

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC DECISIONS AT THE SOCIAL SECURITY
COMMISSION IN NAMIBIA.**

by

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STATEMENT

I, Daniel Sipopa Ndara, hereby declare that the mini-dissertation submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree Magister Technologiae in the subject Business Administration at the University of South Africa is my own work and has not been submitted by me for purposes of obtaining a qualification at another institution.

Signature.....

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to determine the key obstacles to strategy implementation at the Social Security Commission. The objective was to establish various factors that inhibit successful strategy implementation and explore alternative approaches that could be adopted to facilitate effective implementation of strategic decisions.

The data was collected through questionnaires distributed to the personnel of the institution. 34 respondents out of a population of 56 participated in the study. The results showed serious lack of change management practice which could be regarded as the reason why resistance to change from the majority of the personnel is being experienced. Indications are also prevalent from the results obtained that show lack of ownership of the implementation process.

In addition, lack of commitment to achieve positive results, lack of control of the implementation plan, ineffective information sharing methods as well as negative organizational culture are influencing the outcome of the strategy implementation process.

Key Terms

Strategy Implementation; Strategic decisions; Implementation process; Obstacles; Change management; Resistance to change; Commitment; Organizational culture; Communication; Staff turnover.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introductory background

The Social Security Commission is a state owned enterprise of the Namibian Government. The institution was established on 15 January 1995 pursuant to the promulgation of the Social Security Act, Act 34 of 1994, on 1 November 1994. It commenced operation on 1 March 1995. Initially, it operated from one office in Windhoek and gradually expanded its operations to five branch offices and three satellite offices in Namibia during the preceding years.

The mission statement of the Social Security Commission is, “To professionally administer the funds for the provision of social security benefits to the Namibian workforce and their dependants” (Social Security Commission Strategic Plan, 2004-2007:2).

The institution endorsed the following core values and beliefs to serve as the guiding principles when conducting business. The core values are: Equity, Integrity, Transparency, Accountability, Confidentiality, Ethical behavior, Customer satisfaction, Effective communication, Mutual trust and respect.

The main objective of the institution is to administer the Social Security funds and provide benefits such as maternity leave, sick-leave benefits, employment injuries, medical care and death benefits to the potential beneficiaries.

The administration of the institution involves for example, registration of employers and employees operating in Namibia, collection of contributions, payments of benefits and investment of surplus funds.

1.2 Background to the study and preliminary reading

Background to the study

The management of the institution formulates strategies to guide operational activities on a yearly basis. The focus is on developing strategies that are effective in facilitating continuous improvement of operational activities at the institution. The challenge in this regard however, is how to maintain consistency in managing the implementation process of strategic decisions.

As a member of the team that was responsible for implementation of some strategies designed to direct revenue collection activities during the last ten years, it was observed that several strategies were unsuccessful. The results obtained during those years were unsatisfactory as it did not meet management expectations. This aspect serves as the basis of the study to be conducted. The study will attempt to determine key obstacles to strategy implementation at the Social Security Commission in Namibia.

Preliminary reading

The management of the Social Security Commission experiences a number of challenges in managing the implementation process of strategic decisions at the institution. The problems usually arise during the implementation stage of the strategic plan. The assumed conclusions regarding the culprits in the process are the operational personnel, who some managers believe to be the ones responsible for implementation of strategic decisions.

To expand further on this assumption, the literature review will focus on five key themes namely, strategy implementation as a responsibility of operational staff, strategy formulation impact on the implementation process, acceptance level of strategy by personnel, prevailing organizational culture and leadership.

According to Springer (2005:9), managers are mainly comfortable with planning activities than with implementation, organizing, leading and control. This suggestion is supported by some managers who believe that strategy implementation is the responsibility of operational personnel. These managers view strategic planning as the only critical activities that deserve their attention.

As soon as the plan is finally crafted, the managers' role ends and the implementation should then be shifted to the operational personnel to ensure the success thereof. Needless to say that managers are strategic executives and their key responsibility is only planning the direction the institution should follow.

Some studies on the other hand suggest that there is a close relationship between strategy implementation and strategy formulation. According to Beaver (2003:345), success of any strategy depends on how the particular strategy is formulated, communicated, monitored and managed. An understanding is created to indicate the inter-dependence of strategy formulation and strategy implementation. Therefore, it is suggested that strategy implementation is part and parcel of the overall process of strategic management and it is important to consider implementation right from the formulation of the particular strategy.

With regard to the acceptance of the strategy by personnel, some viewpoints exist in practice whereby personnel are being referred to as being instrumental in resisting change. This might be correct as people would want to know from the outset how the proposed change would affect them. It is therefore essential to establish whether everyone that will be affected by the implementation of the particular strategy, accepts the plan and is aware of the implication of adopting the said strategy.

On the other hand, the prevalent culture at the particular institution has a significant role or impact on the strategy implementation process. The culture could serve as an obstacle or a strong element in support for the strategy. It is important to create a culture that would support a particular strategy in order to minimize resistance from those who are supposed to ensure the success of the set goals. If for example, each staff member considers good performance as critical and works towards achieving exceptional results, it is possible that the strategy adopted will be implemented successfully.

Thompson Jr, Strickland, and Gamble (2005:374) highlighted the importance of aligning culture to the strategy with the aim of ensuring maximum support of the implementation plan by personnel.

This however, would require some degree of leadership in the process. The leadership plays a pivotal role in directing the implementation activities. According to Morris and Jamieson (2005:9), leadership is increasingly being recognized as a key competency in strategy implementation. The real measure of success in achieving results depends on the effectiveness of managing the implementation plan and seeing it through. This is the critical role the leadership has to play in an attempt to implement strategy successfully. Management should be ready to provide direction and manage through other people by providing vision for the future moves of the organization. It is also critical for the employees to understand their role and contribution to the success of the strategy.

1.3 Problem statement

Strategy implementation is one of the areas that do not receive appropriate attention at the Social Security Commission. Management would only react very late when it is clear that the strategy was not successful. The problem statement is: “Many strategies are not implemented successfully.”

1.4 The research question or hypothesis under investigation

Why is strategy implementation not successful at the institution?

1.5 Aim and objectives of the study

- Aim of the study**

The aim of the study is to determine factors that lead to or are responsible for the unsuccessful implementation of strategies.

- Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study are:

- To determine problems that inhibit successful strategy implementation related to revenue collection activities.
- Explore alternative approaches.
- To make suggestions to improve strategy implementation processes at the institution.

1.6 Key theoretical concept and construct of the study

The study will focus on the aspect of personnel's perceptions of the current initiative to implement strategies and give an evaluation based on individual observations of the process. Attention will also be drawn on the aspect of the level of awareness among the personnel about the plans.

1.7 Research methodology

1.7.1 Research design

Survey research design will be adopted for the purpose of this study. The respondents will be obtained from the 230 personnel of the Social Security Commission with the focus group of personnel at the managerial level.

1.7.2 Population and sampling procedure

A questionnaire will be distributed to personnel of the institution, specifically those with supervision responsibility, with the aim to obtain responses from them. Structured questionnaires will be designed and distributed to 56 employees at managerial level to obtain information and opinion on the current strategy implementation efforts.

1.7.3 Data Collection

A questionnaire based on an adapted Likert scale, will be used to obtain the data for the study. Data will be collected by means of a survey that is sent to all respondents.

1.7.4 Data Analysis

The data will be analyzed by using graphical statistical techniques performed on Microsoft Excel and Word. Multiple bar charts and line charts will be used to compare results from the group of respondents.

1.8 Methods to ensure validity and reliability

The information will be collected directly from managers and staff of the Social Security Commission. A structured questionnaire will be developed to collect data. Necessary approval will be obtained in advance from the Chief Executive Officer of the Social Security Commission for the participation of employees on the research project.

1.9 Value of the research

The study is anticipated to determine factors contributing to strategy implementation process problems at the institution. Based on the understanding of the problem, management could be advised on available scientific alternatives to tackle strategy implementation problems at the institution.

By creating an understanding of the specific problems, management would be able to devise appropriate actions to address it and improve the institution's operation. The recommendation could also be used to evaluate strategy implementation processes at the institution.

1.10 Limitation and delimitation of the study

Given the fact that the study is focused on one institution the possibility exists that the participants might respond positively with the aim to reflect a good picture of their units. Excuses that might also be given as reasons for not implementing strategies, for example, remuneration related problems could be mentioned during the research process. The unit of analysis is thought to be familiar with the operation of the institution and therefore should fairly provide the needed information.

1.11 Conclusions

The study consists of six chapters, and each chapter presents the details towards answering the research question, aims and objectives of the study. The following rundown summarizes each chapter's highlights of the study:

Chapter one presents an overview of the study and gives the underling outline of the key context of the study in the preceding chapters. The primary background to the study, the research question, aims and objectives are addressed. Chapter two provides background information of the area of the study as well as the literature study. The chapter discusses some key concepts and theoretical background regarding strategy implementation obstacles in detail to set a scene for the study.

Chapter three highlights the research method used to conduct the study as well as in the collection of data for the purpose of the study. Chapter four presents an analysis and detailed interpretation of the data.

Chapter five will deal with the research findings, while Chapter six will present evaluated results, the research recommendations and conclusions. The study attempts to obtain the possible problem areas hampering the strategy implementation at the Social Security Commission as well as highlight some solutions that can be applied to assist in implementing strategies.

CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2. 1 Introduction

This chapter comprises three parts. The first part will present an overview of the strategic framework of the Social Security Commission in Namibia. The second part will highlight general assumptions of problems the institution encounter during implementation of strategic decisions. The discussion on problems will be highlighted together with the key theme that forms the basis of the literature review.

The third part of the chapter will present a literature study that will highlight some key obstacles already identified by the researcher in the area of strategy implementation and some possible solutions to the identified problems. The information obtained from the literature study will serve as a guide in designing the questionnaire for the research project.

2.2 Overview of the strategic framework of the Social Security Commission

The Social Security Commission's strategic intent is guided by the institution's mission statement which highlights the importance of professional approach in managing the institutions operational activities. The institution identified a vision that puts more emphasis on customer satisfaction by ensuring excellent service delivery and in the process making the institution's name a household name in Namibia. This is a big challenge as it requires more efforts from the organization members to ensure the successful implementation of the strategies that are formulated. This aspect is one of the key elements to the research project.

It is important at this point to highlight the definition of strategy in order to create an understanding of the key fundamental elements that are critical to strategy implementation in general.

Rossouw, le Roux and Groenewald (2007:3) defines strategy as a plan of action designed to achieve the set goals and objectives irrespective of the changing environment.

Bryson (1998:163) on the other hand, refers to strategy as a pattern of purposes, policies, programs, actions, decisions of resource allocation that define what an organization is, what it does and why it does it.

In the context of the Social Security Commission, the key aspect within this view point, involves the formulation of appropriate strategies that would guide the operations of the institution. This translates into the activities which various departments engage in at determined intervals to develop action plans with the aim of achieving the overall strategic goals of the institution.

In order to have a structured reporting of progress on the identified objectives for each department, the Social Security Commission management designed a strategic plan framework on which all plans are listed. The institution's management is responsible for the formulation of the strategies on a yearly basis.

The focus is on developing strategies that are effective and able to facilitate continuous improvement of operational activities at the institution. These plans are documented to ensure that it is available in written form and it is readily available in departments. The example in this regard is shown in table 2.1.

Table: 2.1 The Social Security Commission Strategic Plan 2004-2007 Framework

Corporate Goal	Departmental Objectives	Strategy	Responsible Person	Estimated Financial Implications	Start Date	Due Date
Revenue growth & legal compliance	To enhance debt collection activities to ensure: 10% per quarter collection for old debt 70% collection of monthly invoices To ensure accurate invoicing	Regular provision of debtor's statement To implement the new invoicing structure as follows: To reflect employees' list with invoice amount. To invoice one month after registration	GM: Finance GM: Finance and GM: IT	As per annual budget	March 2004	February 2007 March 2004 February 2006

Source: SOCIAL SECURITY COMMISSION STRATEGIC PLAN 2004-2007

As reflected in the table above, one can assume that the strategies highlighted on the strategic plan are clear and can be implemented without any difficulties.

The general belief of management is that all operational activities are effectively coordinated through this strategic plan framework. The framework serves as a guide in which implementation activities are monitored and evaluated throughout the year.

The first challenge in this regard, however, is whether personnel are aware of the existence of these plans and also very clear on the aspect of how it should be operationalized. Secondly, there are also doubts on whether the implementation process is constantly monitored by management to ensure effectiveness of the process.

