THE ALIGNMENT BETWEEN THE PERCEIVED QUALITY OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT AND EMPLOYEES IN A CANOLA OIL MANUFACTURING COMPANY

Research report presented to the

Graduate School of Business Leadership
University of South Africa

by

SUSANNA ALETTTA VAN DER MERWE
48310611

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Supervisor: André Pierre Vermaak

30 November 2021

DECLARATION OF OWN WORK AND COPYRIGHT

I declare that this research project, the alignment between the perceived quality of strategic management of senior management and employees in a canola oil manufacturing company, is my own work and has not been submitted to any other institution for assessment purposes.

Furthermore, I declare that I have acknowledged all sources used, inline UNISA's Policy for Copyright Infringement and Plagiarism using the Augmented Harvard Method as prescribed.

Susanna Aletta van der Merwe

48310611

20 November 2021

DEDICATION

To Netta.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I acknowledge all the great researchers, of the past and the present, who empower us with their work.

ABSTRACT

In 2016, SOILL, a canola oil manufacturing company, aligned its strategy in the business through extensive communication and engagement. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the organisation's market has shifted from the hospitality industry to the retail market and the organisation had to rapidly adjust its operations. The purpose of this study was to investigate whether there is alignment between senior management and that of the rest of the organisation regarding the perceived quality of strategic management within the organisation. A descriptive approach was used by collecting quantitative data via a standard survey. In total 67 participants completed the survey, 12 senior managers and 55 other employees. A deductive approach was used to draw logical conclusions. Although the findings revealed that there is alignment between senior management and that of the rest of the organisation, it was suggested that alignment merits the full attention of senior managers, that lead with example, and should be a comprehensive continuous process, that includes change management methods, strategic communication and a performance measurement system. The research could help the organisation create a competitive advantage.

Keywords: Strategic management, strategy implementation (key success factors and obstacles), strategic alignment (significance and processes) and strategic communication (importance thereof).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE CORE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1.   Background to the study

Once an organisation's strategy has been established, it must be implemented and managed to achieve the desired results. Creating a strategy consists of analysing market conditions and the organisation's resources and capabilities, while implementing, aligning and managing a strategy requires different skills. Executing a strategy should be focused on managing people to successfully implement business processes and operations. It is action-orientated and managers must have the ability to lead change, establish a supporting culture and enhance daily operations to meet or exceed targets – but this is where the difficulty seems to lie.

Accomplished managers agree that their biggest obstacle is executing their strategy and getting employees to act in line with the strategy (Sull, Homkes & Sull, 2015). Employees will not zealously execute a strategy simply because it has been announced by management. Management must create buy-in and get commitment from and alignment with employees on how to implement and manage the strategy through communication and engagement. This process should focus not only on the strategy itself but also on the reasons behind it (Pretorius, 2016; Thompson, Peteraf, Gamble & Strickland, 2018; Amoo, Hiddlestone-Mumford, Ruzibuka & Akwei, 2019; Nienaber and Martins, 2020). Employees must "in their heads and hearts" (Thompson et al., 2018: 291) appreciate why the strategy is important and where it is taking them.

Executing a strategy also involves laborious managerial activities and overcoming unexpected day-to-day obstacles. Senior managers must therefore be able to entrust middle- and entry-level managers with the implementation, alignment and management of operational practices and dealing with issues in line with the strategy. According to Prieto and De Carvalho (2018), Thompson et al. (2018) and Cândido and Santos (2019), it is middle- and entry-level management's responsibility to make sure that all other employees efficiently execute value chain activities, which are essential to strategy execution, and

achieve operating targets that will enable the organisation to realise its strategy. Therefore, all employees, whether they are part of management or not, are actively engaged in implementing and managing the organisation's strategy. This involves a process of constructive engagement with all employees to ensure clarity of decisions and alignment of actions (Jeske and Calvard, 2020).

The above implies that implementing a strategy is about creating the right culture in the organisation as well as commitment from employees. This is achieved by engaging and managing employees in such a way that the employees implement the strategy on a day-to-day basis. It is thus assumed that senior management and the rest of the organisation should be in alignment when it comes to strategy implementation and management practices to successfully execute the strategy.

1.2. Background to the organisation and the industry

Southern Oil (Pty) Ltd (SOILL) is an oil extraction plant and refinery which is currently the biggest crusher of canola in Africa (SOILL, no date f). SOILL was established in 1993 and revolutionised agriculture in the Western Cape by introducing canola as a crop. The goal was to process locally grown seeds and stimulate the growth of a new product in the marketplace. In 1997, the organisation started developing specially formulated canola-based products for wholesale, retail and food services. In 2009, the organisation diversified to manufacture other edible oils and related products (SOILL, no date b). To reduce waste, SOILL started using oil cakes, a by-product of oil crushing, to branch out into animal feed (SOILL, no date a). SOILL sells its products under various brand names.

SOILL has 509 employees and its operations are mainly based in the Western Cape, with its head office in Swellendam. It has another plant and depot in Moorreesburg, additional silos in Caledon, as well as a facility that specialises in animal feed and a marketing office in Cape Town. Additionally, in Gauteng, SOILL has salespeople, another facility that specialises in animal feed as well as a coconut refinery. In Mozambique is a coconut processing plant (SOILL, no date c; SSK, no date).

SOILL has a differentiation strategy, offering products with distinguishing features at a premium price. SOILL aims to be the leader in the development and production of high-quality, healthy, edible oil products, through superior products and excellent customer service (SOILL, no date b; Thompson et al., 2018). To achieve this, SOILL has incorporated activities related to its value chain into the business. Firstly, SOILL provides direct support to canola producers. It employs agricultural experts to build partnerships with local farmers to increase the quality and the yield of their crops (SOILL, no date d) to ensure a consistent supply of high-quality raw materials. Secondly, SOILL has its own fleet of trucks, including oil tankers, that not only collects harvests but also distributes SOILL products to ensure nationwide delivery 365 days a year (SOILL, no date e).

SOILL also has a department that focuses on new product development to meet specific customer requirements, which is part of their growth strategy. This department translates ideas, requests and suggestions into reality by creating differentiated, high-quality and healthy oil-based products (SOILL, no date e). Furthermore, SOILL's animal feed department formulates blends to meet individual customer needs (SOILL, no date a). SOILL dedicates a sales resource to each key account (SOILL, no date e); its sales team and its customer care are dedicated to delivering first-class customer service (SOILL, no date c).

According to Wahyono (2018) and Prieto and De Carvalho (2018), in today's business, customer focus/centricity is key to achieving sustainable competitive advantage. This strategy has seemed beneficial as SOILL has steadily increased its nett profit by 96% from 2004 to 2020 and increased its gross profit and turnover by 67% and 66% respectively from 2013 to 2020 (SSK, 2005, 2013, 2020).

In 2016, SOILL initiated a project to align its strategy throughout the business through extensive communication and engagement. The organisation established and communicated a vision, goal and business objectives, and implemented a two-way performance communication structure and performance management system to enable the company to successfully pursue its strategy.

The worldwide economic slowdown of 2019 was exacerbated during the first half of 2020 by the economic crisis brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, even though the global manufacturing of food products output declined by 0.7% in the fourth quarter of 2020, the manufacturing of food products in developing and emerging industrial economies, excluding China, increased with 0.8% (UNIDO, 2020). COVID-19 had a severe impact on South Africa. The economy suffered a substantial contraction during the second quarter of 2020 when the country implemented lockdown restrictions and the gross domestic product (GDP) fell by over 16%, giving an annualised growth rate of –51% (South Africa. Department of Statistics, 2020). However, the manufacturing of food and beverages increased by 10.4% in March 2021 compared with March 2020 (South Africa. Department of Statistics, 2021).

Since SOILL is classified as an essential service, it was able to operate throughout the COVID-19 lockdown restriction. Additional measures, especially in the factories, had to be put in place to safeguard employees and customers, which resulted in additional costs but it was successful. Up to date, 209 of SOILL's employees had to be quarantined, although no infections occurred on-site and operations could continue as "normal" under the circumstances. However, due to the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, SOILL's market has shifted, as the hospitality industry effectively came to a standstill. Fortunately, the retail market compensated for this loss especially due to emergency buying during the first lockdown and SOILL did not experience a marked change in growth. SOILL, however, had to rapidly adjust its operations, since it experienced a bottleneck in terms of capacity to accommodate this shift.

Thus, SOILL had effectively implemented and aligned its strategy throughout the organisation. Everyone in the company is aware of where the company is going, how it is planning to get there and what its role and responsibility in it were. However, with the changes in the market, SOILL hit a bump in the road and had to adjust quickly. This potentially could have had an impact on how employees experience the quality of strategic management in the company.

1.3. Research question

Against the background of the study, the organisation and the industry, in the interest of sustaining its pre-COVID-19 performance, SOILL must ensure that its strategy is still effectively aligned throughout the organisation to succeed and to create a sustainable future for all its stakeholders during these turbulent times. This implies that there should be alignment between senior management and the rest of the employees in the organisation regarding practices related to strategy implementation and management. The aim of this study will therefore be to answer the following research question:

Is there alignment between senior management and that of the rest of the organisation regarding the perceived quality of strategic management within the organisation?

1.4. Research objectives

In relation to the research question, the following research objectives will form the foundation of the study:

- To establish senior management's perceptions of the quality of strategic management in the organisation.
- To establish all employees' (excluding senior management) perceptions of the quality of strategic management in the organisation.
- To determine if there is alignment between senior management and that of the other employees regarding the perceived quality of strategic management.

1.5. Abbreviated literature review

Strategic management is a complex, multifaceted, integrated practice consisting of three components, namely strategy formulation, strategy implementation and strategy evaluation. Organisations use various tools to help them formulate, implement and evaluate their strategy (Narikae and Lewa, 2017; Makadok, Burton & Barney, 2018; Elbanna, Al Katheeri & Colak, 2020; Fuertes, Alfaro,

Vargas, Gutierres, Ternero & Sabbatin, 2020). For the purpose of this study, the following concepts will be covered in the literature review:

- Strategic management
- Strategy implementation: key success factors and obstacles
- Strategic alignment: significance and processes
- Strategic communication: importance thereof

Chapter 2 of this report consists of a comprehensive, detailed literature review and will cover all relevant concepts.

1.6. Assumptions related to the organisation

The following assumptions are made regarding the organisation, industry and relevant legislation:

- SOILL's strategy and its strategic management processes and procedures will remain consistent and will not change over the coming period.
- SOILL will attempt no further diversification into either related or unrelated businesses in the foreseeable future.
- SOILL will not expand its current business activities to new foreign markets in the foreseeable future.
- There will be no major changes in legislation related to the food manufacturing industry or the importing or exporting of goods and services within the countries where SOILL operates over the coming period.

1.7. Research methodology

Research methodology provides a structure encompassing principles, processes, procedures and techniques to systematically find a solution to the identified research question and objectives and dictates the research methods and tools used (Leedy and Ormrod, 2019; Mukherjee, 2020). For this study, a descriptive approach was used by collecting quantitative data via a standard survey instrument from UNISA. A deductive approach was used to draw logical

conclusions from the premises. As the population and sample all originate from the same organisation, this research is classified as a case study (Rahi, 2017).

1.7.1. Quantitative design

Quantitative research is used to find answers to questions such as who, how much, what, where, when and how many to establish how it can be applied to other worldly phenomena with the purpose of either confirming or modifying existing theories or practices (Apuke, 2017; Zyphur and Pierides, 2017; Leedy and Ormrod, 2019). For this study, concepts, variables and assessment techniques are identified and defined, and remain constant throughout.

The use of impartial scientific methods ensures the objectivity of quantitative research (Apuke, 2017; Bloomfield and Fisher, 2019; Leedy and Ormrod, 2019). This study also forms part of a larger research study that is being conducted by UNISA's Graduate School of Business Leadership (SBL).

1.7.2. Population, sample and sample technique

The population consists of employees within the organisation, from senior management level to lower-level employees. However, due to the use of an electronic questionnaire, only employees who had access to a company email address were included in the study. Proportional stratified sampling was used as the population consisted of two separate groups, namely senior management and employees, with different proportions (Leedy and Ormrod, 2019).

Chapter 3 of this report will address the research methodology, as well as the ethical considerations, at length.

1.8. Limitations of the research

Due to the nature of the research methodology and that of the organisation, the following limitations were anticipated:

- Due to time constraints and the availability of resources, the study was conducted in only one organisation within the food manufacturing industry.

- The researcher was an outside party and had limited access to confidential information and employees within the organisation.

- As a result of the use of an electronic survey, only employees with a company email address were able to receive the questionnaire. This meant that a large percentage of employees within the organisation were not granted an opportunity to complete the questionnaire, many of whom were lower-level employees who generally have less access to information regarding strategic implementation in the organisation.

- On account of the researcher not being known to the employees in the organisation, participants might have been apprehensive to give their honest opinion regarding the quality of strategy implementation within their organisation.

- As the research is not a company initiative and the completion of the survey was not compulsory, employees in the organisation might have been indifferent and not completed the questionnaire, which would have reduced the amount of data available to analyse and draw conclusions from.

- One cannot generalise from the results/findings of this case study.

1.9. Delimitations of the research

This study was conducted within one company, SOILL, in the food manufacturing industry. Although its head office is based in Swellendam, South Africa, it has other production facilities and offices nationwide and a processing plant in Mozambique. All employees from senior management to lower-level employees from all branches and who have a company email address were included in the study.

1.10. Significance of the study

This study will assist the organisation to effectively manage the implementation of its strategy by establishing whether there is a disparity between the perception of senior management and that of the rest of the organisation regarding the quality of strategic management within the organisation. This will enable the

organisation to identify gaps in its strategic management implementation and to put the necessary action plans in place to realise its strategy and create a sustainable future for all stakeholders. It could help the organisation to improve its business and organisational performance (Prieto and De Carvalho, 2018; Elbanna et al., 2020) and overall customer satisfaction (Gębczyńska, 2016) and thereby create a competitive advantage (Alcaide-Muñoz, Bello-Pintado & Merino-Diaz de Cerio, 2018; Galpin, 2018; Prieto and De Carvalho, 2018).

Alignment of strategy management implementation could lead to employees' understanding their role in the organisation, which has a positive effect on their working relationship and their commitment to effectively implement the strategy (Elbanna et al., 2020; Nienaber and Martins, 2020). It could also improve senior management's ability to delegate decision-making and to overcome strategic obstacles and obstacles related to individuals that only work for personal gain (Pretorius, 2016; Amoo et al., 2019), and will result in a reduction in both waste and cost (Nienaber and Martins, 2020).

1.11. Layout of the study

The purpose of this chapter was to give an overview of the "what, why, where, who and how" of the research. It offered background to the study and provided the research question and objectives, an overview of the literature review and the research methodology. This chapter summarised the current conditions and established a roadmap for the study.

Chapter 2 comprises a literature review with the explicit aim of providing academic context to the research and relevant concepts within the framework of the research question and objectives as stated in Chapter 1. The literature review will focus on strategic management, strategy implementation, strategic alignment and strategic communication.

Chapter 3 explains the research methodology used. In addition to providing the motivation behind the research methodology followed, it also outlines the population, sample size, measurement instrument, method used to collect,

analyse and interpret the data, and ethical considerations. Chapter 3 thus specifies how the research methodology will answer the research question and meet the objectives as stated in Chapter 1.

In Chapter 4 the results of the data collected, as per Chapter 3, are documented, analysed, discussed and interpreted in line with the research question and objectives stated in Chapter 1.

Chapter 5 provides a conclusion and recommendations within the limitations of the study. These are based on the data analysis in Chapter 4 and in relation to the research question and objectives as stated in Chapter 1, within the context of the literature review in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The literature review in this chapter sets the scene for the research and applicable concepts within the framework of the research question and objectives. The literature review will identify and examine the current background of theories and models relating to strategic management, strategy implementation, strategic alignment and strategy communication. This is done to evaluate and amalgamate these concepts and to provide a foundation and guidelines for the research.

2.2. Background, definitions, theories and models

2.2.1. Strategic management

The concept of strategic management emerged in the 1950s and was deemed the answer to all problems from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s. During the 1980s, strategic management lost some of its popularity as several models proved unable to yield higher returns. However, strategic management came back into focus in the 1990s, and today it is commonly applied in the business environment (David and David, 2017).

Strategic management is focused on making sense of the organisation's environment (Salvato and Vassolo, 2018; Seidl and Werle, 2018) to determine the organisation's future direction (David and David, 2017; Calabrò, Minichilli, Amore & Brogi, 2018). Although some organisations tend to concentrate on the external environment (Blake and Moschieri, 2017; Sinha, Jaskiewich, Gibb & Combs, 2020), most organisations emphasise both the internal and external business environments (Wheelen, Hunger, Hoffman & Bamford, 2018; Jeong, Segel, Chen & Neweyet, 2020). As organisations are entities with internal environments that can impact their future direction, both the internal and external environment will be deemed applicable to strategic management.

The strategic management process is defined to various degrees. Kouamé and Langley (2018) and Kang, Zhu and Zhang (2021) broadly define it as formulating and implementing an organisational strategy. David and David (2017) include

evaluation of the strategy in this process, whereas Rothaermel (2017) includes analysing the business environment. Wheelen et al. (2018) incorporates all the previous elements but adds control of the strategy. Thompson et al. (2018: 20) expand it even further by adding "developing a strategic vision, mission and core values, and setting objectives" (see Table 2.1). It is the view of the researcher, however, that none of the above definitions intended to specifically exclude certain steps from the strategic management process. Instead, some of the steps were grouped under another step and therefore not mentioned expressly as a separate step, but rather as part of another step.

Table 2.1: Elements included in the strategic management process per author

	Strategic Direction	Analise	Formulate	Implement	Evaluate	Control
Kouamé and Langley (2018)			x	x		
Kang et al. (2021)			x	x		
David and David (2017)			x	x	x	
Rothaermel (2017)		x	x	x		
Wheelen et al. (2018)		x	x	x	x	x
Thompson et al. (2018)	x	x	x	x	x	x

Rothaermel (2017) and Makadok et al. (2018) emphasise the role of management in strategic management, related not only to the decisions that they make (David and David, 2017; Zollo, Minoja & Coda, 2018) but also to the actions that they take (Durand, Grant & Madsen, 2017; Kouamé and Langley, 2018). Additionally, David and David (2017) and Wheelen et al. (2018) state that strategic management is both an art and a science. Thus, strategic management is the decisions and actions taken by management, based partly on science and partly on the instinct and judgment of management.

The purpose or ultimate goal of strategic management is to improve the organisation's overall performance (Durand et al., 2017; Kouamé and Langley, 2018), create value for its stakeholders (Chatain and Mindruta, 2017; Lieberman, Garcia-Castro & Balasubramanian, 2017; Lee, Struben & Bingham, 2018;

Makadok and Ross, 2018; Ross, 2018) and to ensure a sustainable competitive advantage (McIntyre and Srinivasan, 2017; Menon, 2018; Vermeulen, 2018; Haans, 2019; Flammer and Ioannou, 2020; Zhu and Westphal, 2021) and success of the organisation (Calabrò et al., 2018; Sharapov, Kattuman, Rodriguez & Velazquez, 2021). These goals all seem to have one thing in common, which is to ensure the sustainability of the organisation.

To achieve this goal, management must have a holistic view of the organisation and make integrated decisions across functions (David and David, 2017; Durand et al., 2017; Rothaermel, 2017). Thus, strategic management is not focused on only one part of the organisation, but the organisation as an integrated whole.

With the above taken into consideration, for this study, strategic management will be defined as both an art and a science to holistically analyse an organisation's environment, both internal and external. This aids in formulating its strategic direction and enables management to make integrated decisions and take action linked to the implementation, evaluation and control of the organisation's strategy. From here, sustainable value is created for its stakeholders, with the focus on strategy implementation in line with the research question and objectives.

2.2.2. Strategy implementation

Strategy implementation is frequently deemed the more challenging part of the strategic management process (Cândido and Santos, 2015; David and David, 2017; Amoo et al., 2019). One study found that 73% of managers consider strategy implementation harder than formulation; 72% of managers found that it consumes more time, and 82% of managers believe that implementation is the part of the process over which they have the least control (Cândido and Santos, 2015). In contrast to this, Amoo et al. (2019) have found that the majority of literature focuses more on formulation than implementation.

Strategy implementation is based on coherent decisions and actions required to convert the strategic plan into action (David and David, 2017; Wheelen et al.,

2018; Gans, Stern & Wu, 2019). It is the organisation, coordination and integration of achieving the organisation's vision (Rothaermel, 2017; Thompson et al., 2018; Gans et al., 2019). Strategy implementation involves the setting of annual objectives, drawing up budgets, putting in place policies and procedures in line with the strategy and mobilising employees to put these in place (David and David, 2017; Wheelen et al., 2018). According to David and David (2017), each division must decide how best to implement its part of the strategy. Therefore, the purpose of strategy implementation is to realise the organisation's strategic plan.

Strategy implementation, however, cannot be done in isolation. Although strategy formulation is different from strategy implementation, both are part of an interdependent process to assure the sustainability of the organisation (Neeley and Leonardi, 2018; Wheelen et al., 2018) and must be seen "as two sides of the same coin" (Wheelen et al., 2018).

Although David and David (2017) distinguish between strategy implementation and strategy execution, according to the Oxford Dictionary (Lexico, 2021b), implementation and execution are synonyms. It has been found that authors generally use these terms interchangeably. Thus, strategy implementation and strategy execution will be deemed synonyms and the term "strategy implementation" will be used to describe both implementation and execution.

There are various opinions on how best to implement an organisation's strategy.

Amoo et al. (2019) identified eight activities to strategy implementation (Figure 2.1). The first is to ensure that the organisation has the right capacity and capabilities. The second is to provide and allocate the required resources. The third is to align the structure with the strategy. The fourth is to drive implementation. The fifth is to manage change. The sixth is to communicate the strategy and associated processes. The seventh is to influence employees' perception regarding the strategy, and the eighth is to monitor and control the implementation.

Figure 2.1: Eight activities of strategy implementation (Amoo et al., 2019)

Thompson et al. (2018) propose that, although an organisation must adapt their strategy implementation process to suit its milieu, certain tasks must be performed by management to ensure the success of the strategy implementation process (Figure 2.2). The first task is to build an organisation that is capable of implementing the strategy by correctly staffing the organisation, developing the required resources and capabilities, and establishing a structure that supports the strategy. The second task is to control internal operations by allocating adequate resources to strategy implementation, establishing policies and procedures that enable strategy implementation, adopting best practices and processes, setting up information and operating systems, and tying incentives to strategic goals. The third task is to create a culture that encourages strategy implementation and practise strong leadership to propel the implementation process forward.
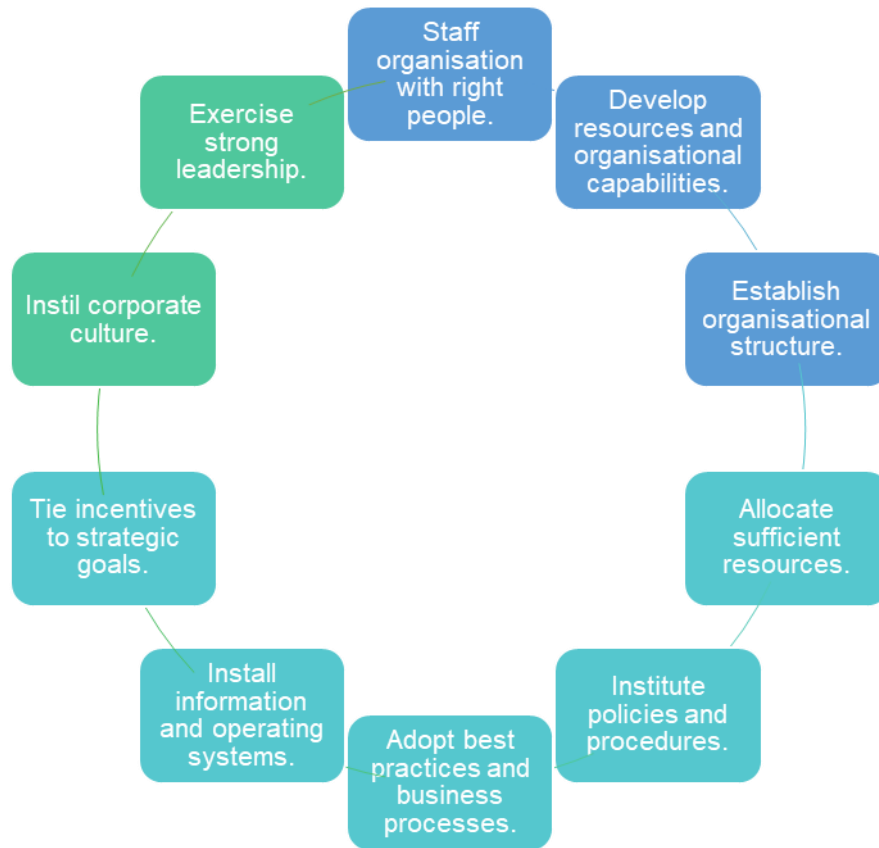
Figure 2.2: Essential tasks of the strategy implementation process (Thompson et al., 2018)

David and David (2017) suggest establishing a structure, allocating resources, establishing annual targets and policies, motivating and rewarding employees, managing conflict, attracting customers and managing finances (Figure 2.3).
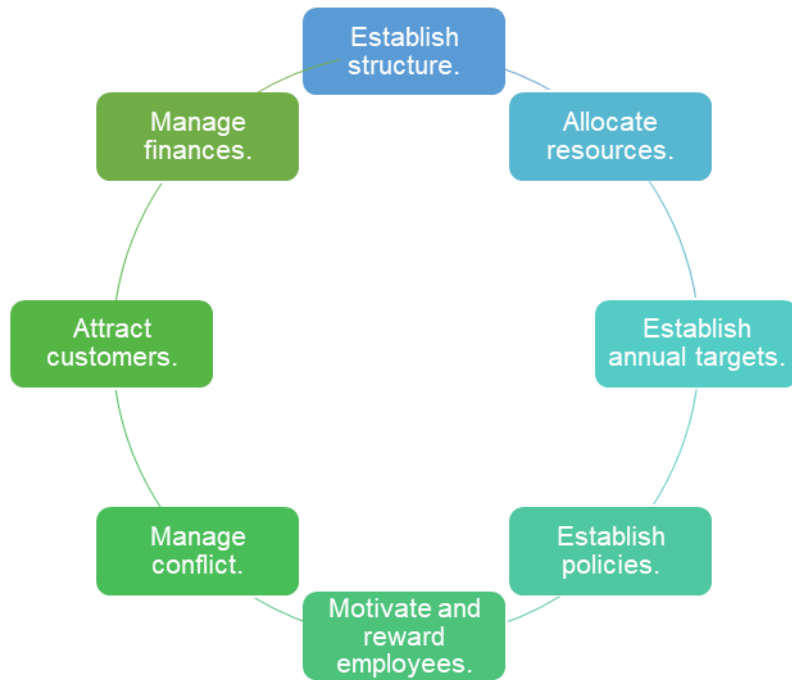
Figure 2.3: Implement strategy (David and David, 2017)

Wheelen et al. (2018) divide strategy implementation into two distinct categories (Figure 2.4). First is organising and structure. This includes developing programmes, budgets and procedures, designing and implementing a structure that supports the strategy, and reengineering processes and designing jobs in line with the strategy. Secondly, staffing and directing. This includes ensuring that staffing is in line with the strategy, that a conducive culture is in place and that action planning is in line with annual objectives through the implementation of a balanced scorecard system.
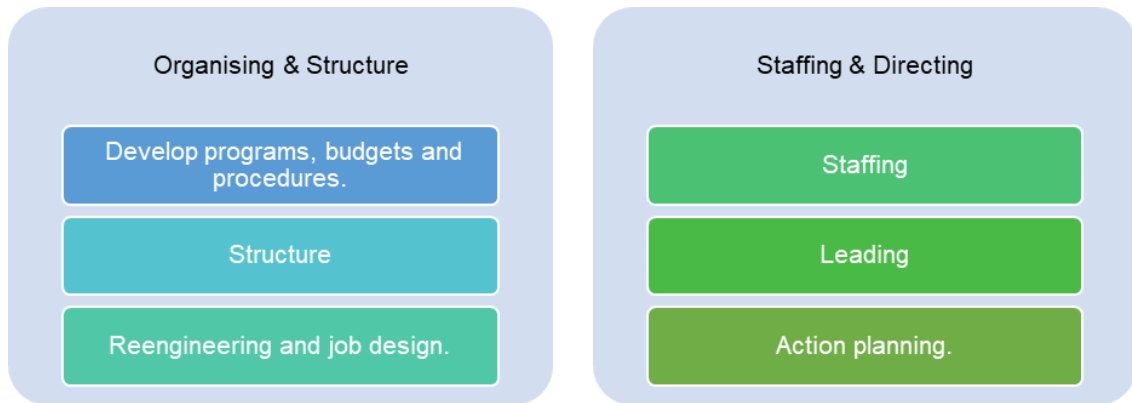
Figure 2.4: Strategy implementation (Wheelen et al., 2018)

Rothaermel (2017) focuses on four main elements to implement strategy (Figure 2.5). Organisational design involves putting in place the structure, processes and procedures of the organisation. Organisational structure requires establishing how the work efforts are arranged and how resources are divided. An organisational culture is created that supports the strategy, based on shared values, norms and artefacts. The strategic control and reward systems include internal governance and processes that align the incentives of the shareholders and the employees.
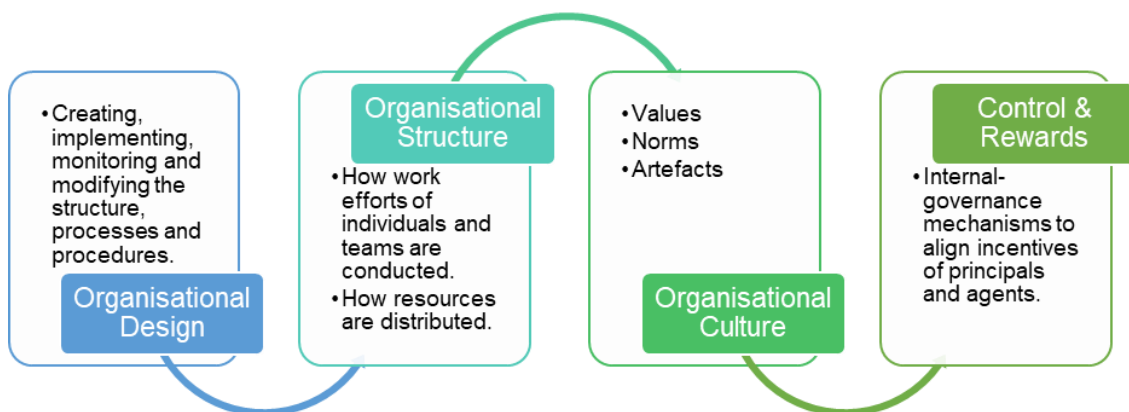
Figure 2.5: Strategy implementation (Rothaermel, 2017)

Canic (2020) divides strategy implementation into four parts, namely right focus, right environment, right team and right commitment (Figure 2.6). The right focus embodies the "what", "why" and "how" of strategy implementation. The "what" is

the core of the strategy, the "why" gives purpose and the "how" provides direction. The right environment aligns every touchpoint with the intention of the strategy. Building the right team includes employing the right people and regularly engaging with them. The right commitment embodies the motivating force that drives the right focus and environment.
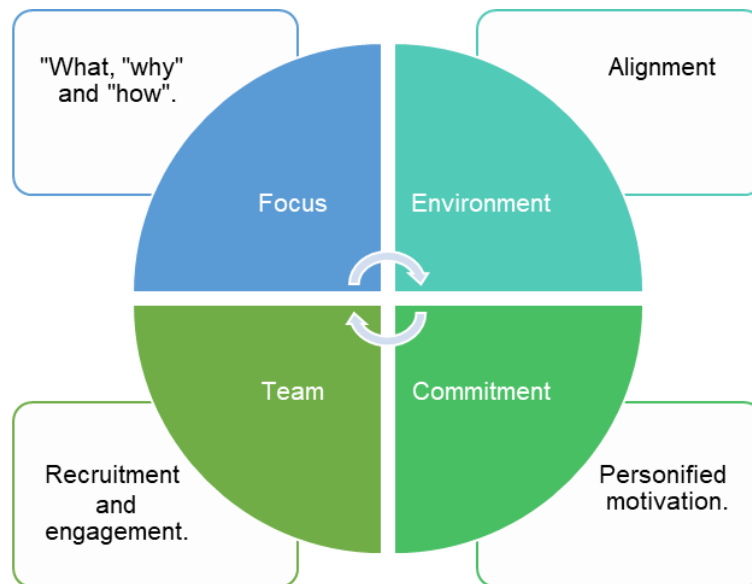
Figure 2.6: How committed leaders implement strategy (Canic, 2020)

Rani (2019) recommends using the McKinsey 7S model (Figure 2.7) to implement strategy. The McKinsey model was designed to show the complexity of change management, the interconnectedness of the seven organisational elements and to ensure alignment between these elements (Waterman, Peters & Phillips, 1980). The diagram has no starting point or hierarchy and all seven elements, categorised under hard and soft Ss, must be amalgamated, aligned and collectively reinforced to realise and maintain synergy (Masilela and Nel, 2021).

