



THE PERCEIVED QUALITY OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT WITHIN A PRIVATE ORGANISATION IN EKURHULENI DISTRICT

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MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

by

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30 November 2023

DECLARATION

I, Petrus Jacobus Lodewikus Möller, with student number 34432167, declare that this research report titled 'The Perceived Quality of Strategic Management within a Private Organisation in Ekurhuleni District' is entirely my own work. I have provided all necessary references as per the requirements of UNISA. This research has not been submitted for publication nor used for any other degree purposes at any other institution.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. J. M.', is written over a horizontal line.

Signature

Date

30 November 2023

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ABSTRACT

In today's fast-paced business world, strategic management plays a crucial role in keeping businesses ahead of the competition. However, there is little research on how private organisations perceive the quality of their strategic practices, tools, and decisions. To fill this gap, the researcher conducted a study analysing the strategic management quality of a private organisation in Ekurhuleni. Findings were made that high-quality strategic decision-making processes and tools are essential for small business stakeholders. It is crucial for business leaders and decision-makers to understand the importance of implementing comprehensive, quality strategic management practices to improve their organisation's strategic practices and gain a better understanding of the correlation between strategic management and instruments and decisions of strategic practices. These results demonstrate the need for private small businesses to develop strategic frameworks that prioritize long-term planning, realistic objectives, and identifying challenges and opportunities to sustain their existence. This study investigated the perceived quality of strategic management in a private organisation for practical and academic purposes and the findings are consistent that high level perceptions of strategic practices and related concepts are valued by stakeholders, even in small private organisations.

Keywords

Strategic management, strategic decision making, small private organisations, strategic management tools

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1 CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION TO THE CORE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter outlines the purpose of the study, and the rationale for conducting research is discussed. In addition, the point of departure provides an overview of what definitions were used in the study and its scope. In essence, the chapter explains the report's nature and structure.

1.2 Research Overview

The perceived quality of strategic management can vary depending on various factors such as industry, organisational structure, leadership, and individual perspectives. Further, some general perceptions and indicators can provide an overview of the perceived quality of strategic management that leads to organisational success. Moreover, the critical aspect to consider in this study is the clarity of vision and goals; the perceived quality of strategic management often depends on how well employees and stakeholders communicate and understand the organisation's vision and goals. Thus, if the idea or direction the organisation is heading to is clear, inspiring, and effectively cascaded throughout, it can enhance the perception of strategic management quality. Specifically, the alignment with organisational objectives is critical. Therefore, strategic management is considered adequate when it aligns with the organisation's objectives. In addition, if the strategic decisions and actions consistently contribute to achieving the organisational goals, it reflects a higher perceived quality of strategic management (Thompson, Peteraf, Gamble & Strickland, 2022). Essentially, strategic adaptability and agility will be outlined, which explains the rapidly changing business environment and the ability of strategists to adapt and respond quickly to emerging challenges and opportunities that are crucial. Importantly, organisations with a perceived high-quality strategic management are often categorised by their performance agility, adjusting strategies, reallocating resources, and embracing innovation. Additionally, resource allocation and utilisation are critical factors in allocating resources effectively. Thus, considering priorities, risks and return on investment will demonstrate a well-executed.

strategic management process. However, it continues further; evaluation is required for this to happen. Respectively, strategic tools will ultimately indicate the perceived quality of strategic management and if it is closely tied to the organisation's outcome and performance. Therefore, strategic initiatives lead to positive results, such as increased market share, profitability, or customer satisfaction; it enhances the perception of strategic management effectiveness. Moreover, it is assumed that strategic management, which is effectively actioned, will lead to stakeholder satisfaction, which is described as the satisfaction of various stakeholders, including employees, customers, investors, and partners, and therefore crucial for assessing these factors towards the perceived quality of strategic management (Archie B. Carroll and Ann K. Buchholtz, 2008). In addition, if an organisation's strategists consider the stakeholders' needs and expectations and the result in their satisfaction or priority, it will contribute to a positive perception of strategic management. Specifically, continuous improvement and learning in organisations are stressed; does the organisation have a high perceived quality of strategic management and are performance indicators in place that they regularly evaluate their strategies, learn from successes and failures, and adapt their strategic approach accordingly. In fact, it is essential to note that the perceived quality of strategic management can be subjective and vary among different individuals and stakeholders; what one person may perceive as high quality, another may have a different opinion. Therefore, regular feedback, communication, and transparency in strategic decision-making are crucial to manage and enhance the perception of strategic management quality for organisational performance (Babafemi, 2015).

1.3 Organisational Overview

A study was carried out on a privately held SME holding company located in Ekurhuleni Gauteng, South Africa. This company has been in operation for the last three decades and generates revenue from various businesses, including Waste Management, Recycling, Agricultural Animal Feed, Construction Material, and maintenance of high-voltage electrical equipment in both the private and public sectors of South Africa. The company boasts qualified engineering technicians, skilled laborers, and administrators with specialized tools and equipment across their diverse industries. Safety and health are key priorities for the company, and they have put in place necessary measures to ensure the wellbeing of their

workers, and everyone involved in their day-to-day activities. Moreover, the company has a workforce of over 60 employees and is a level-one contributor to black economic empowerment. The private organisation also partners with subcontractors that specialize in the same industries as the company. These subcontractors provide services to both the public and private sector markets. The organisational structure comprises top, middle, and lower-level managers who oversee the operations of their respective departments.

Notably, the private organisation follows a cost leadership strategy approach, offering products and services at a specific price that complements lower costs. Moreover, this is obtained by reducing production cost at optimum in a domain activity by a significant margin (Venter, Botha, Nieuwenhuys, Davis, Singh & Jansen van Rensburg, 2019). The private organisation's primary business goal is safe, quality, and reliable supplies, services, and repairs to its respective industries. The reason for choosing this private organisation is that there could be a perceived lack of proper strategic management within this small private organisation in their respective industries. Thus, is there a current perceived quality of strategic management, or does a strategic plan, the implementation and, most importantly, execution of it exist by reaching strategic objectives? It is assumed that the private organisation requires a structured and comprehensive strategic plan, and all strategic activities are carried out through oral communication between the top managers and other stakeholders. As a result, it is essential for the private organisation to understand this study to promote growth and increase revenue. The research findings and recommendations will help stakeholders understand the importance of a good quality strategic management practice, even if the organisation is classified as a small business. Despite the current economic uncertainty in RSA, the management should apply strategic practices for growth and sustainability (Ocasio & Joseph, 2008). Moreover, strategic management is structured to help businesses identify, assess, and select appropriate strategies by researching and analysing the current situation, including markets and customers; developing and documenting procedures and directions; implementing, evaluating, and controlling strategic activities to achieve the objectives. Thus, the possible outcome of this research process is to identify the perceived quality of strategic management in an organisation. In this study, the perceived quality of strategic management will highlight issues related to this organisation's strategic direction by using a quantitative method to examine the private organisation's strategic formation, strategy implementation and control, and strategic

objectives aligned with its organisational architecture. Additionally, investigating the organisation's low- and high-level strategic management perception will astutely highlight the current quality of its perceived strategic practices. This study is designed to aid organisational strategists in identifying a fresh perspective on the quality of strategic management in business. It highlights the aspects valued by stakeholders in terms of strategy tools and decision-making concepts, providing valuable insights that can benefit small private organisations. However, an appropriate conclusion of possible recommendations will only be sustainable if the strategic management of the business is understood correctly to provide clues from the research objectives. Nevertheless, the research objectives will provide the company with planning strategies, implementation, and decision tools to improve its strategic function and a net result of financial performance and revenue, ultimately improving or increasing stakeholder satisfaction and competitive advantages.

1.4 Problem Statement

The perceived quality of strategic management in private organisations is a pressing concern that needs to be addressed. Further, despite the importance of effective strategic leadership in driving organisational success and competitiveness, stakeholders have growing skepticism and doubt regarding the quality of strategic management practices in private organisations (Griffin, Phillips & Gully, 2017). In essence, this skepticism stems from various factors, such as the inconsistent implementation of strategies, lack of alignment between strategic goals and actual outcomes, limited transparency and accountability in decision-making processes, and a perceived failure to adapt to dynamic market conditions. However, the lack of confidence in the quality of strategic management undermines the trust of stakeholders, including employees, investors, and customers. Significantly, it hampers the long-term sustainability and growth of private organisations. Nevertheless, even with a solid strategic management framework, organisation's may be able to identify and capitalise on the long-term planning of emerging opportunities, effectively allocate resources, navigate risks and uncertainties, and stay ahead of the competition. Thus, the perceived quality of strategic management can impact talent acquisition and retention as prospective employees

increasingly seek organisations with a strong strategic focus and a track record of successful execution.

Therefore, the study will explore the question to be researched:

Is there a perceived quality of strategic management within the private organisation operating in the Ekurhuleni District?

1.5 Research Objectives

Before the study can be investigated, it is essential to identify research objectives parallel to the research question (Maree, 2019).

The following research objectives will navigate the study in question:

- ***To evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the private organisation's current strategic management process.***
- ***To identify and analyse the value of the private organisation's strategic tools that are being deployed.***
- ***To evaluate the private organisation's high-level strategic decision-making process.***

1.6 Abbreviated Literature Review

Strategic management has three components: defining the strategy, implementing it, and evaluating its results (Venter *et al.*, 2019). Further, the study reviews the literature on the following concepts utilising instruments to formulate, implement and assess an organisation's strategy:

- Strategic Management: Quality Strategy in Practice
- Strategic Tools in an Organisation

- Strategic Decision-Making in an Organisation

Chapter 2 of the research project will discuss all relevant concepts and comprehensive literature aligned with the research objectives.

1.7 Organisational Assumptions

Based on the organisation, industry, and relevant legislation, the following assumptions are made:

- Over the next few months, the private organisation's strategy and the processes and procedures that support it will remain the same.
- This private organisation will not open any new businesses in the current financial year, whether related or unrelated.
- This private organisation has yet to make a plan to expand into new local or foreign markets.
- The legislation concerning the import and export of goods and services within the countries of operation for the private organisation will remain unchanged in the upcoming period.

1.8 Research Methodology

Blumberg (2011) outlines a specific research methodology comprising of principles, procedures, and techniques that can be utilised to solve a problem statement in alignment with research objectives. The methodology is showcased through a research method utilised and associated tools. Notably, in this study, a quantitative method will be attributed and applied that includes a descriptive approach in which deductive reasoning is outlined to draw logical conclusions. Further, data collection in number format is proportioned in this study. Importantly, when all ethical clearances are accomplished, the researcher will be able to collect the necessary data through survey or questionnaire instruments adopted from the University of South Africa. In addition, the research in question will be populated and sampled, which will be reported as a case study originating from the equivalent organisation.

1.8.1 Quantitative Approach

Quantitative research establishes how it can be applied to other organisational occurrences and whether it can confirm or modify existing theories or practices to answer questions such as who, how much, what, where, when, and how many (Jakoet-Salie, 2022). Throughout the study, various concepts, variables, and assessment techniques are identified and defined. UNISA's Graduate School of Business Leadership (SBL) is conducting an extensive research study that employs impartial scientific methods to ensure the objectivity of quantitative research.

1.8.2 Population, Sample and Sample Technique

The population consists of employees within the organisation, from senior management to lower-level employees. Specifically, only managers and employees who can access the questionnaire via email will be prescribed as participants in the populated samples. Further, it is fundamental that the researcher indicates the sampling method to be applied in the research for various methods, namely, proportionate, stratified, probability, non-probability sampling, etc. (Maree, 2019). In essence., this study will use the simple random sample method. Notably, random sampling is used to make statistical inferences about a population. It helps ensure high internal validity: randomisation is the best method to reduce the impact of potential confounding variables (Thomas, 2020). In addition, with a prominent enough sample size, a simple random sample has high external validity: it represents the characteristics of the larger population. However, simple random sampling can be challenging to implement in practice.

To use this method, there are some prerequisites:

- Does the researcher have access to a complete list of every member of the population?
- Will the researcher be able to contact or access each member of the population if they are selected?
- Does the researcher have the time and resources to collect data from the necessary sample size?

Therefore, simple random sampling works best if the researcher has the time and resources to conduct the research study or study a limited population that can easily be sampled; thus, with PJL Group of Companies, the researcher will have all required accessibility to research a confidence factor of more than the acceptability of 50% relatively a calculated proximity of 80%.

In Chapter 3, a comprehensive discussion will follow regarding the population, sample and sample technique that will be utilised in this study.

1.9 Limitations

There will be several limitations of this study due to the nature of the research methodology and the nature of the organisation:

- Due to the researcher being an outside party, access to confidential information and employees within the organisation was limited.
- Due to the electronic survey, the questionnaire can only be accessed by employees with a company email address. Consequently, a number of lower-level employees who have limited access to information concerning strategic management within the organisation will need assistance in completing the questionnaire.
- The study will be conducted in one private organisation due to time and resource constraints, which operates in various industries.
- It's important for participants to feel that they can give their honest opinions about the quality of strategy practices in an organisation without any bias stemming from their knowledge of the researcher. However, since the research is not an initiative of the organisation, completing the survey is optional. Despite this, employees should consider completing the study even if they are indifferent towards it, as their participation will contribute to the quality of the analysis and conclusions drawn from the research.
- It may not possible to draw any general conclusions from the findings of this research study.

1.10 Delimitations

One company, a private organisation in various respective industries, was the subject of this study. The company's headquarters are in Ekurhuleni, South Africa, but it also has other offices and production facilities in Cape Province and a processing plant in Mossel Bay. The study will possibly be conducted on all employees with or without an organisation email address, including senior managers and lower-level employees in all branches.

1.11 Significance of the Study

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the perceived quality of an organisation's strategic management tools and decision-making processes. The study aims to assist critical strategists in effective planning, communication, and implementation of the organisation's strategy, ultimately enabling them to sustain a competitive advantage.(Gamble, Peteraf & Thompson, 2021). Furthermore, pinpointing any deficiencies in the strategic management process will enable the organisation to establish a long-lasting future for all stakeholders and develop feasible action plans to achieve its strategy. As a consequence, creating a strong strategy may assist the organisation in enhancing its business and organisational achievements, as well as customer satisfaction overall. This can ultimately increase its competitive advantage (Thompson *et al.*, 2022). Implementing a well-aligned strategy management can have a positive impact on employees' understanding of their role in the organisation. This can lead to a better working relationship and commitment towards effectively executing the organisation's strategy. Moreover, strategic management can improve senior management's decision-making ability and help overcome obstacles and challenges related to employees that can lead to reduced revenue and increased expenses. In summary, the primary objective of strategic management is to help an organisation maintain a competitive edge and sustain its business through future uncertainties (Venter *et al.*, 2019).

1.12 The Roadmap of the Study

An overview of the research is provided in Chapter 1, detailing what, why, where, who, and how the research will be conducted (Monipally & Pawar, 2010). Further, chapter one provided a roadmap for the study, summarizing research conditions, presenting background information, the research question, objectives, abbreviated literature review, and research methodology to utilise (Jakoet-Salie, 2022). The second chapter of the document will provide academic context and relevant concepts to support the research question and objectives mentioned in the first chapter. The third chapter of the research report will concentrate on the research methodology. This chapter will cover the strategic management tools and high-level decision-making of the organisation and their relation to the research objectives. Additionally, it will provide a detailed overview of the research population, sample size, measurement instrument, data collection, analysis, interpretation methods, and ethical considerations. Chapter four will present the results of the data analysis, which was collected, discussed, and interpreted in chapter three. It will also include a literature review from chapter two. Lastly, chapter five will provide conclusions and recommendations based on the study's data findings.

1.13 Conclusion

The importance of strategic management cannot be overstated when it comes to achieving success and staying ahead of the competition. Despite this, there is a lack of research on evaluating its effectiveness in private organisations. In this chapter, the researcher outlined the research problem, objectives, justification, and scope. Chapter 2 delves into the relevant literature on strategic management, decision-making, and the strategic management tools that can be used. Chapter 3 details the research methodology, while Chapter 4 presents the data analysis and findings. Finally, Chapter 5 provides recommendations of the findings and concludes the research.

2 CHAPTER TWO - LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Since the start of the information era, a literature review has been described as essential to any academic research study. Further, it is a rigorous and critical evaluation of existing academic literature on a specific topic, providing a comprehensive overview of the current state of knowledge (Maree, 2019). In addition, a literature review allows researchers to inform their study and contribute to the field by identifying relevant theories, methods, and gaps in the research. However, in this chapter, the researcher will meticulously evaluate strategic management theory and apply it in academic writing, commonly and indispensably utilised in the business sciences in an organisational context. Therefore, strategic management, decision-making, and evaluation of strategic tools will be investigated, exploring current literature regarding strategic theory, models and concepts being applied in leading organisations in the global business environment.

2.2 Background Definitions Theories and Models

2.2.1 *Strategic Management*

During the last decade, the definition of strategy has been described by various authors in many ways and replaced many outdated strategic management processes such as administration or planification. Specifically, the word strategy is derived from the Greek word "strategos" and originated in military practices but evolved to be used in human applications, specifically business practices (Fuertes, Alfaro, Vargas, Gutierrez, Ternero & Sabattin, 2020). A strategy is described as the organisation's long-term direction, a pattern in a stream of decisions, and how organisations achieve their objectives during a deliberate choice of strategic activities to gain a competitive advantage (Venter *et al.*, 2019). More importantly, strategy is prescribed in a business as something that strategic individuals do via decisions implemented into action, not what an organisation possesses (Venter *et al.*, 2019). According to (Gamble *et al.*, 2021), organisations that manage strategies strive toward a

competitive advantage by planning long-term direction that involves various thinking configurations and decision-making steps to showcase a practice called strategic management. Therefore, an organisation should understand the strategy and strategic management needs, their current strategic position, resource availability, and find all factors impacting the organisation before planning and executing a strategy to reach an overall strategic goal (Gamble *et al.*, 2021).

2.2.1.1 Historical Definitions of Strategic Management

Strategic management is a broad and complex field, and many authors have defined the term. For instance, here are some definitions of strategic management by various historical authors:

Alfred D. Chandler stated, "Strategy is the determination of the basic long-term goals and objectives of an enterprise and the adoption of the courses of action and the allocation of resources necessary for carrying out these goals" (Chandler, 2016)

According to Kenneth Andrews, "Strategy is the pattern of objectives, purpose, goals and the major policies and plans for achieving these goals stated in such a way to define what business the company is in to be and the kind of the company it is or is to be (Chetty, 2019)."

William F. Glueck states, "Strategy is a unified, comprehensive and integrated plan designed to assure that the basic objectives of the enterprise are achieved."

Henry Mintzberg states, "Strategy is a pattern in a stream of decisions and actions."

Therefore, these definitions highlight some common themes in strategic management, such as setting long-term goals and objectives, formulating plans and strategies to achieve them, and allocating resources effectively. Therefore, a manager can argue that strategic management involves strategic thinking, followed by making strategic decisions that are recorded in a strategic plan that will be implemented to enable an organisation to achieve its objectives and succeed in its competitive environment (Sinnaiah, Adam & Mahadi, 2023a)

2.2.1.2 Qualities of Strategic Management

Strategic management is procedures and objectives that set an organisation apart from its competitors (Sminia, 2021). Further, the qualities of strategic management are setting goals, analysing the competitive environment, analysing the internal and external factors of an organisation, implementing, and evaluating strategies, and ensuring management communicates and rolls out the strategy across all spheres of the organisation (Köseoglu, Altin, Chan & Aladag 2020).

In addition, some of the critical characteristics of strategic management include:

2.2.1.2.1 Facilitating strategy implementation

Strategic management facilitates effective strategy implementation; thus, a planned strategy is incomplete when an organisation's leaders do not implement or execute the strategic plan.

2.2.1.2.2 Manage the overall direction of an organisation.

Strategic management means influencing the overall direction of the organisation (Sujan, 2022a). Thus, it starts with top management decisions communicated to all managers in the organisation's hierarchy and requires strategic actions to direct the activities to achieve the organisation's overall vision (Thompson *et al.*, 2022)

2.2.1.2.3 Multiple stakeholders in decision-making

Stakeholders are people or organisations with a say in how a company operates and achieves its goals (Pinheiro, 2017). Stakeholder support is critical to executing and achieving organisational objectives and goals in strategic management and decision making. Therefore, it is a good quality of an organisation when all stakeholders are on board when a specific strategy is communicated.

2.2.1.2.4 Ambitious/Uncertain

Strategic management is something other than the planning of predictable and unfeasible contingencies; in other words, strategic management operates in an uncertain environment and requires strategic decisions and plans ambitiously to guarantee positive results (Ahmed & Streimikiene, 2021). However, an organisation should recognise that sometimes the results are pending or unexpected due to unforeseen or planned conditions. In essence, an organisation should recognise that in uncertainties, the environment may provide opportunities to be capitalised on or threats that require risk management to reduce negative impacts (Alexander & Bakpo 2015).

