ADDRESSING THE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION GAP WITH LIABILITIES APPROACH

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Abstract

The plethora of studies existing in the field of strategic management especially strategy implementation, has exhausted theories such as *agency theory*, *organisational theory*, *social system theory, social learning theory,* and *expectancy theory* in trying to provide solutions to organisational problems, as they have not been successful in addressing the *implementation gap*. Poor implementation or organisational performance Aguinis (2013) is and continues to be a matter of grave concern in organisations Cooks (2010); Chimhanzi (2004); Barksdale & Darden (1971); Felton (1959) with Churchman (1975) labelling it "the implementation problem". Strategy implementation is still ill understood, approached from various viewpoints Dinwoodie, Quinn & Mc Guire (2014); Van de Merwe (2013); Tait & Nienaber (2010) acknowledged and the typical approach of most researchers in investigating implementation is to enhance implementation prospects Chimhanzi (2004) and neglect the negative side which potentially might provide answers to most problems.

Through Narrative Research, Strategy Implementation Narrative Capture Statements and in-depth interviews using Triads and Dyads were administered on Top Management, Senior Management, and Middle Management. The purpose of this study was to elicit narratives / stories to try and answer the research question: *How to address strategy implementation gap with a liabilities approach?* The fragmented stories were collected over a period of three months at the Water Utilities Corporation (WUC) Head Office and five other branches countrywide. The primary question which this research sought to answer was: *How can the liabilities approach and insights gained enhance strategy implementation?* The secondary questions were: *How can these gained insights enable organisations achieve success? Why is there limited success at implementation and are there gaps existing in strategy implementation?*

Three liabilities notably, The Liability of Engagement, the Liability of Decision Making Autonomy and the Liability of Perceived Institutional Support (negative influences, items and means, which an organisation has access to, which contribute or detracts organisational performance to generate economic rents) have been identified following the literature review, dyads and triads data analysis, these collectively are labelled *Strategy Implementation Liabilities (SILs)* being *negative influences, destructive holdings* and *processes* encountered at strategy implementation.

This study makes four contributions to the academic literature of strategic management and the Liabilities Theory. This study found evidence of the presence of *Strategy Implementation Liabilities* within the case organisation's strategy implementation processes, and these ought to be averted, mitigated and or removed from beneficial processes of business for effective and successful implementation. Organisations have to be aware of these liabilities as potentially, they can lead to economic loss and competitive disadvantages. These identified liabilities can vary across organisations and units, depending on the strategy and the extent of the already experienced implementation barriers. Strategy Implementers/ Executors should note that they have to contend with them, they are not independent but interdependent and therefore must respond with individualised strategies which take cognisance of their strengths and weaknesses (Pretorius, 2009). Lastly, these identified liabilities require more time to overcome by organisations since they are hidden within the processes, this calls for concerted effort such as the commitment of the organisational resources.

The critical recommendation would be to test the existence or prevalence of the *Strategy Implementation Liabilities* in other organisational settings and use the *Strategy Implementation Liabilities* Framework (see Figure 7.40) to identify any set of liabilities, avert,mitigate and or remove them from beneficial processes.The possible strength of the correlations between these liabilities would be determined in order to identify those liabilities which might be considered to be critical, as this would enable management to then address as a matter of priority. The possibility of identifying and recognising liabilities at the strategy formulation process could be an option such that these are noted at strategy implementation where processes could be put in place to accordingly deal with.

Key words: Strategy Implementation Liabilities (SILs), strategy implementation, strategy implementers, liabilities.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Mother Agnes Didimalang Maotwanyane, my late father John Dikgang Maotwanyane and elder brother Christopher Gadiekangwe Maotwanyane, for their unconditional support and encouragement during my journey in this studies.

Dad and Brother you may not be with us on this earth, however your spirits would forever live with us and you will be in our thoughts and always be remembered and loved!

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH DESIGN

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In many organisations, it is believed that the effective implementation of a strategy rests entirely with the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and Top Management Cater & Pucko, (2010), those being the ultimate accountable organs of the governance structures, thus considered responsible for every action occurring in the organisation (Da Silva & Trkman, 2014). Many CEOs have been blamed for failed or poor strategies and have consequently lost their positions at work. However, it is often the case that the strategy was not the actual problem, instead the strategy implementation was (Sterling, 2003; Chatain, 2014). According to Hrebiniak (2006) formulating a consistent strategy is a difficult undertaking for any management team. He also observes that making the strategy work, as well as implementing it throughout the organisation, is even more difficult. In Noble's (1999b) view, unlike strategy formulation, strategy implementation is often seen as something of a craft, rather than a science, and its research history has previously been described as fragmented and eclectic.

Li, Guohui & Eppler (2008) contend that it is often the case that, after a comprehensive strategy or at times, after a single strategic decision has been formulated significant difficulties arise during implementation the causes of which are sometimes invisible to top management (Sparrow, 2000; Flanagin, Meetzgeer, Pure, Markov & Hartsell, 2014; Wang & Shaver, 2014). This corroborates findings by Corboy and Corbin (1999) indicating that nearly 70 percent of strategies and strategic plans are never successfully implemented. Furthermore, Allio (2005) points to a survey conducted by the *Economist 2004* the findings of which shows that, over the past several years a discouraging 57 percent of organisations were unsuccessful at executing their strategic choices. Moreover Mankins & Steele (2005) in their research titled "Turning Great Strategy into Great Performance" indicate that companies realise only 63 percent of the financial performance promised by their strategies. Kaplan & Norton (2005; 2008) partly attribute this 'strategy-to-performance gap' to the fact that at least 95 percent of employees in companies were not aware or did not understand their organisation strategy. The end result as Johnson (2004) maintains is that 66 percent of any corporate strategy is never implemented. Therefore, it can be assumed that the problem leading to the 'strategy-to-performance gap' most likely has a direct relationship with an eminent gap in the formulation-to-implementation process (Tait &

Nienaber, 2010; Van de Merwe, 2013). Granted, Li et al., (2008) maintain this is testimony that strategy implementation is a key challenge for today's organisation, and Aguinis (2013) believes that organisational performance can be improved.

The various barriers, (e.g. institutional, decisions and interpersonal dynamics), which impede successful strategy implementation, include how the people involved communicate or implement the strategy and what systems or mechanisms are in place for coordination and control. With the plethora of literature available on strategy implementation, as well as the development of numerous frameworks, business models, and analysis tools the problem of 'strategy-to-performance gap' has still not been addressed. Numerous questions continue to arise and the one this research seeks to answer is: *How can the liabilities approach be used to address the strategy implementation gap in organisations?* Organisations may be unaware that they experience numerous hindrances, which put them at a disadvantage to successfully implement their strategies. These hindrances are the result of 'inability preconditions' (Ooghe & De Prijcker, 2008: 224; Arend, 2004). The inability preconditions mutate into liabilities that not only limit the organisation's ability to develop strategic assets (a set of difficult to trade and imitate, scarce, appropriable and specialized resources, and capabilities that bestow the firm's competitive advantage) to generate organisational rents (Henderson, 1999). These are economic rents that stem from the organisation's resources and capabilities that can be appropriated by the organisation.

The problem of information in availability poses iinabilities for organisations to identify liabilities experienced at implementation. For as long as these liabilities are unknown and unidentifiable, they cannot be isolated nor removed from the beneficial processes of strategy implementation, hence determining proper tactics for mitigating the effects remains a serious challenge and an impediment. This research attempts to investigate the question at hand by analysing existing academic research on the barriers and influencers of strategy implementation. Literature was drawn from the most widely used literature databases of management and business to identify the barriers influencing the process of strategy implementation, so as to determine whether a <u>liabilities approach</u> can address the observed strategy implementation gap and provide solutions to organisations.

A huge body of knowledge has been developed through research regarding the failure of organisations to implement their strategy(s) and some of the myths or excuses and explanations advanced are:

- Ill-defined strategic goals;
- Lack of detail in planning to support plans and goals achievement;
- Strategy and organisational culture misalignment;
- Poor communication and coordination;
- Poor planning and governance and
- Poor prioritisation.

The list is endless and by discrediting these myths or excuses research can more clearly look at a number of approaches such as the liabilities approach that would greatly enhance the effectiveness of strategy implementation. According to Crittenden & Crittenden (2008:302) strategists tend to use powerful terminology to describe the importance of implementation. For example, Beer & Eisenstat (2000) in referring to huddles and barriers to strategy implementation used terminology such as s*ilent killers, confrontation*, and *engagement.* Mankins & Steele (2005) refer to *conquering* the gap between strategy and performance, and offer tactical specifity for conquering the formulation-implementation-performance process. This entails, keeping it simple, making it concrete, debating assumptions, using rigorous frameworks, speaking a common language, discussing resource deployment early, clearly identifying priorities, continuously monitoring performance and, rewarding and developing execution capabilities. Crittenden & Crittenden (2008:302) observe that Porter & Harper (2003) talk about *blocking* and *tackling* which are phrases used in sport and further indicate that managers must hone their implementation skills. In their contribution to knowledge in strategy implementation they postulate that strategy implementation is a critical cornerstone and ally in the building of a capable organisation and recommend eight levers of strategy implementation appropriate for building an organisation.

Debates continue, others indicating the richness of literature on strategy implementation whilst some still maintain that the concept has not yet been sufficiently addressed. A review of the relevant literature on strategy implementation indicates an undue bias toward formulation, almost to the neglect of implementation (Noble, 1999; Piercy, 1989; Walker & Ruekert, 1987; Friesl, Silberzahn, 2012; Syrett, 2013; Gide & Jewell, 2014). There is consensus among scholars that the literature on strategy implementation has contributed significantly to the understanding of strategy formulation even though to the detriment of strategy implementation (Floyd & Woolridge, 1992). Key factors to potentially influence implementation success have been identified, with early involvement of relevant people and enabling structural systems being most emphasised (Johnson & Frohman, 1989; Wenham, 1985; Ruhin, Shanks & Johnson, 2011). Early involvement in the strategy process by a wide and deep range of organisational members is the predictor for implementation success (Hambrick & Cannella, 1989; Sandy, 1991; Ruhin, et al., 2011).

Many successful implementation organisations have been fairly fluid in their ability to adapt to changing environmental conditions and to new strategies (Drozin & Howard, 1984; Ruekert, Walter & Roering, 1985). Hambrick & Cannella (1999) maintain that there is a tendency by some strategists to assume that shrewd strategy formulation is the only necessary element of strategic success. Research previously undertaken has concentrated on factors such as culture, organisational structure, and management style as believed to affect implementation (Noble, 1999). Furthermore, existing research has enabled us to appreciate how strategy formulation contributes to sustained performance. Unfortunately this tells half the story since the strategy implementation gap, which contributes to failure, has not been addressed. Even with the abundance of knowledge existing on implementation, attention directed towards inabilities, hindrances and preconditions adversely affecting strategy implementation is lacking. Ultimately, existing literature and its frameworks has thus far ignored the liabilities approach, which has the potential to mitigate the negative factors (liabilities) detracting a firm’s performance.