In addition, the aspect of continuous guidance from management presents a challenge, as adequate time is not there for managers to continuously guide personnel during implementation.

The possibility exists in the process indicating the lack of clear roles of individuals involved and little time spent on communicating what needs to get done, how it should be done and who should do it. The consequences to that translate into an incomplete assignment that ends in the middle without yielding the desired results.

As a member of the team that was responsible for implementation of some strategies designed to direct revenue collection activities during the last ten years, several strategies were observed that were unsuccessful at the institution. For example, some strategies were designed over the years to address the problems related to inaccurate invoicing of employers with an objective of establishing a reliable debtors' database for the institution.

Even though results were obtained to certain extend over the years; some might argue that the results achieved did not satisfy management expectations of minimizing queries from employers related to incorrect statements of accounts. To date, several employers' accounts remain inaccurate and this presents a big question on whether the strategies focusing on these areas were implemented as planned.

This aspect serves as the basis of the study to be conducted. The study will attempt to determine key obstacles to strategy implementation at the Social Security Commission in Namibia.

2.3 Assumed problems during strategy implementation

It is important at this stage to highlight some of the assumed problems during the strategy implementation process. Normally most of the problems arise during the implementation stages of the strategies. The question is, "why?" This is the key research question the study intends to establish.

The problems that arise sometimes are blamed on the possible misunderstanding of the implementation process. At times, personnel would start an activity, but without clear understanding of key information highlighting step-by-step action that is required to guide the implementation process.

Due to the general lack of process understanding, the plan fails. Unfortunately, somebody has to be held responsible for the failure of the plan. The general assumed conclusions regarding the culprits in the process are the operational personnel whom some managers believe as the ones responsible for implementation of strategic decisions. This perception is brought about by the fact that management believes that operational personnel are aware of what needs to be done to implement the strategies, because they were consulted during strategy formulation and should be conversant with the plan from the outset.

Another assumption on possible problem areas involves the lack of continuous guidance during the implementation process. This factor is being regarded as unnecessary due to the fact that management is under the impression that everybody is familiar with the strategies. Management does not set aside sufficient time to explain the strategies to personnel. This aspect, coupled with the lack of support to personnel in terms of provision of critical resources such as manpower required to handle a significant number of activities of the plan, contributes significantly to the failure of the plan.

A further analysis highlighting additional information on the above-mentioned problem will also be presented in detail in the following part of this chapter, where the critical theme that forms the base of the literature review is discussed.

The themes that are central to this literature review are:

- Strategy implementation as responsibility of operational staff;
- Strategy formulation impact on implementation process;
- Acceptance level of strategy by personnel;
- Prevailing organizational culture, and
- Leadership.

The themes are discussed separately to highlight key elements within the particular area of a given theme that are critical for the study.

2.3.1 Strategy implementation as a responsibility of operational staff

This is one of the general assumptions some managers make with regard to the aspect of strategy implementation. Various studies on strategy implementation have highlighted the perception of managers that confirm the assumption on strategy implementation as the responsibility of operational personnel and not the responsibility of managers.

Needless to say that managers are there to serve as strategic executives whose only responsibilities are to plan the future direction of the institution. The general expectation of this group of managers is therefore on putting more effort in planning of activities and little consideration on overseeing the implementation of such activities.

Springer (2005:9) stated that managers are more comfortable with planning than implementation, organizing, leading and control. The important assumption here is that managers do feel comfortable if implementation activities are left to someone else, as it does not form part of the manager's responsibility.

This argument is also being expanded by Hrebinia (2006:12) by stating that managers are trained to plan and as a result they would be more familiar with formulating strategy and very little about strategy implementation. The critical assumption being emphasized here is that top-management's role is to plan and think strategically while the role of the lower level personnel should simply be that of carrying out the top level's demand in terms of what needs to be implemented.

The unfortunate outcome of such assumption is that such managers create an understanding within the process indicating that managers are the smart people that are developing plans which the not-so smart personnel should follow through and ensure that it works.

The manager as a planner has no role to play during the implementation process and therefore the aspect of management responsibility that includes leading, coordination and control of the process is totally eliminated from the equation.

Little emphasis is being placed on the aspect of implementation due to the absence of critical functional expertise needed to facilitate the process through coordinated efforts by all personnel. The assumption could be made based on this understanding that essential skills are missing from these managers that could drive the strategy implementation process.

Furthermore, the understanding that is created during strategy formulation, highlighting the importance of communication on a continuous basis to ensure that personnel understands the strategy, is also not being seen as critical in the process.

This however, contradicts the understanding that is created during strategy formulation that puts more emphasis on communicating on a continuous basis the strategic intend of the organization to ensure better understanding of the strategy by personnel.

In order to effectively manage the strategy implementation process, an understanding needs to be created on a continuous basis with regard to the purpose for the strategy. Management should make time to explain to personnel the benefits that might be derived by implementing the specific plans. It remains the responsibility of the managers to make the reason for the strategy clear to the personnel, as well as make time to observe the implementation process.

The proposed change normally is being received with skepticism from some personnel and the likelihood of it being resisted cannot be overruled. It is therefore very important for management to get involved and oversee the process and try to reduce resistance that normally comes along with every proposed change through participation, involvement and education of personnel.

Taba (2005:34) highlighted that top management support is a crucial factor in any activity implementation process. Management involvement forms a critical part in any successful strategy implementation process.

But the continuous involvement of managers in the process if not handled carefully, could be regarded as inhibiting innovation from other personnel, especially those who are fast in grasping the concepts. The possibility might arise whereby the constant involvement of management in the process would be regarded as unnecessary. They would rather prefer a moderate approach whereby they are told once what needs to be done and leaving the rest to them.

2.3.2 The relationship between strategy formulation and strategy implementation

Some studies suggest that there is a close relationship between strategy implementation and strategy formulation. These two elements go hand in hand and cannot be separated, as implementation is an outflow of the strategy formulation process. An understanding has been created that indicate the inter-dependence of the two elements.

Further on studies also highlighted the view points that reflect strategy implementation as part and parcel of the overall process. It is therefore important to consider implementation right from the formulation process of the strategy. The conclusion expands on the findings of Hambrick and Canella Jr. (1989:278) which indicate that a well conceived strategy is one that can be implemented. Some of the effective ways to aid strategy implementation is by involving personnel early on in the development and debate on strategies that will be regarded as the possible option to address the problem at hand.

Strategy implementation process is also being hampered by the particular approaches adopted during the formulation of such strategy. According to Hambrick et al (1989:278), the inability to implement strategy indicates that the accepted approaches to formulation were not good enough. The critical aspect that is needed in this regard is the consideration on how the strategy will be implemented, while the particular strategy is being formulated.

By doing this, the possible obstacle that might occur during implementation could be predicted, and at the same time the critical questions of whether the strategy is workable are considered from the outset. The researcher highlighted some obstacles during implementation if the formulation process did not carefully consider the implementation. The obstacles are categorized in three major areas, namely internal obstacles, external obstacles, and parent company.

- **Internal Obstacles**

The internal obstacle normally comes from human resources as well as material limitation. The institution may have wrong configuration of physical resources, human resources, and system and procedures. The problem in this regard is that there will be internal resistance to change the deficiencies.

The resistance can be political in nature and could come from individuals that feel threatened by the proposed change the strategy is about to bring. Normally the resistance would come from those that are afraid of change or those that feel that the strategy violates some deeply held values if implemented. If these elements are not managed carefully, it can derail the implementation process.

- **External obstacles**

The obstacles outside the business could be generated from competition. The economic and technological environment can also provide pressure that can impede new strategies. Interest groups such as trade unions, suppliers and distributors can resist the change being brought about by the new strategies if is in conflict with their perceived interest.

- **Parent Company**

At this level the obstacle occurs when the strategy of business unit is in conflict with the strategy of the corporate parent. The problem arises if this happens due to the fact that the corporate parent does not support the business unit strategies and therefore does not allocate resources that are needed for the implementation activities.

Alternatively, the corporate parent might have its own pressure that would require re-allocation of resources and consequently change the strategy towards the particular business units. Based on the assessment of the major obstacle a framework of implementation needs to be created to guide each action on how to counter the obstacles during implementation.

Recommended solutions to some identified strategy implementation obstacles

The researcher indicated the five major “make – happen” areas that need to be considered when implementing strategies. The key areas in this regard are resources commitments, subunit policies and programs, structure, reward and people.

- **Resources Commitments**

With resources commitments come the question of what level of resources need to be committed to a specific product or market. It is very important to provide adequate resources to support the new strategies. By providing resources to a particular program of implementation, a clear indication is being demonstrated that management is committed to bring about change via the proposed new strategy.

At times it would require a commitment to re-allocate some resources to boost the implementation process. Depending on the seriousness of management to re-allocate resources, if not done properly, the strategy is bound to fail simply because the resources were not decisively re-allocated as per the new directions requirements.

- **Subunit Policies**

The critical question that affects the subunits is the proposed action the specific unit should take to advance the new strategy with a specific timeframe in mind.

- **Structure**

The structure normally would indicate the relationship and the roles of individuals in the institution. Normally the new strategy would require a revised approach for the organization. This could involve a change in groupings, existing hierarchy, flow of information and ways in which decisions are made. The structure would therefore be reorganized to accommodate the new approaches and facilitate the implementation of plans in a logical way.

- **Rewards**

The researcher highlighted two critical elements regarding rewards. The first element involves the type of behaviour and outcome that needs to be rewarded. The second element highlights the direction in terms of the type of reward individuals will get by completing a particular task. The important note to make in this regard is the framework in which the rewards are being designed to support the implementation program.

The reward needs to be tailored to the specific strategic thrust of the business. This can however limit the discretion of management to offer rewards to individuals that are beyond the set limit. The challenge would therefore be on management to create attractive approaches that would motivate the employees to ensure the successful implementation of the plan with the limited resources at their disposals.

- **People**

For any strategy to work would require the support of employees. At the same time the individual must have the positive attitude, capabilities and skills to be able to implement the plans. The starting point in this regard is creating an understanding amongst the employees about the required change and clearly stating the skills needed to perform the tasks at hand. This would give an idea on what type of capabilities is needed and should be obtained to be able to implement the particular plan.

The process would also inform the training program that needs to be designed for the employees to acquire the necessary skills to perform the new tasks. The process could also involve recruitment of new people to the team with the combination of required technical and other soft skills. Reassignment of some people to new areas where theirs skills will be utilized effectively can also revitalize the process.

Furthermore, the aspect of replacement of individuals, recruitment of the right people to the team, personal coaching and counseling are important elements to consider during the process. In addition, intensive training programs need to be conducted to develop the needed skills.

New strategy involves change and it requires continuous communication across the organization to create the understanding as well as the support from the organization members. Any new change, regardless how good it is being perceived by management, will provoke resistance from those that feel threatened by the proposed change. Therefore the job of selling the plan to key constituencies to maintain the ongoing support is crucial to the implementation process.

Iipumbu (2006:18), indicated that strategy formulation is a foundation of the organization's evaluation of the prevailing strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. She further states that the organization design strategies to maximize strengths, minimize weaknesses, capitalize upon opportunities and deal proactively with threats.

It is therefore very crucial to engage various stakeholders during strategy formulation to obtain more information regarding the plan under construction. By engaging the personnel earlier in the process creates a platform of idea generation, the aspect that might enhance the sense of ownership of the strategy by personnel. Such approach during formation can also improve the quality of the plan and consequently raise possible implementation problems that could be encountered during the implementation of the strategy.

In addition, the manager could initiate consultation on one-on-one basis with the key individuals to source further opinion on the chosen direction. This could serve as key to secure commitment from personnel since it allows each person to express an opinion on the chosen direction.

The approach however, might be impractical and time consuming especially if the size of the organization is big and more people have to be approached on an individual basis to obtain individual commitment.

The other barrier could be that due to the presence of a senior person, the individual would easily agree to provide support to the chosen direction due to the fear of being seen as an obstacle to the process and afterwards do a totally different thing during implementation stages.

In the same light, Beaver (2003:345) suggested that successful implementation of a particular strategy depends on how the strategy is formulated, communicated, monitored and managed. It should be clear during strategy formulation what the particular strategy will address and what change the strategy would bring about if implemented.

At times management may fail to achieve the buy-in and commitment of personnel due to a failure to identify critical elements that might have been highlighted by personnel as a possible hindrance during the implementation. Some of the elements include understanding of the nature of the change which needs to be brought about by the strategy and possible limitation of the organizational paradigm shift.

