



**THE USE AND PERCEIVED VALUE OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT
TOOLS IN AN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS COMPANY IN
SOUTH AFRICA**

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By

Jagdish Ramaser

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MASTERS DEGREE IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Supervisor: Andre Vermaak

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work in this report is my own except for quotations and summaries which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any University or other higher educational institution for the award of a degree.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Ramaser', with a stylized flourish at the end.

J Ramaser

14 December 2022

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to God as the Trimurti (Brahma the creator, Vishnu the preserver, and Shiva the destroyer) for granting me the will, strength, and tremendous courage to pursue and complete this study.

I also dedicate this study to my parents for being my pillar of strength and for their encouragement and support throughout this study.

In addition, I also dedicate this study to the numerous close family members, relatives and friends that have sadly passed on during the past two years. May they achieve moksha (ultimate freedom and liberation).

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ABSTRACT

The world is currently driven and affected by hyper-competition, which creates severe pressure on firms, including those in the South African (SA) information and communications technology (ICT) sector. The SA ICT sector plays a key role in the economy as it is an enabler of economic growth. To thrive in such a highly competitive climate, a better grasp of the firm's competitive forces and the dynamics that impact its success is essential. Strategic management tools (SMTs) can aid an organisation in gathering relevant data and transforming the data into actionable intelligent information to make strategic and tactical decisions. This can help ICT companies to improve their organisational outcomes including their performance which can ultimately lead to a competitive advantage.

The significance of this study is to explore the use and perceived value of SMTs in a SA ICT company. Based on a cross-sectional survey design, a quantitative data collection technique was used. An online survey questionnaire was used to access a random sample of 200 from approximately 6000 employees in the company from which 55 usable responses were received. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse the data to determine the use and perceived value of twelve SMTs in the company. The company's use and perceived value of the SMTs were compared with the data obtained for the past 5 years from other companies in the wider group study.

This study identified the SMTs with the highest and lowest use and perceived values in both the company as well as in the wider group study. The study found the company to have both a higher average use and a higher average perceived value compared to the wider group study, confirming that in general the company use and value the SMTs more than other companies. The study also found "A formal strategic planning process", "Stakeholder engagement during the strategic planning and implementation" and the "Balanced Scorecard" to be both the least used and valued, and therefore the most unpopular SMTs in the company.

The findings from this study have both academic and managerial implications. This study contributes to literature and attempts to fill the void identified in the

literature surveyed. Knowing the significance and value of using SMTs provides management with concrete considerations for actions and interventions that could be pursued in the interest of improving company-wide performance and gaining a competitive advantage. The study's findings inform specific recommendations to the company's Strategy Division, managers, and employees on using the identified SMTs to make strategic and tactical decisions that can help improve performance. Future research considerations were also identified and suggested that included a study on the use of SMTs and its effect on the performance of ICT firms in SA, in-depth and longitudinal studies in SA companies and studies to be conducted in the SA context on the use and satisfaction rates of SMTs using the Bain's Management Tools & Trends top 25 SMTs list.

Keywords: strategic management tools, strategic management tools use, perceived value of strategic management tools, ICT company, company performance.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

α	Cronbach's alpha coefficient
σ	Standard deviation
μ	Mean
4IR	Fourth industrial revolution
3G	Third (3 rd) generation wireless mobile telecommunications technology
4G	Fourth (4 th) generation wireless mobile telecommunications technology
5G	Fifth (5 th) generation wireless mobile telecommunications technology
ABC	Activity Based Costing
BCG	Boston Consulting Group
BSC	Balanced Scorecard
CBD	Central Business District
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
EIS	Executive Information Systems
GE	General Electric
ICASA	Independent communications authority of South Africa
ICT	Information and communications technology
IT	Information technology
ITA	Information Technology Association
PEST	Political, Economic, Social, and Technological
POPIA	Protection of Personal Information Act
PSPP	A free, open-source alternative to SPSS
SA	South Africa
SBL	School of Business Leadership
SECI	Socialisation, Externalisation, Combination, and Internalisation.
SM	Strategic management
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise
SMME	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises
SMT	Strategic management tool
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences

Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
SWOT	Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats
TQM	Total Quality Management
UNISA	University of South Africa

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This study's overarching goal is to determine the use and perceived value of strategic management tools (SMTs) in a South African (SA) information and communications technology (ICT) company. This research will also be used to offer recommendations to management and practitioners.

The background to the study is discussed in this first chapter, followed by defining the problem statement and providing context on the organisation and sector chosen for the purpose of the research. The study's goals and objectives are then delineated, providing the context within which the significance of the study is expressed. The sections that follow outline the study and highlight the associated limitations in providing additional context and aiding in the conceptualisation of the subject matter. Next, an overview of the research design is provided, followed by an outline of the literature survey, then an outline of the research method and the empirical investigation and analysis. A brief outline of the dissertation is then presented, followed by a synopsis of Chapter 1.

1.2 Background

According to Kamkankaew *et al.* (2022), the world is currently driven and affected by hyper-competition, which creates severe pressure on firms. To thrive in such a highly competitive climate, a better grasp of the firm's competitive forces and the dynamics that impact its success is essential. Firms must understand how to remain competitive and predict and adapt to developments within and outside their industries (Kamkankaew *et al.*, 2022). Firms should adopt a process for converting data into actionable intelligence that can be used to make strategic and tactical decisions. The gathering of information and the transformation of raw data into intelligent information is a crucial characteristic of business. Strategic management tools (SMTs) can aid an organisation in gathering relevant data and transforming the data into actionable intelligent information to make strategic and tactical decisions (Laudon and Laudon, 2012).

Nouri (2017) has found that the use of SMTs by managers increased company performance and there was a significant and positive relationship between the SMTs and company performance. According to Afonina (2015), there are numerous studies conducted on the relationship between strategic planning and organisational performance but only a few studies have been done on the relationship between the use of SMTs and their value and impact on company performance.

Studies conducted by Iseri-Say, Toker and Kantur (2008); Al-khadash and Feridun, (2006); and Indiatsy *et al.* (2014), have found that the use of SMTs is valuable as it influences company performance. However, studies conducted by Rigby (1995); Friedl and Biloslavo (2009) and Efendioglu and Karabulut (2010) concluded that there was no clear relationship between SMTs and company performance thus questioning the value of using SMTs.

Berisha Qehaja, Kutllovci and Shiroka Pula (2017a) have found that there is a general paucity of empirical research on the use and the value of SMTs. Further, Gunn and Williams (2007) and Clark (1997) have found that there has been little research on the use of SMTs in businesses. SMTs utilisation has been explored by many academics in the available studies. Some have contributed by identifying and categorising them, while others have researched which SMTs are utilised more extensively in various types and sizes of businesses, and yet others have investigated the extent of their utilisation and impacts. Nonetheless, academics and practitioners have not thoroughly discussed the use nor the value of SMTs (Berisha Qehaja, Kutllovci and Shiroka Pula, 2017a).

According to Elbanna (2008), the bulk of studies are undertaken in developed countries, with only a few in developing countries. Aldehayyat and Anchor (2008) found that strategy scholars have given little attention to the subject of SMTs use or adoption. Frost (2003) add that the lack of a strong focus on SMTs within the strategic management discipline can be partially attributed to the secondary role that these SMTs serve.

The review of existing literature revealed that the studies conducted previously on the use of SMTs are either too few or too old. There appears to be very little

literature on the value of SMTs in business, especially in South Africa. According to the literature surveyed, it is evident that the use and value of SMTs in the context of the South African ICT industry has not been fully explored. This will be evidenced comprehensively in the literature survey that will be presented in Chapter 2 of this research study.

Thus, there appears to be a gap in literature and therefore a requirement for a study to be conducted in the South African ICT environment. Given the emergence of numerous disruptive technologies, increasing, and changing customer demands and increased competition, the market situation in the ICT environment has become relatively tumultuous. In these extremely turbulent times, ICT providers have no choice but to investigate new competitive positioning strategies that will help them gain a competitive advantage. Organisations that do not embrace the fourth industrial revolution (4IR), have poor business and technology strategies, and do not embrace the use of SMTs to help them navigate the highly dynamic and tumultuous business environment may soon find themselves irrelevant (Henry-Nickie, Frimpong and Sun, 2019). This study is therefore important in that it assesses the chosen ICT company's use and the value placed by staff, managers, and leaders on SMTs. Based on findings from the assessments, the study will provide recommendations that could help the company gain insights, potentially leading to a competitive advantage.

This study will be conducted within a leading ICT service provider in South Africa called BroadbandCo (pseudonym). BroadbandCo offers fixed line, mobile, data and information technology (IT) services. It provides a large suite of international, national, local and access layer data network connectivity and services including international and wholesale voice services. BroadbandCo is one of the leading wholesale infrastructure connectivity providers and has one of the largest network footprints across the country. Products and services are offered to the market by means of various technologies including copper, optic fibre, mobile (3G, 4G and 5G), submarine cable and satellite communications infrastructure. There is a large component of infrastructure development that occurs continually in the organisation and, as competitive pressures intensify, there is an ever-increasing

emphasis on innovating for the future and adopting next generation technologies and practices.

The organisation employs approximately six thousand people and operates on a national scale in South Africa. The employees in BroadbandCo can be considered educated as the minimum qualification requirement for employment in BroadbandCo is a matric certificate. Once employed, employees undergo the relevant technical training and development. The majority of staff, from field technicians and engineers to technical supervisors and managers, senior management and executives, human resources and administration staff, legal teams and financial staff are computer literate and technology savvy.

The requirement for continuous improvement to maintain or increase profitability and shareholder value has necessitated considerable changes in organisational strategy and structure in recent years. BroadbandCo has restructured and downsized on several occasions in the recent past as competitive pressures and regulatory requirements necessitated changes in organisational strategy.

During the periods when organisational strategy had to be changed and restructuring occurred, some employees may have perceived that the new organisational strategy was not clearly articulated and communicated within the organisation. Furthermore, some employees may have also perceived that the rationale for these strategic changes were not clearly communicated. In addition, employees may have not been fully aware of the organisational strategy planning and implementation processes as well as the extent of stakeholder engagement during these processes. Even though the organisation has since created a "Strategy Division" to formulate appropriate strategies to help the organisation navigate through these turbulent times, some employees may perceive that the benefits and value created by this division may not currently be clearly visible. Employees may not be fully aware of the contributions made by the Strategy Division towards the development and implementation of new organisational strategies.

There could therefore be a perceived gap in proper communication and engagement within the organisation during the strategic planning and

implementation stages. There could also be a perceived lack in the use and value of SMTs within the organisation. This study is therefore important as it aims to uncover the extent of the use and the perceived value of SMTs within the organisation. From these findings appropriate recommendations will be made that could assist management, the Strategy Division, and the organisation to be more effective.

1.3 Problem statement

The South African (SA) ICT sector plays a key role in the SA economy as it is an enabler of economic growth. According to ICASA (2021), the SA ICT sector contributed R243 billion in revenue in 2020 towards the SA economy. Malonje (2019) and ITA (2021) indicate that SA has one of the largest ICT sectors in Africa and it will have a significant contribution to Africa's economic growth in future. This sector impacts the economy daily as it enables connectivity, communications and business transactions between the various sectors, businesses and individuals and is key to the digital economy (ICASA, 2021). ICASA (2021), indicate that in 2020 the total number of people employed in this sector in SA stood at 56 550 people. This sector contributes significantly towards job creation and employment especially in a country like SA where the unemployment rate in 2019 was 29.1% (Malonje, 2019).

The ICT industry continuously innovates and transform the way we live and work by its service and product offerings and has enabled economies to continue operations through the Covid-19 Pandemic and lock downs (ICASA, 2021). The ICT industry is a cut-throat industry and poses severe challenges for a company to keep a step ahead of competitors (Leite *et al.*, 2018; Barba-Sánchez *et al.*, 2018). The use of innovation, SMTs and technology convergence provides a way that enables prospects for future business growth as well as competitive advantage (Iseri-Say, Toker and Kantur, 2008).

The literature survey revealed that there is limited empirical research on the use and the value of SMTs in the SA ICT industry. There is thus a perceived gap in the literature regarding the use and the value of SMTs in the SA ICT industry. This could result in a vacuum on aspects that influence the performance of ICT

companies in this market and therefore could make it difficult for business leaders and managers in this industry to determine the best available approach to ensure high performance and a competitive edge in this very competitive industry.

It may seem that BroadbandCo's use of SMTs to set strategies in the past were either limited or used inefficiently as BroadbandCo has been losing market share and its revenues have declined by approximately 9% over the past five years and the company's performance continues to decline. This therefore necessitates additional research on the subject. The research problem has therefore been recognised as: **"The use and the perceived value of strategic management tools in an information and communications technology company in South Africa"**. There seems to be little information about this problem in ICT firms and especially in a firm like BroadbandCo, the scale of the problem is unknown.

1.4 Research question

Research questions are observed through a multidisciplinary perspective of existing theories, previous findings and plural contexts of interpretation (Kumar, 2019). Makadok, Burton and Barney (2018:4) state: *"A research question is the main input into the theorizing process. Without a research question, there is nothing to theorize about. Every field of study has its own uniquely characteristic research questions."*

The use, and in particular the value of SMTs is not clearly known both in the existing body of literature surveyed as well as empirical evidence. This perceived gap in business and literature needs to be closed for the reasons discussed previously. This therefore leads to the formulation of following research question for this study:

- *What is the use and perceived value of SMTs within BroadbandCo?*

1.5 Research objectives

- To determine the use of SMTs in BroadbandCo.
- To explore the perceived value of SMTs in BroadbandCo.

- To compare the use and perceived value of SMTs in BroadbandCo with other companies.

1.6 Importance of the study

The academic significance of understanding how the use and value placed on SMTs impacts organisational performance lies in the application of these results by practitioners in the field of strategic management, as well as to inform future research.

From a business standpoint, the lack of value placed on the use of SMTs to assist BroadbandCo in developing strategies to outwit competitors has the potential to lose any organisational competitive advantage that it may have had. Knowing the significance and value of using SMTs in the strategic management process will provide BroadbandCo's management with concrete considerations for actions and interventions that could be pursued in the interest of improving company-wide performance and gaining a competitive advantage (Rigby, 2015; Pasanen, 2015; Afonina, 2015; Indiatsy *et al.*, 2014; Kalkan and Bozkurt, 2013; Afonina and Chalupský, 2012).

In the context of this study, understanding the empirical research will empower management to better understand and lead staff appropriately using SMTs in all stages of the strategic management process, which is critical for BroadbandCo to gain a competitive advantage. The improved use and perceived value of SMTs may result in improved staff morale, commitment, gratitude, and job satisfaction which would ultimately result in improved company performance (Nouri, 2017; Rigby, 2015; Afonina, 2015; Pasanen, 2015; Indiatsy *et al.*, 2014; Kalkan and Bozkurt, 2013; Afonina and Chalupský, 2012).

1.7 Assumptions of the study

This study assumes that the strategy of BroadbandCo will remain unchanged for the next few months, there will not be any new legislation introduced and it is foreseen that the same top management team and board will remain for the duration of this study.

1.8 Research design

The world view that underpins this research on a meta-theoretical level is positivist. Simply put, this study will concentrate on facts and data that can be observed and obtained by scientific testing, logical inferences, and will be completely objective (Saunders *et al.*, 2019).

The appropriateness of the research methodology selected is determined by the study's objective, the resources accessible, prevailing limitations and the researcher's competency (Kumar, 2019). It is the researcher's duty to define the approach for the data acquisition prior to undertaking a study. There are two main approaches for gathering data: qualitative and quantitative research methods.

The quantitative research method was chosen for this study because it will largely focus on generating a statistical picture of what the respondents will think and do. This, in turn, will lead to following validity and reliability considerations based – at its heart – on an intellectual platform that will employ quantitative analysis techniques (Barnham, 2015).

The study will comprise descriptive research, which means that the quantitative data gathered during the investigation will be portrayed by way of summaries and explanations, by being arranged and represented graphically (Byrne, 2017). These approaches describe situations and do not make accurate predictions or determine cause and effect.

The study will be undertaken as a cross-sectional study, meaning that a single measurement across a sample population at a specific point in time will be taken. A cross-sectional study is appropriate when the research questions are related to a given point in time (Saunders *et al.*, 2019; Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). In this instance, the exact point will be anchored in the context of when the survey questionnaire will be completed by all respondents within the organisation.

1.9 Research method

According to Coldwell and Herbst (2004) and Devlin (2018), research is a process of designing, gathering, analysing, and reporting information to uncover

opportunities and reduce decision-making risks. In research methodology, there are several research designs, which include exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory designs.

The study will comprise descriptive and explanatory research, where the quantitative data gathered during the investigation will be analysed and presented by way of summaries and explanations, by being arranged and by being represented graphically (Byrne, 2017).

A literature survey and an empirical investigation forms the basis of the research study. These are briefly expanded on below. Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 provide a detailed literature survey and a detailed discussion of the empirical investigation respectively.

1.9.1 Literature survey

The study's key concepts will be explained by examining existing literature for each concept. *Strategic management*; *Strategic management tools*; and *Perceived value* are the key concepts. For each of these key concepts, definitions will be provided, and a preferred definition will be chosen for this research study. The use and perceived value of SMTs will be explored and an in-depth look at the linked antecedents and precursors will be provided.

1.9.2 Empirical investigation

The steps of the empirical investigation are aligned with the overall objectives of this research study. A standard online survey questionnaire will be used to gather data within the organisation. Data will also be obtained from the wider group study or other companies (it should be noted that the terms "wider group study" and "other companies" will be used interchangeably in this study) and compared with BroadbandCo's data. Once all the data has been obtained, it will be analysed with descriptive statistics, and the results of the study will then be presented in Chapter 4 using tables and graphs.

1.10 Research constructs

The definition to key terms will be provided in the Literature Survey in Chapter 2 below. The key terms that will be defined are: *Strategic management*; *Strategic management tools*; and *Perceived value*.

1.11 Delineation

This research study focuses solely on a South African ICT company. A pooled sample of two-hundred employees from operational staff to senior management across the organisation will be used to conduct the research study on BroadbandCo.

The research study will only include a few variables related to the use and perceived value of SMTs. It should be noted that there are also other variables that will not be explored that may have an impact on the relationship between the variables.

1.12 Limitations of this study

The study will be carried out within BroadbandCo, therefore generalisations within the ICT sector, as well as between industries and other geographical jurisdictions, should be viewed with caution. Given the subjective nature of the method, other influences outside the scope of the research study could affect employee replies and have an impact on the results that will be obtained and ultimately the outcomes of the research study.

Gaining access to the right people could also be a challenge. It is assumed that the targeted people will respond to the survey request and questionnaire. The study is also based on the assumption that the respondents will be open and honest in their responses to the survey questions.

Time and resource constraints will also be a limiting factor. The allocated time for the survey responses could be a challenge especially for senior management staff who have busy schedules and other 'important work' to attend to and may not view the survey as important. The researcher will have a tight schedule to

meet, and this may prove to be a challenge considering the balancing of various commitments and responsibilities.

The researcher does not have many years of experience conducting research and authoring academic papers; thus, the scope of discussion could therefore be a limitation of this study. As a result, the scope and depth of the study's discussions may be compromised on many levels when compared to the studies of experienced researchers.

1.13 Layout of study

The following is an overview of this dissertation:

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter provides the introduction, the study's background, and problem statement. This chapter also outlines the study's purpose, the research questions to be addressed and the research methodology.

Chapter 2: Literature Survey

In a detailed literature survey, this chapter identifies and explores key concepts relevant to this study. The chapter examines the theoretical, empirical, and conceptual frameworks of the literature on the use and perceived value of SMTs.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter provides details of the research design and research methodology that this study employs. It describes how the research data will be collected, analysed, and presented.

Chapter 4: Analysis and Findings

This chapter presents the data that is to be collected and will then examine the findings from the data analysis. The results of the data analysis are then presented and discussed in relation to answering the research question and addressing the research problem and research objectives.

Chapter 5: Findings, Recommendations, Limitations and Conclusions

This chapter examines the study's significant findings in relation to the research question and the research objectives. This chapter also includes recommendations, study limitations, opportunities for future research and conclusions.

1.14 Conclusion

The background to the research study was presented in this introductory chapter, providing context on the organisation and sector that this research study will focus on. This was followed by refining and articulating the problem statement. The research question was formulated, and the study's objectives were determined, after which the study's significance from a business and academic standpoint was expressed. Delineation and the limitations of the study were then described in the sections that followed. This added context and framing to the chosen topic. An overview of the proposed research design was given, followed by outline of the proposed research methodology. A brief on the literature survey completed and to be conducted and the empirical investigation to be undertaken then followed. Finally, a brief description of the rest of the dissertation's proposed structure was provided.

The chapter that follows will focus on relevant existing literature as well as the conceptual framework.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE SURVEY

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the background to the study, the study's goals and objectives and provided a context within which the significance of the study has been expressed. This chapter discusses the theoretical, empirical, and conceptual frameworks of literature regarding the use and value of strategic management tools in organisations to gain and sustain a competitive advantage.

The concepts of strategic management, strategic management tools and perceived value are discussed and defined from several viewpoints to act as a common point of reference for the rest of this study. Previous studies on the use and value of SMTs are reviewed. In addition, the benefits, and limitations of SMTs are also highlighted.

2.2 Key concepts

The key concepts relevant to this study are Strategic Management, Strategic Management Tools (SMTs) and Perceived Value and they are discussed below.

2.2.1 Strategic management

In the domain of strategic management (SM), strategy is an important concept. Strategy originates from the Greek word *strategos*, which in military connotation means leadership; it relates to planning the deployment of resources to achieve selected objectives (Kotler *et al.*, 2015). *“Strategy is the act of aligning a company and its environment. That environment, as well as the firm’s own capabilities, are subject to change. Thus, the task of strategy is to maintain a dynamic, not a static balance”* (Porter, 1991: 97).

The origins of SM can be traced to the early 1960s in four publications from that era, namely, Chandler (1962); Ansoff (1965); Learned, Christensen, Andrews, and Guth (1965); and Andrews (1971). These authors are considered the founders of SM. The first publication, *“Strategy and Structure”* discussed the manager’s role in taking long-term decisions, allocating resources, and developing plans to ensure that decisions are implemented. It was also demonstrated that a shift in strategic direction could fundamentally alter an

organisation. Ansoff (1965) also shared this perspective on SM and addressed recent popular constructs such as competitive advantage.

SM is considered management at the uppermost level of the company and comprises the process of strategic planning, strategy implementation, and strategic control. Though there are various perspectives on how this occurs, SM includes strategists making decisions (strategising) on what the company wants to achieve (its strategic direction), how it intends to achieve it (its strategy), and which strategic initiatives will best assist it in expressing its ambitions (UNISA SBL, 2021; Thompson *et al.*, 2020). SM is a continuous process that entails formulating an organisation's strategic goals, vision, mission, and objectives, and analysing its present situation so that it can formulate appropriate strategies, operationalise the strategies, and evaluate, adjust, or modify the strategies as required (Al Hijji, 2014; Tokgöz *et al.*, 2014; Popa, 2005).

According to Nouri (2017) and Grant (2003), SM is a systematic process that identifies internal and external factors in an organisation in order to determine better objectives, and formulate, implement and evaluate strategies to accomplish these objectives. SM also encompasses a collection of frameworks and theories, complemented by tools and procedures that are intended to aid managers to strategically think, plan and act (Stonehouse and Pemberton, 2002).

Other researchers have different perspectives on what SM is, for example, Bonekeh (2015); Stead and Stead (2008) and Bowman *et al.* (2002) view SM as a continuous process that involves strategic manager's efforts to adapt the firm to its operational environment while developing competitive advantages. Such competitive advantages allow the organisation to capitalise on opportunities while minimising threats from the business environment. Popa *et al.* (2019) add that SM enables firms to not only adjust to environmental changes but also to initiate these changes and contribute to the environmental changes.

In his seminal work, "Strategy and Structure", which was published in 1962, Chandler defines strategy as "*the determination of the basic long-term goals and objectives of an enterprise, and the adoption of courses of action and the*

allocation of resources necessary for carrying out the goals” (Chandler, 1962:13-14).

Hitt *et al.* (2011:6) defines SM as: “...*the set of commitments, decisions, and actions required for the firm to achieve competitive advantage and above-average returns.*”

In addition, Abosede, Obasan and Alese (2016:316) state: “*strategic management provides overall direction to the enterprise and involves specifying the organisation’s objectives, developing long-term policies and plans designed to achieve these objectives, and then allocating resources to implement the plans*”

Based on the findings above, there are several perspectives and definitions of SM. The abovementioned authors define four key characteristics of SM: It is oriented toward organisational objectives, involves multiple stakeholders in decision-making, necessitates the incorporation of both short and long-term perspectives, and necessitates the acknowledgement of trade-offs between effectiveness and efficiency in the perspective of its internal and external environments. This study will refer to this perspective of SM.

2.2.1.1 Perspectives on Strategic Management

The two broad perspectives on strategising and SM can be clustered around the concepts of deliberate strategy and emergent strategy (Aggerholm, 2018). Deliberate strategy is planned and executed according to plan, achieving the organisation’s strategic objectives. It usually considers strategy to be a neat and rational cognitive process that is proactive in nature. In contrast, emergent strategy occurs when managers react to unplanned events. It is thus reactive in nature. However, emergent strategy can also be proactive (Aggerholm, 2018; Mintzberg, 1994; Mintzberg and Walters, 1985). Table 1 below provides a comparison of deliberate and emergent strategies. The reality is that most organisations do not operate purely in a deliberate or emergent fashion but will have elements of both.