According to Okumus (2001), recent studies in the strategic management field indicate that there remains a lack of knowledge on strategy implementation and therefore, more research is necessary on this important area (D’Aunno, 2005; Sila, 2013; Van de Merwe, 2013; Tait & Nienaber, 2010; Rajasekar, 2014). The same sentiments are echoed by several scholars, who maintain that there is a lack of comprehensive implementation frameworks (Alexander, 1991, 2005; Noble, 1999) a noteworthy observation considering that some scholars and managers treat strategy implementation as a strategic after thought (Day & Wesley, 1983; Zarif & Bayrami, 2010). Researchers interested in the area of strategy implementation face a formidable challenge due to the general lack of research on which to base new efforts. A review of literature reveals few formal description of strategy implementation (Noble, 1999).

Actually, the widespread inability to implement strategy may be a sign that the accepted approaches to strategy formulation are not as good as many think they are, for a well-conceived strategy is one that is implementable. For that reason, implementation must be considered during the formulation process, not later when it may be too late. A tendency to treat formulation and implementation as two separate phases is at the root of many failed strategies (Hambrick & Cannella, 1999; Rajasekar, 2014; Cocks, 2010).

The Liabilities Theory, which has not to date been applied to strategy implementation, has the potential to address the implementation gap and this could be the solution to low success in strategy implementation in organisations. The main aim of this study was to better understand the phenomena of implementation, describe the implementation gap with the liabilities approach and establish the status of implementation understanding. Ultimately, generic guidelines have been provided for overcoming "inability preconditions" referred to collectively as "liabilities" and those pertaining to implementation referred to as Strategy Implementation Liabilities. This research thesis draws insights from strategy-as-practice as an emerging field of research which might assist in understanding the strategy implementation gap within the literature and accordingly assist organisations to avert low level strategy implementation emanating from the liabilities experienced at the implementation stage. As Whittington (2006b, 2007) asserts, strategy-as-practice provides insights beyond studying organisational processes and embeds strategising activities in the wider practices of society. Jarzabkowski & Spee (2009) posit that people are preoccupied with the work of strategy, whilst the theory of strategy is inundated with multivariate analyses of firms with emphasis on industry-level effects upon firm performance. There is a curious absence of human actors and their actions in most strategy theories, even those that purport to examine the internal dynamics of the firm, such as the resource–based view (Johnson, Melin & Whittington, 2003; Johnson, Langley, Melin & Whittington, 2007). Theories in strategy are derived from large-scale studies within the micro-economics tradition such as strategy formulation and implementation. Some of these studies have placed their full attention on firm and industry levels of analysis at the expense of the human actors" (Whittington, 2006:614). The strategy–as–practice (s-a-p) was born to seriously address these concerns, by bringing to the centre of strategy research, human actors and their actions as well as the way they interact (Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009). There is increasing attention directed to a new paradigm in strategy research, which has the potential to addressing micro-social practices within organisations seeking to implement their strategy choices (Knights & Morgan, 1991; Barry & Elmes, 1998; Oakes et al., 1998; Hendry, 2000; Levy et al., 2003; Whittington, Jarzabkowski, Mayer, Mounoud, Nahapiet & Rouleau, 2003; Ezzamel & Willmott, 2004). Broader field of strategic management research, more specifically strategy implementation is frantically seeking more 'humanized' theories such as the liabilities theory that have the potential to bring actors and action in unison and into research action to enable organisations achieve their strategy choices.

Strategy as practice research is interested in the detailed activities that comprise strategizing (strategy-making) and the ultimate link *inter se* these activities and larger organisational and societal phenomena (Seidl & Whittington, 2014). The s-a-p approach explicitly emphasizes the link between micro and macro perspectives on strategy as a social practice (Jarzabkowski, 2004b; Whittington, 2006). It has shifted the focus and interest on strategy research and has ultimately landed itself within the scrutiny of the micro-processes, practices, and activities that have been clandestinely overlooked in traditional research on strategy (Chia & MacKay, 2007).

According to Whittington (2006:121) the s-a-p researchers are "invited to dive deep into organisations to engage with people's strategy activity in all its intimate detail" (Johnson et al., 2003; Samra-Fredricks, 2003). The research in practice aims to go deep in organisations in order to make sense of the 'messy realities of doing strategy as lived experience' (Whittington, 2002). It may be concluded that s-a-p consists of: intricate and comprehensive aspects of strategizing; the strategist's patterns of thinking, talking, reflection, action, interaction, and emotion; and the type of technologies, and tools used, and the various implications of their action geared towards strategizing.

The key elements of the emerging s-a-p approach has the potential to enhance strategy implementation which include an emphasis on "where and how is the work of strategizing and organising actually done; who does this work strategizing and organizing work; what are the skills required for this work and how are they acquired?" (Whittington, 2002:119). S-a-p offers another perspective to decision-making processes acceptable within the strategic management field. Practitioners are strategy's actors or strategy prime movers, these are normally referred to as strategists and they perform the strategy activities and carry out its practices. Middle managers, a particular group of strategy practitioners whose role as strategists has been undermined by the dominant top-down view on strategy (Whittington, 2006; Jarzabkowski et al., 2007) play a crucial role. These are the actors and individuals who draw upon and apply the practices in their action. They are therefore part and puzzle of the practices and praxis (Jarzabkowski et al., 2007). “Praxis constitute the flow of the various activities through which strategy is accomplished and these are situated, socially accomplished flows of activity that strategically are consequential for the direction and survival of the group, organisation or industry” (Jarzabkowski, 2005; Jarzabkowski et al., 2007:13; Johnson et al., 2007). According to Whittington (2006:619) “*Practices* refer to shared routines of behaviour, including traditions, norms and procedures for thinking, acting and using ‘things’.. The Greek word ‘praxis’ refers to ‘activity engaged by free men’, that is, the actual activity ‘what people do in practice’”. Practices guide and enhance the actual work (praxis) that has to be done by practitioners and therefore constitute the road map of any strategic initiative, detailing ‘what’ has to be done, ‘who’ has to do what, ‘when’ it has to occur and ‘how’ it has to be coordinated and controlled, for it to be successful.

This study, therefore, sought to uncover the true nature of strategy implementation in organisations. The main focus and emphasis was on low level strategy implementation, whether, strategy implementation is and should be undertaken separately from strategy formulation for effective implementation or what could be other causes of this. Therefore, the study was concerned with crystallising the literature and better understanding the phenomena of implementation, describing the implementation gap with the liabilities approach, which could enlighten the causes and effects of low strategy implementation. Ultimately, the study establishes the status of implementation understanding and prescribes a framework to address the identified liabilities. The term ‘strategy implementation’ and ‘strategy execution’ are used interchangeably. Both the terms are used widely in academic literature. Most authors agree that among the terms synonymous with “implementation” are “execution”, “successful goals achievement” and “actualization of goals”, and those are mostly favoured in the management and business literature.

1.2 HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

1.2.1 Strategy implementation

Generally, there has been little disagreement and debate regarding the definition of strategy implementation (Syrett, 2013; Jewell, 2015; Jenkins, 2014). Strategy is the determination of the basic long-term goals of an enterprise, and the adoption of courses of action and the allocation of resources necessary for carrying out these goals (Chandler, 1962). Strategy is a categorizing scheme by which incoming stimuli can be ordered and dispatched (Mintzberg, 1987).

According to Aaltonen & Ikavalko (2002:415) strategy implementation has attracted much less attention in strategic and organisational research than strategy formulation or strategic planning. Alexander (1991) highlights various reasons that could be given for this, specifically that strategy implementation is considered less glamorous than strategy formulation as people demean the process believing that it can be undertaken by anyone regardless of seniority. Again, people are unsure of beginning and ending of the process (Friesl & Silberzahn, 2012; Syrett, 2013. Research within the field of strategic management has uncovered several problems with strategy implementation some of which are as follows: weak management roles; limitations in communication on the organisational strategy resulting in lack of commitment and poor buy-in into the proposed strategy initiatives; misaligned organisational systems and resources; unawareness and misunderstandings of strategy; uncoordinated implementation initiatives and sharing of responsibilities; inadequate organisational and human capital capabilities; activities competing for the same meagre resources and; uncontrollable environmental factors (Alexander, 1991, 2005; Giles, 1991; Lares-Mankki, 1994; Galpin, 1998; Beer & Eisenstat, 2000; Aalbers & Dolfsma, 2014; Heide, Gronhaug & Johannessen, 2002; Chatain, 2014; Cater & Pucko, 2010; Wang & Shaver, 2014; Aboutalebi, 2016).

Nowadays strategists have developed numerous concepts and techniques to facilitate strategy formulation. Over the last 20 years, consultants, academics and researchers have introduced powerful and pragmatic tools such as the: industry and competitor analysis portfolio; business models; product life cycle theory and; internal strength and weakness analysis all of which have genuine widespread use (Hambrick and Cannella, 1998). However, well-formulated strategies only produce superior performance for the firm when they are successfully implemented (Bonoma, 1984; Nag, Hambrick & Chen, 2007; Porter, 2001). Academia has thus undergone satisfactory research in strategy implementation, both in the conceptual and empirical related literature, which highlights the contribution to the body of knowledge in strategic management research. These contributions seek to find suitable solutions to effective implementation of strategy. Within the conceptual implementation literature, issues raised include: considering a range of implementation techniques and power bases; combined form appropriate implementation and; suggesting consensus building with external groups for a positive influence on both strategy development and implementation (Nielsen, 1983; Chang & Wu, 2014; Singal & Jain, 2014; Kaplan, Norton & Barrows, 2008). Less attention has been drawn to implementation which has traditionally been treated merely as an activity following formulation, rather than noting the intertwined nature of formulation and implementation. Regarding empirical implementation literature, three important dimensions of the decision-making process: managerial cohesiveness, formality and, centralisation have been found. It has been suggested that:

- strategy makers should concentrate on reaching consensus concerning means (competitive strategies) rather than ends when formulating strategies;
- factors such as availability of resources of all kinds, top management support, perception of benefits, technical and organisational validity influence implementation and,
- structuring top management teams to achieve consensus on objectives may improve their performance.