It is relatively simple to define and identify the hard Ss – strategy, structure and systems – and management has a direct impact on it (Alam, 2017; Burnes, 2017). Strategy represents the actions that an organisation takes to respond to changes. Structure represents how the organisation is organised and designed and underlines the complexity of control. Systems include all the procedures that enable the organisation to function (Waterman et al., 1980).

The soft Ss – skills, style, staff and superordinate goals – are less tangible, more difficult to encapsulate and usually influenced by culture (Alam, 2017; Burnes, 2017). Skills capture crucial attributes and capabilities. Style refers to leadership. Staff is related to human resources. Superordinate goals, or shared values, are guiding concepts that supersede formal objectives (Waterman et al., 1980).
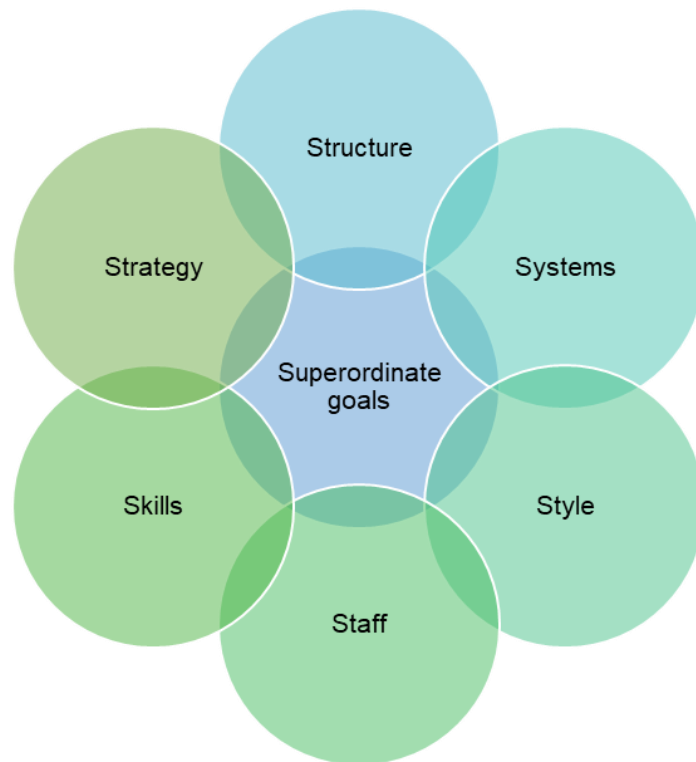
Figure 2.7: McKinsey 7S model (Waterman et al., 1980)

When reviewing the various strategy implementation processes above, several similarities can be identified (Table 2.2). These are organisational structure, including decision-making, policies and procedures, resources and capabilities, culture, including leadership, and measurement and control. It can therefore be deduced that these elements are essential to the strategy implementation process and must be part of the strategy implementation process to ensure successful strategy implementation.

Table 2.2: Similarities in the different strategic implementation processes per author

	Organisational Structure	Policies & Procedures	Resources & Capabilities	Culture	Measurement & Control
Amoo et al. (2019)	x		x	x	x
Thompson et al. (2018)	x	x	x	x	x
David and David (2017)	x	x	x	x	x
Wheelen et al. (2018)	x	x	x	x	x
Rothaermel (2017)	x	x	x	x	x
Canic (2020)		x	x	x	
McKinsey 7S (1980)	x	x	x	x	

2.2.2.1 *Key success factors of strategy implementation*

According to the Oxford Dictionary, key success factors (KSFs) provide a means of accomplishing a goal (Lexico, 2021d, 2021c, 2021a). Key success factors of strategy implementation can facilitate the effectiveness and efficiency of strategy implementation (Vigfússon, Jóhannsdóttir & Ólafsson, 2021). There are various views concerning what these KSFs are.

According to McChesney, Covey and Huling (2012), there are four disciplines that management must focus on to ensure the success of implementing a strategy. These are focusing on the wildly important, acting on lead measures, keeping a compelling scorecard and creating a cadence of accountability.

By focusing on the important elements, management must focus on only a few goals that will have a major impact on the success of the organisation, rather than give their divided attention to all the goals (McChesney et al., 2012). This is in line with the Pareto (80/20) principle. The Pareto principle maintains that 20% of customers, products or employees are responsible for 80% of the profits (Koch, 1998). This means that when implementing a strategy, instead of trying to achieve all the goals of the organisation, the management must decide which one or two

strategic goals will have the biggest impact on the sustainability of the organisation and give these goals their full attention.

Acting on lead measures, management must put the majority of their effort into activities that will drive the lead measures (McChesney et al., 2012). To ensure that the strategy is implanted successfully, managers need to establish which resources are needed and how they should be dispersed. This means directing resources, both human and non-human, at strategy critical areas. Evident redirecting of resources indicates a dedication to strategic change and can act as a catalyst for strategy implementation (David and David, 2017; Thompson et al., 2018; Wheelen et al., 2018; Canic, 2020). Therefore, excessive effort must be exerted and resources allocated to activities that are conducive to the achievement of the chosen goals.

Keeping a compelling scorecard ensures that everyone is always aware of what the score is so that employees know if they are winning or not (McChesney et al., 2012). Dalton (2016: 190) states that "there is no point implementing a strategy if you have no way of knowing whether it was successful". A key part of this is implementing and using real-time systems to monitor the performance of employees (Rothaermel, 2017; Akhtar and Sushil, 2018). Additionally, the results must be visible to employees, as this will drive engagement. According to McChesney et al. (2012), anything rarely affects morale and engagement as much as when employees feel that they are winning. As a result, it will be beneficial for management to display the latest scoreboard where all employees have access to it.

Creating a cadence of accountability involves having a frequent repeating cycle of accounting for performance and planning on how to improve the score. This can take the form of regular meetings to review the scoreboard and coming up with ideas to improve (McChesney et al., 2012). Cutting-edge, well-designed data systems can assist the organisation to successfully implement its strategy by providing accurate and real-time information regarding day-to-day operations. These systems must cover information aligned with the key performance indicators (KPIs). This will allow managers to analyse difficulties and implement

remedial actions in line with the strategy. Implementing employee performance monitoring information systems likewise offers managers a way to oversee the effectiveness of empowered employees (David and David, 2017; Rothaermel, 2017; Thompson et al., 2018; Canic, 2020). Consequently, management must not only measure performance but also engage with employees on how to improve performance.

Building on this, Vigfússon et al. (2021) note that tying awards to strategy implementation is a KSFs of strategy implementation. Rewarding employees, both financially and non-financially, for effectively implementing the strategy drives strategy implementation as this improves the employees' commitment. (Thompson et al., 2018; Shafagatova and van Looy, 2021). Rewarding employees will deliver the desired results only if the employees are rewarded for the results that they achieve in line with the strategy (Akhtar and Sushil, 2018; Guerra-López, 2018). Therefore, many organisations use KPIs, in line with the organisation's strategic goals, and the balanced scorecard to monitor and control performance, as it helps to measure performance both tangible and intangible (Lonbani, Sofian & Baroto, 2016; Cifalinò and Lisi, 2019). The reward system, however, must be transparent, understood, objective and fair, and employees must be measured on outcomes that they can personally influence (Thompson et al., 2018). Accordingly, management must implement an unambiguous reward system, likened to the chosen goals, to motivate employees to implement the strategy successfully.

Sharma (2017) focuses more on what the KSFs are when implementing a strategy in a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) environment and process using vision, understanding, clarity and agility (VUCA Prime) to combat the negative effects of a VUCA environment.

In a volatile environment, where things are changing rapidly, employees must know where the organisation is heading, even if the way might deviate from the original plan. A clear vision will help employees to keep focused on what the priorities are, no matter the opportunities and demands that might arise (Sharma, 2017). Drawing from this, Vigfússon et al. also note that (2021) linking goals and

objectives to the strategy is often cited as a KSFs in strategy implementation. It is thus essential for an organisation to have a vision and goals to "carry the torch" through turbulent times.

To combat uncertainty, management must create understanding. When the environment changes rapidly, it is vital to communicate to ensure that all employees have the same level of understanding of what is going on (Sharma, 2017). This is endorsed by Vigfússon et al. (2021), who found that frequent communication is repeatedly mentioned as a KSFs to strategy implementation. Leaders must also understand what their employees are thinking and how they are feeling (Sharma, 2017). This notion supports the idea by McChesney et al. (2012) of creating a cadence of accountability through engagement. Good communication "is not only top-down but also bottom-up and across organisations" (Tawse and Tabesh, 2021:26). Management must stay informed and monitor progress through a wide range of information sources. Management must, therefore, implement not only information systems, but also coordination instruments, such as interdepartmental task teams, and communication networks and must regularly engage with stakeholders. This will allow management to understand what is going on and with an opportunity to motivate stakeholders (Dalton, 2016; Thompson et al., 2018; Wheelen et al., 2018; Morrow and Mowatt, 2020). As a result, communication and engagement are KSFs to strategy implementation and will be discussed in more detail in section 2.2.5 (the importance of strategic communication).

By creating clarity through simplified processes, an organisation can counter complexity (Sharma, 2017). In keeping with this, Trullen, Bos-Nehles and Valverde (2020) claim that successful strategy implantation is based on the notion of routinisation. Routinisation is when a practice is entrenched within the organisation, which means that all employees understand and act accordingly. Policies must provide top-down direction, ensure consistency and promote an enabling environment within an organisation. To ensure that policies support strategy implantation, policies must provide a clear focus and realistic limits but must leave some degree of autonomy for employees (David and David, 2017;

Kollenscher, Eden, Ronen & Farjoun, 2017; Canic, 2020). Consequently, an organisation must establish and implement simple guiding policies and procedures to guide employees, especially when facing the unknown.

To counter ambiguity, an organisation must be agile. When situations are unclear, organisations must be flexible enough to respond to whatever happens. However, all people have their own level of tolerance for ambiguity (Sharma, 2017). To ensure that the organisation has the right employees, an organisation must be selective in whom it employs (David and David, 2017; Wheelen et al., 2018; Canic, 2020) and hire only employees with the right mindset and skills (Thompson et al., 2018). Kollensher et al. (2017) and Selvarajah and Meyer (2017) also suggest filling essential management positions with intelligent individuals who can think clearly, understand what must be done and deliver results. Minbaeva (2018), Wheelen et al. (2018) and Canic (2020) go even further by declaring that building an organisation's resources and capabilities includes not only putting in place the necessary resources and capabilities, but also improving and updating it as the market evolves (Minbaeva, 2018; Wheelen et al., 2018; Canic, 2020). Ensuring constant organisational learning is also a key success factor (KSF) in strategy implementation (Tan, Fu & Yi, 2016; Alagaraja, Egan & Woodman, 2017; Osorio-Londoño, Naranjo-Valencia & Calderón-Hernández, 2020). Thus, to effectively implement a strategy, an organisation must employ agile and competent employees, and provide them with the necessary training and development to adapt to an ever-changing environment.

Leading on from this, it is important to note that when an organisation improves its strategy implementation skills, it enables the organisation to make the most of its current resources and capabilities. It thereby reduces costs and provides more value to its customers. As strategy implementation capabilities are rare, it can provide the organisation with a competitive edge (Herhausen, De Luca & Weibel, 2018; Jarzabkowski and Bednarek, 2018; Li, Sun & Dong, 2018).

Corporate culture is also a KSFs in strategy implementation (Vigfússon et al., 2021). Each organisation has a distinctive culture. This refers to the values, attitudes and traditions, embodied by the organisation's leadership, that underlie

its behaviour, styles and practices. It is important to note that an organisation's culture is influenced by actions, policies, procedures, the atmosphere, interactions, peer pressure and rewards and traditions (David and David, 2017; Rothaermel, 2017; Thompson et al., 2018; Wheelen et al., 2018; Canic, 2020).

To institutionalise the values and ethics, organisations must employ only those candidates who will fit into the culture, and partly evaluate employees' performance based on their ability to live the values. The organisation's leadership must share regular communication and engagement regarding the values at all levels and they are expected to be role models (David and David, 2017; Rothaermel, 2017; Thompson et al., 2018; Canic, 2020; Copper, 2021).

The organisation's culture must encourage attitudes and behaviours that are in sync with its selected strategy, as this will align decision-making and actions, and boost motivation and buy-in. Aligning the culture with the strategy is the responsibility of the leadership and the better they embed strategy supportive behaviours, the less supervision is required, as the culture will steer employees in the right direction (David and David, 2017; Thompson et al., 2018; Wheelen et al., 2018; Canic, 2020; Copper, 2021).

If a culture is not conducive to the strategy, the leadership within the organisation must fix it immediately. The leadership must clearly outline the desired behaviours and communicate with employees to persuade them to embrace the new culture. The leadership can take both substantive and symbolic action to endorse the change. The best substantive way for management to do this is to replace employees in leadership positions that do not embrace the new culture. Organisations can promote and reward employees that are at the forefront of the change. Organisations can also provide cultural training and align all their policies and procedures with the strategy. In terms of symbolic actions, the leaders must lead by example, and they can hold ceremonies to honour employees that live the values (David and David, 2017; Rothaermel, 2017; Thompson et al., 2018; Wheelen et al., 2018).

As mentioned above, culture is the embodiment of the organisation's leadership. In line with this, Vigfússon et al. (2021) have discovered various references to leadership as a KSFs in strategy implementation.

For an organisation to effectively implement its strategy, senior management must take the lead and personal responsibility. The leadership must monitor progress, apply constructive pressure and take remedial actions (Dalton, 2016; David and David, 2017; Selvarajah and Meyer, 2017; Thompson et al., 2018; Wheelen et al., 2018; Canic, 2020).

It is the leadership's responsibility to mobilise the organisation to drive strategy implementation. This can be done by applying constructive pressure. Constructive pressure can be enhanced by considering employees to be valued partners and using people management practices to energise employees. Empowering employees to make their own decisions and engaging with employees can create constructive pressure. Constructive pressure can also be applied through setting stretch objectives, benchmarking, celebrating success and applying negative consequences when necessary (Elbanna and Fadol, 2016; Henry, Buyl & Jansen, 2019; Kan, Chung & Chung, 2019).

2.2.2.2   *Obstacles in implementing the strategy*

It is important to note that if the KSFs of strategy implementation, as set out above, are not considered, it could produce obstacles in implementing the strategy. Thus, in the discussion below, regarding obstacles in implementing the strategy, the inverse of KSFs will not be discussed.

Cândido and Santos (2019) have identified obstacles related to strategy implementation which were cited in literature from 1970 to 2016. They identify various categories of obstacles. The most frequently cited are culture and climate, leadership, communication and perceptions, participation and involvement, resources, and performance management.

When looking at culture and climate, it is important to note that when an organisation implements mere cosmetic values to create a positive image for

outside parties, it will lead to a weak organisational culture (Thompson et al., 2018). On the one hand, a weak or unhealthy organisational culture can seriously impede strategy implementation. Weak cultures lack strong common values, principles and norms, and can lead to misalignment (Thompson et al., 2018). On the other hand, if a strong culture is not aligned with the strategy, it can be a significant liability. Strategy must precede culture. If the organisation's culture is not conducive to the strategy, it must be changed (Groysberg, Lee, Price, Yo & Cheng, 2018; Kaul, 2018). Thus, it is not about having a textbook culture, but rather the right culture to support the organisation's strategy.

Being tradition bound and having paradigm persistence are obstacles related to culture and climate (Cândido and Santos, 2015). Some cultures stress flexibility while others favour stability. Employees in inflexible cultures are prone to prioritise innovation, openness and diversity. In stable cultures, employees are inclined to follow rules, use control structures and strive for efficiency, which are all positives in terms of strategy implementation (Groysberg et al., 2018). However, when consistent cultures are also change-resistant cultures, employees fear and are sceptic of any form of change that could prevent implementing a new strategy (Brozovic, 2018; Lanzolla, Pesce & Tucci, 2021). Authoritative cultures can improve the speed of decision-making, especially in a crisis (Groysberg et al., 2018) but in the long-term, it can lead to internal politics, where employees drive their own agenda, redirecting their energy away from the vision of the organisation (Dalton, 2016). Because of this, organisations can fall back on an authoritative culture in an emergency; however, to ensure effective strategy implementation, it is not ideal.

There are various forms of unhealthy organisation cultures that present unhealthy and counterproductive traits that can be a barrier to strategy implementation. In organisations that have an inwardly focused culture, employees believe that they have all the answers, and neglect customer wants and needs. This type of organisation also underestimates the potential of its rivals, which can reduce its competitiveness in the future (Dalton, 2016). Unethical cultures are characterised by unethical standards and are driven by greed and ego-indulgent behaviours,

which could threaten the long-term sustainability of the organisation (Ding, Mo & Zhong, 2017). When an organisation has clashing subcultures, it will be difficult for them to align its strategy implementation efforts throughout the organisation (Latukha, 2018; Thompson et al., 2018). Therefore, an unhealthy culture can handicap strategy implementation.

It is difficult to exaggerate the significant impact leadership has on culture. The nature and actions of top executives have a penetrating effect on culture (Groysberg et al., 2018). If leadership is weak, lack emotional maturity and feel out of their depth, it can have a grave impact not only on culture but also on strategy implantation, as they are incapable of distinguishing between worthwhile and ill-advised ideas (Dalton, 2016; Thompson et al., 2018). Additionally, a lack of leadership buy-in into the strategy and necessary changes results in insufficient support from leadership related to the changes and gives mixed messages to employees (Rampe and Elliott, 2016; Copper, 2021). As mixed messages from leadership regarding the changes could confuse employees as to what is expected of them in terms of the strategy, it could frustrate strategy implementation.

Issues related to communication and perceptions, and participation and involvement were covered under section 2.2.2.1 (KSFs of strategy implementation) and will be discussed further under section 2.2.4 (the importance of strategic communication).

Concerning resources, Cândido and Santos (2019) specially identified limited resources as an obstacle. A lack of funding and resources can obstruct the strategy implementation process (Albrecht, 2017; Brozovic, 2018; Knight, Megicks, Agarwal & Leenders, 2019). However, Kor, Mahoney, Siemsen and Tan (2016) believe that the size of the capital requirement can be mitigated by competent leadership. Additionally, resource allocation that is based on political or personal preferences can lead to a waste of resources and reduce strategic performance (David and David, 2017; Thompson et al., 2018). For that reason, even if strategy implementation is inhibited by a lack of resources, it can be

overcome by capable leaders. Thus, it would seem that a lack of resources is not the real problem, but rather a lack of adept leadership.

Performance management can be negatively impacted by organisational motivational tactics that create too much stress, through excessive competitiveness and fear, which can be counterproductive (Thompson et al., 2018). When organisations emphasise the hours worked rather than the results achieved, employees who achieve better results in less time will become demotivated and organisations will struggle to retain efficient employees (Rampe and Elliott, 2016).

In an article, Vigfússon et al. (2021) list not only success factors of strategy implementation and how often it has been cited in research from 1980 to 2020, but also obstacles to strategy implementation. Although the majority of these obstacles are similar to those raised by Cândido and Santos (2019) above, other obstacles can be looked at.

The most cited obstacle identified by Vigfússon et al. (2021), in line with various KSFs, is a lack of clearly defined goals and tasks. Vague and general KPIs that are chosen from a standard list, rather than through engagement with employees, can prevent employees from taking ownership of their KPIs (Dalton, 2016; David and David, 2017).

"No guidelines to implement" is also identified by Vigfússon et al. (2021: 41) as an obstacle to strategy implementation. When managers see new initiatives as only the "new flavour of the month" and not as an integral part of strategy implementation, it can produce strategy-blind activities that lead nowhere (Thompson et al., 2018). This can lead to an organisation not adapting or abandoning current policies and procedures and that does not support the strategy, which sends out a mixed message to employees who must implement the strategy (Thompson et al., 2018; Wheelen et al., 2018). Rigidity, on the other hand, can also impact the flexibility of the strategy implementation process, which in turn can negatively impact making corrective adjustments (Dalton, 2016; Brozovic, 2018). Consequently, strategy implementation can be impeded by not

having clear guidelines on how to implement the strategy, not updating outdated policies and procedures, or implementing policies and procedures that are too restrictive.

Another obstacle identified by Vigfússon et al. (2021) is a lack of time. A lack of time to reflect on mistakes and analyse data severely impacts organisational learning, which in turn can lead to inefficient strategy implementation (Middleton, Hall, Muir & Raeside, 2018). Therefore, not making enough time to focus on strategy implementation can hinder overall strategy implementation.

Vigfússon et al. (2021) also identify limited alignment and coordination as an obstacle to strategy implementation. An organisation must decide how much authority will be delegated. It is important to note that decentralised decision-making empowers employees that are nearest to and have the greatest understanding of a situation to make in the moment decisions (Herhausen, De Luca & Weibel, 2018; Jarzabkowski and Bednarek, 2018; Li et al., 2018). However, this freedom should be governed by policies, procedures and interdepartmental coordination (Rothaermel, 2017; Canic, 2020; Morrow and Mowatt, 2020). If an organisation's communication structures, responsibility and decision-making are not aligned, it creates bureaucratic waste, political manipulation and administrative chaos (Thompson et al., 2018; Weiser, 2021). As a consequence, misalignment hampers strategy implementation.

2.2.3. Strategic alignment

2.2.3.1 *The significance of strategic alignment*

The overarching objective of strategic management is to unify and align all activities to ensure the best performance at all levels in the organisation (Rothaermel, 2017). Herd, Shuck and Githens (2018) believe that in the academic field of strategic management, the word "alignment", although used in various contexts, refers to a desired state where an organisation achieves positive outcomes. Guerra-López (2018), however, emphasises that it is a dynamic state and Hicks (2016) supports this by stating that it is a dynamic process that must constantly adapt to keep abreast with changes to create value for its

stakeholders. As a result, as an organisation's environment changes, an organisation must realign to reach its goals.

Strategic alignment aims to create a fit between both the internal and the external environment, and the internal business units, internal resources and the strategic goals (Hicks, 2016; Guerra-López, 2018; Ling, 2019). External alignment is done to create congruence between the organisation and its business environment, which includes laws, government policies, the needs of the customer, technology advancements, economic conditions and competitors (Guerra-López, 2018; Ling, 2019; Busco and Sofra, 2021). Internal alignment focuses on joining everything the organisation uses and does to optimise its resources and capabilities to reach its strategic goals (Kaufman, 2017; Guerra-López, 2018; Mavis, Richter, Landau, Schmidt, Simmons & Steinbock, 2019). In line with the research question and objectives, the focus will be on internal alignment.

2.2.3.2 *Strategic alignment processes*

If all employees have the same interpretation of what the organisation's goals are and how to achieve them, a culture of alignment and strategic coherence is created. A culture of alignment starts on an individual level and broadens to include all teams and all levels in the organisation that will enable the organisation to align actions across levels and functions (Herd et al., 2018; Mavis et al., 2019). On an individual level, employees must understand how they contribute to the organisation's success. This motivates employees as they understand how valuable their role is (Herd et al., 2018; Mavis et al., 2019). Strategic consistency is reached when an organisation has continuity between various strategic activities. If activities are consistent, it will better enable an organisation to create a competitive advantage (Mavis et al., 2019). Alignment can thus not be done in isolation or seen as a one-time event, but it must be viewed as a continuous comprehensive organisational process.

Alignment is not fundamentally present in all organisations and an organisation must purposefully use the appropriate means and interventions, such as programmes and projects, to enable employees to cooperate in a focused way

and achieve the strategic ends (Hicks, 2016; Guerra-López, 2018). Hicks (2016) emphasises the fact that strategic alignment cannot secure success, but that it is only one of several interments used by effective leadership (Kaufman, 2017) that can help organisations to obtain and sustain a competitive advantage. Therefore, to create alignment, leadership must actively drive the process in conjunction with other strategic processes.

There are various opinions regarding what takes preference when aligning an organisation. Demartini and Taticchi (2021), Wolff-Bye (2021), Taylor (2021) and Sacher and Lal (2017) concentrate on aligning the culture of the organisation with the strategy, which includes stakeholder buy-in, by creating a common purpose. Zhao, Fisher, Lounsbury and Miller (2017) and Baik, Kim and Park (2021) highlight the structure, whereas Ling (2019) and Bendickson, Gur and Taylor (2018) focus mainly on capabilities. Martínez-Romero, Rojo-Ramírez and Casado-Belmonte (2020) and Guerra-López (2018), on the other hand, accentuate the need for measurement and incentives to drive alignment. Others take a broader view. Amoo et al. (2019) include both culture and structure, and David and David (2017) and Rothaermel (2017) embrace culture and measurement and incentives. Wheelen et al. (2018), Copper (2021) and Thompson et al. (2018) take a much more comprehensive view and incorporate most of the elements within the strategy implementation process (Table 2.2). This is in line with Canic's (2020) findings. He found that it is not only one thing that is done by an organisation that ensures success, but everything – every decision and every action. Effective implementation is a methodical process to align everything with the vision, as "the whole is truly greater than the sum of its parts" (Canic, 2020). Consequently, everything done during the alignment process creates synergy; if certain elements are neglected, it can reduce the effect of the other elements.

Although strategic power can be delegated to other levels in the organisation, strategic power is primarily seated at the head of the organisation (Dalton, 2016). Therefore, strategic alignment merits the exhaustive focus of senior managers (Thompson et al., 2018) and it is senior management's responsibility to use

processes to achieve this (Wheelen et al., 2018). For this reason, it can be deduced that even though senior management can delegate the authority to align the strategy within the organisation, senior management must take ultimate responsibility for it.

To align strategy, Dalton (2016) proposes using John Kotter's process for leading change. Kotter's (1995) model consists of eight steps to drive and align any changes that must be made organisation-wide. Step one is to create a sense of urgency. Step two is to form a guiding coalition. Step three is to create a vision to give direction and develop strategies to achieve this vision. Step four is to communicate the vision. Step five is to enable others to pursue the vision. Step six is to generate short-term wins. Step seven is to consolidate improvements and accelerate the change. Step eight is to institutionalise the change.

Copper (2021), however, thinks that various change management methods can help an organisation to achieve alignment, but emphasises having change agents, building expertise and leadership throughout the organisation and developing a plan. Accordingly, it is the opinion of the researcher that various credible change management processes can be used to align the strategy within an organisation.

One such change management model is the ADKAR model. The ADKAR model is outcome-orientated and consists of five goals (Hiatt, 2006). The first goal, awareness, is to create understanding regarding the nature of the change and why the change is important. The second goal, desire, is to motivate employees so that they want to make the change. The third goal, knowledge, is to inform, train and educate employees on how to change. The fourth goal, ability, is to realise the change by turning the knowledge into action. The fifth and final goal, reinforcement, is to strengthen the change made through internal and external reinforcements.

2.2.4. The importance of strategic communication

Successful strategic communication helps employees make sense of the organisation's strategy and create shared meaning to align the attitudes and values of employees, thereby improving consensus around the strategy and the effectiveness of the implementation process (Amoo et al., 2019). Talking about and distributing documents about the strategy throughout the organisation helps an organisation to align its strategy implementation. Although some managers might have personal agendas, communication from senior management can overcome this by addressing the whole organisation through presentations and official communique distributed through various communication channels. This will directly link senior management's perception of the strategy with the perception of all employees (Ocasio, Laamanen & Vaara, 2018), as a lack of transparency can lead to misalignment (Kambla, 2017). There are various communication aids that senior management can use to align strategy within the organisation, such as analogies (Ott, Eisenhardt & Bingham, 2017), stories (Copper, 2021), visualising the strategy (Knight, Paroutis & Heracleous, 2018) and structured training (Edwards, 2018). Guerra-López (2018) also highlights the use of a performance measurement system to communicate the organisation's intent in terms of its strategy, as monitoring the correct indicators gives managers and employees a platform to communicate priorities and expectations. This will lead to better strategy implementation and alignment. Thus, strategic communication from senior management to employees, whether in the form of presentations, written communication, training or a performance management system, will help an organisation to effectively realise its vision.

In terms of the change that the strategy implementation process brings, senior management needs to engage with and understand stakeholders to align the organisation's strategy (Ahmed, Kumar & Kumar, 2018; Copper, 2021). Executing the strategy depends on employees. For this reason, an organisation must engage employees' hearts and minds to create not only buy-in but also want-in. To achieve this, an organisation must treat their employees as individual human beings who can contribute to the strategy implementation process (Canic,

2020) by building a trust relationship (Thompson et al., 2018) through engagement, which will improve motivation and productivity (Guerra-López, 2018). Employee engagement can be attained through surveys, one-on-ones, meetings and events (Canic, 2020; Copper, 2021). Therefore, communication is a two-way street: not only is strategic communication from senior management to employees important, but communication from employees back to management also plays a vital role in effective strategy implantation and alignment.