Table 1: A comparison of deliberate and emergent strategy

	Deliberate	Emergent
View of strategy	Organisational process	Human activity
Responsible	Top managers think, middle managers do	All managers (and external players) can be strategists
Primary perspective on strategising	Rational, <u>neat</u> and efficient process	Messy and experimental
Primary lens	Cognitive	Both cognitive and political
View of the organisation	Rational and ordered	Complex adaptive system

Source: Adapted from UNISA SBL (2021)

2.2.1.2 The Strategic Management Process

The stages that an organisation goes through when involved with its strategy are referred to as the SM process. Understanding the individual stages is not an easy task, as some researchers have identified three stages (Aggerholm, 2018; Dudzeviit and Peleckien, 2010; Feurer, Chaharbaghi, and Wargin, 1995; Mintzberg, 1994; Mintzberg *et al.*, 2003), whereas others have identified four (Bear and Pawlak, 2010; Acur and Bititci, 2004). The researchers who found that there are three phases in the SM process normally combine the formulation and implementation stages while those that understand it as four stages consider a separate stage for analysing the internal and external environment, and distinct formulation and implementation stages. Thompson *et al.* (2020) identifies five stages and these are illustrated in Figure 1 and discussed below.

According to Thompson *et al.* (2020), the SM process is an ongoing process comprising of five interconnected stages. The first stage entails creating a strategic vision that sets the company's long-term direction, a mission statement that specifies the company's purpose, and a set of core values that drive the pursuit of the vision and mission. In the second stage objectives are established to measure the company's performance and monitor its progress in moving in the intended long-term direction. The third stage entails developing a strategy to lead the company along the path that has been charted by management and achieve its performance objectives (Thompson *et al.*, 2020).

During the fourth stage the chosen strategy is executed efficiently and effectively. The fifth stage monitors developments, evaluates performance, and initiates corrections in the company's vision and mission statement, objectives, strategy, or method to strategy implementation in accordance with actual experience, changing situations, new ideas, and new opportunities (Thompson *et al.*, 2020).

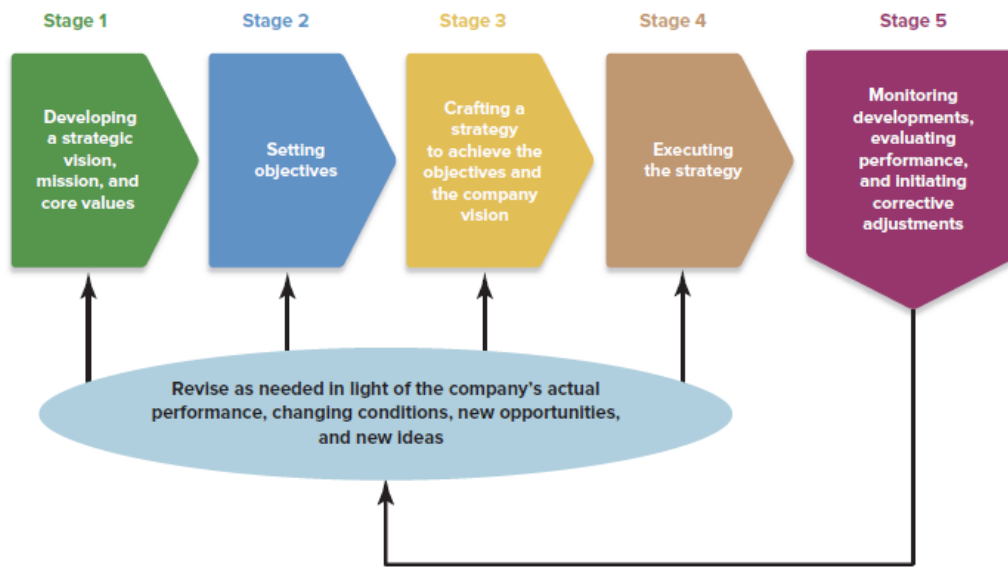


Figure 1: The Strategic Management Process

Source: Thompson *et al.* (2020)

2.2.2 Strategic management tools

Strategic management tools (SMTs) are an essential component of strategic management. SMTs have been defined as management tools that aid in strategy work (Stenfors, Tanner and Haapalinn, 2007). SMTs have also been defined as a catch-all term for the frameworks, concepts, models, and methods that codify strategy-making within structured approaches (Jarzabkowski and Kaplan, 2015). The term SMT encompasses a comprehensive set of concepts, ideas, techniques, and approaches that structure or influence strategic thinking, strategic decision-making, and strategy implementation. SMTs act as a thinking guide and a basis for structuring SM activity (Knott, 2006).

While SMTs were initially intended to be “technologies of rationality” (March, 2006), providing causal models, allowing for data collection within a structured

space, and contributing to the establishment of rules for the selection of alternative choices and decision-making (Jarzabkowski and Kaplan, 2015), their usage appears to be much richer. SMTs assist managers in transforming valuable data into information that can be used for decision-making and action (Fleisher and Bensoussan, 2003).

Managers have grown accustomed to SMTs such as the five forces, the SWOT analysis, and the strategy map, which are used to enable communications about strategy (Spee and Jarzabkowski, 2009). When managers and practitioners engage in strategy work or strategic practices, SMTs play a critical role (Jarzabkowski and Wilson, 2006; Vaara and Whittington, 2012).

Reductionist models of strategic planning, which are based on SMTs and frameworks, argue that SMTs are rational and structured vehicles through which businesses should be examined and operated (Thompson and Strickland, 1981; Steiner, 1979; Ansoff, 1965). This viewpoint is supported by the commonly used definition of SMTs. Clark (1997), for example, regards SMTs as decision-making instruments used by managers. Rahman and de Feis (2009) echo a similar viewpoint.

Clark (1997) defines SMTs as concepts, analytical frameworks, methodologies, and practices that enable strategic managers to make decisions by simplifying and describing a complicated situation and therefore guiding the strategy formulation process. SMT can also be defined as any method, framework, model, approach, tool, technique, technology, or methodology applied in the facilitation of strategy work (Stenfors *et al.*, 2007). Further, Vuorinen *et al.* (2018:7), defines SMTs as “*models, frameworks, or methods that shape the development of strategies*”.

The literature survey revealed that there are numerous definitions for the term SMTs, but the most commonly used one is provided by Stenfors *et al.* (2007:931) that states: “...*a generic name for any method, model, technique, tool, framework, methodology or approach used to provide decision support.*” Gunn and Williams (2007) , Clark and Scott (1999) and Ramanujam *et al.* (1986) all provided similar definitions. This study will refer to this most popular definition.

2.2.3 Perceived value

Perceived value is difficult to understand and quantify because it originates from the nature of value, which is an abstract concept with several interpretations. Even though numerous studies have defined perceived value using different concepts, the majority of them converge into two classical approaches: “*the economic dimension (where value is linked to perceived price through what is known as transaction value) and the psychological dimension (where value relates to the cognitive and affective influences on product purchase and brand choice)*” (Gallarza, Gil Saura and Holbrook, 2011:181).

Many studies have been conducted that investigated perceived value as a multidimensional concept (Zietsman, Mostert and Svensson, 2019; Sweeney and Soutar 2001; Holbrook, 1999; Sheth, Newman and Gross, 1991; Babin, Darden and Griffin, 1994). Holbrook (1999) presented a typology that contains eight types of customer value: efficiency, play, esteem, aesthetics, spirituality, status, excellence (quality), and ethics. Perceived value is thus frequently defined as “*a ratio or trade-off of total benefits received to total sacrifices*” (Patterson and Spreng, 1997:416).

Perceived value is accordingly a trade-off between the benefits gained and the sacrifices made to obtain those benefits, however what is received (volume/ quality/ convenience) and what is provided (money/ time/ effort) differs between customers. Customers determine perceived value by taking into account all relevant benefit and sacrifice elements (Boksberger and Melsen, 2011; Kim, Xu and Gupta, 2007; Patterson and Spreng, 1997; Zeithaml, 1988).

The most often used definition of perceived value is the Zeithaml (1988:14) definition, which states that “*the customer’s overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given*”. In addition, Woodruff (1997:142) defines perceived value as: “*Customer’s perceived preference for and evaluation of those product attributes, attribute performances, and consequences arising from use that facilitate (or block) achieving the customer’s goals and purposes in use situations.*”

In literature and as can be noted from above, there are several interpretations and definitions of perceived value. However, the definition by Woodruff (1997:142) is preferred in the context of this study.

2.3 Benefits and limitations of strategic management tools

The discussions below provide the benefits and limitations of SMTs.

2.3.1 Benefits of strategic management tools

Firms may use SMTs for a variety of reasons. According to research, one of the most significant advantages of using SMTs is efficiency. However, SMTs can function as non-human actors actively involved in the creation of the organisational realities in which they are used (Pasanen, 2015).

The benefits SMTs provide include raising awareness of the business environment, strategic issues, opportunities, and threats, which reduces the risk associated with making certain decisions; setting priorities in large complex organisations and presenting a framework for assessing the relative rank of various business portfolios; and assisting with the reporting of complicated problems. In addition to their analytical role, they may be viewed as a valuable means of communication, coordination and control (Frost, 2003; Gunn and Williams, 2007; Abushabab, 2016; Shvetsova and Dobrynina, 2016; Berisha Qehaja, Kutllovci and Shiroka Pula, 2017b).

SMTs can be crucial problem solvers, information generators, social interaction inspirers, or architects of strategy functions (Chesley and Wenger, 1999; Wright *et al.*, 2013). SMTs can also support multiple functions at the same time (Frost, 2003) and can be utilised at the individual, interpersonal, organisational, and societal levels (Stenfors *et al.*, 2007). It has been found that the use of SMTs can also help managers improve their analytical and diagnostic skills (Berisha Qehaja, Kutllovci and Shiroka Pula, 2017a).

According to Frost (2003), with the use of some SMTs, it is often possible to condense several pages of a narrative plan into just one or two diagrams. In general, SMTs could provide significant benefits to firms if managers have a proper awareness/understanding of existing tools and methodologies (Afonina

and Chalupský, 2012). Table 2 provides a list of additional benefits of using SMTs.

2.3.2 Limitations of strategic management tools

The use and value of SMTs are not endless. There are several limitations of SMTs, and like many other tools, they are not universal and cannot be applied in all circumstances, problems, and situations (Pearce and Robinson, 2003). Porter (1996) states that SMTs cannot replace a firm’s strategy. Hussey (1997) add that SMTs do not make a strategy but that this is the role of managers. It can be agreed that SMTs can help form a part of the SM process, but they cannot be a replacement for managerial skills and experience (Whittington, 2012). In addition SMTs may restrict the deployment of experience-based knowledge (Roper and Hodari, 2015; Grant, 2003). Table 2 provides a list of further limitations of SMTs.

Table 2: Benefits and limitations of SMTs

Benefits of SMTs	Limitations of SMTs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assists organisations in preventing problems. When employees have been made aware of SMTs use and are involved in strategic planning they help managers in the implementation and monitoring of the strategy and use of SMTs (Bradutan and Sarbu, 2014). • Offers a multifaceted method to evaluating and monitoring performance (Otley, 1999). • Can be used to organise information and lay the groundwork for strategic conversations and encourage the development of strategic thinking (Chesley and Wenger, 1999; Hill and Westbrook, 1997). • It not only translates strategy into operational terms as the company aligns its strategy, it helps focus the company’s business units and employees on their 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides an oversimplification of reality. It could result in the possibility of missing crucial information resulting in incorrect analyses and outcomes (Otley, 1999). • Misunderstanding of the SMTs and its implementation by staff and management could result in incorrect analyses and adverse outcomes (Othman, 2009). • Requires workers to have access to sources of data which could be expensive and time consuming (Rastogi and Trivedi, 2016). • Could lead to incorrect assumptions regarding causal relationships. The incorrect assumptions could lead to dysfunctional organisational behaviour, thus having a detrimental impact on the company performance (Norreklit, 2000). • Most of the data used by SMTs are based on assumptions. However, the business environment is tumultuous. Thus, it is

<p>role in fulfilling the company's mission (Bradutan and Sarbu, 2014).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In just a few steps it focuses management's attention and bridges the gaps between different functional areas (Akkermans and Oorschot, 2002). • Allows staff to understand the strategic objective and links this with the day-to-day activities of the organisation. It enables ongoing and regular performance feedback and assessment (Pandey, 2005). • Can assist in anticipating future problems and taking steps to avoid or mitigate their impact (Rastogi and Trivedi, 2016); • Can be used in any sized organisation to manage and assess the company's strategy, monitor operational efficiency, and communicate necessary functions to all personnel (Rohm, 2006). • Allows management to better understand how their actions affect performance measurement results (Burney and Widener, 2007). • SMTs can help improve processes, products and services and provide better performance and greater profits (Nakayama, 2018). • The use of SMTs can help an organisation's managers to improve their analytical and diagnostic skills (Berisha Qehaja, Kutllovci and Shiroka Pula, 2017a). 	<p>becoming increasingly difficult for projects to anticipate developments (Rastogi and Trivedi, 2016).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited knowledge of SMTs could result in not knowing how to integrate it within the organisation or using the wrong/inappropriate SMT in some or all the strategic phase/s (Rastogi and Trivedi, 2016). • Staff may succumb to "paralysis by analysis" and gather too much information and lose sight of the SMT's goal and objective (Rastogi and Trivedi, 2016).
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Source: Author's compilation from various sources

From the discussion above, it is be noted that the use of SMTs is very beneficial. This notion is supported by several scholars. Similarly, this research study also leans toward the notion that SMTs use at the various stages of the SM process

offer many benefits to organisations, and can thus help the organisation achieve a competitive advantage.

2.4 Previous studies on the use of strategic management tools

The use of SMTs is a topic that has piqued the interest of academics and practitioners all around the world. The most popular longitudinal study on SMTs usage and satisfaction rate is by Bain & Company. Rigby has partnered with Bain & Company and has conducted Bain's Management Tools & Trends survey since 1993. The latest report on the most popular SMTs in the world and satisfaction rates are shown in Table 3.

According to the latest survey by Rigby and Bilodeau (2018) and as can be noted from Table 3, Strategic Planning is the most used SMT of the top 25 SMTs with usage at 48%. This is closely followed by Customer Relationship Management with usage also at 48%. Benchmarking makes the top 3 on the list with usage at 46%. The report indicates that since 1993 the top 10 SMTs have varied over time but Benchmarking (46%), Customer Satisfaction (38%), Total Quality Management (34%) and Mission and Vision Statements (32%) have remained in the top 10 (Rigby and Bilodeau, 2018).

The general use of SMTs fluctuates in cycles, frequently reflecting the macroeconomic situation and competitive dynamics. The study revealed that on average companies used 7.5 SMTs in 2017 but this was half the number of SMTs used a decade before. SMTs usage is presently close to the all-time low which occurred in 2014 with companies having only used an average of 7 SMTs. The study also found that the larger the company, the higher the likelihood it will use the vast majority of SMTs (Rigby and Bilodeau, 2018). According to Rigby and Bilodeau (2015), large companies used 8.1 SMTs on average in 2014, compared to midsize firm's 7.6 SMTs (up from 6.8 SMTs in 2012) and smaller firm's 5.3 SMTs. This finding is similar to many other studies where it was confirmed that the use of SMTs was more popular in the larger companies (Stonehouse and Pemberton, 2002; Elbanna, 2007; Aldehayyat and Anchor, 2009; Aldehayyat *et al.*, 2011; Pasanen, 2011; Kalkan and Bozkurt, 2013).

Table 3: Strategic management tools worldwide usage

Ranking	Strategic Management Tool	Usage
1	Strategic Planning	48%
2	Customer Relationship Management	48%
3	Benchmarking	46%
4	Advanced Analytics	42%
5	Supply Chain Management	40%
6	Customer Satisfaction Systems	38%
7	Change Management Programs	34%
8	Total Quality Management	34%
9	Digital Transformation	32%
10	Mission and Vision Statements	32%
11	Employee Engagement Systems	31%
12	Core Competencies	30%
13	Internet of Things	30%
14	Balanced Scorecard	29%
15	Business Process Reengineering	28%
16	Customer Segmentation	27%
17	Strategic Alliances	25%
18	Agile Management	24%
19	Mergers and Acquisitions	24%
20	Organizational Time Management	22%
21	Price Optimization Models	20%
22	Scenario and Contingency Planning	19%
23	Customer Journey Analysis	18%
24	Complexity Reduction	17%
25	Zero-Based Budgeting	10%

Source: Adapted from Rigby and Bilodeau (2018)

Figure 2 below presents the ten most used SMTs in the world over the years 2015 – 2017. Strategic Planning was the most used SMT in 2015 and 2016, but was displaced by CRM, Benchmarking and Employee Engagement respectively to be the fourth most popular SMT in 2017 (Gallo *et al.*, 2019; Rigby and Bilodeau, 2018).

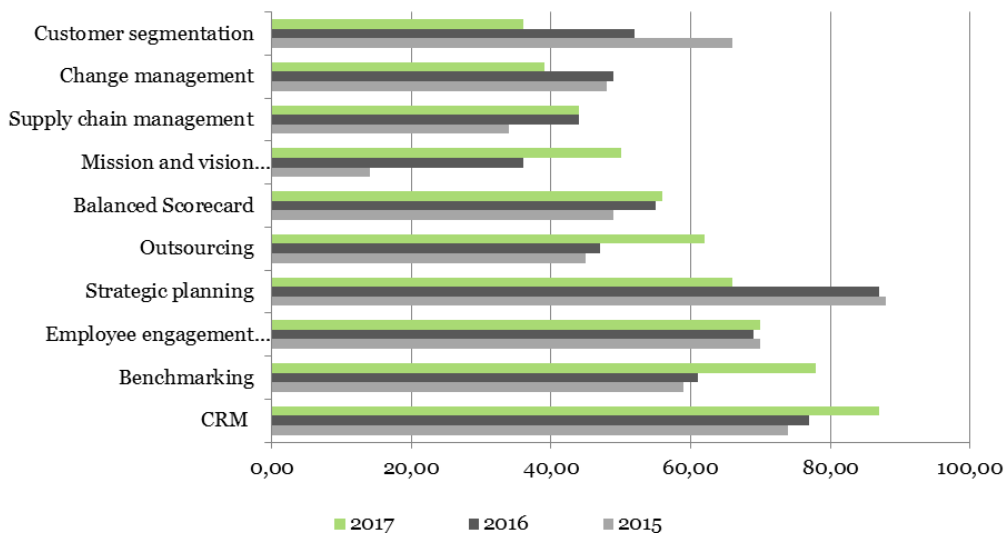


Figure 2: The top ten SMTs and their use worldwide (in %)

Source: (Gallo *et al.*, 2019)

The results described in the studies above are pre Covid-19 Pandemic results. It would be interesting to see how the SMTs usage rates have been impacted by the Covid-19 Pandemic and the current difficult economic climate around the world.

In another study, Berisha Qehaja, Kutllovci and Shiroka Pula (2017b) conducted a review of empirical studies for the period 1990–2015 using the textual narrative synthesis method. The focused studies on the SMTs usage that they have identified include Rigby (1993); Clark (1997); Frost (2003); Ghamdi (2005); Gunn and Williams (2007); Stenfors *et al.* (2007); Vaitkevičius (2007); Aldehayyat and Anchor (2009); Pasanen (2011); Aldehayyat *et al.*, 2011; Afonina and Chalupský (2013); Kalkan and Bozkurt (2013); Rigby and Bilodeau (2013); Rajasekar and Al Raei (2014); Tassabehji and Isherwood (2014); Afonina (2015); Nedelko, Potocan and Dabić (2015); and Rigby and Bilodeau (2015).

From these studies, they identified the ten most used SMTs worldwide to be the SWOT analysis, Benchmarking, PEST analysis, “What if” analysis, Vision and mission statements, Porter’s five forces analysis, Business financial analysis, Key success factors analysis, Cost-benefit analysis and Customer satisfaction respectively. For developing countries they found the most used SMTs to be the SWOT analysis, Business financial analysis, PEST analysis, Benchmarking,

Porter's five forces analysis, Key success factors analysis, Competitor financial analysis, Stakeholders analysis, Strategic planning and Cost-benefit analysis (Berisha Qehaja, Kutllovci and Shiroka Pula, 2017b).

They also found that the most used SMTs in large enterprises are the SWOT analysis, Spreadsheets Applications, Scenario analysis, Balanced Scorecard, Competitor financial analysis and Risk analysis (Berisha Qehaja, Kutllovci and Shiroka Pula, 2017b). From the findings for the different categories discussed above, the SWOT analysis was identified as the most used SMT in all instances. Nakayama (2018) also found the SWOT analysis to be the most popular SMT in Japanese firms. According to Frost (2003), researchers believe that managers prefer the SWOT analysis because it is familiar and simple to use, and it requires no training or special skills to understand and apply.

SMTs assist managers in complying with challenging environmental requirements during all phases of the SM process. In this regard, managers must select SMTs that will assist them in improving processes, products, and services, leading to increased performance and profits. Hence, proper use of SMTs necessitates managers knowing the strengths and weaknesses of each SMT, as well as being able to integrate and deploy appropriate SMTs effectively, correctly, and at the correct time. Accordingly, several studies were conducted to determine the adoption and usage of SMTs as discussed below.

Nouri (2017) undertook a study to examine the adoption of SMTs in Iranian businesses. SMTs were picked by interviewing SM experts and an exhaustive literature study, and eventually, thirty-seven (37) SMTs were chosen and employed.

According to the findings, Mission and Vision statements, SWOT analysis, Cost-benefit analysis, Core competencies, Financial analysis, Critical success factors, Total quality management, Price analysis, Stakeholder analysis and Benchmarking were the ten (10) most used SMTs among Iranian company managers. In contrast, Game Theory, Scenario planning, Customer lifetime value, Product life cycle analysis, Virtual teams, McKinsey 7s, Reengineering,

New product acceptance analysis, Activity-based costing (ABC), and One-to-one marketing were the least-used SMTs used by these Iranian firms (Nouri, 2017).

Berisha Qehaja, Kutllovci and Shiroka Pula (2020) conducted a study to examine the use of SMTs from the strategy-as-practice perspective. The study's main concern was the extent of the use of SMTs and their classification. Survey based questionnaires were used in this study to obtain data from 314 enterprises in the Republic of Kosovo. This study assessed the extent to which SMTs are used in Kosovan companies. Eight SMTs were used in the study namely SWOT Analysis, "What if" analysis, Vision and mission statements, Porter's five forces analysis, Value chain analysis, BCG Matrix, GE Matrix, and the Balanced Scorecard. According to the research findings, on average a firm uses one or two SMTs. This utilisation is low compared to usage at a worldwide level or to other similar European countries (Berisha Qehaja, Kutllovci and Shiroka Pula, 2020).

The study also found no statistically significant differences in the use of SMTs among manufacturing, service, and trade firms but found that use is much higher in large firms compared to SMEs (Berisha Qehaja, Kutllovci and Shiroka Pula, 2020). Studies in the United Kingdom (Gunn and Williams, 2007), Jordan (Aldehayyat and Anchor, 2009) and Egypt (Elbanna, 2007) yielded similar results. In contrast, major variations between industries have been identified in Turkish firms in a study conducted by Kalkan and Bozkurt (2013). This is also supported by a study conducted by Nakayama (2018) who found significant differences in the usage between retail and manufacturing firms.

A Southern African study was conducted by Shaningwa (2021) titled "*The use and perceived value of strategic management tools in the Development Bank of Namibia*". The research study employed the qualitative research methodology with a sample of ten (10) participants from the bank. The study revealed that SMTs are vital and useful for the bank to achieve its goals and objectives and thus they positively impacted the performance of the bank. The study also revealed that the SWOT analysis, Balanced Scorecard, Annual strategic sessions, and Strategic analysis are the most used SMTs in the bank. The study confirmed that the participants were satisfied with the SMTs used (Shaningwa,

2021). However, the study did not report on the perceived value of the SMTs used by the bank.

In another study, Mkhonza and Sifolo (2022) sought to investigate SMTs implemented by SMMEs post-COVID-19 lockdown in Johannesburg Central Business District (CBD). The study revealed the use of SMTs such as Financial analysis at 89%, SWOT analysis at 78%, Core capabilities at 72%, Value chain analysis at 67%, Scenario planning at 65%, Benchmarking at 61%, Financial analysis of competitors at 59%, PEST analysis at 56%, Porter's five forces at 51% and BCG matrix at 47%. The study also revealed that Financial analysis was the most common SMT used during the COVID-19 lockdown in Johannesburg CBD (Mkhonza and Sifolo, 2022).

Picard (2016) conducted a study to determine the use of SMTs in South African firms. Sixteen industry categories were represented by the fifty two responses received in the study. However, the ICT industry was not represented. Fourteen SMTs were chosen for this study, namely Benchmarking, SWOT/PEST analysis, Strategic planning, Balanced Scorecard, Long-term budget, Industry analysis, Forecasting/Scenario building, Stakeholder analysis, Core competencies analysis, Market disruption, Brainstorming sessions, BCG growth/GE-McKinsey 3x3 matrix, SECI model and Porter's 5 forces. The study revealed that Benchmarking with greater than 50% use, SWOT/PEST analysis, and Strategic planning both with greater than 30% use were the most used SMTs. In contrast, the BCG growth/GE-McKinsey 3x3 matrix, SECI model and Porter's 5 forces were the least used SMTs all having use figures less than 10% (Picard, 2016).