The main research initiatives undertaken in strategy implementation can be grouped into the two main categories of *structural perspectives* and *interpersonal process* p*erspectives* both of which are important general dimensions of strategy implementation (Skivington & Daft, 1999; Dearlove & Crainer, 2014). The focus of *structural perspectives* research studies is on the effects of the formal organisational structure and control mechanisms on implementation processes and outcomes, whilst the *interpersonal process perspectives* deal with strategic consensus, autonomous strategic behaviours and diffusionary processes, the effects of leadership implementation styles and, communication and other interaction processes. According to the structural perspectives, a proper strategy and structure alignment has been found a necessary precursor to the successful implementation of new business strategies in organisations, while changes in the competitive environment necessitate adjustments to the organisational structure

(Drazin & Howard, 1984). In examining the relationship between Strategic Business Unit (SBU) strategies, aspects of corporate –SBU relationship and, implementation Gupta (1987) found that structures that are more decentralised produce higher levels of SBU effectiveness regardless of the strategic context. In another instance when Daft & Macintosh (1984); Alharbi, Gelaidan, Al-Swidi & Abubakr (2016); Kreutzer, Cardinal, Walter & Lechner (2016) explored the role of formal control mechanisms/systems in strategy implementation, they articulated organisational control into a three stage cycle:

- planning a target or standard of performance;
- monitoring or measuring activities designed to reach that target and;
- implementing corrections if targets or standards are not being achieved.

Jaworski & Mac Innis (1989) and Jaworski et al., (1993) found a strong relationship between the type of control system a firm used and its performance. Therefore, the control system in an implementation effort is a critical element, the decision about which may need to be flexible in order to evolve as implementation efforts unfold.

Regarding *interpersonal process perspectives,* interpersonal processes and issues are given prominence in any strategy implementation effort, with research pointing to 'strategic consensus', 'autonomous strategic behaviours', 'diffusionary processes', 'the effects of leadership implementation styles' and, 'communication and other interaction processes'. According to the s*trategic consensus perspective,* the degree of strategic consensus between managers may influence the success with which strategic directives are implemented. Strategic consensus is a shared understanding and commitment to a strategic directive between individuals or groups within an organisation, and is beneficial for developing a commitment among managers as well as reduction of uncertainty in the organisation. Consensus is an important factor in implementation-related decision-making because a negative consensus may result in highly complex and uncertain environments. Yet still, Schwenger & Morrison (1989) found that groups of middle managers using *dialectical inquiry and devil's advocacy approaches* made significantly higher quality decisions than groups seeking total consensus in the divisions, suggesting that a certain amount of diversity of opinions within colleagues may create a healthier environment that produces more effective strategic decisions. Whitney & Smith (1998) concur, observing that obtaining commitment to a strategic plan at all levels of the organisation may at times be problematic (Guth & MacMillan, 1986; Lantzz & Hjort, 2013). Hence it is worthy of note that, absolute consensus may result in “group think” and therefore suppress valuable individual opinions (Lunenburg, 2012) such as when managers become apathetic and see the planning efforts of senior management as a threat. Nielson (1983) contends that firms must achieve consensus both within and from outside in order to successfully implement business strategies. According to Floyd and Woolridge (1992) strategic consensus can be assessed along both the cognitive and emotional dimensions. Cognitively, a lack of consensus results when managers do not share a common perception of the meaning of strategy, causing disharmony in individual efforts. Similarly, a lack of emotional commitment occurs when organisational members are not committed to a decision to act and decide on an agreed direction. Both cognitive and affective consensus are necessary for maximised organisational performance.

The second dimension of the *interpersonal process perspectives* is *autonomous strategic behaviours perspective,* stressing that when a strategic consensus does not exist within the organisation, members would not operate towards the same goals and objectives (Noble, 1999). In this environment managers may intentionally deviate from a strategic initiative in order to ensure the success of their own desired ends. At times deviation from a strategic institution may be for self–serving purposes such as the protection of personal turf and power bases. As Geventh & Macmillan (1986) suggest “self-interested intervention” on the part of middle managers is more likely when their goals and beliefs are not highly congruent with those of senior management (Beynon-Davis, 2012) leading to low personal commitment, which may in turn result in passive compliance, subversive behaviours such as verbal arguments, objecting memos, coalition formation, the deliberate creation of barriers to implementation or, sabotage. This autonomous behaviour can have a profound effect on the success with which a strategic plan is implemented. An empirical study by Guth & MacMillan (1986) confirmed that managers who believed that their self-interest was being compromised could redirect a strategy, delay its implementation, reduce the quality of its implementation and even totally sabotage the implementation effort (Jenkins, 2014). On the contrary, Boroma (1986; 113) views autonomous behaviour as positive and that a turbulent business environment requires novel management responses that also consider subversives as individuals who challenge mundane practices and where necessary contravene company obsolete rules and policy. These managers have been found to be effective in that they are able to improve under conditions of change by introducing “technologies of rationality” Jarzabkowski & Kaplan (2015) and are willing to change long-standing practices, and they tend to be action oriented (Mirabeau & Maguire, 2014). Therefore, a certain amount of autonomous strategic behaviour may be desirable.

According to the third dimension, the *diffusionary processes perspective,* the view of “trickle down” process is that senior management initiates strategies, which are then communicated through middle management to line workers. At the personal level, Robertson & Gatignon (1986) are of the view that the reputation of the sponsoring senior executive is an important factor in facilitating organisational adoption. Outward thinkers are more apt to be early adopters and some organisation members are naturally predisposed to adopt an innovation with little huddles whilst others would have to wait for formal directives to adopt (Leonard, Barber & Deschamps, 1988). Within the organisation, vertical communication patterns (Fidler & Johnson, 1984; Robertson & Gatignon, 1986), and organisational inertia, may influence the rate of adoption of the new strategy implementation modalities (Boecker, 1989).

Noble (1999) maintains that the leadership styles of senior managers have a significant effect on implementation elements such as the delegation of authority and decision-making. The management of an implementation process generally requires a driving force in the organisation in order to succeed (Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2013; Hughes, Beauty & Dinwoodie, 2014). In most vibrant organisations, implementation is driven by an appointed change agent, who is a highly competent leader normally referred to as “champion”, to pave the way for plan adoption by shaping and guiding the planning process. Management tactics and leadership styles are critical in overcoming lower level obstructionism that is often prevalent in many implementation efforts (Nutt, 1986). Bourgeois & Brodwin (1984) single out five general leadership styles in strategy implementation:

- commander model,
- change model,
- collaborative model,
- cultural model, and,
- crescive model.

Elements within the ‘commander model’ comprise of strategy formulation and implementation as well as general culture like characteristics of the firm. The ‘change model’ emphasises how the organisation structure, incentive compensation, control systems and, other related factors can be used to facilitate the implementation of a new radical strategy, while the ‘collaborative model’ focuses on group decision-making and negotiated outcomes of the firm. The ‘cultural model’ suggests that lower level employees can be infused with a strong set of collective values, which allows them to participate in the strategic thinking and implementation efforts of the firm. The final model, ‘crescive’, suggests that middle managers should be responsible to a greater degree for developing, championing, and implementing new strategies. The crescive model shifts decision-making and implementation authority to lower levels in the organisation.

Vertical and lateral interactions in implementation processes are very important and to this effect, Hambrick & Canella, (1989) provide the following guidelines for successful strategy implementation:

1. Obtaining broad-based inputs and organisational participation at the strategy formulation stage;
2. Assessing in advance the potential obstacles to implementation;
3. Making early and decisive moves in important areas such as resource commitments, organisational structure, and reward mechanisms;
4. “Selling“ the strategy to all affected organisational members, both vertically and laterally and;
5. Fine-tuning, adjusting, and responding to events and trends as they arise.

Breakdowns in implementation occur when the strategic initiative is not well organised for action, and when the necessary information behaviours are not clearly specified (Sandy, 1991; Pearce & Robinson, 2013). In acknowledging that defensive routines exist in virtually all organisations, Argiris (1989) suggests that organisations must actively work to eliminate such if they hope to successfully implement strategy efforts. Defensive routines limit learning and often lend to perceptual gaps and other hindrances in understanding between organisation members, which can ultimately hamper implementation efforts.

1.2.2 Liabilities

According to Arend (2004) a testable theory with practical prescriptions (see also comprehensive discussion of Liabilities Theory in Chapter 3) is what will move the field of strategy formulation and implementation forward, and ultimately, towards an evolving scientific basis that generates beneficial applications for business. The Resource Based View (RBV) could make a good case to be that theory, however, it is lacking in the analysis of two complementary areas:

1) Analysis of the side of the ledger, which is an analysis of firm negative factors (liabilities) that destroy rents rather than increase them (Powell, 2001; West & De Castro, 2001).
2) Analysis of endogenous and contextual elements that define what strategic factors a firm has that positively and negatively affect its potential rents.

According to Arend (2004) the liabilities theory is a field that still needs a lot of attention in research, and it has the potential to enable organisations to successfully implement their strategy choices through:

- Identification and definition of negative implementation factors, termed Strategy Implementation Liabilities;
- An in-depth examination of the "birth" of these factors, which will enable organisations to mitigate their impact;
- Facilitating the exploration of the context-dependency of the identified implementation liabilities and;
- Development of the prescription and framework for the management of the liabilities.

According to the proponents of the Liabilities Theory, the main interest in strategy implementation research by consultants, academics and business people has been drawn towards success factors rather than the causes of failure to effectively and successfully execute implementation, poor performance and non-success. There is a resounding call in many quarters that these experienced liabilities should be objectively considered to evaluate strategy as they negatively influence the firm's performance (Arend, 2004; Pretorius & Holtzhauzen 2008; Pretorius, 2009; Pretorius & Stander, 2012). Despite these revelations, there remains a lack of research to determine their impact and how they could be mitigated to achieve positive organisational performance, hence this study. Ultimately, what remains is for organisational leadership to embrace the liabilities approach in strategy implementation in order to address the implementation gap. Academics and researchers should introduce new powerful and pragmatic liabilities frameworks, models and tools to address negative factors (liabilities) experienced at implementation. There is an urgent need to introduce intense research on strategy implementation liabilities and related phenomena to improve implementation initiatives. Leadership has to consider strategy formulation and implementation as a single activity (Syrett, 2013), as this will enable the identification of liabilities at their infancy and therefore assume relevant tactics of mitigation, and more importantly, numerous techniques and concepts which assist to formulate and implement strategies should be integrated within the liabilities approach. There are various types of liabilities that have been identified in research, where researchers used several labels, for example, the liability of aging - to describe the relationship between age and failure of new organisations. Other examples of liabilities include:

- ☐ Liability of newness (Stichcombe, 1965; Freeman, Carroll & Hannan, 1983; Hannan & Freeman, 1984; Singh, Tucker & House, 1986);
- ☐ Liability of adolescence (Levintal & Finchman, 1988; Bruderl & Schussler, 1990);
- ☐ Liability of obsolescence (Baum, 1989; Baum, 1990, Ingram, 1993; Barron, West, & Hannah, 1994);
- ☐ Liability of newness and adolescence (Brudel & Schussler, 1993);
- ☐ Liability of foreignness (Hymer, 1960, 1976; Zaheer, 1995, Miller & Richards, 2002);
- ☐ Liability of newness, adolescence and obsolescence (Henderson, 1999);
- ☐ Strategic liabilities (Arend, 2004);
- ☐ Turnaround liabilities (Pretorius & Holtzhauzen, 2008);
- ☐ Leadership liabilities (Pretorius, 2009); and
- ☐ Management consultant liabilities (Pretorius & Stander, 2012).