It is important to note that even though communication is important in strategy implementation and alignment, actions speak louder than words (Rothaermel, 2017; Canic, 2020). Mavis et al. (2019) argue that alignment between an organisation's communication and actions creates both legitimacy and performance. Strategic integrity emphasises words over deeds. Alignment between an organisation's stated intentions and its actions increases the credibility and trustworthiness of the organisation in the eyes of the stakeholders. Stakeholders respond negatively if strategic integrity is absent. Consequently, organisations can communicate and engage with stakeholders until the cows come home, but if they do not put their money where their mouth is, they will not reap the rewards.

2.3. Conclusion

The review of the various concepts, theories and models related to the research question and objectives was done to provide a solid academic foundation for the research to be conducted.

Firstly, the concept of strategic management was defined to create a clear understanding of what strategic management is and where the focus will lie in terms of this research. Various processes of strategy implementation were examined, and essential elements in the strategy implementation process were identified to guide and give structure to the research. KSFs and obstacles of strategy implementation were identified to stress important aspects related to the strategy implementation process. The significance of strategic alignment and

strategic alignment processes was considered to create a clear understanding of its role in successful strategy implementation. Lastly, the importance of strategic communication was investigated to establish a thorough grasp of the vital function it plays within strategy implementation and alignment.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1.   Introduction

Research methodology is the holistic process used to carry out the research; it dictates the principles, tools, procedures and methods used (Apuke, 2017; Geetanjali and Jayanth, 2019; Leedy and Ormrod, 2019; Mukhergee, 2020). The research methodology, as set out in this chapter, based on the nature of the research question, provided the foundation for the research conducted, determined the methods used and provided the necessary guidance and direction (Mukhergee, 2020). It sets out the procedure used to collect the data, the type and amount of data that were collected, how the data were analysed, as well as the limitations, reliability, validity and ethical considerations of the research (Geetanjali and Jayanth, 2019; Joshi, 2019; Leedy and Ormrod, 2019; Mukherjee, 2020). This study was part of a larger research study that was conducted at UNISA SBL.

3.2.   Research design

There are two main research designs, namely qualitative design and quantitative design (Leedy and Ormrod, 2019).

Qualitative research deals with characteristics that are difficult to reduce to numerical values (Geetanjali and Jayanth, 2019; Leedy and Ormrod, 2019) and analyses the complexity of a certain phenomenon (Leedy and Ormrod, 2019). Qualitative research is based on the principle that the world is unusable and that everyone reacts differently to a situation (Geetanjali and Jayanth, 2019). Qualitative research is usually used to research complicated human conditions (Leedy and Ormrod, 2019) and focuses more on the individual than on generalisation (Geetanjali and Jayanth, 2019).

In contrast, quantitative research deals with measurable characteristics and statistically analysing variables within certain parameters (Geetanjali and Jayanth, 2019; Leedy and Ormrod, 2019). Quantitative research is based on the principle that the world is stable (Geetanjali and Jayanth, 2019) and that

numerical values can be used to explain worldly phenomena (Apuke, 2017; Leedy and Ormrod, 2019). Quantitative research focuses on the who, what, where, when and how many (Apuke, 2017) in order to apply it to other worldly phenomena (Zyphur and Pierides, 2017).

Although qualitative and quantitative research have some similarities, there are various differences between the two (Table 3) and each individual design is better suited to address specific problems (Leedy and Ormrod, 2019). As the research conducted was focused on testing a theory, through corroboration and verification rather than on building a theory and through examination and deciphering, a quantitative research approach was used.

Descriptive research is aimed at gathering information on a current state to establish a profile of circumstances or people (Rahi, 2017). Thus, as the research question and objectives are directed at understanding the current perceptions of strategic management within the organisation, this research will be classified as descriptive.

A deductive approach was used, as quantitate research usually depends on deductive reasoning (Table 3). The deductive reasoning in this research is based on the premise that strategic alignment plays a vital role in strategy implementation, as per the literature review in Chapter 2, from which logical conclusions will be drawn. Deductive reasoning relies on objectivity in terms of data analysis and criteria to assess outcomes and predetermined statistical procedures, as set out below (Leedy and Ormrod, 2019).

Table 3.1: Differences between qualitative and quantitative methods (Apuke, 2017; Leedy and Ormrod, 2019)

	Qualitative	Quantitative
Purpose	• Depict and explain • Examine and decipher • Build theory	• Explain and predict • Corroborate and verify • Test theory
Process	• Comprehensive • Unknown variables • Adaptable guidelines • Emergent methods • Context-bound • Personal perspective	• Concentrated • Known variables • Fixed guidelines • Predetermined methods • Context-free to a degree • Detached perspective
Data Collection	• Text- and/or image-based information • Informative, small sample • Broadly structured/ unstandardised observations and interviews	• Numerical data • Representative, large sample • Standardised instruments
Data Analysis	• Coding for categories • Potentially subjective and biased • Inductive reasoning	• Statistical analysis • Emphasis on objectivity • Deductive reasoning
Report Findings	• Words • Narrative, individual quotes • Visual, nonnumerical graphics • Personal, literary style	• Numbers • Amassed statistical data • Graphs • Formal, scientific style

3.3. Population

In research, a population refers to all the conceivable members of the target group being studied (Polonsky and Waller, 2019). Due to time constraints and the availability of resources, this study was conducted within the food manufacturing industry in one organisation, namely SOILL. The SOILL head office is based in Swellendam, and it has production facilities and offices across South Africa. It also has a processing plant in Mozambique. The population for this research consisted of all 509 employees at all of the organisation's branches, from senior management level to lower-level employees, in line with the research question

and objectives. As the population all originated from the same organisation and this research was aimed at describing a particular situation, this research was seen as a case study (Rahi, 2017).

3.4.   Sample size

A sample is selected from some members of the population for actual investigation or study (Yarahmadi, 2020). The sample was taken from only employees that had access to a company email address, due to the use of an electronic questionnaire. This meant that 69% of the employees in the organisation did not have an opportunity to take part in the study. These employees consisted of lower-level employees who, as a rule, have limited knowledge of strategy implementation in the organisation. As a result of the relatively small size of the organisation, all employees with an email address, a total of 157 employees, were included in the sample to try and secure the minimum prerequisite of 50 responses as required by UNISA SBL. The list of all the email addresses was provided by the Managing Director of the organisation. This list included only the name, surname and company email address of all 157 employees who have company email addresses. This list did not include the title of the employees, which was not necessary, as the respondents indicated their level and senior management or employee on the questionnaire itself.

3.5.   Sampling technique

The sampling technique determines who the data will be collected from to ensure that it is representative of the targeted population (Polonsky and Waller, 2019). In line with the research question and objectives, the sample was split into two groups, namely senior management and employees. Senior management consisted of 13 people with email addresses and employees of 144 people with email addresses. Thus, proportional stratified sampling was used as the two groups were unequal in size (Leedy and Ormrod, 2019). The organisation has 13 people with email addresses that belong to the group "senior management" and 144 people that with email addresses that belong to the group "employees". This gives us a ratio of 1:11. However, due to the relatively small size of the two

groups, all 13 people in the group "senior management" and all 144 people in the group "employees" will be invited to participate in the study, but their responses will be analysed within the ratio of 1:11.

3.6.   Unit of analysis

A unit of analysis must be defined to link a feasible explanation with the research in a case study (Lee and Saunders, 2017). The unit of analysis for this research was the perceptions of the senior management and employees regarding the quality of strategic management within one organisation, namely SOILL.

3.7.   Data collection tool

Selecting a suitable data collection tool is important to validate and ensure the reliability of the study (Mane and Nikam, 2019). This research was done as part of a larger study conducted at UNISA SBL. A standardised electronic questionnaire was designed and provided by the study leader in order to collect the necessary data relating to the perceived quality of strategic management within the organisation. See Annexure A for the complete questionnaire. Permission was obtained from the developer to use the questionnaire.

The questionnaire consisted of six sections.

Section 1 covered the particulars regarding the organisation and the respondent, and included questions regarding the type and core business of the organisation and the position and functional area of the participant. In line with the research question and objectives, the position of the participant in the organisation determined if the participant was placed in the group "senior manager" or in the group "employee".

Section 2 encompassed the quality of strategic management. This section consisted of 28 close-ended statements that focused on the activities associated with developing and implementing long-term plans. Participants had to indicate their agreement with each statement on a five-point Likert rating scale (1 =

strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neither agree or disagree; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree).

Section 3 focused on the tools of strategic management. This section listed 12 tools used during strategic management. Participants firstly had to indicate if the organisation made use of the specific strategic management tool, by answering yes or no, and secondly indicated, in their view, what value each tool contributes to strategic management on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is "no value whatsoever" and 5 is "can't live without it".

Section 4 concentrated on strategic decision-making and covered high-level decisions that involve the entire organisation and need significant financial and other resource commitments. This section consisted of ten close-ended statements, and participants had to indicate their agreement with each statement on a five-point Likert rating scale (1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neither agree or disagree; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree).

Section 5 centred around organisational performance. Participants had to consider, on a scale from 1 to 3 (1 = below industry average; 2 = about average; 3 = better than industry average) how their organisation's financial performance, growth in revenue and customer perception regarding their brand compared to the industry average over the last three years.

The following elements, although part of the questionnaire will not form part of the data analysis (Chapter 4) or conclusion and recommendations (Chapter 5), as it was not specifically identified as part of strategic management in the literature review.

- Section 2: 2.11; 2.19; 2.20; 2.21; 2.24 and 2.25.
- Section 3: 3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 3.4 and 3.7.
- Section 4: 4.2; 4.4; 4.6 and 4.9.

Responses from sections 2–5 were first separated into the two groups, "senior management" and "employees", in line with the first two research objectives, and then compared in line with the research question and third objective.

Section 6 collected personal particulars regarding the respondent. Although this formed part of the greater study done by UNISA SBL, which this research formed part of, it was not used for this research as the age, gender, highest qualification and ethnic group were irrelevant to the particular research question and objectives.

The questionnaire was accompanied by an information sheet (Annexure B) and informed consent (Annexure A), explaining the context and purpose of the study, as well as the permission received from the organisation's management to conduct the research within the organisation. Participants were also informed that they were under no obligation to complete the questionnaire, that all information would be treated as confidential, and that neither the individual nor the organisation would be identified in any reports or publications resulting from the research.

3.8.   Piloting of the questionnaire

To ensure that the instructions and questions of the questionnaire were clear and unambiguous, the questionnaire was sent to three colleagues to test before it was sent out to the participants in the study (Leedy and Ormrod, 2019; Mane and Nikam, 2019). This also confirmed that the data collected could be used to conduct the research and that the questionnaire was suitable to answer the research question and achieve the research objectives (Mane and Nikam, 2019).

3.9.   Distribution of questionnaire

The questionnaire was sent to all 157 employees within the organisation with email addresses. Each of the 157 employees received an email, together with the participant information sheet (Annexure B) and informed consent (Annexure A), as well as management's permission letter.

The email also contained the contact details of the study leader, and informed participants how to get feedback regarding the research. The email contained a link that the individual, if they chose to participate, could follow to complete the questionnaire.

3.10. Data collection

A total of 157 questionnaires were sent out and only 67 were completed within the allowed timeframe of 13 days, as stated in the email. The return rate was thus 42.7%. There could have been various valid reasons, as discussed under the limitations of this research (section 3.15) as to why some employees chose not to participate in the research.

Survey responses were collected directly online via Lime Survey by the leader of the larger research study that was conducted by UNISA SBL. Once the allowed time for participants to complete the questionnaire had expired, the relevant information was exported and sent to the respective individual researchers in the form of an MS Excel spreadsheet.

3.11. Data analysis

Data analysis requires a researcher to examine variables. These variables are attributes or qualities of people, items or circumstances so that we can have various values (Scherbaum and Shockley, 2015). For this study, primary numerical data were collected using a survey to establish the current perceptions of senior management and employees within the organisation.

To establish each group's perception of the quality of strategic management in the organisation, the responses of the categories, as specified by the Likert scale, were converted to percentages.

To compare the perceptions of the two groups, the t-test was used per element. The t-test is used to determine the difference between the means of two groups (Leedy and Ormrod, 2019; Mishra et al., 2019).

Thus, in order to analyse the data, predetermined descriptive quantitative analysis techniques with objective criteria were used. The data were first summarised and then patterns were identified and compared using deductive reasoning, based on the secondary data collected as part of the literature review in Chapter 2 in line with the research question and objectives, to draw logical

conclusions and to report findings (Rahi, 2017; Leedy and Ormrod, 2019; Mishra, Pandey, Singh, Gupta, Sahu & Keshri, 2019).

3.12. Data storage

A Microsoft Excel spreadsheet which contained the data collected as received from the study leader and the resulting analysis of data was stored on a secure drive for a period of five years, for safekeeping and future reference.

3.13. Validity and reliability

The quality of the data gathered through a survey depends on relevance, adequacy, accuracy and consistency, which is influenced by the design, reliability and validity of the questionnaire (Mukhergee, 2020). The validity and reliability of the assessment strategy were determined in line with the research question and objectives to ensure that the research and the conclusions drawn were credible (Leedy and Ormrod, 2019).

3.13.1. Validity

The degree to which the assessment strategy produced accurate information regarding the research question and objectives, which enabled the researcher to draw justifiable inferences, was based on the following validities (Leedy and Ormrod, 2019; Mukhergee, 2020):

- Face validity was ensured by including only statements relevant to the perception of strategic management in the questionnaire that could be answered by the participants, taking their level of understanding and communication abilities regarding their perception of strategic management into consideration.
- By ensuring that the questionnaire covered all the relevant parts of strategic management, which included developing and implementing a long-term plan, strategic management tools, strategic management decision-making and organisational performance, the content could be seen as valid.

- The construct validity was based on the fact that the questionnaire yielded plausible results regarding the perception of strategic management in the organisation.

Piloting of the questionnaire was also conducted, after which the questionnaire was carefully scrutinised to identify apparent or likely shortcomings (Leedy and Ormrod, 2019; Mukhergee, 2020).

3.13.2. Reliability

The reliability, or the consistency with which the questionnaire measured the perception of strategic management, was based on the following (Leedy and Ormrod, 2019; Mukhergee, 2020):

- The internal consistency, the degree to which the statements within the questionnaire yielded comparable results, was acceptable.
- The Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which measures internal consistency, was 0.85; as it was above 0.7, the questionnaire was reliably consistent (Blumberg, Cooper & Schindler, 2014).

3.14. Ethical considerations

Strict ethical guidelines were adhered to in order to ensure that all the legal and regulatory requirements were met, and that ethical and moral norms and practices were followed (Mukhergee, 2020).

No participants of this study endured any physical or psychological harm. As the research was conducted via an electronic survey, no participants were at any time subject to any physical harm. As the participants' responses were confidential, it could not result in any undue embarrassment. The fact that the research was confidential and measured the individual's perception of strategic management and not their knowledge of strategic management, together with the fact that research was voluntary and that the questionnaire took only 20 to 25 minutes to complete, implies that no participant experienced any loss of self-esteem or unusual stress (Leedy and Ormrod, 2019).

The fact that the participants were identified to participate in this study, as a result of their being employed by the organisation being studied and having access to a company email, meant that their participation in the study should have been seen as voluntary and participants should have provided informed consent to participate in the study (Leedy and Ormrod, 2019; Mukhergee, 2020). Participants were presented with an informed consent form (Annexure A). This informed them of the nature of the study, that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any point without any negative consequences. They received a guarantee that their responses would be anonymous and would remain confidential, together with the information of the researcher and contact details of the UNISA SBL study leader, should they have any queries. Participation was strictly voluntary and at no point did the organisation put any pressure on employees to participate (Leedy and Ormrod, 2019).

Participants' right to privacy was protected at all times and the nature and quality of individual participants' responses were kept confidential (Leedy and Ormrod, 2019; Mukhergee, 2020). All responses were anonymous and at no point did the organisation or any individual not part of the research have any access to an individual participants' responses or to the raw data received from the UNSA SBL study leader.

It should be noted that certain biases could have influenced the research (Leedy and Ormrod, 2019):

- As only employees that had access to a company email could participate in the study, 69% of the employees were unable to take part in this study. Even though these employees consisted of lower-level employees who generally have limited knowledge of strategy implementation in the organisation, it could have led to sampling bias and influenced the results of the study.

- Response bias could also have impacted the results, as respondents' perceptions are sometimes influenced by current events and personal motives.
- As the researcher has their own view on effective strategy implementation, which could result in researcher bias, it was important to curtail this through a systematic research design, review of the research by a supervisor and report on findings in a complete and honest fashion. At no point did the researcher fabricate any data.
- Instrumental bias was mediated through establishing the validity and reliability of the questionnaire.

The use of any other person's ideas or words, whether directly quoted or paraphrased, was fully acknowledged at all times (Leedy and Ormrod, 2019).

Any research done through UNISA SBL must be approved by the ethics committee. An ethical clearance certificate (Annexture C) was received to conduct this study, involving human participants, on 29 July 2021, before the commencement of the research.

3.15. Limitations of the research

The nature of the research methodology and that of the organisation resulted in the anticipation of the following limitations:

- Due to time constraints and the availability of resources, the study was conducted in only one organisation, within the food manufacturing industry.
- The researcher is an outside party and had limited access to confidential information and employees within the organisation.
- As a result of the use of an electronic survey, only employees with a company email address were able to receive the questionnaire. This meant that a large percentage of employees within the organisation was not granted an opportunity to complete the questionnaire, many of whom

were lower-level employees who generally have less access to information regarding strategic implementation in the organisation.

- As the researcher was not known to the employees in the organisation, some employees might have felt apprehensive to participate.

- Even though the email specifically stated that the information is confidential, employees might have been nervous to give their opinion about what is happening within the organisation out of fear of being exposed.

- Since the research was not a company initiative and the completion of the survey was not mandatory, some employees might have been indifferent towards the research and thus decided not to complete the questionnaire.

- Time constraints might also have played a role in employees' not participating in the research.

- As this research was a case study based on only one organisation, the results cannot be generalised.

3.16. Conclusion

This chapter outlined the research methodology used as foundation for the research conducted. A descriptive quantitative approach was used, as the research was aimed at gathering information on a current state to test a theory. The sample consisted of 157 employees within SOILL, and a questionnaire was distributed via email. Numerical data were analysed using descriptive statistical tests, which included calculating the mean and standard deviation. All validity, radiality and ethical issues were addressed to ensure the credibility of the research.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

The data analysis was done in line with the research objectives of the study, namely:

- To establish senior management's perceptions of the quality of strategic management in the organisation.
- To establish all employees' (excluding senior management) perceptions of the quality of strategic management in the organisation.
- To determine if there is alignment between senior management and that of the other employees regarding the perceived quality of strategic management.

4.2. Tests that were applied to measure the research objectives

As per Table 4.1, first, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which measures internal consistency, was calculated to establish whether the questionnaire was reliably consistent. Second, the responses were divided into two groups. The first group consisted of senior management, including directors, and the second group consisted of all employees, excluding senior management. Third, senior management's perception of the quality of strategic management in the organisation was established by calculating the percentages of each element under each section for senior management respondents. Fourth, all employees' perceptions of the quality of strategic management in the organisation were established by calculating the percentages of each element under each section for employee respondents. Lastly, the t-score for each element under each section was calculated to establish if there is a difference in perceptions of senior management and that of the other employees regarding the quality of strategic management in the organisation.

Table 4.1: Calculations used to analyse data for the study

Calculation	Measures	Reason for calculation	Criteria
Cronbach's alpha coefficient	Internal consistency	To establish whether the questionnaire was reliably consistent.	>0.7
Percentage	How many participants, out of a hundred, have the same view regarding a specific element?	To establish the perception of specific groups regarding a specific element.	Not applicable
T-test	The difference between the means of two groups.	To establish if there is a difference between the perception of two groups regarding a specific element.	<1.997

4.3.   Organisation and respondent particulars

The total responses for this study was 67. Figure 4.1 indicates that there were 12 senior managers, including directors, representing 17.9% of the respondents. This means that employees represent 82.1% of the respondents, consisting of middle managers (19.4%), entry-level managers (13.4%), professional specialists (14.9%), permanent employees (32.8%) and other (1.5%).

Table 4.2: Designation of respondents in the organisation

Designation	Frequency	Percentage
Other	1	1.5
Permanent employee	22	32.8
Professional specialist	10	14.9
Entry-level manager (e.g. supervisor)	9	13.4
Middle manager	13	19.4
Senior manager or executive	10	14.9
Director	2	3.0
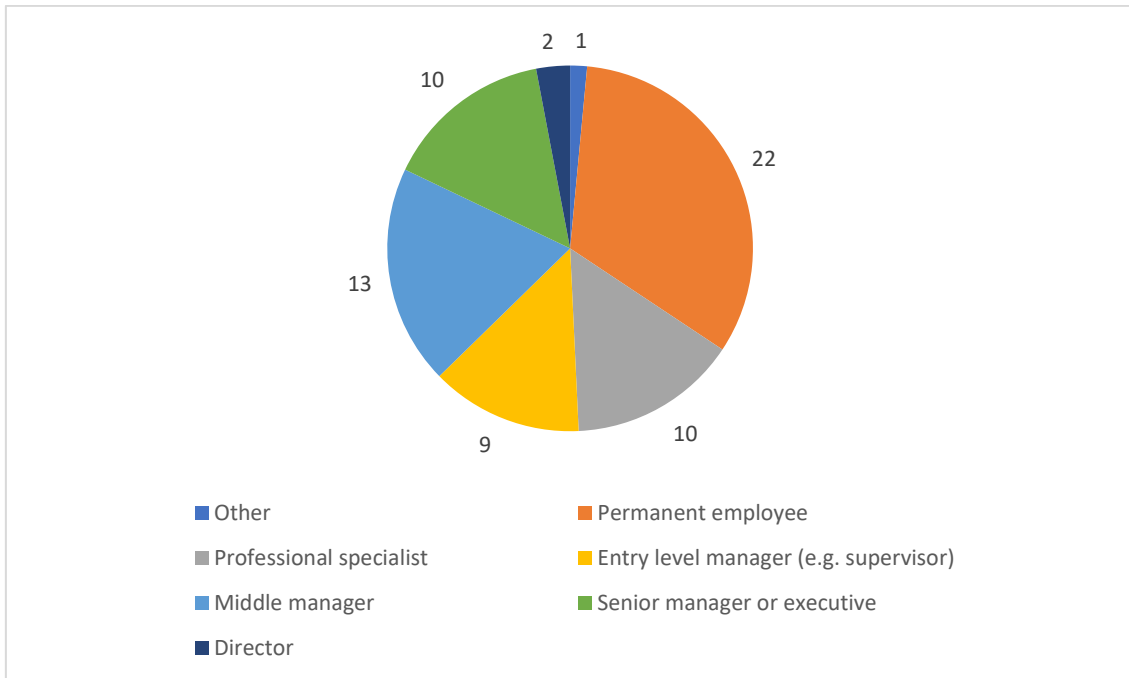
Figure 4.1: Designation of respondents in the organisation

4.4. Reliability of the questionnaire

As the different sections of the questionnaire use different variations of the Likert scale, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated for each section. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for section 3 was calculated in two parts, as the section used two different Likert scales. The average of the Cronbach's alpha of the various sections was then calculated to determine the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the questionnaire. Section 1 and 6 were excluded from the calculation. Section 1 does not use the Likert scale and it is only applicable to organisation and respondent particulars and not based on the perceptions of the participants. Section 6 does not use the Likert scale and is excluded from all calculations as it is applicable to only the personal particulars of the respondents, which is not relevant to the research.

Whether the questionnaire was reliably consistent was based on the total average of the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. According to Blumberg, Cooper and Schindler (2014), if the Cronbach's alpha coefficient is higher than 0.7, the questionnaire is internally consistent.

Table 4.3: Cronbach's alpha coefficient

Section	Cronbach's α
Section 2	0.96
Section 3A	0.89
Section 3B	0.95
Section 4	0.77
Section 5	0.67
Average	0.85

Table 4.2 shows that the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for section 2 is 0.96, which is higher than 0.7, thus section 2 is internally consistent. The first part of the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of section 3 is 0.89 and the second part is 0,95, also indicating that it is reliably consistent. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of section 4 is 0.77, which proves that it is internally consistent. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient (0.67) of section five is below the required maximum of 0.7. It is thus not reliably consistent, and the data collected from section 5 will not be used for this study. The overall average Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the questionnaire is 0.85, which is above the required maximum of 0.7 and therefore the questionnaire is overall reliably consistent.

4.5. Abbreviations and symbols

The following abbreviations or symbols will be used within the tables for this study:

- SD – Strongly disagree
- D – Disagree
- N A/D – Neither agree nor disagree
- A – Agree
- SA – Strongly agree
- R – Responses
- % – Percentage
- NVW – No value whatsoever
- NV – No value

- N – Neutral
- V – Valuable
- CLWI – Can't live without it

4.6.   Senior management's perceptions of the quality of strategic management in the organisation

Firstly, the perception of senior management regarding the quality of strategic management in the organisation was established. This was done per section within the questionnaire.

4.6.1. Section 2: Quality of strategic management

In interpreting the responses, the cumulative percentage of agreed and strongly agreed were combined and, similarly, the response percentages for disagree and strongly disagree, which are regarded as general disagreement.

Table 4.4: Senior management's perception of the quality of strategic management – 90.0% and more agreement

Element	SD		D		N A/D		A		SA	
	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%
2.14 We have a clear long-term strategy.	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	9	75.0	3	25.0
2.2 Our organisation has a clear vision for the future.	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	50.0	6	50.0
2.4 Our strategic decisions create value for the owners/shareholders of the organisation.	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	33.3	8	66.7
2.13 Strategy implementation is regarded as a very important function in our organisation.	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	8.3	7	58.3	4	33.3
2.1 Our organisation has clear long-term (3 years +) objectives.	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	8.3	4	33.3	7	58.3
2.6 Our organisation is focused on a few key performance indicators to track our progress with implementation.	0	0.0	1	8.3	0	0.0	9	75.0	2	16.7
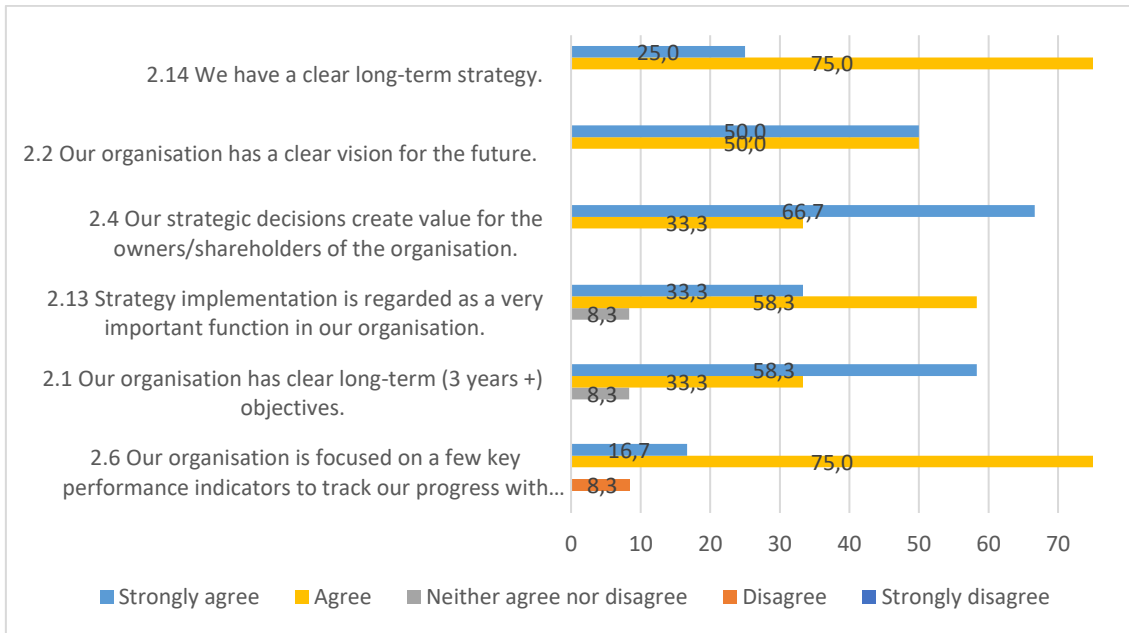
Figure 4.2: Senior management's perception of the quality of strategic management – 90.0% and more agreement

Figure 4.2 indicates the highest rated elements of the quality of strategic management in SOILL according to senior management. Out of ten, all ten (100.0%) felt that they have a clear long-term strategy, their organisation has a clear vision for the future and that their strategic decisions create value for the owners/shareholders of the organisation. It further shows that 91.7% agreed that strategy implementation is regarded as a very important function in their organisation, their organisation has clear long-term (3 years +) objectives and their organisation is focused on a few KPIs to track their progress with implementation. A total of 8.3% were neutral regarding whether strategy implementation is regarded as a very important function in their organisation and their organisation has clear long-term (3 years +) objectives. A total of 8.3% disagreed that their organisation is focused on a few KPIs to track their progress with implementation.

Table 4.5: Senior management's perception of the quality of strategic management – between 80.0% and 89.9% agreement

Element	SD		D		N A/D		A		SA	
	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%
2.18 Our strategies are aligned well with our external environment.	0	0.0	1	8.3	1	8.3	7	58.3	3	25.0
2.3 Our strategic decisions are always in line with our vision for the future.	0	0.0	1	8.3	1	8.3	6	50.0	4	33.3
2.7 The leadership of our organisation is visibly committed to successfully implementing our strategy.	0	0.0	1	8.3	1	8.3	8	66.7	2	16.7
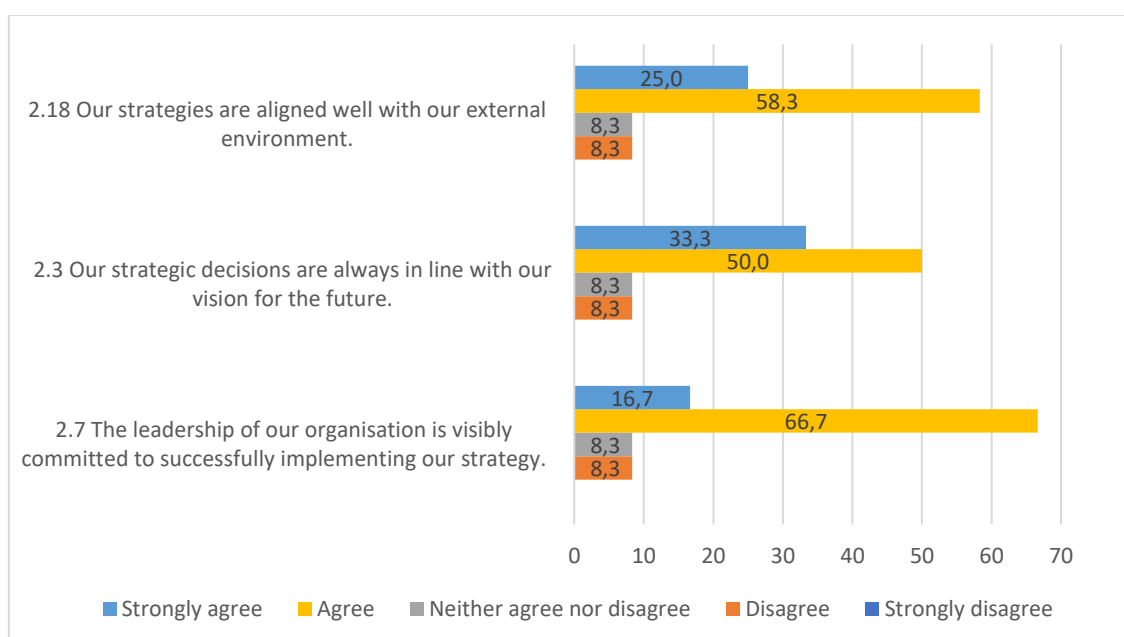
Figure 4.3: Senior management's perception of the quality of strategic management – between 80.0% and 89.9% agreement

Figure 4.3 shows that 83.3% of senior management respondents agreed that their strategies are aligned well with their external environment, their strategic decisions are always in line with their vision for the future and that the leadership of their organisation is visibly committed to successfully implementing their

strategy. A total of 8.3% neither agreed nor disagreed that their strategies are aligned well with their external environment, their strategic decisions are always in line with their vision for the future and that the leadership of their organisation is visibly committed to successfully implementing strategy. Another 8.3% disagreed that their strategies are aligned well with their external environment, their strategic decisions are always in line with their vision for the future and the leadership of their organisation is visibly committed to successfully implementing their strategy.