It will serve no purpose to talk about things that need to change, while no effort is made by management to ensure that personnel understand and support the change.

It is very important to think about implementation from the start as such thinking would generate some indication on how the plan will be operationalized. On the other hand, personnel might take it for granted that the way things are done currently, is the only best way and forget about any possible improvement that could be brought about by the change.

By providing awareness amongst personnel would make them more comfortable with the process and see the necessity of the proposed change. At times personnel view the change as a once off event and get frustrated when the expected changes do not happen immediately. It is very important to let personnel see the change as a process, to assist them to embrace change for the benefit of the organization.

2.3.3 Acceptance level of the strategy by personnel

It is very important to ensure that the strategies that are being developed are accepted by personnel if it is to be successful. If it is not accepted by personnel from the outset, the likelihood of failing is very high as personnel might reject the proposed change being emphasized in the particular strategy.

Various viewpoints exist in practice whereby personnel are being referred to as being instrumental in resisting change. This might be correct as people would want to know from the outset how the proposed change would affect them.

It is very important to share crucial information regarding the intended change to clear possible misunderstanding amongst personnel. This would assist in reducing misunderstandings that might exist amongst personnel and be used as an excuse for non-implementation of the strategy. It could also be of value adding to consider the feasibility of the strategy, both in terms of personnel support and the implication of the strategy on the customers.

Lehner (2004:465) highlighted that the participation of organizational members is very important during implementation of strategy. Successful implementation depends on the collective effort of everybody involved. The behaviour of organizational members towards the strategy adopted plays a pivotal role. To change the direction, management needs to adopt certain implementation tactics. These include for example, a planned step-by-step process in which personnel are encouraged to support the strategy.

This however would require some degree of power to influence behaviour of personnel by management. Certain changes in performance standard could be initiated and agreed with the individual involved. The key element to be considered could be the one that is highlighting the reward that comes along with successful implementation of the particular strategy. At the same time, indication is also given on what could happen if the plan is not implemented both to the individual and the organization at large.

By creating such an understanding in the working environment, could encourage personnel to support the strategy and bring about desired behaviour to the process. Consideration can also be made to bring about slight modification to the chosen alternative in order to help reduce resistance from powerful groups that are resisting the particular change.

This suggests a moderate approach whereby a course of action is selected that fulfils all criteria to an acceptable degree while compromised settlement is also considered that could also generate acceptance by relevant stakeholders to a certain extent. However, to increase the level of acceptance of the strategy by personnel, some degree of participation by personnel during implementation need to be encouraged by management.

In support of this argument is Speculand (2006:34) who stated that the term “strategy implementation” translates to staff members who are expected to change the way they work and adapt to new approaches. Due to not knowing what the implication of the strategy would be, people do react differently, either in support or against the strategy.

Some personnel might develop some assumptions that indicate that adopting a specific strategy could translate into losing responsibility or stepping into the unknown zone. Needless to state that amongst the personnel, a certain number would obviously resist change, but what matters is how management approaches the resistance.

It is critical to approach the situation systematically and focus attention on personnel that are in support of the change as they could form a core to the strategy implementation. This will ensure early wins which might provide some influence to those that are moderate in approach in terms of supporting the implementation process. The drawback of this approach could be seen on the aspect of ignoring the problems related to the conservative personnel during the process for the sake of progress.

This group of employees, especially if they hold managerial position in the institution, might provide significant pressure to others and convince them to not accept the change. Management needs to step in and provide direction to ensure that everyone understands the need to implement the strategy for the benefit of the institution.

2.3.4 Prevailing culture's influence on strategy implementation

Thompson et al. (2005:370) stated that corporate culture is manifested in the values and business principles that management practices as well as in the attitudes and behaviours of employees. The prevalent culture at a particular institution plays a significant role in the strategy implementation process and at the same time could serve as an obstacle or a strong element in support for the strategy.

On the other hand, a work climate at an institution could promote attitudes and behaviours that are well suited to first rate strategy implementation or the opposite. Needless to state that a culture that encourages actions that support good strategy implementation does not only provide the institution's personnel with clear guidance regarding what behaviours and results constitute good job performance but also produces significant peer pressure from co-workers to conform to culturally acceptable norms.

The critical points in this regard are the aspects of building on existing culture that supports the strategy implementation process and trying to change the culture that is not in conformity in order to get the desired support. The culture needs to be aligned to the organizational strategy to ensure smooth implementation activities of the organizational goals.

Management needs to find the correct match between the culture and the strategy to ensure that the culture that is prevalent in the institution supports the applicable strategies in place.

Strong emphasis is on the aspect of advising managers to spend more time in creating a culture that supports and encourages behaviours conducive to good strategy implementation.

Lehner (2004:465) highlighted that participation of organizational members is important for a cultural model of implementation. It is very important to convince personnel to develop a culture that supports strategies designed to lead the organization into better future business prospects. This approach indicates the importance of building the culture with the purpose of developing attitudes and behaviours that support a particular strategy implementation process.

2.3.5 Leadership

Leadership plays a pivotal role in any successful group activity, let alone the implementation of organizational goals. Managers unfortunately have to play the leadership role in order to provide guidance to personnel during strategy implementation. Managers should be ready to oversee the day- to-day implementation of the plans in order to provide continuous support to personnel. At times personnel might encounter problems during the implementation process, which the manager might be able to resolve on the spot without wasting much time.

Personnel might feel discouraged due to changing situations and start to do fewer activities. It is the managers' responsibility to encourage personnel to work hard in order to achieve the objectives of the institution. The importance of leading by example might be required as new approaches are being introduced.

Some personnel tend to associate with their leader, and if the example portrayed by the leader is positive the likelihood of the followers to do the same is high. This would make the implementation process a lot easier as personnel will do their best to ensure the success of the process.

Robbins, Odendaal and Roodt (2003:242) highlighted that leadership is about establishing direction in which others are aligned with the aim of creating a vision of the future.

These observations are supported by Morris et al. (2005:9), by stating that leadership is increasingly being recognized as a key competency in implementing strategies. To implement strategies successfully it requires an extensive range of personal competencies and clear definition of roles, responsibilities and accountabilities.

The leader needs to communicate continuously on the critical roles the followers need to play and emphasize the responsibility that goes along with such roles. In the process each member needs to be held accountable for the part they play in contributing towards the strategy implementation.

Mathafena (2007:81) stated that effective leaders are perceived as assets to the organization due to the mere fact that they can influence the followers to participate in efforts aimed at implementing organizational goals. It is within this framework that managers are expected to demonstrate the leadership capabilities that encourage and motivate teamwork in order to implement organizational goals. The real measure of success in achieving results depends on the effectiveness of managing the implementation plan and seeing it through.

Management should be ready to provide direction and manage through other people by providing vision for the future moves of the organization. During the process, it would be critical for the employees to be let to understand their role and overall expectation of the organization.

2.4 Literature review

The literature review will attempt to expand the theoretical background of the study introduced in Chapter one as well as the summary discussion on themes that form the base of the study. Research on Obstacles to strategy implementation by Hrebinia presents several factors that the study intends to establish and whether such factors are also applicable to the Social Security Commission environment.

Hrebinia (2006:12-31) highlighted various elements that were viewed as obstacles to effective strategy implementation at institutions. This research was based on two sources. The first source was based on the data obtained through the research activities that were done in conjunction with Gartner Group Incorporation, a well known research organization, while the second source was based on the researcher's observation of implementation related problems observed during consulting work with practicing managers.

The researcher took a wide-spread approach survey as a research design. The Questionnaire instrument was directed to practicing managers to obtain valuable insight into problems related to strategy implementation. The objective of the research was to gain an understanding of the challenges the practicing managers are facing when implementing their company's strategies. The research instrument was distributed to 1000 individuals on the Gartner E-database.

The target group was the managers who were involved in strategy formulation and implementation. A total of 243 completed responses were obtained from the individuals that participated in the survey. In addition, further responses based on the open-ended questions were also obtained that provided additional data for the research.

The second source was the platform of the Wharton Executive Education on which the researcher was doing consulting work for several years. On this executive program, the managers with responsibilities of strategy implementation attended the programs. In this program a sample of 200 managers made presentations on implementation related problems. Based on the presentation and discussion conducted, the researcher listed challenges the managers highlighted as key obstacles to strategy implementation.

During the panel discussion following the data collection, further insight was gained based on the data obtained through the survey. The managers were asked why some individuals responded the way they did. The platform was also used to establish the activities that needed to be done to overcome the obstacles and achieve successful execution outcome.

The main obstacles that were presented included for example, the inability to manage change, poor or vague strategies, and the absence of a model to guide implementation efforts, inadequate information sharing, unclear responsibility and accountability as well as working against the power structure. The research highlighted many issues of which the researcher only identified twelve that were seen as more appropriate.

During the informal panel discussions, the managers were asked to rank the obstacles and the following table reflects the ranking:

Table: 2.2 Survey ranking of obstacle to effective strategy implementation

Obstacles to Strategy Execution			
Obstacle	Ranking		Either survey top 5 rankings
	Wharton-Executive Education Survey (n=200)	Wharton-Gartner Survey (n=243)	
1. Inability to manage change effectively and overcome resistance to change	1	1	✓
2. Trying to execute a strategy that conflicts with the existing power structure	5	2	✓
3. Poor or inadequate information sharing among individuals/units responsible for strategy execution	4	2	✓
4. Unclear communication of responsibilities and/or accountability for execution decisions or actions	5	4	✓
5. Poor or vague strategy	2	5	✓
6. Lack of feelings of “ownership” of a strategy or execution plans among key employees	8	5	✓
7. Not having guidelines or a model to guide strategy implementation efforts	2	7	✓
8. Lack of understanding of the role of organizational structure and design in the execution process	5	9	✓
9. Inability to generate “buy in” or agreement on critical execution steps or actions	10	7	
10. Lack of incentives or inappropriate incentives to support execution objectives	8	9	
11. Insufficient financial resources to execute the strategy	12	11	
12. Lack of upper-management support of strategy execution	11	12	

Adapted from Hrebinak (2006: 17), Survey results

The researcher adopted a survey research design. The first target population was 1000 individuals on the Gartner E-panel database. This was an online survey and the targeted sample consisted of practicing managers who were responsible for strategy formulation and implementation. A sample of 243 individuals responded to the survey. The second target sample was the 200 managers whom the researcher requested to provide ranking of the twelve items viewed as having a relationship to strategy implementation.

The following table on the next page represents the survey instruments used by professor Hrebiniaik to collect data for the research work on obstacles to effective strategy implementation.

Table 2.3 The Questionnaire instrument of professor Lawrence G. Hrebiniak:

Question 1 We have identified 12 obstacles or hurdles to successful strategy execution. In your experience, how big a problem for execution is each of the following for your company? Use a 7-point scale, where 1 means *not at all a problem* and a 7 means *a major problem*.

	Not at all a problem						A major problem	Don't know
	1	2	3	4	5	6		
1. Poor or vague strategy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
2. Not having guidelines or a model to guide strategy execution efforts	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
3. Insufficient financial resources to execute the strategy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
4. Trying to execute a strategy that conflicts with the existing power structure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
5. Inability to generate "buy in" or agreement on critical execution steps or actions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
6. Lack of upper management support of strategy execution	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
7. Lack of feelings of "ownership" of a strategy or execution plans among key employees	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
8. Lack of incentives or inappropriate incentives to support execution objectives	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
9. Poor or Inadequate information sharing between individuals or business units responsible for strategy execution	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
10. Unclear communication of responsibility and/or accountability for execution decisions or actions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
11. Lack of understanding of the role of organizational structure and design in the execution process	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
12. Inability to manage change effectively or to overcome internal resistance to change	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK

Question 2 Strategy execution requires information sharing and coordination. Please rate the effectiveness of the following coordination methods for strategy execution between functions, business units and key personnel within your company. Use a 7-point scale where 1 means *highly ineffective* and a 7 means *highly effective*.

	Highly Ineffective		Highly effective		Not applicable		Don't know		
1. Use of teams or cross functional groups	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA	DK
2. Use of informal communication (i.e person-to-person contact)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA	DK
3. Use of formal integrators (e.g., a project management or quality assurance organization.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA	DK
4. Use of a matrix organization or a “grid” structure to share resources or knowledge	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA	DK

Question 3 Based on your perception of knowledge and information sharing within your company during strategy execution, please indicate the extend to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. Use a 7-point scale where a 1 means *strongly disagree* and a 7 means *strongly agree*.