2.2.1.2.5 Complex

Strategic management is a complex phenomenon and operates in an uncertain and unpredictable environment (Sujan, 2022b). In addition, as the organisation's climate is pending, the uncertainty can lead to complexity. Thus, an organisation needs to identify capable strategists to solve complexities that affect the strategy of the organisation.

2.2.1.3 Exploring the Advantages and Disadvantages of Strategic Management

There are several advantages and disadvantages regarding strategic management and recognising them can help managers in an organisation to prepare and face opportunities or challenges that may occur in the future (Chitra, 2023). Further, it can also help stakeholders become proactive rather than reactive in their day-to-day decision-making. Table 2.1 outlines the pros and cons an organisational leader should understand when applying strategy. Firstly, the positive reaction of strategic management is that it will assist the organisation in facing future adversities, and managers are discharged of their duties as pioneers of the business. Notably, managers will be able to see the bigger picture.

Thus, aligning their thinking to reach strategic goals should include a framework to support strategic decision-making. This can help staff make day-to-day operational decisions that move the organisation in a unified direction. However, there are also some disadvantages to strategic management. For instance, it can inhibit team creativity as input is unnecessary

or wanted. However, strategic management may not work well in specific sectors, such as an inventory master plan schedule. Nonetheless, strategic management can become a complex phenomenon not for all in the organisation to understand or follow, thus creating capability or cognitive barriers.

Table 2. 1 Exploring advantages and disadvantages of strategic management

Advantages	Disadvantages
Helps guide organisations to prepare and face challenges that may occur in the future	It can inhibit team creativity as input is not needed or wanted
It helps organisations turn proactive rather than reactive	It may not work well in specific sectors, such as inventory master plan scheduling
Strategic management helps the board of directors to discharge their responsibility.	The strategic management process involves continuous analysis of all significant factors.
Strategic management allows leaders to plan for the future by focusing on the bigger picture.	Strategic Management practices by top leadership take time.
A strategy allows all staff to make daily decisions aligning with the organisation's goals.	For a triumphant strategic management, the contribution of all staff members is indispensable.

Therefore, every organisation must weigh its advantages and disadvantages carefully before practising strategic management concepts. Importantly, it is crucial to remember that inappropriate applications, not limitations, cause many of the disadvantages associated with this approach. Thus, it is argued that the advantages of strategic management outweigh the challenges, and most successful organisations stay in business because of effective strategic management (Thompson *et al.*, 2022).

2.2.1.4 The Process of Strategic Management

Strategic management is a process that involves the planning, management, and utilisation of resources to define and achieve objectives efficiently (Sujan, 2022b) Figure 2.1 showcases the processes followed regarding strategic management: identifying a direction, analysing resources, framing strategies, implementing strategies, and evaluating the strategic process (Thompson *et al.*, 2022).

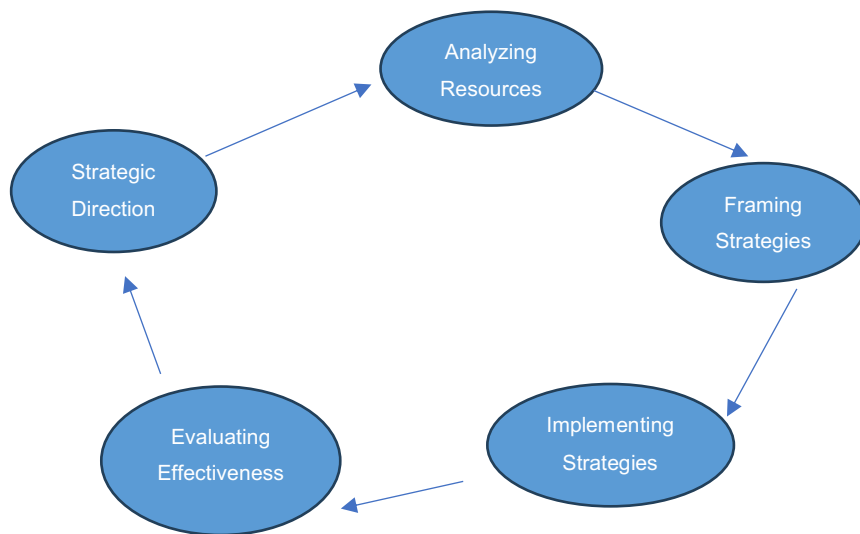


Figure 2. 1 The Strategic Management Process
(Thompson *et al.*, 2022)

2.2.1.4.1 Identifying Direction

Firstly, the process requires the leaders in an organisation to have a clear vision and future direction. For example, an organisation may plan to start exporting its products or services to another country and should, in context, realise that political, economic, social, technological, legal, environmental, and global factors could or will affect these strategic decisions (Frue, 2017). Further, not only will these external elements play a role, but also

internal elements in the organisations, namely, the effect of customers, suppliers, rivalries, competitors, and substitutes (Hall, 2021).

2.2.1.4.2 Analysing Resources

An organisation must further identify and arrange its resources to carry out the strategy, thus, to successfully implement it. Specifically, a search and recognition should identify resources with core competencies and capabilities that will pose a strategic fit for the objectives the organisation wants to reach (Venter et al. 2019). In addition, this step involves allocating the organisation's resources to align with the strategic plan with recognised changes that are correctly adopted. Moreover, this will require the organisation to administer various programs, projects, and business structures that will positively respond to the strategic plan to meet the organisation's goals (Thompson et al., 2022).

2.2.1.4.3 Framing Strategies

After analysing resources, strategies are formulated (Sminia, 2021; Sinnaiah *et al.*, 2023a). In essence, strategy formulation is the process of using available knowledge to document the intended direction of a business and the actionable steps to reach its goals. Moreover, this process is used for resource allocation, prioritisation, organisation-wide alignment, and validation of business goals. However, it requires critical considerations to frame a strategy with purpose when creating an effective strategy; firstly, organisations need a clear understanding of their mission and core values (Union, 2020). Secondly, consider current events and response to changes in the external and internal environment of the organisation. Thirdly, consider the data collected from the events and conduct internal and external research by building a plan backwards. Lastly, before implementing the strategy, consider reviewing the formulated strategy as often as possible because new events may affect the strategy (Thompson *et al.*, 2022)

2.2.1.4.4 Implementing Strategies

Once strategies are formulated, they must be implemented (“Peet Venter”, 2015). Strategic implementation involves change management, organisational learning, and resource allocation (Hussain, Lei, Akram, Haider, Hussain & Ali, 2018). In essence, change occurs when significant strategic decisions are made via a formal strategic process that organisations initiate through communication principles (Angelopulo & Barker, 2013). Further, organisational learning involves stakeholders recognising and responding to the change type via adequate leadership and management (Griffin et al., 2017). Specifically, how will the organisation respond to internal and external changes that will affect their strategic plan and contain these changes that influence the organisation, and will the management learn and respond to these changes? For example, the digital age in which organisations currently find themselves should require them to move towards electronic commerce-based strategies. As a result, they are moving forward towards a more technologically driven organisation to advance an organisation to become more competitive in the specific industry (Botha & Bothma, 2015).

2.2.1.4.5 Critical Success Factors of Strategic Formulation and Implementation

Creating a consistent strategy is difficult for all organisations, but implementing it effectively is crucial for achieving the desired outcomes (Sinnaiah *et al.*, 2023a). Specifically, successful implementation requires coordination among individuals at varying levels within an organisation. Thus, implementing a strategy involves vital success factors such as communicating, interpreting, adapting, and enacting strategic plans (Köseoglu *et al.*, 2020). However, the conventional approach to strategic planning treats formulation and implementation as separate processes. Thus, this approach overlooks that organisations sometimes need to improvise emergent strategies in the face of uncertainty. An organisation can identify critical success factors for strategy formulation and implementation through semi-structured interviews with top managers, as illustrated in Figure 2.2. Specifically, a strategist will note that organisations should prioritise using competitive analysis or recognise macro-environmental conditions over internal characteristics such as teamwork, culture, and communication in strategy formulation (Ali (Köseoglu et al., 2020). Respectively,

an organisation should consider all the stated internal collaboration key success factors illustrated in Figure 2.2 that can result in an organisation's successful strategic practice (Köseoglu *et al.*, 2020). Thus, during the implementation phase, employee involvement and strategic consensus should be prioritised, and exploring strategy literature in business sciences can provide clues on how an organisation should interpret key success factors in strategic management, highlighting the neglected areas to consider.

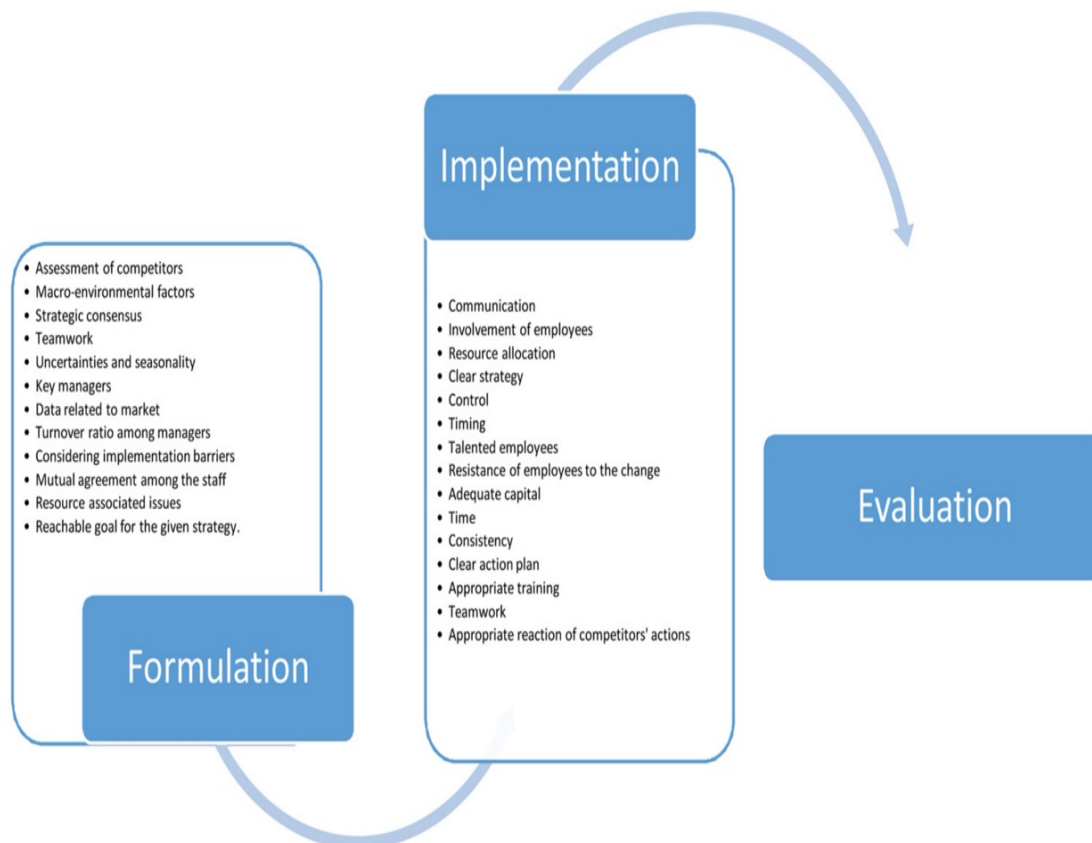


Figure 2. 2 Key Success Factors of Strategic Formulation and Implementation
(Köseoglu *et al.*, 2020)

2.2.1.5 Evaluating Strategic Effectiveness

The final step is to evaluate the effectiveness of the accumulated strategies that have been planned and successfully implemented. Further, strategic control is critical when implementing the organisation's strategy and having all the stakeholders onboard is pivotal

in the overall strategy process (Pineiro, 2017). Notably, the organisation must determine who and how the strategic framework improved the organisation's performance (Jain, 2016). Moreover, does the strategic execution align with the original strategic objective, and what control instruments does an organisation use to measure the success of the specific strategy the organisation formulated to sustain a competitive advantage (Gamble *et al.*, 2021). Therefore, the organisation's managers must plan, implement, and regularly evaluate the strategy daily by identifying their current standing, planning, formulating, and communicating with stakeholders to buy into the new strategy. Responsively, all resources must be aligned and strategically synchronised as a collective unit in the organisation to drive the desired objectives or outcome that was initially planned. Thus, the aim is to meet the overall strategic goals and objectives, improving the organisation's sustainable competitive advantage (Thompson *et al.*, 2022).

Table 2. 2 Strategic Management Factors Included by Various Authors

	Definitions	Process	Strategic Formulation	Strategic Implementation	Strategic Evaluation	Pros & Cons
(Venter <i>et al.</i> , 2019)	X	X	X	X	X	X
(Thompson <i>et al.</i> , 2022)	X	X	X	X	X	X
(Gamble <i>et al.</i> , 2021)	X	X	X	X	X	X
(Berman, Evans & Chatterjee, 2018)	X	X	X	X	X	X
(Thompson <i>et al.</i> , 2022)	X	X	X	X	X	X

Therefore, regarding strategic management, the researcher explored the current literature and evaluated the strategic management theory outlined in Table 2.2 by investigating theories, models and frameworks related to organisational strategy. Further, the table

summarises strategic elements that the authors have prescribed: strategic definitions, processes, formulation, implementation, and evaluation of strategic management. The first author defined strategy practices and indicated that strategy can often be emergent, messy, and experimental (Venter et al., 2019). In essence, strategists provided detailed insights for organisations to strive towards a competitive advantage by initiating, crafting, and executing all respective strategies via decisions relating to production operations, workforce compensation, pricing, and marketing, social responsibilities/ citizenship, and finance (Thompson *et al.*, 2022) . However, more detail regarding strategic decision tools is implemented in the organisations to monitor and control their strategic results (Gamble et al., 2021). Thus, the author's literature explored familiar strategic management concepts, namely, a strategic management process, to assist an organisation in tailoring a strategy. Moreover, literature in retail strategies explains to an organisation a model for a strategic planning and implementation approach, such as starting with a current situation, setting objectives, identifying external stakeholders, and identifying controllable or uncontrollable factors that will affect the organisation's overall strategy (Berman et al., 2018).

2.2.2 Strategic Tools in an Organisation

Strategic tools and frameworks are used in organisations to help them establish their competitive position, grow market share, and thrive in a ruthless business environment (Utomo, Sudaryanto & Saddhono, 2020). Further, strategic tools help organisations to analyse their strengths and internal and external factors to inform and reinforce their strategic decisions. Moreover, the strategic tools also help to identify weak spots and opportunities, prioritise initiatives that move the needle, and act in a specific organisational setting (Utomo *et al.*, 2020). Thus, choosing the right strategic tool for the organisation requires considering unique needs and challenges. Further, this process involves identifying the specific areas that need improvement, assessing available resources, and selecting the most appropriate tools to achieve the desired outcomes. Moreover, many strategy tools are available, and choosing the right one for the organisation can be overwhelming. For instance, one way to approach this is to start by analysing the organisation's environment and understanding where they are today and where they should be tomorrow (Gamble *et al.*, 2021).

For example, this can be done using standard strategic tools such as GAP Analysis, SWOT Analysis, PEST Analysis, PESTLE Analysis, VRIO Analysis, Porter’s Five Forces model, McKinsey 7S Framework, and Ansoff Matrix (Thompson *et al.*, 2022). Therefore, once strategists clearly understand your business environment and strategic direction, they can choose the most appropriate tools to help an organisation execute its strategy. However, it is essential to remember that no single tool is perfect for every situation, so choosing the right combination of tools that work best for an organisation is essential.

2.2.2.1 Popular Strategic Management Tools

An organisation can use several strategic management tools, models, or frameworks to execute its strategies and bring its strategic processes to life. Furthermore, a few strategic tools are outlined and evaluated in Table 2.3, which are only a handful of hundreds of strategic tools leading organisations apply in their respective industries, for instance, popular recent tools such as scenario planning, design thinking, agile methodology, blue ocean strategy, lean start-up, business model canvas, and digital transformation framework.

Table 2. 3 Evaluation of current strategic frameworks utilised in leading organisations

Organisation	Strategic Framework	Purpose	Advantage	Disadvantage
Adobe	Scenario Planning	This framework prepares for possible futures by identifying drivers of change, creating scenarios, and assessing implications.	Anticipation of future changes Flexible Encourage Creativity Improved Decision Making	Time-Consuming Difficult to Predict the Future May Lead to Complacency It may not be suitable for all situations
Apple, IBM, Nike, Netflix	Design Thinking	This framework helps create innovative solutions by empathising with users, defining problems, ideating solutions, prototyping, testing, and implementing the best solution.	User Centred Encourage Creativity Iterative Process Collaborative	Time-Consuming Subjective It may not be suitable for all situations. It may not be Scalable

<p>Microsoft Procter Gamble</p>	<p>Agile Methodology</p>	<p>This framework is used to manage projects flexibly and iteratively. It involves breaking down projects into smaller tasks, prioritising tasks based on value, and continuously delivering working software</p>	<p>Flexibility Customer Centric Iterative Process Collaborative</p>	<p>Requires Skilled Team Members It may not be suitable for all Projects. May Lead to Scope Creep May Not be Scalable</p>
<p>Tesla, Nintendo, Southwest Airlines</p>	<p>Blue Ocean Strategy</p>	<p>This framework is used to create new market space by making competition irrelevant. It involves identifying untapped customer needs and creating a unique value proposition that differentiates the organisation from its competitors</p>	<p>Differentiation Reduced Competition Increased Revenue Innovation</p>	<p>Risk Costs Time- Consuming It may not be suitable for all situations.</p>
<p>Toyota Dropbox Airbnb Instagram</p>	<p>Lean Start-up</p>	<p>This framework is used to develop new products or services cost-effectively. It involves testing assumptions about the product or service through experimentation, learning from customer feedback, and iterating until a viable product or service is developed</p>	<p>Helps Minimize Risks Focus on what stakeholders want. Innovation is accelerated. Reduce waste</p>	<p>Could lose initial vision. Not suitable for all organisations, high investment requirement In the balance between experimentation and execution</p>
<p>Amazon Nestle Mastercard</p>	<p>Business Model Canvas</p>	<p>This framework describes an organisation's business model's designs, challenges, and pivots. It involves identifying critical elements of the business model, such as customer segments, value propositions, channels, revenue streams, cost structure, and critical activities.</p>	<p>Provides a Comprehensive Overview Encourage Collaboration Gaps of improvement are identified. A holistic and shared understanding</p>	<p>Not suitable for organisations in the early stages of growth Requires significant investment. Requires in-depth detail of an organisation's business model</p>

General Electric Walmart	Digital Transformation Framework	This framework transforms an organisation's business model and operations through digital technologies. It involves assessing the organisation's digital maturity level, identifying digital opportunities and threats, developing a digital strategy, and implementing digital initiatives	Alignment of the organisation's transformation goals. Reduced Costs Improvement in Stakeholder Experience	High Investment requirements Difficulties in balancing experimentation and execution The framework may result in losing sight of the initial vision and passion
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In essence, strategic tools are critical for organisations as they help them develop a sound strategy that can help them achieve organisational goals. Thus, strategic tools also help an organisation strategist to execute their strategies effectively and more efficiently (McGraw-Hill Education, 2018).

2.2.3 Strategic Decision-Making

2.2.3.1 Definitions

A strategic decision is a methodical process for identifying the most advantageous course of action that harmonises an organisation's long-range objectives while considering its weaknesses and strengths and the potential consequences for future triumph (Sinnaiah *et al.*, 2023a). Further, strategic decision-making involves evaluating the pros and cons of a situation and developing a stepwise approach to realise organisational goals. Therefore, it differs from routine daily choices as it considers several vital factors that consider long-term and short-term goals. Moreover, strategic decisions are choices by strategists that consider a company's mission and strategic objectives (Fuentes *et al.*, 2020). Further, there are various times when an organisation must use strategic decision-making. For instance, when deciding whether to enter or exit an existing market, introducing a new product or service to their offering, deciding to withdraw or discontinue an existing product or service or target a new or existing customer segment. Thus, strategic decision-making is critical to practising

strategy and complements a continuous cognitive process of strategic planning and implementation (Gamble *et al.*, 2021).

