The Perceived Quality of Strategic Management on the Organisational Performance of a South African Sugar Manufacturing Company

Research report presented to the

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by

Madikizela Funeka Happiness

61489026

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Supervisor: Dr Thembi Masekela

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Declaration of own work and copyright

I declare that this research project, the perceived quality of strategic management on the organisational performance of a South African sugar manufacturing company, is my own work and has not been submitted to any other institution for assessment purposes.

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Student name: Funeka Happiness Madikizela

Student number: 61489026

Abstract

The primary objective of this study was to evaluate the perceived quality of strategic management on the organisational performance of a South African sugar manufacturing company, which was achieved by using ABC as a case study. To meet the study objectives, a quantitative research methodology was adopted and a random sample of 114 employees from several departments at the ABC company yielded 72 responses which were further analysed.

Following the data analysis using SPSS, the study yielded contradictory outcomes pertaining to the firm's employment and adoption of strategic management techniques. The study revealed that scenario planning and the application of an official strategic planning approach were not as highly valued and thus given less weight. On the contrary, the results indicate that higher value was placed on the employment of executive information systems, Balanced Scorecards, organisation-wide performance management system and stakeholder engagement during the strategic planning and implementation. Furthermore, the study outcomes highlighted the significance of having access to real-time information and its role in strategic decision making.

Overall, the study found that strategic management practices have a positive and significant impact on organisational performance. Therefore, the study recommended that (i) the firm should invest in updating its strategic management practices to align with current industry trends and best practices, (ii) the organization should exploit opportunities in sustainably adopting expanded stakeholder consultations to gain a comprehensive understanding of expectations and concerns, (iii) the firm should promote a culture of continuous improvement by encouraging and involving employees at all levels, and (iv) managers as strategic decision makers in the firm should intentionally work together as they deliberate on daily operations.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ANOVA	Analysis of variance
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
EXCO	Executive Committee
IMAC	Institute of Management Accountants
IT	Information Technology
ITAC	International Trade Administration Commission of South Africa
SADC	South African Development Countries
SASA	South African Sugar Association
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview of Chapter

The study investigates the perceived quality of strategic management on the organisational performance of ABC, a South African sugar manufacturing company. This chapter provides a synopsis of the research roadmap, this includes the background of the study, the company background, the problem statement, research questions, research objectives, population and sample framework, how data will be collected and analysed, the ethical considerations and overall report outline. The chapter will end with a conclusion.

1.2 Brief background to the study

Strategic management is a continuous process that comprises of achieving an organisation's strategic intent through the setting of goals, efficiently allocating resources, formulating, and executing action plans (Van der Westhuizen, 2014; Babafemi, 2015; Fuertes, Alfaro, Vargas, Gutierrez, Ternero & Sabattin, 2020; Van der Merwe, 2021). While the strategic management process steps differ from author to author, at the core, the strategic management process can be simplified as the analysis of the external and internal environments, the review of strategies against the available capabilities and resources, the setting of customised goals, the formulation and implementation action plans at all levels of the organisation in alignment to the strategic intent. In an environment that constantly changes, many a company have fallen prey due to inability to swiftly adapt and respond appropriately. When adopted accordingly, a strategic management process offers an opportunity to maximise organisational performance and consequently attain the set strategic objectives in alignment to the strategic intent.

This process is thus, identified as a vital pathway for organisations that are determined to be sustainable, competitive, and profitable. While scholars agree that there is a relationship between strategic management and organisational performance, there is a debate that strategic planning as a first step of the strategic management process sets the tone for the entire process which determines the degree of success (Nyongesa, Makokha, Namusonge & Gregory, 2017; George, Walker & Monster, 2019; Wun, 2019). Perhaps this view is largely influenced by the four phased evolution of the strategic management concept. According to Hunger and Wheelen (2013), the first phase commenced in the with focus on reaching financial targets, while the second phase expanded to basic planning with an element of future prediction. The third phase focused on strategic planning, which for the first time considered the activities of the external

environment and an effort from the organisation to strategically respond to the markets in efforts to remain competitive. The last phase focused on the entirety of the strategic management process where both the external and internal environments were considered with the goal of exploiting internal capabilities and resources to attain competitive advantage. Babafemi (2015) concurs that there is a link between strategic planning and organizational performance however, in addition brings the strategy implementation element, as an additional important strategic management process step, citing that strategic planning on its own will not guarantee organisational success. Pallathadka (2020) argues that beyond the strategy and its implementation, another critical input lies in the ability of leadership to effectively and efficiently provide and manage resources in alignment to the strategic intent. This shifts the spotlight to the various stakeholders in strategic management and the roles they play.

Pallathadka (2020) and Fuertes et al. (2020) concur that both top management and employees have critical roles to play in strategic management. The key responsibilities are however placed on top management to set the strategic direction, create a conductive organizational culture, the provision of resources to enable the translation of the set goals to desired results. Organizational culture is strongly linked to organizational performance with specific spotlight on leadership, decision making and communication as critical contributors to a high-performance culture (Nyongesa et al., 2017; Kim, Kim & Kwon, 2020; Van der Merwe, 2021). Both (Nyongesa et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2020) advise that components that make organisational culture are core values, conventions, and artefacts. In addition, employees are not only affected by the organisational culture but also have personal core values that drive their behavior. This assertion is supported by (Griffin, Phillips & Gully, 2019) who espouses that the personal values are such a critical input to the organisation's culture, so much that the company leader's personal values not only influence the company strategy but the entire organisational culture through setting the tone of relationships between processes, communication and ethical decision making.

Nyongesa et al. (2017) and Kim et al. (2020) added that the top management structure must thus be intentional about ensuring that the strategic alignment process involves the development of an organisational culture with effective organisational structures that address employee role clarity, effective communication and keep employees of all levels engaged. Employees, on the other hand must be committed, involved and execute cascaded action plans into the results. The extent of involvement and committed is thus driven by both organisational

and intrinsic values. Thus, the employee attitudes and perceptions determine the extent of employee engagement in strategic implementation. Wun (2019) and Kim et al. (2020) state that employee perceptions drive behaviour and attitude which impact on the organisational performance. Wun (2019) adds that an organisational performance is the main aspect that gets measured to determine how well an organisation has executed its strategic goals. If a performance gap exists, it is the responsibility of top management to rectify in alignment to the business set targets. The performance gap could result from a variety of external or internal challenges.

Due to the dynamic business environment with both external and internal pressures, the strategic management must be a continuous process. In their submissions, both (Nyongesa et al., 2017; Wun, 2019) concurred that the organizational performance gap is created when there is a shortfall between the intended strategic goals and attained results. External environment induced challenges can originate from the activities associated with political, economic, social, technological, or legal factors. On the other hand, challenges with internal origins are often centred around the leadership's capabilities and competence in identifying and managing risks associated with the organisation's strengths, weaknesses, and being able to efficiently and effectively leverage on available resources to sustain a competitive advantage. The sugar manufacturing industry with its links to the agricultural sector is no different, a review of how the strategic management affects this industry is thus considered.

1.2.1 The industry and organisation background

Globally, there are more than 100 sugar manufacturing countries with top five being India, Brazil, China, European Union and Thailand; while South Africa is consistently ranked in the top 15 (AB Sugar, 2019; SASA, 2023). The wide applicability of sugar cane derived products makes it an important crop to the economy. By the nature, crop farming locations are in rural areas, which has seen rural socio-economic status improvement across the globe. There is a clear economic and political value add as the leading countries formulate support policies to ensure that this industry is safe guarded (AB Sugar, 2019; Ogura, da Silva, Castro, Espíndola, & da Silva, 2022). As a result of the benefit derived from the sugar cane products, leading countries are merging the political economic strategies to optimise the cane derived products. Thus, a significant shift in focus from the generation of renewable energy to more high value

chain activities such as bioplastics, organic chemicals, biofuels, biogases among others (Kassem, Alotaibi & Bagadeem, 2020; SASA, 2020; Verma & Solanki, 2020).

Africa contributes 5% of the global sugar production according to (Thibane, Soni, Phali & Mdoda, 2023) and 80% comes from the sub-Saharan African countries with key participants being South Africa, Kenya, Zambia, Sudan, Swaziland and Mauritius. In alignment to the global developments, (Cherubin, Carvalho, Cerri, Nogueira, Souza, & Cantarella, 2021; Moobi, Woody & Abdi, 2023) state that sub-Saharan African sugar mills are following the global leaders with use of sugar cane products for bioenergy and bio- ethanol production. South Africa, through import and export activities competes with the global sugar manufacturing countries, for sustain a competitive advantage it must adapt to the market activities and position itself such that it retains its position.

1.2.2 South African industry strategy related activities

The South African sugar industry which comprises of six sugar manufacturers, a total of 12 milling assets is supported by 23 000 sugar cane farmers located in KwaZulu Natal and Mpumalanga provinces. Like the global sugar market, the local sugar industry is a vital contributor of employment and with its value chain is estimated to support 1 million livelihoods. According to SASA (2020) this socio-economic impact is achieved through 65 000 direct and 270 000 indirect employment.

SASA (2020) advises that the direct and indirect impact of the sugar industry to the nation's economy received support from the President, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa in his 2019 state of the nation address speech. The president called for specific sector masterplans that would form government's way of creating a conducive environment for local industry growth. This was further actioned by Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition, Minister Ebrahim Patel in his July 2019 Budget Vote speech. In this speech, he called for a multistakeholder committee to formulate a ten-year plan titled a South African Sugarcane Value Chain Master Plan to 2030. This plan was developed as a collaborative effort from the South African sugar industry players, and multiple stakeholders that included sugarcane growers, the millers, refiners, retailers, bulk sugar consumers and government. The master plan included long-term plans that include diversification of sugarcane derived products, development of structures to deal with immediate threats of the collapsing sugar industry and the associated potential job losses, the

restructure in support of collaborative efforts on seeking industry-wide solutions. The plan's focus areas include capacity growth, export increment, local market share and a special focus on innovation as part of increasing competitive advantage. Thus, the six local sugar industry players' strategies would align with the master plan. The ABC company is part of the six players.

1.2.3 Organisational background

The ABC sugar organisation was founded in 1892 and has an operational footprint that spans across the Southern African Development Community with operational facilities in South Africa, Botswana, Mozambique and Zimbabwe (ABC, 2021). In South Africa, the organisation's portfolio includes agricultural properties and a land management portfolio. Of interest is the sugar manufacturing division in South Africa which the study will be confined to. This particular division has a total employ of 1800 permanent employees, of which 139 is decision making management. Due to being multi-layered, the organisation has a corporate, business, functional and operational strategies.

At a corporate level the organisation subscribes to a five-year turnaround strategy which was formulated in 2019 (ABC, 2021). The corporate strategy encompasses all group activities, while the business strategy concerns itself with the sugar division (all countries). The Functional strategies further set plans for each sugar milling operation while functional strategies are set for specific functional work groups. In alignment with one of the four pillars of the corporate turnaround strategy and the generic industry competitive strategy, the ABC organization competes with the low-cost strategy for its sugar division (SASA, 2020; ABC, 2021). According to ABC (2021) the first of the four pillars of the corporate turnaround strategy refer to the continuous drive to revisit the business aspects, processes, capabilities and resources with the aim of customising and promoting overall system efficiencies. The second pillar refers to embarking on activities that would promote sustainable growth, and this is achieved by focussing on the business aspects that concerns itself with stakeholder needs and expectations and customer satisfaction. The third pillar refers to aligning and optimising the organisation's asset base, in this pillar timing of activities is critical. For an example some agricultural land owned by the organisation is converted to industrial or residential zoning as demanded by the property market. The last pillar concerns itself with resource capability improvement, an action that is critical in the strategy formulation as driven by the overall

organizational intent. The highest level of the strategy is compiled by EXCO and reviewed and approved by the Board (ABC, 2021).

1.2.4 Link between the strategy and organizational performance

The corporate strategy is cascaded into in a top-down communication approach through other strategy levels to the operational level. The implementation is done at various levels of the organization, with management providing the resources to execute various action plans. Strategic management tools are used in various stages of the strategic management process. The organizational performance is monitored and measured periodically and reported to various levels of management in the organization. Daily meetings are held for the operational strategy, weekly review sessions are held for the functional strategies. Business level reviews are held quarterly while top management report to various committees at a quarterly basis. At all levels strategic decisions that drive actions and affect results are made by both management and employees. Wun (2019) and Kim et al. (2020) linked employee attitudes and behaviour to the organisational performance and thus, alignment between organisation's values and those of individuals is important to attain the desired objectives.

Thus, this study investigates a relationship between the perceived quality of strategic management by employees at all levels and the organisational performance of ABC, a South African sugar manufacturing company.

1.3 Problem statement

The leading global sugar industry players have support policies to sustain high sugar cane production volumes at a low cost (AB Sugar, 2019; Ogura et al., 2022). Thus, countries like Brazil, India and China can export large volumes of sugar to other countries including South Africa at much lower cost than the locally produced sugar. According to SASA (2020), while South Africa has both local and export sugar markets, it is ranked 15th place in global sugar production, thus, its volumes and costs are not comparable to the subsidised imports. SASA (2023) states that challenges specific to South African sugar industry have consequently resulted in mothballing of two sugar mills in the past three years. This reduced the total production capacity from 14 to 12 mills, which has impacts of socio-economic impacts in the value chain.

SASA (2020) and ABC (2021) states that for the first phase of the sugar industry master plan directly supports the use of local produce over global cheaper imports, the local sugar market however would exercise price restraint. The initiative would see an additional 300 000 tons added to the local demand over a period of two years. While the local industry strategies are low cost driven, to compete with imports local organisations must ensure effective and efficient strategic management process adoption. Since literature indicates that there is a link between the strategic management, organisation performance and attitudes values and perceptions of employees, it is thus critical to investigate the perceived quality of strategic management and its influence on the sugar manufacturing organisation's performance.