	Strongly disagree		Strongly agree		Not applicable		Don't know		
1. Employees are reluctant to share important information or knowledge with others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA	DK
2. Some sources of information are unreliable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA	DK
3. Managers are reluctant to trust information generated from sources outside their own departments.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA	DK
4. Information fails to reach people who need it	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA	DK
5. Employees fail to understand or evaluate the usefulness of available information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA	DK

Question 4 I know there are problems with strategy execution in my company when.....

	Strongly disagree						Strongly agree	Not applicable	Don't know
1. Execution decisions take too long to make.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA	DK
2. Employees don't understand how their jobs contribute to important execution outcomes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA	DK
3. Responses to customer problems or complaints take too long to execute.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA	DK
4. The company reacts slowly or inappropriately to competitive pressures while executing strategy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA	DK
5. Time or money is wasted because of inefficiency or bureaucracy in the execution process.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA	DK
6. "Playing politics" is more important than performance against strategy execution goals for gaining individual recognition	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA	DK
7. Important information "falls through the cracks" during execution and doesn't get acted on	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA	DK
8. We spend lots of time reorganizing or restructuring, but we don't seem to know why this is important for strategy execution	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA	DK
9. We are unsure whether the strategy we're executing is worthwhile, effective, or logical, given the competitive forces we face in our industry	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA	DK

Question 5 Managers have told us that executing strategy is more challenging than formulating strategy. Please tell us whether you agree with this view and briefly explain your answer.

Question 6 Finally, what other factors not mentioned in this survey make the execution process challenging or difficult in your company?

Let us highlight some findings regarding the main obstacles as presented by the researcher.

- **Inability to manage change effectively.**

The paper highlights the importance of managing change and regards this step as the first critical step towards an effective strategy implementation process. It is very important to create an understanding of the needed change throughout the organization and ensure that resistance towards change is addressed.

Consideration should be made regarding the time it would take to implement the particular action plan. Sufficient time needs to be allowed to ensure that the complex information that is brought about by the change process is handled efficiently.

- **Poor or vague strategy**

Implementation of any strategy depends on the soundness of the particular strategy. If the strategy is not clear in terms of what needs to be done for purposes of achieving particular results, the misunderstanding would limit the implementation efforts.

In the same vein implementation of strategy requires that the institution should have good people to drive the process. But the critical part in this regard is the direction in which the institution is heading. A clear direction would facilitate smooth implementation of strategy because the implementers know the intended direction.

The sound strategy also would highlight the critical capabilities that need to be developed in the institution to match the strategy requirements. The capabilities need to be sourced either through training programs or through recruitment processes where new employees with the right skills are brought to the institution.

Another element that comes along with the strategy is the aspect of addressing specific needs of the customers. The strategy, aimed at satisfying a certain need or particular customers, should be clear to ensure that the customers are satisfied with what the institution is doing.

- **Lack of a model to guide implementation effort**

The implementation process needs to be organized in a logical way. A simple model that indicates key steps is critical for the implementation process. It is important to highlight what needs to get done by whom and at what time interval.

To avoid a situation where individuals do what they would regard as important and leave out the critical functions that need to get done, it is advisable to design an implementation model that gives step-by-step guidelines to employees on plans that are about to be implemented. Both management and employees need to know what comes first, second, etcetera, during the implementation process. A roadmap is a critical element in strategy implementation process.

- **Inadequate information sharing, unclear responsibility and accountability**

The paper highlights the importance of information sharing amongst the teams during the implementation stage. Information sharing plays a pivotal role during implementation as it provides an indication on progress of the plan and possible shortcomings that need immediate remedial action. Another element that is also important to note is the identification of roles and responsibilities for all that are involved in the implementation process. This would make the process easier as management would know who to hold responsible and accountable for a specific action.

Based on the fact that there needs to be co-operation and effective coordination of activities, strategy implementation will be affected if lack of co-operation and coordination exists.

- **Working against the power structure**

It is important for any strategy to gain support from various interest groups if it is to work. It would not help to design a strategy that is about to raise serious resistance from those in power and from those whose support is needed. At times it is essential to obtain support for a particular course of action from the relevant authority.

The strategy will fail if it is in conflict with the prevailing power structure. This indicates the importance of considering coalitions with influential people in the organization to obtain support for the plan. The important issue in this regard is that of obtaining individual commitment from those in authority to ensure that their support towards the process is always at hand.

- **Lack of understanding of the impact of strategy formulation on the implementation plan**

The researcher indicated that everything begins with a strategy. By implication, implementation cannot happen until one has something to implement. Therefore, strategy defines the arena in which implementation activities are taking place. Based on this background, it is critical to ensure an excellent approach in strategy formulation to ensure a sound strategy that will in turn give momentum to an effective strategy implementation process.

- **Lack of control and feedback mechanism**

In order to make a strategy work, regular feedback is critical about the organizational performance. The feedback information about the progress on a particular strategy will serve as an indication on whether the plan is being implemented successfully. At the same time the negative progress feedback can be used to fine-tune the strategy as well as the implementation process itself. Proper control is needed to ensure that the plan is regularly monitored to ensure timely action on any deviation from the intended results.

- **Lack of implementation supportive culture**

Culture plays a significant role in a strategy implementation process. It is very important for the organization to develop a culture that is in support of implementation of critical business strategies. Needles to say that implementation demands a culture of achievement, discipline and ownership.

- **Lack of leadership**

The researcher indicated that leadership plays a pivotal role in any strategy process. For the implementation to be successful, it is important that management exercise implementation-biased leadership. At the same time management must be able to motivate ownership and commitment to the implementation process. In this way the management will be able to drive the organization to a successful implementation of strategies.

The important outcome from the managers surveyed, is that the implementation efforts require guidelines. The process must be structured to ensure that the implementation does not rely only on good people that are taking the initiative to make the strategy work. The implementation guidelines are important for the process as it gives a framework on how events are unfolding.

2.5 Conclusion

As it could be seen from the literature, more emphasis is placed on management responsibility during the implementation process. The assumptions were created that strategy implementation is supposed to be effective if management observes all the steps from the start. However, the literature assumes similarity in internal business environments. It ignores the fact that human beings differ in their approach in committing to the new processes.

Management can observe all the steps and try to get everybody on board, but if there is no commitment and willingness from an individual involved, it will be very difficult to effectively implement the required change at a particular institution.

Based on the theoretical background highlighted on the literature, it is possible to explore various factors in the working environment at the Social Security Commission that could be regarded as possible obstacles to strategy implementation at the institution. This chapter primarily focused on theoretical observation related to elements that are possibly contributing factors to the strategy implementation problems in general. The background created a platform that would serve as a guide for the research project. The subsequent chapter will focus on the actual research process in detail.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The preliminary work to set a scene for the study has been concluded in the previous chapters. Based on the information obtained, it is now possible to present the research methodology to be adopted to obtain the data for the study. Attention will now be drawn to the method that is to be applied to collect data with the purpose to answer the research question.

3.2 Research design

According to Welman and Kruger (2001:46), a research design is the plan according to which the research participants are identified and to collect information from them. A qualitative research design is adopted for the purposes of this study. This research design was adopted to accommodate the limitation in terms of time and resources available to conduct the study.

The respondents will be obtained from the 230 personnel of the Social Security Commission. The research instrument is a structured questionnaire developed by Professor Lawrence G. Hrebiniak which is based on an adapted Likert scale of 1 to 5 points, with applicable meanings of each point on the scale.

As part of the background of this chapter, a brief highlight on the intended results to be generated through the questionnaire is discussed to create an indication of the type of information that would be required to answer the research question introduced in Chapter one. The questionnaire consists of five categories.

The first category attempts to establish the perception with regard to already identified obstacles to strategy implementation. This is done to test the relevance of the already identified problems in strategy implementation in the operating environment of the Social Security Commission. The answers to the questions under this category will give an indication to whether all identified problems are relevant to the institution.

The second category would come with questions that are aimed at highlighting the elements regarding the institution's capabilities to manage and control the implementation process. The questions would attempt to establish the effectiveness of co-ordination methods being applied at the institution to facilitate the implementation process.

The third category was designed to source information on the perception of employees with regard to information sharing during strategy implementation process.

Under the fourth section, the research will attempt to establish the level of influence the uncontrollable factor has on the implementation process of the institution. The research would also determine factors related to the timeframe certain plans go through before it is fully implemented. The critical data to be established in this regard is to determine whether individuals get frustrated and lose hope in the planned activities that take long to be implemented.

The last category focuses on determining additional data through additional answers to open-ended questions. This is done to source additional factors that are not highlighted in the survey that are also contributing to obstacles to strategy implementation.

3.3 Field Procedures

The researcher took note of the importance of protecting the privacy and rights of the participants in the research. These fundamental rights and privacy will be protected by adopting the following procedures during the field work:

- The right to privacy and non-participation**

The participation in the research is voluntary. Therefore participants have the right to decide whether to take part in the survey or not.

- **The right to remain anonymous**

The researcher will focus on group data when presenting the results of the research. The result will be presented based on statistical averages to avoid the possibility of revealing the information provided by individual respondents.

- **Reason for the study**

The reason for the study will accompany the questionnaire.

3.4 Population and sampling procedure

According to Mathafena (2007:85), the population refers to the potential subjects who possess the attributes in which the researcher is interested. In the case of this study the total population consists of 230 employees within the various departments of the Social Security Commission. The anticipation is that the questionnaire will be distributed to the personnel of the institution, specifically those with supervision responsibility, with the aim to obtain responses from them.

Structured questionnaires will be distributed to 56 employees at managerial level to obtain opinion on the current strategy implementation efforts. A simple random sampling procedure will be adopted.

According to Welman and Kruger (2001:53), in the simplest case of random sampling, each member of the population has the same chance of being included in the sample. In this case each manager at the Social Security Commission irrespective of their level in the organization, for example, first line, middle or top level, will stand an equal chance to be included in the sample.

3.5 Data Collection

The structured questionnaire to be used is based on an adapted Likert scale. The source of the questionnaire is professor Lawrence G. Hrebinjak. As a first step towards collecting the data, the questionnaires will be hand-delivered at the Social Security Commission's head office in Windhoek which is easily accessible by the researcher. The questionnaire that is intended for the staff at the branch offices will be sent to the identified managers at the specific offices through e-mails.

3.6 Data Analysis

The data will be analyzed using graphical statistical techniques performed on Microsoft Excel and Microsoft Word. During this process the information collected will be analyzed and interpreted in order to give feedback on the findings about the research question. Results will be presented through multiple and line charts.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter concentrated on the research methodology and design adopted to collect data for the study. A summary highlight on the intended result to be generated through the study was also presented. The following chapter will present the results obtained during the field work.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters, the concepts and theoretical background to strategy implementation obstacles were discussed through a comprehensive literature study. In order to address the research objective highlighted in Chapter one, a research study was conducted to provide an understanding of the hurdles faced by the Social Security Commission's personnel when implementing various business strategies. The purpose of this chapter is to present responses obtained from various participants in the research project.

4.2 Analysis of data collected

In Chapter one an assumption was made that strategy implementation is not successful at the Social Security Commission. To test the hypothesis data was collected from personnel at the institution to determine various factors that were perceived as possible obstacles to the strategy implementation process.

The data was collected through a questionnaire consisting of five parts. The first part of the questionnaire obtained data on the general perception of respondents on the twelve strategies implementation obstacles as identified by researchers. A table and graphical representation will be used to present the responses from various participants.

The second part of the questionnaire sourced data regarding the institution's capabilities to manage and control the implementation process. These were done through an investigation on the effectiveness of co-ordination methods at the institution. The responses will be presented through a table and graphical representation.

The third part of the research instrument dealt with questions designed to source information on the perception of employees on the aspect of information sharing during the strategy implementation process. The results under this section will also be presented through a table and graphical representation.

The data collected through Question four presents an indication on the perception of respondents on other general uncontrollable factors. A table as well as a graphical representation will reflect the result obtained under this section.

The last part of the questionnaire focused on obtaining additional data through open-ended questions. The results obtained under this section are presented through descriptive responses.

A total of 56 questionnaires were distributed to the potential respondents at the institution and only 36 were received back. Two questionnaires were returned incomplete while 34 were completed. This represents a 61 percent return rate. Based on the number of completed questionnaire returned (>50%), the researcher deemed it as adequate and decided to proceed with the data analysis and present the findings.

