

Journal of Strategic Management



Effect of Strategic Leadership on Performance of Manufacturing Firms in China

**Hu Muxia Chen, Donghai Feng Birasnav & Wei Hooijberg
Zhang**

ISSN:2616-8472

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^{1*}Hu Muxia Chen, ²Donghai Feng Birasnav & ³Wei Hooijberg Zhang

^{1*}Student, Tsinghua University

^{2&3}Lecturers, Tsinghua University

Email of the corresponding author: humuxiachen@gmail.com

How to cite this article: Chen, M., C., Birasnav, D., F., & Zhang, W., H. (2022). Effect of Strategic Leadership on Performance of Manufacturing Firms in China. *Journal of Strategic Management* 6(3), 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.53819/81018102t5058>

Abstract

Strategic leadership usually does not come easily in some firms. Strategic leadership needs organizations to reason, act, and impact others in various means that enhance the company's enduring success. The study thus examined the effect of strategic leadership on the performance of manufacturing firms in China. The study adopted the descriptive research design. The target population consisted of managers and employees working in JingHongYi PCB (HK) Co., Limited. Notably, the target population was 330 participants. The data collection instruments consisted of questionnaires. The data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The study findings showed that strategic leadership has a positive effect on the performance of manufacturing firms in China. Given the unstable business environment, good strategic leadership is vital in an organization's decision-making to ensure short-term success and long-term sustainability. Strategic leadership positively affects strategic alignment, which, in turn, has a beneficial impact on firm performance. The study concluded that strategic leadership has a positive and significant effect on performance. The study recommended that organizations consider strategic leadership as one of the key contributors to the success of the organizations. The strategic leadership methods need to be examined and adapted in all manufacturing firms since there is a need for strategic leaders in companies who can explore the opportunities in a turbulent environment.

Keywords: *Strategic Leadership, Performance, Manufacturing Firms, China*

<https://doi.org/10.53819/81018102t5058>

1.0 Introduction

Strategic leadership is the ability of firms to anticipate, picture and preserve flexibility and encourage others to produce a strategic opportunity and a viable future for the company. Ireland and Hitt (2020) define strategic leadership as the ability of an experienced, a senior leader who has knowledge and vision to develop and implement strategies and come up with substantial choices in the volatile, unpredictable, complicated and ambiguous strategic environment. Serfontein (2021) argued that few managers allow themselves to think of strategy and the future. Managers need to give instructions to each segment of the firm. Strategic leadership is, for that reason, the capacity of the managers to develop and re-create factors for the company's continued existence. The manager needs to have the ability to maintain one eye on how the company is presently adding value and the other eye on adjustments, both interior and exterior of the organization, which either endanger its position or present some new chance for adding value.

Strategic leadership will positively affect strategic alignment, which, in turn, will have a beneficial impact on firm performance. The role of leaders' behavior is associated directly with firm performance. As specified by Dimitrios, Sakas and Vlachos (2018), strategic leadership style refers to the utilization of strategy to consolidate resources, both human and material, for the long-term optimization of outcomes. This shows that strategic leadership consists of manipulating and maintaining core competencies, establishing social capital, sustaining an efficient firm culture, determining strategic directions: vision and tactical intent, creating human capital, stressing ethical practices, and developing balanced organizational objectives.

Strategic leadership usually does not come easily in some firms. Statistics show that fewer than 10% of managers exhibit a woefully insufficient number of strategic skills in current thinking about the needs of firms (Hill, 2021). Strategic skills are not required just in occasions of development. During difficult circumstances, tight resources are even more crucial to guarantee those resources are focused in the right areas. Strategic leadership needs us to reason, act, and impact others in various ways that enhance the company's enduring success (Cannella, Hambrick, Finkelstein & Cannella, 2019). A strategic plan is just a strategy; a company's fundamental approaches depend on the choices and options people make.