Table 4.6: Senior management's perception of the quality of strategic management – between 70.0% and 79.9% agreement

Element	SD		D		N A/D		A		SA	
	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%
2.16 We are constantly measuring our progress with strategy implementation.	0	0.0	1	8.3	2	16.7	9	75.0	0	0.0
2.22 We are quick to respond to important changes in our environment.	1	8.3	1	8.3	1	8.3	7	58.3	2	16.7
2.23 Our strategic decisions ensure our organisation's sustainability for the future.	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	25.0	8	66.7	1	8.3
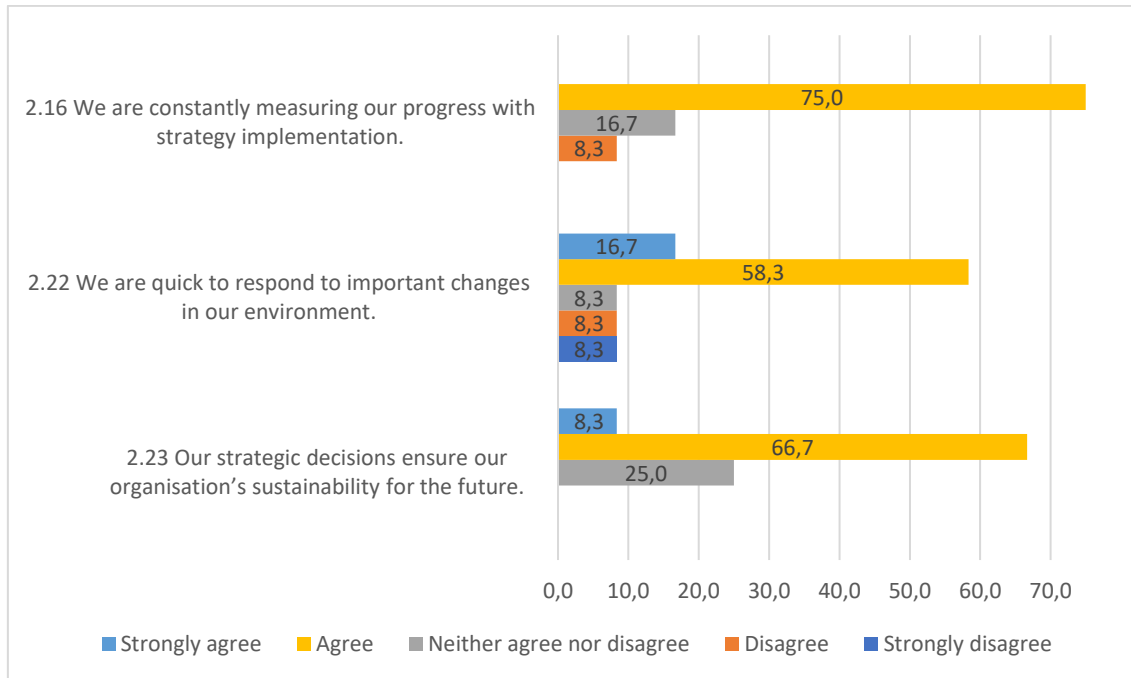
Figure 4.4: Senior management's perception of the quality of strategic management – between 70.0% and 79.9% agreement

Figure 4.4 indicates that three quarters (75.0%) concurred that they are constantly measuring their progress with strategy implementation, they are quick to respond to important changes in their environment and their strategic decisions ensure their organisation's sustainability for the future. Between one and two out of ten (25.0%) were undecided on whether their strategic decisions ensure their organisation's sustainability for the future. A total of 16.7% were unsure and 8.3% disagreed with whether they are constantly measuring their progress with strategy implementation. On the other hand, 8.3% were unsure regarding and 16.7% disagreed that they are quick to respond to important changes in their environment.

Table 4.7: Senior management's perception of the quality of strategic management – between 50.0% and 59.9% agreement

Element	SD		D		N A/D		A		SA	
	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%
2.12 We have the right competencies in place to successfully implement our strategy.	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	41.7	7	58.3	0	0.0
2.26 Several departments get together regularly to plan responses to changes taking place in our business environment.	0	0.0	3	25.0	2	16.7	5	41.7	2	16.7
2.5 We almost always achieve our long-term objectives.	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	41.7	6	50.0	1	8.3
2.8 The culture in our organisation strongly supports our strategic direction.	0	0.0	2	16.7	4	33.3	5	41.7	1	8.3
2.9 Our internal organisation structure supports our strategic direction.	0	0.0	3	25.0	3	25.0	6	50.0	0	0.0
2.28 We are proactive in addressing anticipated changes in our business environment.	0	0.0	4	33.3	2	16.7	5	41.7	1	8.3
2.17 Our strategies are acceptable to all key internal stakeholders.	0	0.0	5	41.7	1	8.3	5	41.7	1	8.3
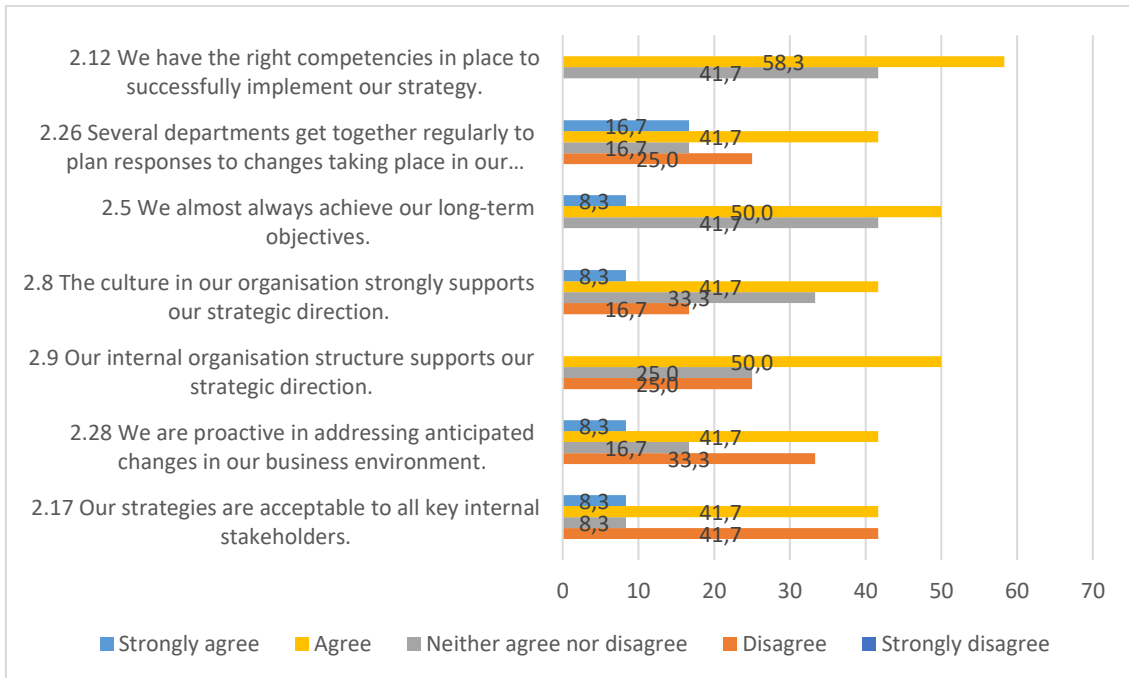
Figure 4.5: Senior management's perception of the quality of strategic management – between 50.0% and 59.9% agreement

Figure 4.5 shows that out of ten participants, approximately six (58.3%) were in agreement that they have the right competencies in place to successfully implement their strategy, several departments get together regularly to plan responses to changes taking place in their business environment and that they almost always achieve their long-term objectives. A total of 41.7% nonetheless wavered regarding whether they have the right competencies in place to successfully implement their strategy and whether they almost always achieve their long-term objectives. A total of 16.6% were indecisive and 25.0% contradicted the fact that several departments get together regularly to plan responses to changes taking place in their business environment.

Half (50.0%) of senior management concurred that the culture in their organisation strongly supports their strategic direction, their internal organisation structure supports their strategic direction, they are proactive in addressing anticipated changes in their business environment and their strategies are acceptable to all key internal stakeholders. Of the participants, 33.3% were irresolute and 16.7% were at odds with the fact that the culture in their

organisation strongly supports their strategic direction. Half (50.0%) were either hesitant or did not agree that their internal organisation structure supports the strategic direction of the company. Of the participants, 16.7% neither agreed nor disagreed that they are proactive in addressing anticipated changes in their business environment and 33.3% disagreed. A total of 8.3% were unsure if their strategies are acceptable to all key internal stakeholders, whereas 41.7% disagreed.

Table 4.8: Senior management's perception of the quality of strategic management – between 20.0% and 49.9% agreement

| Element	SD		D		N A/D		A		SA	
	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%
2.27 The activities of different divisions in this organisation are well coordinated.	0	0.0	3	25.0	4	33.3	4	33.3	1	8.3
2.10 Our internal operating environment (processes and policies) supports strategy implementation.	0	0.0	3	25.0	5	41.7	4	33.3	0	0,0
2.15 Our organisation's strategy is clearly understood by most people in the organisation.	1	8.3	4	33.3	4	33.3	3	25.0	0	0.0
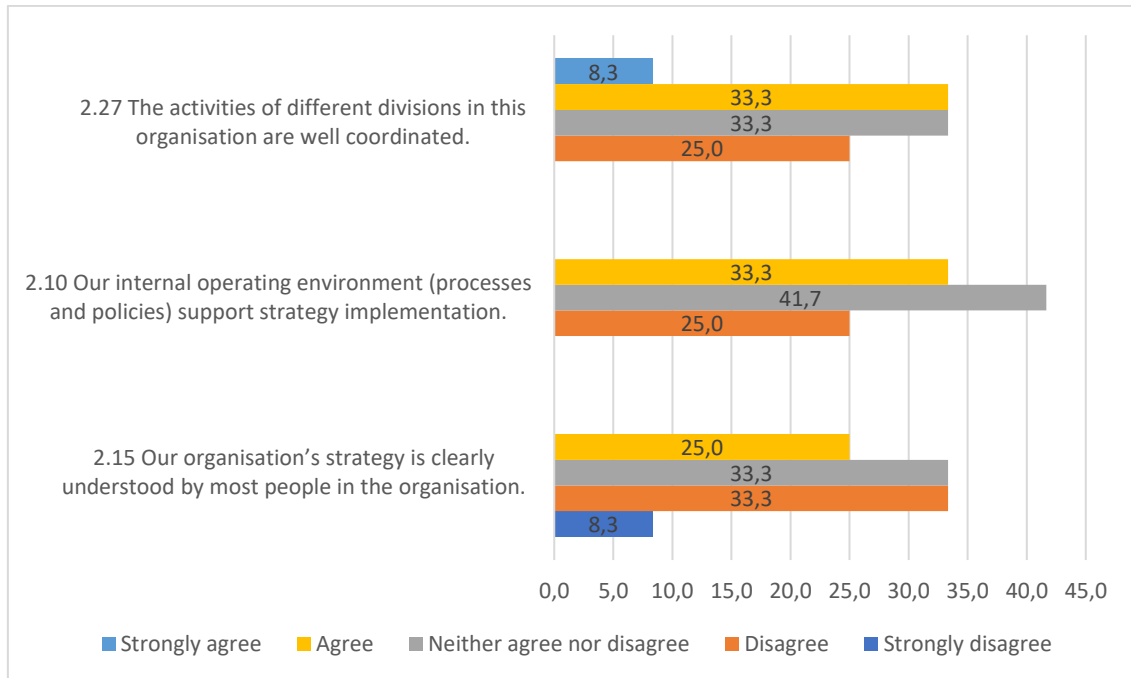
Figure 4.6: Senior management's perception of the quality of strategic management – between 20.0% and 49.9% agreement

Figure 4.6 indicates the lowest rated elements of the quality of strategic management in SOILL according to senior management. Only 41.7% agreed that the activities of different divisions in the organisation are well coordinated, 33.3% neither agreed nor disagreed and 25.0% disagreed. A third (33.3%) agreed that their internal operating environment (processes and policies) support strategy implementation, but 41.7% were unsure and 25.0% disagreed. Only a quarter (25.0%) were sure that their organisation's strategy is clearly understood by most people in the organisation. It was unclear to 33.3% if their organisation's strategy is clearly understood by most people in the organisation and 41.7% agreed that their organisation's strategy is not clearly understood by most people in the organisation.

4.6.2. Section 3: The tools of strategic management

Section 3 is divided into two parts, namely part A and part B, as the section used two different Likert scales.

4.6.2.1   *Section 3: The tools of strategic management (Part A)*

Part A focuses on whether respondents know if their organisation uses a specific strategic tool. Respondents were given a choice between "yes" and "no".

Table 4.9: Senior management's perception of strategic tools used in the organisation

Element	No		Yes	
	R	%	R	%
3.10 An organisation-wide performance management system	0	0.0	12	100.0
3.6 Balanced scorecard	2	16.7	10	83.3
3.12 Stakeholder engagement during the strategic planning and implementation	3	25.0	9	75.0
3.9 Regular reviews of progress with implementation	3	25.0	9	75.0
3.11 Implementation incentives or rewards	5	41.7	7	58.3
3.8 Executive Information Systems (EIS – e.g. performance dashboards for key performance metrics)	5	41.7	7	58.3
3.5 A formal process for strategy implementation	6	50.0	6	50.0
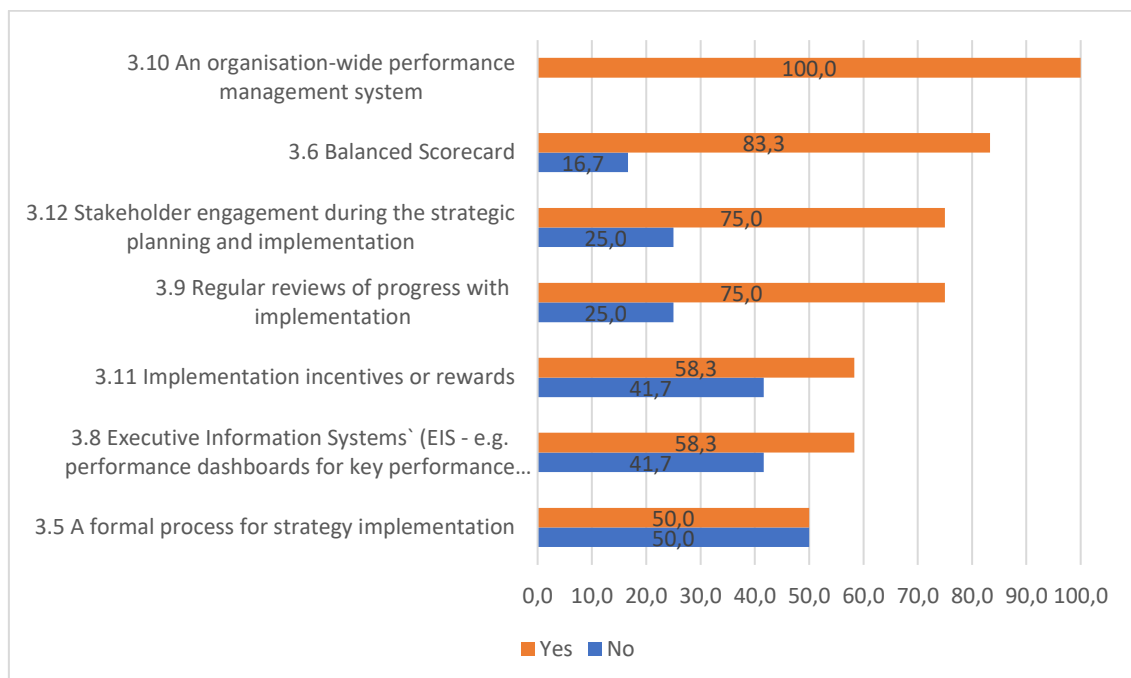
Figure 4.7: Senior management's perception of strategic tools used in the organisation

Figure 4.7 shows that all (100.0%) senior management participants believe that they have an organisation-wide performance management system and 83.3% believe that they make use of a balanced scorecard. Three quarters (75.0%) are convinced that the organisation makes use of stakeholder engagement during the strategic planning and implementation and have regular reviews of progress with implementation. More than half (58.3%) are certain that the organisation has implementation incentives or rewards and uses executive information systems (EIS – e.g. performance dashboards for key performance metrics). Only half (50.0%) of the senior management respondents felt that they have a formal process for strategy implementation.

4.6.2.2   *Section 3: The tools of strategic management (Part B)*

Part B focuses on how valuable respondents deem the specific strategic tool to be in supporting strategic management. Respondents had to rate the value of the tool on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being "no value whatsoever" and 5 being "can't live without it". In interpreting the responses, the cumulative percentages for 1 and 2 (no value) are combined; similarly, the response percentage for 1 and 5 (valuable) are combined.

Table 4.10: Senior management's perception of how valuable a strategic tool is in supporting strategic management – 60.0% and more agreement

Element	NVW		NV		N		V		CLWI	
	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%
3.9 Regular reviews of progress with implementation	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	8.3	8	66.7	3	25.0
3.12 Stakeholder engagement during the strategic planning and implementation	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	33.3	5	41.7	3	25.0
3.5 A formal process for strategy implementation	1	8.3	0	0.0	3	25.0	5	41.7	3	25.0
3.11 Implementation incentives or rewards	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	33.3	4	33.3	4	33.3
3.8 Executive Information Systems (EIS – e.g. performance dashboards for key performance metrics)	1	8.3	1	8.3	2	16.7	6	50.0	2	16.7
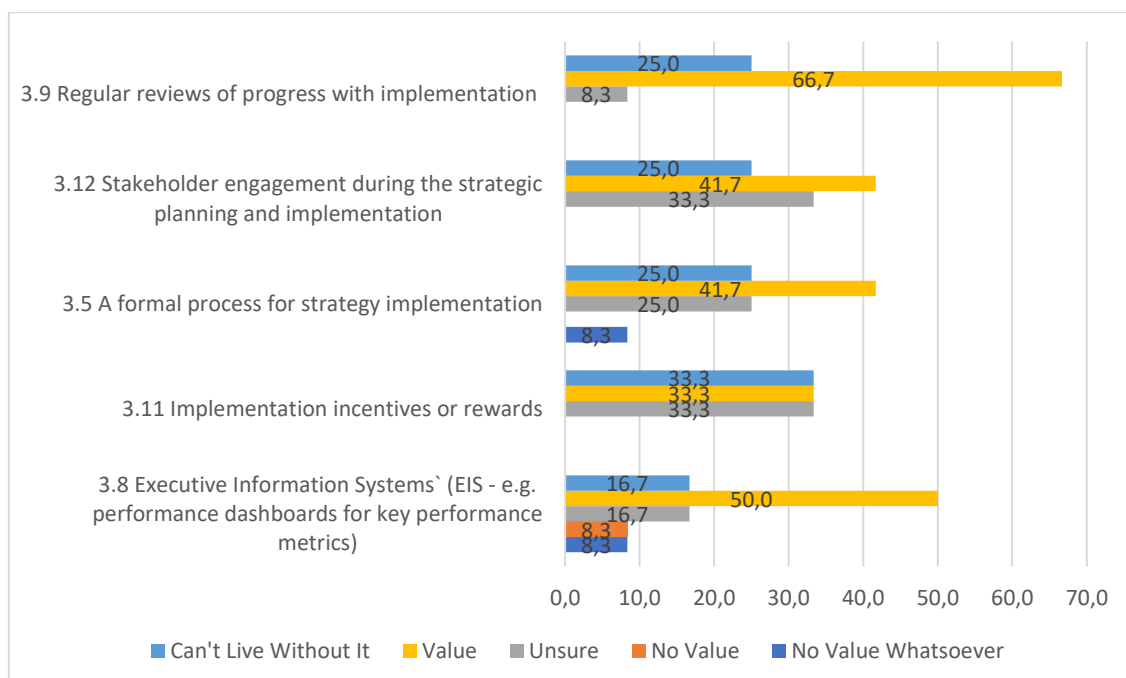
Figure 4.8: Senior management's perception of how valuable a strategic tool is in supporting strategic management – 60.0% and more agreement

Figure 4.8 indicates that 97.1% of senior management participants believe that making use of regular reviews of progress with implementation is a valuable tool, whereas 8.3% were unsure whether it is a valuable strategic tool. A total of 66.7% are positive that stakeholder engagement during strategic planning and implementation, a formal process for strategy implementation, implementation incentives or rewards and executive information systems (EIS – e.g. performance dashboards for key performance metrics) are valuable tools to have in an organisation. A third (33.3%) were impartial regarding the use of stakeholder engagement during the strategic planning and implementation and implementation incentives or rewards. A quarter (25.0%) were indifferent towards the use of a formal process for strategy implementation and 8.3% deemed it to be unhelpful. An equal percentage (16.7%) of participants were either unsure about the worth of executive information systems (EIS – e.g. performance dashboards for key performance metrics) or decidedly against using it.

Table 4.11: Senior management's perception of how valuable a strategic tool is in supporting strategic management – 59.9% and less agreement

Element	NVW		NV		N		V		CLWI	
	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%
3.10 An organisation-wide performance management system	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	41.7	3	25.0	4	33.3
3.6 Balanced Scorecard	0	0.0	1	8.3	6	50.0	1	8,3	4	33.3
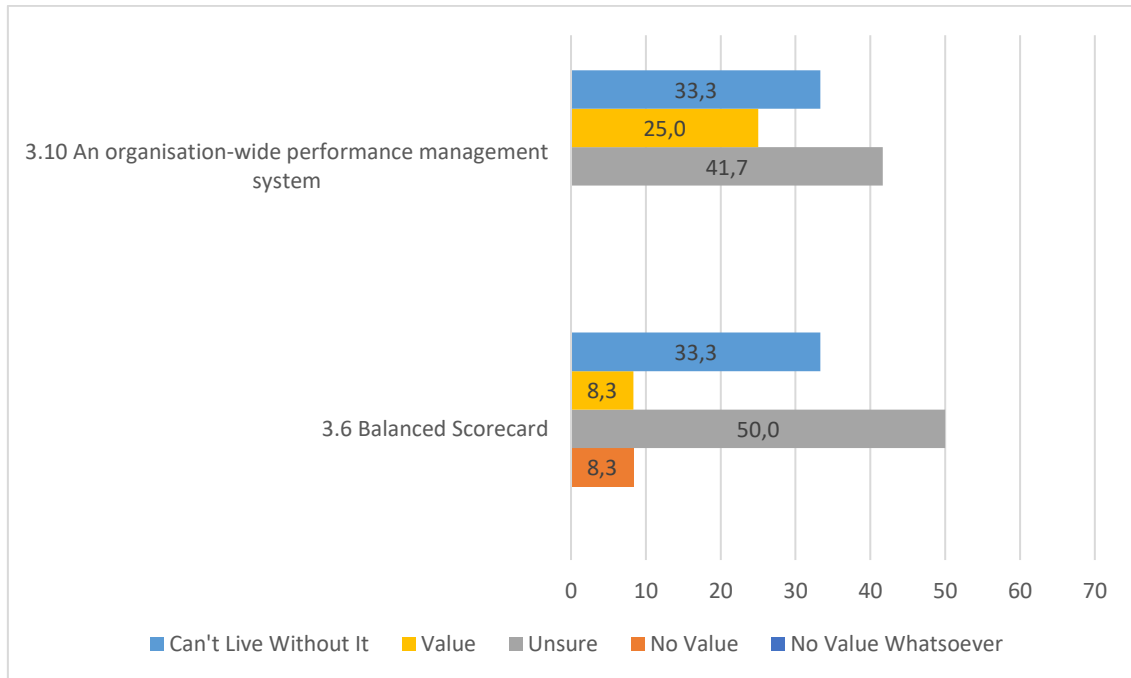
Figure 4.9: Senior management's perception of how valuable a strategic tool is in supporting strategic management – 59.9% and less agreement

Figure 4.9 shows that out of ten management respondents, almost six (58.3%) saw the value in an organisation-wide performance management system. A total of 41.7%, however, were dispassionate about an organisation-wide performance management system. The majority of participants were undecided about the worth of a balanced scorecard; only 41.7% saw worth in it and 8.3% saw no worth in it.

4.6.3. Section 4: Strategic decision-making

In interpreting the responses, the cumulative percentages of agreed and strongly agreed are combined. Similarly, the percentages of the responses for disagree and strongly disagree, which are regarded as general disagreement, are combined.

Table 4.12: Senior management's perception of strategic decision-making –
50.0% and more agreement

Elements	SD		D		N A/D		A		SA	
	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%
4.1 Key strategic decision-makers in our organisation have access to real-time information on the organisation's business operations.	0	0.0	1	8.3	3	25.0	5	41.7	3	25.0
4.10 Strategic decision-makers seek the advice of experienced employees before making important decisions.	2	16.7	0	0.0	2	16.7	6	50.0	2	16.7
4.5 In our organisation, all key managers have a common understanding of our business and its environment.	1	8.3	1	8.3	2	16.7	6	50.0	2	16.7
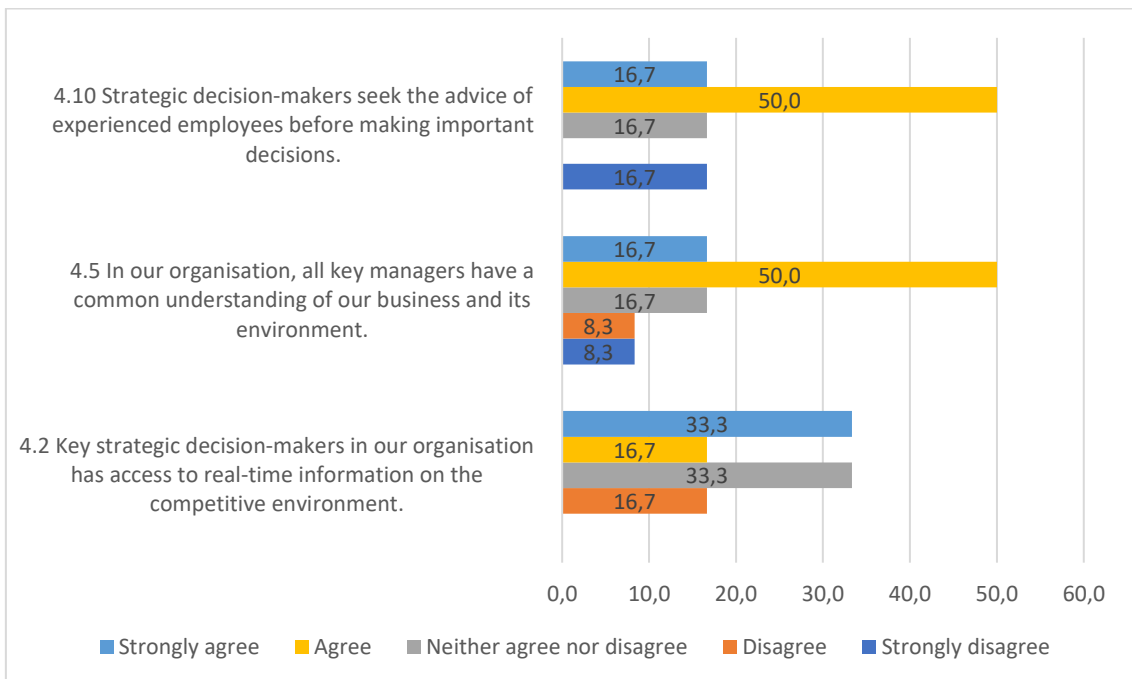
Figure 4.10: Senior management's perception of strategic decision-making –
50.0% and more agreement

Figure 4.10 indicates, according to SOILL's senior management, the most agreed upon elements of strategic decision-making. A total of 66.7% agreed that key strategic decision-makers in their organisation have access to real-time information on the organisation's business operations, strategic decision-makers seek the advice of experienced employees before making important decisions and that all key managers in their organisation have a common understanding of their business and its environment. A quarter (25.0%) neither agreed nor disagreed that key strategic decision-makers in their organisation have access to real-time information on the organisation's business operations, and 8.3% disagreed. A total of 16.7% were unsure and the same percentage disputed the fact that strategic decision-makers seek the advice of experienced employees before making important decisions and that all key managers in their organisation have a common understanding of their business and its environment.