2.2.3.2 Strategic Business Decisions

An organisation's strategist needs to make strategic decisions in its business setting; for instance, it may expand its operations into a new geographical market or industry by vertical or horizontal integration. Alternatively, an organisation might acquire or merge with another company to increase market share, reduce competition, or gain access to new technology. Further, an organisation may develop a new product or service that aligns with its mission and strategic objectives. However, these decisions may lead to feasibility challenges, and an organisation should decide to reduce costs by outsourcing certain functions, automating processes, or downsizing. Respectively, an organisation may invest in research and development to create new products, improve existing ones, or gain a competitive advantage. Therefore, these are just some examples of strategic business decisions to improve performance and industry competitiveness. Thus, an organisation's strategic decision will depend on its unique business situation and goals (Gamble *et al.*, 2021).

2.2.3.3 Challenges in strategic decision-making.

There are several challenges that leaders face when making strategic decisions. These challenges include bounded rationality, escalation of commitment, time constraints, uncertainty, biases, and conflict. Respectively, bounded rationality refers to the notion that leaders may not fully grasp complex issues, making it difficult to make rational decisions. Further, escalation of commitment is when leaders remain committed to a poor decision or find it hard to remove themselves from a poor decision rationally. Further, time constraints can also pose a challenge when little time is available to collect information and make an effective decision. Uncertainty, biases, and conflict can also impact the decision-making process. More profound dimensions to these challenges are hidden barriers that can prevent an organisation from carrying out its strategy effectively. For instance, core barriers include unclear values, ineffective senior teams, ineffective leadership style, poor coordination, inadequate leadership development, and inadequate vertical communication.

However, organisational strategists can overcome the challenges of strategic decision-making by adopting a sound strategic approach that considers their organisation's unique needs and challenges. For example, strategists can work with bounded rationality, understanding its place and continual learning instead of working against it (Sinnaiah *et al.*, 2023a). Further, a required escalation of commitment by using tools to help a leader develop new skills to overcome past mistakes, eventually removing the escalation challenge. In addition, a strategist of the organisation can manage their time well and make effective decisions even when there is little time available to collect information rationally. Importantly, by reducing uncertainties, organisation strategists can embrace the discomfort of not knowing, shift from a “know it all” mindset to a “learn it all” mindset and be biased to distinguish between complicated and complex challenges and approach them differently. Finally, in conflict management, organisational leaders can use effective communication and collaboration to resolve conflicts and make better strategic decisions. In addition to these strategies, leaders can also seek the advice of experts, consult with their team members, and use data-driven decision-making tools to make more informed decisions (Sinnaiah *et al.*, 2023a).

2.2.3.4 Factors that Improve Strategic Decision-Making

It is crucial for an organisation's managers to understand that strategic thinking is a distinct process that varies based on the situation at hand. Moreover, the thinking process needs to be in sync with the particular circumstances to guarantee the best possible solution can be executed. Therefore, to maintain a competitive edge, managers must actively participate in strategic thinking to have a positive impact on their organisations (Gamble *et al.*, 2021). In addition, several factors affect strategic decision-making, such as strategic thinking, decision style, type of environment, and strategic competencies.

2.2.3.4.1 Strategic thinking and enablers

The most challenging issue for an organisation is to be aware of its strategic vision, available resources, and growth opportunities (Bryson, Edwards & Van Slyke, 2018). To achieve success in any strategic task, a organisations strategists must possess the ability to think

strategically. This is especially true when it comes to carrying out a chain of processes in an effective and systematic manner (Merkus, Willems & Veenswijk, 2019). Organisations must understand that strategic thinking can be unsuccessful if the decision-makers are not aware of the strategic enablers or the factors responsible for an effective strategic thinking process. Strategic enablers affect the thought process and decision-making of organisational members. It is important to identify and utilize these strategic enablers for successful strategic thinking and decision-making (Goldman & Scott, 2016). Strategic enablers lead members to idea growth and development, while strategic thinkers boost performance (Abubakar, Elrehail, Alatailat & Elçi, 2019). Through the utilization of their experiences and thought processes, individuals within the organisational structure have the ability to effectively manage conflicts, ultimately leading to an enhancement of strategic thinking (Sinnaiah, Adam & Mahadi, 2023b). As a strategy manager, it is critical to acknowledge the interdependence between business departments, organisations, and their stakeholders. By recognizing this relationship, businesses can enhance their overall performance and achieve success in their respective industries. (Gomolka, Chittipeddi & Schenk, n.d.). Respectively, this "Systems thinking" is a holistic approach that organisations use to investigate the underlying structure of a situation that results in an incident. It involves analysing the various interconnected elements, including the actions taken and the environment in which they occur, to identify the root cause of the problem. By exploring the system as a whole, rather than just individual parts, organisations can gain a better understanding of the interdependencies and relationships that contribute to the incident, enabling them to implement more effective solutions (Gervase Iwu, Kapondoro, Twum-Darko & Lose, 2016). Thus, having a clear direction or organisational destiny is a type of strategic intent that can be used to help achieve business objectives. This approach enables all employees to focus on their tasks until the objectives are achieved. Strategic intent plays a vital role in enhancing competitive advantages and improving organisational success (Chen, Liu & Gong, 2021). Before a firm can compete, it must be intelligent and capable of creating opportunities to lead towards its vision. Conversely, the organisation should integrate previous events with the current situation to achieve and align with the organisation's objectives. Organisations must analyse their past and present environments to anticipate internal and external challenges and prepare for the future. (Abubakar *et al.*, 2019). Strategic thinking involves conducting a hypothesis-driven analysis to collect relevant

information about the business. Therefore, by transforming the challenges faced into a hypothesis-driven analysis, stakeholders can gain a better understanding of the measures needed to improve organisational success (Woermann & Engelbrecht, 2019).

2.2.3.4.2 Strategic Decision Style

The role of managers in an organisation must be elucidated to enhance decision-making and create competitive advantages. Additionally, Michael Porter emphasized differences between competitive strategy and competitors (Smit, 2010). The process of making strategic decisions is influenced by the decision-making styles of managers. These styles can be described as the habitual or formal patterns of response used by managers during an incident. The styles used by managers are closely linked to their cognitive styles and their way of thinking about strategic matters (Acciarini, Boccardelli & Vitale, 2021). The process of making decisions can be categorized into intuition and rationality, both at individual and team levels. In this regard, the author highlighted that cognitive styles could be classified into two groups: "feeling as information evaluators" and "thinking as information evaluators". The former refers to managers who rely on their intuition to actively gather information, while the latter refers to managers who systematically collect information. Alternatively, decision-making styles can also be referred to as intuitive and rational information-gathering and evaluating styles (Sinnaiah, Adam & Mahadi, 2023c). Effective intuitive decision-making involves navigating uncertain situations where managers or decision-makers must rely on their instincts to make informed choices. To ensure success in this approach, decision-makers must stay up-to-date with current events and thoughtfully analyse the complex relationship between cognitive schemes and holistic thinking in order to effectively resolve problems (Calabretta, Gemser & Wijnberg, 2017). Thus, the decision-making process guided by intuition can be significantly impacted by the sudden awareness of new information (He, Zhu & Zheng, 2014).

2.2.3.4.3 Strategic Decisions in Specific Environments: 4IR and VUCA

The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) has brought about significant technological advancements and disruptions that have impacted various aspects of human life, including

the way businesses operate. As a result, strategic decision-making in the 4IR era involves carefully selecting the best course of action to achieve an organisation's long-term goals while considering the potential impact of these technological changes. This requires a deep understanding of the latest technologies, trends, and innovations, as well as an ability to adapt to new and emerging challenges and opportunities (McKinsey, 2023). Further, the Fourth Industrial Revolution is characterised by the convergence of digital, physical, and biological systems, leading to new business models and industries. In essence, strategic decision-making in 4-IR requires organisations to be agile and adaptable to change and to leverage new technologies to create value for their customers (McKinsey, 2023). For instance, investment in new technologies, an organisation may need to invest in new technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, or the Internet of Things (IoT) to remain competitive. In addition, digital transformation decisions for an organisation may need to transform their business models and processes to exploit new digital technologies. As a result, decisions regarding improved online security because with the increasing use of digital technologies comes an increased risk of cyber-attacks; thus, an organisation must make strategic decisions about protecting their data and systems from cyber threats (McKinsey, 2023). Furthermore, in acquiring and retaining talent, the skills required for success in 4-IR differ from those required in previous industrial revolutions. Organisations must make strategic decisions about attracting, retaining, and developing talent with the necessary skills (McKinsey, 2023). Furthermore, in a VUCA environment, strategic decision-making selects the best action to reach strategic objectives in a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous context. VUCA stands for Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity (Pandit, 2021). However, these are the characteristics of an environment that is rapidly changing and challenging to predict. Therefore, in such an environment, strategic decision-making requires organisations to be agile and adaptable to change and to leverage new technologies to create value for their customers. There are various strategic decisions to consider in a VUCA environment, namely, the global economy, because it is constantly changing and challenging to predict, as political instability, natural disasters, and technological advancements can all impact the global economy and require specific strategic decisions that are made to align with strategic objectives (Pandit, 2021). In addition, the technology industry is a VUCA environment because it constantly evolves; new

technologies are continuously being developed, and strategically predicting which ones will be successful can be challenging for an organisation.

2.2.3.5 Strategic Decision-Making Instruments

Strategic decision-making instruments include the entire set of concepts, techniques and approaches that structure or influence an organisation's strategic thinking, strategic decision-making, and strategy implementation (Hakala & Vuorinen, 2020). Furthermore, strategic decision instruments describe methods for simplifying and representing an organisation's complex situation. Moreover, strategic decision instruments are also defined as diverse frameworks designed to assist an organisation in dealing with complex, competitive markets to generate and sustain strategic advantage. For example, in Table 2.4, the researcher outlined and evaluated some of the most current strategic decision instruments used in major organisations: rational decision-making, the decision matrix, the prioritisation matrix, and the cost-benefit analysis. Decision-making instruments promote a specific method of collecting, analysing, and presenting information, which improves rationality in strategic management quality (Hakala & Vuorinen, 2020).

Table 2. 4 Popular strategic decision-making methods used in organisations
(Hakala & Vuorinen, 2020)

Strategic Decision Tool	Purpose	Advantage	Disadvantage
Rational Decision Making	Rational decision-making harnesses rationality and logic to make decisions, leaving emotions and biases behind to ensure objective decisions	Scientifically obtained data that leads to reduced errors, distortions, assumptions, and subjectivity. Promotes Quality decisions	Requires careful consideration. Takes Time Unsuitable for quick decisions Only suitable for long-term policymaking

Decision Matrix	It is a decision tool to evaluate different options based on prioritised variables	Encourage Self-reflection. Assist when complex and challenging decisions are made. Provides more than one option	Takes Time Requires deliberation of data Not adequate when choices fall into different evaluation criteria
Prioritisation Matrix	A decision tool to evaluate the best use of the organisation's scarce resources.	Simple and Easy to Use Encourage Self Reflection Power complete tool that assists with various valuable options	Requires careful consideration. Timeous Delays quick decision-making. Can provide possible unsuitable results
Cost Benefit Analysis	A decision tool to calculate the benefits vs. costs which equal the value of a decision	Helps decision-makers identify efficient resource allocations. Assist in the evaluation of costs related to decisions. Identification of distributional effects in projects	Difficulty in accurately quantifying all costs or benefits. Possible errors in analysis can lead to wrong decisions. Does not include non-monetary factors such as social or environmental impacts.

Thus, an organisation should recognise that strategic decision-making instruments have vital benefits and are crucial for collecting and analysing information to make informed strategic decisions. An organisation can significantly benefit from strategic management tools encompassing various methods, methodologies, frameworks, or approaches to assist decision-making. Thus, to effectively use these tools, managers should know which ones to implement and how to use them. Respectively, these tools can guide management thinking and decision-making by providing a starting and continuous point for strategic management activities (Pandit, 2021).

2.3 Conclusion

Chapter 2 focussed on theory and literature on four specific points: strategic management by understanding strategy practices. Further, a process perspective attained that strategy is something an organisation's management does, not what comes naturally, but elements such as strategic planning, implementation, and control. Thirdly, a well-executed strategy may find pitfalls because of internal and external elements that could arrow an organisation; thus, high-level strategists should consider strategic management tools for indicating the performance of new strategies. Finally, it is concluded that strategy is a strategic decision made by strategists to improve the organisation's competitive advantage.

3 CHAPTER THREE - THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

A research methodology explains how a researcher intends to conduct research logically and systematically to resolve a research problem. In addition, a research methodology is a systematic approach to collecting data, gathering information, and evaluating findings. Further, to enable the researcher to reach the research objectives, a research method will assist the organisation in investigating a specific research problem. Thus, the research methodology involves the overall design, procedures, and techniques to collect, analyse, and scientifically interpret data (Maree 2019). Specifically, there are various research methods, namely, qualitative, quantitative, and mixed research methods a researcher can apply when performing business research (Jakoet-Salie 2022). In addition, a critical component of a research methodology consists of a research design. When researchers follow a well-defined research design, they can enhance their findings to be reliable and valid, generating new knowledge and advancing the organisation's knowledge about a specific research problem. Notably, ethical considerations and compliance are critical, and the researcher, throughout the research process, must obtain informed consent or permission from the institution to ensure participant confidentiality and follow all required ethical guidelines and regulations set out by Unisa SBL. Further, a well-designed research methodology enhances the findings' credibility, reliability, and validity, making meaningful contributions to the research problem (Jakoet-Salie, 2022). In this study, the researcher will evaluate the perceived quality of strategic management of a private holding organisation within Ekurhuleni by investigating the organisation's current strategic practices, namely, PJJ Group of Companies. The researcher intends to examine the organisation's quality of strategic management, strategic tools, and decision-making by utilising a quantitative research method and, thus, will collect data from a questionnaire distributed to the population and report on the findings regarding the research question.

3.2 Research Design

There could be challenges distinguishing the qualitative and quantitative or confusing them by possibly applying a mixed method without recognising it, which will enhance time constraints if the difference is not revised. Thus, the researcher should be careful not to confuse the methods in this study and will identify distinctions between the two approaches used in business research, each with respective characteristics and purposes (Maree 2019).

3.2.1 Qualitative Research Design

The qualitative research approach aims to understand and explore individuals' or groups' underlying meanings and experiences, and therefore, data is collected to gain insights regarding organisational human behaviour (Turner, Ting, Lim & Tan, 2021). In addition, four fundamental steps occur in qualitative settings: understanding the research questions, justifying the qualitative research design, analysing the collected data, and using qualitative data analysis software (Turner, Ting, Lim & Tan 2021). Further, a philosophical ground exists in qualitative research, namely, what is the truth/reality (ontology), what is the nature of the phenomena (objects), how can we know (epistemology), and what is the relationship between the knower and the known (Maree, 2019). Therefore, qualitative business research can help identify patents, uncover motivations, and gain insights into consumer behaviour, employee experiences, market training, and organisational culture. Since COVID-19 pandemic research has stalled significantly, scholars are discouraged from utilising a traditional qualitative approach. In addition, researchers can be more equipped to digitise the qualitative method by digitally applying qualitative research, which can accelerate the research process because it takes significant effort to apply a qualitative research method (Gray, 2022). Table 3.1 summarises the traditions used in qualitative research.

Table 3. 1 Qualitative Traditions

(Maree, 2019)

Focused	We are exploring the life of individuals, understanding the essence of experiences about a phenomenon, developing a theory grounded from data in the field, describing and interpreting the cultural or social group, and developing an in-depth understanding of a single case or multiple cases.
Data Collection Method	Primary interviews and documents also incorporate the Internet. Extended interviews with up to 10 people. Interviews with 20 -30 individuals to saturate categories and detail a theory.
Inductive Reasoning	Research relies on inductive reasoning, expressed primarily on words or views exploring a specific phenomenon.
Predicting Human Behaviour	Within this methodology, the researcher aims to explain and predict human behaviour by observing or interviewing.

3.2.2 Quantitative Research Design

Quantitative research is a systematic and objective process of using numerical data from a selected subgroup of an organisation and generalising the findings to the organisation to be studied (Maree, 2019). Thus, the essential elements are objectivity, numerical data, and generalisability. Further, quantitative research relies on structured data instruments such as questionnaires, experiments, or existing statistical data sets with specific parameters (Maree, 2019). It aims to identify statistical relationships, make predictions, and draw generalisable conclusions from respective sampling. Moreover, quantitative business research helps examine market trends, customer preferences, consumer satisfaction, and financial performance. Thus, in this study, the perceived quality of strategic management of PJJ Group of companies will be investigated using a quantitative research method.

Table 3.2 briefly describes the elements surrounding a quantitative research approach but does not explain the application in the research study. Notably, the research aims with the

overall objectives covered in Chapter 1 will be deductive and descriptive. Thus, in quantitative research methodologies, deductive reasoning is supported to test a hypothesis by collecting data to determine whether empirical evidence supports the hypothesis. Therefore, researchers start with hypotheses and then collect data that can assist in determining whether empirical evidence exists to support that hypothesis (Jakoet-Salie, 2022). Moreover, a quantitative analysis requires numeric information in the form of variables. In other words, deductive reasoning supports quantitative research, a hypothetical-deductive method as a scientific method of testing hypotheses to check whether real-organisational data substantiate the researcher's predictions (Maree, 2019). Further, deductive means reasoning from the particular to the general and that a causal relationship or link seems to be implied by a specific theory ("Deductive Approach (Deductive Reasoning) - Research-Methodology", 2023). Thus, a deductive design might test whether this relationship or link was obtained in more general circumstances and can descriptively align the hypotheses derived from the theory's propositions (Jakoet-Salie, 2022). The primary objective of descriptive research is to gather comprehensive information on a particular current state, to establish and analyse a profile of the prevailing circumstances. In the context of this research, the aim is to obtain a deeper understanding of the private organisation's perceptions of strategic management, strategic tools, and strategic decision-making. The research will focus on describing the present situation in detail, examining the various factors that contribute to the current state, and evaluating the implications of these factors. By doing so, it will provide a comprehensive picture of the organisation's current strategic landscape and inform decision-making processes.

Table 3. 2 Qualities of Qualitative Research

(Maree, 2019)

Deductive Reasoning	Research methods rely on deductive reasoning, are explanatory and descriptive
Numbers	Results are in numerical form, and the researcher utilizes a statistical analysis between variables and identifies the deviation, mean or constant in parameters.

Fixed or Formal Procedures	The research design often follows a fixed procedure or in a controlled setting.
Statistics Parameters Variables	The results from the data to be analysed and parameters and variables to be determined

3.3 Population

A research population refers to a credible group of individuals, objects, or events that a researcher intends to study and draw conclusions from the researcher's evaluation (Shukla, 2020). Further, it represents the larger group with specific characteristics or features relevant to the research objective. The population can vary depending on the nature of the study, ranging from a specific group of people, such as an organisation with a particular problem or objectives to investigate, to a broader category, such as all employees or only some in an organisation. Notably, the researchers intend to select a sample, a smaller subset of the population, to gather data and make inferences about the larger population (Shukla, 2020). For example, the researcher will investigate the perceived quality of strategic management in the organisation named P.J.L. Group of Companies to evaluate the perceived quality of their strategy in essence for the researcher to consider the research objectives. Thus, the organisational population provided by the organisation via an employee list is approximately 60 and consists of full and part-time employees, managers, and executives in all organisation branches. It is important to note that the population exists from the same private organisation and that this study will evaluate a particular phenomenon and be seen as a case study (Maree, 2019)

3.4 Sample Size and Technique

Researchers often select a smaller subset of the research population, thus representing a manageable portion of the population for data collection and analysis to create insight into the research objectives (Maree, 2019). Further, sampling in business research involves selecting a subset of individuals or elements from the research population to represent the larger group. Further, the sampling process is crucial as it allows researchers to collect data

more efficiently and at a lower cost than studying the entire population (Shukla, 2020). In this study, most population members will be considered, and the researcher will apply a simple random sampling method to select participants in the actual investigation or research study. In addition, simple random sampling is used to make statistical inferences about a population. It helps ensure high internal validity: randomisation is the best method to reduce the impact of potential confounding variables. In addition, with a significant enough sample size, a simple random sample has high external validity: it represents the characteristics of the larger population. Although larger samples provide more statistical certainty, they also cost more and require more work. Moreover, there are several potential ways to decide on the size of the study's sample. However, one of the simplest involves using a formula with the desired confidence interval and level, the estimated size of the population the researcher will work with, and the standard deviation of whatever you want to measure in your population. Therefore, the most common confidence interval and levels used are 0.5 and 0.95, respectively. However, since the researcher may not know the standard deviation of the population he is studying, choosing a number high enough to account for various possibilities (such as 0.5) is argued.

Some of the advantages of random sampling are as follows:

- Compared to other sampling methods, it helps reduce the bias involved in the sample and is considered a fair sampling method.
- This method requires no technical knowledge, as it is a fundamental data collection method.
- The data collected through this method is well-informed.
- As the population size is prominent in the simple random sampling method, researchers can create the sample size they want.
- It is easy to pick the smaller sample size from the larger population.

