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STRATEGY-MAKING APPROACHES FOLLOWED IN SOUTH AFRICAN ORGANISATIONS

by

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ABSTRACT

While research in the area of strategy is diverse and widely diffused across different areas of interest within the domain of strategy, the academic interest in the process of strategy-making still remains current (Szulanski, Porac and Dos, 2005:xiv). Some researchers deem the amorphous boundaries and inherent pluralism in the field of strategy as benefiting scholars and practitioners to thrive as a community without being constraint by a dominant theoretical or methodological 'straight-jacket' (Nag, Hambrick & Chen, 2007:952).

It became evident from the literature review that academic discourse on the process of strategy-making renders little academic agreement and is explained in diverse and opposing ways. This study endeavored to unite various views into a single description of strategy-making processes. A continuum of diverse strategy-making approaches is crystallized from literature. Various and divergent views on strategy-making are grouped together and associated with extreme views in this range of approaches to strategy-making. These extreme views represent the rational planning approach to strategy-making on the one end and the emergent approach to strategy-making on the other end. Issues influencing the choice of strategy-making approach, hinging on the perceived advantages and disadvantages of these approaches, are also investigated.

The study set out to describe the dominant approach/es to strategy-making followed in South African organisations. This is done through qualitative and

quantitative research exploring the research questions and hypotheses. Furthermore, defying critique on research methodology typically followed for strategy research (with dominance of qualitative research methods), this study made use of mixed method research. This enabled quantitative data (from questionnaires) to be corroborated with qualitative data (from interviews). Results were also quantified and a spread of data analysis techniques applied to provide the most reliable and valid results and conclusions.

This study describes, applies and tests an array of strategy-making approaches categorised according to extreme views. The study therefore shows that reflecting only on one aspect or extreme of strategy-making to the exclusion of other views when conducting strategy research, training on strategy or practicing strategy distorts the truth and reality of strategy-making and cripples the application of strategy in general.

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Strategy-Making Approaches Followed In South African Organisations

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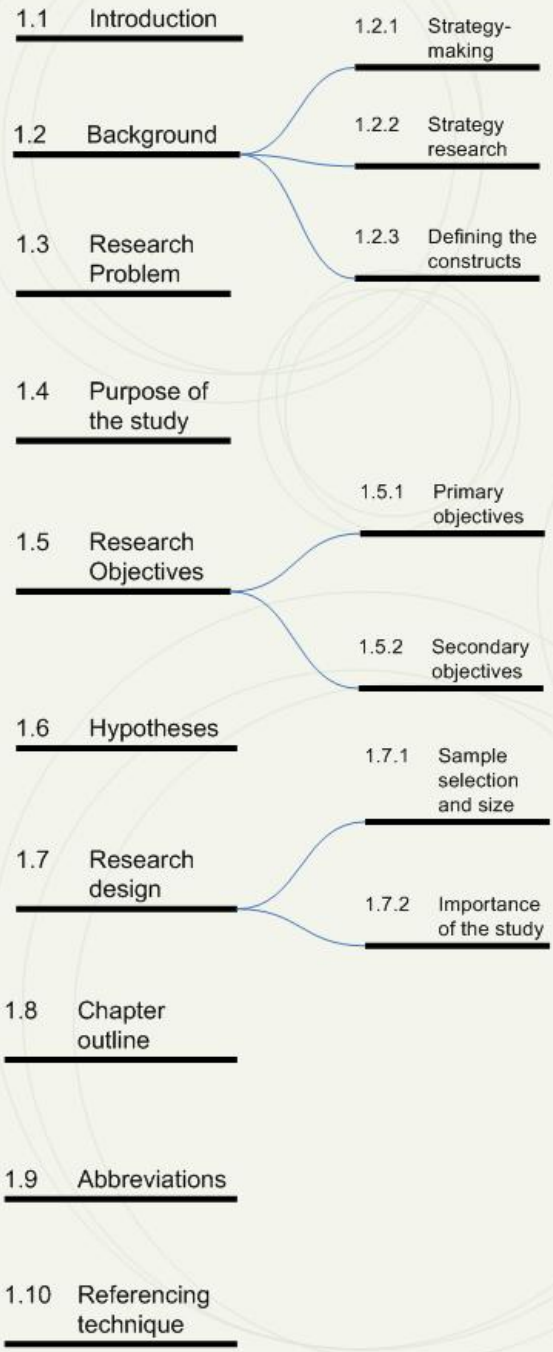
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH DESIGN