Table 4.13: Senior management's perception of strategic decision-making – 49.9% and below agreement

Elements	SD		D		N A/D		A		SA	
	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%
4.8 Strategic decision-makers consult widely with key internal stakeholders (e.g. employees, unions) before making important decisions.	3	25.0	1	8.3	3	25.0	4	33.3	1	8.3
4.3 In our organisation, we take a long time to make important decisions.	0	0.0	7	58.3	2	16.7	2	16.7	1	8.3
4.7 Organisational politics dominate strategic decision-making in our organisation.	1	8.3	7	58.3	2	16.7	1	8.3	1	8.3
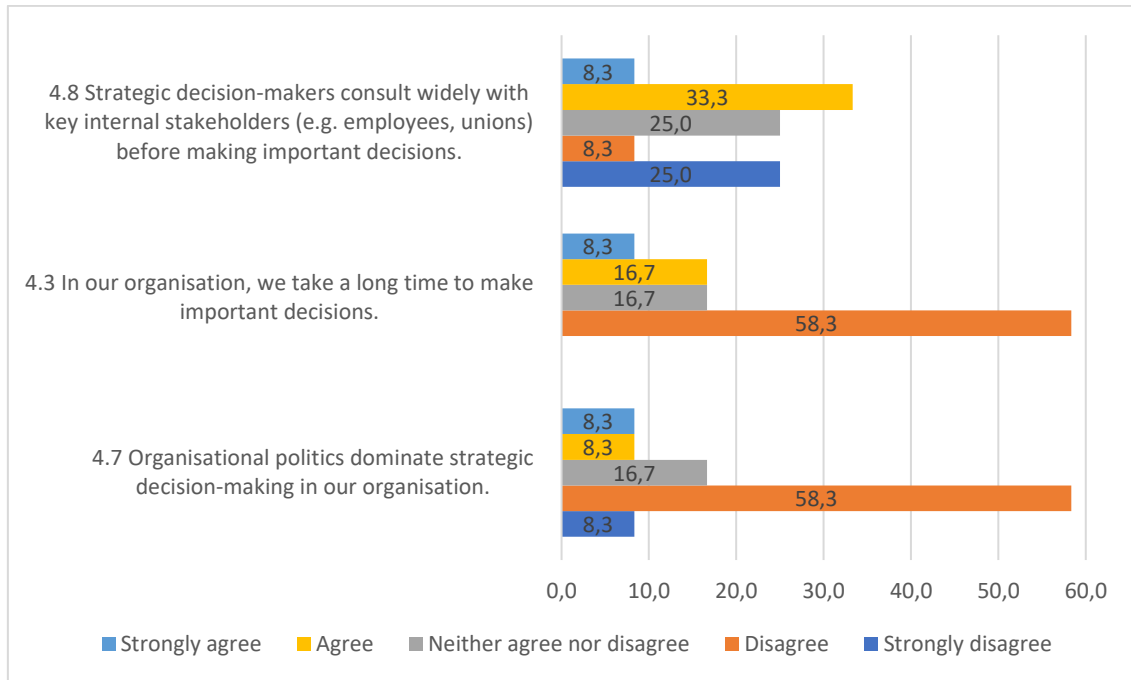
Figure 4.11: Senior management's perception of strategic decision-making – 49.9% and below agreement

Figure 4.11 shows, according to SOILL's senior management, the least agreed upon elements of strategic decision-making. Less than half (41.7%) accepted that strategic decision-makers consult widely with key internal stakeholders (e.g. employees, unions) before making important decisions. Even though a quarter (25.0%) were unconvinced that strategic decision-makers consult widely with key internal stakeholders (e.g. employees, unions) before making important decisions, a third (33.3%) disagreed.

Only a quarter (25.0%) felt that they take a long time to make important decisions in their organisation. A total of 16.7% were indecisive whether they take a long time to make important decisions in their organisation and 58.3% disagreed.

Equal percentages (16.7%) agreed and neither agreed nor disagreed that organisational politics dominate strategic decision-making in their organisation. However, the majority (66.7%) felt that organisational politics do not dominate strategic decision-making in their organisation.

4.7.   All employees' perceptions of the quality of strategic management in the organisation

The perception of all employees (excluding senior management) regarding the quality of strategic management in the organisation was established. This was done per section within the questionnaire.

4.7.1. Section 2: Quality of strategic management

In interpreting the responses, the cumulative percentages of agreed and strongly agreed were combined, as well as the response percentages for disagree and strongly disagree, which are regarded as general disagreement.

There was no agreement (90.0% and above) among employees on any of the elements of the quality of strategic management.

Table 4.14: Employees' perception of the quality of strategic management –
between 80.0% and 89.9% agreement

Element	SD		D		N A/D		A		SA	
	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%
2.1 Our organisation has clear long-term (3 years +) objectives.	1	1.8	1	1.8	5	9.1	35	63.6	13	23.6
2.2 Our organisation has a clear vision for the future.	1	1.8	3	5.5	4	7.3	31	56.4	16	29.1
2.4 Our strategic decisions create value for the owners/shareholders of the organisation.	0	0.0	0	0.0	9	16.4	36	65.5	10	18.2
2.23 Our strategic decisions ensure our organisation's sustainability for the future.	0	0.0	1	1.8	9	16.4	40	72.7	5	9.1
2.13 Strategy implementation is regarded as a very important function in our organisation.	0	0.0	2	3.6	9	16.4	41	74.5	3	5.5
2.6 Our organisation is focused on a few key performance indicators to track our progress with implementation.	2	3.6	1	1.8	8	14.5	39	70.9	5	9.1
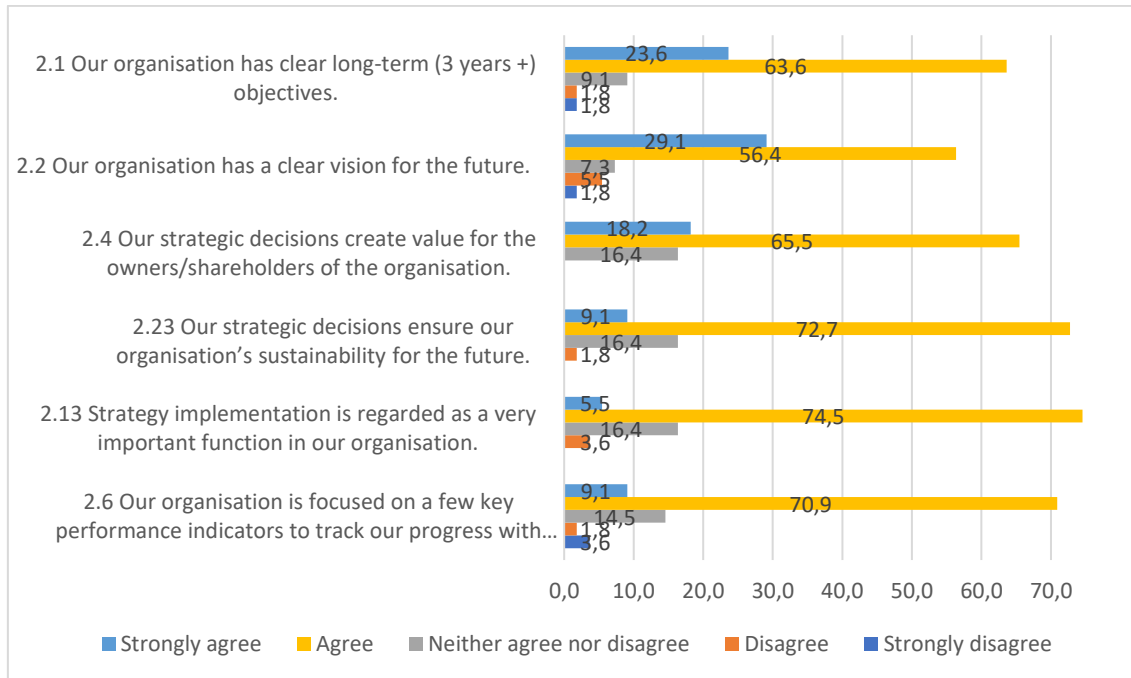
Figure 4.12: Employees' perception of the quality of strategic management – between 80.0% and 89.9% agreement

Figure 4.12 indicates the highest rated elements of the quality of strategic management in SOILL, according to employees. Out of ten management respondents, almost nine (87,3%) agreed that their organisation has clear long-term (3 years +) objectives, 9.1% were unsure and only 3.1% disagreed. Between seven and eight out of ten (85.5%) indicated that their organisation has a clear vision for the future, but 14.6% were not sure and disagreed. A total of 16.4% were uncertain whether their strategic decisions create value for the owners/shareholders of the organisation; 83.6% were sure that it does. Of the respondents, 81.8% felt that their strategic decisions ensure their organisation's sustainability for the future, but 16.4% were undecided and 1.8% disputed this fact.

Out of ten respondents, eight (80.0%) concurred that strategy implementation is regarded as a very important function in their organisation and that their organisation is focused on a few KPIs to track their progress with implementation. A total of 16.4% neither agreed nor disagreed and 3.6% disagreed that strategy implementation is regarded as a very important function in their organisation. Of

the respondents, 14.5% were indifferent to whether their organisation is focused on a few KPIs to track their progress with implementation, but 5.5% disagreed.

Table 4.15: Employees' perception of the quality of strategic management – between 70.0% and 79.9% agreement

Element	SD		D		N A/D		A		SA	
	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%
2.18 Our strategies are aligned well with our external environment.	1	1.8	1	1.8	13	23.6	32	58.2	8	14.5
2.16 We are constantly measuring our progress with strategy implementation.	1	1.8	1	1.8	14	25.5	34	61.8	5	9.1
2.12 We have the right competencies in place to successfully implement our strategy.	1	1.8	3	5.5	12	21.8	31	56.4	8	14.5
2.17 Our strategies are acceptable to all key internal stakeholders.	1	1.8	4	7.3	11	20.0	34	61.8	5	9.1
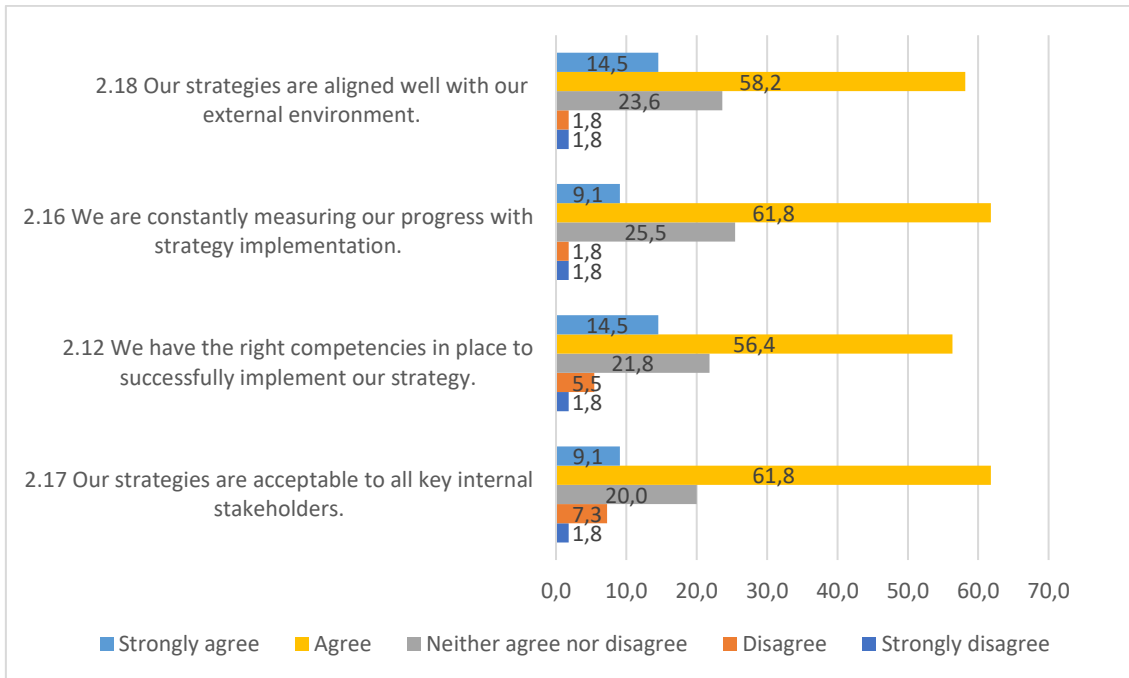
Figure 4.13: Employees' perception of the quality of strategic management – between 70.0% and 79.9% agreement

Figure 4.13 shows that out of ten, just more than seven (72.7%) respondents indicated that their strategies are aligned well with their external environment; however, 23.6% were unsure and 3.6% disagreed.

A total of 70.9% were positive that they are constantly measuring their progress with strategy implementation, that they have the right competencies in place to successfully implement their strategy and that their strategies are acceptable to all key internal stakeholders. A quarter (25.5%) were hesitant about whether they are constantly measuring their progress with strategy implementation, but 3.6% were sure that they did not. A total of 20.0% neither agreed nor disagreed and 9.1% disagreed that their strategies are acceptable to all key internal stakeholders.

*Table 4.16: Employees' perception of the quality of strategic management –
between 60.0% and 69.9% agreement*

Element	SD		D		N A/D		A		SA	
	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%
2.14 We have a clear long-term strategy.	1	1.8	2	3.6	14	25.5	31	56.4	7	12.7
2.10 Our internal operating environment (processes and policies) supports strategy implementation.	1	1.8	5	9.1	11	20.0	35	63.6	3	5.5
2.3 Our strategic decisions are always in line with our vision for the future.	1	1.8	3	5.5	14	25.5	29	52.7	8	14.5
2.7 The leadership of our organisation is visibly committed to successfully implementing our strategy.	2	3.6	4	7.3	12	21.8	31	56.4	6	10.9
2.9 Our internal organisation structure supports our strategic direction.	1	1.8	4	7.3	17	30.9	30	54.5	3	5.5
2.22 We are quick to respond to important changes in our environment.	1	1.8	7	12.7	14	25.5	30	54.5	3	5.5
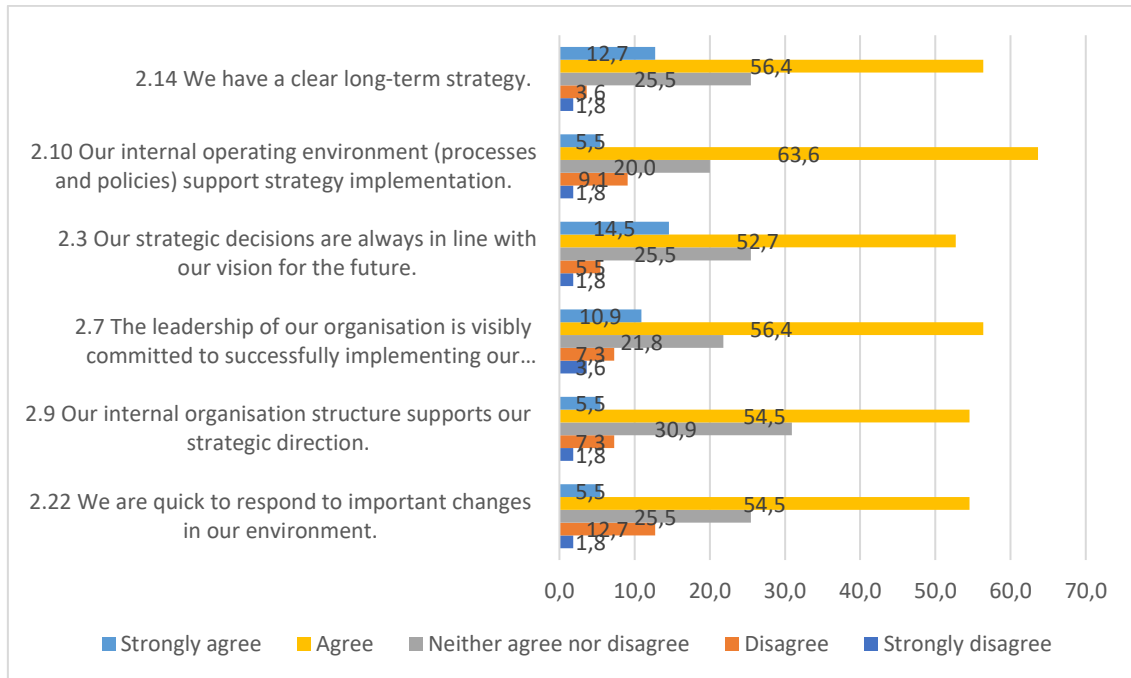
Figure 4.14: Employees' perception of the quality of strategic management – between 60.0% and 69.9% agreement

Figure 4.14 indicates that almost seven out of ten (69.1%) accepted that they have a clear long-term strategy and their internal operating environment (processes and policies) support strategy implementation. A quarter (25.5%) were uncertain that they have a clear long-term strategy and 5.5% agreed that they do not have a clear long-term strategy. While 20.0% were undecided about whether their internal operating environment (processes and policies) supports strategy implementation, 10.9% decidedly agreed that it does not.

A total of 67.3% agreed that their strategic decisions are always in line with their vision for the future and that the leadership of their organisation is visibly committed to successfully implementing their strategy. Of the respondents, 25.5% neither agreed nor disagreed that their strategic decisions are always in line with their vision for the future and 7.3% disagreed. Whereas 21.8% were irresolute, 10,9% disagreed that the leadership of their organisation is visibly committed to successfully implementing their strategy.

Six out of ten (60.0%) felt that their internal organisation structure supports their strategic direction in their organisation and that they are quick to respond to important changes in their environment. A total of 30.9% respondents were indifferent about whether their internal organisation structure supports their strategic direction and 9.1% disputed this fact. A quarter (25.5%) was ambivalent and 14.5% were negative about how quick they are to respond to important changes in their environment.

Table 4.17: Employees' perception of the quality of strategic management – between 50.0% and 59.9% agreement

| Element	SD		D		N A/D		A		SA	
	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%
2.5 We almost always achieve our long-term objectives.	1	1.8	8	14.5	14	25.5	29	52.7	3	5.5
2.28 We are proactive in addressing anticipated changes in our business environment.	2	3.6	9	16.4	14	25.5	26	47.3	4	7.3
2.27 The activities of different divisions in this organisation are well coordinated.	4	7.3	11	20.0	12	21.8	25	45.5	3	5.5
2.26 Several departments get together regularly to plan responses to changes taking place in our business environment.	5	9.1	13	23.6	9	16.4	23	41.8	5	9.1
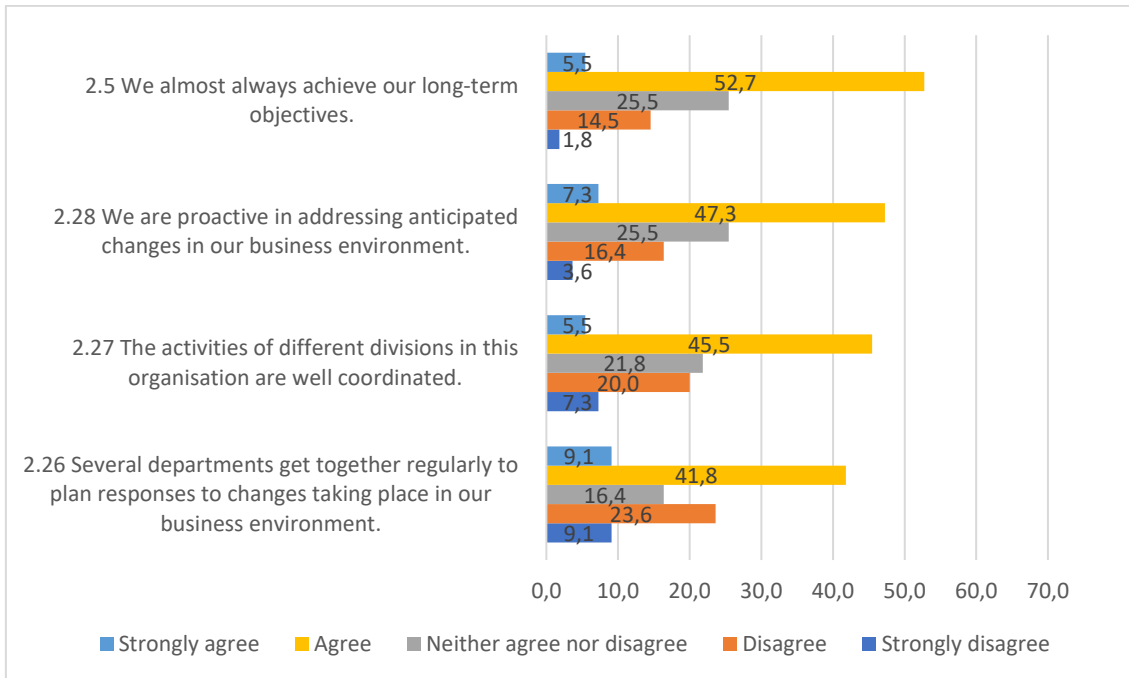
Figure 4.15: Employees' perception of the quality of strategic management – between 50.0% and 59.9% agreement

Figure 4.15 shows that 58.2% endorsed the fact that they almost always achieve their long-term objectives; 25.5% were unsure and 16.4% did not support this fact. Between five and six out of ten (54.5%) believed that they are proactive in addressing anticipated changes in their business environment, but a quarter (25.5%) were unsure and 20.0% did not believe this to be true.

Out of ten respondents, 5 (50.9%) concurred that the activities of different divisions in the organisation are well coordinated and that several departments get together regularly to plan responses to changes taking place in their business environment. A total of 21.8% were uncertain and 27.3% were certain that the activities of different divisions in the organisation are not well coordinated. While 32.7% disagreed that several departments get together regularly to plan responses to changes taking place in their business environment, only 16.4% were unclear about this.

Table 4.18: Employees' perception of the quality of strategic management – between 20.0% and 49.9% agreement

Element	SD		D		N A/D		A		SA	
	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%
2.15 Our organisation's strategy is clearly understood by most people in the organisation.	2	3.6	12	21.8	15	27.3	24	43.6	2	3.6
2.8 The culture in our organisation strongly supports our strategic direction.	1	1.8	12	21.8	17	30.9	20	36.4	5	9.1
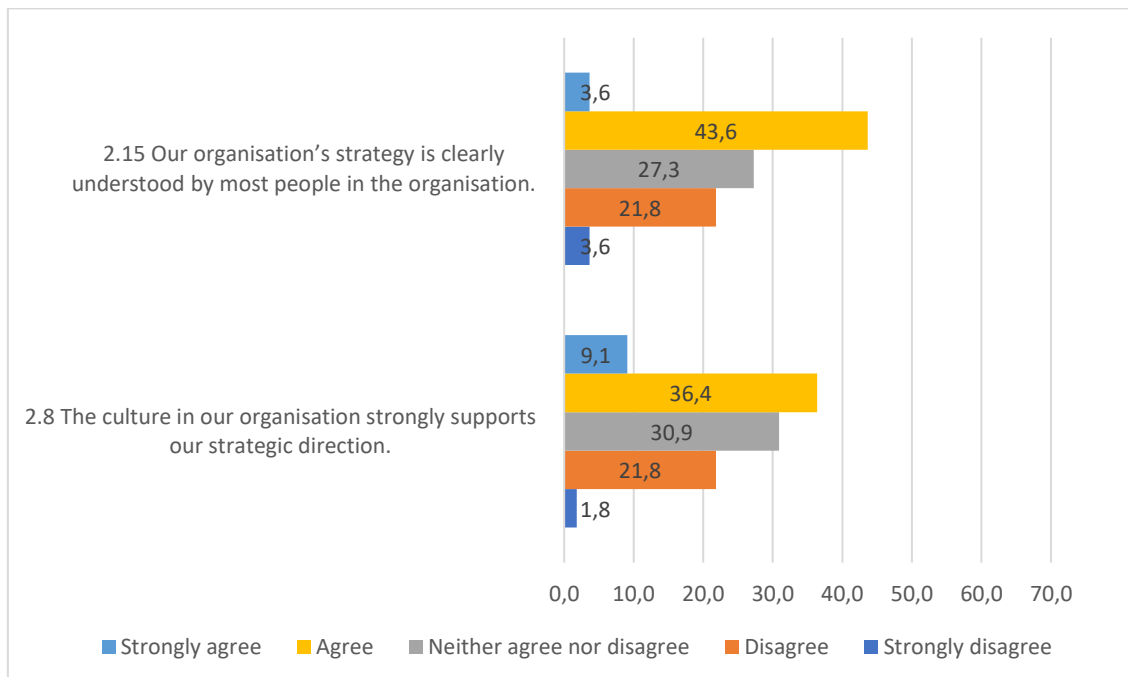
Figure 4.16: Employees' perception of the quality of strategic management – between 20.0% and 49.9% agreement

Figure 4.16 indicates the lowest rated elements of the quality of strategic management in SOILL according to employees. Less than half (47.3%) agreed that their organisation's strategy is clearly understood by most people in the organisation; 27.3% neither agreed nor disagreed and a quarter (25.5%) disagreed. Only 45.5% felt that the culture in their organisation strongly supports

their strategic direction, but 30.9% were unreadable in this regard and 23.6% indicated that they do not believe this to be true.

4.7.2. Section 3: The tools of strategic management

Section 3 is divided into two parts, namely part A and part B, as the section used two different Likert scales.

4.7.2.1   *Section 3: The tools of strategic management (Part A)*

Part A focuses on whether respondents know if their organisation uses a specific strategic tool. Respondents were given a choice between "yes" and "no" (Table 4.19).

Table 4.19: Employees' perception of strategic tools used in the organisation

Element	No		Yes	
	R	%	R	%
3.6 Balanced scorecard	4	7.3	51	92.7
3.10 An organisation-wide performance management system	6	10.9	49	89.1
3.8 Executive Information Systems (EIS – e.g. performance dashboards for key performance metrics)	10	18.2	45	81.8
3.9 Regular reviews of progress with implementation	11	20.0	44	80.0
3.5 A formal process for strategy implementation	17	30.9	38	69.1
3.12 Stakeholder engagement during the strategic planning and implementation	20	36.4	35	63.6
3.11 Implementation incentives or rewards	21	38.2	34	61.8
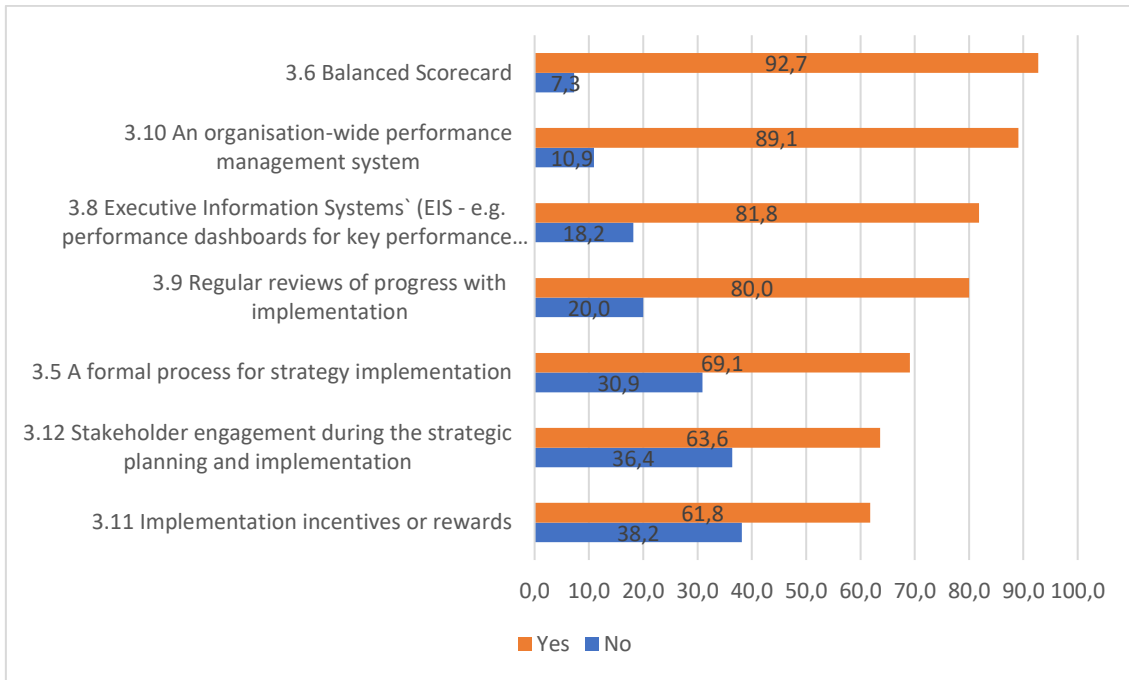
Figure 4.17: Employees' perception of strategic tools used in the organisation

Figure 4.17 indicates that 92.7% of employee participants were sure that the organisation uses a balanced scorecard and 89.1% believed that they use an organisation-wide performance management system. Of the respondents, 81.8% are convinced that the organisation makes use of executive information systems (EIS – e.g. performance dashboards for key performance metrics). Out of ten respondents, eight (80.0%) were sure that the organisation uses regular reviews of progress with implementation. A total of 69.1% trusted that the organisation has a formal process for strategy implementation, and 63.6% accepted that the organisation makes use of stakeholder engagement during the strategic planning and implementation. A little over six out of ten (61.8%) employee respondents felt that the organisation uses implementation incentives or rewards.

4.7.2.2   *Section 3: The tools of strategic management (Part B)*

Part B focuses on how valuable respondents deem the specific strategic tool to be in supporting strategic management. Respondents had to rate the value of the tool on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being "no value whatsoever" and 5 being "can't live without it". In interpreting the responses, the cumulative percentages for 1

and 2 (no value) are combined, as well as the percentage for responses of 4 and 5 (valuable).

Table 4.20: Employees' perception of how valuable a strategic tool is in supporting strategic management – 60.0% and more agreement

Element	NVW		NV		N		V		CLWI	
	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%
3.10 An organisation-wide performance management system	3	5.5	3	5.5	14	25.5	25	45.5	10	18.2
3.11 Implementation incentives or rewards	5	9.1	5	9.1	10	18.2	20	36.4	15	27.3
3.6 Balanced scorecard	0	0.0	3	5.5	18	32.7	19	34.5	15	27.3
3.9 Regular reviews of progress with implementation	3	5.5	3	5.5	15	27.3	24	43.6	10	18.2
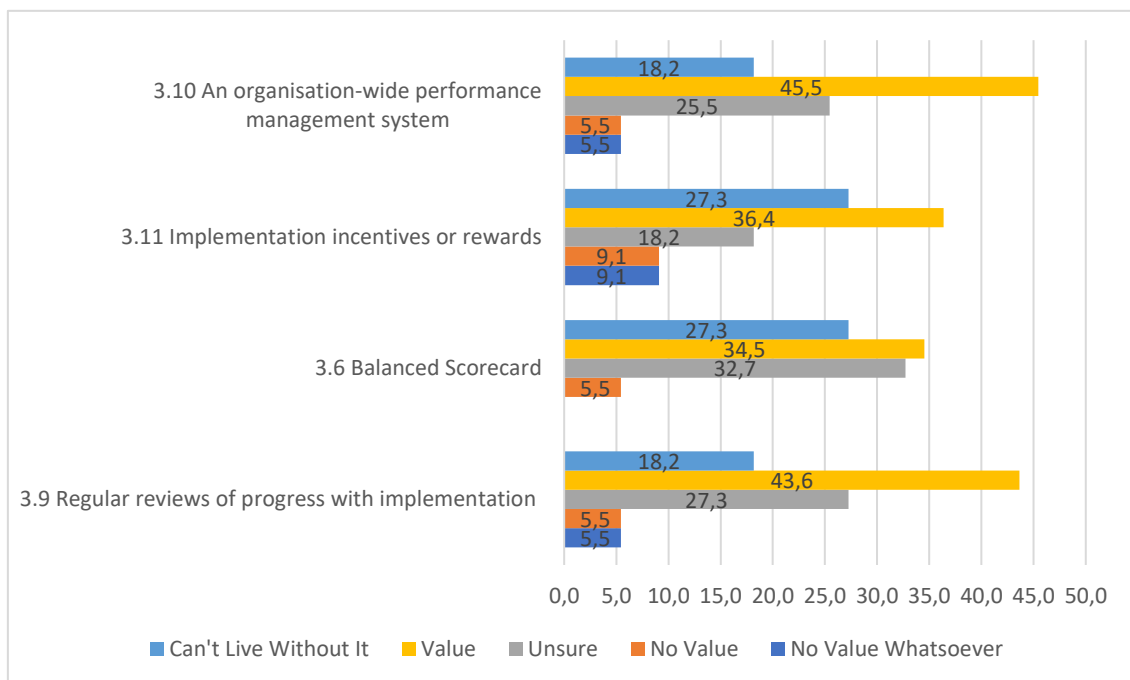
Figure 4.18: Employees' perception of how valuable a strategic tool is in supporting strategic management – 60.0% and more agreement

Figure 4.18 demonstrates that 63.6% of employee respondents believed that an organisation-wide performance management system and implementation incentives or rewards are valuable strategic tools to use in the organisation.