Further, the number of respondents is meaningless unless the sample represents the population, whereby inferences should be drawn. In other words, the larger the sample size, the result will support research validity and reliability. Thus, the researcher will decide how large your sample size will be by making use of the following random sample formula:

PJL Moller Group has 60 employees, and 56 will be selected for the research. Respectively, all their names will be put in a basket to pull 56 names out. Now, each employee has an equal chance of getting selected, so we can also easily calculate the probability (P) of a given employee being selected since we know the sample size (n) and the population size (N).

Therefore, the chance of selection of an employee is only once,

$$P = n/N = 56/60 = 93\%$$

Moreover, the chance of selection of an employee more than once is.

$$P = 1 - (1 - (1/N))^n$$

$$P = 1 - (59/60)^{100}$$

$$P = 0.017$$

$$P \approx 1.70\%$$

Further, a sample technique should be derived from the population and sample size. Thus, a sampling technique in this study is based on an in-survey designed by UNISA SBL, namely a borrowed data instrument and an approved questionnaire to be distributed to a predetermined sample size. In essence, the term survey research has any kind of descriptive, quantitative research, and the emphasis is on the learnings by collecting data from a sample survey done in a population; thus, this approach is called a descriptive or normative survey. Specifically, when dealing with people, a sample can be described as a set of respondents selected from a large population combined with factors with similar characteristics or behaviors. Table 3.3 illustrates a sample framework from all regions and facilities in PJL Moller Group of Companies with a total population of 60, whereby at least 56 participants will be accessed, and this is done by using an online survey questionnaire. In addition, online surveys are low cost and offer high speed of distribution and collection, with relatively fewer errors and better response rates. Notably, the participation company employs more than 56 persons, allowing a sample of more than 30 participants, a surplus of the minimum prerequisite total indicated by UNISA SBL. Lastly, the organisation's

participant mix will consist of managers and non-managerial employees, whereby the survey helps establish the perceived quality of strategic management.

Table 3. 3 Sample Framework of P JL Group of Companies

Operational Unit	Total Population	Sample Size	Percentage of Population	Sample Method
All Regions and Facilities	60	56	93%	Random Sampling

3.5 Unit of Analysis

In business research, the unit of analysis refers to the specific entity or level of analysis that researchers focus on when examining a particular phenomenon. Further, it is the subject or object of study in a research project (Maree, 2019). Therefore, the unit of analysis could be an individual, a group, an organisation, a market, or any other defined entity relevant to the research question and objectives. Choosing the appropriate unit of analysis is crucial as it determines the study's scope and level of detail and helps researchers draw meaningful conclusions from a phenomenon from the research findings (Heath, 2023). Lastly, this study aims to understand the perceived quality of strategic management of P JL Moller Group companies.

3.6 Data Collection Instrument

For this study, the researcher will gather primary data from respondents through interviews or surveys, while secondary data will come literature sources. Further, secondary data sources include research data libraries, internet sites, books, journals, and articles. Choosing the right data collection instrument is crucial to ensure the study's reliability, and the researcher opted for a quantitative methodology using a data instrument like a questionnaire to collect and analyse data. The questionnaire will be accessible online through an electronic mail link provided by Prof Peet Venter, the study leader. The Unisa

School of Business Leadership has pre-designed and validated this survey, making it easy to use for respondents.. However, the research may face some challenges if co-workers or concerns regarding anonymity and data security create barriers to responses. It is important to note that this research will be conducted as part of a structured study group supervised by Unisa SBL, and the study leader has designed a standardised electronic questionnaire to collect the necessary data on the perceived quality of strategic management within the organisation. The researcher have obtained permission from the organisation to use the provided UNISA SBL questionnaire.

3.6.1 Details of the Data Instrument

The current research employs a questionnaire as a data instrument to collect data on the strategic management of PJJ Moller Group of Companies. Respondents provide data by answering the questionnaire, providing information on their organisations' strategic management. Section 1 of the questionnaire captures the demography of the respondent, particulars regarding their organisation, and the respondent's position and functional area. Moreover, it includes questions regarding the nature of the organisation, the position of the participants in the organisation hierarchy, and the functional area of the organisation. Section 2 is designed to elicit information on strategic management quality. It consists of 28 closed-ended statements that focus on activities associated with developing and implementing long-term plans. Participants must indicate their level of agreement with each statement using a five-point rating scale. Section 3 focuses on strategic management tools. The questionnaire lists 12 tools that organisations use during strategic management. Participants must indicate whether their organisation uses these tools and what strategy the organisation employs. Section 4 is dedicated to strategic decision-making and covers high-level decision-making regarding financial and other resource commitments. This section consists of ten closed-ended statements, and participants must indicate their level of agreement with each statement using a five-point scale. Section 5 involves questions regarding organisational performance. Participants are required to rate their organisation's overall financial performance, revenue growth, and customer perceptions of their brand on a scale of 1 to 3. Section 6 is designed to collect personal particulars regarding the respondent. These particulars form part of the more controlled study permitted by the Unisa

School of Business Leadership. The questionnaire will support the quantitative analysis, and the data collected will be confidential. Participants will receive informed consent, and permission will be obtained from the organisation's stakeholders to conduct the research. The questionnaire can be found in appendices 8.1 of section 8. It is expected that participants will take no longer than 20-30 minutes to complete the questionnaire. A cover letter will be attached to the questionnaire explaining the purpose of the study and providing contact details for the student and the researcher.

3.7 Piloting the Data Instrument

Piloting in research ensures that the instructions and questions of the questionnaire will be clear and unequivocal; the questionnaire was sent to three colleagues to test before distribution to the participants in the study (NHI, 2023). Therefore, this also confirmed that the data collected will form part of the research and that the questionnaire will be suitable to answer the research-indicated question aligned with the research objectives (Maree, 2019). The stakeholders in the organisation agreed with the clarity and absence of ambiguity in the survey.

3.8 Distributing the Data Instrument

At least 56 participants within the organisation will receive the questionnaire, which will be provided through a link from Unisa SBL. The number of questionnaires distributed will exceed the organisation's population to account for potential errors and incomplete responses. This will ensure that the data collected and analysed will be sufficient to conduct the research and answer the research question, as well as meet the objectives. To comply with the POPIA Act, the organisation will appoint an information officer to ensure that the participants' privacy is protected. The organisation has agreed to provide two weeks for all data samples to be completed and provide feedback on the questionnaire.

3.9 Data Collection Method

Choosing an appropriate data collection method is crucial to verify and ensure the accuracy of the study (Maree, 2019). In addition, this research was conducted as part of a larger study at UNISA SBL. As a result, the study leader created and offered a standardized electronic questionnaire to gather the necessary information on the perceived quality of strategic management within the organisation. Furthermore, various responses will be collected directly online by the leader of the larger research study, which Unisa SBL will conduct. When the allowed time frame for participants to complete the questionnaire expires, the relevant information will be exported and sent to the respective researcher as a Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet. Finally, the data will be imported into SPSS Statistics version 28 software for further statistical analysis.

3.10 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis is a crucial part of any research study. In order to conduct a thorough analysis, researchers need to examine variables. These variables can be attributes or qualities of people, items, or circumstances, and can have different values. For this particular research study, the researcher will collect primary numerical data using a questionnaire to establish the perceived quality of strategic management in a private organisation in Ekurhuleni. The data will be analysed using a predetermined descriptive quantitative analysis technique with objective criteria. The first step will be to summarize the data, and then identify and compare patterns using deductive reasoning (Maree, 2019). The researcher will also perform factor analysis procedures, such as the Kaiser Criterion, Scree test, Pearson analysis, and other related data extractions. Both primary and secondary data will be collected to draw logical conclusions and report on the findings. The secondary data will be obtained through a literature review in Chapter 2, which will be aligned with the research question and objectives. To analyse the data quantitatively, the researcher will use a statistical package called SPSS Statistics. It's essential for the researcher to remain unbiased throughout the research study. To ensure this, the researcher will dissociate themselves from any physical or visiting the premises and refrain from communicating with participants to avoid any conflict of interest.

3.11 Data Storage

The data collected from the study leader will be entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet that shall remain unencrypted. A comprehensive analysis of this collected data will be conducted, also utilizing the same spreadsheet. The resulting analysis will then be securely stored for up to a minimum of five years, as a matter of safekeeping and future reference.

3.12 Validity and Reliability

The quality of the data collected through the questionnaire depends on relevance, adequacy, accuracy, and consistency, which is influenced by the questionnaire's variables design, reliability, and validity (Maree, 2019). In essence, the validity and reliability of the assessment strategy will be determined in line with the research question and objective to ensure that the research and the conclusions drawn will be credible. Further, criterion validity is probably the ultimate test of whether an instrument measures what must be measured. However, this research study is done in a control group, where it is argued to create a functional counterfactual inference that is essential to maintain relationships with all stakeholders and argued as the hallmark for validity (Aguiar, Doutor, Magalhães Mucci & Modolon Lima, 2022). Further, to measure the degree of the criterion validity of an instrument, scores on an existing instrument (the criterion), known to measure the same construct, should be available for the sample of respondents. Therefore, the correlation between the instrument and the criterion is an indication of the criterion validity of the instrument; a high correlation indicates a high degree of validity, and a low correlation indicates a low degree of validity (Maree 2019). Notably, it is argued that method triangulation involves cross-checking for internal consistency or reliability, but it tests the degree of external validity (Lo, Rey-Martí & Botella-Carrubi, 2020). However, in this study, the reliability will be measured using the Cronbach Alpha test, and reliability studies are commonly used in questionnaire development studies and questionnaire validation studies. This study reviews the sample size guideline for Cronbach's alpha test. Further, the method uses manual sample size calculation within SPSS Statistics software, and sample size tables will be tabulated based on single coefficient alpha and the comparison of two coefficients alpha. Thus, the results for a single coefficient alpha test, the approach by

assuming the Cronbach's alpha coefficient equals to zero in the null hypothesis, will yield a smaller sample size of less than 30 to achieve a minimum desired effect size of 0.7. However, setting the coefficient of Cronbach's alpha more significant than zero in the null hypothesis could be necessary, and this will yield a larger sample size. However, a larger sample size is needed when testing for smaller effect sizes to compare two coefficients of Cronbach's alpha. Lastly, in assessing the internal consistency of an instrument, the present study proposed that Cronbach's alpha coefficient be set at 0.7 in the null hypothesis; hence, a larger sample size is needed. For comparing two coefficients' of Cronbach's alpha, justification is needed as to whether testing for petite and substantial effect sizes is scientifically necessary (Bujang, Omar & Baharum, 2018).

3.13 Ethical Considerations

Firstly, strict ethical guidelines will be followed to ensure that all legal and regulatory requirements are met, and ethical and moral norms and practices will be followed. Significantly, no participants in this study will endure physical or psychological harm, and the research will be distributed via an electronic survey. In respect, no participants will be subject to physical harm at any time (Maree, 2019). Further, the researcher has completed all the required seven modules provided in the Tree Training and Resources in Research Ethics Evaluation platform to understand the ethical guidelines for performing research. The participant's response will be confidential and will result in undue embarrassment. In other words, participation in the study will be seen as voluntary, and participants should have provided informed consent to participate in this study. Thus, participants will be presented with an informal consent form informing them of the nature of the study, that participation was voluntary, and that they could withdraw from the study at any point without a negative consequence. Notably, the organisation was guaranteed that their response would be anonymous and remain confidential, together with the information of the researchers and study leaders' contact details provided by the UNISA SBL.

3.14 Limitations of the Research

The nature of the research methodology and the organisation resulted in various research limitations. For instance, due to time constraints and availability of resources, the study was conducted in only one organisation with three groups within the Waste Removal, Refuse collection and recycling, electrical and construction industries. Further, the researcher is an outside party with limited access to confidential information and employees within the organisation. As a result, with an electronic survey, any employees with an online link from Unisa SBL can receive the questionnaire sent to the organisation's management. However, it is possible that a large percentage of the employees within the organisation will not participate or have an opportunity to complete the questionnaire. Specifically, many employees generally have less access to information regarding strategic management in the organisation. Moreover, as the researcher was not known to the employees in the organisation, some employees might feel apprehensive about participating. However, although the link and questionnaire explicitly distributed state that the information is confidential, employees might have been nervous about giving their opinion about what is happening within the organisation out of fear of being exposed. Nonetheless, since the research was not a company initiative and completing the questionnaire was not mandatory, some employees might have been indifferent toward the research and could not complete the questionnaire. Further, there could be time constraints that could play a significant role in successful participation. Thus, by evaluating employees not participating in their research as a case study based on only one organisation with various departments, the research findings will not be generalised since the research is based on such a study.

3.15 Conclusion

This chapter outlined specifics about the proposed research methodology and what research processes will be utilised as the foundation of the study. Specifically, a descriptive quantitative approach will be conducted as the research will be aimed at gathering data and performing an evaluation. Therefore, the population will most likely consist of 60 employees within the private organisation PJJ Group of companies in Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality and a group located in the Eden District Mossel Bay area. Thus, deductive reasoning will be applied, and numerical and statistical data will be displayed in the research findings. Lastly, all the validity, reliability, and ethical issues will be discussed to ensure the credibility of the research and this study.

4 CHAPTER FOUR – DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher analysed and evaluated the perceived quality of strategic management in a private organisation within Ekurhuleni. Further, the researcher will make findings from the data collected on how the organisation effectively performs strategic management practices. Specifically, the data that will be collected will be interpreted according to the research objectives, namely, to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the private organisation's current strategic management process, to identify and analyse the value of the private organisation's strategic tools that are being deployed, and to evaluate the private organisation's high-level strategic decision-making process. Moreover, chapter four presents the data collected and aims to discuss in the context of the research question that outlines the research problem and presents a formulated hypothesis from the conceptual framework. The researcher was only allowed to collect data after receiving an ethical clearance. After data collection was allowed via a survey method, such as a borrowed questionnaire from the study leader at UNISA SBL, it was distributed among the randomly selected samples of the total population of the organisation. Respectively, the questionnaire was allocated to all managerial levels and employees in the organisation. In addition, the researcher conducted various data analysis methods. For instance, the researcher screened the data with software named SPSS Statistics Version 28 by identifying respondents' response rates and different characteristics such as age, gender, and functionality of respondents. Secondly, the researcher determined if the internal data was valid and consistent by performing a reliability and validity analysis of all three research objectives and related items questioned. Thirdly, after the researcher determined that factor analysis could be performed, an analysis of the various constructs from variables was extracted concerning the quality of strategic management, strategic management tools and strategic decision-making. Additionally, after evaluating the validity and consistency of the data instrument, the researcher performed descriptive statistical analysis to determine the perception level of the respondents regarding the variables in the study to enable the highlights of findings to promote recommendations. Lastly, not that it was required, a

regression analysis was done to identify the correlations and relationships between the three constructs: strategic management quality, strategy tools and strategic decisions.

4.2 Research Problem

At the departure point within chapter one, the researcher outlines the research problem by asking: is there a perceived quality of strategic management within the private organisation operating in the Ekurhuleni Municipality? Thus, do the stakeholders in the organisation perceive strategic management practices as high or low perceptions? Are they making good strategic decisions and applying practical strategic tools to promote organisational success? Notably, the data analysis from responses will outline indicators to support findings from the research objectives. This will help the researcher interpret the strategic management practice as quality in the organisation and what recommendations can be presented to management.

4.3 Response Rate

The researcher selected 56 potential participants out of a population of 60 in the organisation. Forty-eight questionnaires were collected and useable in line with the inclusion and exclusion criteria, with a response rate of 85% valid responses, as indicated in Table 4.1. Respectively, it is argued that a response rate of above 50% from the sample will support the outcome of the research conducted after data analysis (Maree, 2019). An above 50% response is ideal for quantitative research data instruments. Therefore, the researcher can be confident that a response rate of 85% is sufficient for this research study.

Table 4. 1 Response Rate

Description	Frequency	Percentage
Responses Triggered	48	85%
No Response	8	15%
Total Questionnaires Distributed	56	100%

4.4 Organisation's Sample Particulars

The investigation occurred at the P JL Moller Group of Companies; a South African private organisation based in Ekurhuleni. This organisation is dedicated to waste management, recycling, and high-voltage electrical services and employs 60 full-time professionals. This section presents demographic details about the study participants, including age, gender, educational background, ethnicity, job position within the organisation, and functional area. The subsequent subsections provide a breakdown of the participants' demographics.

4.4.1 Respondent's Position in the Organisation

During the initial phase of the survey, the participants were inquired about their respective roles in the company. The resulting data has been tabulated in Table 4.2 to indicate the frequency and percentage of respondents based on their position within the organisation.

Table 4. 2 Respondents Position

Description	Frequency	Percent
Directors	5	18%
Senior Manager / Executive	1	2.1%
Middle Managers	0	0%
Entry Level Manager / Supervisor	5	10.4%
Professional Specialists	1	2.1%
Permanent Employees	32	66.7%
Other / Consultants	4	8.3%
TOTAL	48	100%

Table 4.2 presents the positions of the respondents at work. Most of the sample, accounting for 66.70%, are permanent employees, a common trend in most organisations. Middle managers account for 0.00%, while senior and entry-level managers constitute 12.50%. Professional specialists and consultants comprise 10.40% of the sample, and only 18% are directors. The study's focus on managerial positions is critical since these individuals are

responsible for strategic management and decision-making. However, a balanced view must also consider the perspectives of non-management employees. In the next section, the researcher will present the functional areas of the respondents within their organisation.

4.4.2 Functional Placement of Respondents in the Organisation

According to Table 4.3, the largest portion of respondents come from the operation and engineering department, which accounts for over one-third of the total number. This trend is unsurprising given that the organisation being studied operates within the transport, waste, and electrical sectors, where the majority of staff is employed in operations. Finance and accounting make up a mere 4.2% of the sample, while marketing is not represented at all, and only 2.1% of respondents come from the sales department. General management comprises 14.60% of the sample. Notably, there are no respondents from the ICT department, and 39.6% are from other support services within the organisation. These findings suggest that the sample encompasses most functional areas of the organisation, with the exception of marketing and ICT, which are outsourced to third parties. As such, this study provides a well-rounded perspective on strategic management, strategic tools, and strategic decision-making within the organisation. Further details on the functional areas of the respondents can be found in Table 4.3.

Table 4. 3 Functionality of Respondents

Description	Frequency	Percent
Sales	1	2.1%
Finance & Accounting	2	4.2%
Operations	19	39.6%
Marketing	0	0%
ICT	0	0%
General Manager	7	14.6%
Other Support	19	39.6%
Total	48	100%

4.4.3 Gender

The sample size in Table 4.4 includes an unbalanced distribution of genders, with males dominating at 79% and females at only 21% of the participants. This suggests that the sample indicates unequal gender in the organisation's demographics. Despite the study's gender-neutral focus, males and females are fairly represented in the sample. Moving forward, the researcher will delve into the age distribution of the respondents.

Table 4. 4 Respondents Gender Distribution

Description	Frequency	Percent
Man	38	79%
Woman	10	21%
Total	48	100%

4.4.4 Age

The age distribution of the respondents has been illustrated and presented in Tables 4.5 and Figure 4.1 below. The results demonstrate that the mean age of the respondents is 39.60 years, with the youngest participant being 21 years old and the oldest being 65 years old. These findings suggest that most of the respondents are at a mature age where they possess the necessary experience and knowledge to influence the decisions made within the organisation.