1.4 Research questions

To aid the research study, with the aim of bridging the gap created by the research problem, four key research questions were developed:

1.4.1 Research question 1

- What is the perceived quality of the strategic management process by employees and management at the sugar manufacturing company?

1.4.2 Research question 2

- How does the use and value of strategic management tools influence the quality of strategic management at the sugar company?

1.4.3 Research question 3

- How does the perceived quality of strategic decision-making influence the organisation performance at the sugar manufacturing company?

1.4.4 Research question 4

- How is organisational performance perceived by employees and management at the sugar manufacturing company?

1.5 Research objectives

Typical organisations have to set strategies that support their sustainability and competitive advantage (Kim et al., 2020). The role of leadership is to set strategies and provide a conducive environment to support the attainment of the set goals (Nyongesa et al., 2017; Wun, 2019). The organisational performance is influenced by the role players of strategic management process which is employees and management. Management must ensure effective decision making by its representatives, communicate the "why" to employees to create alignment between the

organisational values and those of individuals in the organisation (Nyongesa et al., 2017; Wun, 2019; ABC, 2021). To aid this study, four research objectives linked to the research questions have been formulated to guide the study.

1.5.1 Research objective 1

- To identify the employees and management's perceptions on the quality of the strategic management process at the sugar manufacturing company

1.5.2 Research objective 2

- To investigate the influence of the use and value of strategic management tools on the quality of strategic management at the sugar company

1.5.3 Research objective 3

- To determine how the perceived quality of strategic decision-making influences the organisation performance at the sugar manufacturing company

1.5.4 Research objective 4

- To evaluate the perceptions of employees and management on the organisational performance at the sugar company

1.6 Abbreviated literature review

The global sugar market has over 100 country participants, where South African sugar industry holds 15th highest volume produced position. In addition, the top five countries have support policies designed to sustain the high volumes. This has aided these countries to exploit their resources and capabilities in support of maintaining the sustainability of the high volumes at low costs. A strategy both (AB Sugar, 2019; Ogura et al., 2022) advise support both political and economic interests of countries like Brazil where sugarcane is critical resource for energy, alcohol and sugar. This means that South African sugar industry is competing with low cost produced sugar in both local and export market. Thus, to gain competitive advantage, the ABC company must exploit its resources and capabilities to set, align and achieve its strategic intent.

1.6.1 Strategic management

Eisenhardt (1990) defined strategy as a response to the question asking the direction a company is headed, and how it intends to get there, the "where to" and the "how". To get to any destination, there needs to be a desired destination and the preferred method of getting to it, hence, the strategic management process is adopted. In literature, there are a number of

strategic management definitions, the commonality is that there is reference to a continuous process that top management adopts to customise the organisation's direction with intentions to gain competitive organisation and add value to its shareholders. It is a process organisations use to deliver on their strategic intent through the setting of goals, efficiently allocating resources, formulating, and executing action plans (Van der Westhuizen, 2014; Babafemi, 2015; Fuertes et al., 2020; Van der Merwe, 2021). While in available literature, the strategic management process steps can vary from three to eight, for this study a five-step approach is adopted. The process commences with 1) the development of a customised company vision; 2) the setting of strategic objectives; 3) the formulation of a customised strategy; 4) implementation and execution of the customised strategy; and the evaluation and control (Gamble, Thompson, & Peteraf, 2019).

Source: adapted from (Gamble et al., 2019)

Figure 1. 1 The five strategic management process steps

Eisenhardt (1990) stated that a successful strategy depends on a series of aspects inclusive that of the organisational culture. The organisational culture sets the values within which to operate, but employees with their own values impact affect the culture, while the organizational culture also influences employees (Griffin et al., 2019). Thus, the evaluation of employee perceptions can assist in the successful execution of the strategic intent.

1.6.2 Perceived quality of strategic management

Konuk (2019) stated that quality can be defined in objective and subjective context, with the objective portion having tangible and measurable technical attributes while the subjective is based on the feeling of an individual. He added that, perceived quality concerned itself with the judgement an individual passes on an object 's brilliance and dominance which further influenced their behaviour. This assertion was supported by (Kim et al., 2020; Wun, 2020; Van der Merwe & Vermaak, 2021) who stated that there was a relationship between perceptions; the behaviour; and attitudes of employees which consequently impacted the organisational

performance. Konuk (2019) stated that to attain the desired goals, it is critical to understand what the perceptions of the affected and involved stakeholders are, in order to overcome related challenges.

1.6.3 Organisational performance

Weinzimmer, Robin and Michel (2012), Jenatabadi (2015) and Hutama and Sagala (2019) define organizational performance as an assessment of an organisation's capability and ability to meet pre-determined aspirations efficiently and effectively.

Jenatabadi (2015) advises that organisational performance amongst other factors is largely influence by resources as strategy inputs and the objectives set for the organisation to achieve.

1.6.4 Link between strategic management and organisational performance

Griffin et al. (2019) and Wun (2019) state that the responsibility of setting the strategy remained with top management, this process involves a series of activities including setting the mission, vision and core values of the organisation which in turn drive the culture of the organization. On the other hand, (Nyongesa et al., 2017; Wun, 2019) advise that both employees and management individual values influence the organisational culture through group dynamics such as team culture which in turn impact on how well the organisation performs (Griffin et al., 2019). While some authors tested hypotheses on the link with certain process steps of the strategic management process, (Weinzimmer et al., 2012; Van der Merwe & Vermaak, 2021) state that they stablished a link between strategic management and organisational performance.

1.7 Research methodology

According to Mukherjee (2020) there is a debate among researchers about the necessity of research methodology and advises that it is so critical that journals and peers do not accept research with no explicitly defined methodology. He adds that, the debate that research was historically conducted without methodologies falls short, in that there were always indications of the research approach adopted even if it was not explicitly scripted. Kothari (2004) and Mukherjee (2020) advise that research is a scientific systematic method of discovering new knowledge. On the other hand, a research methodology is defined as a systematic approach to finding a solution to an identified problem. Thus, conducting research involves a sequence od steps which commence with the identifying gaps in knowledge and formulation of research questions, the identification of a research strategy and design, the data collection, organizing,

analysis and reporting. An appropriate research methodology allows for accurate and suitable examination of the relationship between variables. Thus, the research process is completed when the conclusion is reached taking into consideration the research questions.

This study "The Perceived Quality of Strategic Management on the Organisational Performance of a South African Sugar Manufacturing Company" is a cross-sectional study that attempts to determine a relationship between two variables: strategic management an independent variable and organisational performance a dependent variable. The study adopts a descriptive approach and data collection uses a quantitative survey instrument from the university of South Africa (UNISA). Conclusions are reached by following a logical deductive approach. This approach systematically reviews theory, selects a research methodology, collects and analyses data before a conclusion is reached (Kothari, 2004). The adopted research methodology constitutes empirical data since the data collection will be conducted by the researcher on a few real-life constructs and collected data will be used to inform a conclusion. The survey instrument used is a quantitative survey.

1.7.1 Quantitative research approach

Kothari (2004) defines quantitative research as that which entails the creation of quantitative data that gets submitted to thorough quantitative analysis in a formal and strict manner. In this study quantitative research is adopted.

1.7.2 Population and sample framework

The population of this study is the South African ABC sugar division employees, and management inclusive of the executive committee (EXCO). A simple random sampling technique will be applied on the human capital personnel email groups provided by the Information Technology (IT) department, this is because while the business has 2225 employees, the majority of employees do not have access to email addresses as the jobs occupied do not require computers and or emails to fulfil the requirements of the involved tasks. Thus, on the 1304 personnel with access to computers, a random sample of 114 will be selected to ensure equal selection opportunities (Kothari, 2004). The access to email addresses thus presents a limitation to the pool of respondents.

Table 1. 1 A population and sample framework adopted for this study

Population and sample framework	Total Population	Target Sample size	% Population	Sample method
Management	46	10	22%	Random sampling
Employees	1258	104	8%	Random sampling
Total population: 1304		**Total sample targeted: 114**		

Source: Researcher's own compilation

According to Schindler (2019) pilot studies assist in determining the suitability (language, logic, relevance). The UNISA questionnaire instrument has been pre-tested and validated and thus none will be conducted to determine relevance of the language in this particular study. The UNISA questionnaire was formulated by the strategic research group and for purposes of this study will be adopted as is. The questionnaire has six sections and Section 2- Section 5 have a Likert-type scales that ranges from 1-5, where 1 represents strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- neither agree nor disagree, 4 -agree and 5 – strongly agree (Kothari, 2004). The last section requires personal data input.

The questionnaire layout:

Section 1: Organisation and respondent particulars requires information about the organisations and the role occupied by respondents

Section 2: Quality of strategic management
Respondents are required to share their perception of knowledge related to organisational culture, mission, long term objectives, strategic decision alignment to the strategic intent and questions pertaining to the perceived suitability of strategy for the stakeholders.

Section 3:   The tools of strategic management
This section assesses the use of specific tools and assigns a scale of 1-5 for each tool implementation.

Section 4:   Strategic decision-making

This section provides respondents an opportunity to rate the perceived effectiveness and efficiency of decision making at the company.

Section 5:   Organisational performance

This section uses a simple scale to evaluate three performance areas, financial, growth and customer brand perception.

Section 6:   Personal particulars

This section comprises of a biographical questionnaire that requires participants to advise of their race, gender and educational qualifications.

1.7.4 Data analysis methods, techniques and instruments

A quantitative questionnaire formulated for the UNISA strategy research focus group will be used as is. The instruments used is designed to gather the perception on the four constructs. With the use of the Likert scale the researcher is provided with an opportunity to observe respondent's attitudes and perception on specific topics, this aids the study in meeting the study objectives and responding to the research questions (Kothari, 2004; Schindler, 2019).

1.7.5 Quantitative data analysis

Statistical analysis will be conducted using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Kothari (2004) advises that descriptive statistics concerns itself with raw data indices formation while inferential statistics comprises of means to validate data and reach a conclusion about a population. Descriptive statistics uses charts and the Likert scale while inferential uses regression analysis and Pearson coefficient.

1.7.7 Validity and reliability

Schindler (2019) advises that validity refers to the degree a test instrument measures what it was intended to measure. In addition, validity verifies that the variances observed in a measurement tool are a true reflection of the differences in the observed sample. On the other hand, (Schindler, 2019) states that content validity is the degree to which the test covers all targeted areas, in other words the degree of representation of a targeted area. For this study validity of the questionnaire was pre-conducted by the UNISA focus group which comprises

of experts in the strategic management and organisational performance fields and thus will not be required.

Reliability refers to the degree a measurement, calculation, or specification's outcome can be relied upon to be correct (Cooper and Schindler, 2014). Cronbach's alpha coefficient will be used to measure reliability.

1.8 Ethical considerations

Ethics will be considered throughout the study. The target organisation was advised of the purpose of the study and guaranteed anonymity as part of the authourisation to conduct the study. The UNISA SBL Ethics committee certificate will be obtained prior to data collection.

1.8.1 Informed consent

Respondents will be advised of the aim of the study and where their contribution will be used.

1.8.2 Protection from harm

All participants will be protected from harm, none of the confidential details will be required. The study will maintain anonymity and the information will be used for the research purposes only.

1.8.3 Right to privacy

No confidential information identifiers such as names will be collected.

1.9 Conclusion

The chapter introduced the topic the perceived quality of strategic management at a South African based sugar company. It investigated the background of the topic, the global, African and local strategic management processes of the south African industries. The chapter then discussed the research questions and the relevant research objectives and the problem statement. Abbreviated literature summarised the key concepts that will be covered in the literature review. Research methodology provided a synopsis on the approach to be adopted. The chapter covered how ethics and protection of rights and confidentiality of participants were managed. Chapter two delves into the literature review which supports some elements from this chapter.

1.10 Study layout

This section provides a study layout and a brief synopsis of the study chapters and respective brief contents. The layout as mapped out in Figure 1.2, thus has a total of five chapters that are assembled in alignment to the purpose of the study, which is to achieve the research objectives.

Chapter 1		Chapter 2		Chapter 3		Chapter 4		Chapter 5
• Introduction	→	• Literature review	→	• Research methodology	→	• Results and Findings	→	• Conclusion and recommendations
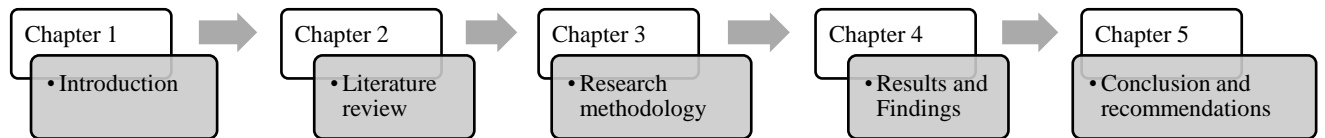
Source: Researcher's own compilation

Figure 1. 2 The research study layout

Chapter 1 concerns itself with the introduction, the background to the study, the problem statement, research questions, research objectives, abbreviated literature, research methodology, ethical consideration and conclusion.

Chapter 2 delves into the literature review, a brief evaluation of historical and recent views on the perceptions on strategic management by management or employees and impact on the organisational performance. Through literature review a conceptual and theoretical framework is developed which forms a basis and guidance for the study's later chapters.

Chapter 3 delves into the research methodology employed in the study. The chapter will provide the definitions of the research methodology, the approach and relevance to the study. The chapter will also discuss the measurement instrument, the sample framework inclusive of population and sample size, and ethical considerations.