The questions were based on a Likert scale of one to five. For the purpose of providing a broader indication on whether the respondents accept or reject the hypotheses the data is summarized as follow:

- Respondents having scored one and two are grouped together to indicate disagreements.
- Respondents having scored three are regarded as being neutral.
- Respondents having scored four and five are grouped together to indicate agreements.

The following section presents the results according to sections as highlighted on the research instrument.

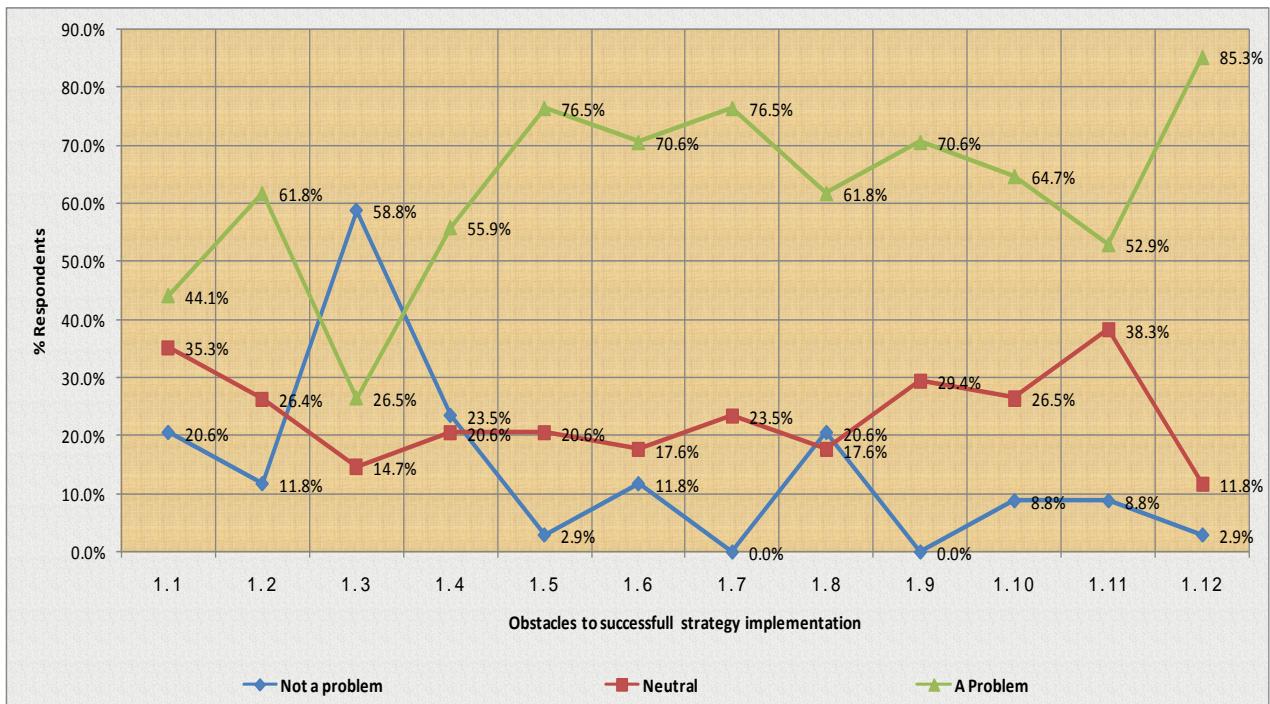
4.2.1 Results on twelve obstacles to strategy implementation

This section presents the results of question one that focused on the perception regarding the twelve obstacles to strategy implementation. The results are presented by Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1 respectively.

Table 4.1 Statistical result on perception of the twelve obstacles to strategy implementation

Obstacles to successful strategy implementation	Not a problem	Neutral	A Problem	Total respondents
1.1. Poor or vague strategy	7	12	15	34
1.2. Not having guidelines or a model to guide strategy implementation efforts	4	9	21	34
1.3. Insufficient financial resources to implement the strategy	20	5	9	34
1.4. Trying to implement a strategy that conflicts with the existing power structure	8	7	19	34
1.5. Inability to generate “buy in” or agreement on critical implementation steps or actions	1	7	26	34
1.6. Lack of upper management support of strategy implementation	4	6	24	34
1.7. Lack of feelings of “ownership” of a strategy or implementation plans among key employees	0	8	26	34
1.8. Lack of incentives or inappropriate incentives to support implementation objectives	7	6	21	34
1.9. Poor or Inadequate information sharing between individuals or business units responsible for strategy implementation	0	10	24	34
1.10. Unclear communication of responsibility and/or accountability for implementation decisions or actions	3	9	22	34
1.11. Lack of understanding of the role of organizational structure and design in the implementation process	3	13	18	34
1.12. Inability to manage change effectively or to overcome internal resistance to change	1	4	29	34

Figure 4.1 Graphical representations on perception of obstacles to strategy implementation



- Explanation of the results**

- The majority of the respondents indicated that the identified obstacles to strategy implementation were a real challenge to Social Security Commission. However, out of the twelve obstacles, the insufficient financial resources to implement strategy were highlighted as not a problem by 58.8 percent of the respondents, while 25.5 percent were of the opinion that this obstacle was a problem. The remaining 14.7 percent of the respondents were neutral on this issue.
- Amongst all the obstacles, inability to manage change effectively or to overcome internal resistance to change was presented as the biggest problem. A substantial majority, 85.3 percent of the respondent indicated that this obstacle was a problem, while 11.8 percent were neutral and only 2.9 percent of the respondents presented it as not a problem.

- A lack of feeling of ownership of the strategy or implementation plans amongst key employees came second on the list. A significant majority of the respondents, in total 76.5 percent, were in agreement that the obstacle was a problem while 23.5 percent remained neutral.
- In the third place is the obstacle on inability to generate “buy-in” or agreement on critical implementation steps or actions. About 76.5 percent of the respondents agreed that this obstacle is a problem at the institution while 20.6 percent remained neutral on the issue. Only 2.9 percent were of the opinion that this obstacle was not a problem.
- Poor or inadequate information sharing between individuals or business units responsible for strategy implementation was indicated as the fourth problem on the list with 70.6 percent of the respondents in agreement and 29.4 percent neutral.
- The lack of upper management support of strategy implementation was identified as a problem by 70.6 percent of the respondents while 17.6 percent remained neutral and only 11.8 percent indicated it as not a problem.
- Unclear communication of responsibility and/or accountability for implementation decisions or actions was perceived as a problem by 64.7 percent of the respondents while 26.5 percent were neutral and 8.8 percent disagreed.
- With regard to the obstacles related to lack of incentives or inappropriate incentives to support implementation objectives, a total of 61.8 percent of the respondents were of the opinion that the obstacle is a problem while 20.6 percent disagreed. The remaining 17.6 percent of the respondents were neutral.
- On the obstacles of not having guidelines or a model to guide strategy implementation efforts, 61.8 percent of the respondents perceived it as a problem while 26.4 percent were neutral and only 11.8 percent disagreed.

- The obstacles on trying to implement a strategy that conflicts with the existing power structure was indicated by 55.9 percent of the respondents as a problem while 23.5 percent disagreed and 20.6 percent remained neutral.
- The lack of understanding of the role of organizational structure and design in the implementation process was indicated by 52.9 percent respondents as a problem while 38.3 percent were neutral on the aspect and only 8.8 percent in disagreement.
- The obstacle on poor or vague strategy was identified by 44.1 percent of the respondents as a problem while 35.3 percent were neutral. Only 20.6 percent of the respondents disagreed.

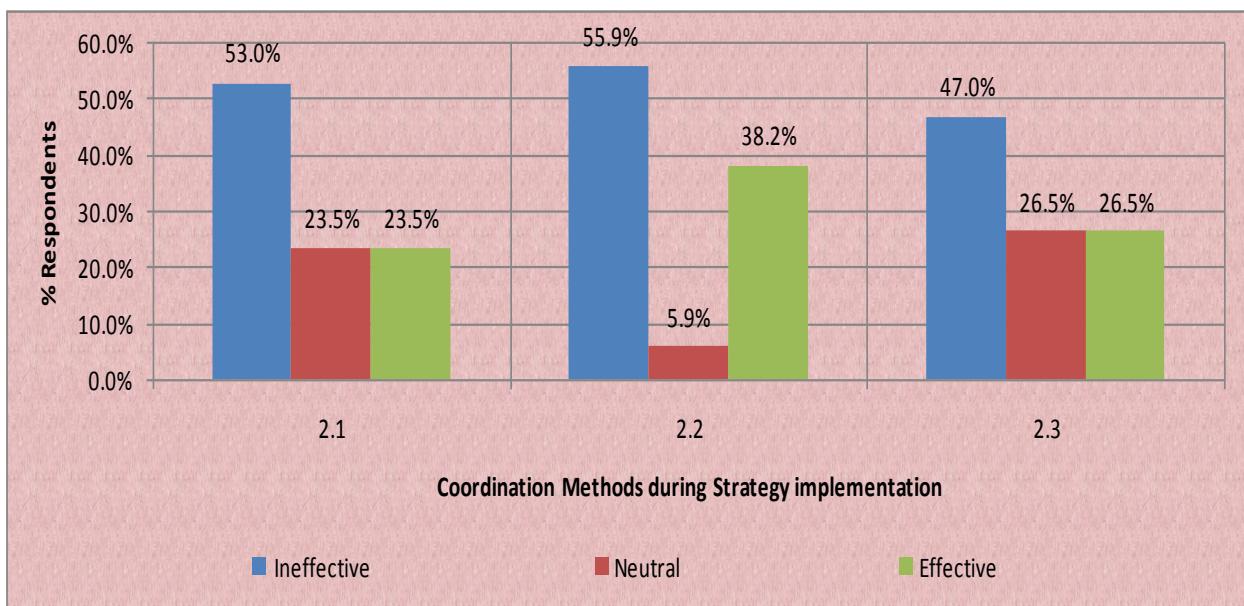
4.2.2 Results on the effectiveness of information sharing and coordination methods

The results of the investigation on the effectiveness of information sharing and co-ordination methods at the institution are presented in this section by Table 4.2 and Figure 4.2.

Table 4.2 Statistical result on perception of effectiveness of information sharing and coordination methods

Coordination Methods during strategy implementation	Ineffective	Neutral	Effective	Total Respondents
2.1. Use of teams or cross functional groups	18	8	8	34
2.2. Use of informal communication (i.e. person-to person contacts)	19	2	13	34
2.3. Use of formal integrators (i.e. consultancy organization)	16	9	9	34

Figure 4.2 Graphical representations on perception of effectiveness of information sharing and coordination methods



- **Explanatory notes on the effectiveness of the coordination methods**

The majority of the respondent reported that all three co-ordination methods surveyed were ineffective at the institution.

- About 55.9 percent of the respondents were of the opinion that the use of informal communication (i.e., person to person contact) was ineffective, while 38.2 percent disagreed and only 5.9 percent remained neutral.
- On the other hand, the use of teams or cross functional groups was reported as ineffective by 53.0 percent of the respondents while 23.5 percent disagreed and 23.5 percent remained neutral.
- The use of formal integrators (i.e., consultancy organization) was reported by 47.0 percent of the respondents as ineffective while 26.5 percent of the respondents were of the opinion that the method is effective and the remaining 26.5 percent were neutral on the issue.