Table 4. 5 Age Distribution of Respondents

Descriptive Statistics					
Description	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Age next birthday	48	39.60	11.82	21	65

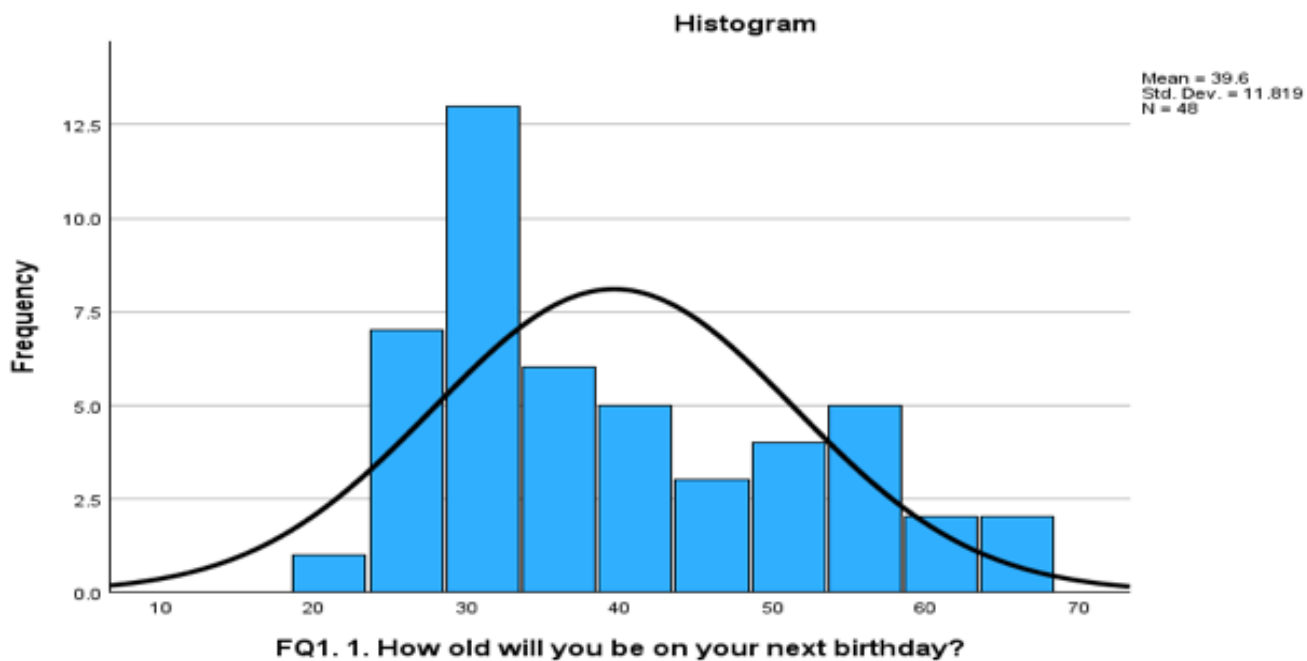


Figure 4. 1 Age Distribution of Respondents

Therefore, their opinions and insights should be considered when making important organisational decisions. The following section will provide a detailed account of the educational qualifications of the respondents.

4.4.5 Educational Background

As part of the study, the researcher collected data on the educational background of the respondents. The findings are presented in detail in Table 4.6, providing valuable insights into the educational qualifications of the individuals who participated in the study. Based on Table 4.6, most survey participants have completed high school (matric), accounting for 43.80% of the sample size. However, 39.60% of the respondents did not complete high school, which could affect the understanding of questions affecting quality data results. Nonetheless, 10.40% hold a post-matric degree or diploma and 6.30% post-graduate qualifications. Therefore, most of the participants had attained high educational levels and, thus, were expected to provide informed responses.

Table 4. 6 Education of Respondents

Description	Frequency	Percent
Did not complete High School	19	39.60%
Completed High School (Matric)	21	43.80%
Post-matric degree or diploma	5	10.40%
Post Graduate Qualification	3	6.30%
Total	48	100%

Additionally, a breakdown of the respondents based on their ethnic groups is presented below.

4.4.6 Ethnic Group

As part of the data collection process, the survey asked respondents to provide information about their ethnic background. This information ensured that the sample represented the population being studied. The ethnic distribution of the respondents is presented in Table 4.7, which provides a clear picture of the diversity within the sample.

Table 4. 7 Ethnic Groups of Respondents

Description	Frequency	Percent
Asian / Indian	0	0.00%
Black	30	62.50%
Coloured / Mixed Race	1	2.10%
White	17	35.40%
Total	48	100%

Table 4.7 displays the results of the survey on the ethnic distribution of the respondents. The study reveals that 63% of the respondents are black, followed by 35.40% white and 2.10% mixed race. These findings are consistent with Stats SA's (2022) published results, which indicate that most of South Africa's working population is black, accounting for 60% of the workforce. After providing the respondents' demographic details, the next section will focus on analysing the research data instrument, emphasising evaluating the measurement scales' reliability and validity.

4.5 Evaluation of the Research Data Instrument

4.5.1 Reliability Assessment

To ensure that a measurement scale is dependable, it needs to be utilized multiple times to assess similar items and produce consistent outcomes (Maree, 2019). The reliability of a scale is crucial, as it should give consistent and accurate results every time it is used. There are different methods to measure instrument reliability, but the most commonly used one is Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. This coefficient uses a scale ranging from 0 to 1, where 0 indicates no internal consistency and 1 indicates complete internal consistency. According to Jakoet-Salie (2022), a Cronbach Alpha of over 0.70 is considered reliable for research purposes. In our study, we measured the perceived quality of strategic management, strategic decision-making, and strategic tools using Cronbach's alpha, and you can find the results in Table 4.8.

Table 4. 8 Reliability Assessment of the Data Instrument

Measured Construct	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients	Number of Items
Quality of Strategic Management	0.959	28
The Tools of Strategic Management	0.826	12
Strategic Decision Making	0.795	10
Total Scale Average	0.860	

In Table 4.8, the researcher noticed the alpha values for three different constructs, as well as the number of items within each construct. The quality of strategic management contains 28 items, the tools of strategic management contain 12 items, and the quality of strategic decision-making consists of 10 items. All of these scales have alpha values greater than 0.7, indicating strong internal consistency. Additionally, the Cronbach's Alpha for the total scale average is 0.860, demonstrating a comprehensive internal consistency of the data instrument. Therefore, these measures can be confidently utilized for further analysis. Moving forward, the upcoming section will delve into exploratory factor analysis and present the validity analysis.

4.5.2 Validity and Internal Consistency Test

As a critical aspect of our study's objectives, we employed three scales to assess the constructs of Quality Strategic Management, Tools of Strategic Management, and Strategic Decision-Making, all of which played a vital role in achieving our research goals. Our initial step in the analysis involved conducting an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to identify any hypothetical sub-constructs that might exist and affect the perceived quality of strategic management. This crucial step allowed for a more profound comprehension of the constructs and ensured the validity of the study's outcomes.

4.5.3 Factor analysis Stages

Factor Analysis, or FA, is a statistical technique used to simplify intricate data sets by revealing hidden patterns and relationships among variables. Its primary aim is to identify a reduced number of factors that can explain the variability in the data while minimizing any loss of information. This is accomplished by analysing the correlation matrix of the variables. There are two types of FA: exploratory and confirmatory. For this study, exploratory factor analysis was employed. The procedure typically involves three stages.

4.5.3.1 Stage 1 - Evaluating whether the data is appropriate for factor analysis.

Determining the suitability of a data set for factor analysis requires assessing two crucial factors: sample size and the strength of the relationships among variables. Researchers have reached a consensus that a sample size of no less than 50 is ideal, though the required size may vary depending on the nature of the research. Generally, larger sample sizes yield more representative and generalizable results. However, in some cases, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) can generate satisfactory results for sample sizes below 50, provided the data is well-structured and the factors are well-defined or limited.

To determine the strength of the relationships among variables, two tests are employed - Bartlett's test of sphericity and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test. Bartlett's test assesses the probability of a significant correlation between variables, with a significance level of $p < 0.05$, indicating that the test has been passed. The KMO index, on the other hand, ranges from 0 to 1, with 0.5 being the minimum value for good factor analysis (Maree, 2019)

Table 4. 9 Validity Assessment of Data Instrument

Test	Measure	Result
Kaiser – Meyer – Olkin (KMO)	Sample Adequacy	0.754
Bartlett Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	874.82
	Degrees of Freedom	233
	Significance	<0.001

Table 4.9 presents the KMO results, which indicate that the KMO statistic is 0.754, more than 0.5. Based on the results, it can be inferred that the sample size is sufficient for factor analysis. Despite the fact that the sample size for this study was less than 50 (n=48), Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was still a viable method due to the presence of well-defined factors and a limited number of items in the dataset. Moreover, the study's target population comprised individuals from the same team of a single organization, who were exposed to the same communication and activities. The next step in the process is to extract the factors of the variables collected in the instrument.

4.5.3.2 Stage 2 - Factor Extraction Procedure

To analyse data effectively, identifying the minimum number of factors is crucial. Several extraction techniques are available, but the unweighted least squares (USL) technique is preferred for small sample sizes. It works by decreasing the sum of squared differences between observed and estimated correlation matrices. Researchers can use Kaiser's criterion, Scree test, or Parallel analysis to decide the appropriate number of factors to retain, which impacts the accuracy and reliability of statistical analysis.

4.5.3.2.1 EFA – Quality of Strategic Management

The quality of strategic management KMO score falls between 0 and 1, boasting a remarkable score of 0.770. Furthermore, Bartlett's test demonstrates a significant level

below 0.05, with a score of $p < 0.001$. Passing both tests confirms that this variable can be factor analysed in line with the criteria of each evaluation. Therefore, all variables that underwent analysis satisfied the prerequisite conditions and were utilised in the study.

Table 4. 10 Kaiser – Meyer -Olin and Bartlett (Quality of Strategic Management)

Test	Measure	Result
Kaiser – Meyer – Olkin (KMO)	Sample Adequacy	0.770
Bartlett Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1366.04
	Degrees of Freedom	378
	Significance	<0.001

In addition, the researcher employed the PCA technique to ascertain the optimal number of factors required to capture the underlying data structure. The selection standard for accepting factors hinged on an Eigen-value surpassing 1.0. Please refer to Table 4.11 for an overview of the extracted factors, including the rotation sums of squared loadings.

Table 4. 11 Total Variance Explained (Quality of Strategic Management)

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings ^a
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total
1	13.554	48.409	48.409	13.554	48.409	48.409	9.215
2	2.704	9.659	58.067	2.704	9.659	58.067	8.170
3	2.112	7.543	65.610	2.112	7.543	65.610	7.388
4	1.539	5.496	71.106	1.539	5.496	71.106	2.874
5	1.147	4.097	75.204	1.147	4.097	75.204	5.791
6	.979	3.498	78.702				
7	.883	3.152	81.854				
8	.739	2.639	84.493				
9	.629	2.245	86.738				
10	.593	2.119	88.857				
11	.515	1.841	90.698				
12	.477	1.702	92.401				
13	.375	1.340	93.740				
14	.318	1.134	94.874				
15	.271	.967	95.841				
16	.232	.830	96.671				
17	.173	.619	97.290				
18	.157	.561	97.852				
19	.142	.507	98.359				
20	.114	.407	98.766				
21	.088	.313	99.078				
22	.077	.274	99.353				
23	.051	.184	99.536				
24	.040	.143	99.680				
25	.031	.111	99.790				
26	.024	.084	99.874				
27	.022	.078	99.952				
28	.013	.048	100.000				

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. When components are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance.

After considering 28 factors, only five proved significant with Eigenvalues greater than 1.0 and were ultimately chosen. These four factors account for 75.2% of the overall variability of the quality of strategic management that encourages strategy and promotes management's commitment to the same. As per Maree (2019), this percentage falls within the recommended range of 50% to 75%, deemed acceptable. Thus, it can be concluded that the tool utilised to evaluate the level of quality strategic management was fitting. Further, Figure 4.2 illustrates the Scree test, a statistical method used to identify the number of factors to be retained for further analysis. Thus, the software generated a plot of the eigenvalues of the factors against their respective factor numbers, and the plot typically resembles an elbow. The 'elbow' point on the plot indicates the number of significant factors to be retained, and the factors with eigenvalues above this point are considered necessary for further analysis. This method helps to simplify the data and improve the accuracy of the analysis.

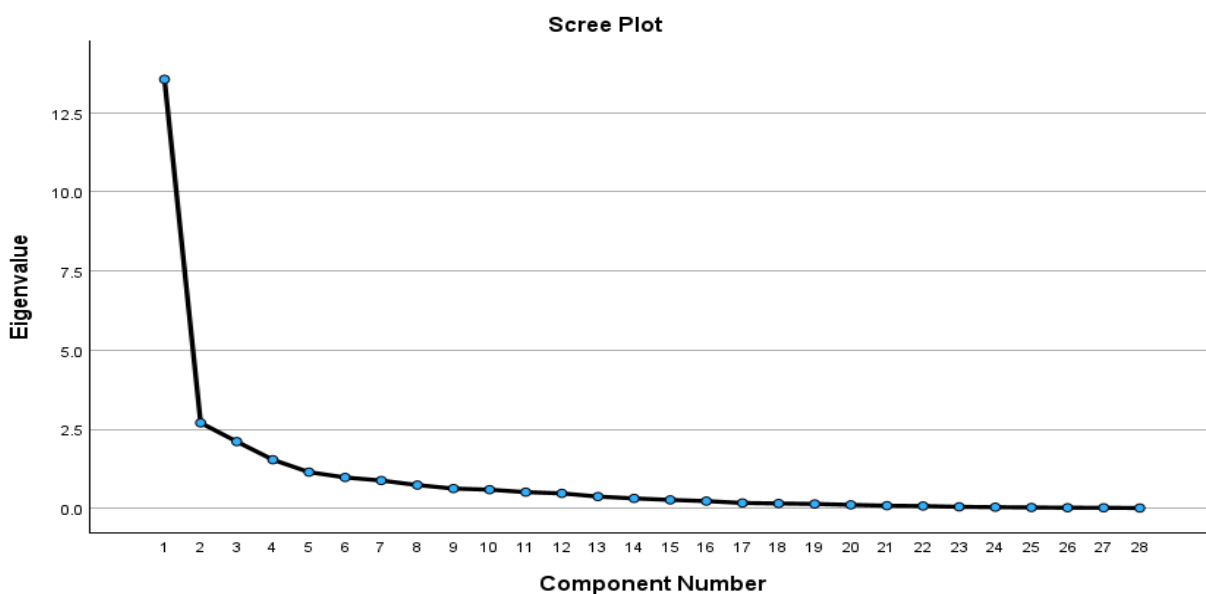


Figure 4. 2 Eigenvalue Scree Plot (Quality of Strategic Management)

After analysing the scree plot in Figure 4.2, it is evident that the curve changes at factor two, indicating support for only one factor for this scale.

4.5.3.2.2 EFA – The Tools of Strategic Management

The researcher conducted KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity to determine the suitability of the data related to the use and value of strategic management tools for exploratory factor analysis. The purpose was to assess the reliability of the data and identify any underlying factors that could help explain the relationship between the strategic tools used and the organisation's value. The results of these tests are presented in Table 4.12, which provides a clear overview of the findings and helps to highlight the key factors that are important for the strategic management tools in the organisation.

Table 4. 12 Kaiser – Meyer -Olin and Bartlett (The Tools of Strategic Management)

Test	Measure	Result
Kaiser – Meyer – Olkin (KMO)	Sample Adequacy	0.877
Bartlett Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	509.75
	Degrees of Freedom	66
	Significance	<0.001

Based on the KMO value of 0.877, it can be concluded that the collected data is appropriate for further analysis as it exceeds the acceptable lower limit of 0.6. Moreover, Bartlett's test also yielded a statistically significant result at $p=0.001$. However, a comprehensive evaluation was conducted to ensure no anomalies between the variables. Please refer to Table 4.13 for a detailed summary of the results.

Table 4. 13 Total Variance Explained (Tools of Strategic Management)

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings ^a
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	
1	7.856	65.466	65.466	7.856	65.466	65.466	7.562
2	1.034	8.619	74.085	1.034	8.619	74.085	5.656
3	.759	6.328	80.413				
4	.535	4.459	84.872				
5	.454	3.781	88.653				
6	.407	3.395	92.048				
7	.298	2.486	94.534				
8	.185	1.546	96.080				
9	.153	1.271	97.351				
10	.136	1.129	98.480				
11	.107	.895	99.375				
12	.075	.625	100.000				

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. When components are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance.

The study revealed that only two of the 12 factors analysed in measuring organisational strategic management tools were statistically significant. These factors had Eigenvalues exceeding 1.0, and their cumulative effect accounted for 74.085% of the observed variation. This result is considered reliable as it falls within the acceptable eigenvalues range recommended by Maree (2019), which indicates that the tool used to measure strategic management at the organisational level was trustworthy. Overall, the study provides valuable insight into the factors that impact tools of strategic orientation within the organisation.

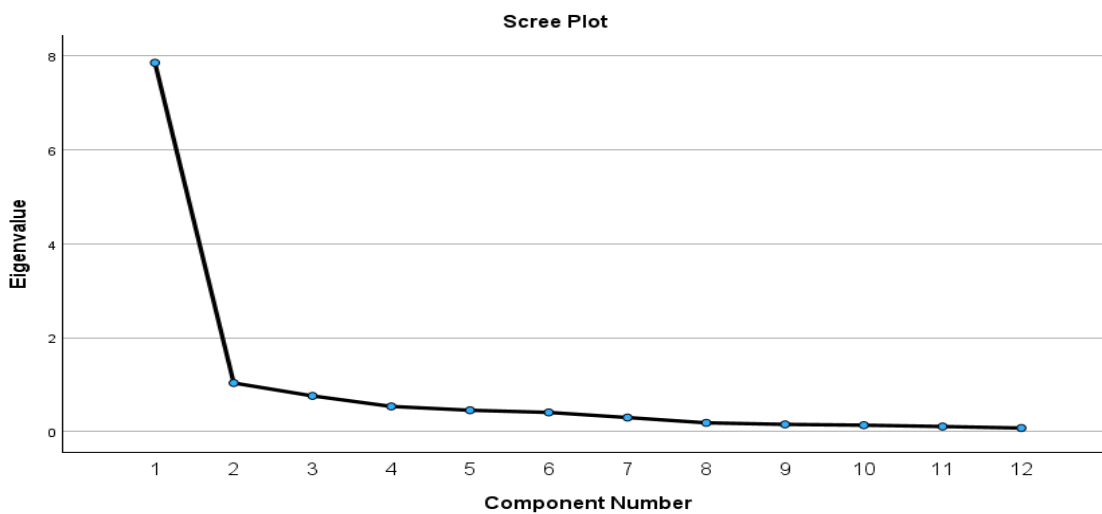


Figure 4. 3 Eigenvalue Scree Plot (The Tools of Strategic Management)

The Scree plot (Figure 4.3) provides valuable insight into variables of strategic management tools. It indicates that the curve significantly shifts at factor two, suggesting that this scale is best suited for a single-factor model. This information is essential in making informed decisions and developing effective strategies that align with the organisation's goals.

4.5.3.2.3 EFA – Strategic Decision Making

Two tests were employed to evaluate the appropriateness of the data for the strategic decision-making construct in this study for exploratory factor analysis: KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. The KMO test measures the degree of variance among variables, while Bartlett's Test of Sphericity assesses the adequacy of the correlation matrix. The results of both tests are displayed in Table 4.14 to facilitate a better understanding of the data suitability.

Table 4. 14 Kaiser – Meyer -Olin and Bartlett (Strategic Decision Making)

Test	Measure	Result
Kaiser – Meyer – Olkin (KMO)	Sample Adequacy	0.718
Bartlett Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	192.69
	Degrees of Freedom	45
	Significance	<0.001

With a KMO value of 0.718, surpassing the acceptable threshold of 0.6, the sampled data appears suitable for analysis. Additionally, Bartlett's test yielded a significant result with a p-value of 0.001. Further examination was carried out to confirm no singularities between variables. Consequently, all variables were utilized as the data fulfilled all the necessary prerequisites. Extracted factors with their rotation sums of squared loadings are presented in Table 4.15.

After analysing ten different factors, it was found that four factors significantly impacted the private organisation's strategic decision practices, leading to an increase in strategic

decision-making and competitive advantage. This extraction accounted for 77.84% of the variability. To gain a deeper understanding, further analysis was conducted using the Scree Plot, which can be found in Figure 4.4.

Table 4. 15 Total Variance Explained (Strategic Decision Making)

Component	Total Variance Explained						Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings ^a
	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	
1	3.940	39.396	39.396	3.940	39.396	39.396	2.857
2	1.614	16.138	55.534	1.614	16.138	55.534	1.559
3	1.207	12.070	67.604	1.207	12.070	67.604	2.690
4	1.024	10.240	77.844	1.024	10.240	77.844	2.214
5	.674	6.737	84.581				
6	.444	4.442	89.023				
7	.413	4.134	93.157				
8	.271	2.707	95.864				
9	.229	2.291	98.155				
10	.185	1.845	100.000				

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. When components are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance.

An organisation can better understand the strategic decision-making process by analysing the scree plot (Figure 4.4). The plot reveals that this scale aligns with a single-factor model, evidenced by the change in the curve at factor two. This finding can inform decision-makers on how to approach the scale in question best, whether through a unidimensional lens or by considering multiple factors. Knowing this information can lead to more effective and tailored strategies that consider the nuances of the situation at hand.