Chapter 4 provides findings and explanations on the results of the disseminated questionnaire on the survey-based empirical research on the relationships between strategic management, quality of perceptions on strategic management, strategic decision making, strategic management tools and organisational performance.

Chapter 5 offers a conclusion and proposes recommendations based on the outcomes of Chapter 4.

1.11 References

The references on the study followed an augmented Harvard method.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Chapter one presented a foundation to the study and offered insight to the research problem, objectives and research questions. Chapter two on the other hand comprises a literature review. Martelli and Greener (2018), Bell, Bryman and Harley (2019), Snyder (2019) define literature review as a brief but critical overview and evaluation of the relevant existing body of knowledge such as published journals, reports, books and other peer evaluated articles. The purpose of the review of existing body of knowledge is to critically evaluate the significance of the historical and recent studies to identify synergies, divergences and gaps which are relevant to the study. This also serves to assist in substantiating the need for further research or solution seeking without duplicating what already exists in the body of knowledge. Thus, literature review seeks to provide insight on the processes employed to realise responses to research questions and support objectives.

The fundamental proposition of this study is based on the review of a relationship between the strategic management approach an organisation adopts and the influence on both management and employee's behaviour and their perceptions and how it consequently impacts on the organisational performance. With the research objectives and research questions in mind, this chapter thus delves into the definitions of key concepts, the relationship between the study variables (strategic management and processes, perceived quality of strategic management, strategic decision making and strategic management tools), the conceptual and theoretical frameworks, the empirical evidence, and the chapter conclusion. This study's literature review will thus be conducted by evaluating information on e-resources inclusive of journals, ebooks, industry websites and relevant organisation reports for common threads, contrasts, and synergies in application of empirical evidence where applicable. The chapter will thus start off by discussing the definitions of key concepts such as aspects related to strategic management in an organisation.

2.2 Definition of key concepts, conceptualisation and key issues

Prior to discussing strategic management, it is important to define strategy, given the various definitions available in literature and the views of some of the historical leaders in this field. Thus, a background on the need is given from the lens of Porter.

Porter (1996) and Hitt, Ireland, Hoskinkson (2020) postulate that in an ever-evolving competitive world with technological advancements, to survive the organisational focus has had to shift to sustainable competitive advantage. It is further asserted that, historical efforts of organisations employing process and productivity improvement tools failed to yield sustainable profitability. Adopting a systematic approach with strategy at the centre stage, is thus recommended, where strategy is defined as a unique value proposition that is accompanied by a respective set of actions, customised to achieve a competitive advantage in a specific organisation. This approach is said to be unique in that it seeks to exploit the available resources of an organisation to achieve set goals. Both (Grant, 2020; Fuertes et al.,2020) are aligned to these assertions and adds the trajectory aspect, stating the strategy is futuristic plan that comprises of planning activities that transform allocated resources into value-add activities. Ungerer, Ungerer and Herholdt (2016) bring in a continual improvement concept and define strategy as a set of intentional continual improvement behaviours adopted over time to maintain its competitive advantage. Ungerer et al. (2016) adds an important ingredient related to strategic leadership, that is the strategic decision making, where the definition identifies the process of establishing a foresight considering the available possibilities, then selecting an appropriate business model and implementing strategic goals that will yield a unique competitive advantage. Louw and Venter (2013) provide an all-inclusive definition and assert that strategy is a subterfuge that considers customer needs and satisfaction, the unique proposition to gain competitive advantage, the development of proficiencies, organisational design and how these elements are considered to ensure sustainable profitability and growth. Similarly, the definition offered by (Johnson, Whittington, Regnér, Angwin, & Scholes, 2020) include all concepts but add the organisation's dynamic abilities to manage its relationship between the business environment changes and the relevant aspects of the stakeholders' context.

While some definitions do not explicitly encompass the key concepts, some either indirectly allude to them or refer to other concepts, therefore the summary offered by Table 2.1 should not be seen to display limitations in adoption of concepts, but rather the alignment to the selected four most common concepts. Such examples are definition offerings by (Hunger and Wheelen, 2013; Johnson et al., 2020) that incorporate the concept of achieving goals in alignment to the mission, vision, and objectives of a business. Thus, the limited concepts on display in Table 2.1 does not necessarily mean, other authors refute the adoption of other concepts. After the review of the strategy definitions, it is the (Louw & Venter, 2013; Gamble

et al., 2019; Johnson et al., 2020) versions that are considered overall superior, as these consider the strategic intent, the business environment, stakeholders and the efficiencies within the business and their ability to work together to support the attainment of business goals in alignment to the strategic intent.

Table 2. 1 Key concepts that define an organisational strategy

Author/s	Long term plan	Unique value proposition	Transformation of resources	Action plans to achieve goals
Porter (1996)		x	x	x
Hunger and Wheelen (2013)	x	x		x
Louw and Venter (2013)	x	x	x	x
Ungerer et al. (2016)	x	x	x	
Gamble et al. (2019)	x	x	x	x
Grant (2020)	x	x		x
Fuertes et al. (2020)			x	x
Johnson et al. (2020)	x	x	x	x
Hitt et al. (2020)		x	x	x
Tjemkes, Vos, and Burgers (2023)	x		x	x

Source: Researcher's own compilation

Considering the various concepts that are key to the strategy, its execution requires an organisation architecture that enables synergy in all activities that must take place in order to achieve the desired goals. Thus, (Kim et al., 2020) emphasizes the need for the entire organisation to be aligned to the strategic action plans in order to realise the strategic intent.

He further postulates that, while the strategic direction might be set by top management, both middle management and employees have a role in formulating business and operational strategy levels and highlights the importance of strategic alignment. Kim et al. (2020) and Ramsumair (2023) advise that the role of strategic decision making, and strategic activity coordination is delegated to management, this highlights the significance of setting an organisational culture that promotes alignment, engagement and communication throughout the business. Related to this concept, (Ramsumair, 2023) advises that more than setting the strategy, strategic management comprises of implementing the defined strategy in an organisation in such a way that it gains competitive advantage. The next segment delves into the strategic management processes.

2.2.1 Strategic management and Strategic management processes

In support of sustainable competitive advantage, the previous segment provided a brief foundation by defining the strategy of an organisation and its significance in business. It further introduced the strategic management concept deemed as the process of implementing the respective action plans in place to support the strategy realisation (Eisenhardt, 1990). This segment examines the strategic management definitions offered by literature and briefly discusses some process steps involved in strategic management. Eisenhardt (1990) and Grant (2020:4) define strategic management as the direction the organisation is taking and how it intends to compete. A view that is almost linear and limited to the organisation and its intentions. Van der Westhuizen (2014), Babafemi (2015), Fuertes et al. (2020), Van der Merwe (2021) collectively offer a more dynamic definition that views the organisation as just one of the pieces in the puzzle of the world of business. The authors collectively define strategic management as a continuous process aimed at actualising the strategic intent of an organisation. This is achieved through setting customised strategic goals, efficiently allocating the required resources, developing, and implementing action plans that are aligned to the strategic intent.

Grant (2020) avows that the strategic management process enables organisations to consistently adapt and appropriately respond to the demands exerted by the internal and external environments, as such its significance becomes more evident when the outcome of corporate failures is related to lack of adaption and flexibility. Literature offers a various number of steps and approaches to strategic management processes; these vary from three to eight steps. What is critical to note is that the authors that provided a fewer process steps infused

the key concepts to other process steps, as opposed to totally disregarding them. Another contrast is noted in the sequence of process steps where the first step such as an establishment of the vision, mission and values is sometimes presented as a last step. This is because when considering the sequence of the steps, some authors commenced by considering the business environment, with elements such as environmental and internal scanning, wherein some authors considered the identity and intentions of the organisation first such as the vision, mission and values establishment. It is the view of the researcher that given the interdependence and continual improvement nature of the strategic management process that there is no incorrect sequence presentation. To meet the objective of the research, a sequence by (Gamble et al., 2019) is randomly adopted. Gamble et al. (2019) adopted a five-step approach which commences with the establishment of a vision, mission and organisational values, then the setting of the strategic objectives, the formulation of strategy, implementation and execution step and lastly the evaluation of performance.

| Develop vision, mission and values | | Set strategic objectives | | Formulate strategy | | Implement and execute strategy | | Evaluate perfomance and implement corrective action |

Source: adapted from (Gamble et al., 2019)

Figure 2. 1 The five strategic management process steps

2.2.2.1 The development of a customised company vision, mission and values

Although the strategic management process steps sequence offered by (Hitt et al., 2020) differs to that of (Gamble et al., 2019), the purpose as deemed by both assertions is the same. Both avowals assert that the vision and mission of an organisation advise the stakeholders about the identity of the organisation, its intentions, and the customers it intends to service. Gamble et al. (2019) further define the vision as a top leadership set business trajectory and the key focus elements it will adopt. These focus elements include the product offers, target customers, market position and approach to technology. Gamble et al. (2019) adds that the mission is defined as the current business activities, while the values are a set of behaviours, attitudes adopted by an organisation in order to achieve the vision and mission. In support of the assertions related to the values, (Nyongesa et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2020) avow that amongst other elements, values are an essential ingredient of the organisational culture. Griffin, Phillips,

and Gully (2019) assert that while the inverse is true, various inputs such as employees' personal values, business environment values affect the organisational culture. Griffin et al. (2019) add that personal values of the organisation's leader influence the organisation's strategy and the entire organisational culture to the detail of process interaction, communication and ethical decision making. Furthermore, (Eisenhardt, 1990) links the successful realisation of an organisation's strategy to an organisation's culture, which is logical given the assertions of (Griffin et al., 2020) that organisational culture serves to guide a common standard for the attitudes and behaviours expected of employees. Kim et al. (2020) and Wun (2019) support this judgement and advise that there is a relationship between the organisational culture and the organisational performance. Nyongesa et al. (2017) and Kim et al. ((2020 forewarn of the need of top management structure to be intentional about strategic alignment between the organisation's strategic intent, its culture and design. Louw and Venter (2013) concur and warn that while the vision, mission and values provide guidance to the direction, purpose and aspects that transform the organisation's resources into strategic goals, all efforts are contradicted if the organisation's leadership does not commit to conforming to these or if there is no lack of communication to stakeholders or the desired strategic goals are not achieved. Thus, the establishment of the vision, mission and values is top management led and will either produce results or not depending on how well top management understand and execute their strategic leadership role. Gamble et al. (2019) states, the next strategic management process step is the setting of the long-term objectives.

2.2.1.2 Setting of the strategic objectives

Louw and Venter (2013) advise that the setting of strategic objectives stage concerns itself with explaining the response to the questions of the course the organisation intends on taking and how it intends to get there. A response, (Gamble et al., 2019) postulate is attained after assessing the external and internal environments and defining a vision, mission and values that would competitively set the organisation apart. External environments according to (Gamble et al., 2019) comprise of the market the organisation competes in, while internal environment concerns itself with the organisations capabilities and resources that can be leveraged to add value to shareholder equity. Both (Louw & Venter, 2013; Gamble et al., 2019) assert that strategic objective setting comprises of translating the organisation's trajectory committed to in the vision, into action plans. Gamble et al., 2019 further recommends that the objectives follow a SMART principle, that it they must be specific, measurable, realistic and time bound.

The significance of these goals is communicating a common goal that can be tracked throughout the organisation. Organisations adopt the balanced scorecard approach to setting strategic goals and financial goals which must preferably have leading indicators as opposed to lagging indicators (Gamble et al., 2019). The balanced scorecard is defined by (Laury, Matondang & Sembiring, 2020; Loch, Kavadias & Yang, 2021) as a widely adopted methodology for setting targets, cascading goals throughout the organisation which allows for monitoring performance against strategic objectives. It is further added that the tool has four legs, the financial, customer, internal processes and learning and innovation perspectives. The use of the tool thus requires translation of the strategic intent taking into these four perspectives taking into consideration the sustainability and competitive advantage course an organisation must take. It is further advised that once this methodology is adopted, for its success it is critical that all levels of the strategy be it corporate, business, functional and operational levels be aligned to the strategic objectives. Loch et al. (2021) adds that transparency and cascading these objectives is essential and thus performance monitoring must be tied into these to ensure that all activities translate to the desired organisational performance.

2.2.1.3 The formulation of a customised strategy

Wheelen, Hunger, Hoffman & Bamford (2018) advise that the strategy formulation process step uses as an input, information gathered from the external and internal environment to select a strategy deemed aligned to the strategic intent. Nyongesa et al. (2017) who on the contrary provides four strategic management steps, fused all preceding steps into the strategy formulation step which highlights the interdependence of the strategic management process steps. It is added that this step concerns itself with development of strategic objectives which aid the effective management of the identified risks and opportunities, defining mission, selecting relevant strategies and setting the policy framework. This supports the earlier observation that strategic process management steps are sometimes concentrated into a single process step which eventually yields a few number of strategic management process steps.

The strategy formulation process step comprises of complex and risky strategic decision-making according to (Gamble et al., 2019) in that it carries an element of uncertainty due to being future focussed. The risk is that forecast conditions may not precisely transpire as per the organisation's anticipation. Nevertheless, organisations must evaluate information it has gathered as advises by (Nyongesa et al., 2017) and formulate a strategy that best aligns to its

strategic intent. Loch et al. (2021) postulates that this process step concerns itself with leveraging the resources and capabilities an organisation has to meet its strategic intent.