The research in liabilities enumerated above would be described and explained in detail under the literature review (Chapter 3) of this research thesis. At a glance, strategy implementation does not appear to be any part of the research undertaken hence the immediate need to exploit the liabilities approach and it’s potential with the view to address the gap within implementation.

1.2.3 Definition of constructs

1.2.3.1 Strategy

The debate on the definition of strategy has matured; the majority of authors writing on strategy agrees that there is no consensus on its definition (Bourgeois, 1980; Gluck, Kaufman, & Walleck, 1982; Glueck, 1980; Hatten, 1979; Hofer & Schendel, 1978; Lenz, 1980b; Rumelt, 1979; Spender, 1979; Steiner, 1979; Nag, Hambrick & Chen (2007)). Proponents of strategy such as Hambrick (1983) suggested that this lack of consistency arises because the concept is multidimensional and that it must be situational and, will accordingly vary by industry, hence consensus is difficult to achieve. Some strategy theorists, however seem to agree that the study of strategy includes both the actions taken, and the content of the strategy, as well as the processes by which actions are decided and implemented. They agree that intended emergent, and realised strategies may differ from one another and finally they agree that the making of strategy involves conceptual as well as analytical exercises (Chaffee, 1985:89). Nag, Hambrick & Chen (2007) defined strategy as “a field that deals with the major intended and emergent initiatives taken by general members on behalf of owners, involving the utilisation of resources to enhance the performance of organisations in their external environment with a view to financial gain”.

According to Mintzberg (2001:20-21) the definition of strategy can be classified into Five Ps these being: strategy as plan (strategy deals with how leaders try to establish direction for organisations, to set them on pre-determined courses of action); strategy as ploy (strategy takes us into the realm of direct competition, where threats, feints and various other manoeuvres are employed to gain advantage); strategy as pattern (strategy focuses on action, reminding us that the concept is an empty one if it does not take behaviour into account); strategy as position (strategy encourages us to look at organisations in context, specifically in their competitive environments) and; strategy as perspective (strategy raises intriguing questions about intention and behaviour in a collective context). The definition of strategy may be traced to the contributions of Chandler (1962) where it was defined as the determination of the basic long-term goals of an enterprise, and the adoption of courses of action and the allocation of resources necessary for carrying out these goals. Broad formula for how a business is going to compete, what its goals should be, and what policies will be needed to carry out these goals (Porter, 1980). Strategy is about building sustainable competitive advantage that in turn creates above-average financial performance (Becker, Huselid, 2007:899). According to Chaffee (1985:90) strategy theorists agree that intended, emergent, and realised strategies may differ from one another. They maintain that organisations may have both corporate strategy and business strategy and that the heart of strategy making is the conceptual work done by leaders of the organisation. Strategy is about shaping the future “and is the human attempt to get to desirable ends with available means” (Mc Keown, 2011). Nickols (2012) considers strategy as a phenomenon which has perspectives, positions, plans, and patterns. It is the bridge between policy or high-order goals and tactics or concrete actions. It is a term that refers to a complex web of thoughts, ideas, insights, experience, goals, expertise, memories, perceptions and expectations that provides general guidance for specific actions in pursuit of particular ends. However, according to Freedman (2013) strategy is a “comprehensive way to try to pursue political ends, including the threat or actual use of force, in a dialectic of wills” in a military conflict, in which both adversaries interact. Implementation of strategies has always been key drivers in the field of strategic management even in the 20th century (Cater & Pucko, 2010).

1.2.3.2 Strategy implementation

Implementation is the carrying out, execution, or practice of a plan, a method, or any design for doing something. It is a process comprising the two main variables of structure and managerial skills (Bonoma & Crittenden, 1988). Chimhanzi (2004) contends that implementation is the translation of strategic plans into an operational reality. Meanwhile Mintzberg (1978) views implementation as the process by which an ‘intended’ or ‘emergent’ strategy translates into a ‘realised’ strategy. Giles (1991:75) on the other hand views implementation as concerned with ‘putting strategy into practice’. However, Meldrum (1996) maintains that strategy is considered as, all the sequence of actions undertaken following a series of policy decisions.

Some of the terminology synonymous with ‘implementation’ and often employed in the management literature, but not frequently used by managers include ‘execution’, ‘actualisation of goals’ and ‘performance management’ (Sashittal & Wilemon, 1996; Aguinis, 2013; Jooste & Fourie, 2009; Tait & Nienaber, 2010). In this research we will use the term ‘strategy implementation’ as the key word and the term ‘strategy execution’ as the descriptive domain label, as both are more widely used in the relevant literature (Li, Guohui, & Eppler, 2008). Examples of its use are definitions posited by Hrebiniak (2009) who argue that: the formulation of strategy is the difficult part, with the most difficult being operationalizing it across the whole organisation. Aguinis (2013:02) defines performance management as the "continuous process of identifying, measuring, and developing the performance of individuals and teams and aligning performance with the strategic goals of the organisation". The variance in the definition of strategy has thus matured, everyone contributing to the literature agrees that there is no consensus on its definition.

The strategy implementing/execution task is the most complicated and time-consuming aspect of strategic management as pointed out by Thompson & Strickland (2003). According to Hrebiniak & Joyce (1984:358), "strategy implementation is operational in nature and relies on a series of daily activities performed by employee's at all organisational levels". Therefore, strategy implementation is the translation of a chosen strategy into organisation action so as to achieve strategy goals and objectives. It is as well the manner in which an organisation forges its way for competitive advantage and a better performance (Steiner, 2011), through a process of allocating resources such as motivation, compensation, management, appraisal, and control processes to support the chosen managerial activities (Pierce & Robinson, 2010), hence implementation of organisational strategy is a process that takes longer than the formulation (Hrebiniak, 2006).

Strategy implementation deals with organisational issues, the development of specific marketing programs, and the execution of programs in the field (Cespedes, 1991). In the absence of a single universally accepted definition of 'strategy implementation' Li, et. al (2008:46) identified the three distinct notations of 'process', 'behaviour', and 'hybrid' as the denoting perspectives for the concept. The p*rocess perspective,* defines implementation as the *process* that turns plans into action assignments and ensures that such assignments are executed in a manner that accomplishes the plan's stated objectives (Kotler, 1984). Through this lively, highly complex and interactive process, companies identify future opportunities even as many variables impinge upon it (Reid, 1989; Wernham, 1985). Strategy implementation may also be viewed as a *process* inducing various forms of organisational learning because both environmental threats and strategic responses are a prime trigger for organisational learning processes (Lehner, 2004). Regarding the *behaviour perspective,* implementation is operationally defined as those *senior-level* leadership *behaviours* and activities that will transform a working plan into a concrete reality (Schaap, 2006).

According to Floyd & Wooldridge (1992) implementation designates a series of *managerial* interventions that align organisational action with strategic intention. Hrebiniak & Joyce (1984) add that organisational structures, key personnel *actions*, and control systems designed to control performance with respect to desired ends are prime factors for implementation. Li, et al's (2008) *hybrid perspective* combines the process and behaviour perspectives, whereby strategy execution is defined as the *step-by-step* implementation of the various *activities* that make up a formulated decision-making strategy. This as Li, et al (2008:06) observe, makes "strategy implementation a dynamic, iterative and complex process, which comprises a series of decisions and activities by managers and employees – affected by a number of inter-related internal and external factors – to turn strategic plans into reality in order to achieve strategic objectives".

In this study, the working definition of strategy and strategy implementation have been adopted as follows:

Strategy has been defined as patterns and perspectives of decision making set out within an organisation, with the intention to provide general guidance for specific actions with the ultimate goal to achieve specified ends.

Strategy Implementation has been defined as the execution of the patterned perspectives of decision making which have been made to capture objectives, purposes/goals of an organisation.

1.2.3.3 Liabilities

According to Arend (2004: 1004) if strategy is the pursuit of explanations for why some organisations succeed while others fail then the Resource Based View (RBV) has provided only part of the story. It may be true that some firms fail because they lack superior assets and capabilities. His assertion is that they may be failing because they retain many *destructive holdings* and *processes* which organisations are unaware of, because in many instances, organisations only examine the positive influences at strategy implementation on their performance. This act in itself does not address all possible explanations and therefore it is imperative for organisations to also examine the *negative influences* on organisational performance to properly evaluate strategy implementation. These *negative influences* are also referred to as *negative factors* or *liabilities. Factors* are *items and means* an organisation needs to have access to, regardless of whether they contribute or impair/detract it from its performance to generate economic rents. These might either be positive or negative. Examples of positive factors include the organisations assets (inventory, capital, land, equipment, and goodwill), its capabilities, strategy, tactics, and relationships while negative factors include the organisation's rigidities, hindrances, and liabilities. Examples of liabilities include, lawsuits, bad-will with customers and labour, management incompetence and, obsolete technology and inventory. This means that at any time an organisation will possess either positive or negative factors or both and what is most critical is its capability and ability to manage/mitigate them to generate economic rent (Arend, 2004).

Even though the liabilities theory is one area of research not fully exploited for possible solutions to address low and ineffective strategy implementation, academic scholars have made attempts at advancing definitions of the concept. Liabilities are a combination of a result of barriers, disadvantages, hindrances, weaknesses, difficulties, accountabilities and responsibilities, which limit an entity's ability (Henderson, 1999) to successfully strategise, gain competitive advantage, and earn superior economic rents (Pretorius and Holtzhauzen, 2008). Also, liabilities are preconditions, (for example, a dysfunctional culture, inherited consequence of bad decisions, misleading data), that act as obstacles to effective leadership (Pretorius, 2009:37) and successful strategy implementation. In addition liabilities are situational deficiencies inherited from previous decision-making in the venture and are often referred to as 'past decision baggage', and they originate from the Resource Based View (Thornhill & Amit, 2003:500). The evolution of the liabilities theory, definitions of related terms to liabilities and implication for strategy implementation, will be fully addressed in Chapter 3.