However, 25.5% were neutral about the worth of an organisation-wide performance management system and 10.9% believed that it has no value. An equal percentage (18.2%) was either not sure whether implementation incentives or rewards have value, or were convinced that it does not. A total of 61.8% felt that a balanced scorecard and regular reviews of progress with implementation are important tools. Of the participants, 32.7% were impartial towards and 5.5% against using a balanced scorecard; 27.3% did not know if regular reviews of progress with implementation would be valuable and 10.9% were certain that it would not be valuable.

Table 4.21: Employees' perception of how valuable a strategic tool is in supporting strategic management – 59.9% and less agreement

Element	NVW		NV		N		V		CLWI	
	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%
3.5 A formal process for strategy implementation	4	7.3	0	0,0	19	34.5	24	43.6	8	14.5
3.8 Executive Information Systems (EIS – e.g. performance dashboards for key performance metrics)	4	7.3	3	5.5	19	34.5	20	36.4	9	16.4
3.12 Stakeholder engagement during the strategic planning and implementation	4	7.3	7	12.7	15	27.3	18	32.7	11	20.0
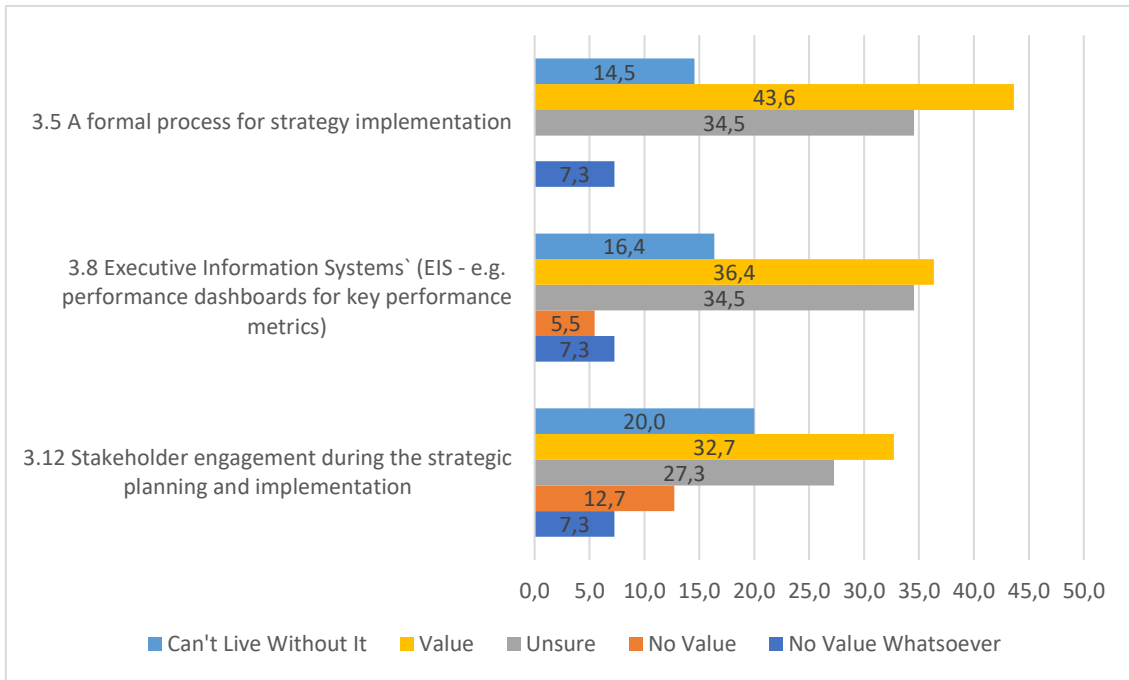
Figure 4.19: Employees' perception of how valuable a strategic tool is in supporting strategic management – 59.9% and less agreement

Figure 4.19 shows that 58.2% of employee participants are positive that a formal process for strategy implementation is a valuable tool to implement strategy in the organisation; 33.4% were neutral regarding its use and 7.3% responded negatively. Out of ten respondents, just over five (52.7%) deem executive information systems (EIS – e.g. performance dashboards for key performance metrics) and stakeholder engagement during the strategic planning and implementation to be important. A total of 34.5% were unsure about the worth of executive information systems (EIS – e.g. performance dashboards for key performance metrics) and 12.7% assume it to be trivial. Of the respondents, 27.3% were impartial towards stakeholder engagement during the strategic planning and implementation and 20% felt that it is generally a waste of time.

4.7.3. Section 4: Strategic decision-making

In interpreting the responses, the cumulative percentages of agreed and strongly agreed are combined, as are the response percentages for disagree and strongly disagree, which are regarded as general disagreement.

Table 4.22: Employees' perception of strategic decision-making – 50% and more agreement

Elements	SD		D		N A/D		A		SA	
	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%
4.1 Key strategic decision-makers in our organisation have access to real-time information on the organisation's business operations.	2	3.6	4	7.3	10	18.2	34	61.8	5	9.1
4.5 In our organisation, all key managers have a common understanding of our business and its environment.	1	1.8	10	18.2	12	21.8	24	43.6	8	14.5
4.7 Organisational politics dominate strategic decision-making in our organisation.	3	5.5	5	9.1	18	32.7	20	36.4	9	16.4
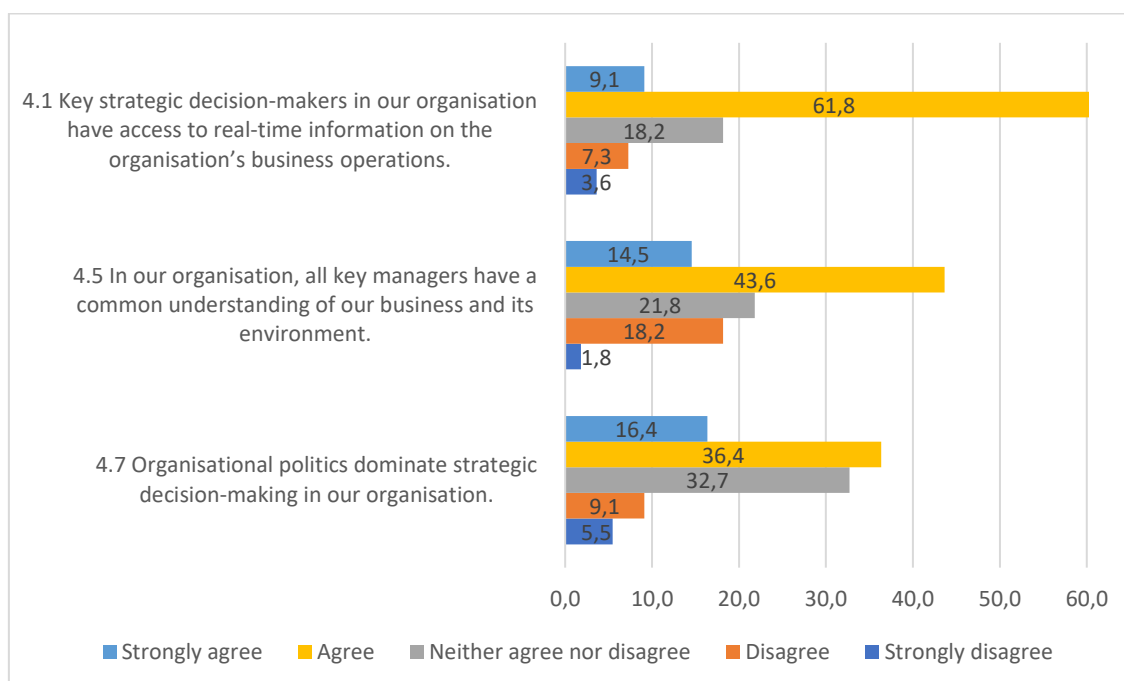
Figure 4.20: Employees' perception of strategic decision-making – 50% and more agreement

Figure 4.20 indicates the most agreed upon elements of strategic decision-making according to SOILL's employees. Out of ten respondents, seven (70.9%) agreed that key strategic decision-makers in their organisation have access to real-time information on the organisation's business operations. A total of 18.2% neither agreed nor disagreed and 10.9% disagreed. A total of 58.2% believed, 21.8% were undecided and 20.0% did not believe that all key managers in their organisation have a common understanding of their business and its environment. The fact that organisational politics dominate strategic decision-making in their organisation was deemed to be true by 52.7%, while 32.7% were undecided and 14.7% deemed it to be untrue.

Table 4.23: Employees' perception of strategic decision-making – 49.9% and below agreement

Elements	SD		D		N A/D		A		SA	
	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%
4.10 Strategic decision-makers seek the advice of experienced employees before making important decisions.	3	5.5	9	16.4	21	38.2	18	32.7	4	7.3
4.3 In our organisation, we take a long time to make important decisions.	2	3.6	14	25.5	18	32.7	15	27.3	6	10.9
4.8 Strategic decision-makers consult widely with key internal stakeholders (e.g. employees, unions) before making important decisions.	4	7.3	11	20.0	20	36.4	17	30.9	3	5.5
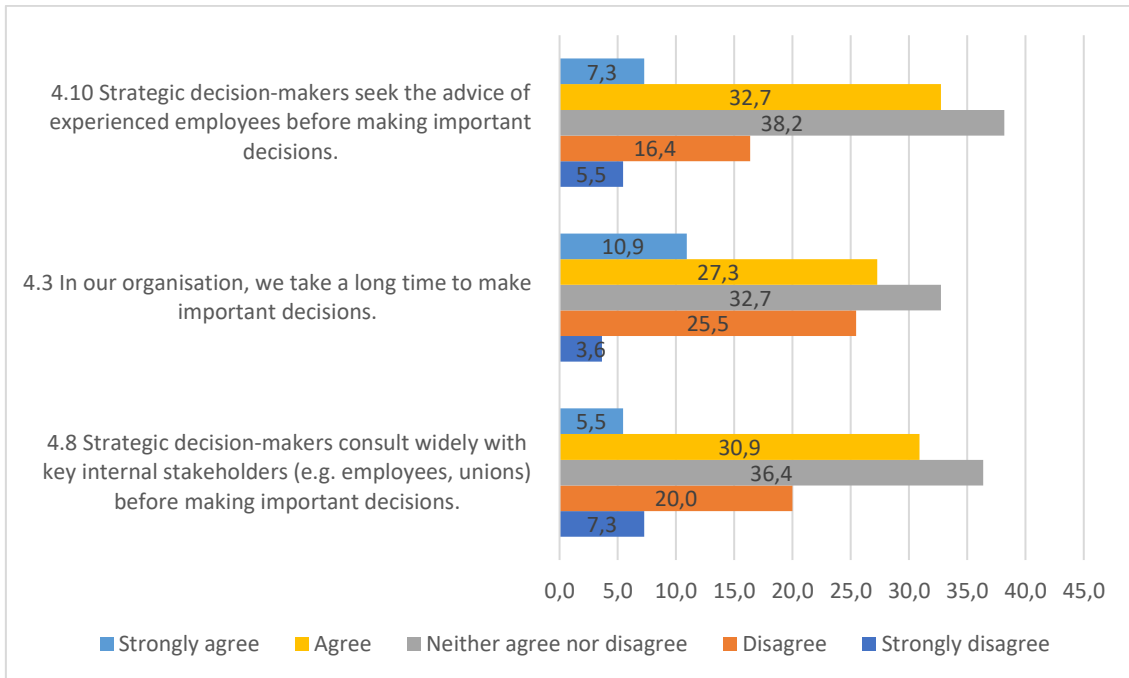
Figure 4.21: Employees' perception of strategic decision-making – 49.9% and below agreement

Figure 4.21 shows, according to SOILL's employees, the least agreed upon elements of strategic decision-making. Four in ten (40%) of participating employees are in agreement that strategic decision-makers seek the advice of experienced employees before making important decisions; 38.2% were hesitant and 21.8% were resolute that strategic decision-makers do not seek the advice of experienced employees before making important decisions.

A total of 38.2% agreed, 32.7% neither agreed nor disagreed and 29.1% disagreed that, in their organisation, they take a long time to make important decisions. Finally, the same percentage (36.4%) accepted and neither accepted nor disputed the fact that strategic decision-makers consult widely with key internal stakeholders (e.g. employees, unions) before making important decisions; however, 27.3% disputed this.

4.8.   The alignment between senior management and that of the other employees regarding the perceived quality of strategic management

Finally, the difference in perceptions of senior management and that of the other employees regarding the quality of strategic management in the organisation was established. This was done per section within the questionnaire.

4.8.1. Section 2: Quality of strategic management

To determine if there is a significant difference in perceptions of senior management and that of the other employees regarding the quality of strategic management within SOILL, the t-score for each element was calculated. A 0.05 level of significance for a two-tailed test was used and the degrees of freedom was established at 1.997.

Table 4.24: T-value for the elements of the quality of strategic management

Variable	t-value
2.4 Our strategic decisions create value for the owners/shareholders of the organisation.	-3.977
2.14 We have a clear long-term strategy.	-2.981
2.2 Our organisation has a clear vision for the future.	-2.332
2.13 Strategy implementation is regarded as a very important function in our organisation.	-2.206
2.1 Our organisation has clear long-term (3 years +) objectives.	-2.028
2.3 Our strategic decisions are always in line with our vision for the future.	-1.254
2.7 The leadership of our organisation is visibly committed to successfully implementing our strategy.	-1.079
2.5 We almost always achieve our long-term objectives.	-0.955
2.26 Several departments get together regularly to plan responses to changes taking place in our business environment.	-0.906
2.6 Our organisation is focused on a few key performance indicators to track our progress with implementation.	-0.841
2.18 Our strategies are aligned well with our external environment.	-0.680
2.22 We are quick to respond to important changes in our environment.	-0.498
2.8 The culture in our organisation strongly supports our strategic direction.	-0.432
2.27 The activities of different divisions in this organisation are well coordinated.	-0.101
2.23 Our strategic decisions ensure our organisation's sustainability for the future.	0.314
2.16 We are constantly measuring our progress with strategy implementation.	0.372
2.28 We are proactive in addressing anticipated changes in our business environment.	0.398
2.12 We have the right competencies in place to successfully implement our strategy.	0.966
2.9 Our internal organisation structure supports our strategic direction.	1.087
2.15 Our organisation's strategy is clearly understood by most people in the organisation.	1.525
2.17 Our strategies are acceptable to all key internal stakeholders.	1.542
2.10 Our internal operating environment (processes and policies) supports strategy implementation.	2.111
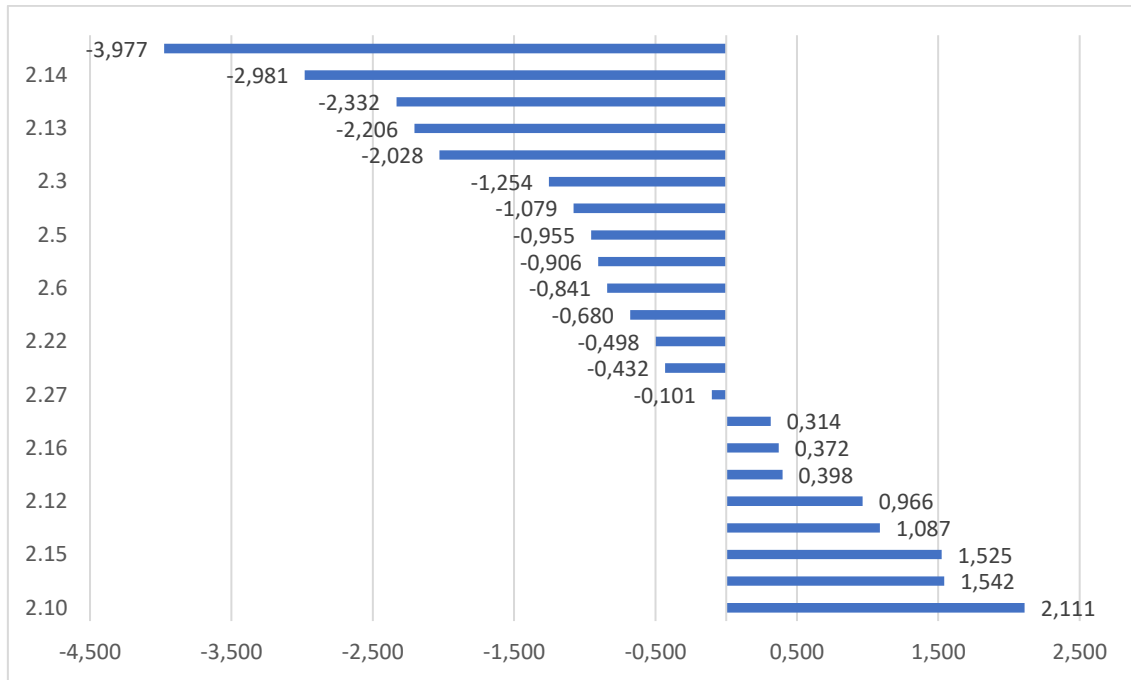
Figure 4.22: T-value for the elements of the quality of strategic management

Figure 4.22 indicates that if we assume that there is no significant difference between the perceptions of senior management and that of the other employees, only one element of the quality of strategic management, namely that our internal operating environment (processes and policies) supports strategy implementation, is rejected as its t-score (2.11) is higher than 1.997. It means that in terms of all the other elements of the quality of strategic management, there is no significant difference between the perceptions of senior management and that of the other employees.

4.8.2. Section 3: The tools of strategic management

To determine if there is a significant difference in perceptions of senior management and that of the other employees regarding the quality of strategic management within SOILL, the t-score for each element was calculated. A 0.05 level of significance for a two-tailed test was used and the degrees of freedom was established at 1.997.

4.8.2.1   *Section 3: The tools of strategic management (Part A)*

Table 4.25: T-value for the elements of strategic tools used in the organisation

Variable	t-value
3.10 An organisation-wide performance management system	-2.571
3.12 Stakeholder engagement during the strategic planning and implementation	-0.778
3.11 Implementation incentives or rewards	0.214
3.9 Regular reviews of progress with implementation	0.353
3.6 Balanced scorecard	0.797
3.5 A formal process for strategy implementation	1.169
3.8 Executive Information Systems (EIS – e.g., performance dashboards for key performance metrics)	1.490
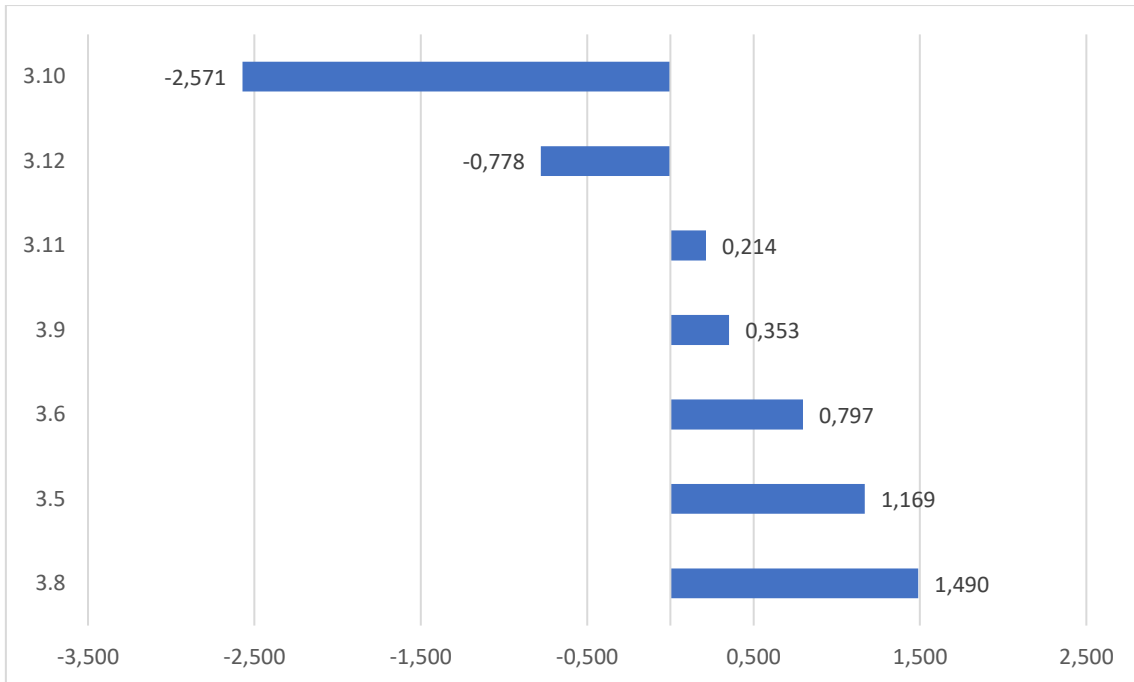
Figure 4.23: T-value for the elements of strategic tools used in the organisation

Figure 4.23 demonstrates that that if we assume that there is no significant difference between the perceptions of senior management and that of the other employees, no single element of whether the organisation uses a specific tool of strategy implementation is rejected as no t-score is higher than 1.997. It means that in terms of all the elements of whether the organisation uses a specific tool

of strategy implementation, there is no significant difference between the perceptions of senior management and that of the other employees.

4.8.2.2   *Section 3: The tools of strategic management (Part B)*

Table 4.26: T-value for the elements how valuable a strategic tool is in supporting strategic management

Variable	t-value
3.9 Regular reviews of progress with implementation	-2.449
3.12 Stakeholder engagement during the strategic planning and implementation	-1.663
3.11 Implementation incentives or rewards	-1.223
3.10 An organisation-wide performance management system	-0.891
3.5 A formal process for strategy implementation	-0.474
3.8 Executive Information Systems (EIS – e.g.. performance dashboards for key performance metrics)	-0.253
3.6 Balanced scorecard	0.510
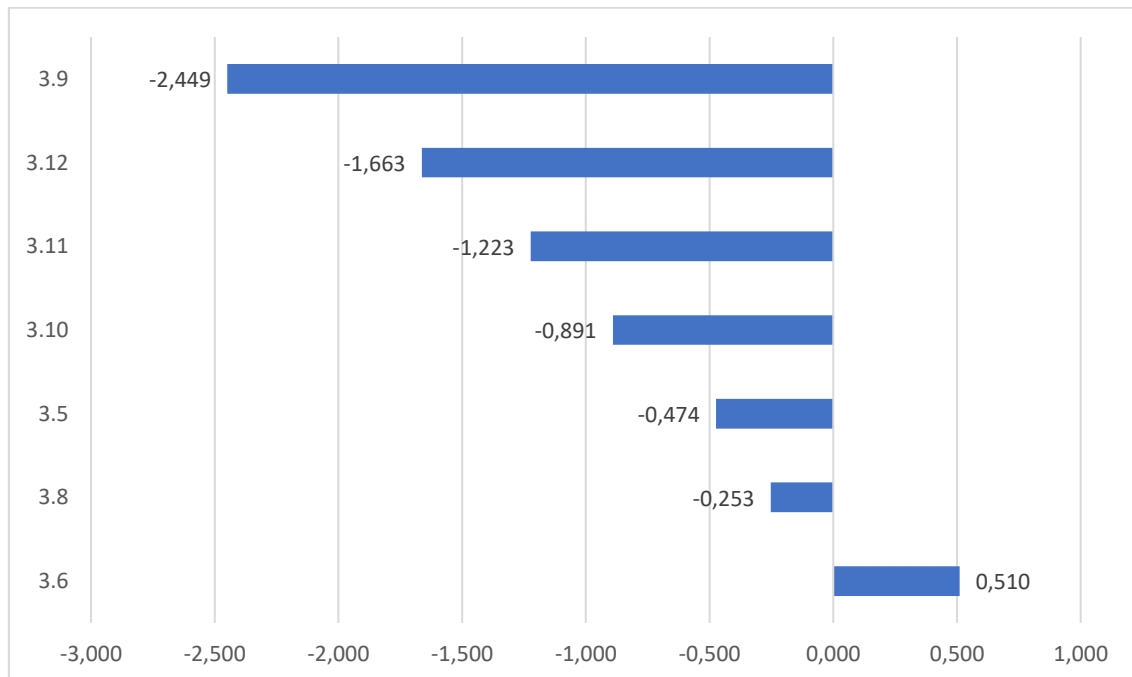
Figure 4.24: T-value for the elements of how valuable a strategic tool is in supporting strategic management

Figure 4.24 indicates that that if we assume that there is no significant difference between the perceptions of senior management and that of the other employees, no elements of how valuable a tool is in supporting strategic management is rejected as none of the t-scores are higher than 1.997. It means that in terms of all the elements of how valuable a tool is in supporting strategic management, there is no significant difference between the perceptions of senior management and that of the other employees.

4.8.3. Section 4: Strategic decision-making

To determine if there is a significant difference in perceptions of senior management and that of the other employees regarding the quality of strategic management within SOILL, the t-score for each element was calculated. A 0.05 level of significance for a two-tailed test was used and the degrees of freedom was established at 1.997.

Table 4.27: T-value for the elements of strategic decision-making

| Variable	t-value
4.10 Strategic decision-makers seek the advice of experienced employees before making important decisions.	-0.746
4.1 Key strategic decision-makers in our organisation have access to real-time information on the organisation's business operations.	-0.604
4.5 In our organisation, all key managers have a common understanding of our business and its environment.	-0.205
4.8 Strategic decision-makers consult widely with key internal stakeholders (e.g. employees, unions) before making important decisions.	0.371
4.3 In our organisation, we take a long time to make important decisions.	1.231
4.7 Organisational politics dominate strategic decision-making in our organisation.	2.877
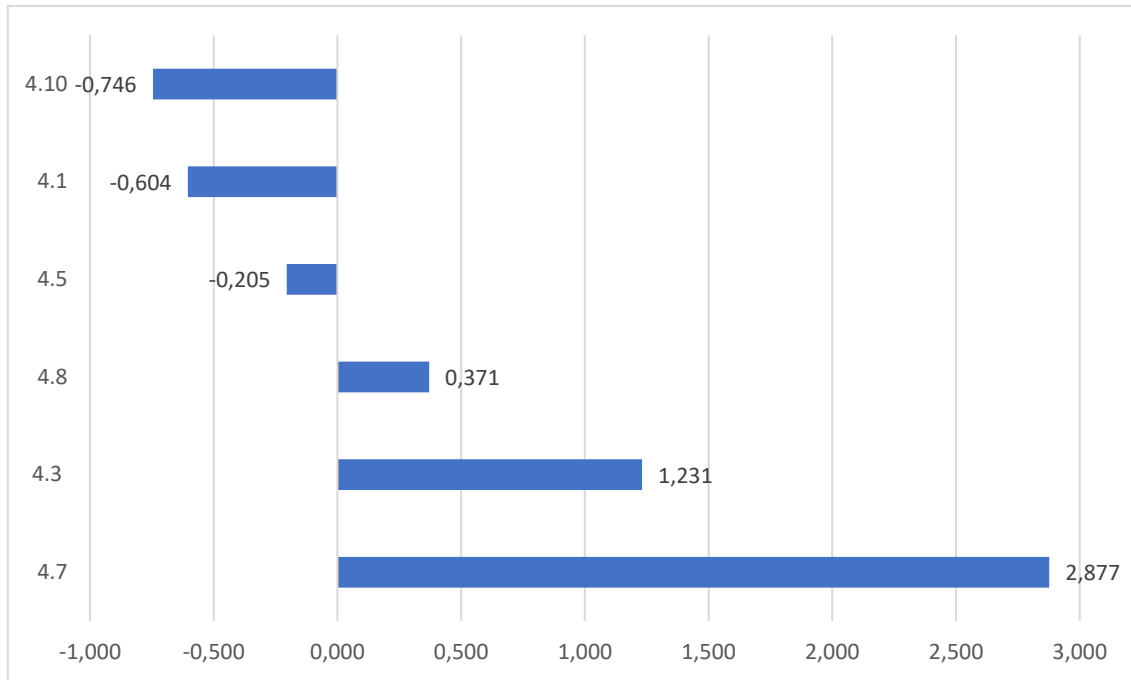
Figure 4.25: T-value for the elements of strategic decision-making

Figure 4.25 indicates that if we assume that there is no significant difference between the perceptions of senior management and that of the other employees, only one element of strategic decision-making, namely organisational politics dominate strategic decision-making in our organisation (2.88), is rejected as its t-score is higher than 1.997. It means that in terms of all the other elements of strategic decision-making, there is no significant difference between the perceptions of senior management and that of the other employees.

4.9.   Conclusion

The data analysis and findings in this chapter were done and made in line with the objectives of the study as set out in Chapter 1. The analysis and results gave insight to the perception of senior management regarding the quality of strategic management in the organisation, the perception of all employees regarding the quality of strategic management in the organisation and whether the perceptions of these two groups are aligned.

The results of the t-test revealed that, generally, senior management and employees are in alignment when it comes to the quality of strategic management

in the organisation, whether positive or negative, as there were only 2 elements out of 42 where the t-scores were above the required maximum.

Chapter 5 will contain the conclusions and recommendations in accordance with the analysis done in and the findings of Chapter 4 within the framework of the objectives of the study as established in Chapter 1. This will be done in line with the literature review of Chapter 2 in order to answer the research question in Chapter 1. The literature review done in Chapter 2 will also be scrutinised to find alignment with the findings of this study and to steer recommendations.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter, a summary of the findings in Chapter 4 will be discussed in accordance with the literature review in Chapter 2 to answer the research question asked in Chapter 1: *Is there alignment between senior management and that of the rest of the organisation regarding the perceived quality of strategic management within the organisation?* This will once again be done in line with the research objectives of the study, and provide insight into the disparities between the perception of senior management and that of the rest of the organisation regarding the quality of strategic management within the organisation. The research objectives were:

- To establish senior management's perceptions of the quality of strategic management in the organisation.
- To establish all employees' (excluding senior management) perceptions of the quality of strategic management in the organisation.
- To determine if there is alignment between senior management and that of the other employees regarding the perceived quality of strategic management.

Recommendations will be given as well as areas to investigate in the future. The limitations of the study will also be discussed.

The survey had 67 responses, which consisted of 12 senior managers and 55 employees. Their perceptions of the quality of strategic management in the organisation, especially with regard to alignment within the organisation, were established and compared. The results provide an insight to the disparities between the perception of senior management and that of the rest of the organisation regarding the quality of strategic management within the organisation.

5.2. Summary of findings

5.2.1. Senior management's perceptions of the quality of strategic management in the organisation

5.2.1.1 *Section 2: Quality of strategic management*

Senior management's view of the quality of strategic management within SOILL is generally in alignment. Out of 22 elements, senior management was in alignment on 19 elements. This means that they concurred (50.0% or more) on whether a specific element of the quality of strategic management was either in place or not in place within the organisation.