2.2.1.5 Implementation and execution of the customised strategy.

Ochieng (2012) and Van der Merwe (2021) advise that strategy formulation and the implementation and execution process steps are interdependent and while formulation comprises of the setting of long-range objectives, the implementation process translates those plans into actions. Wheelen et al. (2018) adds that this process involves a wider group of participants than the formulation steps and the aim of this step is to disseminate the organisation's strategy efficiently and effectively. During the process, top management must ensure adequate resource capability, organisational structure, the adopted programs and human capital requirements to support the attainment of goals. Louw and Venter (2013) highlight the role of strategic leadership and advises that the success of a strategy implementation process rests on the calibre of strategic leadership. Nyongesa et al. (2017) and Wheelen et al. (2018) advise that the strategy implementation process involves the translation of policies and strategies into annual plans, budgets and procedures. Louw and Venter (2013) and Van der Merwe (2021) concur that the ability of the organisation leadership to manage change is essential in this process, to ensure continuous alignment between the action plans executed within the business, the strategic intent and the dynamic external environment. On the other hand, (Ochieng, 2012; Van der Merwe, 2021) add that the importance of strategic alignment throughout the organisation is an essential ingredient for successful implementation and execution of strategy. Management at all levels must ensure that employees have a clear understanding of the action plans and the role they need to play to realise those action plans. Thus, alignment as a function of strategic leadership is essential from the organisation levels top down and visa versa and at an external environment level to the business activities. The next step looks at measuring performance against desired course.

2.2.1.6 Evaluation and control

Post the implementation and execution step, the organisation according to (Gamble et al., 2019) must evaluate the alignment between three key areas, the external and internal environments against the organisation's performance. This assertion is confirmed by (Kabeyi, 2019), who postulates that dynamic environments pose different conditions and advocates for a continuous evaluation and validation of strategic approach against the organisation's strategic intent. The

aim of this process step is to identify gaps and implement remediation, there are no sacred cows depending on what needs to be changed it can be a vision, values, strategic approach or organisational plans (Gamble et al., 2015; Kabeyi, 2019; Grant; 2020: 67). Kabeyi (2019) warns that for this process step to add value, factual and meaningful data about the current state of the business must be presented. The challenge, he adds is that this process steps seeks to examine the quality of strategic decisions and strategic approach taken by top management to attain the strategic intent and thus highlights the need for honesty and integrity in the top management structures which is exemplary of how well the leadership lives the values of the organisation. Thus, strategic leadership is an essential ingredient in making strategic decisions that eventually drive the organisation towards attainment of strategic intent, which can be measured with the evaluation of how the organisation performs relative to its pre-determined aspirations.

2.2.2 Organisational performance

Venter & Louw (20134) links a well-managed strategy to organisational performance. Hunger and Wheelen (2013) postulate that organisations that embark on a strategic management journey to reach the strategic intent, typically perform better than those that elect not to. Organisational performance is thus viewed as the ability of an organisation to efficiently and effectively transform its resources, both tangible and non-tangible to gain a competitive advantage (Weinzimmer et al., 2012; Jenatabadi, 2015; Hutama & Sagala, 2019). Venter & Louw (2013) assert that some key indicators that are monitored to evaluate performance are finances, profit gains and market share growth. Griffin et al. (2019) concurs and postulates that traditionally, organisational performance is evaluated in terms of financial performance, stock price, return on investment and the growth the organisation has demonstrated over a specific period. It is however added that the emerging performance evaluation trends have expanded to include stakeholder satisfaction and the ability to adapt and survive the dynamic external environment factors. The main purpose of strategic management is to support and enhance organisational performance to meet the strategic intent. Thus, organisational performance is a critical indicator to the effectiveness of a strategy in an organisation.

Griffin et al. (2019) and Wun (2019) advise that setting of the organisational strategy and the creation of an environment (organisational culture) that supports the effective and efficient strategic management process are responsibilities of top management. On the other hand,

(Nyongesa et al., 2017; Wun, 2019) advise that both the values of employees and management influence the organisational culture through group dynamics which in turn impact on organisational performance. Griffin et al. (2019) thus advises that top management must demonstrate ethical leadership, provide an organisational structure that is focussed on alignment, communication and employee engagement. These assertions are supported by (Ungerer et al., 2016) who adds that the King Code of Governance Principles for South Africa provides the guidelines for ethical leadership for governing bodies. Based on the contributions of these scholars, it can be summed that organisational performance is a good indicator of a winning strategy. A winning strategy is however an output of many inputs inclusive of the right decisions that are align the vision and the alignment of all the business aspects, a role of a strategic leadership.

2.2.3 The quality of strategic decision-making

Griffin et al. (2019) defines strategic leadership as a skillset that has the capability to navigate and align activities of the organisation to those of the ever-changing external environment. To enable the organisation to keep the alignment it requires a level of competences that are able to make the appropriate decisions in favour of the strategic intent. Louw and Venter (2013) concur with these assertions and advise that an essential competence in the strategic leadership is in-depth knowledge on the organisational history, its values and culture. These elements are useful in analysing the organisational strengths and weakness. These are aligned with the activities of the external environment as per (Griffin et al. (2019) assertions. Ungerer et al. (2016) further indicates that strategic decision making is a function of strategic leadership which is required for effectively moving the organisation towards its strategic intent. Both (Louw & Venter; 2013; Ungerer et al., 2016) advise that strategic decision making is required from the first step of the strategic management process, the strategic planning. This requires delivery of valuable information from the external environment (competitive intelligence) and internally (business intelligence) in what is deemed strategic decision-making enablers. Ungerer et al. (2016) emphasize the importance of correct data, factual information as inputs to the strategic decision-making process due to the long-term impact nature associated with this process.

Competitive intelligence is defined as a continuous process of collating and prioritising valuable external environment information about the competitors, suppliers and general market aspects (Louw & Venter, 2019). On the other hand, business intelligence is valuable

information gathered from processes, people and technology, whether from within the organisation or without. Essentially, (Louw & Venter, 2019) add that this information is essential in information the strategic leadership which decision will give an output aligned to the strategic intent, that is growth, profitability and competitive advantage. Thus, the function of strategic decision making is ultimately to bridge the performance gap and steer the organisation towards attaining the strategic goals, thus inputs such as a information must be readily available, correct and adequate for the process to be effective.

2.2.4 The use and value of strategic management tools

While strategic decision making is hailed as an important contributory factor towards steering the organisation to attaining the strategic intent aspirations, (Louw & Venter, 2013; Shaningwa, 2021) also highlight the role played by strategic management tools in supporting strategic management decision. Shaningwa (2021) adds that there is a positive relationship between the strategic management tools and the organisation's performance, given that the decision-making process is supported by adequate, factual and accurate information. It has been observed that the "strategic management tools" concept is interchangeable with several other terminology such as organisational tools (Ochieng, 2012), business analysis tools and techniques (Ungerer et al., 2016) or techniques and models (Griffin et al., 2019). Ungerer et al. (2016) advises organisations to seek appropriate and relevant tools that are aligned to their culture and activities. It is recommended that prior to the selection of appropriate tools the following is considered, the circumstances for which the tools will be utilised whether once off major decision or high-end strategic purpose. Tools are noted to have limitations to which (Ungerer et al., 2016) suggests the adoption of practices that would minimise such impact, and lastly formally documenting and embedding the tools of choice into the strategic management processes of the organisation.

Qehaja, Kutllovci and Pula (2017) postulate that there is a wide selection of strategic management tools available for organisations to select from, some of the commonly used tools that made it to the top ten included benchmarking, PESTLE analysis, SWOT analysis, Porter's five forces analysis and cost benefit analysis. One of the most recognised and appraised tools is the balanced scorecard (Louw & Venter 2013; Ungerer et al., 2016; Griffin et al., 2019). The balanced scorecard is praised for its ability to provide alignment from its four pillars (financial, customer processes, internal processes and learning and innovation) at strategic goal level to

individual performance which can be used for performance management and rewards system (Griffin et al., 2019). The All these tools enable collation of information that serve to support the strategic decision-making process. Thus, strategic decision-making rests on the ability of top management to select appropriate tools in relation to the organisational purpose. As much as top management can set organisational design that is appropriate to the strategic intent, it is also important to consider how these decisions are perceived by stakeholder than can have influence and impact on the organisational performance.

2.3 Perceived quality of strategy and organisational performance

Some scholars regard organisational performance as a critical element of attaining strategic intent, however (Kim et al., 2020) argue that as much as top management is ultimately responsible for aligning functional processes and it is the employees that ultimately participate in the delivery of organisational performance. It is further postulated that the organisational culture aspects that are associated with heightened employee experience, perceptions and performance are thus critical, some of the highlighted alignment activities are communication, role clarity, reward systems and employee engagements. Griffin et al. (2019) highlight the importance of the role of both strategic and ethical leadership in driving a positive organisational culture as a means to achieve the strategic intent. Venter & Louw (2013) concur and assert that there is a positive relationship between ethical leadership, organisational performance and strategic intent. Griffin et al. (2019) advise that individuals values, beliefs and perceptions influence the organisational culture, and the individuals are influenced by the organisational culture. It is further added that the perceptions, attitudes and behaviours of employees' impact on job satisfaction which translate to employee performance. It is thus recommended that to increase employee performance that the relationship between the organisational values and employee behaviour be effectively managed. To contribute wholistically to the study, strategic management in practice within the sugar industry must be looked at.

2.4 Strategic management process in the sugar industry

While there is limited literature on strategy and strategic management processes in the sugar industry, globally there is strong drive to increase value add downstream products such as ethanol production and to adopt more value-add processes for the feedstock (Kassem, Alotaibi & Bagadeem, 2020; SASA, 2020; Verma & Solanki, 2020; Konde, Nagarajan, Kumar, Patil,

& Ranade, 2020).This has caused a shift from the historical predominant feedstock use for renewable electricity to more value-add processes such as biorefineries for bioplastics, biogases among other products. In Africa, even though it was a decade ago, (Kalinda & Chisanga, 2014) concur to these strategic interventions for Zambia stating that the primary focus was the ethanol production and recommended a look into the value-add processes such as biorefinery for the future. Likewise, the South African sugar industry is no stranger to diversification in the sugar industry, both (Nieder-Heitmann, Haigh, G€orgens, 2019; SASA, 2021) state that South Africa in its South African Department of Science and Technology's Bio-economy strategy, and Sugar Value Chain Master Plan respectively inform of interest in the establishment of biorefineries.

While there is a debate about the relationship between strategic management and organisational performance, (Zulu, Sibanda & Tlali, 2019) assert that the successful implementation of flexible strategies is essential for the survival of an organisation. This is particularly observed in the sugar cane production farms where small scale producers are affected by external factors such as climate change which ended their businesses while bigger commercial farmers are able to adapt and introduce irrigation schemes to maintain survival. In essence strategic management is important to provide platform for external and internal climate assessments, resources and adaptability of plans to deal with external and internal forces that may arise. Some critical inputs to the strategy formulation come from legislation which can provide limitations and constraints or provide the support to organisational visions.

2.5 Institutional framework

In South Africa, the sugar industry is regulated by the Sugar Act of 1978 (Act No. 9 of 1978) and the Sugar Industry Agreement of 2000 (Department of Trade and Industry (2011). According to the Sugar Act of 1978 as amended, the purpose of the Sugar Act is the protection of the profitability, growth and sustainability of the sugar cane derived sugar market in South Africa. The Sugar Act of 1978 makes provision for the establishment of the South African Sugar Association, which is a recognised association for the sugar industry sector, hence this body was engaged by the Minister Patel of the Trade and Industry to coordinate the establishment of the South African Sugarcane Value Chain Master Plan to 2030. The South African Sugar Association also is responsible for the interaction with relevant stakeholders for the determination of the maximum sugar products prices that can be charged for local and export markets. According to (ITAC; 2020), South African Sugar Association represents its

members in application of import tariffs with the import regulatory body, the International Trade Administration Commission of South Africa. On the other hand, The Sugar Industry Agreement details the rights and responsibilities of the sugar industry role players by so doing supports profitability, growth and sustainability of the South African industry. The snapshot at the sugar industry presents an opportunity to wholistically map out the key concepts of this study.

2.6 Conceptual framework

Figure 2.2 below demonstrates the relationship between the study variables, the strategic management process, use of strategic tools and strategic decision making are the three basic constructs. Literature advises that organisational culture influences employees, while employees are influence the culture. Most importantly personal beliefs, attitudes and values inform perceptions that drive behaviour. Thus, the perceived quality on the three constructs will be evaluated in this study to assess the impact on the organisational performance. Besides other factors like organisational culture, the perceived quality of these constructs is largely e influenced by the strategic decisions taken by the organisation to select certain tools and approaches. Some of these methodologies are discussed as part of the theoretical framework.
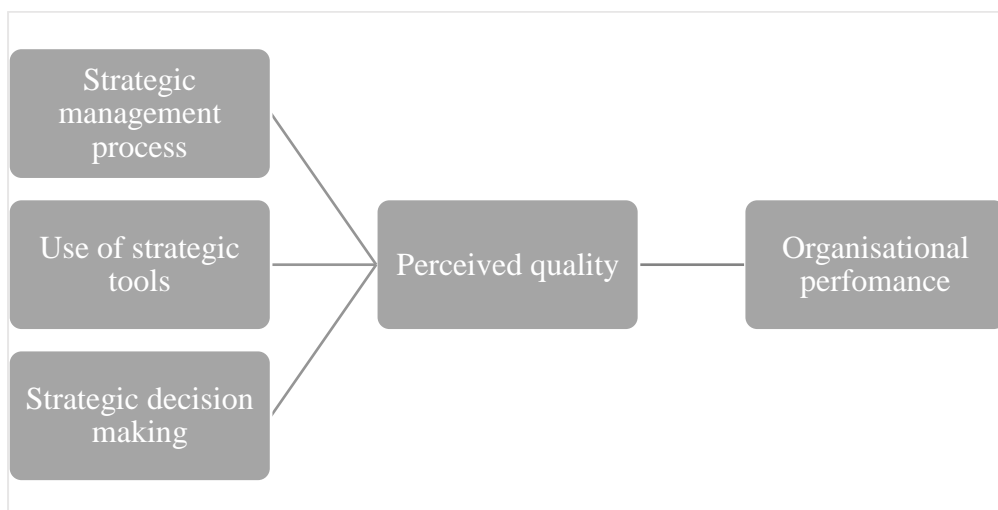
Source: Researcher's own compilation

Figure 2. 2 The relationship between the study variables

2.7 Theoretical framework

Literature presents a variety of strategic management generic theories adopted by organisations as part of their competitive advantage strategy in alignment with the strategic intent goals which is to support business growth and sustainability (IMAC, 1996; Barnes, 2001). These strategic theories are sometimes referred to as practices or methodologies and can be adopted as strategic approach to collate information for strategic decision in alignment with the selected competitive advantage strategy (IMAC, 1996). These strategic approaches can be used for internal or external environment analysis. In this chapter, two internal analysis theories have been randomly selected. These are value chain analysis and resource-based view theories. It must be noted that these could be employed with other external analysis theories and in their isolation are in no way adequate to complete the inputs to competitive advantage strategy. The section will briefly dissect the two internal theories in a format commencing with the definitions, advantages and limitations.