1.2.3.4 Strategy implementation liabilities

As previously indicated, the liabilities theory (the negative factors ledger) is one area that has been under addressed as the majority of researchers are interested in the positive factors. Business people, consultants, including academics are mainly drawn to success impeding factors (Arend, 2004:1006) such as barriers and obstacles to effective strategy implementation, rather than inability, hindrance, embedded causes of failure, poor performance and non-success elements such as Strategy Implementation Liabilities. Organisations have analysed success factors of strategy implementation in order to imitate, apply and better understand them, with the sole purpose of benefiting from this new knowledge in the various fields. Having considered the definitions of strategy implementation and liabilities, the definition of *Strategy Implementation Liabilities* is postulated as dynamic and complex inabilities, hindrances, unfavourable conditions, embedded within strategy choices of organisations which is a source of great worry and stress, causing inconveniences and experienced at strategy execution level, and which frustrate gains to economic rent. Strategy Implementation Liabilities should be identified, isolated and removed or mitigated from beneficial processes of strategy implementation to avoid having organisations experience inefficiencies, non optimal processes, and systems which would inhibit their best performance thus deterring them from making beneficial changes in the competitive environment.

The definition of the phenomena of Strategy Implementation Liabilities will be fully dealt with in the literature review in Chapter 3.

In this study:

- *Liabilities* are defined as retained destructive holdings, processes and negative influencers experienced by organisations, which impair their abilities to gain economic rents.

- *Strategy Implementation Liabilities* are the negative influencers, hindrances, unfavourable conditions embedded within an organisation's strategy implementation, causing great worry and inconvenience at strategy execution, which also frustrate organisations' efforts towards achieving its objectives.

1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM

According to Chimhanzi (2004), poor implementation is and has from time immemorial, been a matter of grave concern to organisations and this has been reiterated by other writers (e.g. Barksdale & Darden, 1971; Felton, 1959), with Churchman (1975) labelling it ‘the implementation problem’. The concern is that research interest in strategy implementation is fuelled not so much by the anticipated positive link between implementation effectiveness and enhanced business performance, but rather, more directly by such research which consistently reports a general incompetence on the part of businesses at implementation strategies such that the competitive advantages to be conferred via implementation capabilities are not being realised (Chimhanzi, 2004). However, for strategy to be effective, it should be based on competitive advantage (David, 2013, Porter, 1985, Pearce & Robinson, 2009). Authors, academics and practitioners advance a range of reasons from various perspectives for the existence of the *implementation (performance) gap.*

Even though scholars are not in agreement on defining it, they share the same sentiment that overall, strategy implementation remains a challenge and a non-success story (Alexander, 1985; Cocks, 2010; Mankins & Steele, 2005; Sandy, 1991; Jooste & Fourie, 2009; Schaap, 2012; Dimwoodie, Quinn & Mc Guire, 2014; Evan, 2012; Tait & Nienaber, 2010; Van de Merwe, 2013; Chatain, 2014; Aboutalebi, 2016b; Aboutalebi, 2016).

Unfortunately, organisations, business people, consultants, and academics researching on implementing strategy are only concerned with the success factors of strategy implementation and in the process disregard the *negative factors*, therefore most research undertaken consists of those success factors considered as essential for both the *organisational level* and the *organisational types*.

There is an imperative need for organisations to also address the *negative influencers* referred to as Strategy Implementation Liabilities on organisational performance to properly evaluate strategy implementation. Organisations are failing because they retain many *destructive holdings* and *processes* and that by organisations only examining the positive influences at strategy implementation on their performance, they will not address all the possible explanations. The research problem is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

Since strategy implementation is still ill understood, approached from various viewpoints and the typical approach of most researchers in investigating implementation is to enhance implementation prospects and neglect the negative side which potentially might provide answers to the implementation gap and most problems, this study therefore seeks to garner greater understanding and insight into the liabilities encountered at strategy implementation by answering the following research questions:

- Primarily: How can the liabilities approach and insights gained through its views enhance strategy implementation?
- Secondarily: Are there alternative views on the implementation of strategy forthcoming from the liabilities theory to address the strategy implementation gap?

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to:

- Better understand and gain new/alternative insight into the liabilities, (*negative influences, destructive holdings* and *processes*), encountered at strategy implementation since those are regarded as the weakest link and to fix these through the liabilities approach while also gaining a better understanding of their interrelationships.
- Identify liabilities experienced at implementation and 'describe' how the liabilities approach and its insight(s) could address the strategy implementation gap.

This may enable us to determine why organisations experience non-success or low levels of achievement at implementation, and therefore improve on our conception of the implementation phenomena.

The primary intention of this study is to specifically determine:

- if organisations are aware that they experience 'negative influencers', 'destructive holdings' (liabilities) that detract them from optimal performance during strategy implementation.
- strategies to avert, remove or mitigate these liabilities from business beneficial processes to achieve success in strategy implementation.

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

What follows is a presentation and discussion of the primary and secondary research objectives of the study.

1.5.1 Primary objectives

The primary objective of the study is to 'identify liabilities experienced at implementation and describe how the liabilities approach and its insight(s) could address the strategy implementation gap'.

1.5.2 Secondary objectives

1.5.2.1 Identify and describe negative influencers, destructive holdings and, processes *labelled* as *Strategy Implementation Liabilities (SILs)* and encountered at strategy implementation, causing the implementation gap.

1.5.2.2 Undertake an in-depth case examination of the origins of these negative influencers, destructive holdings and, processes with the aim to mitigate their impact.

1.5.2.3 Determine the effects of these liabilities on strategy implementation success.

1.5.2.4 Develop a theoretical framework for the management of SILS.

1.5.2.5 Understand the potential effects of moderators and mediators.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is a master plan specifying the methods and procedures for collecting and analysing the needed information (Zikmund, 2003:65). According to Cooper & Schindler (2011) research design is defined as:

- The blue print for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data.
- An aid to the researcher in the allocation of limited resources by posing crucial choices of methodology.
- An expression of the structure of the research problem, theoretical framework, organisation, or configuration of the relationships among variables of a study,

and the plan of investigation used to obtain empirical evidence on those relationships.

The design of this study consists both of the literature review and the empirical study. The literature review was approached from the *interpretivist paradigm*. This paradigm favours to interact and to have a dialogue with the phenomenon studied (Wayhumi, 2012; Gray, 014b). Preference was to work with *qualitative data*, which provided rich descriptions of social constructs (Creswell, 2012). The aim of the literature review was to explore secondary data sources, (books and academic journals) on strategy implementation, to obtain an important background on SILs and strategy implementation, which enabled the investigation of both phenomena. The literature review enabled the determination of the research purpose, research design and provided important clues about the research design including the substance, which was assessed (Berry & Otleg, 2004; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009).

The strategy pursued entailed Yin's (2004) *Case Study Method* of enquiry, using narrative research. Included in this research study, are the mixed method analysis techniques (combining qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis procedures), multiple triangulation, multiple paradigms and perspectives, and the narrative enquiry as the study lens. A total of 200 Narrative Capture Questionnaires were administered on employees of Water Utilities Corporation (WUC) in Botswana categorised as, 30 Top Management (Chief Executive Officer [CEO], Chief Financial Officer [CFO], Chief Operations Officer [COO] and General Managers); Senior Management totalling 74 (Engineers, Heads of Departments, Other Professionals); and Middle Management totalling 68 (Middle Managers, Supervisors and staff) at head office and branches countrywide. The case organisation WUC has been discussed in detail in section 6.5.4.3 page 51.

In-depth interviews subsequently followed, the purpose of which was to elicit experiences and narratives/stories of the interviewees on strategy implementation and to determine whether insights gained from the liabilities approach might address the gap experienced at implementation. To bring all the participants on board, the interviewer in his introduction of himself explained the aim of the study, and briefly presented the Strategy Implementation Liabilities (SILs) Framework followed by discussions.

Figure 11.1 explicitly detail the research design which was undertaken in this study. Saunders, et al's., (2009) conception of "research onion" has been used in exploring the research design and methodology for this study. The research philosophy must be defined, the appropriate research approach is determined, the research strategy is adopted, the research choices are made, the time horizon is specified, and the data collection and analysis methodology are identified. The research onion creates the phase for systematically aligning all the decision pertaining to how the study must be taken simulatenously articulating the necessary thought process that must be covered in developing a research study on how to address the strategy implementation gap with a liabilities approach. Literature reviewed, narrative data obtained through narrative, questionnaires, research purpose and questions highlighted, development of measurement questions, research strategy planning, planning of indepth interviews, development of narrative capture questions, data collection, presentation of findings, analysis, discussions and conclusions.