There seems to be no relevant studies and empirical evidence on the use and perceived value SMTs play in the South African ICT sector. For example, a study on the strategic planning process as a whole was conducted by Odame (2007). A study by Murimbika (2011) investigated the link between strategic planning and entrepreneurialism in the financial and commercial sectors. du Toit and Steyn (2011) investigated Knowledge management as a SMT at Eskom. Naidoo (2006) investigated strategic processes in the retail sector, Laljit (2006) assessed business strategy development among SMEs, Kruger (2010) investigated strategic intelligence as a SMT in the long-term insurance industry, Kinbangou

(2019) investigated the use of management accounting tools and a SMT (the Balanced Scorecard) to improve firms' (SMMEs) performance in the manufacturing industry, Boikanyo, Lotriet and Buys (2016) investigated the use of SM process in the mining industry, Nkulu (2012) and Tshienda (2021) investigated the link between strategic planning and performance in SMMEs while Mohutsiwa (2012) investigated the link between entrepreneurship and performance of SMEs in South Africa. This highlights that very little is known on the use and perceived value of SMTs in ICT companies in South Africa.

2.5 Previous studies on the perceived value of SMTs

Studies on the perceived value of SMTs is lacking. The literature survey will therefore evaluate existing studies on the use of SMTs and its impact on company performance and will thus recognise the perceived value of SMTs from the perspective of its influence on company performance. This study will also review previous studies conducted on the satisfaction of SMTs usage and thus also recognise the perceived value of SMTs from the perspective of the satisfaction of users.

2.5.1 Strategic management tools use and company performance

Nouri (2017) found that the adoption of SMTs can help improve business performance. The study revealed Customer Profitability Analysis, Customer Satisfaction Analysis, Customer Value Analysis, Knowledge Management, Price Analysis, Porter's model, Reengineering, Total Quality Management, Virtual Teams, and Change Management Programs were SMTs that had a stronger positive impact on firm's performance. Hence, it was recommended that managers prioritise the use of SMTs in their strategy and SMTs proved to be valuable towards enhancing company performance (Nouri, 2017). Other similar studies were conducted by Bellamy *et al.* (2019); Nakayama (2018); Rigby (2015); Afonina (2015); Pasanen (2015); Kalkan and Bozkurt (2013); and Afonina and Chalupský (2012) that confirm that the adoption and the use of SMTs are valuable in helping improve company performance.

Another study in Turkey by Bingöl *et al.* (2017) sought to determine if the business owners and managers were aware of SMTs, if they were able to identify the SMTs

that they used, their satisfaction with the SMTs and what SMTs they planned on using in future. Furthermore, the study investigated the relationship between the use of SMTs and company performance.

The findings revealed that the firms included in the study have very low levels of awareness and utilisation of SMTs. Furthermore, organisations that used the Balanced Scorecard, Customer Segmentation, Mergers and Acquisitions, and Strategic Alliances had higher performance levels. They also found that the use of SMTs increased as organisational size grew, with large enterprises employing the SMTs the most. There were high levels of satisfaction with the SMTs employed. It is therefore considered that the study confirms that the use and adoption of SMTs is valuable both from the improved company performance perspective as well as from the user satisfaction of the SMTs perspective (Bingöl *et al.*, 2017).

In South African studies by Gomera, Chinyamurindi and Mishi (2018); Sandada, Pooe and Dhurup (2014); Dubilihla and Sandada (2014); and Adendorff, Appels and Botha (2011), it was found there was a positive and predictive relationship with the use of SMTs and company performance thus confirming that SMTs can be considered valuable. Other African studies, such as Afolabi and Amusat (2021); Ma kanga and Paul (2017); and Amurle, Gakure and Waititu (2013) revealed similar findings.

In contrast to the preceding studies discussed above studies by Falshaw, Glaister and Tatoglu (2006); Sajuyigbe, Adeyemo and Abodunde (2015); and Majama and Magang (2017) could not find a relationship in their studies between the use of SMTs and organisational performance.

2.5.2 Strategic management tools use and satisfaction

According to Rigby and Bilodeau (2018) and as can be noted from Table 4, Total Quality Management (TQM) has the highest satisfaction rate of 4.09 of the top 25 SMTs. This is followed by Digital Transformation with a satisfaction score of 4.07 and Internet of Things also with a satisfaction score of 4.07. TQM has remained in the top 10 SMT's satisfaction rate list since 1993 (Rigby and Bilodeau, 2018).

Table 4: Worldwide satisfaction rate of strategic management tools

Ranking	Strategic Management Tool	Satisfaction
1	Total Quality Management	4.09
2	Digital Transformation	4.07
3	Internet of Things	4.07
4	Advanced Analytics	4.06
5	Customer Segmentation	4.06
6	Price Optimization Models	4.06
7	Customer Journey Analysis	4.06
8	Supply Chain Management	4.05
9	Strategic Planning	4.03
10	Customer Satisfaction Systems	4.03
11	Business Process Reengineering	4.02
12	Customer Relationship Management	4.01
13	Mission and Vision Statements	4.00
14	Agile Management	4.00
15	Scenario and Contingency Planning	3.99
16	Organizational Time Management	3.96
17	Benchmarking	3.94
18	Balanced Scorecard	3.93
19	Strategic Alliances	3.93
20	Core Competencies	3.92
21	Change Management Programs	3.90
22	Mergers and Acquisitions	3.90
23	Complexity Reduction	3.88
24	Employee Engagement Systems	3.87
25	Zero-Based Budgeting	3.82

Source: Adapted from Rigby and Bilodeau (2018)

Rigby and Bilodeau (2018) have found a generally positive correlation between satisfaction rate and use of SMTs. They have advised that SMTs should be tailored to one's business system rather than the other way around. They claim that major efforts achieve significantly higher SMT satisfaction scores than limited ones. If management only makes a limited effort, they advise that it may then be better to avoid the use of some SMTs. In addition, satisfaction levels for the same SMT can vary greatly depending on the size and location of the company (Rigby and Bilodeau, 2018).

The goal of SMTs is to provide significant gains and benefits to the company using the SMTs. There is some evidence that SMTs can have an impact. Rigby and Bilodeau (2015) demonstrated greater satisfaction with SMTs in successful companies than in unsuccessful ones, highlighting the importance of good

implementation to successful outcomes. Despite the fact that Rigby and Bilodeau (2015) found that financially successful firms are more satisfied with the SMTs they use, it is not definitive that SMTs are a driving factor in success.

Interestingly, the most popular SMTs received high satisfaction ratings in both SMEs and large corporations. Manufacturing SMEs were almost always slightly more satisfied with SMTs than service SMEs (Rigby and Bilodeau, 2015; Pasanen, 2015). Based on the findings above this study assumes that high satisfaction rates of SMTs can also be considered as users perceiving these SMTs as being valuable.

2.6 Literature survey findings and identified gaps

A significant number of the aforementioned studies show clear trends in SMTs use and SMTs satisfaction. The SWOT analysis has proved to be the most popular and most used SMT in almost all the studies including the South African studies. The studies confirmed that the use of SMTs enhances company performance and are therefore valuable. The studies also revealed that SMTs use is higher in larger companies (Bellamy *et al.*, 2019; Bingöl *et al.*, 2017; Rigby, 2015; Afonina 2015; Pasanen 2015; Kalkan and Bozkurt, 2013; Afonina and Chalupský, 2012) and there is a positive correlation between SMT satisfaction rate and use (Rigby and Bilodeau, 2018). In addition, contextual factors in the industry, such as culture and structure, influence the use and perceived value of SMTs (Roper and Hodari, 2015).

From the recommendations in the literature surveyed, there is agreement by several scholars that firms should adopt and use SMTs as this could increase company performance and help the company to achieve a competitive advantage, thus proving that SMTs can be valuable. Some researchers, however, have expressed contradictory views on the use and the value of SMTs and their impact on organisational performance. This therefore necessitates further investigation.

The literature survey has also identified significant implications for company leaders and managers who seek to improve company performance,

enhance corporate work climate, and improve innovation to gain a competitive advantage.

The literature survey has identified several gaps as follows. There are very little or no studies and empirical evidence on the use and value of SMTs in the South African ICT sector. There is little or no studies on the perceived value of SMTs in general. In addition, studies on SMTs were mostly conducted in other countries or worldwide with very little focus in South Africa. SMTs studies were also mostly conducted prior to the Covid-19 Pandemic and very few studies were conducted during or after the Covid-19 Pandemic. This study is therefore important as it attempts to fill some of these identified gaps in literature as it focuses on the use and perceived value of SMTs in the South African ICT sector. This focus is aligned with the need for such research as highlighted in Chapter 1.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter identified and surveyed literature relating to the use and the perceived value of SMTs. Given the inconsistencies and various interpretations discovered on SM, SMTs, and perceived value and the application of these ideas and their constructs, it became necessary to focus on these definitions/interpretations and select an appropriate definition/interpretation for this study.

While scholars have varied opinions on the impact and the value of SMTs especially towards helping firms in acquiring a competitive advantage, there is widespread agreement among most researchers and practitioners that the use of SMTs is valuable to help improve company performance.

The literature survey has also identified several gaps in literature regarding the use and perceived value of SMTs and this study attempts to fill some of the identified gaps.

The next chapter will focus on the research design and research methodology to be used in this study

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter initially describes the purpose of the empirical investigation, followed by the research philosophy, and then the research approach. The study's design is then deconstructed, the method presented, an overview of the data analysis technique is offered followed by considerations for validity, reliability, ethics, informed consent, protection from harm and lastly right to privacy before concluding with a chapter summary.

3.2 Background

A research study begins with the philosophy and finishes with data collection and analysis. It is expected that the researcher will follow a logical thread from philosophy to the completion of the data analysis. This golden thread of logic lends credibility to the research, which is a necessary attribute of a successful research endeavour (Saunders and Lewis, 2018).

Chapter 2 (Literature Survey) revealed that scholars have varied opinions on the use of SMTs and their impact on company performance and the value of SMTs in acquiring a competitive advantage. However, there is widespread agreement among most researchers and practitioners that the use of SMTs improves company performance and SMTs are thus valuable. The literature survey revealed that there is very limited empirical research on the use and perceived value of SMTs in the ICT industry in South Africa, especially in the past five years. There is thus a perceived gap in the literature on this topic. This could result in a vacuum on aspects that influence the performance of ICT companies in this market and therefore become problematic for business leadership and management to determine the best approach to ensure high performance and a competitive edge in this very competitive industry. BroadbandCo's performance has been declining over the past few years. This may stem from either limited or inefficient use and little value of SMTs within BroadbandCo when formulating strategies. This, therefore, necessitates additional research in this area.

3.3 The aim of the empirical investigation

Following from Chapter 1 and the Literature Survey in Chapter 2 and to recap, the Research Question was identified as: *What is the use and perceived value of SMTs within BroadbandCo?* The Research Objectives were identified as 1) To determine the use of SMTs in BroadbandCo; 2) To explore the perceived value of SMTs in BroadbandCo and 3) To compare the use and perceived value of SMTs in BroadbandCo with other companies.

The aim of this study is to answer the above Research Question by gathering empirical data from BroadbandCo to assist in achieving the above-stated Research Objectives.

3.4 Research philosophy

According to Saunders *et al.* (2019), philosophy is defined as a set of beliefs and principles on the development of knowledge and its essence. Research philosophy is positioned on a continuum that stretches between the subjectivist and objectivist positions (Holden and Lynch, 2004; Bell, Bryman and Harley, 2018). A subjectivist philosophy is based on the concept that knowledge is relative and that humans are responsible for shaping their reality. On the other hand, the objectivist approach is based on the concept that the real world existed before humans came into existence (Holden and Lynch, 2004; Bryman and Harley, 2018). Thus, an objectivist approach to research study involves observing the environment and then generalising or drawing conclusions based on quantifiable data (Holden and Lynch, 2004; Saunders *et al.*, 2019).

As research philosophy is located within a range, it is essential to select a position on the continuum from which to commence the research journey. According to the literature survey, many theories have been examined and investigated in earlier studies. Hence, the approach of this study is from the viewpoint that the theory exists but needs to be verified (Punch, 2013), which is in accordance with the objectivist approach.

The positivist philosophy, which is on the objectivist end of the spectrum, has been chosen as the foundation for this study. This is in alignment with the

researcher's ideals and views that research studies must be founded on observable data (Saunders and Lewis, 2018). The research study's intention is to examine observable data in order to develop conclusions and suitable deductions which underpin the positivism philosophy (Saunders *et al.*, 2019; Bell, Bryman and Harley, 2018). The research study is thus based on data that will be acquired from an anonymous standard online survey that was developed by UNISA SBL, which allows the researcher to stay unbiased in the data gathering process, which is an essential objective of positivist research (Saunders and Lewis, 2018; Walliman, 2017).

According to Resnik (2019), bias, in the context of data collection, data analysis, interpretation, and publication, is defined as any variation or divergence from the truth in any way that could lead to erroneous or inaccurate conclusions. For this study, the researcher will use grounded theory and research philosophy to ensure that the study's findings and conclusions will be objective and within the scope of the study.

3.5 Research approach

The two main research approaches according to Saunders *et al.* (2019) are the inductive and deductive approaches. In the inductive approach, the data collected is applied in developing a theory while in the deductive approach a theory is assumed for hypothesis testing.

The inductive approach proceeds from an observation rather than a pre-existing truth, belief, or theory (Leedy and Ormrod, 2016). Consequently, the inductive approach forms a theory by observing a particular phenomenon, starting with a set of objectives, looking for patterns in the interpretations, and then developing a theory (Saunders *et al.*, 2019; Zalaghi and Khazaei, 2016).

The deductive approach assumes that theory is the foundation for reaching conclusions (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). The deductive approach starts with identifying or presuming a theory, then developing from the hypothesis and modifying the theory (Woiceshyn and Daellenbach, 2018).

The deductive approach leans towards positivism (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). Accordingly, the adopted positivism approach in this research study corresponds to the deductive research approach in the investigation of the use and value of SMTs in BroadbandCo.

3.6 Research design

According to De Vaus (2016), research design is an overarching approach used to combine the numerous components of a research study in a cohesive and logical manner, ensuring that the research problem will be effectively solved; it acts as a blueprint for data collection, measurement, and analysis.

3.6.1 Methodological approach

The two main research methodologies are the qualitative and quantitative methods. Their different emphasis and terminologies differentiate the qualitative and quantitative approaches (Neuman, 2014). In addition, Saunders *et al.* (2019) indicate the primary distinction between qualitative and quantitative methodologies is the use of numeric and non-numeric data, that is numbers for quantitative and words for qualitative.

The qualitative approach aims to improve the understanding of social or human challenges through the specific perspectives of informants in their natural surroundings (Leedy and Ormrod, 2016). Researchers suggest that the qualitative method is appropriate for capturing intangibles such as perceptions, motivations, emotions, and experiences using soft data such as words and pictures (Neuman, 2014). Moreover, qualitative approaches are exploratory in nature and rely on a variety of data collection methods, such as ethnography, observation, focus groups, case studies, action research, interviews, and grounded theory (Van Zyl, 2014; Saunders *et al.*, 2016).

According to Neuman (2014), quantitative methods emphasise a numerical focus that aims to measure something rather than explain it using simple terminologies. Quantitative data consists of participant responses that have been classified, grouped, and reduced to numbers to allow statistical operations using

instruments like survey questionnaires to collect data and statistics or graphs to analyse the data (Cooper and Schindler, 2014).

Leedy and Ormrod (2016) opine that research design is determined by the research problem. The purpose of this research is to investigate the use and value of SMTs in BroadbandCo. Accordingly, this research study adopts the quantitative approach to gather the required information. Since this research study uses a standard survey questionnaire to gather data and graphs and statistics in data analysis to answer the Research Question and achieve the Research Objectives, the quantitative approach is therefore the best methodology for this study (Saunders *et al.*, 2019; Cooper and Schindler, 2014).

3.6.2 Nature of research design

In research methodology, there are several research designs, which include exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory designs.

According to Saunders *et al.* (2019), exploratory research seeks to get a deeper understanding of research questions rather than providing clear, definite, and conclusive answers to current problems. Exploratory research is generally conducted to study a topic that researchers have not yet precisely defined. The purpose of designing exploratory studies is not necessarily to produce conclusive answers to research questions, but rather to investigate the subject matter at various levels of depth (Saunders *et al.*, 2019).

In descriptive research, the primary goal is to give an accurate and valid depiction of (encapsulate) the aspects or variables that correspond/are important to the research question. This type of research is more structured than exploratory research (Saunders *et al.*, 2019; De Vaus, 2016).

Explanatory research (often referred to as analytical study), seeks to find any causal linkages between the factors or variables relevant to the research problem. Explanatory research is highly structured (Saunders *et al.*, 2019; De Vaus, 2016).

The research study will comprise descriptive and explanatory research, which means that the quantitative data gathered during the investigation will be

portrayed by way of summaries and explanations, by being arranged and by being represented graphically (Byrne, 2017). The results from the data gathered on BroadbandCo will also be compared to the results of the wider group study's data that have been collected over the past five years to compare BroadbandCo's use and perceived value of SMTs with other companies.

The research study will be undertaken as a cross-sectional study, meaning that a single measurement across a sample population at a specific point in time will be taken. A cross-sectional study is appropriate when the research questions are related to a given point in time (Saunders *et al.*, 2019; Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). In this instance, the exact point will be anchored in the context of when the online survey questionnaire will be completed by all respondents within the organisation.

3.7 Population and sample framework

According to Berndt and Petzer (2011), population may be defined as the study object, which can be individuals, groups, organisations, human products, and events, that is the focus of the research or the conditions to which they are exposed. A population is the aggregate of components about which one wants to analyse and draw various interpretations and conclusions (Loseke, 2021). In this study the population comprises of all the management and operational employees in BroadbandCo that is currently approximately 6,000 employees.

According to Saunders and Lewis (2018), a sample is a fraction or proportion of a population. A sample frame is a complete list or database of all the units that make up the population that acts as the foundation from which the sample is drawn. It can take the shape of a list of all employees' names, a list of all voters in a district, or a list of companies within an industry, and is generally the approach used for probability sampling (Bloor and Wood, 2006) as long as the appropriate legislation requirements are adhered to.

In this study, the sample frame will be the list of 200 randomly selected employees that the company's Human Resources (HR) and the Information Management Sections will provide. A random sample is a type of probability sampling in which each unit of the population of the sample frame has an equal

and greater than zero chance of being chosen to become a member of the sample (Bloor and Wood, 2006).

Based on the central limit theorem, a target of 70 was chosen. According to the central limit theorem, relatively tiny sample sizes accurately reflect the features of a population, allowing researchers to employ small samples for statistical inference (Cramer and Howitt, 2004).

An online standard survey questionnaire will be the method employed to access the target number of participants. Online surveys are low-cost and quick to distribute and collect, with fewer errors and higher response rates (Van Zyl and Pellissier, 2017). The participating company has approximately 6,000 employees of which 200 employees will be randomly selected as the sample frame for this study. The study therefore assumes that it will be able to achieve a statistically significant sample of more than 30 participants (a mix of management and operational staff) to participate in the online survey (Ottum and Moore 1997).

3.8 Unit of analysis

The unit of analysis for this study will be the opinions and perceptions of BroadbandCo's employees in the online survey. The online survey will determine the use and value of SMTs in BroadbandCo.

3.9 Data collection method

Primary data is data that is collected by the researcher via surveys and interviews. Secondary data is any information that is attained from any publication resource such as journals, books, websites, conferences, and newspapers amongst others (Joseph, 2003). According to Fisher and Buglear (2010), these two methods are the most used data collection methods that include data bases, focus group discussions, observations, and other documents. For this research study primary data from respondents will be collected by means of a standard online survey questionnaire. Secondary data will be limited to literature survey, recommendations and conclusions drawn from other publications, but will not include any statistical data. Leedy and Ormrod (2016) state that data and methodology are inextricably intertwined. Thus, the approach

chosen to solve the research problem considered the data collection methodology.

This study employs the quantitative methodology and the single data collection technique (mono method). The mono method when used quantitatively is a combination of a single quantitative data collection technique and data analysis methods (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). This study employs the quantitative data collection method in the form of an online survey questionnaire. Weathington, *et al.* (2012), opine that this is a very popular and cost-effective form of data collection for social and business science researchers.

A survey questionnaire that has been pre-designed and validated will be used. The use of a survey questionnaire is advantageous as it has a structured format and may be used at the respondent's leisure (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). On the other hand, some respondents may be affected by other factors that could distract them while completing the survey questionnaire. Some examples include interference by co-workers, family members or children, fearing a lack of anonymity and data security (Leedy and Ormrod, 2016).

The survey questionnaire that will be used has already been used in similar studies on the use and perceived value of SMTs. This therefore enhances the relevancy and quality of the questionnaire. A comprehensive literature survey was conducted, and many academics were interviewed extensively prior to using the survey questionnaire in previous studies. The survey questionnaire also uses previously utilised validated scores from existing research (Jarvis *et al.*, 2003). The creator/designer of the survey questionnaire has provided written confirmation for its use in this research study. To guarantee continuity and consistency, the survey questionnaire will not be altered in any manner prior to or when it is distributed to respondents.

The list of 200 randomly selected employees in BroadbandCo will be provided by the HR and the Information Management sections. This will comply with Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) as only the company email addresses will be used to contact the prospective respondents and the organisation has provided the authorisation to conduct the study. The first 70 respondents from the 200 selected employees will be taken towards the sample.

The invitation to the participants with a write-up introducing (cover letter attached to the survey) and explaining the request with a link to the online survey will be sent out via email. The communication to participants will include the organisation's permission granted letter and the participant consent letter.

Regular reminders will be sent to selected participants to remind them to complete the online survey questionnaire. The survey questionnaire will be completed online to ensure anonymity of the respondents as an email trail will compromise such agreement to anonymity. The online submissions will be monitored by the research study leader until the required number of respondents are obtained or until the survey period expires. The responses from the online survey questionnaire will be exported to Excel by the research study leader and shared with the researchers. The data will then be analysed with simple statistical analysis and the results of the research study will be presented in Chapter 4 using tables and graphs. Chapter 5 will report on the interpretation of the results and the conclusions of the research study which is the final step of the research study. The data will be stored in an encrypted file for 12 months on the researcher's computer.

A Piloting phase will be conducted with the survey questionnaire. Three work colleagues will be requested to complete the online survey questionnaire before distribution is done to establish whether the questions and instructions are clear and are without any ambiguity.

The standard survey questionnaire consists of six sections as described below.

Section 1: Organisation and respondent particulars

In this section demographical data will be collected from the respondents where respondents are required to indicate the type of organisation that they work for, the number of full-time employees in the organisation, the core business of the organisation, the country/or the region of the organisation's head office, the respondent's position in the company as well as the respondent's functional area.

Section 2: Quality of strategic management

This section assesses the perceived quality of strategic management in the organisation. The twenty-eight listed statements use a five-point Likert scale for evaluating each response. The scale ranges from one to five, with the extreme left of the scale, “1”, being “Strongly disagree”, and the extreme right of the scale, “5”, being “Strongly agree” and “3” in the middle being “Neither agree nor disagree”. Since this research study does not refer directly to the perceived quality of SM, all the feedback on the questions that will be received in this section of the survey may not be used.

Section 3: The tools of strategic management

This section assesses if the organisation uses one or more of the twelve listed SMTs and the perceived value of this tool in supporting strategic management of the organisation. The use or lack of the use of a SMT is determined by a “Yes” or “No” response, while the value is determined on a five-point Likert scale. The scale ranges from one to five where “1” is “No value whatsoever” and “5” is “Can’t live without it”. All the feedback received in this section of the survey will be used as it relates to one of the Research Objectives.

Section 4: Strategic decision-making

This section assesses the perceived strategic decision-making in the organisation by evaluating the response to ten key statements. These statements use a five-point Likert scale for evaluating each response. The scale ranges from one to five, with the extreme left of the scale, “1”, being “Strongly disagree”, and the extreme right of the scale, “5”, being “Strongly agree” and “3” in the middle being “Neither agree nor disagree”. Responses received in this section of the survey questionnaire will not be used as it does not form part of the research study.

Section 5: Organisational performance

This section evaluates the respondent’s perception of the organisation’s past three-year performance as benchmarked against the industry average. The key items evaluated are “Overall financial performance”, “Growth in revenue”,

“Introducing new innovations” and “Customer perceptions of our brand”. The evaluation is done using a three-point Likert scale, where a “1” is “Below industry average”, a “2” is “About average” and a “3” is “Better than industry average”. Data from this section will be used to provide insights into the company’s overall performance.

Section 6: Personal particulars

Demographical data will be collected in this section such as the respondent’s age, their gender, their qualification, and ethnic group. The ethnic group information will be used solely to determine the representativeness of the sample. A copy of the survey questionnaire is included in Annexure A of this study.

3.10 Data analysis methods, techniques, and instruments

According to Pagano (2013), data analysis entails reducing obtained data to a manageable amount, producing evaluations, looking for trends, and employing statistical methods. Data analysis can be defined as the process of transforming meaningless unprocessed data into clearly understandable information (Burns and Bush, 2013). Statistical procedures and tests will be utilised in this study to analyse and draw conclusions from the acquired data. Simple statistics will also be applied such as analysing the percentages that were obtained for each question in the survey questionnaire based on the five-point Likert scale responses that were provided by the members. The data will be analysed using Excel and statistical computer software packages such as the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) or the Opensource package PSPP.

3.11 Validity and reliability

Validity and reliability concerns are fundamental to any research study and must be addressed to ensure the project's effectiveness. They are the two most essential factors that can help improve the quality of data obtained from a research project (Pallant, 2016). The terms validity and reliability and how the researcher will ensure that this study is valid and reliable are described below.