2.7.1 The Value chain analysis

A value chain, according to (Porter, 1985), is an implement used to develop diagnostic inputs for strategies aimed at achieving competitive advantage and organisational sustainability. The diagnostic component is encompassed in the forward planning conducted to counter and align the internal processes with the influences imposed by the dynamic external environment. IMAC (1996), Linkov, Carluccio, Pritchard, Bhreasail, Galaitsi, Sarkis, & Keisler (2020) concur and advise that inability to swiftly respond to the dynamic changes of the external environment can be costly and detrimental to the existence of the organisation. Porter (1985), IMAC (1996), Piboonrungroj, Williams and Simatupang (2017), Linkov et al. (2020) further postulate that the value chain concept recognises that organisation have linked and interdependent internal processes that convert inputs to the outputs desired by customers. It is these processes that are divided into primary and secondary functions, where primary functions handle the tangible product, while secondary functions provide a supportive role to the primary. The primary functions are inbound logistics, operations, sales and marketing, outbound logistic and service. On the other hand, the secondary functions are procurement, human resources, technology and innovation and infrastructure.
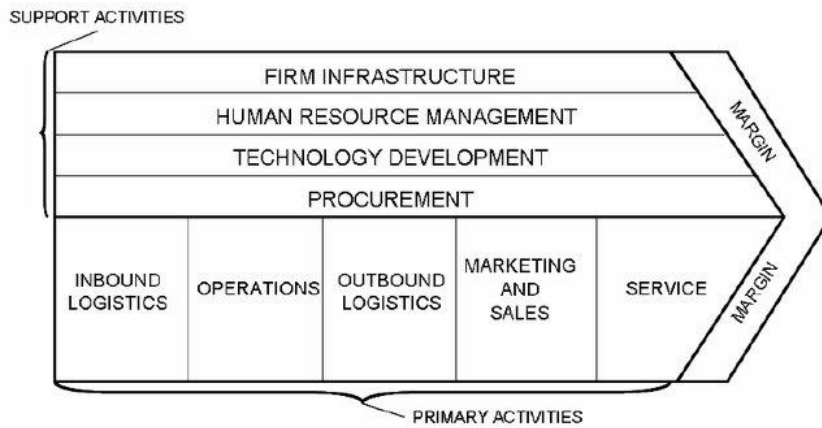
Source: Porter's value chain framework (Viitamo, 2008:9)

Figure 2. 3 Porter's value chain framework

Porter (1985), Piboonrungroj et al. (2017) assert that organisations must conduct value chain analysis, which is defined as an ongoing procedure for acquiring, analysing, and disseminating data in support of strategic decision-making. IMAC (1996), Ungererer et al. (2016), Piboonrungroj et al. (2017) add that value chain is conducted through the identification of value-add processes from supplier to the end of product life cycle. During the value chain analysis, three focus areas are identified and assessed, these are cost benefit, differentiation advantage and the vertical linkage analysis. The cost advantage analysis seeks elements of the internal function where the organisation can add value to the product, this is built on the premise that customers will pay for superior products. The differentiation advantage seeks overall opportunities that the organisation can utilise to set itself apart, be it cost, quality or any other characteristic in support to its strategy. The vertical linkage assesses opportunity to add value in relationships with both the organisation's suppliers and its customers. The information gathered as the output of this continuous process is input into the strategic planning process of the organisation to provide information to assist the strategic decision process.

Linkov et al. (2020 warns that the value chain analysis methodology has limitations in that often personnel that conduct the process analysis are appraised of the overall value chains but may lack in-depth knowledge warranting specialist assistance which can be time consuming and costly. The breakdown and in-depth dive into each activity and its linkages according to (Porter, 1996; Linkov et al., 2020) may cause an eye shift off the overall strategy. Thus, the organisation must align its resources to counter the highlighted limitations. Resources are an

integral part of strategy realisation; thus, the next section will discuss the resource-based theory as another internal analysis theory in place to gather information for strategic decision making.

2.7.2 Resource-based viewpoint theory

Louw and Venter (2013) and Johnson, Whittington, Regnér, Angwin, Scholes (2020) postulate that one of the approaches adopted by organisations in their competitive advantage strategies rests on the combination of unique possessions, dynamic aptitudes and capacities. Johnson et al. (2020) adds that it is top management's responsibility to continuously assess the adequacy, uniqueness of its resources and capabilities in alignment to the strategic intent against the dynamic external environment. Chen, Wu, Mao, Li (2017) concurs with these assertions and adds that resources can tangible, intangible or human capital related in skills and competencies. Louw and Venter (2013) advise that for resources to be deemed valuable they must be unique, scarce, economically unattainable for competitors, imitable. Hitt et al. (2020) define capabilities as a capacity for a group of assets to transform inputs into outputs cohesively. Chen et al. (2017) advise that organisational capabilities can be organisational culture, progressions, and sequences. Both organisational capabilities and resources play an integral part in determining the strategic amendments as necessitated by the dynamic external environment (Louw &Venter, 2013; Chen et al.,2017). The strategy amendments are effected in pursuit of the enhanced strategy performance in alignment to attaining a sustainable competitive advantage over competitors. Chen et al. (2017) and Hitt et al. 2020) further state that some organisations may choose to focus on core competencies and disinvest their resources in less value-add activities. Gamble et al. (2019) and (Johnson et al., 2020) assert that the superiority of an organisation's resources and capabilities can determine the competitive position in the market. This desirability of the resources and capabilities is determined using the VRIN tests which represents, valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable. The VR examines the ability for resources and capabilities to effectively support the pursuit of the competitive advantage, while IN tests for the aptitude to sustain the competitive advantage. Gamble et al. (2019) advise that in dynamic capabilities are essential in management of resources and capabilities which will ensure that the organisation focuses its energy on effective and efficient identification, allocation, optimised utilisation and regeneration or building of resources in alignment to the strategic intent.

2.8 Conclusion

Strategy is defined by a variety of characteristics; these are long term action plans with a unique value proposition concerned with transforming inputs into outputs in alignment to the strategic intent of sustaining profitability and competitive advantage over competitors. The provision of the framework for strategic management belongs to top management, however the role of converting inputs into outputs is conducted by employees. Thus, top management provide an organisational culture that promotes conductive behaviours, values and routines aligned to the attainment of organisational goals.

Strategic leadership is a competence required for top management position, one of the responsibilities is strategic decision making which in relation to the strategy requires continuous assessments of internal and external environments. Data in this process becomes important and methodologies and approaches are abundant for organisation to select from. These comprise of internal and external analysis tools, which provide accurate and adequate information about the internal performance and market activities. This chapter discussed two f the internal analysis tools, the value chain analysis and the resource-based tool. The value chain analysis conducts a systematic review of the value process steps in order to identify those steps that add value to the product manufactured. The aim is to enhance the value add and make decisions about nonvalue add steps. This exercise also presents the organisation with opportunities and risks that the organisation is able to make decisions in support of strategic performance. The resource-based view theory concerns itself with the identification of resources and capabilities it has, the efficient and effective allocation with the aim of maximising value output and assessing the most efficient manner to manage the resources. The decisions for management of resources may include, investment, reallocation, regeneration of capability all in support of sustainable competitive advantage over the competitors. While this section concludes the literature review, the next chapter take a holistic view at the approach adopted for this study.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter follows the literature review, where the study's conceptual framework was discussed, this aspect forms an integral part of the empirical framework of the study on the perceived quality of the strategic management at ABC, a South African sugar manufacturing company. Thus, this chapter outlines the research methodology utilised in the study.

Sekaran and Bougie (2016), Schindler (2017), Dissanaye (2023) define research methodology as a rigid but systematic and consistent approach to solving a research problem by following pre-set rules. Similarly, (Melnikovas, 2018) defines research methodology as a general research strategy on the approach adopted while conducting the research and highlights that its significance in a research study lies in the consistency of tools and techniques application. Sekaran and Bougie (2016), Schindler (2017), Dissanaye (2023) further define research design as a framework that concerns itself with the implementation of a research strategy, and that which also encompasses procedures that guide the researcher into attaining solution to the research problem, some of those procedures include data collection and analysis procedures.

Thus, this chapter begins by presenting an overview of the research onion, followed by discussions on research philosophy, research approach, research strategy, population and sampling techniques, pilot study, data collection techniques and procedures, reliability and validity, data analysis, and ethical considerations. By adopting a quantitative research methodology, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between strategic management and organizational performance within the context of the South African sugar manufacturing industry.

3.2 Research Onion

Melnikovas (2018), Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) and Dissanaye (2023) define the research onion model (Figure 3.1) as a theoretical concept that was first introduced and explained by Saunders in 2016. In this model, Saunders defined the multiple onion layers, each representing a different aspect of the research process that can be peeled to formulate a successful research technique. Dissanayake (2023) advises that the research methodology that is underpinned on the research onion model has a commencement point and an end point which encompasses these topics; the research philosophy, approaches to theory development,

research strategies, research choices, time horizons and data collection procedures which layer a logical foundation prior to the introduction of the research design.
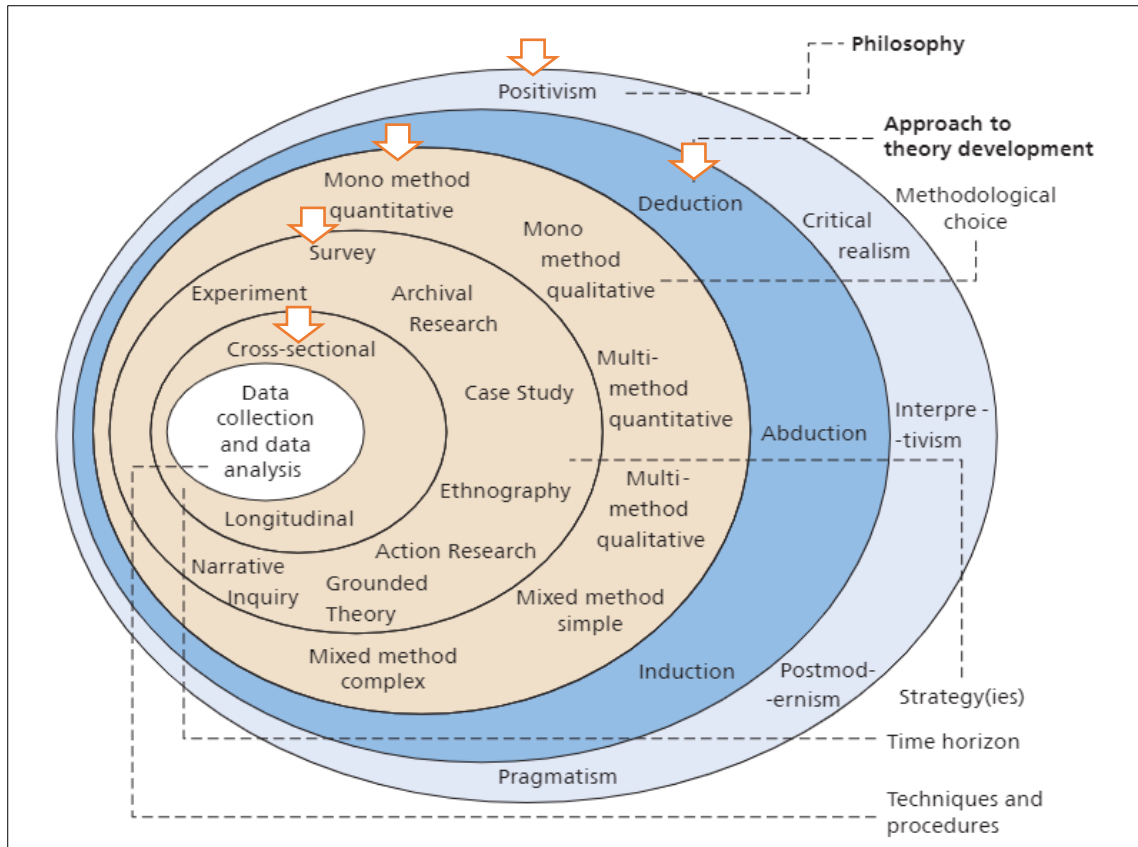
Source: Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2019)

Figure 3. 1 Research onion model

In this study, the research onion guides the selection and implementation of various research components, including research philosophy, research approach, research strategy, data collection techniques, and data analysis methods. By utilizing the research onion model, this study ensures a systematic and comprehensive approach to investigating the perceived quality of strategic management on organizational performance.