Manufacturing companies account for a significant part of the country's wealth. It is necessary for an economy since they employ a vast share of the workforce and produce materials such as nationwide infrastructure (Vera and Crossan, 2021). Every nation worldwide is contending to manufacture items much better, less expensive and faster. There are several advantages to manufacturing companies, including product innovation which entails product innovation, the advancement of innovations and the introduction of the most current techniques. The manufacturing of modern technology has increased swiftly on a global scale (Manyika and Roxburgh, 2019). Several nations have examined the quality process of the manufacturing systems to acquire professional expertise to guarantee their competitive capability. In addition, the manufacturing sector continues to be a substantial contribution to the leading economies worldwide. When the proportion of a nation's export is more significant than its imports, it generates excellent earnings return and adds value to the manufacturing companies. According to

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Hitt, Keats and DeMarie (2018) strategic leadership design requires establishing the strategic direction, manipulating and keeping core competencies, creating human capital, developing social capital, maintaining an influential business culture, and emphasizing ethical methods and developing balance in business objectives. In this regard, realizing the wanted business goals may typically call for the fostering of strategic leadership design by the company's top management with relevant assistance from all the pertinent stakeholders to supply the required direction and clear vision.

2.0 Literature Review

Becker and Gerhart (2018) discovered that strategic leadership is an essential aspect for business' development, continued scale growth along with more advancement. Nevertheless, just a couple of the scholars have researched the emphasis and the function of strategic leadership in Small and Medium-sized enterprises. In China, SMEs are the main source of the nation's unbelievable economic-development in terms of their contribution towards the creation of jobs, increase of GDP and the advancement of high-tech intensive industries. Amongst this, greater than 70 percent SMEs are within the production industry, which accounted for greater than 75 percent of the country's gross domestic product outcome. The research is about to discover whether and how strategic leadership is employed in the Chinese manufacturing SMEs, and to discover the primary qualities of the strategic leadership process in these SMEs. It intends to work as a referral for the senior directors in these firms to far better enhance and use the strategic leadership tools for their future development. In order to discover deep insights within this subject, individual interviews were performed to fifteen Chinese production SMEs and the information were analyzed by using a qualitative research method. A considerable amount of the senior managers in examined SMEs take into consideration strategic leadership as an important mechanism for the growth of their business strategies. All of the examined firms are utilizing strategic leadership strategies. However, the strategic leadership processes in these SMEs often tend to be executed in an informal and easier pattern comparing to the conceptual model.

Birasnav and Bienstock (2019) conducted study focusing on establishing the impact of strategic leadership on performance of manufacturing companies in India. The target population included all the fifty manufacturing companies in India. Participants were individuals in charge of strategy or human resource division. Semi-structured set of questions was utilized to collect primary data. The response rate of this research was 80% anchored on 40 participants out of 50. The analysis of strategic leadership in production firms revealed that, in positive organizational society, core values, signs and ideologies are shared. Well balanced business regulators revealed a favorable strong connection with yearly worker turn over. Strategic leadership techniques have actually been talked about in this study, which include: established business critical direction, successfully handled company resource portfolio, stressed reliable organizational culture, emphasized ethical methods and balanced organizational controls. These approaches have actually correlated very with client complete satisfaction, return on investment, net earnings margin and reduced yearly staff member turn over. The relationship analysis that checked the level and significance of relationships of research variables validated that reliable strategic leadership impacts business

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efficiency of manufacturing companies in India. As a result, this research contributes to the body of knowledge of Barney and Arikan who explained that one of the most essential jobs for strategic leaders is efficiently taking care of the firm's portfolio of resources that can be classified right into financial capital, human resources, social capital and firm culture. It has actually also contributed to the literature that reliable strategic leadership promotes business performance. The researcher advised that balanced organizational controls need to be properly applied to realize excellent performance.

Hitt and Duane (2020) noted good strategic leadership is vital in an organization's decision making to make sure short-term success and long term sustainability given the existing unstable business environment. SMEs in Pakistan are the essential drivers of economic growth however they fall short of accomplishing their potential. SMEs are encountering issues like tight competitors, lack of funding and the incapability of the managers to come up with long-term strategic choices. The research aimed at analyzing the impact of strategic leadership on performance of small and medium manufacturing ventures in Pakistan. Detailed survey layout was made use of. The target population included 400 registered manufacturing SMEs in Pakistan. 300 SMEs were chosen as sample utilizing stratified sampling method. Participants were the owners and managers of the companies. Gathering of main information was executed with a structured survey. The response rate of this research was 60% according to 200 participants out of 400. Descriptive data was utilized in the analysis. Strategic leadership methods have been gone over in this research that includes: developed business strategic direction, properly managed corporate resource portfolio, emphasized business culture, ethical methods and firm controls that are well balanced. Steps of organizational performance like client contentment, net earnings margin, huge yearly income and low yearly worker turnover were also examined. Both variables' level of connection was tested utilizing a correlation analysis and it verified that strategic leadership has impact on company performance. As a result, the research concluded that strategic leadership favorably impacts the performance of manufacturing SMEs in Pakistan. The researcher suggested that balanced business controls need to be successfully utilized in the realization of good performance.