3.11.1 Validity

According to Gray (2014:407), data validity is “*the degree to which data in a research study are accurate and credible*”. Validity is ensured by using consistent and accurate techniques for verifying the accuracy of the resulting data (Mohajan, 2017).

Previously used validated scales from available research was used in the survey questionnaire (Jarvis *et al.*, 2003). To ensure content validity, the survey questionnaire was tested and refined in various studies on the topic of the use and perceived value of SMTs. This includes distributing the survey questionnaire to academics and students, who established face validity and provided feedback (David *et al.*, 2007).

3.11.2 Reliability

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), reliability is a measure of guaranteeing that a research instrument generates reproducible results over time using similar method and consistent measured variables. It is the level of consistency in the questions asked (Salkind, 2018). It also guarantees that participants, regardless of their responses, have a similar understanding of the questions being asked (Boynton and Greenhalgh, 2004). Nonetheless, when using the same research instrument on multiple samples of individuals with similar characteristics, researchers should expect the same results (Crowther and Lancaster, 2012).

There are several ways to determine instrument reliability, but the most common is Cronbach's alpha coefficient. This method employs a scale of zero to one, with a zero indicating “no internal consistency” and one indicating “complete internal consistency” (Hoekstra *et al.*, 2019).

Some scholars, like Taber (2018), Gliem *et al.* (2003) and O'Fallon *et al.* (1973), have said that a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.70 or higher is considered reliable. Many scholars (Nunnally, 1978; Katabe, 1990; Frazier and Rody, 1991) have noted that accepting alphas less than 0.70 in exploratory investigations is unusual. The same technique will be applied in this study, where a minimum alpha of 0.7 will be taken as a reliable measurement. This measure of reliability

will be important for this research study because data will be gathered using a survey questionnaire that has numerous Likert questions. In addition, a pilot research study with three respondents at BroadbandCo will be conducted to ensure the survey questionnaire is clear and reliable.

3.12 Ethical considerations

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), the researcher must be able to anticipate any ethical challenges that may occur during their research work. Research ethics is a key concern for social science researchers when planning, designing, executing, and reporting on research that include human participants (Gontcharov, 2019). The study involves collecting data from people within BroadbandCo. Thus, adhering to the agreed and approved UNISA SBL Ethics clearance process is essential and critical. An ethical clearance certificate from the institution's Ethics Committee will be acquired before the data collection will occur.

BroadbandCo's approval and signed confirmation to perform the study will also be obtained before commencing data collection. This research study will be conducted in an ethical manner, guaranteeing participants informed consent, protection from harm and right to privacy. The survey questionnaire informs participants of all this so that they are properly informed prior to participating in the survey. The research study's results will only be shared with the organisation participating in the study and anything further will be treated as strictly confidential information.

3.13 Informed consent

According to Langdridge and Haggie-Johnson (2009), informed consent relates to a situation in which people who have been invited to partake in a research study are fully informed on all aspects of the research study and nonetheless continue to participate. Subsequently being enlightened on the benefits and downsides of the proposed research study, the participant is free to decide whether or not to participate (Giordano *et al.*, 2007). Participants in this research study will not be obligated to participate. Participants will be well informed about the nature of the research study and will be notified that they can withdraw from

the study at any time if they feel uncomfortable proceeding. The necessary precautions will be adhered to ensuring confidentiality of the findings of the research study. The results will only be distributed to BroadbandCo and to the academic institution underwriting the research study.

3.14 Protection from harm

There will be no physical or mental discomfort for participants. The research study's findings and recommendations will be made available only to BroadbandCo, and all information pertaining to this study will be kept strictly confidential.

3.15 Right to privacy

All respondents will be able to keep their names, other personal information, and their responses private. The research study's participation is entirely voluntary and strictly anonymous. In addition, data cannot be associated with specific respondents. The survey questionnaire is designed such that honest responses will be obtained and ensures anonymity of the respondents.

3.16 Conclusion

This chapter described the research methodology that will be used to conduct this study. The purpose of the empirical investigation, followed by the research philosophy, then the research approach, design and method were discussed. The latter sections of this research study focused on the data analysis technique that will be employed, reliability, and validity of the data collection instrument and ethical issues such as informed consent, protection from harm and participant's right to privacy were also deliberated. This leads to the next chapter where analysis and interpretation of the data will be conducted, and the research findings presented.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses and interprets the collected data and presents the research findings in alignment with the Research Question and Research Objectives. To refresh, the Research Question was identified as: *What is the use and perceived value of SMTs in BroadbandCo?* The Research Objectives were identified as 1) To determine the use of SMTs in BroadbandCo 2) To explore the perceived value of SMTs in BroadbandCo and 3) To compare the use and perceived value of SMTs in BroadbandCo with other companies.

Data collection was administered by an online survey questionnaire, which was sent to a list of permanent BroadbandCo employees. The list included employees both at the management and operational levels. The data gathered from the 55 completed online survey questionnaires were subsequently captured and analysed with the use of the statistical software program PSPP, version 1.6.2. This software package was used for data coding, data capturing, statistical analysis, and internal consistency testing. PSPP was chosen as an alternative to SPSS as SPSS requires a licence and PSPP is an open-source software that does not require a licence.

This chapter begins by discussing the response rate, the online survey questionnaire reliability and the results obtained from the analysis of the demographic data gathered. The chapter then analyses, presents, and discusses the data gathered on the use and perceived value of SMTs in both BroadbandCo and other companies. The perceived organisational performance of both BroadbandCo and other companies are then discussed and finally, the chapter concludes with a chapter summary. Appendix A provides table summaries and more data related to this study.

4.2 Response rate

The online survey questionnaire was sent out to a total of 200 randomly selected prospective respondents in BroadbandCo. A total of 55 usable responses were collected resulting in a response rate of 27.5%. The number of responses received is deemed adequate for this study as it exceeds the minimum generally

accepted requirement of at least 30 participants for the study to be statistically significant (Ottum and Moore, 1997).

The lower response rate was possibly due to many respondents going on compulsory leave during the survey period. The fact that BroadbandCo has adopted a hybrid work policy and most of the staff were working from home may have also contributed to a lower response rate. Table 5 presents the number of responses received and the response rate.

Table 5: Response rate

	Frequency (n)	Frequency (%)
Responded	56	28.00%
Discarded	1	0.50%
Did not respond	144	72.00%
Total online questionnaires issued	200	100.00%
Response rate	27.50%	

Source: Survey data

4.3 Reliability

Reliability is a measure of guaranteeing that a research instrument generates reproducible results over time using similar methods and consistent measured variables. It is the level of consistency in the questions asked (Salkind, 2018). When using the same research instrument on multiple samples of individuals with similar characteristics, researchers should expect the same results (Crowther and Lancaster, 2012).

There are several ways to determine instrument reliability, but Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α) is the most common method used. Some scholars, like Taber (2018), Gliem and Gliem (2003) and O'Fallon *et al.* (1973), have said that a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.70 or higher is considered reliable. This research study will employ the same method and will consider α of 0.7 or higher as reliable.

The α for the research instrument used in this study was established by measuring all the items in Section 3 of the survey questionnaire as a whole and the items related to the use of SMTs as well as the measured perceived value of these SMTs that uses the five-point Likert scale. The α for Section 3 of the survey is 0.9, for the use of SMTs is 0.92 and for the perceived value of SMTs is 0.96 respectively. The reliability results are presented in Table 6. All the measured α values are greater than the recommended value of 0.70 for reliability and therefore the survey questions relevant to this study are considered reliable. In comparison with other companies, the α for Section 3 of the survey is 0.86, for the use of SMTs is also 0.86 and the perceived value of SMTs is 0.94 respectively. The α for all categories from BroadbandCo's data is higher than that for other companies.

Table 6: Survey questionnaire reliability

Measured item	Broadband's α	Other Company's α	Number of items
Complete Section 3	0.90	0.86	24
Use of tool	0.92	0.86	12
Perceived value of tool	0.96	0.94	12

Source: Survey data

4.4 Organisation and respondent's details

This study was conducted within a leading ICT service provider in South Africa with the pseudonym BroadbandCo. BroadbandCo offers fixed line, mobile, data and information technology (IT) services. It provides a large suite of international, national, local and access layer data network connectivity and services including international and wholesale voice services. BroadbandCo is also one of the leading wholesale infrastructure connectivity providers and has one of the largest network footprints across the country.

4.4.1 Organisational level of respondents

Table 7 and Figure 3 presents the particulars of the respondents of BroadbandCo. In BroadbandCo, entry-level managers (such as junior managers, supervisors, operational managers, and operational specialists), permanent employees and other employees are considered as part of the bargaining unit

employees, that is non-management staff. The total non-management respondents are therefore 20 (36.36%) as highlighted in Table 7. The rest of the respondents are considered as management with a total of 35 (63.64%). This reveals that most of the respondents are in management. This is important to this study as normally management staff are more involved with the strategic management related functions of an organisation and would therefore be able to provide better insights into the use and perceived value of SMTs in BroadbandCo. Management employees constitute 10.53% of the workforce of BroadbandCo while 89.47% of the workforce is made up of non-management employees. This contrasts with the breakdown of the responses as more management than non-management staff responded.

Senior managers and executives constitute 10.9% of the responses. They are normally considered to be more informed on the organisation’s overall strategies as well as in the development of these strategies. It is therefore expected that they will provide more reliable information, especially regarding the use and the perceived value of the SMTs.

Table 7: Respondents organisational level

	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Snr Man./executive	6	10.90%
Middle manager	11	20.00%
Entry level manager	6	10.90%
Professional specialist	18	32.70%
Permanent employee	13	23.60%
Other	1	1.80%
Total	55	100.00%

Source: Survey data

The lower response rate of non-management staff could also be attributed to the factors listed previously above as well as non-management staff may be busy or did not see the value in completing the survey questionnaire. The wider group study’s organisational levels are not discussed as BroadbandCo have different management and non-management levels as compared to other organisations in general. In addition, the different organisations in the wider group study data may also have different categories for management and non-management staff and this may not be reflected in the gathered data as only employees/researchers

from those organisations may be the only ones familiar with such differences. Therefore, comparisons cannot be made.

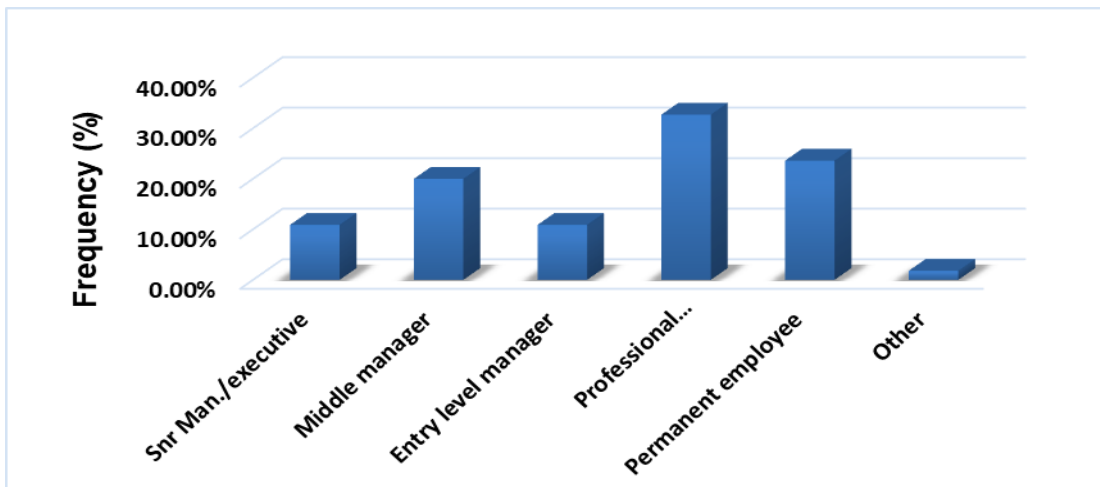


Figure 3: Respondents organisational level

Source: Survey data

4.4.2 Respondents' functional area

Figure 4 presents the functional areas of the respondents. The majority of respondents are from the operations, engineering, or technical environment accounting for 78.2% of the sample population. This is understandable as the organisation falls in the telecommunications domain and thus employs a large number of engineers, technologists, technicians and technical staff.

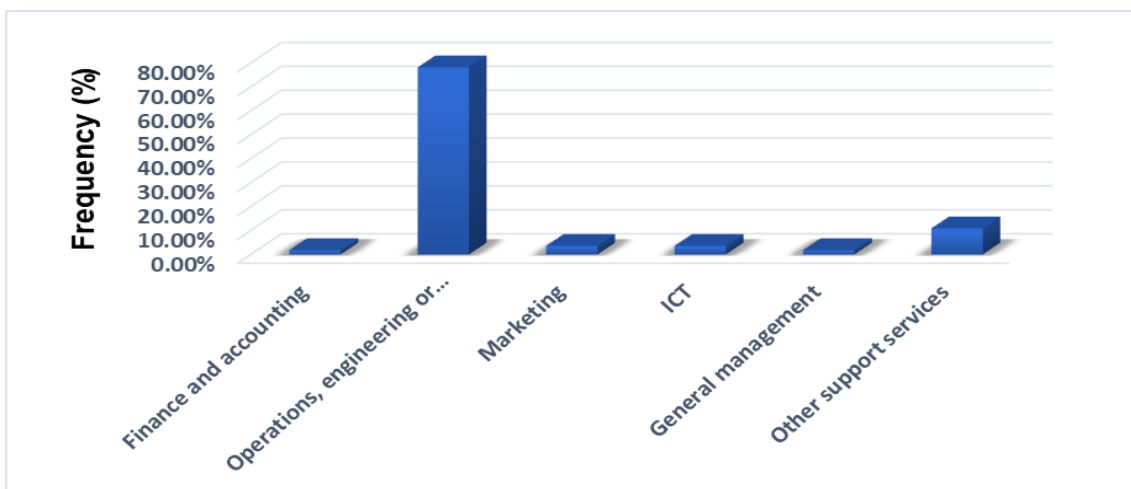


Figure 4: Respondents functional area

Source: Survey data

These employees are considered highly skilled and therefore are expected to provide reliable data for this study. This group consists of a mix of management and non-management staff.

The second largest number of respondents are from the other support services at 10.9%. This group comprises mostly non-management staff. This group is important as they provide data for this study from a non-management perspective. Respondents from the other groups were at either 3.6% or 1.8% which have a relatively small impact.

4.4.3 Gender balance

According to the 2021 South African (SA) population figures, the population comprises of approximately 51.10% females and 48.90% males (Stats SA, 2021). There are 2.20% more females in SA than males. BroadbandCo's workforce consists of 75.49% males and 24.51% females. Respondents provided gender data for this study, and they are presented in Figure 5. The respondents consisted of 76.40% males and 23.60% females. The wider group study consists of 54.50% males and 45.50% females. The respondent's gender balance contrasts with the SA population gender balance as well as the gender balance from the wider group study but it corresponds to BroadbandCo's gender balance where there are substantially more males than females.

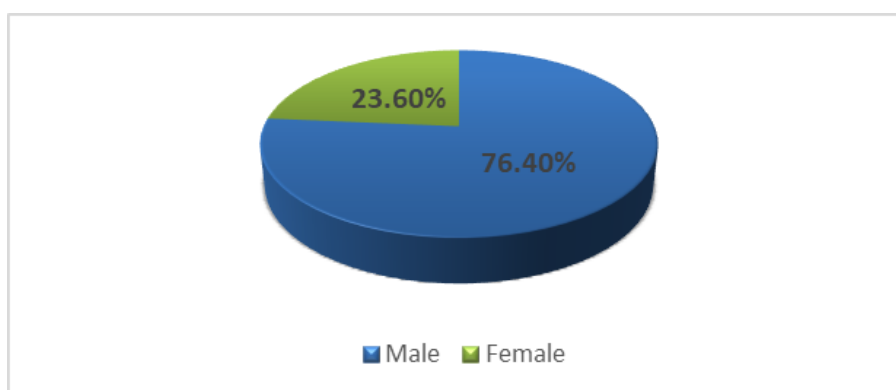


Figure 5: Gender balance

Source: Survey data

Although BroadbandCo has made significant strides in employee equity and gender balance, it still has a significant way to go before the genders can be

considered as balanced. The gender imbalance most likely stems from historical challenges as well as female social responsibilities that may have resulted in fewer females completing their studies and thus seeking formal employment. BroadbandCo requires a very technical workforce, and this further adds to the challenges of gender balance.

4.4.4 Age distribution

Figure 6 and Figure 7 presents the age distribution of respondents. The average age of the respondents is 49 years (standard deviation (σ) = 10.38). The average age of the workforce in the wider group study is 42 years (σ = 11.30). The respondents average age corresponds to the average age of BroadbandCo's entire workforce at 48 years but is 7 years older than in the wider group study. This implies that the majority of BroadbandCo's employees are older generation employees who are nearing retirement. Most people in this age bracket are settled, mature, professionals in advanced careers, most likely having established families. They could have a strong propensity for consistency and reliability in the data gathered from them.

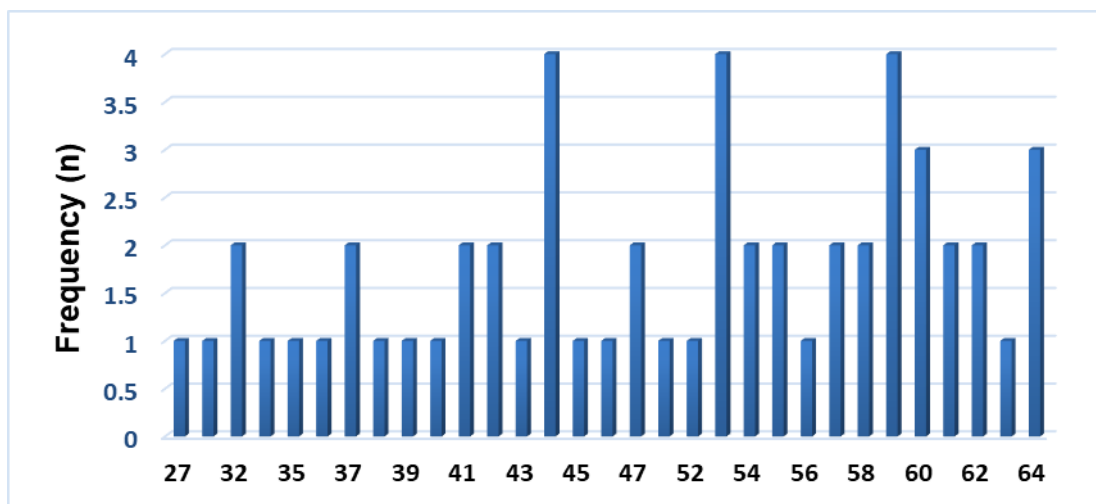


Figure 6: Frequency distribution of respondent's age

Source: Survey data

Andrews and Herzog (1986) in their study on the quality of survey data in relation to age of survey participants, confirmed that data from younger respondents gives a better and more accurate indication of behaviours, attitudes and other characteristics under measurement than data from older respondents. The

higher the age, the greater the extent the “true score variance” percentage drops. In this study, 30 (54.55%) respondents are above the age of 50 and 11 (20%) are 60 years or older. This could pose a serious challenge for BroadbandCo in future as a large proportion of its highly skilled labour force could be close to retirement and there may be insufficient recruitment of young talent.

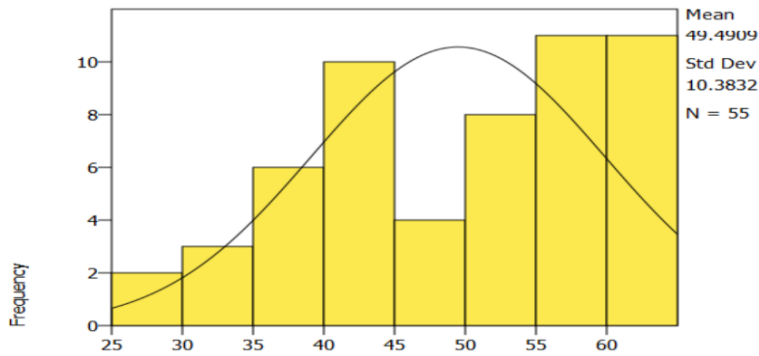


Figure 7: Respondent’s age distribution

Source: Survey data

4.4.5 Educational background

Figure 8 presents the educational background of the respondents, with 49.10% (other companies 43.00%) of respondents having a post-matric degree or diploma and 38.20% (other companies 46.70%) having a post-graduate qualification. The high level of education by the respondents is especially important for this study as it is expected that such respondents will provide reliable, informed, and consistent data supported by their academic qualifications. The qualification is consistent with BroadbandCo’s age distribution of its workforce as the employees over the years would have been provided education and training opportunities as well as bursaries to upskill and educate themselves especially towards gearing themselves with the technical skills and education required to work in such a technical and technology driven organisation. Only 12.70% of respondents have a matric as their highest level qualification whereas in other companies 1% of the population did not complete high school. With such highly qualified respondents, it is thus expected that the respondents understood the questions and requirements of the online questionnaire and responded accordingly.

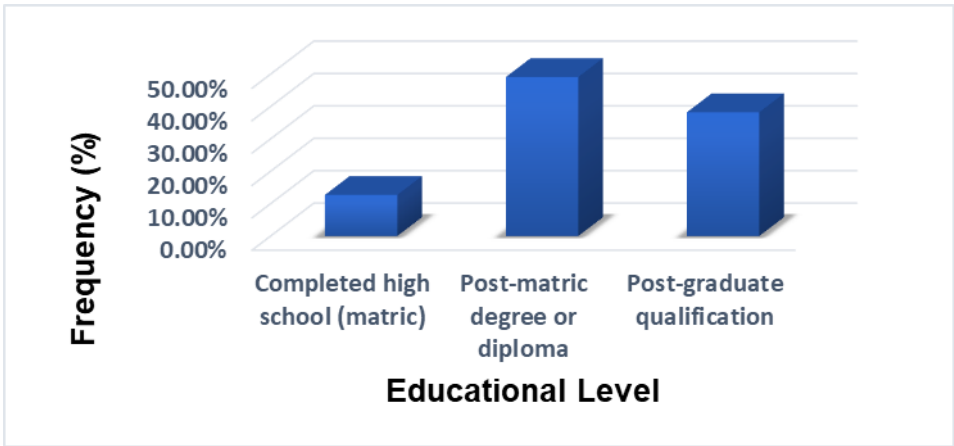


Figure 8: Respondent’s educational background

Source: Survey data

4.4.6 Ethnic group

The online survey questionnaire requested respondents to provide ethnic group information purely to determine the representativeness of the sample. As presented in Figure 9, 40% of respondents were Black, 32.70% were White, 18.20% were Asian/Indian and 9.10% were Coloured. The wider group study consisted of 68.50% Blacks, 20.70% Whites, 5.70% Coloureds, 5.00% Asians/Indians.

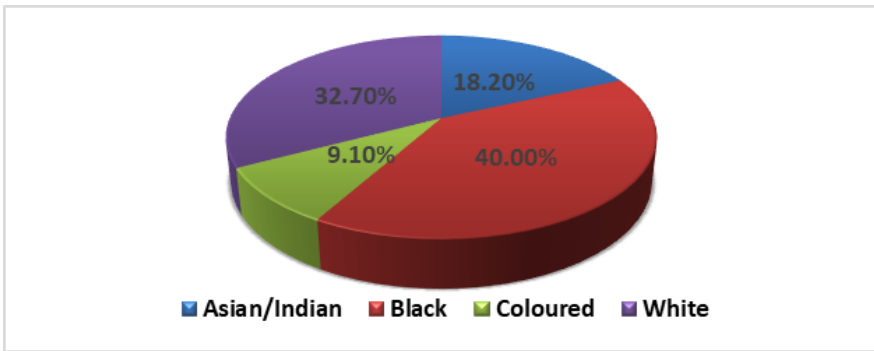


Figure 9: Respondent’s ethnic group

Source: Survey data

As per the 2022 population estimates, the South African population consists of 81% Blacks, 7.7% Whites, 8.8% Coloureds and 2.6% Asians/Indians (Stats SA, 2022). BroadbandCo’s workforce consists of 51.11% Blacks, 26.50% Whites, 13.54% Coloureds and 8.73% Asians/Indians. The respondents ethnic group

breakdown does not align with BroadbandCo's workforce, the wider group study's workforce as well as with SA's population ethnic profile breakdown. The number of Asian/Indian respondents at 18.20% is twice that of Coloureds at 9.10%.

4.5 Research objectives descriptive statistical analysis

This study is titled: "*The use and perceived value of Strategic Management Tools in an ICT company in South Africa*". Descriptive statistical analysis is performed on the data gathered to determine the use and the perceived value of the SMTs in accordance with the research objectives.

4.5.1 The tools of strategic management

This section of the survey questionnaire evaluates and assesses whether the listed SMTs are used in BroadbandCo as well as in other companies and measures the perceived value by using a five-point Likert scale. Respondents were required to answer either a "Yes" or "No" on the use of a specific SMT and rate their perceived value of this SMT in supporting strategic management in their organisation. There were twelve questions related to the twelve SMTs. The twelve SMTs used in this study are: "A Strategic planning department"; "A formal strategic planning process"; "A formal strategic plan"; "Scenario planning"; "A formal process for strategy implementation"; "Balanced Scorecard"; "A formal implementation plan"; "Executive Information Systems"; "Regular reviews of progress with implementation"; "An organisation-wide performance management system"; "Implementation incentives or rewards"; and "Stakeholder engagement during strategic planning and implementation". The analysis of the acquired data in accordance with the research objectives follows below. The survey questionnaire is attached as Annexure A to this study.