3.3 Research philosophy

Crossan (2003), Sekaran & Bougie (2016) and Saunders et al. (2019) define the research philosophy as a set of beliefs, assumptions, and principles that guide the researcher's approach to knowledge generation and the nature of reality. It provides a framework for understanding the nature of research which also shapes the researcher's perspective on how knowledge is

obtained and interpreted. There are several research philosophies used in research and the most used are positivism and interpretivism. Positivism is mainly used in quantitative research while interpretivism, also known as phenomenology, is used for qualitative research. The study adopts quantitative research methodology and thus the research philosophy adopted for this study is positivism. Positivism is based on the belief that social phenomena can be studied objectively, and that knowledge can be derived through empirical observations and measurements (Melnikovas,2018; Saunders et al.,2019; Alturki, 2021).

By adopting a positivism research philosophy, this study seeks to identify causal relationships between strategic management and organizational performance within the sugar manufacturing context. The positivism approach allows for the collection of quantitative data, which can be analyzed statistically to subsequently draw generalizable conclusions.

3.4 Research approach

Research approach refers to the overall strategy or plan that a researcher adopts to address the research questions or objectives of a study (Bougie & Sekaran, 2019). It outlines the general framework and direction of the research, providing guidance on how data will be collected, analyzed, and interpreted. Melnikovas (2018) and Saunders et al. (2019) espouse that the research onion considers three research approaches, the inductive, deductive and abductive approaches. The research approach selected for this study is deductive. A deductive approach involves the formulation of ideas based on existing theories and concepts, which are then tested through empirical data collection and analysis (Melnikovas, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019). By employing a deductive approach, this study aims to test the relationship between perceived quality of strategic management and organizational performance, using quantitative data obtained from the sample population. The study also adopted a deductive research approach because it aims to produce objective and generalizable results. The use of standardized measurement instruments, random sampling techniques, and statistical methods increases the reliability and validity of the findings (Mohajan, 2017). This enhances the ability to make generalizations and apply the findings to larger populations or contexts.

3.5 Research strategy

Research strategy refers to an overall approach that a researcher utilises to execute a study and achieve the research goals (Melnikovas, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019). It outlines the specific

steps and methods that will be employed to gather data, analyze information, and draw conclusions. There are several common research strategies which can be employed in research depending on the nature of the research problem. Some of the most frequently used are experimental research, survey research, case study research and correlational research. The research strategy employed in this study is a cross-sectional survey. Saunders et al. (2019) emphasises that a cross-sectional survey involves collecting data from a sample population at a specific point in time. In this study, a structured questionnaire was administered to employees within the South African sugar manufacturing company, ABC to measure their perceptions of strategic management processes and assess the perceived impact on the organizational performance. The cross-sectional survey strategy allows for the efficient collection of data from a large number of respondents, providing a snapshot of the current state of strategic management and its impact on organizational performance. In addition, survey research strategy was adopted because it offers a level of anonymity and confidentiality to respondents, which can encourage honest and unbiased responses (Patten, 2017). Patten (2017), Saunders et al. (2019) add that respondents are deemed to be more comfortable in providing sensitive or personal information through a survey, as opposed to face-to-face interviews which subsequently leads to more accurate and reliable data.

3.6 Population and sampling techniques

The population of interest for this study consists of employees working within ABC, a South African sugar manufacturing company. While a total population on 1304 employees as per ABC company IT department has access to emails, a sample of 114 employees was randomly selected as a sample from a selection of departments at ABC company as per Table 1.1 as revisited. Cooper and Schindler (2014) espouse that random sampling is a probability sampling technique that ensures equal chances of selection from the population, as such the sample results can easily be inferred to the entire population. The random sampling technique was influenced by the study time, limited availability of the population hence random sampling was conducted on the group of employees with access to email addresses.

Table 1.1 A population and sample framework adopted for this study

Population and sample framework	Total Population	Target Sample size	% of Population	Sample method
Management	46	10	22%	Random Sampling
Employees	1258	104	8%	Random Sampling
Total population: 1304		**Total sample targeted: 114**		

Source: Researcher's own compilation

3.7 Pilot study

A pilot study in research refers to a small-scale preliminary investigation conducted prior to the main study (Schindler, 2019). It serves as a trial run or rehearsal of the research design, methods, and procedures to identify and address potential issues or challenges before conducting the full-scale study. The primary purpose of a pilot study is to test and refine the research protocol, assess the feasibility of the study, and make necessary adjustments to enhance the quality and efficiency of the main study. The research protocol was compiled and pre-tested by UNISA and thus the pilot study was deemed not necessary.

3.8 Data collection techniques and procedures

The primary data collection technique employed in this study is a UNISA structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed based on the relevant literature and is aligned to the study research objectives. It consists of closed-ended questions and utilizes a Likert scale to measure respondents' perceptions on strategic management and its impact on organizational performance. The questionnaire was developed in six sections where Section 1 collected general information about the ABC company, its size, including department and position of respondent. Sections 2 to 5 were much more focused on the research objectives with questions pertaining to the perceived quality of strategic management, tools of strategic management, strategic decision making and organizational performance. Section 6 collected general information about the participants such as gender, educational qualifications and ethnic group.

The questionnaire was administered electronically to the selected participants, ensuring anonymity and confidentiality of responses. Additionally, secondary data, such as company reports and financial statements, was collected to complement the survey data and provide further insights into the company's organizational performance. The advantage of utilizing a questionnaire for such studies is that it offers a standardized format for data collection, ensuring consistency in the questions and response options across participants (Patten, 2017). This standardization reduces potential bias and ensures that all participants receive the same set of questions, allowing for comparability and facilitating quantitative analysis.

3.9 Reliability and validity

Reliability refers to the repeatability, consistency and stability of a measurement (Cooper and Schindler, 2014; Sürücü & Maslakci, 2020). It evaluates the degree to which a measurement instrument yields dependable and consistent results over time, under various circumstances, when employed by several researchers. On the other hand, validity refers to the extent to which a measurement instrument or study accurately assesses the intended construct or variable. It examines whether the instrument or study is actually measuring what it claims to measure (Fitzner, 2007). To ensure the reliability and validity of the research findings, several measures were implemented. The questionnaire was tested for reliability using methods such as Cronbach's alpha coefficient (against the scale in Table 3.1), which assesses the internal consistency of the questionnaire items (Zahreen Mohd Arof, Ismail & Latif Saleh, 2018). Moreover, content validity was achieved through reviews by a UNISA team of experts in the field of strategic management and organizational performance. The use of established measurement scales and careful questionnaire design contributed to the reliability and validity of the data collected in this study.

Table 3. 1 The Cronbach Alpha coefficient scale

Value of α	Internal Consistency
$0.9 \leq \alpha \leq 1$	Excellent
$0.8 \leq \alpha < 0.89$	Very good
$0.7 \leq \alpha < 0.79$	Good
$0.6 \leq \alpha < 0.69$	Acceptable
$0.5 \leq \alpha < 0.59$	Questionable

α ≤ 0.59	Unacceptable

Source: adapted from (Zahreen Mohd Arof, Ismail & Latif Saleh, 2018)

3.10 Data analysis

Data analysis in research refers to a systematic process of examining, reviewing, sorting, converting, and interpreting collected data with the purpose of drawing important findings and fulfil the research objectives and respond to research questions (Ardito, Scuotto, Giudice, Petruzzelli, 2019). It involves applying various statistical and analytical techniques to extract relevant information, identify patterns, and uncover relationships within the data. The collected data was analyzed using appropriate statistical methods. Descriptive statistics, such as means, standard deviations, and frequencies, were computed to summarize the respondents' perceptions on strategic management and organizational performance. Inferential statistics, such as correlation analysis and regression analysis, were employed to test the hypothesized relationships between strategic management and organizational performance. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used to facilitate the data analysis process and generate meaningful insights from the collected data.

3.11 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations play a crucial role in conducting research involving human participants. Little (2014) advises the adoption of ethics in research involving human participants dates back to 1972 where the Council of Representatives of the American Psychological Association adopted principles that involved, respect, dignity, welfare of participants inclusive data confidentiality. Cacciattolo (2015) highlighted the significance of ensuring informed consent, privacy, discretion, and honesty when conducting studies involving human participants. This study adhered to UNISA ethical guidelines to ensure the protection of participants' rights and well-being, and this included ensuring informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality and anonymity, and no harm of participants.

3.11.1 Informed consent

Cacciattolo (2015) explains that informed consent refers to informed agreement that individuals provide before participating in a research study. Informed consent ensures that participants are fully aware of the purpose, procedures, potential risks and benefits, and their

rights regarding their involvement in the research. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before their participation in the study. The participants received clear and comprehensive information about the purpose of the research, the voluntary nature of their participation, the procedures involved, and any potential risks or benefits which was given in the introductory message of the questionnaire.

3.11.2 Voluntary participation

Voluntary participation is a concept that asserts the freedom of individuals to freely decide on whether to participate in a research endeavor, without elements of coercion, unfair influence or compulsion (Cacciattolo, 2015, Arifin, 2018). Voluntary participation ensures that individuals can make informed decisions based on their own preferences, values, and interests. Prior to participation respondents were advise of that the data collection process was entirely voluntary, and that they had a right to withdraw at any stage without facing any negative consequences. Their decision to participate or withdraw did not affect their employment status or relationships within the organization.

3.11.3 Confidentiality and anonymity

Confidentiality refers to the protection of participants' personal information and data collected during the research process (Arifin, 2018; Suri, 2020). It involves the researcher's responsibility to handle participant data in a manner that ensures its security, prevents unauthorized access or disclosure, and maintains the privacy of individuals. Anonymity refers to the state in which the identity of research participants is either not known, concealed and consequently cannot be associated to their responses or data. Anonymity is often achieved by not collecting any identifying information from participants or by ensuring that any identifying information is separated from the research data. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured throughout the research process. All collected data was collected at UNISA via a link and an excel spreadsheet with summarised inputs was shared, no unique markers linking input to individuals were collected, thus the strict confidentiality was observed. Thus, no personal information will be published in any of the reports or publications that can be published currently and in future. Data was coded with a unique identifier and stored securely, it was accessible only to the researcher and relevant UNISA data management personnel.

3.11.4 No harm of participants

The principle of no harm in ethical considerations emphasizes the importance of protecting well-being and minimizing any potential harm to research participants (Cacciattolo, 2015). Every effort was made to minimize any potential physical, psychological, or emotional harm to the participants. The questionnaire did not include any sensitive or intrusive questions. Participants were assured that their responses were used for research purposes only and that their feedback would be anonymized and aggregated to maintain confidentiality.

3.11.5 Study limitations

Theofanidis and Fountouki (2018) define research limitations as any challenges or shortcomings encountered during the study that were out of the researcher's control. These flaws could origin from a series of study related components and aspects which could include the research design, methodology and research tools among others.

In the case of the ABC company, while the company has a SADC footprint the scope was limited to the South African business as the homogeneity of the practices could not be established which would have potential impact on the sample. This could not be established due to the time available to conduct the study. The organisation is accustomed to using questionnaire surveys to collect views on employee experience, but the response is always very low, culturally the employees do not use such platforms to air their views. This could be affected by the timing as well, as the organisation is going through a legal change management process which could affect their employment. For those willing to participate the limitation imposed by the questionnaire dissemination process, meant that only employees with email addresses and internet were able to participate, this means majority of lower-level employees were inaccessible.

3.12 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the research methodology employed in this study, which aims to investigate the perceived quality of strategic management on the organizational performance of ABC, a South African sugar manufacturing company. The research onion provided a framework for designing and conducting the study, while the adoption of a positivism research philosophy and deductive approach ensured a systematic and objective investigation. The cross-sectional survey strategy, along with random sampling enabled data collection from a

diverse sample population. The data collection techniques and procedures, as well as the measures for reliability and validity, ensured the robustness of the collected data. Ethical considerations were adopted given that the study involved human participants and their rights were clearly communicated. The subsequent Chapter provides data analysis using statistical methods.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter discussed the research methodology which informed the process and procedures adopted to find a resolve for the research questions. This chapter follows a data collection process and thus presents a discussion informed by data analysis. The first section of the chapter presents results on general information about the participants while the second section focuses on results attained from items on the research objectives. The research objectives are as follows:

Research objective 1

- To identify the employees and management's perceptions on the quality of the strategic management process at the sugar manufacturing company

Research objective 2

- To investigate the influence of the use and value of strategic management tools on the quality of strategic management at the sugar company

Research objective 3

- To determine how the perceived quality of strategic decision-making influences the organisation performance at the sugar manufacturing company

Research objective 4

- How is organisational performance perceived by employees and management at the sugar manufacturing company?

4.2 Response rate

The questionnaire was distributed to a selected sample of 114 participants. Out of these 114 questionnaires, 72 of them were fully and timeously responded to, they were furthermore checked for errors and deemed to be adequately completed. The balance of 42 did not respond on the stipulated data collection time frame. Nardi (2018) stated that where 100 surveys are issued a minimum with random sampling a response rate of less than 60% compromises the research integrity. Thus, a survey response rate of 70% as tabulated in Table 4.1 was considered to adequately meet the minimum sample requirements.

Table 4. 1 Presentation of a response rate

		Frequency	%
Responses		72	70
No Responses		42	30
Total surveys issued		114	100

Source: Questionnaire survey response data

4.3 Reliability and validity

The SPSS calculated Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess the reliability and validity of the research instrument. The results are summarized in Table 4.2.