Clifton, Huggins, Morgan and Thompson (2019) indicated that majority of studies shows that a growth of good leadership is one of the driving pressures for the success of SMEs in the future, and evidences suggest that lack of leadership and administration skills as the main aspects adding in the direction of the failure of SMEs. In the research, we sought to recognize how these managers have the biggest favorable effect on company performance. The research is important given that the end results will certainly led to the body of knowledge in the sector of leadership and SME's company performance in Turkey. The goal in the research is to question the strategic leadership in regards of various leadership designs and test the impact of them on performance. The sample is included white-collared members that are operating in supervisory and non-managerial job positions in various departments of the firm. An overall of 325 total responses were utilized for analysis. In regards to hypothesis testing, the very first hypothesis of the research is partly assisted as only association-oriented and transformational leadership styles are considerably associated to company performance. As to the second theory contrasted to other leadership designs transformational leadership has a stronger impact on company performance. Where the means of

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leadership designs are taken into consideration, it is obvious that in 3 nations most common leadership style is relationship-oriented. The research can be duplicated by raising the number of individuals.

Six, Normann, Stock and Schiereck (2021) revealed that appropriately applied strategic leadership is precursory for effective strategy formulation, execution and control specifically in the present highly unpredictable company environment. Because of restricted empirical outcomes locally on just how strategic leadership influences performance of companies, the research raised this understanding by answering the concern: what is the impact of strategic leadership on firm performance of production companies in Germany. The primary importance of the research was to analyze the impact of strategic leadership on organization performance of production companies in Germany. Particularly, the research intended to; evaluate the impact of strategic direction setup on firm performance of production companies in Germany, established the effect of core proficiency exploitation on firm performance of manufacturing companies in Germany, develop the effect of firm culture structure on company performance of manufacturing companies in Germany and examine the impact of firm regulations on company efficiency of production companies in Germany. The research was directed by upper tier theory, setting reliance theory, contingency theory and attribute theory. Target population was 1000 staff members from producing companies in Frankfurt and Bremen. Survey layout was used for the research. Total sample size of 300 participants was made use of. Information collection tools were both primary and secondary. Primary information was accumulated using semi organized set of questions. Secondary information collection entailed documentary analysis to capture information on company efficiency of production companies in Germany. Pilot research was executed on a group of workers from Hoechst GmbH to make sure the study instruments capture the need data prior to accomplishing the study. Detailed and inferential statistics that consisted of mean, frequency and regression was utilized in the research. The outcomes of the existing research develop a basis for reference in future by interested parties. More study needs to be executed on the effect of strategic leadership on company performance of other production companies outside these locations in order to make comparisons to the effect of strategic leadership on company performance of production companies in Germany.

Yoganathan, Siyambalapitiya and Rajapaksha (2020) performed research targeting to explore the influence of cost leadership strategy on the efficiency of tea processing factories in Badulla, Sri Lanka. Present changing economic and business environments tea manufacturing facilities in Sri Lanka compete for clients, revenue, market share and products that fulfill consumer's demands. The Sri Lanka tea producing market has actually remained in decline given that 2000 which culminated in closure of a lot of the tea estates. Tea processing factories in Sri Lanka particular encounters unprecedented challenges; a change in consumer demand and practice, an altering climate, resource restraints and mechanization of farming are converging to put pressure on an industry. This research utilized a detailed study layout. The research targeted 10 tea processing factories in Badulla, Sri Lanka. The total variety of the participants was 500 consisting of managers and support staff. Quantitative data was evaluated making use of detailed statistics. The study established a favorable and considerable connection between distinction approach, expense

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leadership strategy and focus approach on business performance. The research noted a favorable and considerable association in between expense leadership method and organizational efficiency. The research concluded that cost leadership strategy focus on resource company. The objective is to generate products or services at the cheapest possible cost by organizing each potential resource around the present manufacturing approaches. The research suggests that the tea manufacturing facilities must supply a reduced price entry with a product offering a competitive advantage in regards of quality.