4.5.2 The use of strategic management tools in BroadbandCo

BroadbandCo's use of the twelve SMTs being studied are discussed in this section.

Table 8 and Figure 10 presents the results of the use of the SMTs. As can be noted 78.20% of the respondents believe that the organisation makes use of "A strategic planning department" while 21.80% believe that the organisation does

not make use of such a department. For the second SMT, 72.70% (majority) of the respondents confirm that the organisation makes use of “A formal strategic planning process” while 27.30% believe the organisation does not. An overwhelming majority (80%) of the respondents confirm that the organisation has “A formal strategic plan” while only 20% believe the organisation does not.

For “Scenario planning” the majority (72.70%) of the respondents agree that this SMT is used while 27.30% disagreed. When it comes to “A formal process for strategy implementation”, a large proportion (76.40%) of the respondents confirm that the organisation has a formal process for strategy implementation while 23.60% believe it does not. For the “Balanced Scorecard” 74.50% of the respondents confirm that the organisation uses it while 25.50% believe that the organisation does not.

For the seventh SMT under study (“A formal implementation plan”), a large proportion (70.90%) of respondents confirm its existence and use while 29.10% believe it is not used. On the other hand, an overwhelming majority (94.50%) of the respondents confirm “Executive Information Systems (EIS)” is used while only 5.50% disagree. Meanwhile “Regular reviews of progress with implementation” has only 78.20% of the respondents confirm that this is conducted while 21.80% disagree.

Table 8: The use of strategic management tools in BroadbandCo

Strategic Management Tools		Frequency (%)		Mean	σ
		Yes	No		
1	A strategic planning department	78.20%	21.80%	1.22	0.42
2	A formal strategic planning process	72.70%	27.30%	1.27	0.45
3	A formal strategic plan (in report or presentation form)	80.00%	20.00%	1.20	0.40
4	Scenario planning	72.70%	27.30%	1.27	0.45
5	A formal process for strategy implementation	76.40%	23.60%	1.24	0.43
6	Balanced Scorecard	74.50%	25.50%	1.25	0.44
7	A formal implementation plan	70.90%	29.10%	1.29	0.46
8	Executive Information Systems	94.50%	5.50%	1.05	0.23
9	Regular reviews of progress with implementation	78.20%	21.80%	1.22	0.42
10	An organisation-wide performance management system	85.50%	14.50%	1.15	0.36
11	Implementation incentives or rewards	83.60%	16.40%	1.16	0.37
12	Stakeholder engagement during the strategic planning and implementation	76.40%	23.60%	1.24	0.43

Source: Survey data

The SMT “An organisation-wide performance management system” also has a high use with 85.50% of the respondents confirming its use while 14.5% believe it is not used. The findings for “Implementation incentives or rewards” is relatively similar with 83.60% of the respondents confirming its use as opposed to 16.40% disagreeing. For the last SMT “Stakeholder engagement during strategic planning and implementation”, 76.40% respondents believe this SMT is used whereas 23.6% differs.

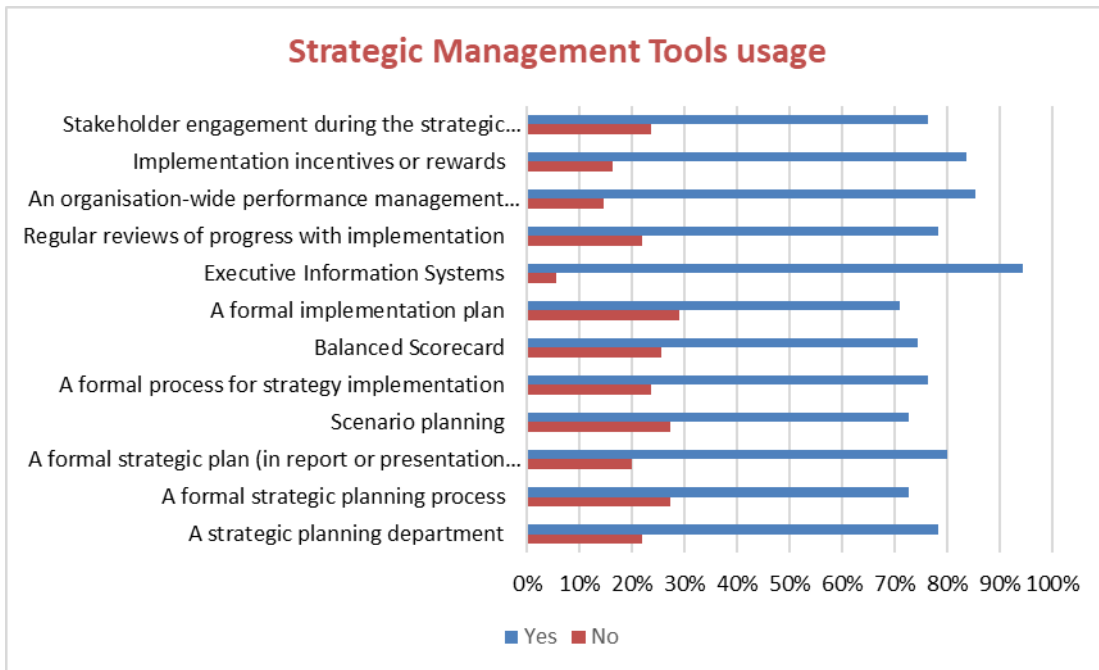


Figure 10: Strategic management tools use in BroadbandCo

Source: Survey data

The findings from the data presented indicate that BroadbandCo has a relatively high use for all the SMTs under study. The lowest use figure is at 70.90% and the highest is at 94.50% with a range of 23.60% separating the highest and lowest used SMT.

Table 8 and Figure 11 presents the mean (μ) and standard deviation (σ) for the use of SMTs. The σ measures the degree to which respondents provide similar responses to a given question. The greater the σ , the wider the range of responses and the less agreement among respondents. Four (33.33%) SMTs have μ and σ below the composite μ and σ respectively. These SMTs have use figures greater than or equal to 80% and are highlighted in green in Table 8.

These SMTs are: “Executive Information Systems”, “An organisation-wide performance management system”, “Implementation incentives or rewards” and “A formal strategic plan”. The three SMTs with the lowest μ and σ figures are: “A formal implementation plan” (1.29 & 0.46), “Scenario planning” (1.27 & 0.45) and “A formal strategic planning process” (1.27 & 0.45) respectively as highlighted in orange in Table 8. The composite μ (1.21) and the μ for each of the SMTs is greater than one thus confirming that the respondents generally agree that the use of each SMT under study is relatively high as well as BroadbandCo’s use of SMTs in general is relatively high. This is also supported by the relatively low σ figures for all the SMTs under study.

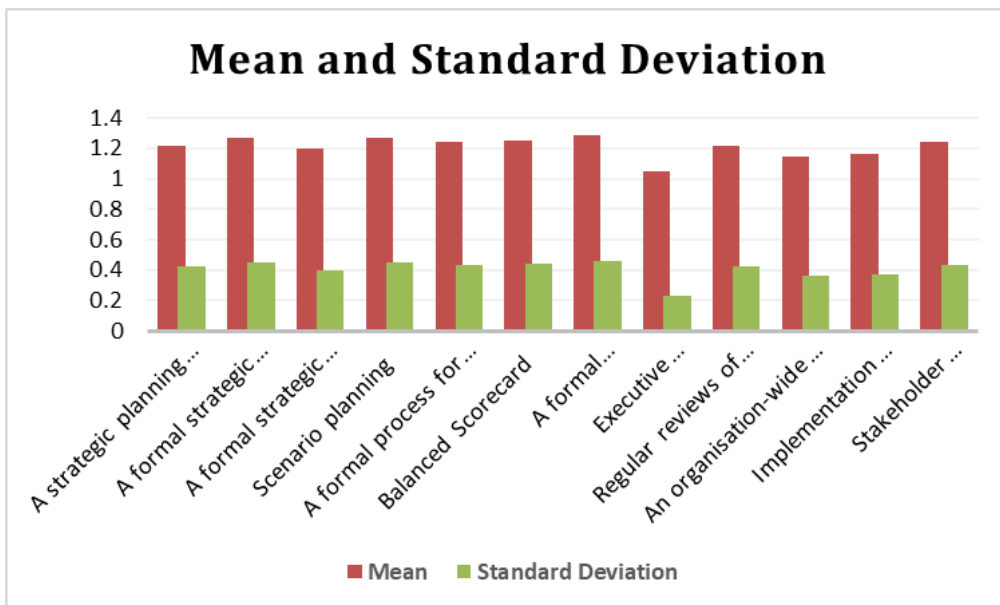


Figure 11: Mean and standard deviation for the use of SMTs

Source: Survey data

Table 9 and Figure 12 presents the rankings in terms of use of the SMTs under study. The top three SMTs that are used in BroadbandCo as viewed by the respondents are: “Executive Information Systems” with use at 94.50%, “An organisation-wide performance management system” with use at 85.50% and “Implementation incentives or rewards” with use at 83.60%. According to the data, the three SMTs that are least used in BroadbandCo are: “A formal strategic planning process” with use at 72.70%, “Scenario planning” with use also at 72.70% and “A formal implementation plan” with the lowest use at 70.90%. The

average for the use of SMTs in BroadbandCo is 78.63% which confirms that SMTs use is relatively high in the organisation.

Table 9: Ranking of SMTs in terms of use in BroadbandCo

	Tool	Usage Frequency (n)	Usage Frequency (%)
1	Executive Information Systems	52	94.50%
2	An organisation-wide performance management system	47	85.50%
3	Implementation incentives or rewards	46	83.60%
4	A formal strategic plan	44	80.00%
5	A strategic planning department	43	78.20%
6	Regular reviews of progress with implementation	43	78.20%
7	A formal process of strategy implementation	42	76.40%
8	Stakeholder engagement during strategic the planning and implementation	42	76.40%
9	Balanced Scorecard	41	74.50%
10	A formal strategic planning process	40	72.70%
11	Scenario planning	40	72.70%
12	A formal "implementation plan"	39	70.90%

Source: Survey data

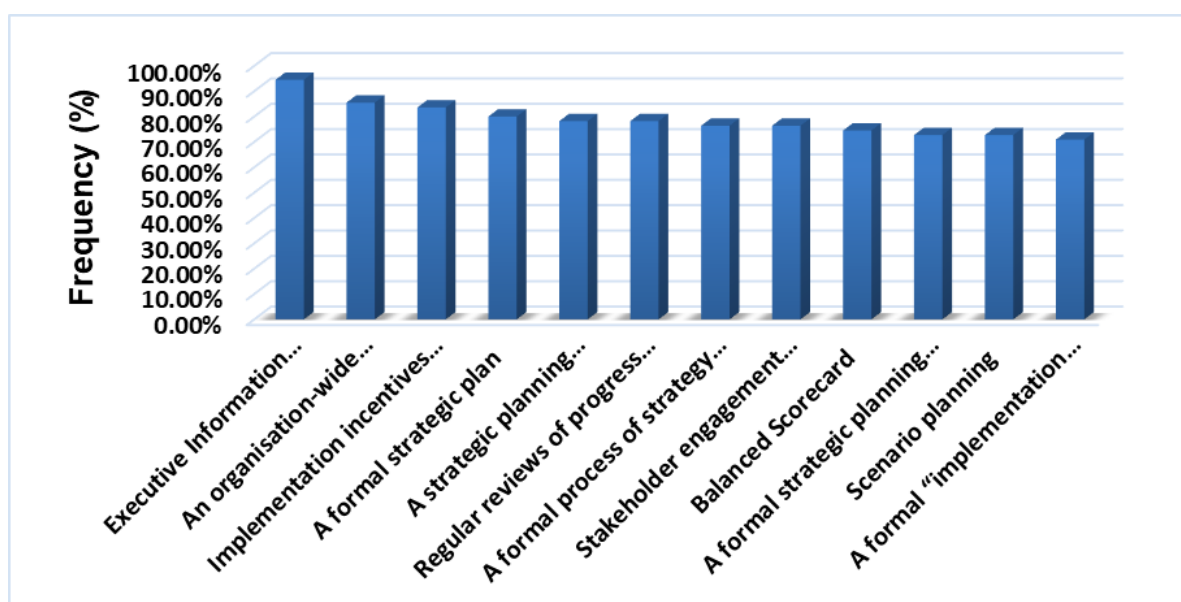


Figure 12: Ranking of SMTs in terms of use in BroadbandCo

Source: Survey data

4.5.3 The perceived value of SMTs in BroadbandCo

The perceived value of the twelve SMTs in BroadbandCo are discussed in this section.

The five-point Likert scale used to determine the perceived value is as follows:

1 = ($0.0 \leq \mu < 1.5$) No value whatsoever,

2 = ($1.5 \leq \mu < 2.5$) Little value,

3 = ($2.5 \leq \mu < 3.5$) Neutral,

4 = ($3.5 \leq \mu < 4.5$) Valuable,

5 = ($4.5 \leq \mu < 5$) Can't live without it.

Table 10 and Figure 13 presents the results for respondent's perceived value ratings for the SMTs being studied. As can be observed from Table 10 and Figure 13, six of the twelve (50%) of the SMTs have "Neutral" as their highest ratings. These SMTs are: "A formal strategic planning process" (frequency at 34.5%); "A formal strategic plan" (frequency at 40%); "Scenario planning" (frequency at 34.5%); "A formal process for strategy implementation" (frequency at 34.5%); "Balanced Scorecard" (frequency at 40%); and "Stakeholder engagement during the strategic planning and implementation" (frequency at 30.9%).

Four (33%) SMTs "A strategic planning department" (40%); "A formal implementation plan" (38.2%); "An organisation-wide performance management system" (32.7%); "Implementation incentives or rewards" (32.7%) have "Valuable" as their highest rating. Only two SMTs (16.67%) have "Can't live without it" as their highest ratings. These two SMTs are: "Executive Information Systems" (36.4%) and "Regular reviews of progress with implementation" (34.5%).

Table 10 and Figure 14 presents the mean (μ) and standard deviation (σ) for the perceived value of SMTs. Of the twelve SMTs under study, ten (83.33%) are rated as "Valuable" with $3.5 \leq \mu < 4.5$. The other two, "Balanced Scorecard" and "A formal strategic planning process" have $\mu=3.47$ and $\mu=3.45$ respectively and

are therefore rated in terms of perceived value as “Neutral”. The composite $\mu = 3.66$ which equates to SMTs are generally perceived as “Valuable” in BroadbandCo. This is also supported by the relatively low σ figures for all the SMTs under study.

Table 10: Perceived value ratings in BroadbandCo

Strategic Management Tools		Frequency (%)					Mean	σ
		1 No value whatsoever	2 Little value	3 Neutral	4 Valuable	5 Can't live without it		
1	A strategic planning department	5.50%	9.10%	21.80%	40.00%	23.60%	3.67	1.11
2	A formal strategic planning process	7.30%	9.10%	34.50%	29.10%	20.00%	3.45	1.14
3	A formal strategic plan (in report or presentation form)	5.50%	5.50%	40.00%	23.60%	25.50%	3.58	1.10
4	Scenario planning	3.60%	9.10%	34.50%	29.10%	23.60%	3.60	1.06
5	A formal process for strategy implementation	3.60%	3.60%	34.50%	38.20%	20.00%	3.67	0.96
6	Balanced Scorecard	7.30%	5.50%	40.00%	27.30%	20.00%	3.47	1.10
7	A formal implementation plan	5.50%	5.50%	25.50%	38.20%	25.50%	3.73	1.08
8	Executive Information Systems	1.80%	7.30%	25.50%	29.10%	36.40%	3.91	1.04
9	Regular reviews of progress with implementation	5.50%	1.80%	30.90%	27.30%	34.50%	3.84	1.10
10	An organisation-wide performance management system	3.60%	7.30%	23.60%	32.70%	32.70%	3.84	1.08
11	Implementation incentives or rewards	7.30%	9.10%	25.50%	32.70%	25.50%	3.60	1.18
12	Stakeholder engagement during the strategic planning and implementation	3.60%	12.70%	30.90%	29.10%	23.60%	3.56	1.10

Source: Survey data

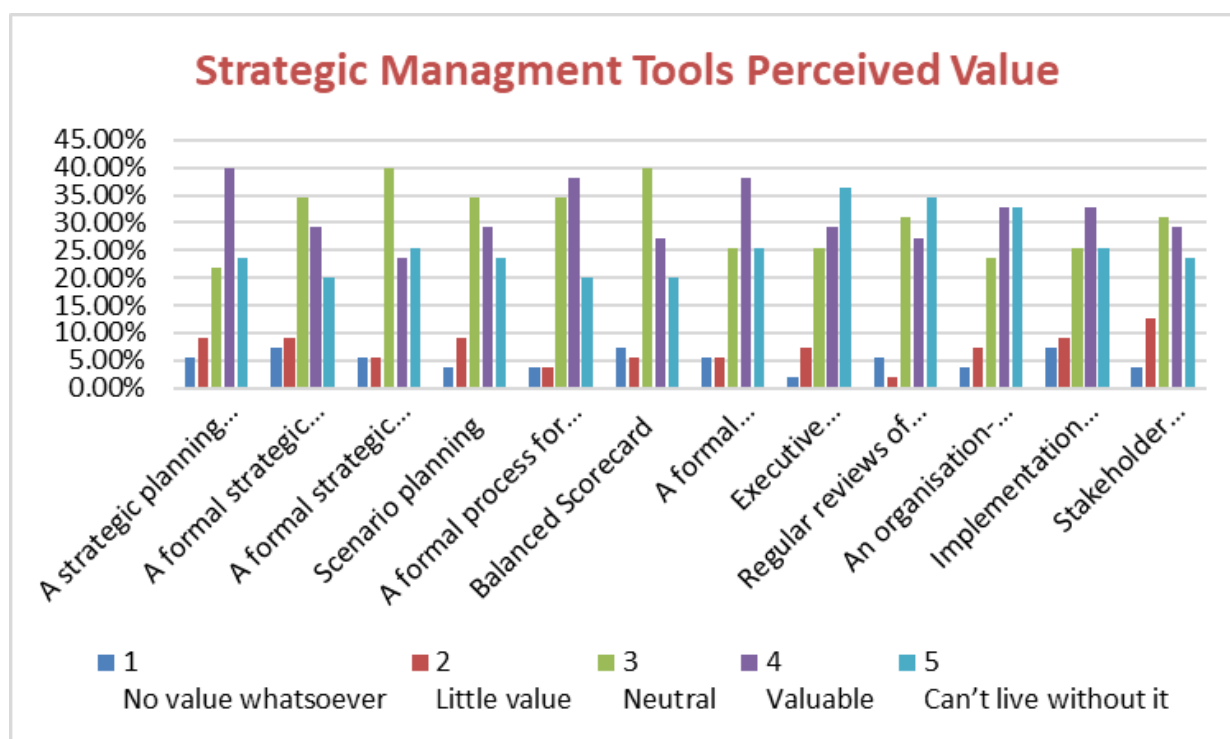


Figure 13: BroadbandCo’s responses for the perceived value of SMTs

Source: Survey data

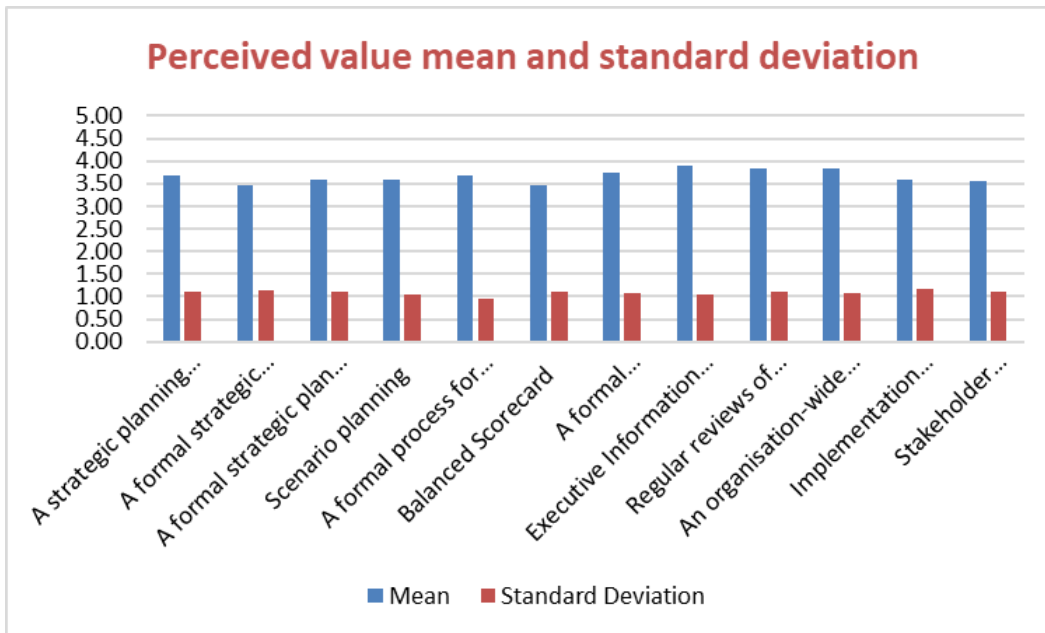


Figure 14: Mean and standard deviation for the perceived value of SMTs

Source: Survey data

Table 11 and Figure 15 presents the rankings of the various SMTs in terms of their perceived value. The SMTs with the highest perceived values are: “Executive Information Systems” with $\mu=3.91$; “Regular reviews of progress with implementation” with $\mu=3.84$; and “An organisation-wide performance management system” also with $\mu=3.84$. These SMTs are perceived as “Valuable” by the respondents as they all have $3.5 \leq \mu < 4$. “Executive Information Systems” is the top SMT used and also has the highest perceived value and is therefore BroadbandCo’s most popular SMT. “An organisation-wide performance management system” is in the top 3 for both use and perceived value and can therefore be considered BroadbandCo’s second most popular SMT.

The three SMTs with the lowest perceived values are: “Stakeholder engagement during the strategic planning and implementation” with $\mu=3.56$; “Balanced Scorecard” with $\mu=3.47$; and “A formal strategic planning process” with $\mu=3.45$. “A formal strategic planning process” has both one of the lowest use and perceived values and is therefore BroadbandCo’s most unpopular SMT. However, the results reveal that generally the respondents view the SMTs under study as “Valuable” with a composite $\mu=3.66$.

Table 11: BroadbandCo's ranking of SMTs in terms of perceived value

Strategic Management Tools		μ	σ
1	Executive Information Systems	3.91	1.04
2	Regular reviews of progress with implementation	3.84	1.10
3	An organisation-wide performance management system	3.84	1.08
4	A formal implementation plan	3.73	1.08
5	A strategic planning department	3.67	1.11
6	A formal process for strategy implementation	3.67	0.96
7	Scenario planning	3.60	1.06
8	Implementation incentives or rewards	3.60	1.18
9	A formal strategic plan (in report or presentation form)	3.58	1.10
10	Stakeholder engagement during the strategic planning and implementation	3.56	1.10
11	Balanced Scorecard	3.47	1.10
12	A formal strategic planning process	3.45	1.14

Source: Survey data

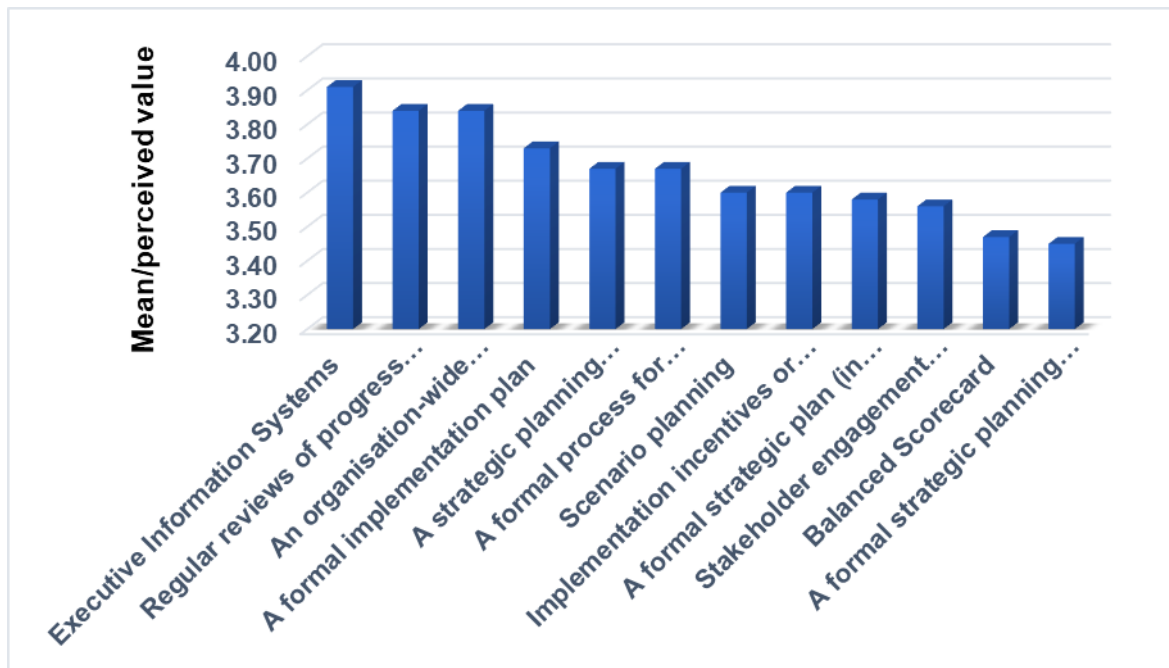


Figure 15: BroadbandCo's ranking of SMTs in terms of perceived value

Source: Survey data

4.5.4 The use and perceived value of SMTs in other companies

The data for other companies on the use and perceived value of SMTs will be discussed in this section.