Table 4. 2 Reliability test of the questionnaire

Questionnaire Section	Variable	N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Internal Consistency
2	Employees and management perceptions on the quality of the strategic management processes at the sugar manufacturing company	28	0.974	Excellent
3	The influence of the use and value of strategic management tools on the quality of strategic management at the sugar company	12	0.851	Very good
4	Influence of strategic decision-making on the performance at the sugar company	10	0.822	Very Good
5	Perceived overall performance of the ABC sugar company	3	0.717	Good
-	**Overall**	**53**	**0.841**	**Very good**

Source: Questionnaire survey response data

Since (Nardi, 2018) espoused that the closer the Cronbach's Alpha is to 1.0 the higher the internal consistency of a test. Thus, at an average Cronbach's Alpha of 0.841 this implies that the instrument used had a very good internal consistency which reveals that the responses given could be trusted and are reliable for informing recommendations of strategic management and organisational performance.

4.4 Summary of general information about the participants

The study collected a series of the respondents' information which included gender, age, department, highest level of education and designation at work. The results are given in the subsequent sections.

4.4.1 Gender of the participants

The study collected information about gender of the respondents in order to establish the representation of women in the study, as well in the labor market. The results are given in Table 4.3.

Table 4. 3 A presentation of respondents' gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Man	41	56.9	56.9	56.9
	Prefer not to respond	2	2.8	2.8	59.7
	Woman	29	40.3	40.3	100.0
	Total	72	100.0	100.0	

Source: Questionnaire survey response data

The results reveal that about 57% of the participants were men while about 40% of them were women. These results show that there was significant representation of both men and women which implies that the views given also considers all genders. In addition, the respondent gender balance is plausible given that the latest South African branch ABC company Human Resources statistics indicate a total of 73% male employ, over the 27% female workforce.

4.4.2 Ethnic group

The study also collected information about ethnic group to which the participants belonged to. This was considered necessary since South Africa is an employer of many people from different regions as well as people of different colour. The results obtained are given in Table 4.4.

Table 4. 4 Ethnic group

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Asian/Indian	19	26.4	26.4	26.4
	Black	41	56.9	56.9	83.3
	Coloured/mixed race	3	4.2	4.2	87.5
	White	9	12.5	12.5	100.0
	Total	72	100.0	100.0	

Source: Questionnaire survey response data

As shown in Table 4.4, the majority of the participants and employees working at ABC company are blacks (56.9%) followed by Asian/Indian group (26.4%). The results also show a significant number of white people (12.5%) as well as people of mixed race (4.2%). The results imply that the views given are representative of different ethnic groups which makes the results obtained reflect how on average people perceive strategic management and its impact on organisational performance.

4.4.3 Highest level of education

Participants were also asked to indicate their highest level of education which was aimed at deducing their level of understanding strategic management practices. Table 4.5 gives the results.

Table 4. 5 Highest formal qualifications

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Degree/Diploma	27	37.5	37.5	37.5
	Matric	12	16.7	16.7	54.2
	Postgraduate	33	45.8	45.8	100.0
	Total	72	100.0	100.0	

Source: Questionnaire survey response data

Most of the participants had a postgraduate qualification as their highest level of education (45.8%), followed by those who had a degree of diploma (37.8%), then the least of them had matric as their highest level of education. The distribution of educational qualifications implies that the respondents were adequately educated to comprehend issues around strategic management practices.

4.4.4 Department within the organisation

Departments under which the respondents were employed was deemed necessary in this study to ensure a wide representation of departments at the ABC company. This is also because different departments may be affected in varying degrees by the adopted strategic management practices. The results obtained are in Table 4.6.

Table 4. 6 Departments within the organisation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Finance and Accounting	8	11.1	11.1	11.1
	General Management	19	26.4	26.4	37.5
	ICT	8	11.1	11.1	48.6
	Marketing	1	1.4	1.4	50.0
	Operations, Engineering or Technical	33	45.8	45.8	95.8

Sales	3	4.2	4.2	100.0
Total	72	100.0	100.0	

Source: Questionnaire survey response data

The majority of the respondents (45.8%) were from the operations department, followed by 26.4% who were from the general management department. There was also a significant representation from the finance and accounting department as well as ICT department (11.1%). This distribution also indicates a fair representation of the departments within ABC company.

4.5 Results on research questions

This section presents results on every research objective.

4.5.1 Results on research question 1: The perceived quality of the strategic management by employees and management at the sugar manufacturing company?

The objective was to establish the employees and management's perceptions on the quality of the strategic management process employed by the ABC sugar manufacturing company. The questionnaire scale abbreviations are as follows, strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), neutral (N), agree (A), strongly agree (SA). The results obtained are given in Table 4.7.

Table 4. 7 Quality of strategic management

Assessment statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
S2Q1 Our organisation has clear long-term (3 years +) objectives.	4.2	13.9	15.3	44.4	22.2
S2Q2 Our organisation has a clear vision for the future.	2.8	12.5	18.1	41.7	25.0
S2Q3 Our strategic decisions are always in line with our vision for the future.	2.8	5.6	19.4	51.4	20.8
S2Q4 Our strategic decisions create value for the owners/ shareholders of the organisation.	2.8	6.9	20.8	45.8	23.6
S2Q5 We almost always achieve our long-term objectives.	4.2	15.3	27.8	37.5	15.3
S2Q6 Our organisation is focused on a few key performance indicators to track our progress with implementation.	2.8	1.4	15.3	55.6	25.0

Assessment statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
S2Q7 The leadership of our organisation is visibly committed to successfully implementing our strategy.	2.8	4.2	20.8	45.8	26.4
S2Q8 The culture in our organisation strongly supports our strategic direction.	4.2	8.3	23.6	42.7	16.7
S2Q9 Our internal organisation structure supports our strategic direction.	4.2	13.9	15.3	52.8	13.9
S2Q10 Our internal operating environment (processes and policies) support strategy implementation.	5.6	6.9	15.3	55.6	16.7
S2Q11, We have the right technology in place to successfully implement our strategy.	5.6	18.1	20.8	40.3	15.3
S2Q12, We have the right competencies in place to successfully implement our strategy,	2.8	12.5	15.3	52.8	16.7
S2Q13 Strategy implementation is regarded as a very important function in our organisation.	2.8	5.6	13.9	61.1	16.7
S2Q14, We have a clear long-term strategy.	2.8	15.3	23.6	44.4	13.9
S2Q15 Our organisation's strategy is clearly understood by most people in the organisation.	2.8	15.3	23.6	44.4	13.9
S2Q16 We are constantly measuring our progress with strategy implementation.	2.8	16.7	25.0	44.4	11.1
S2Q17 Our strategies are acceptable to all key internal stakeholders.	4.2	6.9	23.6	52.8	12.5
S2Q18 Our strategies are aligned well with our external environment.	4.2	9.7	23.6	51.4	11.1
S2Q19 Our strategies make maximum use of what we do well as an organisation.	2.8	5.6	25.0	52.8	13.9
S2Q20 We are not afraid of taking appropriate risks to grow our organisation.	4.2	9.7	26.4	45.8	13.9
S2Q21 In our organisation, we manage risks well.	2.8	12.5	26.4	45.8	12.5
S2Q22 We are quick to respond to important changes in our environment.	2.8	20.8	16.7	44.4	15.3

Assessment statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
S2Q23 Our strategic decisions ensure our organisation's sustainability for the future.	1.4	6.9	23.6	50.0	18.1
S2Q24 The strategic decisions that we make are realistic and implementable.	1.4	13.9	13.9	54.2	16.7
S2Q25, We have a good understanding of our key strengths and weaknesses.	1.4	6.9	19.4	52.8	19.4
S2Q26 Several departments get together regularly to plan responses to changes taking place in our business environment.	4.2	16.7	12.5	50.0	16.7
S2Q27 The activities of different divisions in this organisation are well coordinated.	2.8	13.9	29.2	41.7	12.5
S2Q28 We are proactive in addressing anticipated changes in our business environment.	1.4	16.7	25.0	45.8	11.1

Source: Questionnaire survey response data

The results given in Table 4.7 show that on average the respondents agree on the perceived quality of the strategic management practices. The results obtained are consistent with the findings of (Griffin et al., 2019) who argued that good strategic management practices involved setting clear organizational goals, vision and culture which gives direction to the employees on how they ought to work in order to achieve organizational goals or objectives. In addition, the results imply that good strategic management practices consider setting out key performance indicators on which the organisation can monitor its performance. These results corroborate the findings of (Ungerer et al., 2016) who advised that the key performance indicators present an opportunity to implement corrective measures whenever the desired performance is not achieved according to the plans and set targets. Furthermore, Table 4.7 results highlight that good strategic management practices where a long-term strategy is clear and communicated assists in getting the employees to fully understand the direction of organisation which helps with management of risks and necessary interventions to keep the organisation on its set direction. Louw and Venter (2019) also found similar results as they argued employees within an organisation should have a clear understanding of the vision, strategic plans as it aids in aligning the operational activities.

4.5.2 Results on research question 2: The use, value of strategic management tools and influence the quality of strategic management at the ABC sugar company

The aim of this research question was to identify the strategic management tools that are used at ABC company, with much more focus on the perceived value that is placed on these practices. Table 4.8 indicates views on whether the tools were employed which could be indicated with a yes or no scale. The second part of results presentation focuses on the perceived value which could be selected with the use of a scale of 1 to 5. The scale range for value perception varied from 1=no value (NV), 2= low value (LV), 3=average value (AV), 4=more value (MV) to 5= highest value (HV). Table 4.8 presents the results.

Table 4. 8 The tools of strategic management at the ABC company

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT TOOLS	Yes (%)	No (%)
3.1 A strategic planning department	66.7	33.3
3.2 A formal strategic planning process	87.5	12.5
3.3 A formal strategic plan (in report or presentation form)	80.6	19.4
3.4 Scenario planning	68.1	31.9
3.5 A formal process for strategy implementation	83.3	16.7
3.6 Balanced Scorecard	80.6	19.4
3.7 A formal "implementation plan"	86.1	13.9
3.8 Executive Information Systems` (EIS - e.g. performance dashboards for key performance metrics)	86.1	13.9
3.9 Regular reviews of progress with implementation	83.3	16.7
3.10 An organisation-wide performance management system	84.7	15.3
3.11 Implementation incentives or rewards	80.6	19.4
3.12 Stakeholder engagement during the strategic planning and implementation	80.6	19.4

Source: Questionnaire survey response data

As indicated in Table 4.8, the majority of the participants expressed that they do use the mentioned strategic management tools which is shown by more the 66% of the participants revealing the "Yes" option. However, there were a few individuals who expressed that the organisation did not make use of the mentioned strategic management tools. Given the good mixture of the sample group, this could be an indication of exposure to the affected tools and access to information, presenting an alignment opportunity.

The study then collected information of the value that is placed on the identified strategic management tools which provides more insights rather than a simple Yes and No answers previously provided. The results are presented in Table 4.9 where HV= High Value, MV=more value, AV=average value, LV=low value and NV= no value.

Table 4. 9 Value place on strategic management tools at the sugar company

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT TOOLS	HV	MV	AV	LV	NV
3.1 A strategic planning department	20.8	25.0	31.9	9.7	12.5
3.2 A formal strategic planning process	27.8	26.4	30.6	9.7	5.6
3.3 A formal strategic plan (in report or presentation form)	26.4	27.8	25.0	13.9	6.9
3.4 Scenario planning	18.1	26.4	31.9	11.1	12.5
3.5 A formal process for strategy implementation	15.3	33.3	37.5	9.7	4.2
3.6 Balanced Scorecard	16.7	29.2	33.3	12.5	8.3
3.7 A formal "implementation plan"	22.2	20.8	38.9	15.3	2.8
3.8 Executive Information Systems` (EIS - e.g. performance dashboards for key performance metrics)	27.8	25.0	34.7	11.1	1.4
3.9 Regular reviews of progress with implementation	25.0	23.6	38.9	9.7	2.8
3.10 An organisation-wide performance management system	22.2	31.9	33.3	6.9	5.6
3.11 Implementation incentives or rewards	19.4	31.9	26.4	12.5	9.7
3.12 Stakeholder engagement during the strategic planning and implementation	20.8	34.7	22.2	15.3	6.9

Source: Questionnaire survey response data

The results presented in Tale 4.9 reveal that the value that is placed on the strategic management tools employed at the company is moderate. This is evident with an average of 50% value placed on the strategic management tools (both high value and more value). While (Ungerer et al.,2016) warned that strategic management tools have limitations, it is (Shaningwa, 2012; Louw and Venter, 2013) who highlighted that the selection of strategic management tools adopted at an organisation do influence the organisational performance. Thus, these results indicate that most of the strategic management tools employed at the ABC company may be outdated and perceived not to adequately drive organisational performance, which presents an improvement opportunity.

4.5.3 Results on third research question: The perceived quality of strategic decision-making at the sugar manufacturing company?

The study also sought to understand the perceived quality of strategic decision-making as aided by a variety of management interventions at the ABC company. The questionnaire constituted several assessment statements which are aligned to the empirical and theoretical literature. The questionnaire scale abbreviations are as follows, strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), neutral (N), agree (A), strongly agree (SA). Table 4.10 presents the results.