Wunderer (2021) found that the main concern for each single strategy manager is to enable firm's phenomenal performance with efficient planning and efficient execution of approaches in order to obtain competitive advantage on its competitors. Thus, strategy managers should view the firm personnel as an essential resource whereby different central competencies are made and exploited effectively to get competitive edge. Several scholars are persuaded that a strategy may be referred as a framework whereupon a company can insist its basic congruity while finding out to settle in to the changing condition to complete upper hand on competitors. Whereas, strategy execution is the method of putting plans and techniques into actions while creating programs, budget plans and procedures. Developing strategy is a complicated job but nowadays execution is thought about even more complex process. According to numerous studies, leadership often has a crucial impact on overall performance of a firm. Studies have actually subjected a number of problems in method implementation attached to management roles. Without a reliable management, intensifying problem of concerns will certainly be as a result of decreased harmonization since team might perceive the evasion towards perplexing and intimidating conditions by leading administration, in a result company might experience impediments in method implementation. For that reason, in this study the effect of strategy leadership on strategy execution is found with previous literature review. In which, it is discovered that companies appear to have challenges in implementing their approaches and leadership is claimed as one of one of the most considerable barriers. Moreover, leadership is noted as a vital driver in successful strategy implementation. Consequently, role of leadership need to be embarked on diligently while expressing and applying the strategy decisions.

Hitt, Haynes and Serpa (2019) conducted research to check out the influence of strategic leadership on strategic change in the study and board manufacturing companies in China. The research was led by Upper Tier Concept. The goals of the research were; to identify the impact of transformational leadership on strategic adjustment, impact of transactional leadership on strategic adjustment and the joint impacts of both transactional and transformational leadership on strategic modification in the study and board manufacturing companies in China. The target population made up 84 paper and board production firms in China with a sample of 80 firms made use of for the research. To accomplish the goals of the research, primary information was accumulated utilizing a closed-ended structured questionnaire that was administered to the managers of the firms. The connection in between transformational and transactional leadership on strategy adjustment was tested utilizing Pearson's correlation and the influence of strategic leadership on strategy modification was examined making use of multiple regression evaluation. The outcomes show a significant favorable connection between transformational leadership and strategy adjustment. There was likewise significant partnership between transactional leadership and

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strategy change. The research additionally revealed that transactional leadership were much more efficient on strategic adjustment adhered to by transformational leadership on strategy modification. The research concluded that transformational and transactional leadership exploits and maintains core expertise on the study and board manufacturing firm's strategic adjustment execution. Strategy managers to launch strategic adjustment they are required to recognize when and how to use either transformational or transactional leadership. From the final thought, the research advises that executives in firms need to involve workers when introducing strategic change. The strategy makes sure that the achievement of critical competitive advantage and decreases resistance to strategic change. The research, additionally suggested skill improvement for strategic leadership, training and mentorship strategies to improve strategy leadership ability to initiate strategic changes in their companies.

Gupta (2018) discovered that reliable strategic leadership is taken into consideration as a main component for the effective performance of any company functioning in the ever changing and complex environment of the 21st century. In the context of data unpredictability and resource scarcity, strategic leadership is called for to face the fact of ecological turbulence and a constant requirement for ideal firm modification in order to attain performance objectives. A lot of the conceptual and empirical studies have actually revealed that strategic leadership activities significantly affect performance. In spite of its advantages, researches have actually revealed that the effect of strategic leadership on firm performance rests upon situational restraints or arbitrary impacts. Today, very few empirical studies have examined the direct and indirect association between strategic leadership, outside environment, business change and efficiency. This study looks for to unfold the study space by specifically assessing pertinent conceptual and empirical literature to bring out the opportunity that the exterior environment and firm adjustment might affect the partnership between strategic leadership and firm performance. The study advances the upcoming suppositions that adopt a verdict that the straight result of strategic leadership on performance is disputed and for this reason undetermined because of possible regulating and moderating effect of the outside setting and firm change respectively. It is really anticipated that the study's inferences would assist empirical study in numerous contexts to speed up resolving of the extant expertise gaps.