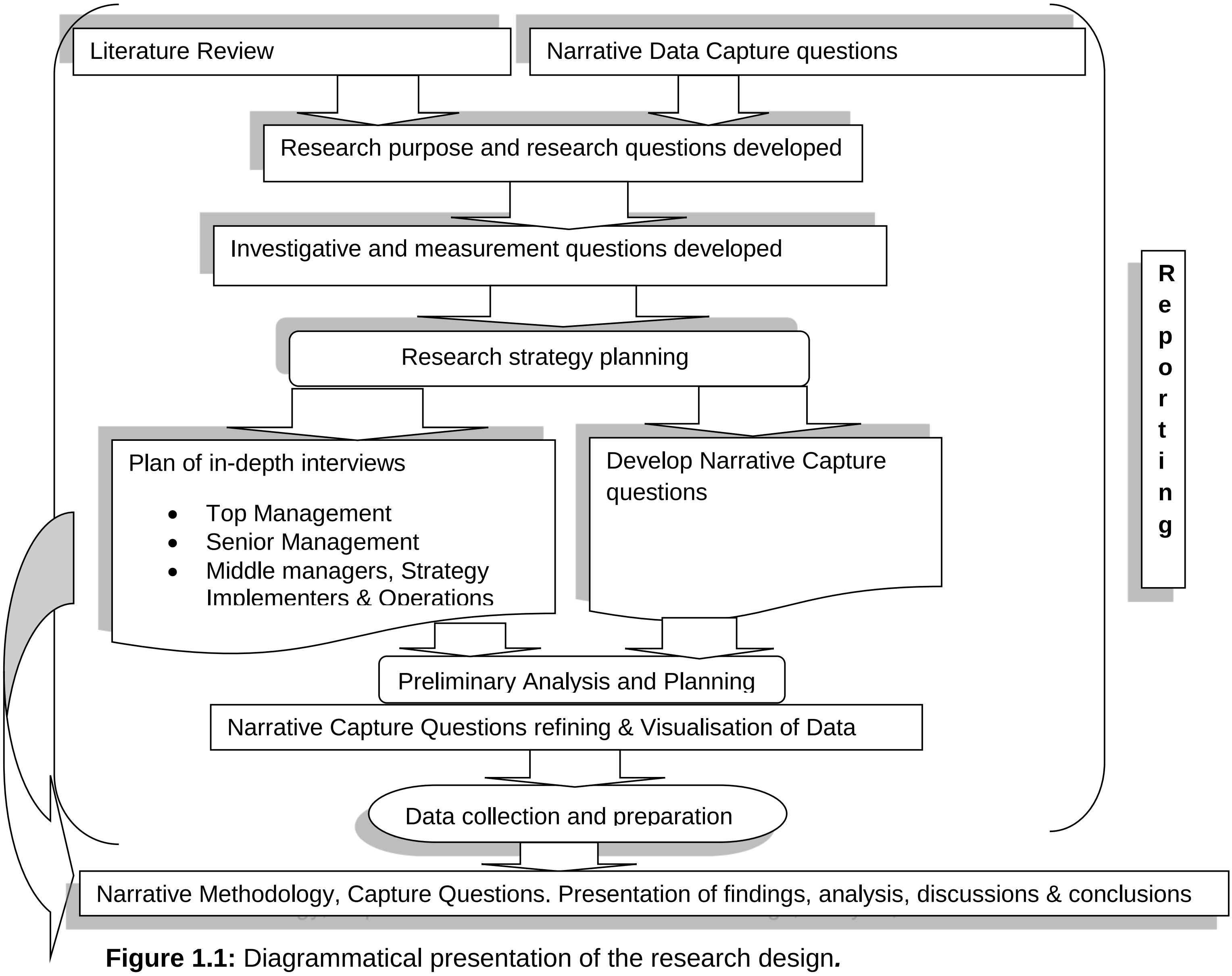

Figure 1.1: Diagrammatical presentation of the research design***.***

Source: Own compilation from literature review

1.6.1 Sample selection and population

A sample population was selected from an essential services organisation (WUC) tasked with the provision of water and sewage services in the country. The Case organisation in this study was chosen using non-probability purposive/convenience sampling according to pre-determined reasons (Noy, 2008). The purposive/convenience sampling was used specifically to facilitate the extraction of rich and vivid data on the basis of the participants' matched criteria in order to answer the research questions asked (Bloor & Wood, 2006; Saunders et al, 2007:230).

The participating case organisation was specifically selected because for some previous 2-3 years, Botswana, the country where the study was undertaken, had experienced challenges with water provision, emanating from a long spell of drought that resulted in the drying up of some dams that were major sources. Official and informal links proved to be favourable thus yielded referrals for the case organisation to be studied. In some instances, strategically positioned managers within the Strategy Department, who directly influenced strategy implementation, were used as referrals. Once top management had granted authorisation and access, the participants at the head and branch offices were identified through a system of referral known as snowballing or networking (Bryman, 2012), for them to share their narratives. In spite of this seemingly arbitrary selection of the case organisation, interviewees and respondents were still purposefully measured against sample selection criteria for inclusion in the study. In most cases, the sensitivity of the information to be studied seemed to make participants hesitant to talk to the researcher (Wahyuni, 2012-73).

1.6.2 Importance and benefits of the study

This case study research is a synthesis of an enormous 'body of knowledge' in literature, theories, models, and an array of analytical tools uncovered by various research initiatives of scholars. The plethora of literature in the field of strategy implementation which was uncovered through the literature survey of secondary data accessed in the existing academic journals, is an indication that indeed very little of the issues of paramount importance have been exploited to the benefit of most organisations in strategy implementation. Opportunities to explore the liabilities approach, which has so far been neglected, though with the potential to address numerous strategy implementation challenges faced by organisations, exist and this could be an area of priority for future research in strategic management.

Processes of strategy formulation and implementation could be better enhanced through an understanding of the strategy implementation liabilities, which are complex phenomena. The liabilities approach is an opportunity to build on the tenets of strategy implementation and presents a potential to develop a strategy implementation liabilities framework, which would assist strategy practitioners and managers to mitigate existing implementation liabilities. Business people, consultants, and academics would be drawn to failure factors on strategy implementation, which will enable them to probe influencing factors to address causes of low implementation and failure. People would now investigate and analyse these failure factors in order to apply and understand them, so that they do not only profit from the new knowledge in their respective fields, but also expand the liabilities research arena.

There is an imperative need for the WUC and other organisations to address the *negative influencers* referred to as Strategy Implementation Liabilities on organisational performance so as to properly evaluate strategy implementation because, organisations are failing since they retain many *destructive holdings* and *processes.* Through the liabilities approach, issues such as: inherited consequences of bad decisions, embedded causes of failure, dysfunctional culture, and unavailability of credible data, organisational access and integrity to make decisions would greatly be enhanced in the implementation of their strategic choices.

Chapter 2: ***Strategy Implementation*** ***50***

Chapter 3: ***Liabilities Theory*** ***100***

Chapter 4: S*trategy-as-practice* ***164***

Chapter 5: ***Moderating and mediating factors as concepts*** ***186***

Chapter 6: ***Research design and methodology*** ***199***

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Chapter 8: ***Research analysis & discussions*** ***295***

Chapter 9: ***Research conclusions*** ***377***

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Figure 1. 2: Chapters Outline

Chapter 2: Strategy Implementation ***Page 56***

This chapter outlines and explains the cornerstone of the continuing debate on failure of strategies. Numerous studies acknowledges that failure of strategy is not because of inadequate strategy formulation but because of insufficient/ failure at implementation. Various views are explored, discussed with the view to make sense of what really impedes strategy implementation. Important theoretical contributions both literature related and emperical studies were presented.

Chapter 3: The Liabilities Theory ***Page 116***

Chapter outlines and describes the most important theoretical approaches to the liabilities theory which has the potential to address the strategy implementation gap. The most important tenets of the theory are discussed with its evolution and ultimate relevance to strategic management.

Chapter 4: Strategy-as-practice ***Page 180***

This chapter outlines and describes studies in the strategising process. The interest of the study, and research methods are defined mainly with the lens of sociology- in that researchers should go beyond studying, and seriously start to consider people in organisations and what they actually do.

Chapter 5: Moderating and mediating factors on implementation ***Page 202***

The focus of this chapter is to identify factors influencing strategy implementation which are a cause of hindrances, obstruction and a liability. The most important aspect in this chapter pertains to setting out strategies on how to mitigate these influences.

Chapter 6: Research design and methodology ***Page 216***

The research problem, objectives, purpose and importance are highlighted. The research design, methodology implored in the study, data collection and data analysis are discussed.

Chapter 7: Research findings ***Page 244***

Themes and patterns are established. Findings indicate the existence of strategy implementation liabilities which impede organisational performance in curtailing economic rents.

Chapter 8: Research Analysis & Discussions ***Page 287***

Analysis of triad and dyads data, the identification of a set of liabilities; Strategy Implementation Liabilities (SILs). Findings and analysis enabled identification of emerging themes and patterns.

Chapter 9: Research conclusions ***Page 321***

This last chapter summarises the study and its findings. Research objectives, themes and patterns are reflected on, study limitations are discussed; the study's contribution to science, identification of areas for further research is undertaken.

Figure 1.3: Chapter descriptions

1.7 REFERENCING

The Harvard style of referencing has been used in this study research.

CHAPTER 2: STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The origins of the strategic management discipline can be traced back to the 1950s and 1960s (Ghemawat, 2002). Amongst the most influential contributors to developing the discipline were Peter Drucker (1939), Philip Selznick (1957), Alfred Chandler (1922), Igor Ansoff (1965), and Bruce Henderson (1974). The discipline emanates from earlier thinking on 'strategy', dating back thousands of years. Before the 1960s, the term 'strategy' was primarily used to address issues of war and politics and not business (Kiechel, 2010). Many of the organisations outside the war and politics contexts which set up strategic planning functions to craft and execute their strategy formulation and implementation process did so during the 1960s (Mintzberg, 1994). Hence the birth of strategic management was geared towards answering the fundamental question of how firms achieve sustainable competitive advantage. To this end, and in a bid to answer this question, strategic management has developed concepts and theories which examine the environment with a focus inside the organisation, in the process constructing ideas and methodological advances that follow and attempting to predict management practices resultant transformation (Herrman, 2005:111).

Chapter 2 covers a wide array of issues; some of which includes; the evolution of strategy implementation, showing the position occupied by this concept within the field of strategic management. The Ten Schools of Thought Model that led to the evolution of modern strategic management perceptions is presented with the historic account on the definition of strategy covering the differenct perceptions on the definition of strategy. This is followed by the definition of strategy implementation by advancing varied perspectives, with a summary depicting the literature reviewed on strategy implementation.

2.2 STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Strategic management "is a process that includes all commitments, decisions and actions required for a firm to develop competitive advantage and earn above average returns" (Ireland & Hitt, 1997:846). The discipline has two parts: 'strategic planning', which is the skills capacity of an organisation to convert its plans into reality and secondly; *strategic thinking* as the skilfulness of a firm in managing its own internal resistance to change (Ansoff, 1965). *Strategic planning* is an organisational process of defining its strategy or direction, and making directions for allocating its resources to pursue this strategy. This process extends to control mechanisms for guiding the implementation of strategy (Argenti, 1968). *Strategic thinking* on the other hand entails the generation and application of unique business insights and opportunities geared to create competitive advantage for an organisation (Abraham, 2005). Overall, strategic management entails the two critical and major processes of *formulation* and *implementation* of the major goals set and initiatives taken by the company's top management on behalf of owners, which finds its basis, consideration of resources and an assessment of both the internal and external environment in the organisations' competitive arena (Hambrick & Chen, 2007; Mintzberg & Quinn, 1996). The *formulation* of strategy is basically an analysis of the environment in which the organisation operates, thereafter creating a series of strategic choices about the way the organisation will compete. *Implementation* constitutes the second major process of strategic management, which involves decisions concerning how the organisations' resources will be aligned and mobilised towards the desired objectives. Implementation culminates in the arrangement of how the organisation's resources are structured, for example, products and services, leadership arrangements, communication channels, incentive packages, and monitoring mechanisms, which are pertinent to keep track of the progress towards objectives. According to Chaffee (1985) the elements of strategic management consist of both the conceptual and the analytical processes, performed at the corporate strategy and individual business level which may be planned (intended strategy) or unplanned (emergent strategy), incorporating both strategy formulation processes and strategy implementation content. Provision of direction is crucial, as the processes are fluid, flexible and at times complex, where changes creates novel combinations of circumstances.

The current paradigms of strategic management signal the need for new strategy implementation paradigms. The arguments advanced are that the concepts and theories of 'implementation liabilities' developed by researchers in strategic management, allow us to understand the pertinent directions for the field. These directions suggest the urgent need to develop liabilities frameworks that will both help organisations to cope with complexity in strategy implementation and assist scholars guide their numerous research streams.

Research in strategic management initially developed the idea of strategy, which culminated into formulation and implementation then went further and intensively examined the effect of the environment of the strategy on organisations. Later, scholars in strategic management renewed their attention to resources and core competencies, which opened up to other streams of research (Herrman, 2005). The advancement of strategic management culminated in the traditional division of the field into *content* and *process* research.

