employees as internal audience. Ads also reach the organization's employees and may contain information useful to employees in meeting customer needs (Celsi & Gilly, 2010).

Therefore results of this study are in alignment with previous studies. Moreover this study provides us with important implications about the mechanisms by which media can effect commitment and therefore will help managers and academia significantly.

This study recommends that Sepah bank's marketing communications should be integrated and focused on achieving the strategic goals. Designing and formulating a clear plan for all organizational and advertising media is very essential in this regard. Media based relevant and effective education and orientation for employees, disseminating employees' voice and comments as well as properly appraising the favorable behavior of employees through organizational media is also highly recommended. Meanwhile the impact of advertisement on employees should be seriously regarded.

By employing the outcomes of this study it is possible to select appropriate mix of media techniques and strategies. The positive relationship between media management and

strategy implementation gave productive idea of utilizing media as an important tool for enhancing employee's commitment.

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