Senior management's view of the quality of strategic management within SOILL could also as a whole be seen as positive. Senior management agreed that 19 out of 22 elements were indeed in place within the organisation. This means that 50.0% or more of senior management either agreed or strongly agreed on a specific strategic management element.

In line with the literature review in Chapter 2, senior management is confident (50.0% and more agreement) that SOILL has the following important elements of the quality of strategic management in place.

SOILL's senior management is certain that their decisions create value their shareholders and ensure the organisation's sustainability for the future. This is consistent with the goal of strategic management identified in Chapter 2. Strategic management must create value for its stakeholders (Chatain and Mindruta, 2017; Lieberman, et al., 2017; Lee, et al., 2018; Makadok and Ross, 2018; Ross, 2018) to ensure a sustainable competitive advantage (McIntyre and Srinivasan, 2017; Menon, 2018; Vermeulen, 2018; Haans, 2019; Flammer and Ioannou, 2020; Zhu and Westphal, 2021) and the success of the organisation (Calabrò et al., 2018; Sharapov, et al., 2021).

According to Kouamé and Langley (2018) and Kang et al. (2021), the strategic management process is the formulating and implementation of a strategic plan. In accordance with this, SOILL's senior management is certain that they have a

clear long-term strategy. They also believe that they have a clear vision for the future and that their strategic decisions are always in line with this vision. Thompson et al. (2018) stated that developing a strategic vision is part of the strategic management process and all decisions should be aligned with an organisation's strategy (David and David, 2017; Durand, Grant and Madsen, 2017; Rothaermel, 2017). Senior management is also confident that the strategy is acceptable to key internal stakeholders, which conforms to the view that employees must buy-in to the strategy of the organisation in order for it to be successful (Sacher and Lal, 2017; Demartini and Taticchi, 2021; Taylor, 2021; Wolff-Buy, 2021).

Strategic alignment creates a fit between the internal and the external environment (Hicks, 2016; Guerra-López, 2018; Ling, 2019) and organisations must be able to proactively respond to changes in this external environment (Waterman, et al., 1980; Sharma, 2017). The senior management of SOILL agree that their strategies are aligned with their external environment, that they are both proactive and quick to respond to changes in the environment and that departments get together regularly to plan responses to changes in the business environment.

Key to implementing strategy is setting objectives (Thompson et al., 2018), focusing on a few critical KSFs (McChesney et al., 2012) and measuring in terms of implementation (David and David, 2017; Rothaermel, 2017; Thompson et al., 2018; Wheelen et al., 2018; Amoo et al., 2019). SOILL's senior management is certain that they are doing all three of these important aspects of strategy implementation. They are also confident that they almost always achieve their objectives, which is the purpose of strategic management (Durand et al., 2017; Kouamé and Langley, 2018).

At SOILL, senior management sees strategy implementation as an important function, believes that their leadership is visibly committed to implementing the strategy and that their culture supports their strategic direction. As identified in the literature review in Chapter 2, all three these elements are essential to strategic management (David and David, 2017; Rothaermel, 2017; Kouamé and

Langley, 2018; Thompson et al., 2018; Wheelen et al., 2018; Canic, 2020; Copper, 2021; Kang, et al., 2021).

To successfully implement a strategy, an organisation must have the right structure (Wheelen et al., 2018; Amoo et al., 2019) and capabilities (Waterman, et al., 1980; Thompson et al., 2018) in place to support the strategy. SOILL's management believe that they have both the right structure and competencies in place.

5.2.1.2 *Section 3: The tools of strategic management*

5.2.1.2.1 *The tools of strategic management (Part A)*

Senior management's perception of the tools of strategic management within SOILL is in alignment, as they were in alignment on all seven elements. This means that they assented (50.0% or more) on whether a specific tool of strategic management was either in place or not in place within the organisation.

Consistent with the literature review in Chapter 2, senior management is confident (50.0% and more in agreement) that SOILL has the following important tools of strategic management in place.

SOILL's senior management believes that they have a formal process to implement their strategy and engage with stakeholders during the strategic planning and implementation. This is important as it is vital to strategy management and implementation (McChesney et al., 2012; Dalton, 2016; Thompson et al., 2018; Wheelen et al., 2018; Morrow and Mowatt, 2020).

To monitor strategy implementation, SOILL's management trusts that they have an organisation-wide performance management system using a balanced scorecard, that they have regular reviews of progress with implementation that are linked to implementation incentives or rewards and they have executive information systems in place to provide the necessary information. According to Guerra-López (2018), Lonbani et al. (2016), Cifalinò and Lisi (2019), McChesney (2012) and Akhtar and Sushil (2018), regularly reviewing the progress in terms of

implementation, having a performance management system, specifically using a balanced scorecard, linking rewards to implementation and having the necessary information systems are vital to strategy implementation.

5.2.1.2.2 *The tools of strategic management (Part B)*

Senior management's perception of whether certain tools of strategic management are valuable in supporting strategic management is in alignment. Senior management were in alignment on all seven elements. This means that they are of a similar opinion (50.0% or more) on whether a specific tool of strategic management is either valuable or not.

SOILL's senior management, following the trend in 5.2.1.2.1, feels that the majority of tools of strategic management implemented in the organisation is of value (50.0% and more agreement). Except on regarding the balanced scorecard, the majority were neutral.

5.2.1.3 *Section 4: Strategic decision-making*

Senior management's view of strategic decision-making within SOILL is by and large in alignment. Out of six elements, senior management were in alignment with five elements. This means that 50.0% or more agreed that a specific element of strategic decision-making was either in place or not in place within the organisation.

Senior management's view of strategic decision-making within SOILL could also be seen as all together positive. Out of six elements, senior management agreed that five of the elements were indeed in place within the organisation. This means that 50.0% or more of senior management either agreed or strongly agreed on a specific strategic decision-making element. As 4.3 (in our organisation, we take a long time to make important decisions) and 4.7 (organisational politics dominate strategic decision-making in our organisation) are the inverse of good practices when it comes to strategic decision-making, senior management's general disagreement on these elements is seen as a positive.

In accordance with the literature review (Chapter 2), senior management were of the opinion (50.0% and more agreement) that the following happens at SOILL in terms of strategic decision-making.

Taking a long time to make decisions and internal politics are barriers to strategy implementation (Dalton, 2016; Groysberg et al., 2018). Senior management, however, feels that this is not a problem within SOILL.

It is important that the leadership is on the same page when it comes to their strategy (Rampe and Elliott, 2016; David and David, 2017; Rothaermel, 2017; Thompson et al., 2018; Wheelen et al., 2018). SOILL's senior management believes that at SOILL key managers have a common understanding of their business and its environment. The leadership should also engage with stakeholders and have access to up-to-date information when making decisions (Dalton, 2016; David and David, 2017; Rothaermel, 2017; Thompson et al., 2018; Canic, 2020; Morrow and Mowatt, 2020). Senior management is of the opinion that they engage with experienced employees and consult real-time information resources when before making decisions.

5.2.2. All employees' perceptions of the quality of strategic management in the organisation

5.2.2.1 *Section 2: Quality of strategic management*

The employees' view of the quality of strategic management within SOILL is generally in alignment. Out of 22 elements, employees were in alignment with 20 elements. This means that they accepted (50.0% or more) that a specific element of the quality of strategic management was either in place or not in place within the organisation.

The employees' view of the quality of strategic management within SOILL could also, as a whole, be seen as positive. Employees agreed that 20 out of 22 elements were if fact in place within the organisation. This means that 50.0% or more employees either agreed or strongly agreed on a specific strategic management element.

Employees mostly showed the same confidence (50.0% and more agreement) in the elements in place in relation to the quality of strategic management as senior management. There were, however, some differences.

In line with the view by David and David (2017) and Wheelen et al. (2018) that policies and procedures must be in line with the strategy, SOILL's employees are certain that SOILL's internal operating environment (processes and policies) support their strategy.

SOILL's employees also felt that the activities of different divisions in this organisation are well coordinated, which is consistent with the opinion that interdepartmental coordination is important to strategy implementation (Rothaermel, 2017; Canic, 2020; Morrow and Mowatt, 2020).

They did, however, not agree that culture strongly supports strategic direction.

5.2.2.2   *Section 3: The tools of strategic management*

5.2.2.2.1   The tools of strategic management (Part A)

Employees' perception of the tools of strategic management within SOILL is overall in alignment, as they were in alignment on all seven elements. This means that they concurred (50.0% or more) on whether a specific tool of strategic management was either in place or not in place within the organisation. This in in line with the perception of senior management, in 5.2.1.2.1.

5.2.2.2.2   The tools of strategic management (Part B)

Employees' perceptions of whether certain tools of strategic management are valuable in supporting strategic management is overall in alignment. Employees were in alignment on all seven elements. This means that they are of a similar opinion (50.0% or more) on whether a specific tool of strategic management was either valuable or not.

Similar to senior management's opinion of the value of the tools of strategic management, employees at SOILL are of the opinion (50.0% and more

agreement) that all the tools of strategic management are valuable, including the balanced scorecard, which helps to measure performance both tangible and intangible aspects of strategy implementation (Lonbani et al., 2016; Cifalinò and Lisi, 2019).

5.2.2.3   *Section 4: Strategic decision-making*

The employees' view of strategic decision-making within SOILL is barely in alignment. Out of six elements, employees were in alignment on only three elements. This means that they consented (50.0% or more) that only three of the specific elements of strategic decision-making were either in place or not in place within the organisation.

The employees' view of strategic decision-making within SOILL could be interpreted as ambiguous. Out of six elements, employees agreed that only three of the elements were indeed in place within the organisation. This means that on three elements, 50.0% or more of employees either agreed or strongly agreed on a specific strategic decision-making element.

Even though employees primarily had the same assurance (50.0% and more agreement) in the elements in place in relation to the strategic decision-making as senior management, there were some disparities.

Employees were not of the opinion that strategic decision-makers seek the advice of experienced employees before making important decisions and that it takes a long time to make important decisions.

5.2.3. The alignment between senior management and that of the other employees regarding the perceived quality of strategic management

5.2.3.1   *Section 2: Quality of strategic management*

There is general alignment between the perception of senior management and that of other employees regarding the quality of strategic management. The t-test indicated that senior management's perception and employees' perception of the quality of strategic management were in alignment on all elements but one. Thus,

there was only one element in which the perceptions of senior management and the employees were disconnected.

5.2.3.2   *Section 3: The tools of strategic management*

5.2.3.2.1   *The tools of strategic management (Part A)*

There is overall alignment between the perception of senior management and that of other employees regarding the tools of strategic management. The t-test indicated that the perceptions of senior management and employees were alighted in all elements regarding the quality of the tools of strategic management.

5.2.3.2.2   *The tools of strategic management (Part B)*

There is 100% alignment between the perception of senior management and that of other employees regarding how valuable a tool is in supporting strategic management. The t-test indicated that the perceptions of senior management perception and the employees were aligned in all elements regarding how valuable a tool is in supporting strategic management.

5.2.3.3   *Section 4: Strategic decision-making*

Although there was less alignment between the perception of senior management and that of other employees in terms of strategic decision-making, overall, the perceptions of senior management and that of other employees were similar. The t-test indicated that, despite the fact that senior management's perception and employees' perception of strategic decision-making diverged on one element, on five of the six elements senior management's perception corresponded with employees' perception of strategic decision-making.

5.2.4. Conclusion to the summary of findings

The research question of whether there is alignment between senior management and that of the rest of the organisation regarding the perceived quality of strategic management within the organisation was addressed. It is safe to conclude that, overall, there is alignment between senior management and that

of the rest of the organisation regarding the perceived quality of strategic management within the organisation. This is due to the fact that in most of the elements the questionnaire related to the perceived quality of strategic management, senior management and employees generally have the same perception as to what is in place in the organisation and what is important regarding the quality of strategic management.

5.3. Recommendations

5.3.1. Senior management's perceptions of the quality of strategic management in the organisation

5.3.1.1 *Section 2: Quality of strategic management*

According to senior management, the following elements of the quality of strategic management are not in place (49.9% and less agreement) at SOILL.

Senior management feels that the activities of different divisions in the organisation are not well coordinated. Through organisation, coordination and integration, the organisation can achieve its vision (Rothaermel, 2017; Thompson et al., 2018; Gans et al., 2019). The strategy must also be implemented by each division to ensure success (David and David, 2017), but if it is not governed by policies, procedures and interdepartmental coordination (Rothaermel, 2017; Canic, 2020; Morrow and Mowatt, 2020), it will impede strategy implementation (Vigfússon, et al., 2021). To help different divisions to coordinate their activities, SOILL can implement coordination instruments, such as interdepartmental task teams, communication networks and regularly engage with stakeholders (Dalton, 2016; Thompson et al., 2018; Wheelen et al., 2018; Morrow and Mowatt, 2020).

Senior management is also of the opinion that the organisation's strategy is not clearly understood by most people in the organisation (Sharma, 2017). Employees must not only understand the organisation's strategy, but employees must also understand how they contribute to its success (Herd et al., 2018; Mavis et al., 2019). Strategic communication helps employees to understand the organisation's strategy and consequently improves the effectiveness of strategy

implementation (Amoo et al., 2019). Leadership must focus on regularly communicating and sending out documents about the strategy. If some leaders relay the strategy incorrectly, communication from the top can correct this by addressing the whole organisation through presentations and official communique distributed through various communication channels. This links senior management's perception of the strategy with the perception of all employees (Ocasio, Laamanen & Vaara, 2018). Suggested communication aids include analogies (Ott, Eisenhardt & Bingham, 2017), stories (Copper, 2021), strategy visualisation (Knight, Paroutis & Heracleous, 2018) and training (Edwards, 2018).

SOILL's senior management believes that their internal operating environment (processes and policies) does not support strategy implementation (Waterman et al., 1980; David and David, 2017; Rothaermel, 2017; Thompson et al., 2018; Wheelen et al., 2018; Canic, 2020). Strategy implementation involves creating policies and procedures in line with the strategy and mobilising employees to put these in place (David and David, 2017; Wheelen et al., 2018). This is especially important when facing difficult or unknown situations (Sharma, 2017). Policies and procedures should give top-down direction, ensure consistency and create an enabling environment. To ensure that policies support the strategy, it must give focus and set limits, but it should also leave some degree of freedom for employees (David and David, 2017; Kollenscher, Eden, Ronen & Farjoun, 2017; Canic, 2020). SOILL should review and update their current policies and procedures to align with their strategy.

5.3.1.2 *Section 3: The tools of strategic management*

5.3.1.2.1 *Section 3: The tools of strategic management (Part A)*

According to the senior management, all the necessary tools of strategic management are already in place at SOILL. There are thus no specific recommendations regarding the implementation of strategic management tools.

5.3.1.2.2   *Section 3: The tools of strategic management (Part B)*

Not all of SOILL's senior management see the value in having a balanced scorecard. It should be considered that monitoring the implementation of the strategy is a crucial part of strategy implementation (Wheelen et al., 2018) and that implementing employee performance monitoring systems gives managers a way to monitor the effectiveness of their employees (David and David, 2017; Rothaermel, 2017; Thompson et al., 2018; Canic, 2020). However, management must not only measure performance but also provide employees an opportunity to provide ideas on how to improve performance (McChesney et al., 2012). Rewarding employees for implementing the strategy drives strategy implementation (Thompson et al., 2018; Shafagatova and Van Looy, 2021); it will work only if employees are rewarded in line with the strategy (Akhtar and Sushil, 2018; Guerra-López, 2018). To achieve this, balanced scorecards can be of value to monitor and control performance (Lonbani, Sofian & Baroto, 2016; Cifalinò and Lisi, 2019). Balanced scorecards, if used correctly, give management a way to monitor the implementation and performance, provide an opportunity for engagement and motivate employees.

Section 4: Strategic decision-making

Although senior management agree that the majority of the elements associated with strategic decision-making are in place at SOILL, they agree that strategic decision-makers do not consult widely with key internal stakeholders (e.g. employees, unions) before making important decisions.

Leaders should understand what their employees are thinking and feeling (Sharma, 2017). Efficient communication is not only top-down but also bottom-up (Tawse and Tabesh, 2021:26). Management must stay informed of what is happening on the ground by regularly engaging with stakeholders. This will help management to gain insight from people who have intimate knowledge of what the operational reality is (Herhausen, De Luca & Weibel, 2018; Jarzabkowski and Bednarek, 2018; Li et al., 2018).

The leadership must also motivate the organisation to drive the strategy (Dalton, 2016; Thompson et al., 2018; Wheelen et al., 2018; Morrow and Mowatt, 2020). This can be achieved through constructive pressure, which can be strengthened by treating employees as valued partners by consulting employees (Elbanna and Fadol, 2016; Henry, Buyl & Jansen, 2019; Kan, Chung & Chung, 2019).

Obstacles identified regarding goal achievement can also be overcome by engaging with stakeholders to take ownership of goals (Dalton, 2016; David and David, 2017). This supports the idea of creating accountability through engagement (McChesney et al., 2012).

Regarding the changes that the strategy implementation process provides, senior management must engage with and understand stakeholders to ensure alignment (Ahmed, Kumar & Kumar, 2018; Copper, 2021). Strategy execution depends on the stakeholders. Therefore, leadership must engage their hearts and minds and treat them as human beings, thereby building a trust relationship and creating want-in (Thompson et al., 2018; Canic, 2020). This can be achieved through engagement, which will also improve motivation and productivity (Guerra-López, 2018). Stakeholder engagement can be done through surveys, one-to-ones, meetings and events (Canic, 2020; Copper, 2021).

5.3.2. All employees' perceptions of the quality of strategic management in the organisation

It is not employees' responsibility to drive strategy implementation, but the leadership of an organisation (Dalton, 2016). Therefore, the recommendations below in terms of the employees' perceptions of the quality of strategic management in the organisation will be related to how SOILL's management can improve their employees' perceptions of the quality of strategic management in the organisation.

5.3.2.1   *Section 2: Quality of strategic management*

Despite the fact that SOILL's senior management believe that the culture in the organisation strongly supports the strategic direction, SOILL's employees do not believe this to be true.

SOILL's culture must reassure attitudes and behaviours that drive its strategy (David and David, 2017; Thompson et al., 2018; Wheelen et al., 2018; Canic, 2020; Copper, 2021). As culture is a KSFs in strategy implementation (Vigfússon et al., 2021), it is important that an organisation's culture is supported by actions, policies, procedures, the atmosphere, interactions, peer pressure and rewards and traditions (David and David, 2017; Rothaermel, 2017; Thompson et al., 2018; Wheelen et al., 2018; Canic, 2020).

To institutionalise their culture, SOILL must employ only candidates that fit into the culture and to some extent evaluate their employees' performance based on cultural values. SOILL's leadership must regularly communicate and engage with their employees regarding their desired culture and act as role models (David and David, 2017; Rothaermel, 2017; Thompson et al., 2018; Canic, 2020; Copper, 2021).

SOILL's culture must reassure attitudes and behaviours that drive its strategy (David and David, 2017; Thompson et al., 2018; Wheelen et al., 2018; Canic, 2020; Copper, 2021).

SOILL's leadership must clearly outline the preferred behaviour and persuade employees to embrace the culture. They can take substantive and symbolic action to endorse the culture. Management can replace employees in leadership positions that do not embrace the culture, promote and reward employees that imbue the culture, and give cultural training. SOILL's leaders must lead by example, and they can honour employees that drive the culture (David and David, 2017; Rothaermel, 2017; Thompson et al., 2018; Wheelen et al., 2018).

In line with SOILL's senior management's opinion, employees also agree that their organisation's strategy is not clearly understood by most people in the organisation. (Refer to 5.3.1.1 for recommendations.)

5.3.2.2   *Section 3: The tools of strategic management*

5.3.2.2.1   *Section 3: The tools of strategic management (Part A)*

In line senior management's view, all employees believe that all the necessary tools of strategic management are already in place at SOILL. Therefore, there are no specific recommendations regarding the implementation of strategic management tools.

5.3.2.2.2   *Section 3: The tools of strategic management (Part B)*

As SOILL's employees believe all tools of strategic management to be valuable, there are no specific recommendations regarding how valuable a strategic management tool is in supporting strategic management.

5.3.2.3   *Section 4: Strategic decision-making*

The alignment between senior management and that of the other employees regarding the perceived quality of strategic management was investigated. Even though SOILL's senior management believe that strategic decision-makers seek the advice of experienced employees before making important decisions, SOILL's employees disagree. This goes hand-in-hand with the opinions of both senior management opinion and SOILL's employees that strategic decision-makers do not consult widely with key internal stakeholders (e.g. employees, unions) before making important decisions. (Refer to section 5.3.1.1 for recommendations.)

In contrast to senior management's position that they do not take a long time to make important decisions at SOILL, employees reckon that it does take a long time.

Strategy implementation requires efficient decision-making (Canic, 2020). To speed up the decision-making process, an organisation can delegate authority. Decentralised decision-making allows employees that are nearest to and have the greatest understanding of a situation to make decisions in the moment (Herhausen, De Luca and Weibel, 2018; Jarzabkowski and Bednarek, 2018; Li et al., 2018) and it creates constructive pressure and ownership (Elbanna and Fadol, 2016; Henry, Buyl and Jansen, 2019; Kan, Chung and Chung, 2019).

If, however, decisions are too important to delegate, leadership must engage with employees to create the necessary understanding. (Refer to 5.3.1.1 and 5.3.1.3 for recommendations.)

5.3.3. Strategic management

Alignment plays a major role in the quality of strategic management (Rothaermel, 2017) and limited alignment can be an obstacle in terms of the quality of strategic management (Vigfússon et al., 2021). It is thus vital to ensure that there is alignment between the perception of senior management and the other employees regarding the quality of strategic management.

According to the t-test done in Chapter 4 as well as the data analysis and findings, there are only two elements that do not pass the t-test as their t-score is above the allowed maximum. This means that the perceptions of senior management and employees regarding the quality of strategic management are aligned, except in two elements.

The first element in which there is misalignment falls under section 2 (quality of strategic management) and is related to their internal organisation structure supporting their strategic direction implementation. The second element of misalignment falls under section 4 (strategic decision-making) and is related to organisational politics dominating strategic decision-making in their organisation.

SOILL can be commended for the degree of alignment (whether positive or negative) in their organisation regarding the perceived quality of strategic

management. However, due to the importance of strategic alignment, there are some guidelines that they can follow to improve it.

Alignment starts on an individual level and expands to include all actions across levels and functions (Herd et al., 2018; Mavis et al., 2019) until strategic consistency is reached (Mavis et al., 2019). Alignment should therefore not be done in isolation or as a one-time event, but it must be a comprehensive continuous organisational process.

Alignment does not come naturally; it must be done purposefully by using the right means and interventions, such as programmes and projects (Hicks, 2016; Guerra-López, 2018). Although there are different opinions regarding what takes preference when aligning an organisation, Canic (2020) found that it is not any one thing but rather everything during the alignment process that creates synergy. Consequently, alignment merits the full attention of senior managers (Thompson et al., 2018).

In line with the recommendations given in 5.3.1 and 5.3.2, to align strategy, Copper (2021) proposes using change management methods that stress change agents, building expertise and leadership, and developing a plan. Strategic communication can also play a role in alignment (Amoo et al., 2019), as a lack of transparency can lead to misalignment (Kambla, 2017). Guerra-López (2018) suggests the use of a performance measurement system to align and communicate the strategy, as it gives all stakeholders a base to communicate priorities and expectations. It is, however, vital to understand that actions speak louder than words (Rothaermel, 2017; Canic, 2020), as it creates integrity and legitimacy (Mavis et al., 2019).

5.4. Limitations of the study

Due to the nature of the research methodology and that of the organisation, the following limitations were anticipated:

- Because of time constraints and the availability of resources, the study was conducted in only one organisation within the food manufacturing industry.

- The researcher is an outside party and had limited access to confidential information and employees within the organisation.

- As a result of the use of an electronic survey, only employees with a company email address were able to receive the questionnaire. This meant that a large percentage of employees within the organisation were not granted an opportunity to complete the questionnaire, many of whom were lower-level employees who generally have less access to information regarding strategic implementation in the organisation.

- On account of the researcher not being known to the employees in the organisation, participants might have been apprehensive to give their honest opinion regarding the quality of strategy implementation within their organisation.

- As the research was not a company initiative and the completion of the survey was not compulsory, employees in the organisation might have been indifferent and not completed the questionnaire, which could have reduced the amount of data available to analyse and draw conclusions from.

- One cannot generalise from the results/findings of this case study.

5.5. Future research areas

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic that started in 2020, SOILL had to quickly adjust their operations to meet the new demand brought by the shift in the market from the hospitality industry to the retail market.

As the conditions within the country return to normal, it would be beneficial to understand what the impact will be on the alignment between senior management and that of the rest of the organisation regarding the perceived quality of strategic management within the organisation. The changes that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic happened quite rapidly and most people were aware of the

general impact. SOILL had to intentionally make large-scale changes in terms of both the safely of the employees and their operations. With things gradually returning to normal, albeit a new normal, the changes might be more subtle and could happen at a much slower pace. By and large, people might not be as aware of these changes as the changes brought on by COVID-19.

It would be beneficial to repeat the study in the future, at SOILL, to see if there is still alignment between senior management and that of the rest of the organisation regarding the perceived quality of strategic management within the organisation when changes happen at a decelerated pace and in a more muted fashion.

5.6. Conclusion

This research project focused on the alignment between senior management and that of the rest of the organisation regarding the perceived quality of strategic management within the organisation. A wide array of literature was reviewed to understand what strategic management and strategy implementation entails, and what the KSFs and obstacles are to strategy implementation. Further focus was given to the significance of strategic alignment and the strategy alignment process, and the important role of strategic communication. This review of the literature, in alignment with the research objectives, was used as the basis for the data analysis in Chapter 4 and the conclusions and recommendations in Chapter 5.

In totality, taking the limitations of the study into consideration, the research indicated that there is alignment between senior management and that of the rest of the organisation regarding the perceived quality of strategic management within the organisation. However, it would be advantageous to repeat the study in the future to assess the sustainability of the alignment between senior management and that of the rest of the organisation regarding the perceived quality of strategic management at SOILL.

REFERENCES

Ahmed, Z., Kumar, U. & Kumar, V. 2016. Managing critical success factors for IS implementation: a stakeholder engagement and control perspective. *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences*, 35(3), 403–418. doi: 10.1002/cjas.1441.

Akhtar, M. & Sushil, M. 2018. Managing strategic performance in a dynamic business environment: a study of two Indian oil companies. *Global Business and Organizational Excellence*, 37(5), 47–62. doi: 10.1002/joe.21876.

Alam, P.A. 2017. Measuring organizational effectiveness through performance management system and Mckinsey's 7 S Model. *Asian Journal of Management*, 8(4), 1280-1286. doi: 10.5958/2321-5763.2017.00194.9.

Alagaraja, M., Egan, T.M. & Woodman, R.W. 2017. Towards an understanding of HRDLean strategy linkages: a multicase study of four U.S. based firms. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 28(4), 553–592. doi: 10.1002/hrdq.21292.

Albrecht, J.N. 2017. Challenges in national-level tourism strategy implementation – a long-term perspective on the New Zealand tourism strategy 2015. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 19(3), 329–338. doi: 10.1002/jtr.2115.

Alcaide-Muñoz, C., Bello-Pintado, A. & De Cerio, J.M.D. 2018. Manufacturing strategy process: the role of shop-floor communication. *Management Decision*, 56(7), 1581–1597. doi: 10.1108/MD-01-2017-0085.

Amoo, N., Hiddlestone-Mumford, J., Ruzibuka, J. & Akwei, C. 2019. Conceptualizing and measuring strategy implementation: a

multidimensional view. *Strategic Change*, 28(6), 445–467. doi: 10.1002/jsc.2298.

Apuke, O.D. 2017. Quantitative research methods – a synopsis approach. *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review (Kuwait Chapter),* 6(10), 40–47. doi: 10.12816/0040336.

Baik, Y., Kim, H. & Park, Y.R. 2021. Environmental multi-dimensionality and staff localization in multinational enterprises: the case of Korean firms. *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences*, 38(1), 68–79. doi: 10.1002/cjas.1584.

Bendickson, J., Gur, F.A. & Taylor, E.C. 2018. Reducing environmental uncertainty: how high performance work systems moderate the resource dependence-firm performance relationship. *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences*, 35(2), 252–264. doi: 10.1002/cjas.1412.

Blake, D.J. & Moschieri, C. 2017. Policy risk, strategic decisions and contagion effects: firm-specific considerations. *Strategic Management Journal*, 38(3), 732–750. doi: 10.1002/smj.2509.

Bloomfield, J. & Fisher, M.J. 2019. Quantitative research design. *Journal of the Australasian Rehabilitation Nurses' Association*, 22(2), 27–30. doi: 10.33235/jarna.22.2.27-30.

Blumberg, B.F., Cooper, D.R. & Schindler, P.S. 2014. *Business research methods*. 4th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Education.

Brozovic, D. 2018. Strategic flexibility: a review of the literature. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 20(1), 3–31. doi: 10.1111/ijmr.12111.

Burnes, B. 2017. *Managing change*. 7th ed. Harlow: Pearson Education.

Busco, C. & Sofra, E. 2021. The evolution of sustainability reporting: integrated reporting. In: Taticchi, P. & Demartini, M. eds. *Corporate sustainability in practice: A guide for strategy development and implementation*. Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland AG, 191–206.

Calabrò, A., Minichilli, A., Amore, M. & Brogi, M. 2018. The courage to choose! Primogeniture and leadership succession in family firms. *Strategic Management Journal*, 39(7), 2014–2035. doi: 10.1002/smj.2760.

Cândido, C.J.F. & Santos, S.P. 2015. Strategy implementation: what is the failure rate? *Journal of Management and Organization*, 21(2), 237–262. doi: 10. 1017/jmo.2014.77

Cândido, C.J.F. & Santos, S.P. 2019. Implementation obstacles and strategy implementation failure. *Baltic Journal of Management*, 14(1), 39–57. doi: 10.1108/BJM-11-2017-0350

Canic, M. 2020. *Ruthless consistency: how committed leaders execute strategy, implement change and build organizations that win*. New York: McGraw-Hill Education.

Chatain, O. & Mindruta, D. 2017. Estimating value creation from revealed preferences: application to value-based strategies. *Strategic Management Journal*, 38(10), 1964–1985. doi: 10.1002/smj.2633.

Cifalinò, A. & Lisi, I.E. 2019. Managing multiple forms of strategic training fit through the balanced scorecard. *International Journal of Training and Development*, 23(3), 240–252. doi: 10.1111/ijtd.12160.

Copper, D.L. 2021. Sustainability transformations – from theory to practice. In: Taticchi, P. & Demartini, M. eds. *Corporate sustainability in practice: a guide for strategy development and implementation*. Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland AC, 165-190.

Dalton, C. 2016. *Brilliant strategy for business: how to plan, implement and evaluate strategy at any level of management*. Harlow: Pearson Education.

David, F.R. & David, F.R. 2017. *Strategic management concepts and cases: a competitive advantage approach*. 16th ed. Harlow: Pearson Education.