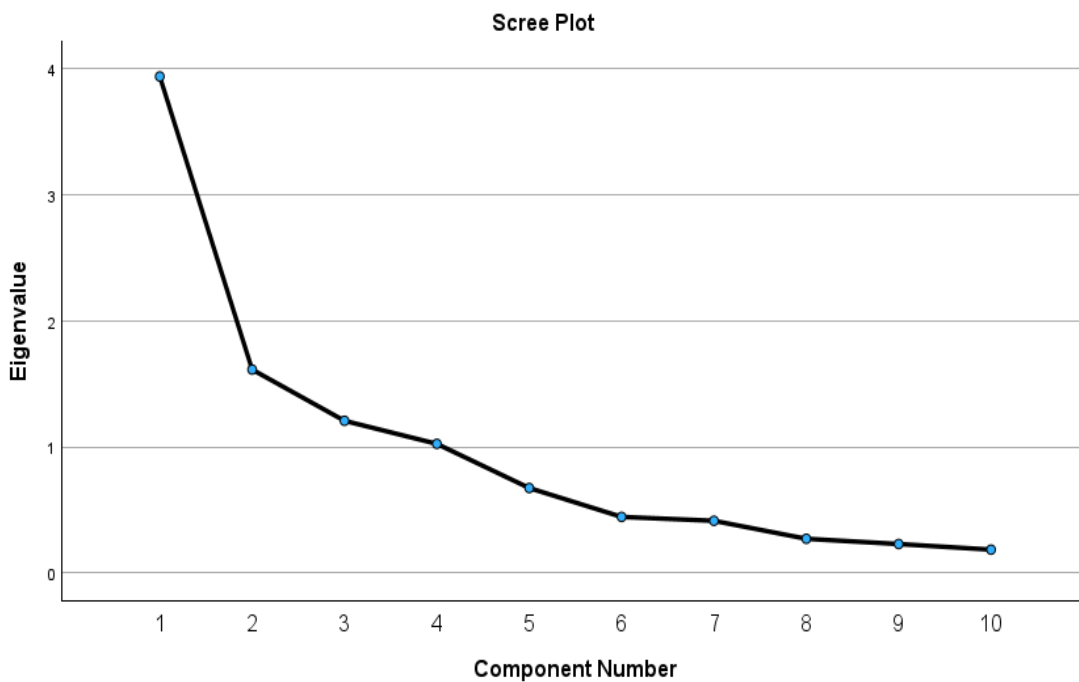


Figure 4. 4 Eigenvalue Scree Plot (Strategic Decision Making)

4.5.3.3 Stage 3 - Factor Rotation Procedure

Upon completing the factor analysis, the number of factors was determined. The next step was to interpret the results utilising factor rotation. However, after evaluating the outcomes of the Kaiser criterion, Scree plot, and Parallel analysis, it was discovered that single-factor models are supported for both scales. As a result, given this study's specific context and objectives, factor rotation was deemed unnecessary and not considered.

4.6 Descriptive Statistical Analysis

The purpose of this study was to assess the quality of the strategic management process in organizations. This includes evaluating the strategic tools and decision-making procedures involved in the process, and their contribution to the overall quality of strategic management. To achieve this, a descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to evaluate the quality of the strategic management process, strategic tools, and decision-making. The mean was used to determine the average response per item, while the standard deviation was used to measure the spread of values from the mean. A low standard deviation indicates that the

values are close to the mean, while a high standard deviation means that the values are widely dispersed from the mean (Maree, 2019). This section presents descriptive statistics for the variables used, including the quality of the strategic management process, strategic tools, and decision-making. The study utilized a 5-point Likert scale consisting of 28, 12, and 10 items from three different sections (S2, S3, and S4) to evaluate the perceptions of the quality of strategic management, strategic tools, and decision-making. The Likert scale allowed for a detailed assessment of the various aspects of the process, providing a comprehensive understanding of its quality level of perceptions.

1= ($1 \leq \mu < 1.5$) = Strongly Disagree (SD)

2= ($1.5 \leq \mu < 2.5$) = Disagree (D)

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

4= ($3.5 \leq \mu < 4.5$) = Agree (A)

5= ($4.5 \leq \mu < 5$) = Strongly Agree (SA), where μ is the mean score per item

4.6.1 Quality of Strategic Management Practices

In this study, the researcher will make findings using the respondents' perceptions. Thus, to do this, the weighted average value. To calculate the weighted average value, the researcher simply sums up the mean values for the items and then divides them by the total number of items. Based on the survey findings, the weighted average of the mean is 3.80, and the standard deviation of 0.598 is illustrated in Figure 4.5. This indicates overall that there seems to be a perceived quality of strategic practices in the organisation because of a mean benchmarked on a perception level scale of $3.5 \leq \mu < 4.5$ = agree. In addition, the variability is statistically significant because of a standard deviation lower than 1 ($0.598\sigma < 1\sigma$).

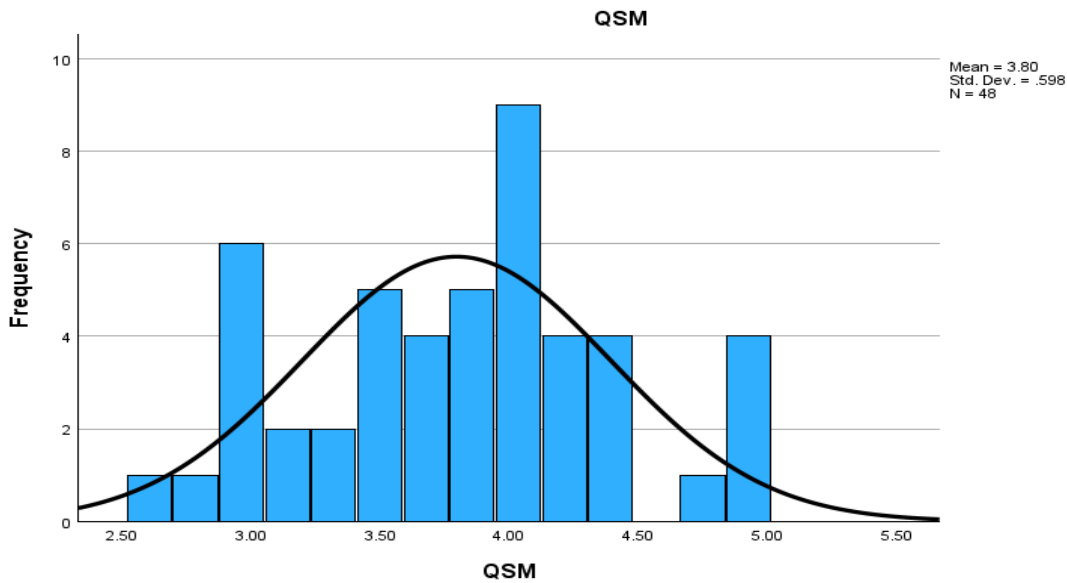


Figure 4. 5 Quality Strategic Management Frequency

However, in contrast, a more profound dimension is required of the low and high perceptions of the 28 items measured against the weighted average mean of 3.80 of section two to identify more specific findings regarding the perceived quality of strategic management. For instance, if an item measures below the weighted average mean, an assumption can be made that the item has a low perception. On the other hand, if the mean of the item appears above the weighted average mean, then that indicates a high perception of the item.

Note: **N** = 48, **SA** = Strongly Agree; **A**= Agree; **N** = Neutral; **D** = Disagree; **SD** = Strongly Disagree. Decision – weighted average = 3.80

Table 4. 16 Descriptive Statistics of Quality of Strategic Management

Item	Frequency (%)					Mean	σ	Decision
	SD	D	N	A	SA			
Our organisation has clear long-term (3 years +) objectives.	4.2	4.2	31.3	43.8	16.7	3.65	.956	Low Perception
Our organisation has a clear vision for the future.	2.1	8.3	20.8	47.9	20.8	3.77	.951	Low Perception

Item	Frequency (%)					Mean	σ	Decision
	SD	D	N	A	SA			
Our strategic decisions are always in line with our vision for the future.	0	6.3	18.8	56.3	18.8	3.88	.789	High Perception
Our strategic decisions create value for the owners/ shareholders of the organisation.	0	6.3	20.8	54.2	18.8	3.85	.799	High Perception
We almost always achieve our long-term objectives.	0	6.3	25	52.1	16.7	3.79	.798	Low Perception
Our organisation is focused on a few key performance indicators to track our progress with implementation.	2.1	4.2	22.9	58.3	12.5	3.75	.812	Low Perception
The leadership of our organisation is visibly committed to successfully implementing our strategy	2.1	4.2	16.7	60.4	16.7	3.85	.825	High Perception
The culture in our organisation strongly supports our strategic direction	0	4.2	20.8	52.1	22.9	3.94	.783	High Perception
Our internal organisation structure supports our strategic direction	2.1	0	20.8	54.2	22.9	3.96	.798	High Perception
Our internal operating environment (processes and policies) supports strategy implementation	2.1	0	25	56.3	16.7	3.85	.772	High Perception
We have the right technology in place to successfully implement our strategy	0	4.2	18.8	60.4	16.7	3.90	.722	High Perception
We have the right competencies in place to successfully implement our strategy	2.1	6.3	14.6	58.3	18.8	3.85	.875	High Perception
Strategy implementation is regarded as an essential function in our organisation	0	6.3	16.7	52.1	25	3.96	.824	High Perception
We have a clear long-term strategy.	0	10.4	18.8	52.1	18.8	3.79	.874	Low Perception
Most people in the organisation clearly understand our organisation's strategy	0	10.4	14.6	58.3	16.7	3.81	.842	High Perception
We are constantly measuring our progress with strategy implementation.	4.2	2.1	29.2	52.1	12.5	3.67	.883	Low Perception
Our strategies are acceptable to all key internal stakeholders.	2.1	6.3	20.8	58.3	12.5	3.73	.844	Low Perception
Our strategies are aligned well with our external environment	2.1	4.2	18.8	60.4	14.6	3.81	.816	High Perception
Our strategies make maximum use of what we do well as an organisation.	0	6.3	22.9	56.3	14.6	3.79	.771	Low Perception
We are not afraid of taking appropriate risks to grow our organisation.	0	6.3	27.1	45.8	20.8	3.81	.842	High Perception

Item	Frequency (%)					Mean	σ	Decision
	SD	D	N	A	SA			
In our organisation, we manage risks well	6.3	0	20.8	52.1	20.8	3.81	.982	High Perception
We are quick to respond to important changes in our environment.	2.1	4.2	25	50	18.8	3.79	.874	Low Perception
Our strategic decisions ensure our organisation's sustainability for the future	4.2	2.1	29.2	43.8	20.8	3.75	.957	Low Perception
The strategic decisions that we make are realistic and implementable,	2.1	0	29.2	47.9	20.8	3.85	.825	High Perception
We have a good understanding of our key strengths and weaknesses	4.2	6.3	27.1	41.7	20.8	3.69	1.014	Low Perception
Several departments get together regularly to plan responses to changes taking place in our business environment	4.2	4.2	18.8	62.5	10.4	3.71	.874	Low Perception
The activities of different divisions in this organisation are well coordinated.	2.1	10.4	27.1	43.8	16.7	3.63	.959	Low Perception
We are proactive in addressing anticipated changes in our business environment	4.2	12.5	16.7	45.8	20.8	3.67	1.078	Low Perception

The data analysis in section two outlined in Table 4.16 shows that most of the respondents appeared to feel that the organisation does not have clear long-term (3 years +) objectives (lowest overall mean = 3.65 of section two) and that low-level perceptions of a clear vision are communicated for the future direction of the organisation. Further, the researcher noted a low-level perception in the organisation to achieve their long-term objectives because no real long-term strategy is clearly outlined. The organisation is perceived not to be focused on a few key performance indicators to track its strategic implementation efforts. Respectively, due to no clear official strategic plan that can be measured and accepted, data results show a low perception that most internal stakeholders cannot accept the strategies made by the organisation. Moreover, the respondents have a lower perception that the organisation's strategies make maximum use of what they do well. There seems to be a perceived delay in responding to essential changes in the organisation's environment. Thus, most respondents indicate that low-level perceptions of strategic decisions and responses to threats in the organisation arguably could pose a risk to sustaining the future

competitiveness of the organisation. Notably, a low perception regarding a clear understanding of the key strengths and weaknesses of the organisation is felt, and there is a low level of coordination from specific strategists to regularly plan activities to address changes in the environment that affect the organisation proactively. On the other hand, regarding the quality of strategic management, the respondents had higher level perceptions with a mean above the weighted average of 3.80 regarding strategic decisions that are primarily in line with the future vision but only to create value for the owners or shareholders of the organisation. The respondents agree with higher perceptions that the leaders are visibly committed to implementing their strategies successfully, and the culture in the organisation also supports strategic direction, as the organisation's internal structure complements strategic management. Specifically, the respondents proved a high perceived level that the critical resources complement when strategies are implemented, namely, structure, operating environment, technology, and competencies. Further, higher-level perceptions are noted that the organisation's strategies are clearly understood and that the strategies are aligned well with the organisation's external environment. The respondents agree with a higher-level perception that appropriate risks are taken to grow the business, and these risks are perceived to be managed well. It is noted that respondents perceive a high-level perception that the organisation's strategic decisions are realistic and implementable.

4.6.2 Strategic Management Tools (SMT)

The questions provided in section three included 12 items to measure SMT (Strategic Management Tools). Respondents were given two options - 1 - Use and 2 - Do not use, followed by five options indicating value, ranging from 1 - no value to 5 - cannot live without. Data extracted from the respondent's perception that most strategic management tools are answered yes and used in the organisation with performance management systems and strategic planning processes at 70.83% agreed the most used tools as illustrated in the bar graph Figure 4.6.

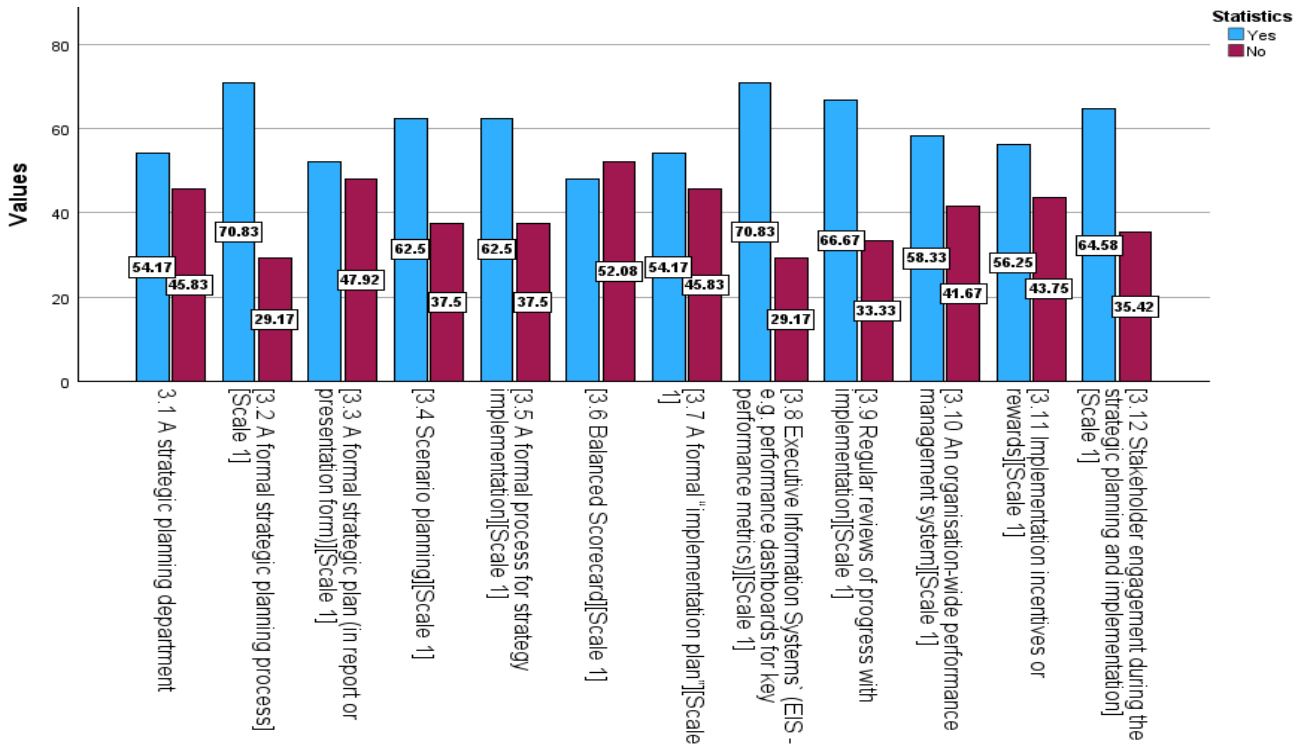


Figure 4. 6 Bar Graph % of Yes and No of the Tools of Strategic Management

Figure 4.7 showcases respondents' perceived value towards each of the 12 SMT items. The researcher noted that most of the data in this analysis show that the respondents rated a three above 40% on the scale, which assumed that respondents are mostly neutral regarding SMT. Thus, it can be argued that this neutral stance of perceived value prescribes that not all respondents fully understand what the SMT is about, what it is used for and why it is applied in the organisation. Nonetheless, the organisation can notice that less than 10% of respondents feel that SMT have no value whatsoever.

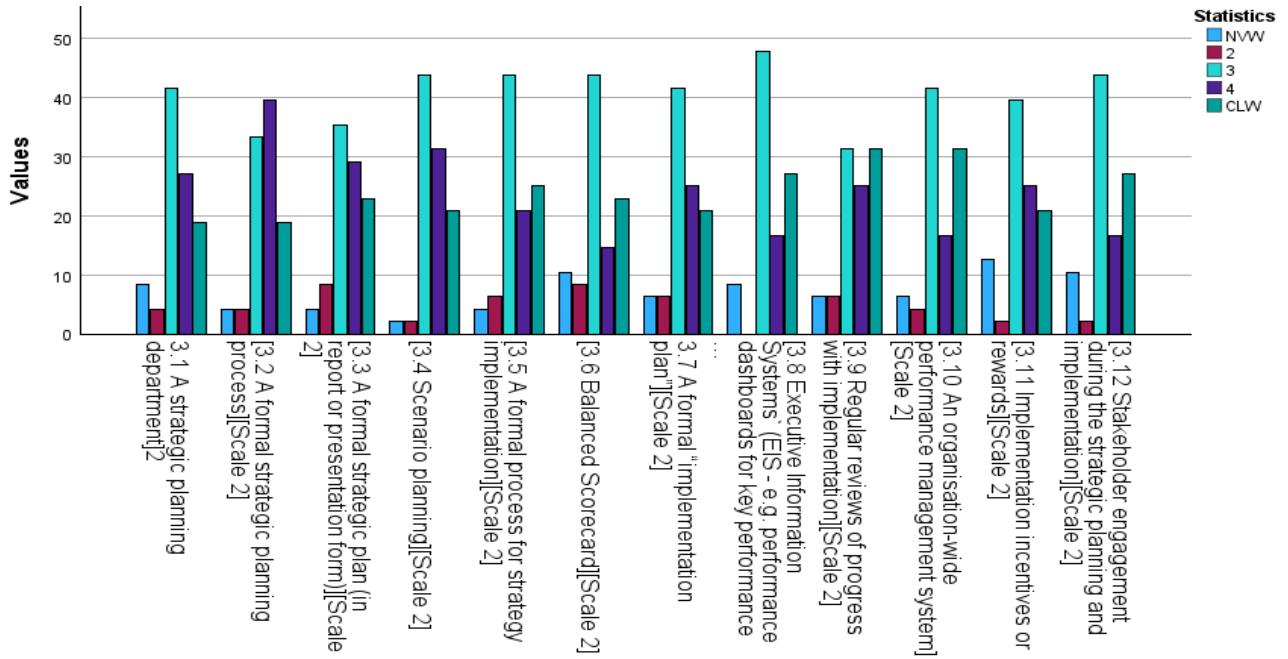


Figure 4. 7 Bar Graph of Perceived Value towards the Tools of Strategic Management

In addition, the data provided in Table 4.17 and Figure 4.8 shows a composite mean value of the SMT of 3.54, which suggests that the sample population leans towards using strategic management tools.