4.5.4.1 The use of SMTs in other companies

Table 12 and Figure 16 presents the results of the use of SMTs. Four or 33.33% of the SMTs have confirmed use greater than 80%. These SMTs include: “A formal strategic planning process” (85.9%); “A formal strategic plan” (87.1%); “Regular reviews of progress with implementation” (83.5%); and “An organisation-wide performance management system” (83.9%).

Five (41.67%) of the SMTs have been confirmed to be used by between 70% and 80% of the respondents. They are: “A strategic planning department” (77.2%); “A formal process for strategy implementation” (76.8%); “A formal implementation plan” (75.8%); “Executive Information Systems” (70.4%); and “Stakeholder engagement during strategic planning and implementation” (76.45%).

Two (16.67%) of the SMTs, “Balanced Scorecard” and “Implementation incentives or rewards” are confirmed to be used by between 60% and 70% of respondents. Confirmed use for these SMTs are 68.9% and 68.2% respectively. One (8.33%) of the SMTs have a confirmation of use of between 50% and 60%. This SMT is “Scenario planning” with confirmation of use at only 59.2%.

The findings from the data presented indicate that other company’s use of SMTs has a range of 28.7% with the lowest use at 59.3% and the highest use at 87.1%. With an average use of 76.11%, other companies have a relatively high general use of SMTs.

Table 12: The use of strategic management tools in other companies

Strategic Management Tools		Frequency (%)		μ	σ
		Yes	No		
1	A strategic planning department	77.20%	22.80%	1.23	0.42
2	A formal strategic planning process	85.90%	14.10%	1.14	0.35
3	A formal strategic plan (in report or presentation form)	87.10%	12.90%	1.13	0.34
4	Scenario planning	59.20%	40.80%	1.41	0.49
5	A formal process for strategy implementation	76.80%	23.20%	1.23	0.42
6	Balanced Scorecard	68.90%	31.10%	1.31	0.46
7	A formal implementation plan	75.80%	24.20%	1.24	0.43
8	Executive Information Systems	70.40%	29.60%	1.3	0.46
9	Regular reviews of progress with implementation	83.50%	16.50%	1.17	0.37
10	An organisation-wide performance management system	83.90%	16.10%	1.16	0.37
11	Implementation incentives or rewards	68.20%	31.80%	1.32	0.47
12	Stakeholder engagement during the strategic planning and implementation	76.40%	23.60%	1.24	0.42

Source: Survey data

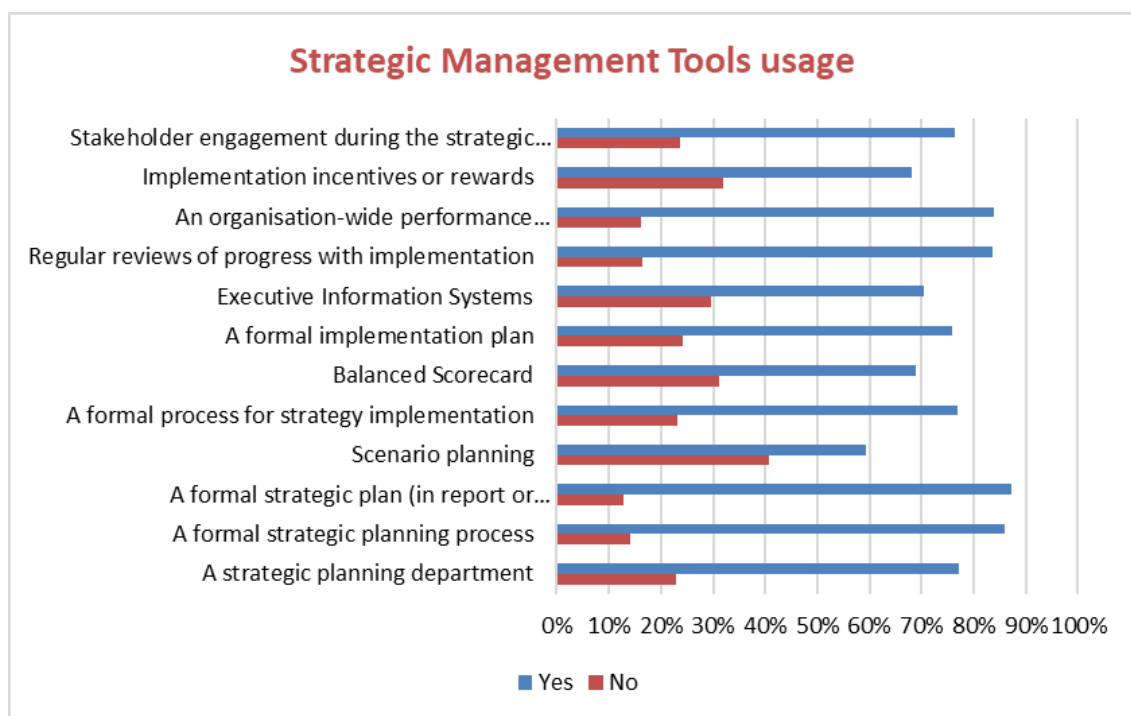


Figure 16: Responses for the use of SMTs in other companies

Source: Survey data

Table 12 and Figure 17 presents the mean (μ) and standard deviation (σ) for the SMTs use in other companies. The composite μ and σ are 1.24 and 0.42 respectively. Six (50%) SMTs have μ below the composite μ , two (16.67%) are equal to and four (33.33%) have μ greater than the composite μ . The σ is relatively high for five (41.67%) of the SMTs which corresponds with the lower use percentages for these SMTS.

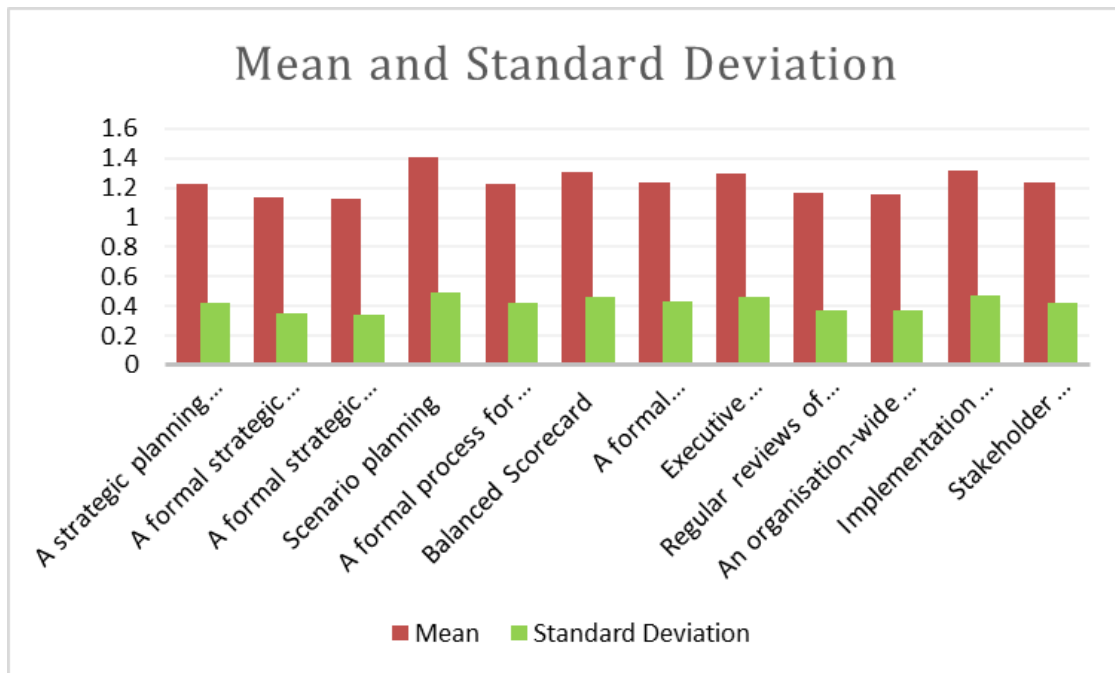


Figure 17: Mean and standard deviation for the use of SMTs

Source: Survey data

Table 13 and Figure 18 presents the rankings in terms of the use of SMTs. The top three SMTs used by other companies are: “A formal strategic plan” with use at 87.10%; “A formal strategic planning process” with use at 85.90%; and “An organisation-wide performance management system” with use at 83.90%.

The three SMTs that are least used by other companies are: “Balanced Scorecard” with use at 68.90%; “Implementation incentives or rewards” with use at 68.20%; and “Scenario planning” with the lowest use at 59.20%. The average for the use of SMTs is 76.11% which confirms that the general use of SMTs in other companies is relatively high.

Table 13: Ranking of SMTs use in other companies

	Strategic Management Tool	Usage Frequency (n)	Usage Frequency (%)
1	A formal strategic plan (in report or presentation form)	1555	87.10%
2	Formal strategic planning process	1534	85.90%
3	An organisation-wide performance management system	1498	83.90%
4	Regular reviews of progress with implementation	1490	83.50%
5	A strategic planning department	1378	77.20%
6	A formal process for strategy implementation	1370	76.80%
7	Stakeholder engagement during the strategic planning and implementation	1363	76.40%
8	A formal implementation plan	1353	75.80%
9	Executive Information Systems	1257	70.40%
10	Balanced Scorecard	1230	68.90%
11	Implementation incentives or rewards	1217	68.20%
12	Scenario planning	1056	59.20%

Source: Survey data

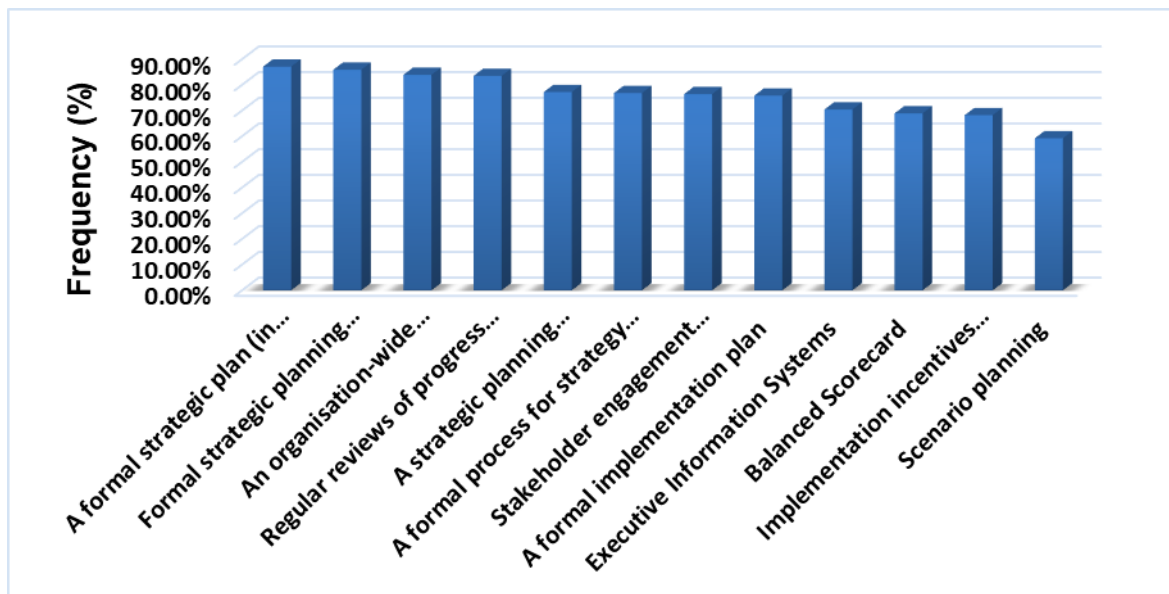


Figure 18: Ranking for the use of SMTs in other companies

Source: Survey data

4.5.4.2 The perceived value of SMTs in other companies

The perceived value of the twelve SMTs in other companies is discussed in this section. A similar five-point Likert scale was used to determine the perceived value as in the case of BroadbandCo.

Table 14 and Figure 19 presents the results of respondents' ratings for the SMTs being studied. As can be observed, all twelve (100%) of the SMTs have "Valuable" as their highest rating. Eleven (91.67%) have "Can't live without it" as their second-highest rating, while "Scenario planning" has "Neutral" as its second-highest rating and "Can't live without it" as its third-highest rating.

Table 14: Perceived value of SMTs responses in other companies

Strategic Management Tools		Frequency (%)					μ	σ
		1 No value whatso ever	2 Little value	3 Neutral	4 Valuable	5 Can't live without it		
1	A strategic planning department	7.50%	7.20%	25.90%	31.50%	27.90%	3.7	1.2
2	Formal strategic planning process	4.70%	7.40%	23.70%	35.20%	29.00%	3.8	1.1
3	A formal strategic plan (in report or presentation form)	4.90%	7.20%	22.10%	35.60%	30.10%	3.8	1.1
4	Scenario planning	14.80%	10.50%	25.70%	31.00%	18.10%	3.3	1.3
5	A formal process for strategy implementation	8.70%	7.90%	23.40%	34.50%	25.50%	3.6	1.2
6	Balanced Scorecard	14.70%	10.00%	22.80%	27.20%	25.30%	3.4	1.4
7	A formal implementation plan	9.10%	7.40%	23.40%	34.70%	25.30%	3.6	1.2
8	Executive Information Systems	13.60%	8.60%	21.10%	30.70%	26.00%	3.5	1.3
9	Regular reviews of progress with implementation	7.80%	6.90%	23.50%	34.10%	27.70%	3.7	1.2
10	An organisation-wide performance management system	8.80%	7.60%	21.50%	33.90%	28.30%	3.7	1.2
11	Implementation incentives or rewards	15.80%	9.70%	20.30%	27.30%	26.90%	3.4	1.4
12	Stakeholder engagement during the strategic planning and implementation	9.40%	8.90%	23.40%	31.60%	26.80%	3.6	1.2

Source: Survey data

Table 14 and Figure 20 presents the mean (μ) and standard deviation (σ) for the perceived value of SMTs. The majority, the top eight (66.67%) on the list have perceived value ratings as "Valuable" with $3.5 \leq \mu < 4.5$. The bottom four (33.33%) on the list have perceived value ratings as "Neutral" with $2.5 \leq \mu < 3.5$. The SMTs with perceived value as "Neutral" are: "Executive Information Systems"; "Implementation incentives or rewards"; "Balanced Scorecard"; and "Scenario planning". The rest of the SMTs are considered "Valuable". The composite $\mu = 3.57$, thus confirming that other companies generally perceive these SMTs as "Valuable".

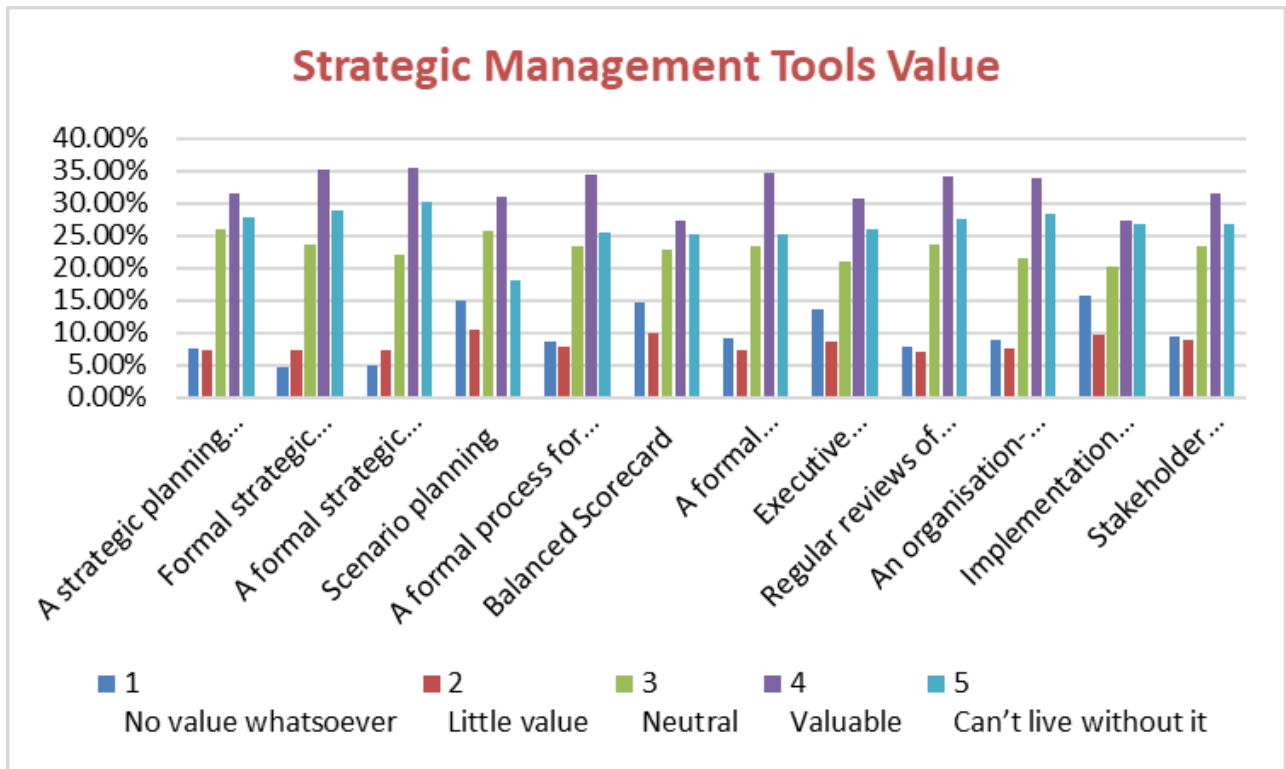


Figure 19: Other company's responses for the perceived value of SMTs

Source: Survey data

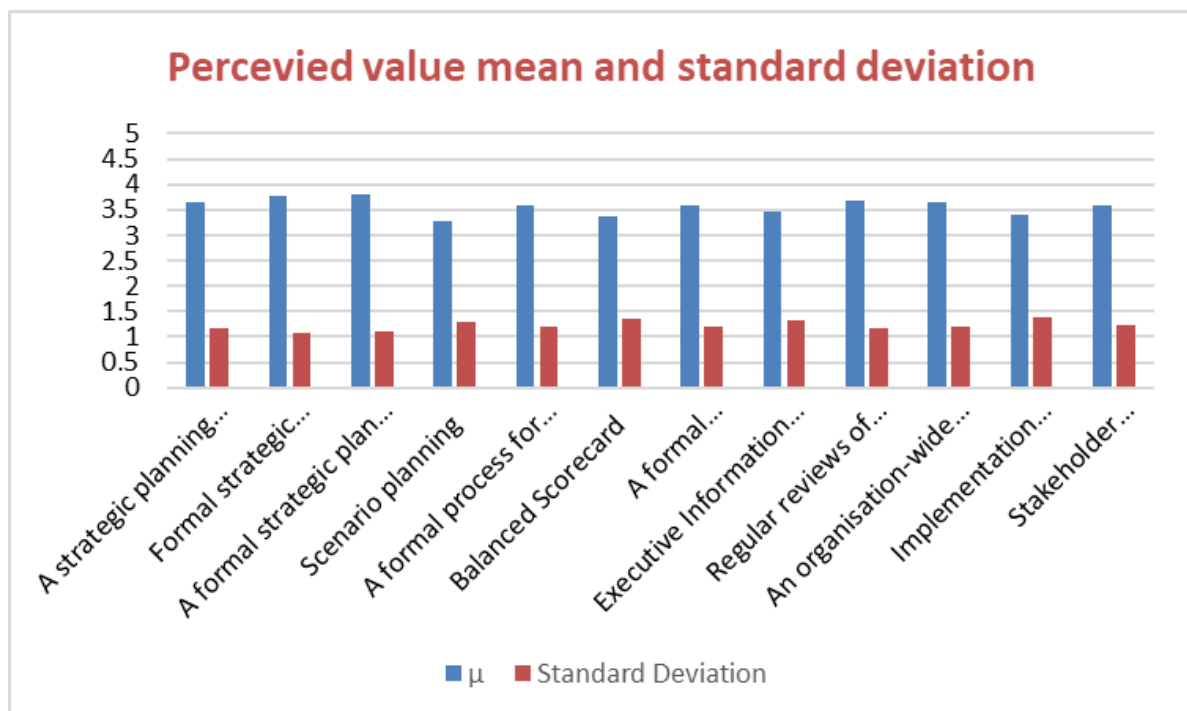


Figure 20: Mean and standard deviation for the perceived value of SMTs

Source: Survey data

Table 15 and Figure 21 presents the rankings of the SMTs in terms of their perceived value. The SMTs with the highest perceived values are: “A formal strategic plan” with $\mu=3.79$; “A formal strategic planning process” with $\mu=3.76$; and “Regular reviews of progress with implementation” with $\mu=3.67$. These SMTs are perceived as “Valuable” by the respondents as they all have $3.5 \leq \mu < 4$. “A formal strategic plan” and “A formal strategic planning process” are the top SMTs that are used and have the highest perceived values and are thus the most popular SMTs for other companies.

“Implementation incentives or rewards” with $\mu=3.4$, “Balanced Scorecard” with $\mu=3.38$ and “Scenario planning” with $\mu=3.27$ have the lowest perceived values. All three SMTs also appear on the bottom of the use list and are least valuable, and therefore the most unpopular SMTs for other companies. They all have “Neutral” perceived value ratings as well.

Table 15: Perceived value ranking of SMTs in other companies

Strategic Management Tools		μ	σ
1	A formal strategic plan (in report or presentation form)	3.79	1.10
2	Formal strategic planning process	3.76	1.09
3	Regular reviews of progress with implementation	3.67	1.18
4	A strategic planning department	3.65	1.17
5	An organisation-wide performance management system	3.65	1.21
6	A formal process for strategy implementation	3.60	1.20
7	A formal implementation plan	3.60	1.20
8	Stakeholder engagement during the strategic planning and implementation	3.58	1.23
9	Executive Information Systems	3.47	1.33
10	Implementation incentives or rewards	3.40	1.39
11	Balanced Scorecard	3.38	1.35
12	Scenario planning	3.27	1.29

Source: Survey data

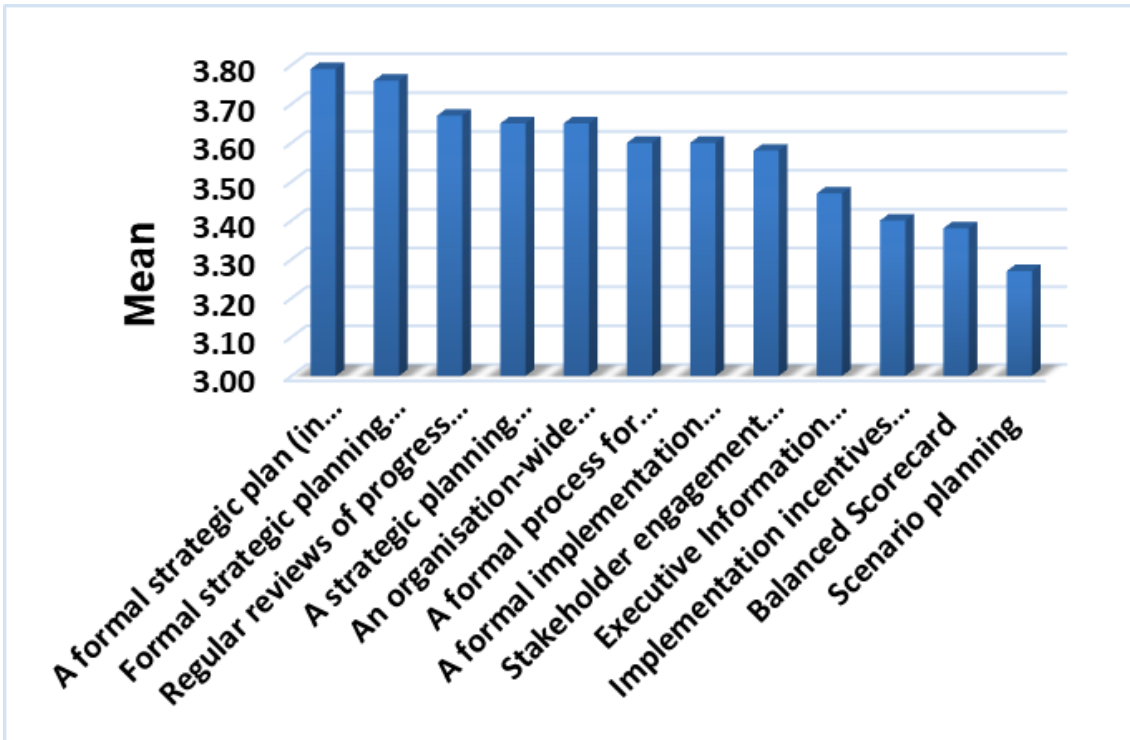


Figure 21: Ranking for the perceived value of SMTs in other companies

Source: Survey data

4.6 Organisational performance

BroadbandCo’s performance was measured by gathering and analysing respondent’s perceptions of the organisation’s average performance over the last three years in comparison with other organisations in the ICT industry. The performance ratings were based on the respondent’s perceived “Overall financial performance”, “Introducing new innovation”, “Growth in revenue”, and “Customer perceptions of our brand” compared to competitors in the ICT industry. The outcome of the gathered data and analysis are depicted in Figure 22. Other company’s organisational performance is depicted in Figure 23 below and will be used for comparison purposes.