Boal and Hooijberg (2021) performed study which tries to identify the link amongst the strategic leadership on worker performance. Strategic leadership produces a unique association between administration and workers to improve staff member performance. In the research we likewise discover the mediating influence of job engagement among strategic leadership and worker performance. Convenience sampling is made use of as the sampling method. Total 200 questionnaires were given out amongst the participants of the research. 150 surveys are relatively attempted with the action rate of 89%. To examine the information, SPSS was utilized. To inspect the partnership in between the variables connection analysis is utilized that reveals the important connection between the variables. To determine the effect of one variable on other regression evaluation is made use of which have clearly shown that strategic leadership has considerable influence on worker efficiency. Therefore, all the theories provided considerable results. Thus, learning will guide the leaders of management to number out the part of strategic leadership to

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boost worker's efficiency for the upcoming cut-throat examinations in international industrial competition.

3.0 Research Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive research design. The target population consisted of managers and employees working in JingHongYi PCB (HK) Co., Limited. Notably, the target population was 330 participants and sample size 247. The data collection instruments consisted of questionnaires. The data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics

4.0 Research Findings and Discussion

4.1 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis shows the association between study variables. Notably, it shows the association between strategic leadership and performance. Table 1 presents the study findings of correlation analysis.

Table 1: Correlation Analysis

		Performance	Strategic Leadership
Performance	Pearson Correlation	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Strategic Leadership	Pearson Correlation	.258**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000

The correlation results from Table 1 show that strategic leadership is positively and significantly associated with performance ($r=.258$, $p=.000$). The results concur with Yoganathan, Siyambalapitiya and Rajapaksha (2020), who articulated a positive and considerable association between the strategic leadership method and firm performance.

4.2 Regression Analysis

The section comprised of model fitness, analysis of variance and regression of coefficient. The results presented in Table 2 indicate the model fitness

Table 2: Model Fitness

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.245a	0.357	0.245	0.0345

The results presented in Table 2 show that strategic leadership is satisfactory in explaining the performance in manufacturing firms in China. This was backed up by the coefficient of

<https://doi.org/10.53819/81018102t5058>

determination which was 0.357; this implied that the strategic leadership explains 35.7% variations of the performance in the manufacturing firms in China. The analysis of variance results are presented in Table 4

Table 4: Analysis of Variance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.215	1	4.251	483.1	.000b
	Residual	2.164	246	0.0088		
	Total	6.379	247			

The results depicted in Table 3 show that the overall model was statistically significant. The results imply that strategic leadership is a significant predictor in explaining performance. The findings are supported by the F statistics, which is 483.1 and the reported p-value of 0.000, which was less than the conventional probability significance level of 0.05.

Table 4: Regression of Coefficient

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.758	0.005		9.152	0.007
Strategic Leadership	0.458	0.085	0.314	4.512	0.045

The results in Table 4 show that strategic leadership is positively and significantly related to performance ($\beta=.458$, $p=0.045$). The results are supported by the calculated t-statistic of 4.512, larger than the critical t-statistic of 1.96. This meant that when the strategic leadership within the manufacturing firms increases or improves by one unit, the performance of manufacturing firms will increase by 0.458 units when other factors are held constant. This shows that strategic leadership is critical in increasing workers' performance. Boal & Hooijberg (2021) discovered that strategic leadership produces a unique association between management and workers to improve staff member performance.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concluded that strategic leadership has a significant positive effect on performance. The strategic leadership style has a considerable contribution to the performance of manufacturing firms in China. Skill improvement for strategic leadership, training and mentorship strategies to improve strategy leadership ability to initiate strategic changes in their firms. Given the unstable business environment, good strategic leadership is vital in an organization's decision-making to

ensure short-term success and long-term sustainability. Strategic leadership positively affects strategic alignment, which, in turn, has a beneficial impact on firm performance. The study concluded that strategic leadership has a positive and significant effect on performance. The study recommended that organizations consider strategic leadership as one of the crucial contributors to the success of the organizations. The strategic leadership methods need to be examined and adapted in all manufacturing firms since there is a need for strategic leaders in companies who can explore the opportunities in a turbulent environment.

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