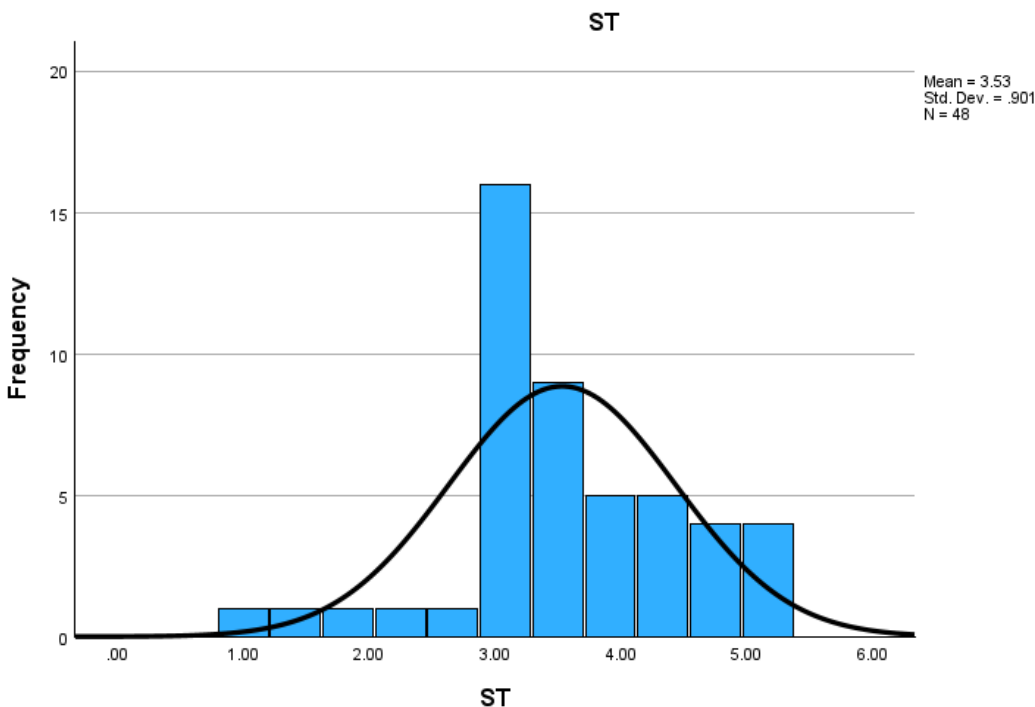


Figure 4. 8 Strategic Management Tools Frequency

However, it is clear that not all tools are valued equally, and because of several items, a standard deviation above 1.0 indicates significant variability. The reasons behind this variation in value cannot be determined in this research, as only the perception of value was measured. It is worth noting that the sample population included respondents from different organisational levels (as shown in Table 4.17), and each level would have different tool preferences and values.

Table 4.17 also shows the standard deviation of each tool. SMT is not a single construct but multiple items that form SMT. The standard deviation of each tool indicates the reliability of the mean value and how differently the respondents from the sample perceived each tool. The tool use of a balanced scorecard' had the highest standard deviation of 1.223, indicating lower reliability and was perceived as the least valuable.

Note: *N* = 48, **NVW** = No Value Whatsoever; **CLW** = Can't Live Without. Decision – weighted average = 3.54

Table 4. 17 Descriptive Statistics of Strategic Management Tools

Item	Frequency % Answered		Frequency (%) Value Scale rating					Mean	σ	Decision
	Yes	No	NVW1	2	3	4	CLW 5			
A strategic planning department	54.17	45.83	8.3	4.2	41.7	27.1	18.8	3.44	1.109	Low Perception
A formal strategic planning process	70.83	29.17	4.2	4.2	33.3	39.6	18.8	3.65	.978	High Perception
A formal strategic plan (in report or presentation form)	52.08	47.92	4.2	8.3	35.4	29.2	22.9	3.58	1.069	High Perception
Scenario planning	62.50	37.50	2.1	2.1	43.8	31.3	20.8	3.67	.907	High Perception
A formal process for strategy implementation	62.50	37.50	4.2	6.3	43.8	20.8	25	3.56	1.070	High Perception
Balanced Scorecard	47.92	52.08	10.4	8.3	43.8	14.6	22.9	3.31	1.223	Low Perception
A formal "implementation plan."	54.17	45.83	6.3	6.3	41.7	25	20.8	3.48	1.091	Low Perception

Item	Frequency % Answered		Frequency (%) Value Scale rating					Mean	σ	Decision
	Yes	No	NV W1	2	3	4	CLW 5			
Executive Information Systems (e.g., performance dashboards for key performance metrics)	70.83	29.17	8.3	0	47.9	16.7	27.1	3.54	1.148	High Perception
Regular reviews of progress with implementation	66.67	33.33	6.3	6.3	31.3	25	31.3	3.69	1.170	High Perception
An organisation-wide performance management system	58.33	41.67	6.3	4.2	41.7	16.7	31.3	3.63	1.160	High Perception
Implementation of incentives or rewards	56.25	43.75	12.5	2.1	39.6	25	20.8	3.40	1.216	Low Perception
Stakeholder engagement during the strategic planning and implementation	64.58	17	10.4	2.1	43.8	16.7	27.1	3.48	1.220	Low Perception

On the other hand, scenario planning' had the lowest standard deviation of 0.907, indicating high reliability and perceived as the most valuable. This tool received the highest mean value of 3.67, and its data points were clustered around the mean, indicating more value than the others. Notably, this tool is the only one with a standard deviation less than 1.0, while all other tools have a standard deviation greater than 1.0. This suggests that more respondents from the sample perceived the presence of a scenario planning tool within the organisations. Overall, the data shows that the sample population had different value levels for each tool, as indicated by the dispersion of data from the mean.

4.6.3 Strategic Decision Making (SDM)

The SDM measurement utilised a questionnaire consisting of 10 items. Respondents were given a range of five options, from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5), with a neutral option (3). As shown in Figure 4.9, the mean for SDM was 3.56 (SD $\sigma=0.571$), indicating that the sample viewed SDM as slightly above average, with most respondents agreeing.

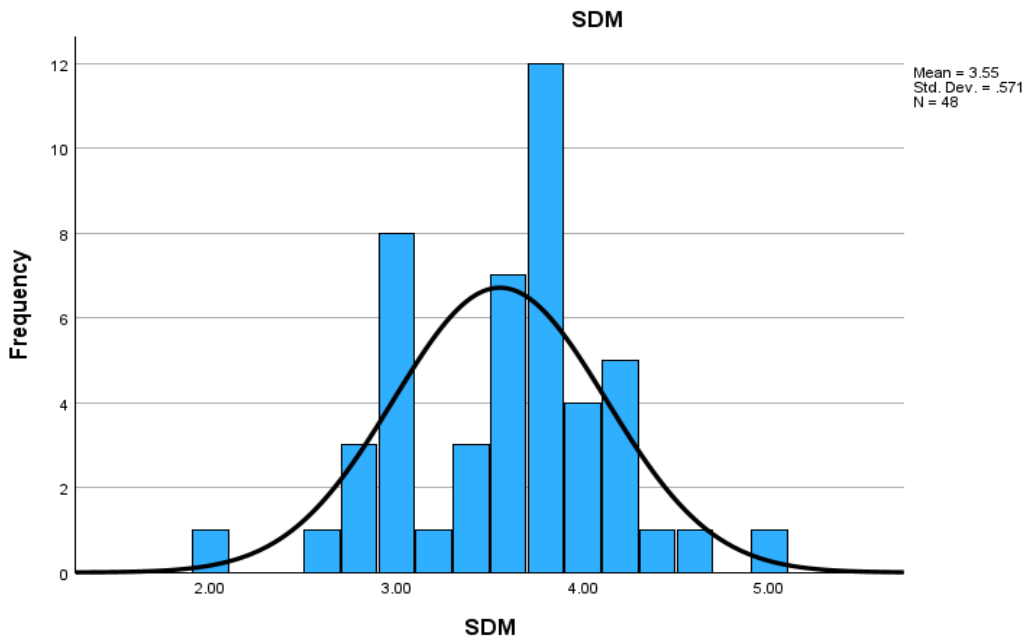


Figure 4. 9 Strategic Decision-Making Frequency

In addition, there was some variability in the data, suggesting room for improvement for the organisation and further analysis is needed to confirm this. The standard deviation of 0.571 in Table 4.18 confirms that data points are dispersed but relatively low, indicating that they are closer to the mean. This is consistent with the slightly above-average perception of 3.56 SDM, as depicted in Figure 4.9.

Note: *N* = 48, **SA** = Strongly Agree; **A**= Agree; **N** = Neutral; **D** = Disagree; **SD** = Strongly Disagree. Decision – weighted average = 3.56

Table 4. 18 Descriptive Statistics of Strategic Decision Making

Item	Frequency (%)					Mean	σ	Decision
	SD	D	N	A	SA			
Key strategic decision-makers in our organisation have access to real-time information on the organisation's business operations.	6.3	2.1	33.3	37.5	20.8	3.65	1.041	High Perception
Key strategic decision-makers in our organisation have access to real-time information on the competitive environment	0	6.3	29.2	50	14.6	3.73	.792	High Perception

Item	Frequency (%)					Mean	σ	Decision
	SD	D	N	A	SA			
In our organisation, we take a long time to make crucial decisions	6.3	25	20.8	35.4	12.5	3.23	1.153	Low Perception
Our critical strategic decision-making team is diverse in terms of age, ethnicity, and gender	4.2	14.6	33.3	41.7	6.3	3.31	.949	Low Perception
In our organisation, all key managers have a common understanding of our business and its environment	2.1	6.3	25.0	39.6	27.1	3.83	.975	High Perception
There is a lot of healthy debate among the management team about key decisions	4.2	10.4	25.0	43.8	16.7	3.58	1.028	High Perception
Organisational politics dominate strategic decision-making in our organisation	4.2	6.3	35.4	47.9	6.3	3.46	.874	Low Perception
Strategic decision-makers consult widely with key internal stakeholders (e.g., employees, unions) before making important decisions	4.2	8.3	35.4	43.8	8.3	3.44	.920	Low Perception
Strategic decision-makers consult widely with key external stakeholders (e.g., customers) before making important decisions	2.1	6.3	33.3	41.7	16.7	3.65	.911	High Perception
Strategic decision-makers seek the advice of experienced employees before making important decisions	4.2	6.3	20.8	56.3	12.5	3.67	.930	High Perception

In the process of interpreting the responses, the cumulative percentages of the responses of "agree" and "strongly agree" are combined, as are the percentages of the responses of "disagree" and "strongly disagree," which are considered to be general disagreement. This provides an overall picture of the level of agreement or disagreement. It is essential to combine these categories to prevent a potential misinterpretation of the results. Additionally, based on a recent survey conducted among respondents, the results depicted in Figure 4.18 highlight the critical elements of strategic decision-making that garnered the highest perceptions. Of the 48 participants, 61.45 % agreed on a high perception that those responsible for making critical decisions in the organisation have access to real-time information about business operations. 31.25% remained undecided, and 6.3% disagreed with the statement. Moreover, 63.60% of respondents believed that all key managers in their

organisation possess a common understanding of the business and its environment, 25% were undecided, and 11.40% did not share this belief. Over half of the respondents, 54.20%, agreed that organisational politics dominate their strategic decision-making. 35.40% were undecided, and 10.40% disagreed with this statement. Therefore, strategic decision-making has some elements with low analysed perceptions when the weighted average mean of 3.56 is compared to the mean of the item.

The results indicated the second lowest perception mean of 3.31 because only 48% of the participating employees agreed that strategic decisions are made within a diverse group regarding age, ethnicity and gender. In comparison, 33.30% were hesitant, and 18.70% were resolute that they disagreed. Regarding decision-making time, the lowest mean of 3.23 was observed in Table 4.18. It resulted in a low perception that organisations delay strategic decisions, with only 47.90% agreeing, 20.80% being neutral, and 31.30% disagreeing that their organisation takes a long time to make crucial decisions. Regarding consulting with key internal stakeholders (such as employees and unions) before strategic decision-making, a low perception was computed at a mean of 3.44, but in contrast, more agreed at 52.10% accepted, 35.40 were neutral to this idea, while 12.50% disputed it.

4.7 Correlation and Regression Analysis

Even though it was not required to perform a correlation and regression analysis, the researcher continued to perform it to gain valuable insight regarding the effect the two variables (Strategic Tools and Strategic Decisions) have on the activities that contribute to their overall quality of strategic management. The study conducted a thorough literature review and developed the following hypotheses:

H1: Strategic Management Tools has a relationship with Quality Strategic Management.

H1null: Strategic Management Tools has no relationship with Quality Strategic Management.

H2: Strategic Decision Making has a relationship with Quality Strategic Management.

H2null: Strategic Decision Making has no relationship with Quality Strategic Management.

Two statistical methods, correlation analysis and regression analysis, were employed to test these hypotheses. The study analysed three variables: quality strategic management, strategic management tools, and strategic decision-making. Composite scales of these variables were calculated by averaging the scores. Overall, the study aimed to explore the relationship between strategic management and decision-making practices and their impact on the quality of strategic management.

4.7.1 Correlation Analysis

A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to evaluate the relationship between strategic management tools, strategic decision-making, and the quality of strategic management. This analysis produced a Pearson correlation coefficient, which ranges from -1 to +1 and indicates the direction and strength of the relationship between the variables. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 4.19. The table displays the correlation coefficients for each variable combination, providing a clear and informative picture of the relationships between them. In the study, Table 4.19 was used to illustrate the correlations between the variables. The results showed a moderate positive relationship between strategic management tools and the quality of strategic management, with a positive and statistically significant correlation coefficient of $r=.503$ and $p<.001$. This means that practical strategic management tools can lead to high-quality strategic management. Similarly, there is a strong positive relationship between quality strategic management and strategic decision-making, as evidenced by the positive and statistically significant correlation coefficient of $r=.553$ and $p<.001$. This analysis implies that high-quality strategic decision-making processes move in the same direction as high-quality strategic management. The correlation analysis also revealed a weaker but positive correlation between strategic management tools and strategic decision-making, with a correlation coefficient of $r=.483$ and $p<.001$.

Table 4. 19 Pearson Correlation

Correlations				
		Quality Strategic Management	Strategic Management Tools	Strategic Decision Making
Quality Strategic Management	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig.(2-tailed)			
	N	48		
Strategic Management Tools	Pearson Correlation	.503**	1	
	Sig.(2-tailed)	<.001		
	N		48	
Strategic Decision Making	Pearson Correlation	.553**	.483**	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	
	N	48	48	48
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)				

However, this weaker correlation suggests no severe multi-collinearity problem between the two variables, as strategic management and strategic decision-making are independent variables. It is important to note that correlation analysis only shows the relationship between the variables and does not provide information on the cause-and-effect relationship. A multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the influence of strategic management tools and decision-making on the quality of strategic management. Therefore, the results are presented in the following sections. Importantly, these results provide a more detailed understanding of the relationship between the variables and their impact on organisational performance.

4.7.2 Multiple Regression Analysis

In the context of analysing the quality of strategic management, a simple linear regression model was created using two independent variables: perceived quality of strategic management tools and perceived quality of strategic decision-making. The dependent variable was also defined as the quality of strategic management. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 4.20, where the model summary provides valuable insights into the goodness of fit of the data to the multiple regression model. Specifically, the R square value in the summary indicates how well the data fits the model.

Table 4. 20 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.615 ^a	.378	.351	.482
a. Predictors (Constant), Strategic Management Tools, Strategic Decision Making				

The analysis shows that the statistical model has an R-square value of 0.378. This value indicates that the two predictor variables, strategic decision-making and strategic management tools, can explain about 38% of the variations in the quality of strategic management. The remaining 62% of the variations can be attributed to other factors not included in this statistical model. Overall, the model is a good fit, and it suggests that one-quarter of the changes in the quality of strategic management are due to improvements in the tools of strategic management and strategic decision-making processes. The ANOVA test confirms that the model is statistically significant, and the organisation can find the detailed results of the ANOVA test in Table 4.21.

Table 4. 21 ANOVA analysis

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	6.362	2	3.181	13.699	<001 ^b
	Residual	10.450	45	.232		
	Total	16.812	47			
a. Dependant Variable: Quality of Strategic Management						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic Decision Making, Strategic Tools,						

The ANOVA analysis is a statistical tool used to test the overall validity of a regression model. In this particular case, the F-statistic was statistically significant (F= 13.699, p<.001), where p represents the probability value in statistical testing. This indicates that the regression model is statistically significant at a 1% level. Additionally, Table 4.22 presents each predictor variable's contribution to strategic management's quality.

Table 4. 22 Multiple Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta (β)		
1	(Constant)	1.568	.449		3.489	.001
	Strategic Tools	.204	.089	.307	2.287	.027
	Strategic Decision Making	.425	.141	.405	3.018	.004
a. Dependent Variable: Quality of Strategic Management						

Based on the data presented in Table 4.22, it is clear that variable B demonstrates the unstandardised coefficients that indicate how the dependent variable is affected when the independent variable changes by one unit (Maree 2019). On the other hand, the Beta (β) coefficient represents the slope of the coefficient, which highlights the level of the statistical

relationship between the two variables (Maree 2019). The value of t represents the magnitude of the test statistic. The results show that both coefficients for strategic management tools and strategic decision-making are positive and statistically significant at the 1% level ($p < .001$). In particular, the coefficient value of the perceived use of strategic management tools is 0.307. This suggests that the high use of strategic management tools leads to improved quality of strategic management while keeping other factors constant. Based on the research data analysed, it has been determined that there is a positive correlation between strategic management tools and strategic management quality. Further, the analysis revealed a strategic decision-making coefficient of 0.405, indicating that a superior strategic decision-making process can benefit the quality of strategic management. These findings support the hypothesis that a strong focus on high-quality strategic decision-making can improve strategic management quality.

4.8 Conclusion

The study at PjL Moller Group of Companies aimed to analyse how organizations perceive and implement quality strategic management tools and decision-making. The study surveyed 48 respondents, achieving an 85% response rate, and the researcher carefully analysed the data to ensure the validity and reliability of the research instrument. The results showed high reliability of all measurement scales, confirmed by Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, and the KMO sample adequacy test indicated that factor analysis was possible despite the small sample size. The study found that employee perceptions of the strategic management process, strategic management tools, and strategic decision-making within their organization were mixed. However, the respondents believed that their organization's strategic management and decision-making were appreciated to some extent. High-quality strategic tools and decision-making improve strategic management practices, according to a study. The researcher recommends that organizations invest in these areas to enhance their competitive advantage. The study provides valuable insights into effective strategic management and decision-making processes, making it a useful resource for organizations seeking to improve their practices..

5 CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to analyse and interpret the results presented in the previous chapter, in a more detailed and comprehensive way. The main objective is to provide a deeper understanding of the outcomes of the study and to give recommendations and conclusions that are consistent with the research objectives. The primary goal of this research is to gain a better understanding of the perceived quality of strategic management in a private organisation located in the Ekurhuleni district. Through careful examination and analysis, the researcher aims to shed light on the effectiveness of strategic management practices within the organisation and how the tools of strategy and quality strategic decisions can benefit the organisation. The study consisted of 48 participants, including 12 senior managers and 36 employees, and aimed to assess the alignment of the organisation's strategic management quality based on their perceptions. The study produced valuable insights and presented several opportunities for further investigation. In addition, this chapter offers suggestions for further research that can build on the study's findings. The first section of the chapter restates the research purpose and objectives, setting the stage for a more detailed discussion of the study's findings. Each objective is discussed in detail, providing a more in-depth analysis of the results. The chapter then highlights the significance and contribution of the study, as well as any limitations that were encountered. Finally, the chapter concludes with suggestions for further research that can help build on the study's findings and provide even more insight into the research topic.

5.2 Research Purpose and Objectives

This research examined how the quality of strategic management processes and decision-making in organisations can impact the overall strategic management quality of PJJ Moller Group of Companies. To achieve this, the study used three constructs: perceived quality of strategic management practices, tools of strategic management, and strategic decision-making.

The following research objectives are considered:

- ***To evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the private organisation's current strategic management process.***
- ***To identify and analyse the value of the private organisation's strategic tools that are being deployed.***
- ***To evaluate the private organisation's high-level strategic decision-making process.***

5.3 Discussion of Research Results

This section will delve into the findings presented in Chapter 4 of the study. The discussion will focus on the literature review's objectives, highlighting the alignment between the review and the research results.

5.3.1 Research Objective One - *To evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the private organisation's current strategic management process.*

This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategic management process of PjL Moller Group Companies, a private organisation, and to determine how the use of strategic tools and strategic decisions impacts it. Revisiting Chapter Two of the literature review, (Venter *et al.*, 2019: 41) describe a strategy as the organisation's long-term direction, a pattern in a stream of decisions, and how organisations achieve their objectives during a deliberate choice of strategic activities to gain a competitive advantage. More importantly, strategy is prescribed in a business as something that strategic individuals do via decisions implemented into action, not what an organisation possesses (Venter *et al.*, 2019) A strategist that manage strategies strive toward a competitive advantage by planning long-term direction that involves various thinking configurations and decision-making steps to showcase a practice called strategic management (Gamble *et al.*, 2021; Thompson *et al.*, 2022). Therefore, an organisation should understand the strategy and strategic management needs, their current strategic position resource availability, and find all factors

impacting the organisation before planning and executing a strategy to reach an overall strategic goal (Gamble *et al.*, 2021).