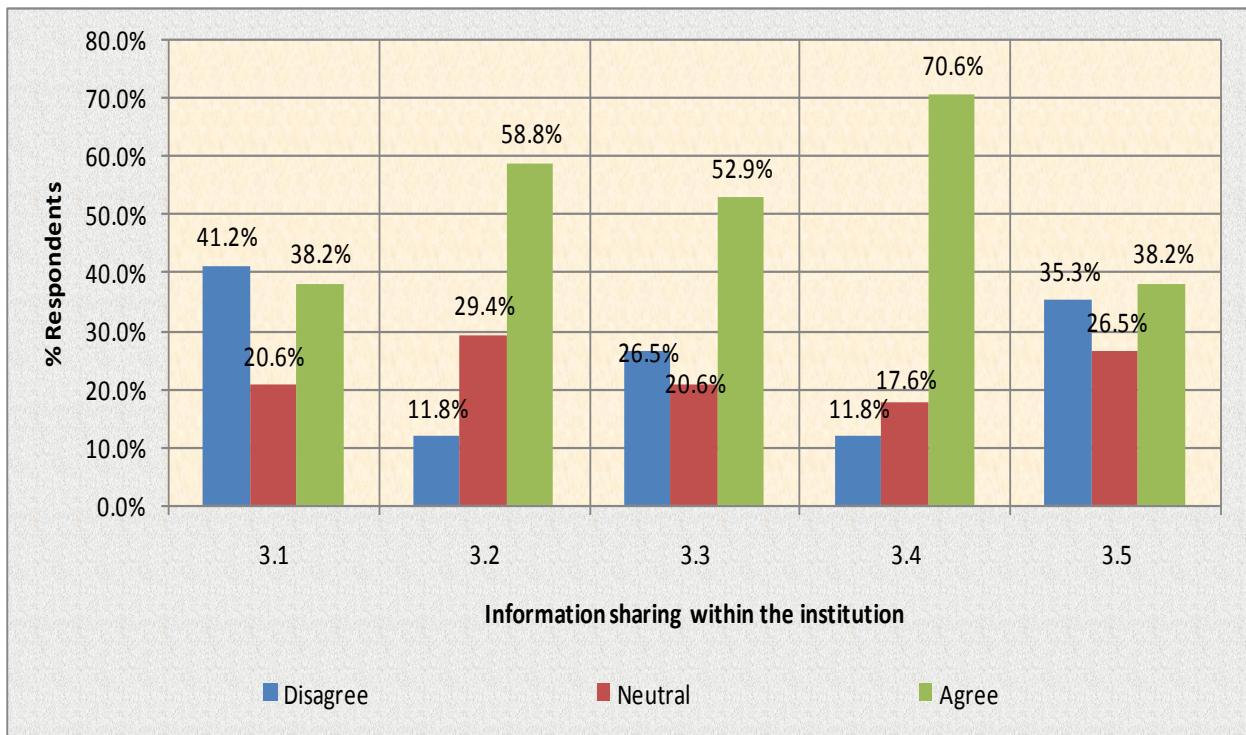
4.2.3 Results on information sharing within the institution

The following presentation highlights the survey result on question three and it is presented by Table 4.3 and Figure 4.3.

Table 4.3 Statistical result on perception of information sharing within the institution

Information sharing within the institution	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Total respondents
3.1. Employees are reluctant to share important information or knowledge with others	14	7	13	34
3.2. Some sources of information are unreliable	4	10	20	34
3.3. Managers are reluctant to trust information generated from sources outside their own departments.	9	7	18	34
3.4. Information fails to reach people who need it	4	6	24	34
3.5. Employees fail to understand or evaluate the usefulness of available information	12	9	13	34

Figure 4.3 Graphical representation of results on information sharing within the Social Security Commission



- Explanatory notes on information sharing within the institution**

The results on perception on information handling at the institution were sourced through five key items.

- The first item focused on whether employees were reluctant to share important information with others. On this item 41.2 percent of the respondents disagreed while 38.2 percent agreed and 20.6 percent were neutral.
- The second item focused on unreliable sources of some information. The respondents totaling 58.8 percent agreed that some sources of information were unreliable while 29.4 percent were neutral and 11.8 percent disagreed.

- With regard to the aspects of managers being reluctant to trust information generated from sources outside their departments, 52.9 percent respondents were in agreement with the statement while 26.5 percent disagreed. The remaining 20.6 percent of the respondents remained neutral.
- On the aspect of failure of information to reach people who need it, 70.6 percent of the respondents agreed that this was the case, while 17.6 percent were neutral. Only 11.8 percent of the respondents disagreed.
- The last item on this section focused on failure of employees to understand or evaluate the usefulness of available information. A total of 38.2 percent of the respondents agreed that this was the case at the institution while 35.3 percent disagreed. The remaining 26.5 percent of the respondents remained neutral.

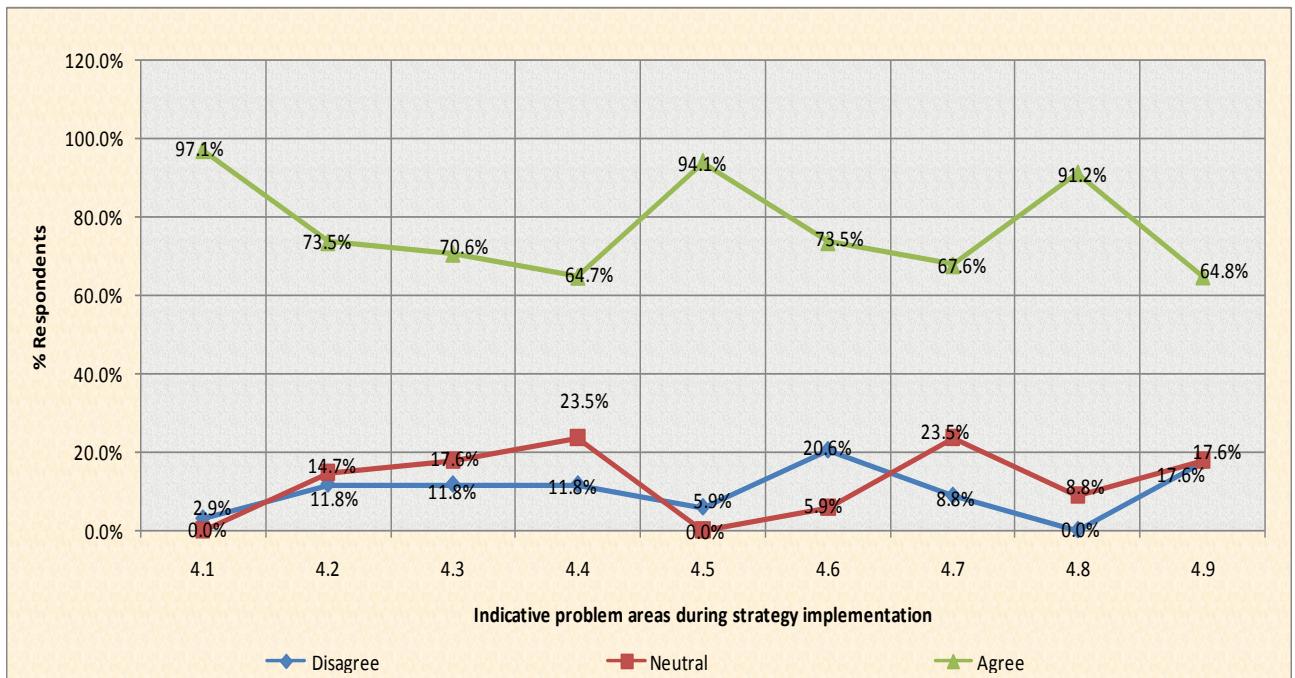
4.2.4 Results on indicative problem areas during strategy implementation

The survey results on indicative problem areas during strategy implementation are presented by Table 4.4 and Figure 4.4.

Table 4.4 Statistical results of perception on indicative problem areas during strategy implementation

Indicative problem areas during strategy implementation	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Total respondents
4.1. Implementation decisions take too long to make.	1	0	33	34
4.2. Employees don't understand how their jobs contribute to important implementation outcomes.	4	5	25	34
4.3. Responses to customer problems or complaints take too long to implement.	4	6	24	34
4.4. The company reacts slowly or inappropriately to competitive pressures while implementing strategy.	4	8	22	34
4.5. Time or money is wasted because of inefficiency or bureaucracy in the implementation process.	2	0	32	34
4.6. "Playing politics" is more important than performance against strategy implementation goals for gaining individual recognition.	7	2	25	34
4.7. Important information "falls through the cracks" during implementation and doesn't get acted on.	3	8	23	34
4.8. We spend lots of time reorganizing or restructuring, but we don't seem to know why this is important for strategy implementation.	0	3	31	34
4.9. We are unsure whether the strategy we're implementing is worthwhile, effective, or logical, given the competitive forces we face in our industry.	6	6	22	34

Figure 4.4 Graphical representations of indicative problem areas during strategy implementation



- Explanatory notes on indicative problem areas during strategy implementation**

This section of the survey focused on the indicative problem areas during strategy implementation. Nine elements were investigated during the survey.

- The first item focused on the timeframe the implementation process takes. The majority of the respondents, 97.1 percent were in agreement that the implementation process took too long while only 2.9 percent disagreed.
- On the item of employees not understanding their job's contribution towards the implementation outcome, 73.5 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement while 14.7 percent were neutral and only 11.8 percent disagreed.

- On the third item that focused on the timeframe for responding to customer problems, 70.6 percent of the respondents agreed that responses to customer complaints took too long while 17.6 percent were neutral and 11.8 percent disagreed.
- The fourth item focused on the company's reaction to competitive pressure while implementing strategy. A total of 64.7 percent respondents agreed with the fact that the company reacted slowly or inappropriately to competitive pressure while 23.5 percent were neutral and 11.8 percent disagreed.
- The fifth item dealt with the issue of wastage of resources and time due to inefficiency or bureaucracy during the implementation process. The majority of the respondents, (94.1 percent) were in agreement with the statement while only 5.9 percent disagreed.
- On the issue of “playing politics” being regarded as more important than performance against targets, 73.5 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement while 20.6 percent disagreed. Only 5.9 percent of the respondents remained neutral.
- The seventh item focused on the aspect of losing important information or failure to act on important information during strategy implementation. On this item, 67.6 percent of the respondents agreed that that was the case at the institution while 23.5 percent were neutral and 8.8 percent of the respondents disagreed.
- The majority of the respondents (91.2 percent) agreed with the statement about a lot of time that was being spent on reorganizing or restructuring and they seemed not to know the importance of it during strategy implementation. Only 8.8 percent of the respondents were neutral on the issue.
- The last area of the investigation under this section focused on whether the implementers were unsure about the strategies that were being implemented in terms of whether it was worthwhile, effective or logical given the competitive forces the company faces. A total of 64.8 percent of the respondents agreed that this was the case at the institution while the remaining half was shared equally between those in disagreement (17.6 percent) and those that remained neutral (17.6 percent).

4.2.5 Results on open-ended question and additional comments

The results under this section were sourced through additional remarks and open-ended question comments made by respondents. The respondents were of the opinion that these factors were also contributing to the obstacle of strategy implementation at the Social Security Commission.

The following are the additional factors raised by respondents:

- The respondents highlighted the lack of control of implementation plans, improper approach in communicating required changes as well as fear amongst employees of change as the contributing factors to an unsuccessful strategy implementation process.
- Lack of leadership and negative conflicts within top management are also to blame for some of the failure of strategy implementation at the institution.
- The organizational culture at the institution does not encourage good performance amongst employees.
- High staff turnover at the top level including Board of Commissioners (Directors) does not auger well with effective strategy implementation
- Insufficient time is spent on communicating strategies and lack of comprehensive training programs for employees to create understanding across all levels hamper the smooth implementation of strategies.
- Dependence on consultants.
- Focus on individual benefits instead of organizational or customer benefits.

- Government intervention in particular, the changes in political office bearers delay strategy implementation. This happens when changes are made at Ministerial level resulting in some strategic programs' due dates to be reviewed and shifted forward.
- Conflicting information from some managers is incorrectly interpreted by employees and consequently causing misunderstanding amongst employees.
- Given the prevalent economic factors that have forced some businesses out of business, employees regard any process of re-organization as a recipe of retrenchment. Therefore individuals turn a blind eye to the positive aspect of the process and fail to pinpoint the positives that would come with the particular change.
- The lack of mentorship programs and succession planning at the institution force people to spend a short time at the institution.
- Lack of a proper strategy formulation process as well as the lack of knowledge about strategy implementation process.
- Lack of cooperation between departments and initiative to encourage ownership of the implementation process amongst employees coupled with lack of commitment from staff members hamper effective strategy implementation.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter highlighted the results of the study and no details were provided in terms of the meaning of the results to the institution. The following chapter will present the results in detail by highlighting the possible implication to the institution.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH RESULTS INTERPRETATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with the data analysis with the main focus on what the respondents indicated on the research instrument. This chapter will present the findings of the research in the context of the main obstacles highlighted in Chapter one. The chapter will provide detailed interpretation of factors established by the study as obstacles to strategy implementation at the Social Security Commission. The interpretation will be organized according to the questionnaire structure in order to highlight the main areas of concern per particular section.

5.2 Interpretation of results of Question one

The study focused on establishing the possible obstacles to strategy implementation at the Social Security Commission. Researchers identified twelve hurdles or obstacles to strategy implementation. These hurdles were investigated through the research study and the findings were overwhelmingly in agreement, except the obstacle relating to insufficient financial resources, where the majority (>50 percent) of the respondents did not agree that this obstacle was posing a challenge to the Social Security Commission.