Most of the respondents believe that BroadbandCo’s “Overall financial performance” (50.90%), “Introducing new innovation” (49.10%), “Growth in revenue” (45.50%), and “Customer perceptions of our brand” (49.10%) is “About industry average”. The same percentage of respondents (29.10%) believe that BroadbandCo is “Better than industry average” for all items measured. However,

between 20% and 25.50% of respondents believe for all the items measured that BroadbandCo’s organisational performance is “Below industry average”, and the organisation has room for improvement. It is noted that the ratings for “Introducing new innovations” and “Customer perceptions of our brand” had the same value for all categories.

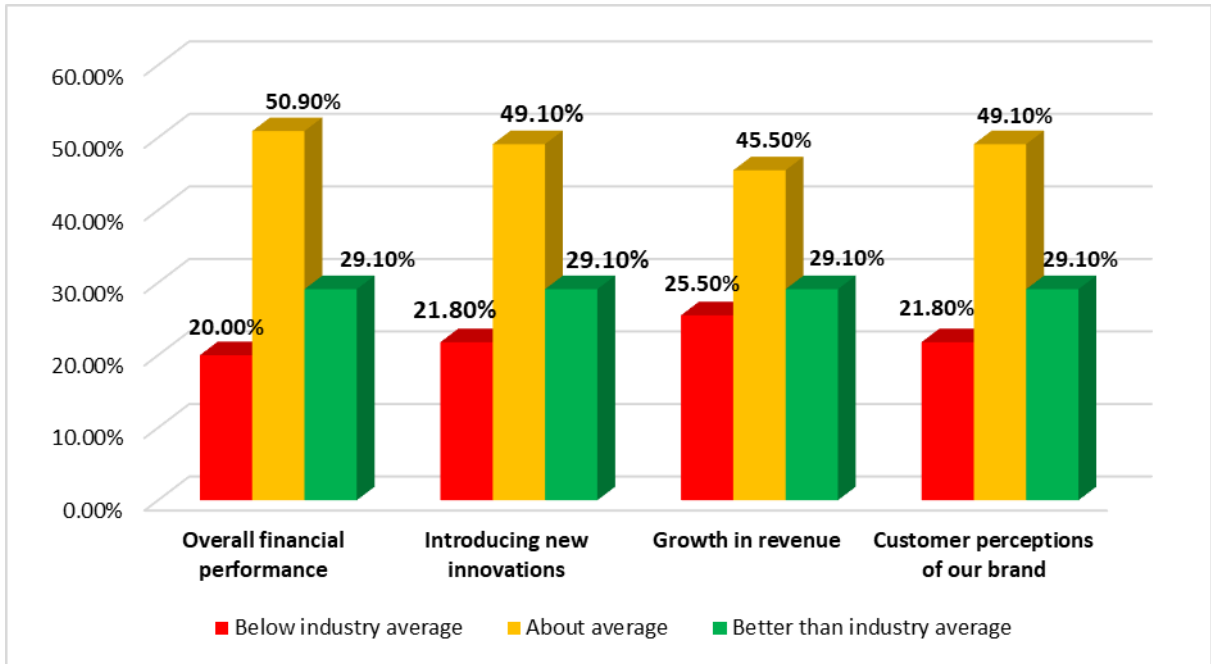


Figure 22: BroadbandCo’s organisational performance

Source: Survey data

As can be noted from Figure 23, most of the respondents from other companies believe that their organisation’s “Overall financial performance” (42.10%), “Introducing new innovation” (41.20%), “Growth in revenue” (44.00%), and “Customer perceptions of our brand” (42.40%) is “About average”. BroadbandCo has higher figures for all items rated in the “About average” category and therefore BroadbandCo’s employees believe that its financial performance is more on par with the ICT industry average. Other companies have higher “Better than industry average” score than BroadbandCo for all items except for “Growth in revenue” where the scores are equal at 29.10%. This implies that employees in other companies perceive that their organisations in general perform better than other competitors in their industry as well as better than how BroadbandCo’s employees perceive it to perform.

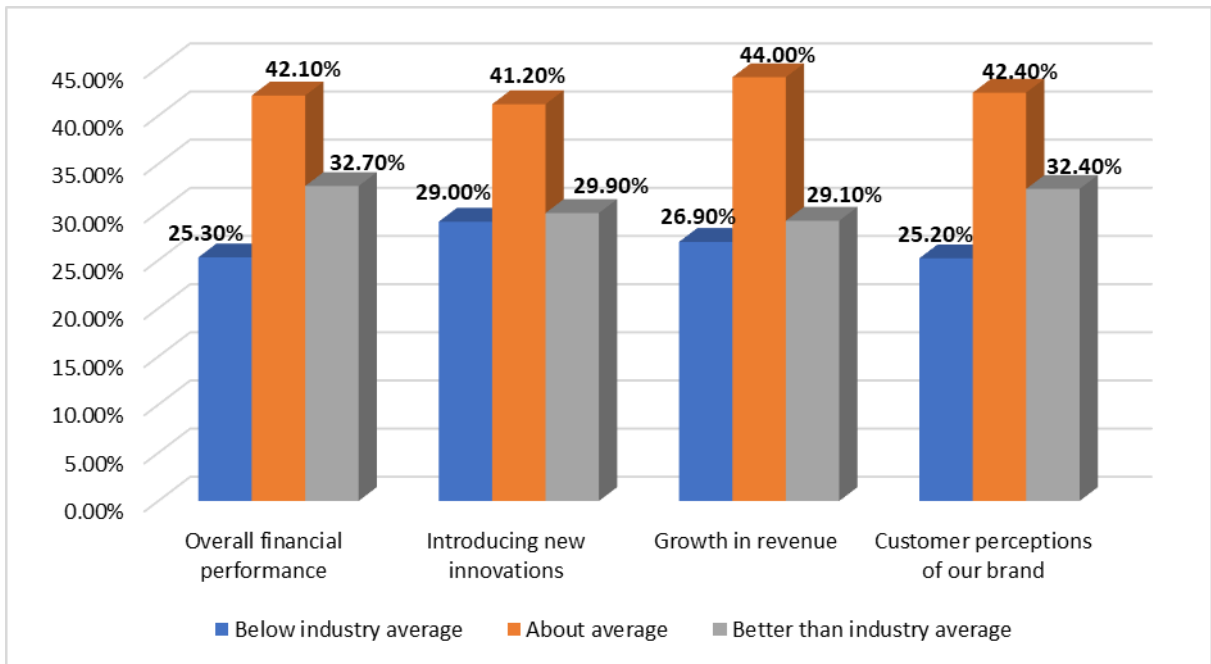


Figure 23: Organisational performance for other companies

Source: Survey data

Conclusion

This chapter presented and discussed the results of this research study in the order of the response rate, the online survey questionnaire reliability, the organisational and respondents' demographics, descriptive statistics on the use and perceived value of SMTs, and the perceived organisational performance in both BroadbandCo and other companies.

The results as described in this chapter will be discussed in the next chapter focusing on the findings, recommendations, practical implications, limitations of the study and conclusion.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises previous chapter's key findings and makes recommendations based on the findings. The limitations of the study are discussed, followed by recommendations for future research and a study conclusion.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter provided the introduction, background to the study and the problem statement. The purpose of the study, the research question, the research objectives, and the research methodology were also outlined in this chapter.

Chapter 2: Literature Survey

In a detailed literature survey, this chapter identified and explored key concepts relevant to this study. The chapter examined the theoretical, empirical, and conceptual frameworks of the literature on the use and perceived value of strategic management tools (SMTs). This chapter also identified a gap in the literature.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter provided details of the research design and research methodology that this study employed. It described how the research data is to be collected, analysed, and presented.

Chapter 4: Analysis and Findings

This chapter analysed and interpreted the collected data and presented the research findings in alignment with the Research Question and Research Objectives. The data was analysed, discussed, and presented using tables, graphs, and text.

5.2 Research purpose and objectives

To recap, the Research Question was identified as: *What is the use and perceived value of SMTs within BroadbandCo?* The Research Objectives were identified as: 1) To determine the use of SMTs in BroadbandCo; 2) To explore the perceived value of SMTs in BroadbandCo and 3) To compare the use and perceived value of SMTs in BroadbandCo with other companies.

5.3 Discussion of findings

In this section, the research study's findings are discussed, in alignment with the research objectives.

5.3.1 Discussion pertaining to Research Objective 1

The first objective of this study was to determine the use of SMTs in BroadbandCo and the findings related to this objective are discussed below.

The top three SMTs that are used in BroadbandCo are: "Executive Information Systems" with confirmed use at 94.50%; "An organisation-wide performance management system" with confirmed use at 85.50%; and "Implementation incentives or rewards" with confirmed use at 83.60%. Of the 12 listed SMTs in the survey questionnaire, the three SMTs that are least used in BroadbandCo descending order are: "A formal strategic planning process" with confirmed use at 72.70%; "Scenario planning" with confirmed use also at 72.70%; and "A formal implementation plan" with the lowest confirmed use at 70.90%.

In the most popular longitudinal study on SMTs usage and satisfaction rate by Bain & Company and Rigby, it was found that since 1993 the top 10 most used SMTs have varied over time but Benchmarking (46% use), Customer Satisfaction (38% use), Total Quality Management (34% use) and Mission and Vision Statements (32% use) have remained in the top 10 most used SMTs worldwide list. Berisha Qehaja, Kutillovci and Shiroka Pula (2017b) in their study found that the three most used SMTs worldwide to be the SWOT analysis, Benchmarking, and PEST analysis. South African studies also found the SWOT analysis to be the most used SMT.

Only two SMTs (Balanced Scorecard and Scenario Planning) used in this study are on the Bain's Management Tools & Trends top 25 SMTs list, so comparisons could not be made for the rest of the SMTs except these two SMTs. The worldwide use figures for the Balanced Scorecard and Scenario Planning are 29% and 19% respectively, and they are the 14th and 22nd most used SMTs in top 25 SMTs list respectively. In BroadbandCo they have use figures of 74.50% and 72.70% and are ranked 9th and 11th of the 12 SMTs respectively. This indicate that they are among the least used SMTs in BroadbandCo whilst worldwide the Balanced Scorecard has a use figure that ranks as average whilst Scenario Planning is one of the least used SMTs. The SWOT analysis, Benchmarking, and PEST analysis are also not on this study's list of SMTs so comparisons could not be made on these worldwide popular SMTs either.

The results reveal that BroadbandCo makes high use of all the SMTs under study with the lowest SMT use being a relatively high figure of 70.90% as compared to the worldwide lowest SMTs use figure of 10% (Rigby and Bilodeau, 2018). The average for the use of SMTs in BroadbandCo is 78.63% which is substantially higher than the Rigby and Bilodeau (2018) average of 30%.

5.3.2 Discussion pertaining to Research Objective 2

The second objective of this study was to explore the perceived value of SMTs in BroadbandCo and the findings pertaining to this objective are discussed below.

The SMTs with the highest perceived values in BroadbandCo are: "Executive Information Systems" with a score of 3.91; "Regular reviews of progress with implementation" with a score of 3.84; and "An organisation-wide performance management system" also with a score of 3.84.

The three SMTs with the lowest perceived value ratings in descending order are: "Stakeholder engagement during the strategic planning and implementation" with a perceived value score of 3.56; "Balanced Scorecard" with perceived value score of 3.47; and "Formal strategic planning process" with perceived value score of 3.45. The results reveal that generally the respondents view the SMTs being studied are valuable with an average perceived value score of 3.66.

No studies could be found that investigate the perceived value of SMTs. The literature survey revealed that there are many studies that confirm the use of SMTs have a positive impact on company performance. SMTs can thus be considered valuable from the perspective of improving company performance. There are also empirical studies conducted to determine the level of satisfaction with SMTs use. This study assumes that high satisfaction rates of SMTs can also be considered as users perceiving these SMTs as being valuable. Rigby and Bilodeau (2018) provides the satisfaction rate of the top 25 most used SMTs in the world with Total Quality Management (4.09), Digital Transformation (4.07) and Internet of Things (4.07) being the top 3 SMTs with the highest satisfaction rates. The SMTs with the lowest satisfaction rates are Complexity Reduction (3.88), Employee Engagement Systems (3.87) and Zero-Based Budgeting (3.82). None of the SMTs mentioned above are on this study's standard survey questionnaire list of SMTs. Perceived value comparisons could not be made with other studies as no relevant perceived value studies could be found in the literature surveyed.

5.3.3 Discussion pertaining to Research Objective 3

The third objective of this study was to compare the use and perceived value of SMTs in BroadbandCo with other companies. The discussion related to the findings for this objective is conducted below.

Table 16 provides a comparison of the use and perceived value of the SMTs in BroadbandCo and other companies. The higher use and perceived value for each SMT has been highlighted in green. Similar ratings are highlighted in yellow. As can be observed, BroadbandCo has higher use values for six (50%) of the SMTs and has the same use value for one (8.33%) SMT which is "Stakeholder engagement during the strategic planning and implementation" (with use at 76.4%).

BroadbandCo has higher perceived values for nine (75%) of the SMTs. Other companies have higher perceived value for: "A formal strategic planning process" at 3.76 versus BroadbandCo's at 3.45; "A formal strategic plan" at 3.79 versus BroadbandCo's at 3.58; and a marginally higher perceived value for "Stakeholder

engagement during the strategic planning and implementation” at 3.58 versus BroadbandCo’s at 3.56.

Table 16: BroadbandCo’s use and perceived value vs other companies

Strategic Management Tools		Use (%)		Perceived Value	
		BroadbandCo	Other Companies	BroadbandCo	Other Companies
1	A strategic planning department	78.20%	77.20%	3.67	3.65
2	A formal strategic planning process	72.70%	85.90%	3.45	3.76
3	A formal strategic plan (in report or presentation form)	80.00%	87.10%	3.58	3.79
4	Scenario planning	72.70%	59.20%	3.60	3.27
5	A formal process for strategy implementation	76.40%	76.80%	3.67	3.60
6	Balanced Scorecard	74.50%	68.90%	3.47	3.38
7	A formal implementation plan	70.90%	75.80%	3.73	3.60
8	Executive Information Systems	94.50%	70.40%	3.91	3.47
9	Regular reviews of progress with implementation	78.20%	83.50%	3.84	3.67
10	An organisation-wide performance management system	85.50%	83.90%	3.84	3.65
11	Implementation incentives or rewards	83.60%	68.20%	3.60	3.40
12	Stakeholder engagement during the strategic planning and implementation	76.40%	76.40%	3.56	3.58
Average		78.63%	76.11%	3.66	3.57

Source: Survey data

The top three SMTs used by other companies are: “A formal strategic plan” with use at 87.10% versus BroadbandCo’s use at 80.00%; “A formal strategic planning process” with use at 85.90% versus BroadbandCo’s use at 72.70% (BroadbandCo’s 3rd least used SMT); and “An organisation-wide performance management system” with use at 83.90% versus BroadbandCo’s use at 85.50% (BroadbandCo’s second highest used SMT).

BroadbandCo’s most used SMT is “Executive Information Systems” with use at 94.50% versus other company’s use at 70.40%. BroadbandCo’s highest SMT use is greater than other companies (that is, 94.50% versus 87.10%). BroadbandCo’s second most used SMT is “An organisation-wide performance management system” with use at 85.50% (versus other company’s use at 83.90%), which is marginally lower than other companies second most used SMT at 85.90%. BroadbandCo’s third most used SMT is “Implementation incentives or rewards” with use at 83.60% (versus other company’s use at 68.20%), which is also marginally lower than other companies third most used SMT at 83.90%.

In contrast to BroadbandCo, the three SMTs that are least used by other companies in descending order are: “Balanced Scorecard” at 68.90% (versus BroadbandCo’s at 74.50%); “Implementation incentives or rewards” at 68.20% (versus BroadbandCo’s at 83.60%); and “Scenario planning” at 59.20% (versus

BroadbandCo's at 72.70%). BroadbandCo has higher use ratings for all three of its lowest used SMTs which were discussed in 5.3.1 above.

When it comes to perceived value rankings, the SMTs with the top three highest perceived values in BroadbandCo are: "Executive Information Systems" with perceived value at 3.91 (versus other company's at 3.47); "Regular reviews of progress with implementation" with perceived value at 3.84 (versus other company's at 3.67); and "An organisation-wide performance management system" also with perceived value at 3.84 (versus other company's at 3.65).

In comparison, the top three SMTs with the highest perceived values for other companies are: "A formal strategic plan" with perceived value at 3.79 (versus BroadbandCo's at 3.58); "A formal strategic planning process" with perceived value at 3.76 (versus BroadbandCo's at 3.45); and "Regular reviews of progress with implementation" with perceived value at 3.67 (versus BroadbandCo's at 3.84). BroadbandCo has higher perceived values compared to other companies for all of its top three most valued SMTs.

In contrast to BroadbandCo, the three SMTs with lowest perceived values in other companies in descending order are: "Implementation incentives or rewards" with perceived value at 3.40 (versus BroadbandCo's at 3.60); "Balanced Scorecard" with perceived value at 3.38 (versus BroadbandCo's at 3.47); and "Scenario planning" with perceived value at 3.27 (versus BroadbandCo's at 3.60). BroadbandCo has higher perceived values for all three of its lowest valued SMTs which were discussed in 5.3.2 above.

It can be noted that the "Balanced Scorecard" has one of the lowest perceived values in both BroadbandCo and other companies at 3.47 and 3.38 respectively (11th on both BroadbandCo's and other company's list). Its use is at 74.50% (9th on the list) in BroadbandCo and at 68.90% (10th on the list) in other companies.

"Executive Information Systems" is BroadbandCo's most popular SMT as it has both the top use and the highest perceived value ratings. "An organisation-wide performance management system" is the second most popular SMT with both use and perceived value ratings listed in the top 3. "A formal strategic planning process" has both the lowest use and perceived value ratings and is therefore

BroadbandCo's most unpopular SMT. In contrast, "A formal strategic plan" and "A formal strategic planning process" are the top SMTs that are used and have the highest perceived value ratings and are thus the most popular SMTS for other companies. The "Balanced Scorecard", "Implementation incentives or rewards" and "Scenario planning" have the lowest use and perceived value ratings and is therefore the most unpopular SMTs in other companies.

BroadbandCo has a higher average use of SMTs at 78.63% versus other companies at 76.11% as well as a higher average perceived value of SMTs at 3.66 versus other companies at 3.57. This confirms that in general BroadbandCo uses and values the SMTs used in this study more than other companies.

5.4 Recommendations

Like all Managers, BroadbandCo's managers also require peripheral vision; they must constantly think in dualities and examine issues from various perspectives (Wright *et al.*, 2013). They must also distinguish and then integrate complex bundles of issues. SMTs can thus assist BroadbandCo's managers and its Strategy Division to perform better analysis and make better decisions. While not a panacea for improved performance, it is recommended that BroadbandCo's Strategy Division, management, and staff be more prepared and able to use relevant SMTs appropriately and at appropriate times as this may reap many benefits some of which are alluded to in the discussions below.

This study revealed that "A formal implementation plan" has the lowest use figure in BroadbandCo. This SMT provides several benefits including improved clarity, communication, buy-in and keeps all employees on track. It can be a very useful in assisting an organisation to successfully communicate and implement its strategy and thus help it gain a competitive advantage. It is therefore recommended that BroadbandCo's Strategy Division and management use "A formal implementation plan" to assist the organisation to communicate a consistent strategy implementation plan organisation-wide and align everybody towards achieving a common goal and objective. This will result in a higher likelihood of successfully implementing its strategy and can thus result in improved performance.

This study also revealed that “A formal strategic planning process” is another key SMTs that is both least used and valued and is thus the most unpopular SMT in BroadbandCo. However, this SMT has been found to have both one of the highest use and value figures and thus the most popular SMT in other companies. Since other companies use and value this SMT, it may therefore be very useful and valuable in assisting other companies to successfully formulate and communicate their strategies thus helping them gain a competitive advantage. According to Jarzabkowski and Balogun (2009), organisations are placing increased importance on this SMT to facilitate communication, participation, and integration around common objectives. It is therefore recommended that BroadbandCo increase the use of its formal strategic management process in conjunction with the appropriate SMTs to support the consistent evaluation of its external environment and internal resources, capabilities, and competencies, thus aiding in the planning, development and communication of appropriate strategies that will enable it to constantly review its strategic position and thus maintain a competitive edge.

“Scenario planning” is also one of the least used SMTs in BroadbandCo. This SMT is valuable as it aids organisations in preparing for possible eventualities as well as making organisations more flexible and innovative. It also helps a company to test its strategy (Hiltunen, 2009). Managers frequently use it to articulate their conceptual models about the future so better decisions can be taken (Martelli, 2001). The use of this SMT for long-term planning and strategic foresight allows for rapid adaptation to major changes (Varum and Melo, 2010). As can be noted, “Scenario planning” is very beneficial and therefore it is recommended that BroadbandCo’s Strategy Division and employees make high use of this SMT.

“Stakeholder engagement during the strategic planning and implementation” is one of the least valued SMTs with use also being relatively low in BroadbandCo. According to Dess *et al.* (2012), engaging key stakeholders is the foundation upon which a successful strategy is developed. The breaking down of an organisation's environment into recognisable key stakeholders makes the entire strategy formulation process more manageable (Dess *et al.*,2012). Strategic

planning is a difficult process in and of itself. One of the most effective approaches to ensure campus-wide acceptance of significant strategic decisions is to ensure that everyone has a voice and that that voice is effectively heard as part of the overall strategic planning process. As more stakeholders feel committed and take ownership of the strategy, the likelihood of successful implementation increases (Rowley and Sherman, 2001). It is therefore recommended that BroadbandCo's Strategy Division and management engage stakeholders during its strategy planning and implementation stages as this will increase staff commitment and ensure a better chance of a successful strategy.

This study's findings revealed that the "Balanced Scorecard" (BSC) is among the lowest used and valued SMT in BroadbandCo. However, the BSC is flexible and can be adapted according to the market situation, product strategy, and competitive environment. Previous financial information together with non-financial factors (drivers of future performance) are the advantages of using the BSC over other SMTs (Kaplan and Norton, 1996). In addition to help improve company performance, the BSC has many other benefits such as the ability of improving the company's information system and responding to changes in the environment, providing managers with relevant and necessary information to formulate, communicate, evaluate and implement strategy, and to support the decision-making process (Quesado *et al.*, 2022). It is therefore recommended that BroadbandCo's Strategy Division and management utilise the BSC as one of its key SMTs especially during the strategy formulation, communication, implementation, and control phases.

In addition to the above recommendations, this study proposes that BroadbandCo also consider the following general recommendations to aid in its strategic management process and help improve company performance and ultimately gain and sustain a competitive advantage.

A recommendation is for BroadbandCo to use benchmarking as a SMT. This will assist the Strategy Division and employees to provide an independent perspective on how well the company is performing compared to the competitors in the ICT industry. The Strategy Division and management can then use appropriate SMTs to devise relevant strategies and set suitable performance

objectives to address any shortcomings. The suitable performance objectives as well as staff buy-in will motivate employees and ensure a higher likelihood of the set targets being achieved more frequently.

Gunn and Williams (2007) recommend that a company should not just rely on a single SMT in its strategic decision-making processes as different SMTs may present alternate valid perspectives. It is therefore recommended that BroadbandCo and especially the Strategy Division use various appropriate SMTs in its strategic decision-making processes to gain an insight into alternate perspectives and thus ensuring that the organisation makes informed strategic decisions.

Although this study revealed that BroadbandCo's use of SMTs is relatively high, it is recommended that the SMTs used be reviewed annually to gain a deeper understanding of BroadbandCo's competitive position, and the strength of a position that it may consider moving towards during a specific financial period. This is to ensure that it achieves its desired goals and objectives within that financial period by using the appropriate SMTs correctly at the right time.

BroadbandCo's Strategy Division and employees are advised to be fully aware and well informed of the various SMTs and strengths and weaknesses of each SMT so that they can integrate and apply suitable SMTs creatively, appropriately, and at the right time. SMTs can help improve processes, products and services and provide better performance and greater profits (Nakayama, 2018). In addition, the use of SMTs can help an organisation's managers to improve their analytical and diagnostic skills (Berisha Qehaja, Kutllovci and Shiroka Pula, 2017a). It is therefore recommended that BroadbandCo increase the use of SMTs as this may also improve processes, products and services, performance and enhance the organisation's skillset.

Additionally, and as stated previously, the increase in the use of SMTs during all stages of the strategic management process may result in improved staff morale, commitment, gratitude, and job satisfaction which would ultimately result in improved company performance in accordance with the many studies listed in

Chapter 2. It is therefore recommended that BroadbandCo increase the use of the relevant and appropriate SMTs to reap these benefits.

It is also recommended that the Strategy Division and employees reconsider the various roles and benefits of SMTs in their “technologies of rationality” functions to aid and guide them in their daily activities. It is further recommended that the organisation must be careful not to view SMTs solely as analytical tools, ignoring other applications such as their ability to facilitate debate and dialogues and as boundary-spanning objects across hierarchies and departmental divisions. These latter strengths may aid in mitigating some of BroadbandCo's communication, coordination, and relational challenges that may be caused by its large size and its various divisions that are spread across several regions in the country (Roper and Hodari, 2015).