Table 4. 10 Strategic decision-making perceptions

Assessment statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
S4Q1. Key strategic decision-makers in our organisation has access to real-time information on the competitive environment.	1.4	5.6	20.8	62.5	9.7
S4Q2. In our organisation, we take a long time to make important decisions.	8.3	16.7	22.2	41.7	11.1
S4Q3. Our key strategic decision-making team is diverse in terms of age, ethnicity, and gender.	5.6	11.1	31.9	37.5	13.9
S4Q4. In our organisation, all key managers have a common understanding of our business and its environment.	1.4	6.9	31.9	47.2	12.5
S4Q5. There is a lot of healthy debate among the management team about key decisions.	5.6	11.1	26.4	47.2	9.7

Assessment statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
S4Q6. Organisational politics dominate strategic decision-making in our organisation.	4.2	20.8	27.8	47.2	0
S4Q7. Strategic decision-makers consult widely with key internal_stakeholders (e.g., employees, unions) before making important decisions.	5.6	16.7	26.4	47.2	4.2
S4Q8 Strategic decision-makers consult widely with key external stakeholders (e.g., customers) before making important decisions	1.4	5.6	20.8	62.5	9.7
S4Q9 Strategic decision-makers seek the advice of experienced employees before making important decisions.	8.3	16.7	30.6	38.9	5.6

Source: Questionnaire survey response data

Results in Table 4.10 reveal that on average strategic decision makers in the organisation have access to real time information on the organisation's business operations (62.5% agreed while 9.7% strongly agreed). These results are in tandem with the findings of (Louw & Venter, 2019; Kim et al., 2020) who found that access to important information about the firm enable strategic decision makers to make quick and informed decisions. This means the ability of firms to make good decisions rely on access to real time information which reflects on the current trends in an organisation. Moreso, the results show that having a common understanding for the business and its environment is important for managers as they make strategic decisions for the growth of the organization (47.2% agreed and 12.5% strongly agreed).

Nieder-Heitmann et al. (2019) also found similar results as they argued that working together as leadership always lead to better decision making which is essential for business growth. Another key highlight from the results is that strategic decision-makers consult widely with key external stakeholders (customers) before making important decisions (62.5% agreed and 9.7% strongly agreed). These results are supported by the findings of Zulu et al. (2019) who found that stakeholder consultation plays a critical role in making informed decisions as it considers the expectations and concerns of other players. This implies the need for expanded stakeholder consultation so that the organisation grows.

4.5.4 Results on fourth research question: Perceptions on the overall performance of the ABC company by employees and management

The questionnaire contained information about the perceived overall performance of the organisation as a result of some strategic management practices that are being employed at the organisation. The results obtained are given in Table 4.11.

Table 4. 11 Overall performance of the organisation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	About average	28	38.9	38.9	38.9
	Below industry average	5	6.9	6.9	45.8
	Better than industry average	39	54.2	54.2	100.0
	Total	72	100.0	100.0	

Source: Questionnaire survey response data

The majority of the respondents (54.2%) had the view that the organisation was performing above industry average as a result of the strategic management practices adopted by the organisation. In addition, about 39% of the participants revealed that the organisation was operating on average. The results obtained imply that ABC company is operating well considering the strategic management practices that it is employing. This indicates the need to further employ effective strategic management practices at the organisation to realise more organisational growth.

4.6 Regression results

4.6.1 Pearson correlation

The study performed the Pearson correlation in order to realise the direction of the relationship between strategic management practices and organizational performance (Senthilnathan ,2019). The results are presented in Table 4.12.

Table 4. 12 Pearson correlation results

		Strategic management practices	Organizational performance
Strategic management practices	Pearson Correlation	1	.649[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	72	72
Organizational performance	Pearson Correlation	.649[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	72	72

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Source: Questionnaire survey response data

A correlation factor of 0.649 was found. Senthilnathan (2019) states that in a correlation factor scale ranges from -1 to 1, where -1 represents a negative correlation, while 0 indicates no correlation and 1 indicates a positive correlation. In addition, a correlation factor of above 0.5 represents a strong positive correlation relationship. Thus, from the results in Table 4.12, the Pearson correlation result of 0.649 indicate that there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between organisational performance and strategic management practices.

4.6.2 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) analysis

Table 4.13 indicates ANOVA results which according to (Bertinetto, Engel and Jansen, 2020) indicates whether the independent variable had a significant impact on the dependent variable.

Table 4. 13 ANOVA results

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	10.475	2	10.475	50.835	.000[b]
	Residual	14.425	70	.206		
	Total	24.900	72			

a. Dependent Variable: Organisational performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic management practices

Source: Questionnaire survey response data

Since the probability value of the regression is statistically significant at 1% level of significance, this means the independent variable (strategic management practices) has a significant impact on the dependent variable (organisational performance).

4.6.3 Regression analysis

The study also performed regression analysis in order to establish the relationship between strategic management practices and organisational performance. The results from the estimations are given in Table 4.14.

Table 4. 14 Regression results

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.594	.263		6.049	.000
	Strategic Management practices	.507	.071	.649	7.130	.000

Dependent Variable: Organisational performance

R Square 0.649   Adjusted R Square 0.612

Source: Questionnaire survey response data

The results show that the slope coefficient of strategic management practices is positive and statistically significant at 1% level of significance. This means an increase in strategic management practices by 1 unit leads to an increase in organisational performance by 0.51 units. These results are in tandem with the findings of Grant (2020) who also found a positive relationship between organisational performance and strategic management practices. The results also show that about 65% changes in the dependent variable (organisational performance) are explained by changes in the independent variable (strategic management practices). The results imply that good strategic management practices have great influence on the overall performance of the organization. Therefore, organisations need to continue adopt efficient and modern management practices that work to grow the business.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter presented the data analysis results. The main findings of the study indicate that the respondents perceive strategic management practices at the ABC sugar company to be very effective in improving the performance of the organisation. The next chapter offers a summary of the significant outcomes, conclusions, recommended policy, and possible avenues for future study.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the results from data analysis. This chapter presents a comprehensive discussion on the key findings from the research conducted on strategic management practices and their impact on organizational performance at the ABC company. The chapter also provides conclusions drawn from the findings, policy recommendations based on the research outcomes, and identifies potential areas for further research.

5.2 Summary of key findings

The research findings revealed valuable insights into the strategic management practices employed at the ABC Company and their influence on organizational performance.

5.2.1 Perceived quality of strategic management practices

Participants generally agreed on the perceived quality of the strategic management practices at the ABC Company. The results highlighted that all the strategic decisions made at the organisation are realistic and implementable. In addition, the results indicated that the strategic decisions taken ensured the organisation's sustainability, which was supported by the majority of the responses given by the respondents as they strongly agreed to the given assessment statements. Also, the findings aligned with previous studies, highlighting the importance of clear organizational goals, vision, culture, and the use of key performance indicators to track performance and manage risks effectively (Griffin et al., 2019; Ungerer et al., 2016, Louw & Venter, 2019).

5.2.2 Value of strategic management tools

The results indicated that the value placed on strategic management tools at the ABC company was moderate. This could be an indication of perception that the tools used are somewhat outdated, suggesting a need to revisit and update to trigger a shift to high impact scores and therefore enhance organizational performance. The respondents indicated the minimum value for a strategic planning department and the scenario planning practices. The study however, found that more value was placed on the formal strategic implementation process and regular implementation progress reviews, organisation-wide performance management system, the

Balanced Scorecard and the stakeholder engagement during the strategic planning and implementation.

5.2.3 The perceived quality of strategic decision making

The study revealed that strategic decision-makers at the ABC Company had access to real-time information, which facilitated quick and informed decision-making. Additionally, fostering a common understanding of the business and actively consulting with key external stakeholders, such as customers, were identified as important factors for effective strategic decision making. Based on literature this effectively means that internal and external factors are considered in strategic decision making.

5.2.4 Perceptions on the overall performance of the organisation

Results indicated that the respondents perceived that ABC Company was performing above industry average due to its strategic management practices. However, there was still room for improvement, suggesting the need to adopt more effective practices to further enhance organizational growth.

5.3 Conclusions from findings

Based on the research findings, several conclusions can be drawn. The perceived quality of strategic management practices was generally positive, emphasizing the importance of clear goals, vision, culture, and the use of key performance indicators. The value placed on strategic management tools at the ABC Company was moderate, indicating a need for updating and modernizing these practices. The use of strategic management tools, such as real-time information access and stakeholder consultation, played a vital role in facilitating effective strategic decision-making. ABC Company's overall performance was perceived to be above industry average, suggesting the effectiveness of the currently employed strategic management practices. Overall, the results indicate that there is positive relationship between strategic management practices and organisational performance. This means organisations that seek to perform better need to use effective strategic management practices.

5.4 Policy recommendations

The study makes the following recommendations based on the findings of the study.

- ABC Company should invest in updating its strategic management tools and practices to align with current industry trends and best practices. This could involve revisiting

organizational goals, vision, and culture, as well as incorporating advanced tools and techniques to enhance performance.

- To attain the maximum value from expanded stakeholder consultation, the organisation needs to implement a culture of regular engagements in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of expectations and concerns. This will enable more informed decision-making and foster stronger relationships with key external stakeholders.

- ABC Company should promote a culture of continuous improvement by inspiring its internal stakeholders to participate in the generation of ideas and suggestions for enhancing strategic management practices. This can be achieved through regular feedback mechanisms, training programs, knowledge sharing initiatives including increased visibility of the implemented and adopted strategic management practices.

- Management as strategic decision makers should work together as they deliberate on daily operations in order to absorb any risks that may arise. This can be attained through adopting a clear communication strategy that keeps all levels of managers informed.

5.5 Suggested areas for further research

While this study provided valuable insights into the relationship between strategic management practices and organizational performance at the ABC Company, there are several areas that warrant further research. Future research could investigate the long-term impact of updated strategic management practices on organizational performance. This would involve assessing performance indicators over an extended period to understand the sustained effects of these practices. Conducting a comparative analysis across multiple organizations within the same industry could shed light on the effectiveness of different strategic management practices and their influence on performance. This would provide a broader perspective and enable benchmarking against industry peers. Also, given the rapid advancements in technology, future research could investigate the role of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, data analytics, and automation, in enhancing strategic management practices and organizational performance.

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ANNEXURE A Ethics approval letter from UNISA Business Leadership_RERC

UNISA | university of south africa

Graduate School of Business Leadership_RERC

Date: 07/08/2023

Dear: Miss Funeka Happiness Madikizela

Ref #:2023_SBL_MBA_009-0525
Name: Miss Funeka Happiness Madikizela
Student #: 61489026

Decision: Ethics Approval from July 2023 to December 2024

Researcher: Miss Funeka Madikizela

Tongaat, KwaZulu Natal

Tongaat

61489026@mylife.unisa.ac.za   0834957707

Supervisor: Dr Thembisile Masekela drthembimdla@gmail.com

The Perceived Quality of Strategic Management on the Organisational Performance of a South African Sugar Manufacturing Company

Qualification: Masters in Business Administration

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Graduate School of Business Leadership_RERC for the above-mentioned research study Ethics approval is granted for two years.

The **low risk application** was **reviewed** by Graduate School of Business Leadership_RERC on 31 July 2023 in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.

2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the Graduate School of Business Leadership_RERC.

3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.

4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.

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. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.

6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.

7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date (December 2024). Submission of a completed research

ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal, for Ethics Research Committee approval.

Additional Conditions

1. Disclosure of data to third parties is prohibited without explicit consent from Unisa.
2. De-identified data must be safely stored on password protected PCs.
3. Care should be taken by the researcher when publishing the results to protect the confidentiality and privacy of the university.
4. Adherence to the National Statement on Ethical Research and Publication practices, principle 7 referring to Social awareness, must be ensured: "Researchers and institutions must be sensitive to the potential impact of their research on society, marginal groups or individuals, and must consider these when weighing the benefits of the research against any harmful effects, with a view to minimising or avoiding the latter where possible." Unisa will not be liable for any failure to comply with this principle.

Note

The reference number 2023_SBL_MBA_009_FA-0525 should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Kind regards,

NBWMlitwa

Prof N Mlitwa
Chair of Graduate School of Business Leadership_RERC
E-mail: wiltonb@unisa.ac.za

Prumhilmeli

Prof P Msweli
Executive Dean / By delegation from the Executive Dean of Graduate School of Business Leadership_RERC
E-mail: mswelp@unisa.ac.za

ANNEXURE B Strategic Management Questionnaire

THE PERCEIVED QUALITY OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT 2023

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?

South Africa

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

Section 2: Quality of strategic management

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

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

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

2.21 In our organisation, we manage risks well.					
2.22 We are quick to respond to important changes in our environment.					
2.23 Our strategic decisions ensure our organisation's sustainability for the future.					
2.24 The strategic decisions that we make are realistic and implementable.					
2.25 We have a good understanding of our key strengths and weaknesses.					
2.26 Several departments get together regularly to plan responses to changes taking place in our business environment.					
2.27 The activities of different divisions in this organisation are well coordinated.					
2.28 We are proactive in addressing anticipated changes in our business environment.					

Section 3: The tools of strategic management

Consider each of the following strategic management tools and indicate:
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		

Section 4:   Strategic decision-making

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

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

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

Man	Woman	Transgender	Nonbinary/ non-conforming	Prefer not to respond	Prefer to self-describe (Please be specific)

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/ Mixed race	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 C Supervisor submission consent letter

CONSENT TO SUBMIT MBA / MBL RESEARCH REPORT FOR EXAMINATION 2023

Consent is hereby given to:

Student name: Funeka Happiness Madikizela

Student number: 61489026   to submit her research report in its final form.

Supervisor Signature: ....   Date: ...21 December 2023..........................

Supervisor Name: ...Dr Thembi Masekela.......................................

The student acknowledges that sufficient feedback was provided by the supervisor and that s/he took the responsibility to attend to the feedback in a way that satisfies the requirements of a doctoral degree on NQF level 9.

Student signature.................................   Date: ...21 December 2023.....................