Researchers in *content* study the 'what' of the outcomes, positions, scope of organisations, and methods of competing, whilst *process* researchers focus on 'how' the systems and processes of organisations lead to those outcomes. Ultimately the *content* and *process* research in unison complement one another to generate and strengthen the foundations of strategic management. The evolution of strategic management as traced back to the early 1960's had *strategic adaptation* as the main concept, and emphasis originally and mainly on the development of case studies. Rumelt, Schendel & Teece (1994) maintain that researchers during that era preferred ideas of the contingent design better than the universalistic principles of administration.

Several authors had earlier made a contribution to the field through management theories. March & Simon (1958) advocated for advancement in the information-processing metaphor for management; Burns & Stalker (1961) advocated for the contrasting of organic and mechanistic types of management organisations with the description of how organisations undertake decisions (Cyert & March, 1963). Contributions of scholars such as Woodward (1965) resulted in the idea of contingency theory, which explained that organisations were dependent on environmental uncertainty and that the relevance of different strategies depended on the competitive setting of business. Today's strategists have developed numerous concepts and techniques to facilitate strategy formulation.

Over the last 20 years, consultants, academics and researchers have introduced a variety of powerful and pragmatic tools for strategy formulation, such as industry and competitor analysis portfolio, models, product life cycle theory, and internal strength and weakness analysis, all of which have genuine widespread use (Hambrick & Cannella, 1998). When successfully implemented, the well formulated strategies produce superior performance for the firm (Bonoma, 1984). Regardless, researchers interested in the area of strategy implementation face a formidable challenge due to the general lack of research on which to base new efforts. A review of literature reveals few formal descriptions of strategy implementation (Noble, 1999). Actually, the widespread inability to implement strategy may be a sign that accepted approaches to strategy formulation are not as good as many think they are, for a well conceived strategy is one that is implementable. This further suggests that, implementation must be considered during the formulation process, not later when it may be too late. A tendency to treat formulation and implementation as two separate phases is at the root of many failed strategies (Hambrick and Cannella, 1999). An attempt has been made above to outline an account on how strategic management evolved, as well as what the current thoughts on strategy implementation are, that being a topical issue in the field, and then the term strategy was defined.

The 'Ten Schools of Thought Model' from Mintzberg (1991) is the framework that led to the evolution of modern strategic management perceptions and can be used to categorise strategic management according to different stages of development.

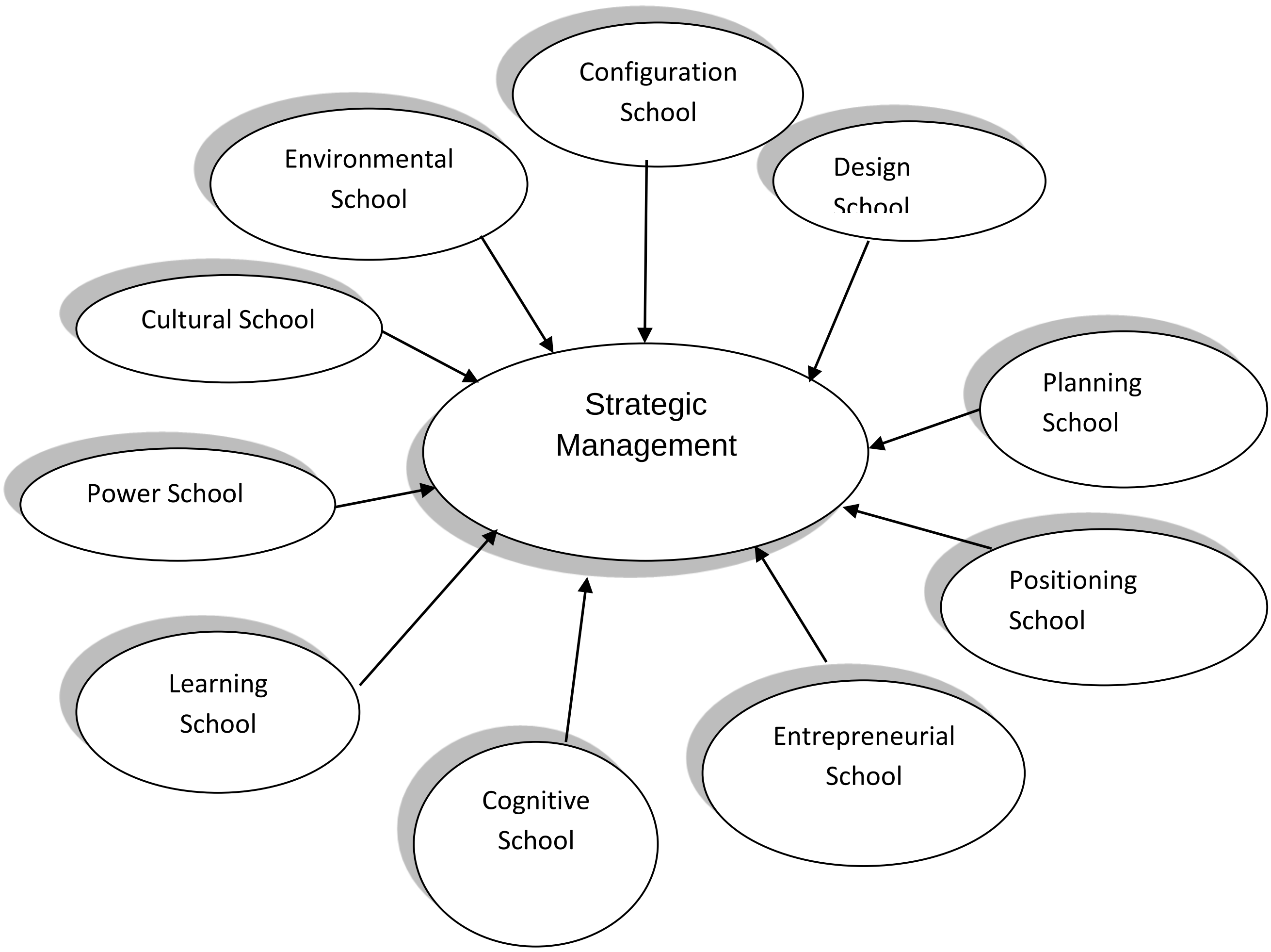


Figure 2.1: Ten Schools of Thought Model **Source:** Mintzberg, Ahltrand & Lampel (1998)

Figure 2.1 depicts the 'Ten Schools of Thought Model' and according to Mintzberg et al., (1998) these schools were conceptualised at different stages of the development of strategy management. These schools are briefly described below:

1. *The Design School* - strategy functions as a process of *conception* and the school of thought views strategy formation as achieving the essential fit between internal strengths and weaknesses and external threats and opportunities.
2. *The Planning School* - strategy functions as a *formal* process. Though it was predominantly alive in the mid 1970's, it faltered in the 1980's, but continues to be an important influence.

3. *The Positioning School* - strategy functions as an *analytical* process. The school represent the dominant view of strategy formulation in the 1980's. Michael Porter in 1980 gave it an impetus in his work on strategic positioning of academia and consulting.

4. *The Entrepreneurial School* - strategy function as a *visionary* process centering on the Chief Executive Officer as "The strategist". The metaphor used to project perspectives, visions, positions, and the CEO's intuition is the key in organisational success.

5. *The Cognitive School* - strategy functions as a *mental* process. Emphasis on research has grown steadily on cognitive biases in strategy making and on cognition as information processing.

6. *The Learning School* - strategy functions as an *emergent* process. The school challenged the first three schools as being prescriptive and focused on earlier work of 'incrementalism', concepts like 'venturing', 'emergent strategy', and 'enhancing strategy' to develop.

7. *The Power School* - strategy functions as a process of *negotiation*. It focused on strategy making into 'micro power' (development of strategies within the organisation as essentially political) and 'macro power' (taking the organisation as an entity that uses its power over others and among its partners in alliances).

8. *The Cultural School* - strategy functions as a *collective* process. The focus is on common interest and integration, and strategy formulation is viewed as a social process rooted in culture.

9. *The Environmental School* - strategy functions as a *reactive* process. The emphasis is on theories such as the 'contingent theory' that consider the responses expected of organisations that face particular environment conditions.

10. *The Configuration School* - strategy functions as a process of transformation. This school of thought presently enjoys the most extensive and integrative literature and practices. Organisation is seen as a configuration; coherent clusters of characteristics and behaviours.

Even though there are criticisms levelled against some of these schools, such as Ansoff's (1991) criticism of the Design School, the emergence of these schools has greatly influenced strategic management; practitioners read and are influenced by the literature in as much as the literature is influenced by the practice. As Mintzberg et al., (1998) observe, a few have peaked and declined, others are now developing.

2.3 A HISTORIC ACCOUNT ON THE DEFINITION OF STRATEGY

The word ‘strategy’ derives from the Greek ‘strategia’, which refers to ‘office of general, command, and generalship’. During the Byzantine times, it was commonly used in military terms to define a set of ideas implemented by military organisations to pursue desired strategic goals, or to mean the planning and execution of the context between groups of armed adversaries (Hambrick & Chen, 2007; Mintzberg, 1994). Military strategy therefore deals with the planning and conduct of campaigns, the movement and disposition of forces, and the deception of the enemy. The principles of military strategy emerged at least as far back as 500BC in the works of Sun Tzu (Sun Zi – Sun Wu - Changqing) who authored ‘The Art of War’ an extremely ancient Chinese book on military strategy. The campaigns of Alexander the Great, Chandragupta Maurya, Hannibal, Qin Shi Huang demonstrated strategic planning and movement (Hill, 2012). Hence the use of the concept ‘strategy’ during the 18th century (Ghemawat, 2002), was in the narrowed sense of the ‘art of the general’, and arrangement of troops (Hill, 2012).

The term strategy does not have a global homogeneous meaning (Bourgeois, 1980; Gluck, Kaufman, & Walleck, 1982; Glueck, 1980; Hatten, 1979; Hofer & Schendel, 1978; Lenz, 1980b; Rumelt, 1979; Spender, 1979; Steiner, 1979). Hambrick (1983) maintains that this inconsistency could be attributed to two factors: a) strategy as being multidimensional and, b) that strategy must be situational and will accordingly vary by industry. There is however agreement in that the basic premise of thinking about strategy concerns the inseparability of organisation and environment (Biggadike, 1981; Lenz1980a).

According to Chaffee (1985:89) researchers and practitioners have made use of the term strategy ad-lib to the extent that they even measured it for decades, there has been no controversy around the question of its existence, nor the nature of its anchoring concept. Therefore, everyone agrees that there is no consensus on the definition of the term. Table 2.1 shows the different perspectives on the definition of strategy and all allude to a foresighted conceptualisation for giving an organisation a winning advantage, be it in the military sense, game view or organisational context.