The study came up with at least five key obstacles the researcher identified as the top five hurdles. The ranking was done based on the number of respondent (>70 percent) who were of the opinion that the particular obstacle is a problem.

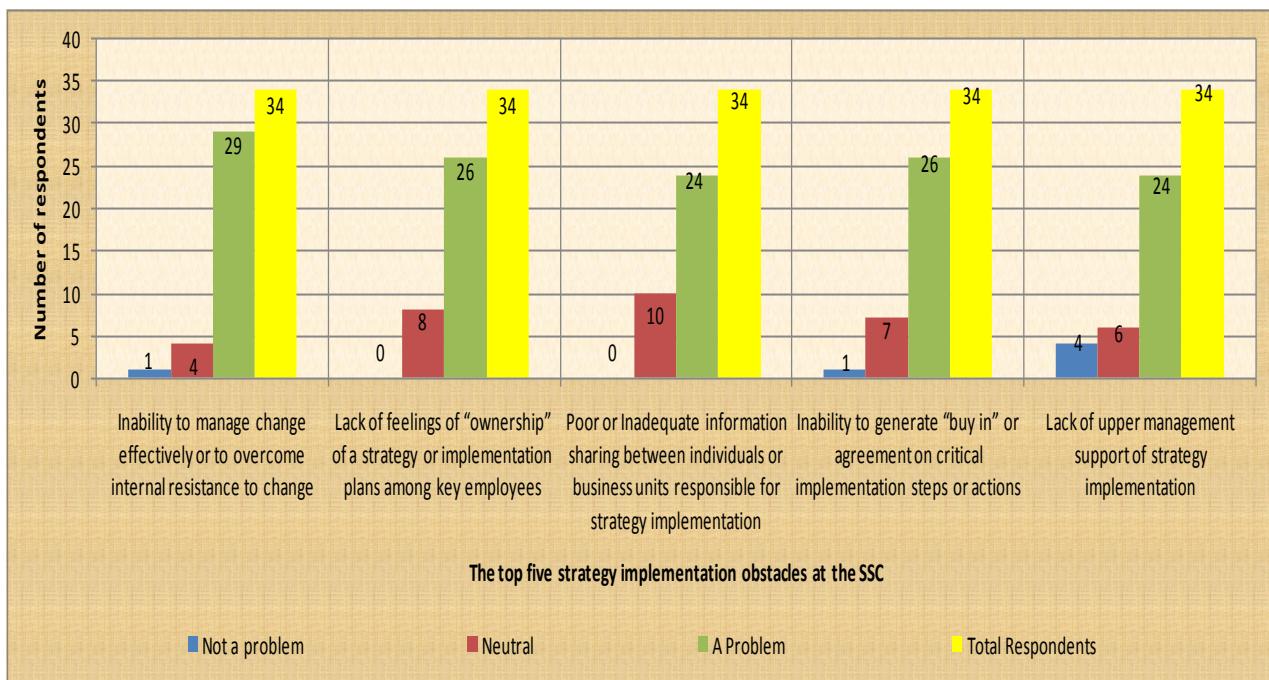
The top five hurdles that were identified were:

- Inability to manage change effectively or to overcome internal resistance to change.
- Lack of feelings of ownership of a strategy or implementation plans among key employees.
- Poor or inadequate information sharing between individuals or business units responsible for a strategy implementation.
- Inability to generate “buy in” or agreement on critical implementation steps or actions and,
- Lack of upper management support of strategy implementation.

Table 5.1 Research findings obstacle ranking in comparison to Wharton-Executive Education and Wharton-Gartner Survey

Obstacles to Strategy Execution			
Obstacle	Ranking	Ranking	
	Researcher's findings (n=34)	Wharton-Executive Education Survey (n=200)	Wharton-Gartner Survey (n=243)
1. Inability to manage change effectively and overcome resistance to change	1	1	1
2. Trying to execute a strategy that conflicts with the existing power structure	8	5	2
3. Poor or inadequate information sharing among individuals/units responsible for strategy execution	3	4	2
4. Unclear communication of responsibilities and/or accountability for execution decisions or actions	6	5	4
5. Poor or vague strategy	10	2	5

Figure: 5.1 Graphical representations of the top five hurdles to strategy implementation



The findings indicated an overwhelming agreement of respondents on the obstacle related to inability to manage change effectively. Based on the results obtained, it was evident that there is a lack good change management practice at the institution. The result showed that the majority of the personnel were resisting change due to the incorrect approach adopted in managing the change process.

This implies that serious resistance was prevalent at the institution and the strategy implementation process was being negatively affected by this problem. The lack of feeling of ownership of a strategy or implementation plans amongst key employees was identified as the second serious problem at the institution by the majority of the respondents.

From the results, a conclusion could be drawn that suggested that the strategy in place was not accepted by the majority, hence lack of ownership of such plans.

This presents a serious challenge to management as key employees do not take ownership of the strategies and drive it to ensure effective implementation. This implies lack of accountability for the strategy adopted by the institution and if not addressed fast, could result in a big stumbling block for efficient operation of the institution.

The third hurdle identified by the majority of the respondents was the inability to generate buy-in or agreement on critical implementation steps or action. The findings suggest a serious problem at the institution indicating lack of team spirit amongst employees.

The result showed that there was a lack of agreement on what needed to be done among those responsible for making the strategy work. The result also suggested that there was a lack of commitment from personnel to agree on certain steps in order to move the institution forward. Poor or inadequate information sharing between individuals or business units responsible for strategy implementation was identified as the fourth hurdle.

The findings demonstrated a lack of information sharing that could be regarded as a serious problem confronting the institution. The results also showed that there was a possibility of departments operating as independent units with opposing objectives. In addition, lack of proper co-ordination was seen as another challenge facing the institution.

The fifth obstacle was the lack of management support of strategy implementation. Based on the findings, it became apparent that necessary support from management was not being provided to those that were supposed to implement the plans.

This conclusion suggests that strategy in place does not have the necessary support from management and at the same time no support is availed by management on a continuous basis to ensure understanding and assist the implementers during the process.

The following section presents the findings on other obstacles that were also highlighted during the study with the response rate of less than 70 percent in agreement.

The respondents identified unclear communication of responsibility as a hurdle to the institution's effort to implement strategies. Surprisingly, 64.7 percent of the respondents indicated that there was unclear communication of responsibilities. The result suggested that to a certain extent some personnel did not understand their responsibilities.

This shows the difficulties confronting personnel and it becomes very difficult to implement plans that have responsibilities that are not clearly stipulated.

With this in mind, a conclusion can be made that even though strategies are in place, the implementers are not adequately prepared to take the challenge or a significant number of personnel do not have a clear understanding on what needs to get done and how it should be done.

The lack of incentives or inappropriate incentives to support implementation was also identified as a hurdle confronting the institution. This conclusion suggests that the institution only has the traditional incentives system which is a fixed monthly salary. This type of incentive is being viewed as not sufficient in rewarding the implementers adequately.

It does not encourage people to perform exceptionally as everybody is being rewarded monthly regardless of performance. There is no reason why an individual should put in more effort to implement the plan as even failure to implement the strategy is being rewarded.

The lack of a model to guide implementation efforts was also highlighted as a problem by 61.8 percent of the respondents. The results suggest that there is no logical model to guide implementation activities at the institution.

According to Hrebiniak (2006:23), without guidelines, implementation becomes a helter-skelter affair which leads to a situation whereby individuals do things they think as important, resulting in uncoordinated divergent, even conflicting decisions and actions.

Respondents in the survey agreed that trying to implement a strategy that conflicted with the existing power structure was an impediment to effective strategy implementation.

The conclusion suggests that some strategies in place are in conflict with the existing power structure. The assumption confirms the aspect of resistance being experienced even at the top level when it comes to implementation of structural changes.

The indication is that some plans are in conflict with the traditional beliefs of some top level personnel and this proves to be a stumbling block to any attempts to change the routine that might affect those in power and they may end up losing some of their power.

The survey results also indicated the lack of understanding of the role of organizational structure and design in the implementation as one of the obstacles present at the Social Security Commission. Serious misunderstanding prevailed at the institution on the role of organizational structure. Some comments made on the survey reflect a situation whereby the organizational structure was being viewed as an instrument to retrench employees.

Based on this misunderstanding, it can be concluded that the correct intention of organizational structure was misunderstood by many in the institution resulting in serious resistance towards strategies that were aimed at reorganizing activities at the institution.

The survey results reflect the obstacles related to poor or vague strategy in a moderate way. Not a significant number of respondents (<50 percent) presented it as a problem. This also serves as an indication of a problem not so significant but one that requires attention.

5.3 Interpretation of results of Question two

Part two of the questionnaire sourced data regarding the three main coordination methods an institution can adopt to improve its operations. The respondents were in agreement with the facts that the coordination methods were ineffective.

The study found that there was a lack of communication at all levels be it at a person-to-person contact or between various teams in departments.

This indicated why misunderstanding was prevailing amongst employees regarding certain processes at the institution.

On the other hand, the use of consultancy was reported by (<50 percent) respondents as ineffective. The use of consultants can be crucial sometimes, especially at the time when professional expertise is needed to facilitate various change processes. This seems to be lacking at the institution and professional advice that could have assisted management in some aspect of change process is not being sourced.

5.4 Interpretation of result of Question three

The third section of the research instrument investigated the aspect of information utilization by employees. The result showed that employees were willing to share information with others. This however, was hampered by lack of appropriate platform that could allow the sharing of information amongst employees. The study also tested the opinion regarding reliability of some information generated from some sources in the institution. The result showed that some information was unreliable.

The study also found that managers did not trust some information generated from other departments. This indicated a lack of trust in the existing information system of the institution by managers. On the other hand it also showed a lack of proper information systems that could facilitate information flow to various departments and employees.

There was also a lack of commitment from management to train employees in the various aspect of information evaluation to ensure that all employees could correctly evaluate available information and create better understanding out of the particular information.

5.5 Interpretation of results of Question four

Part four of the research instrument concentrated on the general aspect of possible situations at the institution that were being viewed as indicative problem situations and if it was found to be present at the institution, it could mean a manifestation of a problem situation.

The first factor that was unanimously agreed as being an indicative problem in the strategy implementation at the institution was the timeframe of the implementation process.

The timeframe to implement strategic decisions was reported to be too long by the majority of the respondents. This aspect appeared to be causing anxiety amongst employees, especially the prolonged implementation of strategies focusing on changes in some operational activities. Indication was that some employees had lost confidence in the process and it was evident from their responses that they did not see that the plans would ever be implemented.

Due to the negative perception on the implementation of certain plans, the other areas such as service delivery was impacted on. This was being seen as well on the perception on responses to customer queries. The institution reacted very slowly in addressing customer problems. This could be due to lack of commitment from responsible employees to timely address the compliance or it could be a result of lack of proper operational systems that was able to support the business process as well as facilitate faster response time on queries.

Coupled with this scenario was also the slowness of the institution to react on competitive pressure. It appears that the Social Security Commission does not take competition in the business environment seriously. There were also some respondents that were of the opinion that the line Ministry's involvement in some operational decision making process was hampering the effective implementation of strategies.

The moment the line Ministry got involved in operational issues of the institution, unnecessary bureaucracy prevailed and this delayed the implementation process.

On the other hand, a certain degree of negative politicking was also playing a role in the implementation process. It appeared that individual interest was more important than the institution's long term progress. The results showed some degree of ignorance from employees to correctly interpret available information. This could be the reason why important information available was being ignored or wrongly interpreted to cause confusion and ensure the failure of the planned intervention.

The process of re-organizing the institution's operations was reported to be not conclusive. The respondents were of the opinion that the process had taken too long to complete and employees seemed not to understand why the implementation process was taking such a long time to complete.

5.6 Descriptive results on indicative problem areas during strategy implementation

The research instrument also contained sections that sourced additional comments from respondents. The main factors highlighted as additional obstacles to effective strategy implementation at the institution are summarized in this section. From the various comments made by respondents, the aspect of lack of control of the implementation plan was indicated as the first serious problem facing the institution.

Secondly, respondents indicated that there were too many vacancies at management level as well as at some key operational levels. There was also a concern about the frequent changes at the level of Board of directors. This scenario appeared to be a serious concern as these changes had a negative impact on the implementation plan due to the fact that new directors had to be given enough time to understand the operation of the institution and this would mean shifting the target date of the major implementation program.