Furthermore, the Strategy Division, management and staff need to be aware that limited knowledge of SMTs could result in not knowing how to integrate them within BroadbandCo or using the wrong/inappropriate SMTs in some or all the strategic management stages could result in adverse effects. To have proper awareness and be able to correctly use the appropriate SMTs, it is recommended that BroadbandCo's management and staff attend relevant education and training, webinars, and conferences as well as staff must be encouraged to practice the use of SMTs in their daily activities. This will enhance their understanding and appropriate use of the SMTs. The use, value, importance, and impact of SMTs will then become self-evident.

According to the literature surveyed, manager's use of SMTs has not been consistent, and the popularity of the different SMTs and their use has varied over time (Rigby and Bilodeau, 2018). Based on this finding, it is therefore recommended that BroadbandCo consider such changes in its long-term planning and emphasise those SMTs that improve the company's performance, as well as employees use SMTs that they are more satisfied with or find more valuable.

A challenge that BroadbandCo will need to overcome is employee's resistance to change and adopting the use of some SMTs. To help overcome the resistance

to change it is recommended that appropriate education and training is conducted to demonstrate the value and benefits that the SMTs provide in improving employee's daily activities and their lives. Transparent and effective communication are vital to get all staff motivated towards adopting and using the chosen SMTs. In addition, employees should be included in the decision-making process and be afforded the opportunity to provide inputs prior to the organisation making the changes. This will ensure employees taking ownership and thus will have a higher likelihood of success.

A further hurdle that Broadband will need to overcome is the challenge of communicating the use of SMTs and the organisational strategy with all stakeholders, especially employees to ensure alignment, commitment, and buy-in. Some ways that this can be mitigated include, clear and frequent communication, informing staff about the changes as soon as possible, and being open and honest with the communication to staff.

Another challenge that BroadbandCo will need to overcome whilst trying to achieve the goal of increasing the use of SMTs include, providing access to staff to sources of data that could be expensive and time consuming. With the increased use of SMTs, the company will need to be careful that staff do not succumb to "paralysis by analysis" and gather too much information and lose sight of the SMT's goal and objective (Rastogi and Trivedi, 2016).

The use of SMTs will be successful if certain conditions for using them are met in BroadbandCo. This is supported by research that indicate that, if the necessary infrastructures such as comprehensive information systems, proportional cultural values, ideal organisational structures, and so on are not provided, managers will be unable to fully and optimally utilise these SMTs (Hitt, 2016; Dess *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, it is recommended that, before choosing to use a SMT, BroadbandCo's Strategy Division and management identify the conditions that should be provided in the organisation so that the chosen SMT can be used optimally to achieve the organisation's overall goals.

Furthermore, the use of some SMTs requires large financial resources, and they can be used only by the larger companies. BroadbandCo is a large company that has the financial resources to ensure that the conditions can be met to use

some of the SMTs that require financial investments such as Strategic alliances and Supply chain integration. It is therefore recommended that in the medium to long-term BroadbandCo consider implementing and using some of these SMTs that may be appropriate for its objectives as such an investment, according to Gallo *et al.* (2019), will reap rewards that could lead to improved financial performance, long term increase in company value and a competitive advantage.

BroadbandCo should be cognisant that SMTs like all tools have strengths and weaknesses, and their usefulness can change over time. BroadbandCo must therefore understand the full effects of each SMT and then combine the right ones in the right ways at the right times to ensure a higher likelihood of success. BroadbandCo will need to examine the literature and consult with other SMT users to avoid being taken in by exaggeration and oversimplification. This will enable it to choose the best and the right SMT for the job.

Moreover, BroadbandCo's managers should use a logical method when selecting and implementing SMTs as SMTs will only improve results if they identify unmet customer needs, develop distinct capabilities, exploit competitor vulnerabilities, and develop game-changing strategies. BroadbandCo should also advocate for realistic strategic directions and view SMTs as a supplement, not a panacea (Rigby and Bilodeau, 2018).

Finally and according to research, it is advised that BroadbandCo should tailor SMTs to its business system rather than the other way around. Research has revealed that major efforts achieve significantly higher SMT satisfaction scores than limited ones. If BroadbandCo's Strategy Division and management are only going to make a limited effort, then it is advised that it will be better to avoid the use of some SMTs (Rigby and Bilodeau, 2018).

5.5 Significance and contribution of the study

Both practitioners and academics require a better understanding and more information about the utility and role of SMTs in specific contexts (Roper and Hodari, 2015; Jarzabkowski and Wilson, 2006). Such knowledge can help practitioners improve their managerial effectiveness and efficiency by allowing them to have a better reflection on their specific strategy work

practices, processes, and systems (Johnson *et al.*, 2003). The findings from this study have both academic and managerial implications and these are discussed below.

5.5.1 Academic implications

There seem to be no studies or empirical evidence on the use and value SMTs play in the South African ICT sector, especially in the last 5 years. The literature survey revealed several related South African studies such as a study to investigate the SMTs implemented by SMMEs post-COVID-19 lockdown in Johannesburg CBD by Mkhonza and Sifolo (2022) and a study to determine the usage of SMTs in South African firms that did not include the ICT sector by Picard (2016).

Other South African studies include a study on the strategic planning process as a whole by Odame (2007), the link between strategic planning and entrepreneurialism in the financial and commercial sectors by Murimbika (2011), knowledge management as a SMT at Eskom by du Toit and Steyn (2011), strategic processes in the retail sector by Naidoo (2006), business strategy development among SMEs by Laljit (2006), strategic intelligence as a SMT in the long-term insurance industry by Kruger (2010), the use of management accounting tools and the Balanced Scorecard to improve firm's performance in the manufacturing industry by Kinbangou (2019), the use of strategic management process in the mining industry by Boikanyo, Lotriet and Buys (2016), the link between strategic planning and performance in SMMEs by Nkulu (2012) and Tshienda (2021) and the link between entrepreneurship and performance of SMEs by Mohutsiwa (2012). This highlights that very little is known on the use and value of SMTs in ICT companies in South Africa.

This has left a gap in literature regarding the use and perceived value of SMTs in the ICT Industry as well as in South Africa in general. This study therefore contributes significantly to literature regarding the use and perceived value of SMTs, especially in the ICT sector, therefore attempting to fill the void in literature.

5.5.2 Managerial implications

The ICT industry is a very competitive environment (Leite *et al.*, 2018; Barba-Sánchez *et al.*, 2018). This study has highlighted important implications for business leaders and managers in the ICT sector on the use and value of SMTs.

From a business standpoint, the lack of value placed on the use of SMTs to assist an organisation in developing strategies to outwit competitors has the potential to lose any organisational competitive advantage that it may have had. Knowing the significance and value of using SMTs in all stages of the strategic management process provides management with concrete considerations for actions and interventions that could be pursued in the interest of improving company-wide performance and gaining a competitive advantage (Indiatsy *et al.*, 2014).

In the context of this study, an understanding of the empirical research will empower management to better understand and lead staff appropriately through the various stages of the strategic management process, which is critical for BroadbandCo to gain a competitive advantage. Improved stakeholder engagement during the strategic management process may result in improved staff morale, commitment, gratitude, and job satisfaction which would ultimately result in improved company performance.

5.6 Limitations

This research study is descriptive in nature, and the method used is a cross-sectional survey. The sample size could have been larger to be more representative of the organisation under study. The research study was carried out within a single South African organisation, therefore generalisations within the ICT sector, as well as between industries and other geographical jurisdictions, should be viewed with caution.

Gaining access to the right people and getting the targeted people to respond to the survey and as predicted in Chapter 1, did become a challenge. A large proportion of the organisation went on compulsory leave during the period that the survey was conducted resulting in a lower than expected response rate.

Given the subjective nature of the method, other influences outside the scope of the research study could have affected employee responses impacting the obtained results and ultimately the outcomes of the research study. The research study was also based on the assumption that the respondents would be open and honest in their responses to the survey questions.

Another limitation is that the research study did not investigate moderating factors that could influence SMTs use, such as company size, environmental turbulence, and so on. As a result, future research can broaden the scope by looking at other SMTs as well as organisational performance outcomes, which may reflect the overall use and perceived value of SMTs.

Of the list of 12 SMTs on the survey questionnaire only two SMTs (Balanced Scorecard and Scenario Planning) are on the Bain's Management Tools & Trends top 25 SMTs list. This difference in SMTs list limited direct comparisons of SMTs use with Rigby and Bilodeau's and well as various other studies.

5.7 Future considerations

Since this study was limited to a single South African ICT company, future research could be conducted on a wider scope within the South African ICT industry. Future research could include a study on the use of SMTs and its effect on the performance of ICT firms in South Africa. Other opportunities for future studies include in-depth and longitudinal studies to gain better insights on the use and perceived value of SMTs in South African companies. Studies could be conducted in the South African context on the use and satisfaction rates of SMTs using the Bain's Management Tools & Trends top 25 SMTs list. It would also be interesting to benchmark and compare South African companies with international and worldwide trends. The SWOT analysis and other relevant popular SMTs should also be considered on the list of SMTs in a South African context to compare with the various other studies including the study conducted by Berisha Qehaja, Kutllovci and Shiroka Pula (2017b) for the various scenarios and settings.

5.8 Chapter summary

This final chapter discussed the objectives of the research study, confirming that all were met through the execution of the research study. Recommendations for managers, the Strategy Division and staff based on the findings in the research study and the limitations of the research study were discussed followed by future research imperatives.

5.9 Study conclusion

The goal of the research study was ultimately to meet all the objectives of the study, which were duly achieved. The key concepts of strategic management, strategic management tools and perceived value were comprehensively defined in Chapter 2. The empirical research was conducted as described in Chapter 3. The results of the study were analysed, presented, and reported on in Chapter 4, and finally, the recommendations for the Strategy Division, managers and employees were presented in this final chapter.

This cross-sectional study was conducted in a South African ICT company. An online survey questionnaire was employed to gather data from 55 respondents. The data was analysed and interpreted against the developed Likert scales. The data was also compared with that of other companies.

Although the literature advocates the use of SMTs as an important element of the strategic planning and implementation process, strategy scholars have given relatively little attention to the study of the value and use of SMTs. Instead, they have incorporated SMTs use as a small part of their investigations of both developed and emerging market contexts. In this study, an attempt has been made to shed light on and fill the gap in the literature about this important element of the strategic management process by providing relevant information about SMTs use and value.

The study revealed that although SMTs may not be perceived as very valuable in the organisation under study, they are used often in the organisation. Therefore, it is suggested that the staff of the organisation need to enhance their knowledge on the value and the improvements that SMTs can have on all stages

of the strategic management process especially during strategic planning and implementation stages, and in the day-to-day operations in the organisation. This can also be enhanced by attending specialised training courses and programs, thereby increasing the use of SMTs which may result in improved company performance and thus proving SMTs to be valuable in the organisation.

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APPENDIX A: RESEARCH DATA

Table 17: BroadbandCo's respondent functional areas

Respondents' functional area	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Finance and accounting	1	1.80%
Operations, engineering or technical	43	78.20%
Marketing	2	3.60%
ICT	2	3.60%
General management	1	1.80%
Other support services	6	10.90%
Total	55	100.00%

Source: Survey data

Table 18: Other company's respondent functional areas

Respondents' functional area	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Finance and accounting	93	5.20%
Operations, engineering or technical	267	14.90%
Marketing	525	29.40%
ICT	260	14.60%
General management	236	13.20%
Other support services	404	22.60%
Total	1786	100.00%

Source: Survey data

Table 19: BroadbandCo's gender balance

Gender	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Male	42	76.40%
Female	13	23.60%
Total	55	100.00%

Source: Survey data

Table 20: Other company's gender balance

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	973	54.50%
Female	812	45.50%
	1785	100.00%

Source: Survey data

Table 21: BroadbandCo's age distribution

Age	Frequency (n)	Frequency (%)
27	1	1.80%
29	1	1.80%
32	2	3.60%
34	1	1.80%
35	1	1.80%
36	1	1.80%
37	2	3.60%
38	1	1.80%
39	1	1.80%
40	1	1.80%
41	2	3.60%
42	2	3.60%
43	1	1.80%
44	4	7.30%
45	1	1.80%
46	1	1.80%
47	2	3.60%
51	1	1.80%
52	1	1.80%
53	4	7.30%
54	2	3.60%
55	2	3.60%
56	1	1.80%
57	2	3.60%
58	2	3.60%
59	4	7.30%
60	3	5.50%
61	2	3.60%
62	2	3.60%
63	1	1.80%
64	3	5.50%
Total	55	100.00%

Source: Survey data

Table 22: Other company's age distribution

Age	Frequency (n)	Frequency (%)
20	1	0.10%
23	3	0.20%
24	2	0.10%
25	7	0.40%
26	14	0.80%
27	16	0.90%
28	21	1.20%
29	35	2.00%
30	42	2.40%
31	34	1.90%
32	61	3.40%
33	67	3.80%
34	65	3.60%
35	77	4.30%
36	71	4.00%
37	67	3.80%
38	84	4.70%
39	70	3.90%
40	90	5.00%
41	52	2.90%
42	76	4.30%
43	60	3.40%
44	73	4.10%
45	77	4.30%
46	58	3.20%
47	51	2.90%
48	53	3.00%
49	43	2.40%
50	51	2.90%
51	47	2.60%
52	58	3.20%
53	24	1.30%
54	37	2.10%
55	23	1.30%
56	33	1.80%
57	24	1.30%
58	28	1.60%
59	22	1.20%
60	13	0.70%
61	10	0.60%
62	7	0.40%
63	13	0.70%
64	3	0.20%
65	6	0.30%
66	3	0.20%
68	2	0.10%
69	1	0.10%
70	1	0.10%
74	1	0.10%
Total *	1777	100%

* invalid ages were removed

Source: Survey data

Table 23: BroadbandCo's educational background

Educational Level	Frequency(n)	Percent(%)
Completed high school (matric)	7	12.70%
Post-matric degree or diploma	27	49.10%
Post-graduate qualification	21	38.20%
Total	55	100.00%

Source: Survey data

Table 24: Other company's educational background

Educational Level	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Did not complete high school	18	1.00%
Completed high school (matric)	167	9.40%
Post-matric degree or diploma	767	43.00%
Post-graduate qualification	833	46.70%
Total	1785	100.00%

Source: Survey data

Table 25: BroadbandCo's ethnic group breakdown

Ethnic Group	Frequency (n)	Frequency (%)
Asian/Indian	10	18.20%
Black	22	40.00%
Coloured	5	9.10%
White	18	32.70%
Total	55	100.00%

Source: Survey data

Table 26: Other company's ethnic group breakdown

Ethnic Group	Frequency (n)	Frequency (%)
Asian/Indian	90	5.00%
Black	1223	68.50%
Coloured	102	5.70%
White	370	20.70%
Total	1785	100.00%

Source: Survey data

ANNEXURE A: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

THE PERCEIVED QUALITY OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT 2022

Dear Respondent

You are herewith invited to participate in an academic research study conducted by Unisa's Graduate School of Business Leadership (SBL).

The purpose of the study is to investigate the perceived quality of strategic management in organisations, and the purpose of the research is to help us better understand how to improve the practise of strategic management.

All your answers will be treated as confidential, and you or your organisation will not be identified in any of the research reports or publications emanating from this research.

Your participation in this study is very important to us. You may however choose not to participate, and you may also withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences.

Please answer the questions in the attached questionnaire as completely and honestly as possible. Completing the questionnaire should not take more than 20-25 minutes of your time.

The results of the study will be used for academic purposes only and may be published in an academic journal. We will provide you with a summary of the findings on request.

Please contact the study leader, Prof Peet Venter (ventep@unisa.ac.za) if you have any questions or comments regarding the study.

By clicking on the "submit" button below, you are consenting to participate in the study.

Identifier: Please enter the code provided by the person that invited you to participate in the research. This code will only be used to ensure that team researchers get the correct data to work with.

Insert number

Section 1: Organisation and respondent particulars

1.1 Which of the following best describes the type of organisation that you work for?

A privately-owned enterprise	A public (listed) company	A state-owned enterprise (e.g. Telkom, SAA)	Public Entity
A national or provincial government organization	A local government	A not-for-profit organization	Government Business Enterprise (e.g. CSIR, Mintek)

1.2 How many full-time employees (approximately) work in your organisation?

Insert number

1.3 What is the core business of your establishment?

Agriculture, fishing, forestry	Mining & quarrying	Manufacturing	Electricity, gas, and water supply	Construction
Wholesale and retail trade, restaurants, hotels	Transport, storage, and communication (includes telecommunication)	Finance, insurance, real estate and business services	Community, personal and social services (includes general government services)	Other (please specify):

1.4 In which country/ region is your organisation's head office located?

Select from drop-down list

1.5 What best describes your position within your company?

Director	Senior manager or executive	Middle manager	Entry level manager (e.g. supervisor)	Professional specialist	Permanent employee	Other (please specify):
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1.6 Which of the following best describes the functional area that you work in?

Sales	Finance and accounting	Operations, engineering or technical	Marketing	ICT	General management	Other support services
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Section 2: Quality of strategic management

IMPORTANT: Strategic management involves the activities associated with developing and implementing long-term plans.

Consider each of the following statements on **strategic management in your organisation** and indicate your agreement with each statement. Remember that this is about your own perceptions – there are no wrong answers.

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neither agree nor disagree 3	Agree 4	Strongly agree 5
2.1 Our organisation has clear long-term (3 years +) objectives.					
2.2 Our organisation has a clear vision for the future.					
2.3 Our strategic decisions are always in line with our vision for the future.					
2.4 Our strategic decisions create value for the owners/ shareholders of the organisation.					
2.5 We almost always achieve our long-term objectives.					
2.6 Our organisation is focused on a few key performance indicators to track our progress with implementation.					
2.7 The leadership of our organisation is visibly committed to successfully implementing our strategy.					
2.8 The culture in our organisation strongly supports our strategic direction.					
2.9 Our internal organisation structure supports our strategic direction.					
2.10 Our internal operating environment (processes and policies) support strategy implementation.					
2.11 We have the right technology in place to successfully implement our strategy.					
2.12 We have the right competencies in place to successfully implement our strategy,					
2.13 Strategy implementation is regarded as a very important function in our organisation.					
2.14 We have a clear long-term strategy.					
2.15 Our organisation's strategy is clearly understood by most people in the organisation.					
2.16 We are constantly measuring our progress with strategy implementation.					
2.17 Our strategies are acceptable to all key internal stakeholders.					
2.18 Our strategies are aligned well with our external environment.					
2.19 Our strategies make maximum use of what we do well as an organisation.					
2.20 We are not afraid of taking appropriate risks to grow our organisation.					
2.21 In our organisation, we manage risks well.					
2.22 We are quick to respond to important changes in our environment.					
2.23 Our strategic decisions ensure our organisation's sustainability for the future.					

2.24 The strategic decisions that we make are realistic and implementable.					
2.25 We have a good understanding of our key strengths and weaknesses.					
2.26 Several departments get together regularly to plan responses to changes taking place in our business environment.					
2.27 The activities of different divisions in this organisation are well coordinated.					
2.28 We are proactive in addressing anticipated changes in our business environment.					

Section 3: The tools of strategic management

Consider each of the following strategic management tools and indicate:

- Whether your organisation make use of it (yes or no).
- What value (in your view) it adds to your strategic management efforts (on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is "no value whatsoever" and 5 is "can't live without it")

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT TOOLS	Does your organisation use this tool? (Yes/no)	How valuable is it in supporting strategic management? (scale= 1 to 5)
3.1 A strategic planning department		
3.2 A formal strategic planning process		
3.3 A formal strategic plan (in report or presentation form)		
3.4 Scenario planning		
3.5 A formal process for strategy implementation		
3.6 Balanced Scorecard		
3.7 A formal "implementation plan"		
3.8 Executive Information Systems` (EIS - e.g. performance dashboards for key performance metrics)		
3.9 Regular reviews of progress with implementation		
3.10 An organisation-wide performance management system		
3.11 Implementation incentives or rewards		
3.12 Stakeholder engagement during the strategic planning and implementation		

Section 4: Strategic decision-making

IMPORTANT: Strategic decision-making refers to the high-level decisions that affect the whole organisation and require significant financial and other resource commitments!

Consider each of the following statements on the **strategic decision-making process in your organisation** and indicate your agreement with each statement. Remember that this is about your own perceptions – there are no wrong answers.

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neither agree nor disagree 3	Agree 4	Strongly agree 5
4.1 Key strategic decision-makers in our organisation have access to real-time information on the organisation's business operations .					
4.2 Key strategic decision-makers in our organisation has access to real-time information on the competitive environment .					
4.3 In our organisation, we take a long time to make important decisions.					
4.4 Our key strategic decision-making team is diverse in terms of age, ethnicity and gender.					
4.5 In our organisation, all key managers have a common understanding of our business and its environment.					
4.6 There is a lot of healthy debate among the management team about key decisions.					
4.7 Organisational politics dominate strategic decision-making in our organisation.					
4.8 Strategic decision-makers consult widely with key internal stakeholders (e.g. employees, unions) before making important decisions.					
4.9 Strategic decision-makers consult widely with key external stakeholders (e.g. customers) before making important decisions					
4.10 Strategic decision-makers seek the advice of experienced employees before making important decisions.					

Section 5: Organisational performance

5.1 When considering your organisation's overall performance compared to your industry average over the last three years, how would you rate it on each of the metrics below?

	Below industry average 1	About average 2	Better than industry average 3
Overall financial performance			
Growth in revenue			
Customer perceptions of our brand			

Section 6: Personal particulars

- How old will you be on your next birthday?

Insert number

- What is your gender?

Female

Male

- What is your highest formal qualification?

Did not complete high school

Completed high school (matric)

Post-matric degree or diploma

Post-graduate qualification

- Which ethnic group do you belong to?

(this response will be used purely to determine the representativeness of the sample)

Asian/ Indian

Black

Coloured

White

Thank you very much for your time. Should you wish to receive feedback on the results, please enter your e-mail address below.

Enter e-mail address

ANNEXURE B: TURNITIN SIMILARITY REPORT

40924653_MBA5929.pdf

ORIGINALITY REPORT

20%

SIMILARITY INDEX

16%

INTERNET SOURCES

5%

PUBLICATIONS

9%

STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	Submitted to University of South Africa Student Paper	5%
2	uir.unisa.ac.za Internet Source	2%
3	repository.up.ac.za Internet Source	1%
4	acta.mendelu.cz Internet Source	1%
5	electronic-businessjournal.com Internet Source	<1%
6	hdl.handle.net Internet Source	<1%
7	hrcak.srce.hr Internet Source	<1%
8	vital.seals.ac.za:8080 Internet Source	<1%
9	Jieun Yu, Hwansoo Lee, Imsook Ha, Hangjung Zo. "User acceptance of media tablets: An	<1%

ANNEXURE C: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Graduate School of Business Leadership, University of South Africa, PO Box 392, Unisa, 0003, South Africa
Cnr Janadel and Alexandra Avenues, Midrand, 1685, Tel: +27 11 652 0000, Fax: +27 11 652 0299
E-mail: sbl@unisa.ac.za Website: www.unisa.ac.za/sbl

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS LEADERSHIP RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE (GSBL CRERC)

19 July 2022

Ref #: 2022_SBL_MBA_004_FA

Name of applicant: Mr J Ramaser

Student #: 40924653

Dear Mr Ramaser

Decision: Ethics Approval

Student: Mr J Ramaser (40924653@mylife.unisa.ac.za , 081 318 9457)

Supervisor: Mr A Vermaak, (andrepy@mweb.co.za , 083 308 0235)

Project Title: The use and the perceived value of strategic management tools.

Qualification: Master in Business Administration (MBA)

Expiry Date: December 2023

Thank you for applying for research ethics clearance, SBL Research Ethics Review Committee reviewed your application in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics.

Outcome of the SBL Research Committee: Approval is granted until December 2023

The application was reviewed in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics by the SBL Research Ethics Review Committee on the 14/07/2022.

The proposed research may now commence with the proviso that:

- 1) **The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa Covid-19 position statement on research ethics attached**
- 2) The researcher/s will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
- 3) Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study, as well as changes in the methodology, should be communicated in writing to the SBL Research Ethics Review Committee.
- 4) An amended application could be requested if there are substantial changes from the existing proposal, especially if those changes affect any of the study-related risks for the research participants.
- 5) The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study.

45
years

Building leaders who go beyond



Graduate School of Business Leadership, University of South Africa, PO Box 392, Unisa, 0003, South Africa
Cnr Janadel and Alexandra Avenues, Midrand, 1685, Tel: +27 11 652 0000, Fax: +27 11 652 0299
E-mail: sbl@unisa.ac.za Website: www.unisa.ac.za/sbl

Kind regards,

NBW Mitwa

Prof N Mitwa

Chairperson: SBL Research Ethics Committee

011 - 652 0381/ wiltonb@unisa.ac.za

Pmsweli

Prof P Msweli

Executive Dean: Graduate School of Business Leadership

011- 652 0256/mswelp@unisa.ac.za

45 Building leaders who go beyond



ANNEXURE D: SUPERVISOR'S LETTER OF CONSENT TO SUBMIT

MBA5929

CONSENT TO SUBMIT RESEARCH REPORT FOR EXAMINATION 2022

Consent is hereby given to:

Student name: Jagdish Ramaser

Student number: 4092 4653 to submit her research report in its final form.



Supervisor Signature:

Date: 25 November 2022

Supervisor Name: Andre P Vermaak.

The student acknowledges that sufficient feedback was provided by the supervisor and that s/he took the responsibility to attend to the feedback in a way that satisfies the requirements for a research dissertation on the MBA and MBL level.



Student signature:

Date: 06 December 2022