5.3.1.1 Summary of findings – Objective one

The objective of the study was to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation's strategic management process. The researchers utilized descriptive statistical analysis to accomplish this aim. The findings revealed that the majority of participants highly valued the strategic management process, with a composite mean score of 3.80 and a composite standard deviation of 0.598. While there was relatively low variability in agreement and disagreement among participants, some expressed concerns about the organisation's focus on crucial performance indicators, clear long-term objectives, realistic and feasible strategic decisions, and the leadership's dedication to effectively implementing the strategy. From the information presented in Table 4.16, it is apparent that the management team effectively utilized five dimensions that were particularly impactful. These dimensions received ratings of "agree" or "strongly agree," indicating that they are functioning well for the team.

5.3.1.2 QSM Perceived Strengths

- Our internal organisation structure supports our strategic direction.
- Strategy implementation is regarded as an essential function in our organisation.
- The culture in our organisation strongly supports our strategic direction.
- We have the right technology in place to successfully implement our strategy.
- Our strategic decisions are always in line with our vision for the future.

Therefore, it is highly recommended that the team continue using these dimensions in their future endeavours. However, the following areas of weakness were identified in Table 4.16; management should consider acknowledging the reason for low perceptions, and if these perceptions increase, the long-term benefit will be.

5.3.1.3 QSM Perceived Weaknesses

- The activities of different divisions in this organisation are well coordinated.
- Our organisation has clear long-term (3 years +) objectives.
- We are proactive in addressing anticipated changes in our business environment.
- We have a good understanding of our key strengths and weaknesses.
- We are constantly measuring our progress with strategy implementation.

5.3.1.4 Short Term Recommendations – Objective One

Effective coordination of different organisational divisions can be achieved by implementing several strategies. These include:

Clear Communication: The organisation should ensure that all divisions understand the business goals, objectives, and strategies (Angelopulo & Barker, 2013). This can be achieved through regular meetings, emails, and other forms of communication.

Defined Roles and Responsibilities: Each division should clearly understand its roles and responsibilities. This helps to avoid confusion and overlap of duties.

Regular Meetings: Regular meetings between different divisions can help ensure everyone is on the same page and working towards the same goals.

Use of Technology: Tools such as project management software can help track progress and ensure that all divisions work in sync (Botha & Bothma, 2015).

Feedback Mechanism: Establishing a system for providing feedback can help to identify any issues or conflicts early on, allowing for timely resolution.

Team Building Activities: These can help to foster a sense of unity and cooperation among different divisions.

Performance Metrics: Establishing performance metrics for each division can help to ensure accountability and track progress towards organisational goals (Merkus *et al.*, 2019).

In essence, successful coordination is essential for the success of any organisation, and it is the manager's responsibility to ensure that all divisions are working together effectively.

To prepare for current and future changes in the business environment, an organisation can take the following steps:

Environmental Scanning: Regularly monitor both external and internal environments to identify early signs of opportunities and threats.

Strategic Planning: Develop flexible strategies to respond quickly to changes in the business environment (Thompson *et al.*, 2022).

Research and Development (R&D): Invest in R&D to keep up with technological advancements and industry trends.

Continuous Learning and Training: Equip employees with the necessary skills to adapt to changes.

Change Management: Implement a change management process to manage resistance to change and ensure smooth transitions (Griffin *et al.*, 2017).

Stakeholder Engagement: Regularly communicate with stakeholders (employees, customers, suppliers, etc.) to understand their expectations and prepare for changes.

Risk Management: Identify potential risks and develop contingency plans to mitigate them.

Investing in Technology: Leverage technology to improve efficiency and stay competitive.

Therefore, being proactive means anticipating changes rather than just reacting to them. It involves taking charge of the organisation's future and making calculated decisions that will benefit the organisation in the long run (Griffin *et al.*, 2017).

5.3.1.5 Long-term Recommendations – Objective One

To perform clear 3+ long-term objectives, the organisation can follow these recommendations:

Define the Mission and Vision: The organisation should have a clear mission statement that defines its purpose, values, and goals. This statement should be communicated to all employees so that everyone understands the organisation's objectives.

Identify Key Performance Indicators (KPIs): KPIs are measurable goals that help to track progress towards achieving the mission and vision. The organisation should identify KPIs for each department and employee.

Set SMART Goals: Setting **s**pecific, **m**easurable, **a**chievable, **r**elevant, and **t**ime-bound (SMART) goals can help the organisation focus on achieving objectives aligned with the mission and vision.

Develop a Strategic Plan: A strategic plan outlines how the organisation will achieve its long-term goals. It should include a timeline, budget, and action plan(Louw & Venter, 2013; Venter *et al.*, 2019).

Assign Responsibility: Each employee should be assigned a specific role and responsibility that aligns with the organisation's objectives. This ensures that everyone is working towards the same goals.

Monitor and Evaluate Progress: Regular monitoring and evaluation of progress towards achieving long-term objectives can help the organisation identify areas for improvement and make necessary adjustments.

Therefore, clear long-term objectives are essential for the success of any organisation. By following these steps, your organisation can ensure everyone is working towards the same goals and achieving the desired outcomes.

Furthermore, to gain a comprehensive understanding of their strengths and weaknesses, organisations have a range of methods at their disposal, including:

SWOT Analysis: This strategic planning tool helps identify internal and external factors that are favourable or unfavourable to achieving business objectives. By pinpointing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, organisations can better plan for success (Gamble *et al.*, 2021; Thompson *et al.*, 2022).

Performance Metrics: Establishing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) across the organisation allows for performance measurement in various areas, highlighting strengths and weaknesses.

Feedback: Regular input from employees, customers, and other stakeholders provides valuable insights into areas where the organisation excels or falls short.

Benchmarking: By comparing their processes and performance metrics to industry best practices, organisations can identify areas for improvement and potential strengths to build on.

Financial Analysis: Analysing financial statements can reveal strengths and weaknesses in profitability, liquidity, solvency, and efficiency (Correia, 2019).

Market Research: Understanding the market, including competitors, trends, and customer needs and preferences, can help organisations identify their strengths and weaknesses. A thorough understanding of an organisation's strengths and weaknesses is essential for effective strategic planning and decision-making.

Therefore, understanding strengths and weaknesses is crucial for strategic planning and decision-making in any organisation (Sinnaiah, Adam & Mahadi, 2023d) .

5.3.2 Research Objective Two - To identify and analyse the value of the private organisation's strategic tools that are being deployed.

The study's second objective was to gauge how effective strategic management tools are for PJL Moller Group of Companies and their impact on strategic management quality. The researchers evaluated the use and value of these tools within the organisation by gathering feedback from respondents. To assess agreement or disagreement with statements about the use of strategic management tools, a descriptive statistical analysis was conducted. The composite mean score for the strategic management tools scale was 3.53, with a composite standard deviation of 0.901. This means that most respondents agreed with the statements regarding the value and use of strategic management tools. However, some inconsistencies revealed low perceptions in the responses towards the assertions related to:

- A strategic planning department
- Use of Balanced Scorecard
- A formal "implementation plan."
- Implementation of incentives or rewards
- Stakeholder engagement during the strategic planning and implementation

The survey participants conveyed contentment with the implementation of strategic instruments, especially scenario planning. The fact that this sentiment was consistent across the board implies that the strategic tools were utilized effectively. Although not obligatory, the research study also aimed to establish the effect of strategic tools on strategic management. To test the hypothesis, correlation and regression analyses were performed. The results of the correlation analysis disclosed a noteworthy positive correlation ($r=.503$, $p.001$) between the use of valuable strategic tools and the calibre of strategic management. Moreover, the regression analysis demonstrated that the use and value of strategic tools had a constructive influence on strategic management practices. Hence, it can be deduced that the use of valuable strategic tools has a positive impact on the quality of strategic management.

5.3.2.1 Short Term Recommendations – Objective Two

The balanced scorecard is a powerful strategic tool that can deliver impressive results for organisations in the near term. To guarantee success, define and align the objectives with the organisation's overarching mission. From there, identify key performance indicators (KPIs) enabling strategists to gauge the organisation's advancement toward set objectives. Establish targets for each KPI and devise action plans to achieve them. Lastly, keep a close eye on the progress and make necessary adjustments to stay on track (Holiday, 2021). To successfully implement the balanced scorecard, it is essential to create a formal strategic tool implementation plan. This plan should be short-term, outlining specific objectives, timelines, and responsibilities for each step in the process. Additionally, it should identify potential roadblocks and strategies for overcoming them. With a clear and concise plan, implementing the balanced scorecard can go smoothly and achieve the desired results (Louw & Venter, 2013; Venter *et al.*, 2019).

5.3.2.2 Long-term Recommendations – Objective Two

Starting a strategic planning department involves several crucial steps. First, assess the organisation's current state and define the long-term goals. Then, assemble a team of experts to help develop a comprehensive strategic plan. Once the team is in place, create

a detailed timeline and budget for implementing the plan. Finally, monitor and evaluate the progress regularly to ensure the organisation is on track to achieve its strategic objectives. Further, engaging stakeholders to use strategic management tools involves several essential steps. First, communicate the benefits of the tools and how they can help stakeholders achieve their goals. Then, provide training and support to ensure stakeholders are comfortable using the tools. Additionally, involve stakeholders in developing the strategic plan and encourage their feedback throughout the process. Finally, recognise and reward stakeholders for their contributions and successes in implementing the plan and the fruits of its desired outcome (Venter *et al.*, 2019).

5.3.3 Research Objective Three - To evaluate the private organisation's high-level strategic decision-making process.

In this study, the third objective was to evaluate the level of perception of strategic decision-making at P JL Moller Group of Companies and its impact on the quality of strategic management. The study aimed to analyse the perspectives of the respondents to assess the quality of strategic decision-making within the organisation. To achieve this, descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to determine the level of agreement or disagreement among respondents regarding the statements related to the strategic decision-making process of the organisation. The study found that the composite mean score of the strategic decision-making scale was 3.55, indicating that most respondents were in agreement with the statements regarding the strategic decision-making process. However, there were some areas of low perceptions among the respondents. For example, the top management's decision-making process was perceived as slow, and organisational politics dominated strategic decision-making despite the diversity in age, ethnicity, and gender of the organisation's critical strategic decision-making team. Though strategic decision-makers consulted with key internal stakeholders, such as employees and unions, before making important decisions, the perception level was low. Moreover, the study assessed the impact of perceived strategic decision-making quality on the quality of strategic management. The correlation and regression analyses showed a significant positive correlation between the effectiveness of strategic decision-making and the quality of strategic management. The findings are consistent with the literature, which suggests that investing in improving the

quality of strategic decisions can lead to long-term profitability and revenue growth. Furthermore, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) often lack resources, and strategic decision-making becomes crucial in improving strategic management. Therefore, the study supported Venter's (2019) claim that the success of small business organisations depends on their strategic decisions with the available resources. Additionally, Chapter 2 of the literature review suggests that the success of strategic management and the competitive advantage of small private organisations heavily rely on effective strategic decisions involving strategy design, execution, and review.

5.3.3.1 Short Term Recommendations – Objective Three

To ensure timely strategic decision-making, especially in the short term, you can follow these guidelines:

Manage time effectively: Know how much a strategist can handle daily.

Discipline commitment and avoid procrastination: This will help a strategist stay focused and make decisions promptly (“A Principal’s Reflections: Eight Leadership Essentials”, n.d.; Gamble *et al.*, 2021).

Learn from previous mistakes and set achievable goals: This will enable strategists to make better strategic decisions in the future.

Avoid deferring difficult strategic decisions: They often become more complicated when delayed. It is important to act even in the face of incomplete data.

Assign a deadline: Put a time limit on strategic decisions by assigning a deadline by which it needs to be made.

Delegate decisions: Senior executives can facilitate rapid organisational decision-making by delegating certain decisions.

Therefore, strategic decision-making aims to avoid decisions based on limited information by considering a problem from all angles. Making decisions based on data and aligning them with broader strategic objectives is also essential (Gamble *et al.*, 2021).

5.3.3.2 Long Term Recommendations – Objective Three

To ensure efficient and effective strategic decision-making in the long term, there are several recommendations you can consider:

Maximise and optimise the workforce: To achieve long-term success, it is crucial to maximise and optimise the organisation's workforce and cognitive abilities.

Have the courage to commit to the chosen strategy: It is essential to have confidence and commit to it wholeheartedly.

Be open to learning and supportive: Humility, credibility, openness to learning, and supportive behaviour are essential for effective decision-making (Omotayo, 2015).

Execute strategic decisions with discipline and reliability: Avoid delaying decision-making to gather more data and follow through on strategic decisions (Abubakar *et al.*, 2019).

Communicate accurately and promptly: Clear and accurate communication is vital for the success of a long-term strategy.

Plan periodic reviews and updates: Formal strategic processes require periodic evaluations to track progress and identify areas for improvement.

Align leadership, operational teams, employee skills, and experiences: Strategic planning guides day-to-day decision-making and defines a roadmap for organisational growth (Galpin & Whittington, 2012).

5.4 General recommendations

To improve the perceived quality of strategic management, it is recommended that PJJ Moller Group of Companies plan, formulate and execute a clear short and 3+ year strategic plan, use practical strategic tools such as SWOT analysis, PESTEL analysis, Porter's Five Forces, and the Balanced Scorecard to measure the organisation's performance. Moreover, strategists must base strategic decisions on data rather than intuition and stay updated with industry trends and changes. Importantly, all stakeholders should be included in the planning process, and the strategy should be communicated clearly. It is crucial to regularly review

and update the strategy to ensure that it reflects changes in the business environment or organisational goals.

5.5 Significance and contribution of the study

The objective of this research study is to examine the strategic tools that can enhance the quality of strategic decision-making in small private organisations. In South Africa, small businesses operate in a highly competitive business environment, making effective strategic management critical to gain a competitive advantage and overcome challenges through appropriate strategic decision-making and management tools. Based on the findings, it is clear that practical strategic tools and decision-making processes are crucial for high-quality strategic management. As such, we recommend that the management of P JL Moller Group of Companies proactively utilize strategic management tools and seek out relevant business information to improve the quality of their strategic management and decision-making. Previous research has delved into implementing effective strategic management practices and conducting strategic decision-making using modern strategic tools. However, the literature has not evaluated the quality of these constructs or their relationship to strategic management. Thus, this study contributes to strategic management in small private organisations by providing empirical evidence that assesses the perceived quality of strategic management, tools, and decision-making processes, as well as their associations with enhancing quality. Rather than simply determining whether these processes are being carried out, this study measures the extent to which they are perceived as being of high or low quality.

5.6 Limitations of the study

The study focused exclusively on a single organisation comprising 48 participants from the small business sector. The research employed closed-ended questionnaires, which limits the ability to draw broad conclusions about other organisations based on the results. Therefore, it is not advisable to generalize the findings of this study to other organisations. While the research was quantitative and easy to analyse, the limited data collected due to the closed-ended questionnaires prevented an in-depth exploration of the participants'

experiences, beliefs, and perceptions of strategic management. Moreover, the study adopted a cross-sectional research design that only examined the impact of strategic tools and decision-making on the quality of strategic management. This approach ignored the changes that may occur over time, which can significantly influence the results of the study. In the business world, several factors can impact organisational success, not just perceptions of strategic management tools and decision-making. Therefore, the model may not be suitable as it did not account for other crucial elements that determine the overall quality of strategic management.

5.7 Suggestions for further research

In order to accurately assess the potential for generalisation within an organisation or industry, it is crucial to conduct thorough research with a large and diverse sample size. Ideally, the sample size should be over 50, but having a sample of 100 or more would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the population's perspectives. Sufficient time should be allocated to gather enough data for the sample, and if the population is multilingual, questionnaires should be provided in appropriate languages to ensure inclusivity. Moreover, the research should focus on specific activities mentioned in the questionnaire where the sample showed low agreement. This approach will help differentiate between whether an issue is a general problem for organisations or specific to a particular organisation. While the study focused on three industries, it can be extended to other industries to compare how they vary in terms of strategic management, strategic management tools, and strategic decision-making. The research followed a descriptive approach and employed a survey method. However, other methods such as focus groups and in-depth interviews could also be used to gather and analyse findings. Longitudinal research with the same population could also provide a better understanding of perceptions and whether changes, if implemented, would affect perceptions.

6 CONCLUSION

The aim of this research study was to explore perceptions regarding three objectives: the evaluation of strategic management quality, strategic management tools, and strategic decision-making. The research problem centred on determining whether private organisations in the Ekurhuleni district perceived a level of strategic management quality. To accomplish this, data was collected and analysed from 48 respondents at PJJ Group of Companies. The research successfully met all objectives and provided comprehensive answers to the research questions. The study's findings, implications, limitations, and recommendations have been presented in a clear, concise, and articulate manner, enhancing the understanding of the research outcomes. The study's limitations have been thoroughly discussed, offering an in-depth understanding of factors that may have impacted the results. Furthermore, identified future research opportunities may lead to further development in strategic management. Overall, this research study offers valuable insights into strategic management quality within private organisations, which can be used to inform decision-making in this field.

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8 APPENDICES

8.1 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

8.1.1.1.1 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 organisation	A local government	A not-for-profit organisation	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 (<i>please specify</i>):

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

Select from drop-down list

1.5 What best describes your position within your company?

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

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

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

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

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neither agree nor disagree 3	Agree 4	Strongly agree 5
2.1 Our organisation has clear long-term (3 years +) objectives.					
2.2 Our organisation has a clear vision for the future.					
2.3 Our strategic decisions are always in line with our vision for the future.					
2.4 Our strategic decisions create value for the owners/ shareholders of the organisation.					
2.5 We almost always achieve our long-term objectives.					
2.6 Our organisation is focused on a few key performance indicators to track our progress with implementation.					
2.7 The leadership of our organisation is visibly committed to successfully implementing our strategy.					
2.8 The culture in our organisation strongly supports our strategic direction.					
2.9 Our internal organisation structure supports our strategic direction.					
2.10 Our internal operating environment (processes and policies) support strategy implementation.					
2.11 We have the right technology in place to successfully implement our strategy.					
2.12 We have the right competencies in place to successfully implement our strategy,					
2.13 Strategy implementation is regarded as a very important function in our organisation.					
2.14 We have a clear long-term strategy.					

2.15 Our organisation's strategy is clearly understood by most people in the organisation.					
2.16 We are constantly measuring our progress with strategy implementation.					
2.17 Our strategies are acceptable to all key internal stakeholders.					
2.18 Our strategies are aligned well with our external environment.					
2.19 Our strategies make maximum use of what we do well as an organisation.					
2.20 We are not afraid of taking appropriate risks to grow our organisation.					
2.21 In our organisation, we manage risks well.					
2.22 We are quick to respond to important changes in our environment.					
2.23 Our strategic decisions ensure our organisation's sustainability for the future.					
2.24 The strategic decisions that we make are realistic and implementable.					
2.25 We have a good understanding of our key strengths and weaknesses.					
2.26 Several departments get together regularly to plan responses to changes taking place in our business environment.					
2.27 The activities of different divisions in this organisation are well coordinated.					
2.28 We are proactive in addressing anticipated changes in our business environment.					

Section 3: The tools of strategic management

Consider each of the following strategic management tools and indicate:

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?	How valuable is it in supporting strategic management? (scale= 1 to 5)
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	(Yes/no)	
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.					

8.1.1.1.2 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			

8.1.1.1.3Section 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)
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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
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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	Colored/ Mixed race	White
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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

8.2 Supervisor Consent Form

CONSENT TO SUBMIT RESEARCH REPORT FOR EXAMINATION 2023

MBLREP / MBL5913 / MBA5929

Consent is hereby given to:

Student name: Petrus Jacobus Lodewikus Möller

Student number: 34432167

to submit her research report in its final form.

Supervisor Signature: *Andre Vermaak*

Date: 6 November 2023

Supervisor Name: Andre Vermaak

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

Student signature: *Petrus Jacobus Lodewikus Möller*

Date: 6 November 2023

8.3 Ethical Clearance

Graduate School of Business Leadership_RERC

Date: 22/09/2023

Dear: Mr Petrus Moller

Ref #: 2023_SBL_MBA_046_FA_1098
Name: Mr Petrus Moller
Student #: 34432167

**Decision: Ethics Approval from
September 2023 to December
2024**

Researcher: Mr Petrus Moller
127 Flanagan Road , Boksburg / 16 Tulbach Road , Alberton
Alberton
34432167@mylife.unisa.ac.za 0791443511

Supervisor: Mr Andre Vermaak ; andreppv@mweb.co.za

THE PERCEIVED QUALITY OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT WITHIN A PRIVATE ORGANISATION IN EKURHULENI DISTRICT

Qualification: MBA

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 **21 September 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_046_FA_1098 should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the committee.

Kind regards,

NBW Mlitwa

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

P Mswell

Prof P Mswell
Executive Dean / By delegation from the Executive Dean of Graduate School of Business Leadership_RERC
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