The other factor that was highlighted as a major concern was the conflict within the management team. The result indicated that there was negative conflict present in the management team of the institution. Unfortunately, this situation was being felt by ordinary employees at the lower levels in the institution. Due to the disunity at the top level, it was becoming very difficult to implement certain programs planned for the future direction of the organization. Some of the plans were failing because of the lack of commitment from the leadership.

The last element worth highlighting is the regular government intervention in operational activities of the institution. Some respondents highlighted that at times government intervention into the institution's operations had resulted in delays of planned programs.

5.7 Conclusion

The chapter highlighted in detail the findings of the study. The result showed that various obstacles exists at the institution and needs to be addressed by management to ensure successful implementation of strategies.

The following chapter will highlight recommendations, conclusions drawn from the study and some shortcomings on the study that would require some further research.

CHAPTER 6

RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Introduction

The theoretical background and objective of the study were set out in Chapter one. To expand on the theoretical background to the study, a literature review was done in Chapter two. The concepts and issues related to obstacles to effective strategy implementation were highlighted within the framework of five themes.

Chapter three highlighted the research methodology adopted to obtain the data for the study while Chapter four presented the detailed interpretation of the data. Chapter five dealt with the research findings and interpretation of various factors obtained during the research project.

In this chapter, the most crucial points of concern highlighted in the previous chapters are summarized together with a number of conclusions. Certain recommendations will be put forward as well as some suggestions on the areas for further research.

The hypotheses under investigation as set out in the study was:

HO: Why is strategy implementation not successful at the institution?

This hypothesis was accepted as the majority respondents agreed that a number of obstacles to strategy implementation were impacting on the implementation process of the institution.

This being the case, it serves as an indication that the objective of the study has been achieved. It is now proper to highlight some recommendations to be adopted to improve the strategy implementation process at the institution.

6.2 Recommendations drawn from the research study

In light of the issues highlighted as the research findings in Chapter five, the following recommendations are made to improve strategy implementation process at the institution:

- The institution should develop tangible mechanism to manage change to facilitate strategy implementation. Personnel need to be adequately prepared through regular information sharing to eliminate misunderstanding of plans. A platform needs to be created whereby employees in teams are given the opportunity to express their fears, as well as an explanation to them in fewer details how the proposed change is going to affect them. Furthermore, clarity where necessary must be provided to everybody on what the organization intends to do for the sake of the future growth of the institution.
- The responsibility to change certain aspects of the institution's operation must be made everybody's responsibility. On-going follow-up meetings should be conducted to ensure that everybody understands the purpose of the strategy adopted.
- The institution should be able to identify key employees who could be given clear mandates to report on the progress of certain strategies in terms of its acceptance by general staff and progress towards achieving the results. A team spirit must be created in such a way that team members are free to express opinions on whether a particular strategy is workable and how it should be made to work if it is found to be not working. To keep momentum, co-operation needs to be rewarded to ensure that those who are ready to work as a team are rewarded accordingly.
- Information-sharing must be an ongoing process within all departmental units as well as across departmental level. Good information must be shared timely to ensure that up-to-date information is reaching everybody in the organization.

- Management must always be ready to provide support wherever it is needed for the strategy to work. Management must be able to provide leadership and at the same time be willing to listen to complaints from employees. Employees' complaints must be timely addressed to ensure that everybody gets the feeling of being a critical component to the overall progress of the system.
- Regular interaction between managers and subordinates should be encouraged to ensure ongoing communication in departments. Managers should be visible to all team members even when there is no problem to address but only to show that they are part of the team.
- The timeframe it takes to implement changes should be given serious consideration. The change process should be explained with a specific timeframe in mind. There should be serious commitment from the institution's management to keep to the proposed timeframe. Any failure to meet the target date must be communicated timely to employees to ensure that trust is maintained for the process.
- The institution should not allow too many vacancies at the management level. Management plays a pivotal role in leading the process. They provide leadership to the personnel in various departments and without them a leadership vacuum could develop and hamper strategy implementation.
- Changes at the board of director level must be organized in such a way that they do not hamper the process as a result of many new faces at the institution strategic level. The changes should come as reinforcement in areas where the board is lacking necessary expertise. Consideration could be given to changing at least three directors in a given cycle to ensure that continuity is maintained.
- Government intervention should be of strategic nature and should not be a stumbling block to the operation of the institution. Government for example, should give a clear mandate to the board of directors and the latter must be accountable for any decision that is made based on the particular mandate.

6.3 Conclusion drawn from the research findings

The conclusions drawn from the study are summarized as follow:

- A number of obstacles to strategy implementation have been highlighted in the study. These obstacles appear to be a serious stumbling block to successful strategy implementation at the Social Security Commission. Failure to address these obstacles will result in failure of many programs aimed at improving the performance of the institution.
- Several interventions are needed to improve the communication process at the institution.
- Measures are needed to ensure team spirit across all functional departments.
- Measures are needed to reduce staff turnover at management level.

6.4 Areas for further research

- To determine the reason why staff turnover is high at the management level, further research will be needed to understand the underlying factors behind the resignation of managers at the institution.
- To determine the impact of slow response to customer complaints by the institution.
- Investigate the impact of regular changes at board of director level on the performance of the institution.
- To investigate the possible reasons why some planned programs take too long to implement.

6.5 Conclusions

The chapter provided recommendations and conclusions derived from the study as well as the areas for further research. Even though many factors were highlighted as serious obstacles to effective strategy implementation, the findings might have been influenced by the restructuring process that was ongoing at the time of the study. Therefore the result might have been different or different outcome might have been obtained.

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ANNEXURE: A

TITLE OF THE STUDY: IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC DECISIONS AT THE SOCIAL SECURITY COMMISSION IN NAMIBIA

Dear respondent

You are invited to participate in this academic research study conducted by Daniel S Ndara, a student at the University of South Africa. The purpose of the study is to seek understanding of the challenges faced by the Social Security Commission personnel during implementation of strategic plans. You are part of a carefully selected group that has been asked to participate in this academic research study and I greatly appreciate your assistance.

Please note that;

- The responses is anonymous and confidential;
- Approximately 15 minutes will be required to complete the questionnaire
- Participation in the study is voluntary and important;
- Your responses will be used for academic purposes only;
- The findings can be availed on request only;
- Should you have any difficulties in responding, please contact me at the e-mail address; dsndara@yahoo.com or call me at 061-2051326(w) or +264812684376.

Please sign the form to indicate that;

- You read the information and
- You have given your consent.

Thank you for your participation

Respondent's signature:.....

Date:.....

Questionnaire

Q01. Researchers have identified 12 obstacles or hurdles to successful strategy implementation. In your experience, how big a problem for implementation is each of the following for your company? Use a 5-point scale, where 1 means *not at all a problem* and a 5 means *a major problem*.

	<i>Not at all a problem</i>			<i>a major problem</i>	
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Poor or vague strategy					
2. Not having guidelines or a model to guide strategy implementation efforts	1	2	3	4	5
3. Insufficient financial resources to implement the strategy	1	2	3	4	5
4. Trying to implement a strategy that conflicts with the existing power structure	1	2	3	4	5
5. Inability to generate “buy in” or agreement on critical implementation steps or actions	1	2	3	4	5
6. Lack of upper management support of strategy implementation	1	2	3	4	5
7. Lack of feelings of “ownership” of a strategy or implementation plans among key employees	1	2	3	4	5
8. Lack of incentives or inappropriate incentives to support implementation objectives	1	2	3	4	5
9. Poor or Inadequate information sharing between individuals or business units responsible for strategy implementation	1	2	3	4	5
10. Unclear communication of responsibility and/or accountability for implementation decisions or actions	1	2	3	4	5
11. Lack of understanding of the role of organizational structure and design in the implementation process	1	2	3	4	5
12. Inability to manage change effectively or to overcome internal resistance to change	1	2	3	4	5

Additional Comments:

Q02) Strategy implementation requires information sharing and coordination. Please rate the effectiveness of the following coordination methods for strategy implementation between functions, business units and key personnel within your company. Use a 5-point scale where 1 means *highly ineffective* and a 5 means *highly effective*.

	<i>Highly Ineffective</i>			<i>Highly Effective</i>	
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Use of teams or cross functional groups					
2. Use of informal communication (i.e person-to-person contact)					
3. Use of formal integrators (e.g., consultancy organization.)					

Additional Comments:

Q03) Based on your perceptions of knowledge and information sharing within your company during strategy implementation, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. Use a 5-point scale where a 1 means *strongly disagree* and a 5 means *strongly agree*.

	<i>Strongly disagree</i>			<i>Strongly agree</i>
1. Employees are reluctant to share important information or knowledge with others	1	2	3	4
2. Some sources of information are unreliable	1	2	3	4
3. Managers are reluctant to trust information generated from sources outside their own departments.	1	2	3	4
4. Information fails to reach people who need it	1	2	3	4
5. Employees fail to understand or evaluate the usefulness of available information	1	2	3	4

Additional Comments

Q04) I know there are problems with strategy implementation in my company when.....

	<i>Strongly disagree</i>				<i>Strongly agree</i>
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Implementation decisions take too long to make.					
2. Employees don't understand how their jobs contribute to important implementation outcomes	1	2	3	4	5
3. Responses to customer problems or complaints take too long to implement.	1	2	3	4	5
4. The company reacts slowly or inappropriately to competitive pressures while implementing strategy.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Time or money is wasted because of inefficiency or bureaucracy in the implementation process.	1	2	3	4	5
6. "Playing politics" is more important than performance against strategy implementation goals for gaining individual recognition	1	2	3	4	5
7. Important information "falls through the cracks" during implementation and doesn't get acted on	1	2	3	4	5
8. We spend lots of time reorganizing or restructuring, but we don't seem to know why this is important for strategy implementation	1	2	3	4	5
9. We are unsure whether the strategy we're implementing is worthwhile, effective, or logical, given the competitive forces we face in our industry	1	2	3	4	5

Additional Comments:

Q05) Finally, what other factors not mentioned in this survey make the strategy implementation process challenging or difficult in Social Security Commission?

.....
.....

ANNEXURE: B
Authorization note to conduct research at Social Security Commission

September 25, 2008

**The Executive Officer
Social Security Commission
Private Bag 13223
Windhoek**

Dear Sir

Subject: Permission to administer a questionnaire to obtain information from staff members of the Social Security Commission.

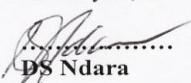
I hereby wish to ask for your permission to allow me to distribute questionnaires to obtain information from the Social Security Commission's staff members, for purposes of my studies with the University of South Africa.

I am currently enrolled for the M-tech: Business Administration degree at Unisa and one of the requirements to complete this degree includes the completion of a mini-dissertation in the area of business administration.

The information to be sourced from the staff is about the possible obstacles the staff in various departments experience when implementing strategic decisions.

The result will be treated as confidential and will only be used for the purposes of the study. I will also submitted one copy of the mini-dissertation to management for information after the successful completion of the project.

Thank you,



DS Ndara

Permission granted/not granted-



Festus Hangula
Chief Executive Officer
Social Security Commission

ANNEXURE: C

Authorization note from Professor Lawrence G. Hrebinia

Print

Page 1 of 1

From: Hrebinia, Lawrence (hrebinia@wharton.upenn.edu)
To: Daniel Sipopa Ndara
Date: Sunday, February 8, 2009 10:00:56 PM
Subject: RE: Permission request

Permission granted. Good luck with the research.

From: Daniel Sipopa Ndara [<mailto:dsndara@yahoo.com>]
Sent: Sunday, February 08, 2009 6:54 AM
To: Hrebinia, Lawrence
Subject: Permission request

From: "Hrebinia, Lawrence" <hrebinia@wharton.upenn.edu>
To: Daniel Sipopa Ndara <dsndara@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 7, 2009 6:17:34 PM
Subject: RE: Research paper request

The questionnaires used in this research can be found in my book, *Making Strategy Work* (Wharton School Publishing, 2005). The article can be had directly from the journal. Regards,

Larry Hrebinia

From: Daniel Sipopa Ndara [<mailto:dsndara@yahoo.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, January 06, 2009 2:42 PM
To: Hrebinia, Lawrence
Subject: Research paper request

Good day Professor

My name is Daniel S Ndara, a student at the University of South Africa . I intend to obtain you complete research paper titled “obstacle to effective strategy implementation.”(2006). I want to use it as part of the literature review on my research project.

Is it possible to obtain this research paper with all relevant questionnaires? If it is available for sale, kindly advise me.

Thanks

DS Ndara

E-mail address: dsndara@yahoo.com

Postal Address:

P.O Box 70436

Khomasdal

Namibia