Demartini, M. & Taticchi, P. 2021. Sustainability facts. In: Taticchi, P. & Demartini, M. eds. *Corporate sustainability in practice: a guide for strategy development and implementation*. Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland AG, 3-20.

Durand, R., Grant, R.M. & Madsen, T.L. 2017. The expanding domain of strategic management research and the quest for integration. *Strategic Management Journal*, 38(1), 4–16. doi: 10.1002/smj.2607.

Edwards, G. 2018. Through the looking glass: strategic organizational practices in strategic management. *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences*, 35(3), 373–389. doi: 10.1002/cjas.1442.

Elbanna, S. & Fadol, Y. 2016. An analysis of the comprehensive implementation of strategic plans in emerging economies: the United Arab Emirates as a case study. *European Management Review*, 13(2), 75–89. doi: 10.1111/emre.12068.

Elbanna, S., Al Katheeri, B. & Colak, M. 2020. The harder firms practice strategic management, the better they are. *Strategic Change*, 29(5), 651–569. doi: 10. 1002/jsc.2365.

Fitza, M. & Tihanyi, L. 2017. How much does ownership form matter? *Strategic Management Journal*, 38(13), 2726–2743. doi: 10.1002/smj.2671.

Flammer, C. & Ioannou, I. 2020. Strategic management during the financial crisis: how firms adjust their strategic investments in response to credit market disruptions. *Strategic Management Journal,* 42(7), 1275–198l. doi: 10.1002/ smj.3265.

Fuertes, G., Alfaro, M., Vargas, M., Gutierrez, S., Ternero, R. & Sabattin, J. 2020. Conceptual framework for the strategic management: a literature review – descriptive. *Journal of Engineering (United Kingdom)*, 2020, Article ID 6253013. doi: 10.1155/2020/6253013.

Galpin, T.J. 2018. Realizing your strategy's potential: a seven-step model for its effective execution. *Strategy and Leadership*, 46(6), 35–43. doi: 10.1108/ SL-09-2018-0088.

Gans, J.S., Stern, S. & Wu, J. 2019. Foundations of entrepreneurial strategy. *Strategic Management Journal*, 40(5), 736–756. doi: 10.1002/smj.3010.

Gębczyńska, A. 2016. Strategy implementation efficiency on the process level. *Business Process Management Journal*, 22(6), 1079–1098. doi: 10.1108/ BPMJ-01-2016-0004.

Geetanjali, V.K. & Jayanth, J. 2019. Introduction to research. In: Bairagi, V. & Munot, V.M. eds. *Research methodology – a practical and scientific approach*. New York: CRC Press, 1-24.

Groysberg, B., Lee, J., Price, J., Yo, J. & Cheng, J. 2018. The leader's guide to corporate culture what's your organization's cultural profile? *Harvard Business Review*, January-February, 44-52.

Guerra-López, I. 2018. Ensuring measurable strategic alignment to external clients and society. *Performance Improvement*, 57(6), 33–40. doi: 10.1002/ pfi. 21796.

Guo, G. 2017. Demystifying variance in performance: a longitudinal multilevel perspective. *Strategic Management Journal*, 38(6), 1327–1342. doi: 10.1002/smj.2555.

Haans, R.F.J. 2019. What's the value of being different when everyone is? The effects of distinctiveness on performance in homogeneous versus heterogeneous categories. *Strategic Management Journal*, 40(1), 3–27. doi: 10.1002/smj.2978.

Henry, L.A., Buyl, T. & Jansen, R.J.G. 2019. Leading corporate sustainability: the role of top management team composition for triple bottom line performance. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 28(1), 173–184. doi: 10.1002/ bse.2247.

Herd, A.M., Shuck, B.M. & Githens, R P. 2018. Strategic human resource development alignment from the employee's perspective: initial development and proposition testing of a measure. *Performance Improvement Quarterly*, 31(3), 269–291. doi: 10.1002/piq.21266.

Herhausen, D., De Luca, L.M. & Weibel, M. 2018. The interplay between employee and firm customer orientation: substitution effect and the contingency role of performance-related rewards. *British Journal of Management*, 29(3), 534–553. doi: 10.1111/1467-8551.12230.

Hiatt, J.M. 2006. *ADKAR: a model for change in business, government and our community*. Loveland: Prosci Research.

Hicks, K. 2016. Construct validation of strategic alignment in learning and talent development. *Performance Improvement Quarterly*, 28(4), 71–89. doi: 10.1002/piq.21210.

Hong, B. 2020. Power to the outsiders: external hiring and decision authority allocation within organizations. *Strategic Management Journal*, 41(9), 1628–1652. doi: 10.1002/smj.3182.

Jarzabkowski, P. & Bednarek, R. 2018. Toward a social practice theory of relational competing. *Strategic Management Journal*, 39(3), 794–829. doi: 10.1002/smj.2724.

Jeong, Y., Siegel, J.I., Chen, S.Y.P. & Newey, W.K. 2020. A recentering approach for interpreting interaction effects from logit, probit, and other nonlinear models. *Strategic Management Journal*, 41(11), 2072–2091. doi: 10.1002/smj.3202.

Jeske, D. & Calvard, T.S. 2020. A review of the literature on cross-functional integration (2010-2020): trends and recommendations. *International Journal or Organizational Analysis*, 29(2), 401–414. doi: 10.1108/IJOA-04-2020-2144.

Kambla, V. 2017. Do spin-offs really create value? Evidence from India. In: Raghunath, S. & Rose, E.L. eds. *International business strategy perspectives on implementation in emerging markets*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 129-142.

Kan, S., Chung, D. & Chung, G. 2019. Customer experience transformation in the aviation industry: business strategy realization through design thinking, innovation management, and HPT. *Performance Improvement*, 58(1), 13–30. doi:10.1002/pfi.21823.

Kang, Y., Zhu, D.H. & Zhang, Y.A. 2021. Being extraordinary: how CEOs' uncommon names explain strategic distinctiveness. *Strategic Management Journal*, 42(2), 462–488. doi: 10.1002/smj.3231.

Kaufman, R. 2017. Practical strategic leadership: aligning human performance development with organizational contribution. *Performance Improvement*, 56(2), 16–21. doi: 10.1002/pfi.21664.

Kaul, A. 2018. Culture vs strategy: which to precede, which to align? *Journal of Strategy and Management*, 12(1), 116–136. doi: 10.1108/JSMA-04-2018-0036.

Knight, E., Paroutis, S. & Heracleous, L. 2018. The power of PowerPoint: a visual perspective on meaning making in strategy. *Strategic Management Journal*, 39(3), 894–921. doi: 10.1002/smj.2727.

Knight, H., Megicks, P., Agarwal, S. & Leenders, M.A.A.M. 2019. Firm resources and the development of environmental sustainability among small and medium-sized enterprises: evidence from the Australian wine industry. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 28(1), 25–39. doi: 10.1002/bse.2178.

Koch, R. 1998. *The 80/20 principle: the secret of achieving more with less.* London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

Kollenscher, E., Eden, D., Ronen, B. & Farjoun, M. 2017. Architectural leadership: tneglected core of organizational leadership. *European Management Review*, 14(3), 247–264. doi: 10.1111/emre.12108.

Kor, Y.Y., Mahoney, J.T., Siemsen, E. & Tan, D. 2016. Penrose's The Theory of the Growth of the Firm: an exemplar of engaged scholarship. *Production and Operations Management*, 25(10), 1727–1744. doi: 10.1111/poms.12572.

Kotter, J.P. 1995. Leading change: why transformation efforts fail. *Harvard Business Review,* 85(1), 96-103.

Kouamé, S. & Langley, A. 2018. Relating microprocesses to macro-outcomes in qualitative strategy process and practice research. *Strategic Management Journal*, 39(3), 559–581. doi: 10.1002/smj.2726.

Lanzolla, G., Pesce, D. & Tucci, C.L. 2021. The digital transformation of search and recombination in the innovation function: tensions and an integrative framework. *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, 38(1), 90–113. doi: 10.1111/jpim.12546.

Latukha, M.O. 2018. Can talent management practices be considered as a basis for sustainable competitive advantages in emerging-market firms? Evidence from Russia. *Thunderbird International Business Review*, 60(1), 69–87. doi: 10.1002/tie.21778.

Lee, B. & Saunders, M.N.K. 2017. *Conducting case study research for business and management students.* London: Sage. doi: 10.4135/ 9781529716702.

Lee, B.H., Struben, J. & Bingham, C.B. 2018. Collective action and market formation:aAn integrative framework. *Strategic Management Journal*, 39(1), 242–266. doi: 10.1002/smj.2694.

Leedy, P.D. & Omrod, J.E. 2013. *Practical research: planning and design*. Boston, MA: Pearson.

Leedy, P.D. & Omrod, J.E. 2019. *Practical research: planning and design*. 12th ed. Boston, MA: Pearson.

Lexico. 2021a. *Factor: Definition of Factor by Oxford Dictionary on Lexico.com also meaning of FACTOR* [online].
Available from: <https://www.lexico.com/definition/factor> [Accessed 9 July 2021].

Lexico. 2021b. *Implementation: Definition of Implementation by Oxford Dictionary* [online].
Available from: <https://www.lexico.com/definition/implementation> [Accessed 2 June 2021].

Lexico. 2021c. *Key: Definition of Key by Oxford Dictionary on Lexico.com also meaning of Key* [online].
Available from: <https://www.lexico.com/definition/key> [Accessed 9 July 2021].

Lexico. 2021d. *Success: Definition of Success by Oxford Dictionary on Lexico.com also meaning of Success* [online].
Available from: <https://www.lexico.com/definition/success> [Accessed 9 July 2021].

Li, C., Brodbeck, F.C., Shenkar, O., Ponzi, L.J. & Fisch, J.H. 2017. Embracing the foreign: cultural attractiveness and international strategy, *Strategic Management Journal*, 38(4), 950–971. doi: 10.1002/ smj.2528.

Li, C., Sun, L.Y. & Dong, Y. 2018. Innovating via building absorptive capacity: Interactive effects of top management support of learning, employee learning orientation and decentralization structure. *Creativity and Innovation Management*, 27(4), 431–443. doi: 10.1111/caim.12261.

Lieberman, M.B., Garcia-Castro, R. & Balasubramanian, N. 2017. Measuring value creation and appropriation in firms: the VCA model. *Strategic Management Journal*, 38(6), 1193–1211. doi: 10.1002/smj.2565.

Ling, Y.H. 2019. Examining green policy and sustainable development from the perspective of differentiation and strategic alignment. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 28(6), 1096–1106. doi: 10.1002/bse.2304.

Lonbani, M., Sofian, S. & Baroto, M.B. 2016. Balanced scorecard implementation in SMEs: addressing the moderating role of environmental uncertainty. *Global Business and Organizational Excellence*, 35(3), 58–66. doi: 10.1002/ joe.21671.

Makadok, R. & Ross, D.G. 2018. Losing by winning: the danger zone of adverse competitor replacement. *Strategic Management Journal*, 39(7), 1990–2013. doi: 10.1002/smj.2910.

Makadok, R., Burton, R. & Barney, J. 2018. A practical guide for making theory contributions in strategic management. *Strategic Management Journal*, 39(6), 1530–1545. doi: 10.1002/smj.2789.

Makino, S. & Chan, C.M. 2017. Skew and heavy-tail effects on firm performance. *Strategic Management Journal*, 38(8), 1721–1740. doi: 10.1002/smj.2632.

Mane, P.B. & Nikam, S.S. 2019. Basic Instrumentation. In: Bairagi, V. & Munot, M. eds. *Research methodology: a practical and scientific approach*. New York: CRC Press, 99-160.

Martínez-Romero, M.J., Rojo-Ramírez, A A. & Casado-Belmonte, M. del P. 2020. Value creation in privately held family businesses: the moderating role of socioemotional wealth. *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences*, 37(3), 283–299. doi: 10.1002/cjas.1540.

Masilela, L. & Nel, D. 2021. The role of data and information security governance in protecting public sector data and information assets In National Government in South Africa. *Africa's Public Service Delivery and Performance Review*, 9(1), 1–10. doi: 10.4102/apsdpr.

Mavis, C.P., Richter, A., Landau, C., Schmidt, S.L., Simons, T. & Steinbock, K. 2019. What happens when companies (don't) do what they said they

would? Stock market reactions to strategic integrity. *European Management Review*, 16(3), 815–831. doi: 10.1111/emre.12175.

McChesney, C., Covey, S. & Huling, J. 2012. *The four disciplines of execution*. New York: Free Press.

McIntyre, D.P. & Srinivasan, A. 2017. Networks, platforms, and strategy: emerging views and next steps. *Strategic Management Journal*, 38(1), 141–160. doi: 10.1002/smj.2596.

Menon, A. 2018. Bringing cognition into strategic interactions: strategic mental models and open questions. *Strategic Management Journal*, 39(1), 168–192. doi: 10.1002/smj.2700.

Middleton, L., Hall, H., Muir, L. & Raeside, R. 2018. The interaction between people, information and innovation: information literacy to underpin innovative work behaviour in a Finnish organisation. *Proceedings of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 55(1), 367–376. doi: 10.1002/pra2.2018. 14505501040.

Minbaeva, D.B. 2018. Building credible human capital analytics for organizational competitive advantage. *Human Resource Management*, 57(3), 701–713. doi: 10.1002/hrm.21848.

Mishra, P., Pandey, C.M., Singh, U., Gupta, A., Sahu, C. & Keshri, A. 2019. Descriptive statistics and normality tests for statistical data. *Annals of Cardiac Anaesthesia*, 22(1), 67-72. doi: 10.4103/aca.ACA_ 157_18.

Morrow, J. & Mowatt, S. 2020. The freedom within framework: a multilevel perspective on developing green capabilities through routines in service organisations. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 29(7), 2895–2907. doi: 10.1002/bse.2579.

Mukhergee, S.P. 2020. *A guide to research methodology: an overview of research problems, tasks and methods*. New York: CRC Press.

Narikae, P.O. & Lewa, P.M. 2017. The origins and development of strategic management 'knowledge': a historical perspective. *European Journal of Business and Strategic Management*, 2(1), 1–19.

Neeley, T.B. & Leonardi, P.M. 2018. Enacting knowledge strategy through social media: passable trust and the paradox of nonwork interactions. *Strategic Management Journal*, 39(3), 922–946. doi: 10.1002/smj.2739.

Nienaber, H. & Martins, N. 2020. Exploratory study: determine which dimensions enhance the levels of employee engagement to improve organisational effectiveness. *TQM Journal*, 32(3), 475–494. doi: 10.1108/ TQM-05-2019-0151.

Ocasio, W., Laamanen, T. & Vaara, E. 2018. Communication and attention dynamics: an attention-based view of strategic change. *Strategic Management Journal*, 39(1), 155–167. doi: 10.1002/smj.2702.

Osorio-Londoño, A.A., Naranjo-Valencia, J.C. & Calderón-Hernández, G. 2020. Training and its influence on competitive strategy implementation. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 31(2), 149–172. doi: 10.1002/hrdq. 21381.

Ott, T.E., Eisenhardt, K.M. & Bingham, C.B. 2017. Strategy formation in entrepreneurial settings: past insights and future directions. *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal*, 11(3), 306–325. doi: 10.1002/sej.1257.

Polonsky, M. & Waller, D. 2019. *Designing and managing a research project: a business student's guide*. 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. doi: 10.4135/ 9781544316499.

Pretorius, M. 2016. Crooked strategy implementation: covert tactics fill the gaps. *Journal of Business Strategy*, 37(4), 24–31. doi: 10.1108/JBS-04-2015-0035.

Prieto, V.C. & De Carvalho, M.M. 2018. Can internal strategic alignment influence performance? An empirical research applying structural equation modelling. *Academia Revista Latinoamericana de Administracion*, 31(3), 585–604. doi: 10.1108/ARLA-09-2016-0235.

Rahi, S. 2017. Research design and methods: a systematic review of research paradigms, sampling issues and instruments development. *International Journal of Economics & Management Sciences*, 6(2),1–5. doi: 10.4172/2162-6359.1000403.

Rampe, K. & Elliott, S. 2016. Gender equity in accounting: how the CPA profession is balancing the numbers. *Global Business and Organizational Excellence*, 35(5), 6–18. doi: 10.1002/joe.21694.

Rani, P. 2019. Strategy implementation in organizations: a conceptual overview. *Management*, 14(3), 205–218. doi: 10.26493/1854-4231.14.205-218.

Ross, D.G. 2018. Using cooperative game theory to contribute to strategy research. *Strategic Management Journal*, 39(11), 2859–2876. doi: 10.1002/ smj.2936.

Rothaermel, F.T. 2017. *Strategic management*. 3rd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Education.

Sacher, A. & Lal, A. 2017. Challenges in employee engagement in emerging economies. In: Raghunath, S. & Rose, L. eds. *International business strategy perspectives on implementation in emerging markets.* London: Palgrave Macmillan, 335-360.

Salvato, C. & Vassolo, R. 2018. The sources of dynamism in dynamic capabilities. *Strategic Management Journal*, 39(6), 1728–1752. doi: 10.1002/ smj.2703.

Sara Ding, X., Mo, J. & Zhong, L. 2017. The effect of cross-border mergers and acquisitions on earnings quality: evidence from China. *Thunderbird International Business Review*, 59(4), 519–531. doi: 10.1002/tie.21851.

Scherbaum, C.A. & Shockley, K.M. 2015. Basic components of quantitative data analysis. In: Lee, B., Saunders, M.N.K. & Narayanan, V.K. eds. *Analysing quantitative data for business and management students*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. doi: 10.4135/9781529716719.

Seidl, D. & Werle, F. 2018. Inter-organizational sensemaking in the face of strategic meta-problems: requisite variety and dynamics of participation. *Strategic Management Journal*, 39(3), 830–858. doi: 10.1002/smj.2723.

Selvarajah, C. & Meyer, D. 2017. Leadership excellence in organisations in the Mekong region: a comparitive study of Thailand, Cambodia, Lao, and Vietnam. In: Raghunath, S. & Rose, E.L. eds. *International business strategy perspectives on implementation in emerging markets.* London: Palgrave Macmillan, 391-418..

Shafagatova, A. & Van Looy, A. 2021. A conceptual framework for process-oriented employee appraisals and rewards. *Knowledge and Process Management*, 28(1), 90–104. doi: 10.1002/kpm.1644.

Sharapov, D., Kattuman, P., Rodriguez, D. & Velazquez, F.J. 2021. Using the SHAPLEY value approach to variance decomposition in strategy research: diversification, internationalization, and corporate group effects on affiliate profitability. *Strategic Management Journal*, 42(3), 608–623. doi: 10.1002/smj.3236.

Sharma, R. 2017. The straits of success in a VUCA world. *ABS International Journal of Business Management*, 7(1), 1–6.

Sinha, P.N., Jaskiewicz, P., Gibb, J., & Combs, J.G. 2020. Managing history: how New Zealand's Gallagher Group used rhetorical narratives to reprioritize and modify imprinted strategic guideposts. *Strategic Management Journal*, 41(3), 557–589. doi: 10.1002/ smj.3037.

SOILL. No date a. *Animal feed - SOILL* [online]. Available from: <https://www.soill.co.za/animal-feed/> [Accessed 25 May 2021].

SOILL. No date b. *Company – SOILL* [online]. Available from: <https://www.soill.co.za/company/#about> [Accessed 25 May 2021].

SOILL. No date c. *Contact – SOILL* [online]. Available from: <https://www.soill.co.za/contact/> [Accessed 25 May 2021].

SOILL. No date d. *Farmer's portal – SOILL* [online]. Available from: <https://www.soill.co.za/farmers-portal/> [Accessed 25 May 2021].

SOILL. No date e. *Services – SOILL* [online]. Available from: <https://www.soill.co.za/services/#bottling> [Accessed 25 May 2021].

SOILL. No date f. *SOILL – Southern Oil (PTY) Ltd* [online]. Available from: <https://www.soill.co.za/> [Accessed 25 May 2021].

South Africa. Department of Statistics. 2020. *Steep slump in GDP as COVID-19 takes its toll on the economy* [online]. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa.

Available from: <http://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=13601> [Accessed 30 April 2021].

South Africa. Department of Statistics. 2021. *Statistical release, P3041* [online]. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa.
Available from: <https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P30412/P30412September2001.pdf> [Accessed 30 April 2021].

SSK *(Sentraal-Suid Co-Operative Limited).* 2005. *SSK Jaarverslag / Annual Report 2005*. Swellendam: Sentraal-Suid Co-operative Ltd.

SSK (*Sentraal-Suid Co-Operative Limited).* 2013. *SSK Jaarverslag / Annual Report 2013*. Swellendam: Sentraal-Suid Co-operative Ltd.

SSK (*Sentraal-Suid Co-Operative Limited).* 2020. *SSK Jaarverslag / Annual Report 2020*. Swellendam: Sentraal-Suid Co-operative Ltd.

SSK *(Sentraal-Suid Co-Operative Limited). 2021. Groep struktuur – SSK* [online]. Available from: <https://www.ssk.co.za/af/oor-ons/groep-struktuur/> [Accessed 26 May 2021].

Sull, D., Homkes, R. & Sull, C. 2015. Why strategy execution unravels - and what to do about it. *Harvard Business Review*, 93(3), 57–66.

Tan, X., Fu, F.Q. & Yi, H. 2016. Improving retail sales performance by integrating HPT with marketing strategies. *Performance Improvement*, 55(1), 6–13. doi: 10.1002/pfi.21546.

Tawse, A. & Tabesh, P. 2021. Strategy implementation: a review and an introductory framework. *European Management Journal*, 39(1), 22–33. doi: 10.1016/J.EMJ.2020.09.005.

Taylor, S. 2021. How to approach the development of a corporate sustainability strategy. In: Taticchi, P. ed. *Corporate sustainability in practice: a guide for strategy development and implementation*. Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland AG, 143-164.

Thompson, A.A., Peteraf, M.A., Gamble, J.E. & Strickland, A.J. 2018. *Crafting and executing strategy: the quest for competitive advantage*. 21st ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Education.

Trullen, J., Bos-Nehles, A. & Valverde, M. 2020. From intended to actual and beyond: a cross-disciplinary view of (human resource management) implementation. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 22(2), 150–176. doi: 10.1111/ijmr.12220.

UNIDO. 2020. *World manufacturing production statistics for quarter IV 2020 - a recovery at two speeds* [online].
Available from: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/ WEO/Issues/2021/ 01/26/2021-world-economic-outlook-update> [Accessed 30 April 2021].

Verhaal, J.C., Hoskins, J.D. & Lundmark, L.W. 2017. Little fish in a big pond: legitimacy transfer, authenticity, and factors of peripheral firm entry and growth in the market center. *Strategic Management Journal*, 38(12), 2532–2552. doi: 10.1002/smj.2681.

Vermeulen, F. 2018. A basic theory of inheritance: how bad practice prevails. *Strategic Management Journal*, 39(6), 1603–1629. doi: 10.1002/smj.2713.

Vigfússon, K., Jóhannsdóttir, L. & Ólafsson, S. 2021. Obstacles to strategy implementation and success factors: a review of empirical literature. *Strategic Management*, 26(2), 12–30. doi: 10.5937/StraMan2102012V.

Wahyono. 2018. The moderation effect of customer orientation variable on the influence of professional competence toward the quality of strategy

implementation. *International Journal of Law and Management*, 60(6), 1432–1447. doi: 10.1108/ IJLMA-10-2017-0247.

Waterman, R.H., Peters, T.J. & Phillips, J.R. 1980. Structure is not organization. *Business Horizons,* 23(3), 14–26.

Weiser, A.K. 2021. The role of substantive actions in sensemaking during strategic change. *Journal of Management Studies*, 58(3), 815–848. doi: 10.1111/joms.12621.

Wheelen, T.L., Hunger, D.J., Hoffman, A.N. & Bamford, C.E. 2018. *Strategic management and business policy: Globalization, innovation and sustainability*. 15th ed. Harlow: Pearson Education.

Wolff-Buy, C. 2021. Business' role in a changing society. In: Taticchi, P. & Demartini, M. eds. *Corporate sustainability in practice: a guide for strategy implementation and development*. Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland AG, 127-142.

Yarahmadi, F. 2020. *Multistage sampling technique and estimating sample size for a descriptive study on viewers' perception of TV Commercials*. London: Sage. doi: 10.4135/9781529713961.

Zhao, E.Y., Fisher, G., Lounsbury, M. & Miller, D. 2017. Optimal distinctiveness: broadening the interface between institutional theory and strategic management. *Strategic Management Journal*, 38(1), 93–113. doi: 10.1002/smj.2589.

Zhu, D.H. & Westphal, J.D. 2021. Structural power, corporate strategy, and performance. *Strategic Management Journal*, 42(3), 624–651. doi: 10.1002/ smj.3239.

Zollo, M., Minoja, M. & Coda, V. 2018. Toward an integrated theory of strategy. *Strategic Management Journal*, 39(6), 1753–1778. doi: 10.1002/smj.2712.

Zyphur, M.J. & Pierides, D.C. 2017. Is quantitative research ethical? Tools for ethically practicing, evaluating, and using quantitative research. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 143(1), 1–16. doi: 10.1007/s10551-017-3549-8.

ANNEXURE A: PERCEIVED QUALITY OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

THE PERCEIVED QUALITY OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT 2021

Dear Respondent

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Insert number

Section 1: Organisation and respondent particulars

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

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

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

Insert number

1.3 What is the core business of your establishment?

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

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

Select from drop-down list

1.5 What best describes your position within your company?

Director	Senior manager or executive	Middle manager	Entry level manager (e.g. supervisor)	Professional specialist	Permanent employee	Other *(please specify)*: ....

1.6 Which of the following best describes the functional area that you work in?

Sales	Finance and accounting	Operations, engineering or technical	Marketing	ICT	General management	Other support services

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

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

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

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

Section 3: The tools of strategic management

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

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

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

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

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

•

Section 5: Organisational performance

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

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

Section 6:   Personal particulars

6.1 How old will you be on your next birthday?

Insert number

6.2 What is your gender?

Female	Male

6.3 What is your highest formal qualification?

Did not complete high school	Completed high school (matric)	Post-matric degree or diploma	Post-graduate qualification

6.4 Which ethnic group do you belong to?
(this response will be used purely to determine the representativeness of the sample)

Asian/ Indian	Black	Coloured	White

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

Enter e-mail address

ANNEXURE B: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Graduate School of Business Leadership, University of South Africa PO Box 392 Unisa 0003 South Africa
Cnr Janadel & Alexandra Avenue Midrand 1685 Tel: +27 11 652 0000 Fax: +27 11 652 0299
Email: sbl@unisa.ac.za Website: www.sblunisa.ac.za

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

30 July 2021

RESEARCH FOCUS AREA: PERCEIVED QUALITY OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Dear Prospective Participant

My name is Sanet van der Merwe and I am doing research with Prof Peet Venter, a Professor of Strategy in the Graduate School of Business Leadership, and a group of other students, towards a Masters of Business Administration (MBA) degree at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a research project entitled "The Perceived Quality of Strategic Leadership" The title of my dissertation is: The disparity between the perceived quality of strategic management of senior management and employees in a canola oil manufacturing company.

WHAT IS THE AIM/PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

The aim of this study is to determine the perceived quality of strategic leadership in southern African organisations.

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

You have been chosen to participate as an employee of Southern Oil (Pty) Ltd (SOILL). Your company has provided me with permission as well as your company email address, and all 157 employees with a SOILL email address, no exclusions, are invited to participate in this study.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY /WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH INVOLVE?

The study involves completing an online questionnaire about your perceptions of strategic leadership and leadership practices in your organisation, and it will take about 20-25 minutes to complete.

CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY?

Participating in the study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to participate. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to specifically consent to participation. You are free to withdraw at any time before submitting

First in Leadership Education in Africa

Graduate School of Business Leadership, University of South Africa PO Box 392 Unisa 0003 South Africa
Cnr Janadel & Alexandra Avenue Midrand 1685 Tel: +27 11 652 0000 Fax: +27 11 652 0299
Email: sbl@unisa.ac.za Website: www.sblunisa.ac.za

the questionnaire without giving a reason, but questionnaires are submitted confidentially, and it may not be possible to withdraw after submission of the questionnaire.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

Your participation in the study is important to better help us identify ways of improving the quality of strategic leadership and through that, the performance of organisations.

WHAT IS THE ANTICIPATED INCONVENIENCE OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

Apart from the time commitment, there should be no discomfort or inconvenience beyond what you may experience in your daily life.

WILL WHAT I SAY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

Your name will not be recorded anywhere, and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give.

Research results will be published in a research dissertation. A report of the study may be also submitted for publication (e.g. in conference proceedings or academic journals). However, organisations or individual participants will not be identifiable in such reports unless their specific permission has been obtained.

HOW WILL INFORMATION BE STORED AND ULTIMATELY DESTROYED?

Electronic copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of 5 years on a password protected disk. Information will be destroyed by deleting the files after 5 years.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

There are no direct incentives or payments for participating in the study. Should you wish to receive a summary of the research results, you can request it by providing your e-mail address at the end of the questionnaire. The e-mail address will be used only for distributing a copy of the research report.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICAL APPROVAL?

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the Graduate School of Business Leadership at Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the team leader if you so wish.

ANNEXURE C: ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPROVAL

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

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

29 July 2021

Ref #: 2021_SBL_MBA_006_FA
Name of applicant: Miss SA van der Merwe
Student #: 48310611

Dear Ms van der Merwe

Decision: Ethics Approval

Student: Ms SA van der Merwe, (48310611@mylife.unisa.ac.za , 073 998 4031

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

Project Title: The disparity between the perceived quality of strategic management of senior management and employees in a canola oil manufacturing company.

Qualification: Master of Business Administration (MBA)

Expiry Date: December 2022

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

Outcome of the SBL Research Committee:
Approval is granted for the duration of the Project

The application was reviewed in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics by the SBL Research Ethics Review Committee on the 26/07/2021.

The proposed research may now commence with the proviso that:

1) The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa Covid-19 position statement on research ethics attached

2) The researcher/s will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and

Building leaders who go beyond

SBL
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF
BUSINESS LEADERSHIP
UNISA

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

principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.

3) Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study, as well as changes in the methodology, should be communicated in writing to the SBL Research Ethics Review Committee.

4) An amended application could be requested if there are substantial changes from the existing proposal, especially if those changes affect any of the study-related risks for the research participants.

5) The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study.

Kind regards,

NBWMLitwa

Prof N Mlitwa

Chairperson: SBL Research Ethics Committee

011 - 652 0000/ wiltonb@unisa.ac.za

Prof P Msweli

Executive Dean: Graduate School of Business Leadership

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

ANNEXURE D: SUPERVISOR'S CONSENT LETTER TO SUBMIT

The Programme Administrator: MBL / MBA
Graduate School of Business Leadership
P O Box 392
UNISA
0003

CONSENT TO SUBMIT RESEARCH REPORT

Consent is hereby given to:

Student name: Susanna Aletta van der Merwe

Student number: 48310611 to submit her research report in its final form.

Study Leader: André Vermaak   Date: 28 November 2021

Study leader signature

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

Student signature: Date: 27 November 2021