Table 2.1: Different perspectives on the definition of strategy

(i) Strategy is the determination of the basic long-term goals of an enterprise, and the adoption of courses of action and the allocation of resources necessary for carrying out these goals (Chandler, 1962).

(ii) Strategy is a categorizing scheme by which incoming stimuli can be ordered and dispatched (Mintzberg, 1987).

(iii) Strategy classified into Five Ps; strategy as plan (directed course of action to achieve *intended* set of goals), strategy as ploy (specific manoeuvre intended to outwit a competitor), strategy as pattern (consistent pattern of past behaviour, with strategy *realised* over time rather than planned or *intended*), strategy as position (locating brands, products, or companies within the market, based on the conceptual framework of consumers or other stakeholders: a strategy determined primarily by factors outside the firm and strategy as perspective (executing strategy based on a " theory of the business" or natural extension of the mind-set or ideological perspective of the organisation) (Mintzberg, 2001).

(iv) Broad formula for how a business is going to compete, what its goals should be, and what policies will be needed to carry out these goals (Porter, 1980).

(v) Strategy is about building sustainable competitive advantage that in turn creates above-average financial performance (Becker & Huselid, 2007).

(vi) Strategy has been practiced whenever an advantage was gained by planning the sequence and timing of the deployment of resources while simultaneously taking into account the probable capabilities and behaviour of competition. (Gluck, Kaufman & Walleck, 1980).

(vii) Three models of strategy; linear strategy (a planned determination of goals, initiatives, and allocation of resources), adaptive strategy (organisational goals and activities are primarily concerned with adaptation to the environment), interpretive strategy (orienting metaphors constructed for the purpose of conceptualising and guiding individual attitudes or organisational participants) (Chaffee, 1985).

(viii) Strategies have two essential characteristics: they are made in advance of the actions to which they apply, and they are developed consciously and purposefully (Mintzberg, 2001)

(ix) In the military sense, it is concerned with "drafting the plan of war… shaping the individual campaigns and, deciding on the individual engagements" (Howard & Paret, 1976:177).

(x) An integrated and coordinated set of commitments, decisions, and actions designed to exploit the firm's core competencies in a particular setting (Hitt, Ireland, & Hoskisson, 1997)

(xi) In Game theory, strategy is "a complete plan: a plan which specifies what choices, the player will make in every possible situation" (Newmann & Morgenstern, 1944:79).

Source: Own Compilation

Strategy is used to deal with turbulent changes in the organisational environment and as change brings improvements to the conditions of organisations, the aorta of strategy remains “unstructured, unprogrammed, non-routine, and non-repetitive” (Mason & Mitroff, 1981; Mazzolini, 1981; Miles & Cameron, 1982; Narayanan & Fahey, 1982; Van Cauwenbergh & Cool, 1982). Researchers who analyse the strategy construct agree that the study of strategy includes both actions taken, strategy content and the processes of undertaking actions and implementation decisions. Consensus exists that “intended, emergent, and realized strategies” would always differ from one another (Mintzberg, 2001). Besides having the corporate strategy (line of business preferred) and business strategy (competition plans), there is agreement that the crafting of strategy is both a conceptual and an analytical exercise. Early strategies included the strategy of annihilation, exhaustion, attrition warfare, scorched earth action, blockade, guerrilla campaign, deception, and feint (Kiechel, 2010). Mintzberg (1988:105) asserts that “human nature insists on a definition for every concept. The field of strategic management cannot afford to rely on a single definition of strategy, indeed the world has long been used implicitly in different ways even if it has traditionally been defined formally in one”

Organisations undergo a strategy process such as depicted by Figure 2.2 below in their effort to implement their strategy choices and thereby fulfil their organisational objectives. The values of an organisation represent the objectives it intends to achieve; the organisation would have to make deliberate strategy choices (intentionally formulated by management to address a problem or exploit opportunities which have presented themselves) and some strategies could be emergent from changes presenting in the markets, new legislation, competition, and shareholders. Once decisions are made in terms of:

- the strategy (ies) to pursue,
- investment in new products and services,
- processes and acquisitions, and
- the requisite resources allocated, there arises the need for the portfolio management according to: the multiple processes involved, different contexts, and intended and emergent strategies. Through effective and efficient management of the deliberate and emergent strategies with sufficient resources, an attainment of the desired strategy becomes a reality.

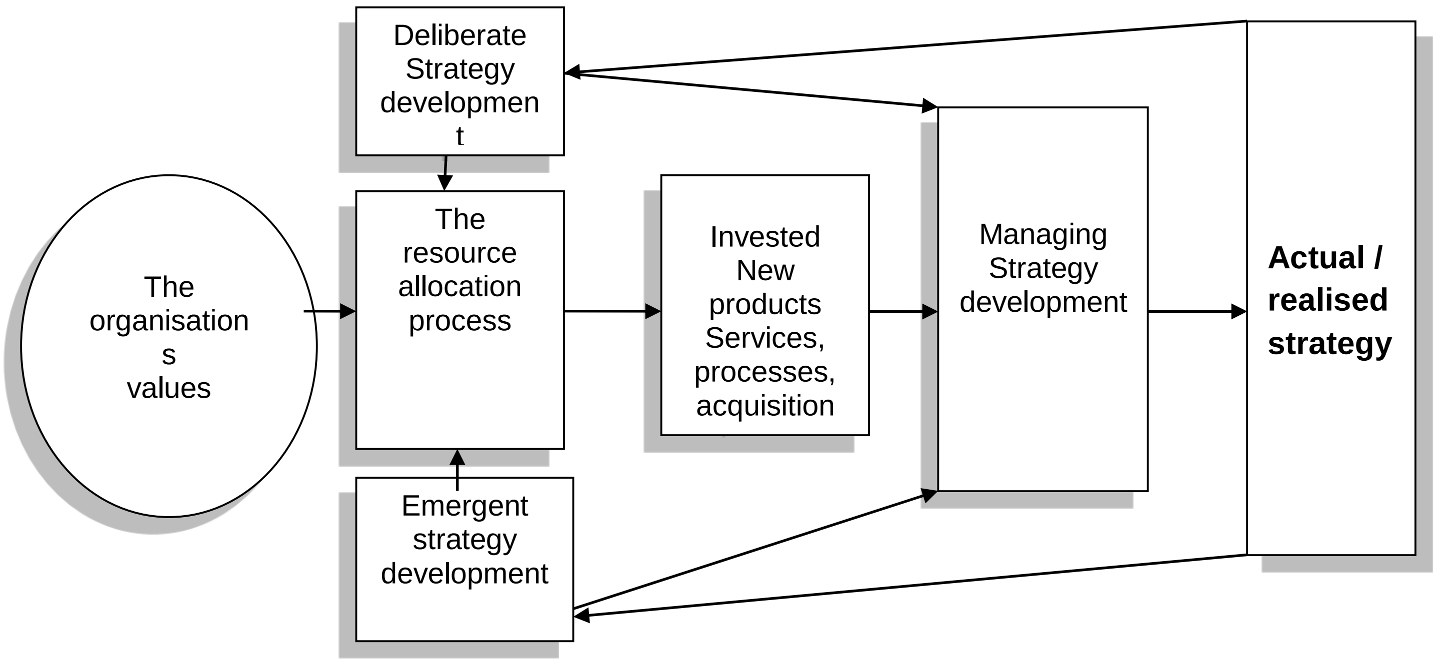


Figure 2.2: Strategy process-definition and implementation **Source**: Adapted from Christensen & Raynor (2003, 612)

The deliberate strategy development illustrated in Figure 2.2, entails strategic leadership, vision and command; strategic planning, and externally imposed strategies. Emergent strategy development consists of logical incrementalism, whereby the strategy develop through experimentation and learning, accommodating the political processes, prior decisions, and organisational systems. Managing strategy development concerns issues of multiple processes; different contexts, and managing both the intended and emergent strategy. The model adapted from Christensen & Raynor (2003, 2612) fairly assist in the strategy process of definition and implementation of strategy in organisations.

2.4 DEFINITION OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

In defining 'strategy implementation' Hitt, Ireland & Hoskisson (1997) differentiate between *formulating* and *implementing* decisions. The former explicates the organisation's intentions, whilst the latter seeks to depict the relativity of an organisation's intentions to the accomplishment of its mission, and objectives. Even though there is no globally accepted definition of 'strategy implementation', Li et al., (2008:04) postulate that there are three distinct and identifiable definitions of strategy implementation.

According to them the first is informed by a *process perspective* and takes strategy implementation as a sequence of carefully planned consecutive steps. Then the *behaviour* *perspective,* which considers strategy implementation as a series of more concerted actions and they interrogate them accordingly. The third perspective combines the *process* and the *behaviour perspectives* into a *hybrid perspective*. Despite the various definitions of strategy articulated in section 2.3, there is great uniformity, as several of the definitions emphasise the imperative role of top management, with only a few emphasising the environment external to implementation. Somehow none of these definitions make mention of the employees (non-managerial) and their vital role in their bid to ensure strategy success.

Table 2.2 spell out the various perspectives pertaining to strategy implementation. The perspectives presented highlight issues of decision making in operations and resource allocation, organisational structure, activities performed by employees, conversion of plans into action, dynamic, iterative and complex process, comprising a series of activities by managers and employees. Ultimately, implementation describes the concrete measures that translate strategic intent into actions that produce results. Implementation is operations oriented. Studies undertaken have indicated that strategy implementation is an essential challenge for today's organisations. According to Li et al., (2008:03) there are numerous *soft, hard* and *mixed factors* that influence the success of strategy implementation, and there are people who communicate or implement the strategy within the systems or mechanisms in place for coordination and control. An analysis of the existing research on the factors that influence strategy implementation could clarify the understanding and importance of these factors for successful strategy implementation.

Table 2.2: Perspectives on strategy implementation

Author	**Perspectives on Implementation**
Laffan (1983)	During the implementation phase, a policy decision must be spelled out in operational detail and resources allocated among programs.
Hrebiniak and Joyce (1984)	Implementation is a series of interventions concerning organisational structure, key personal actions, and control systems designed to control performance to desired ends.
Kotter (1984)	Implementation is the process that turns plans into action assignments and ensures that such assignments are executed in a manner that accomplishes the plans' stated goals.
Bonoma (1984)	Implementation is turning the drawing board strategy into market place reality.

Aaker (1988)	The implementation stage involves converting strategic alternatives into an operating plan.
Cespedes (1991)	Implementation refers to the “how – to-do-it” aspects of marketing. Implementation deals with organisational issues, with the development of specific marketing programs, and with the execution of programs in the field.
Floyd and Woolridge(1992a)	Implementation is the managerial interventions that align organisational action with strategic intervention.
Li et al (2008)	Strategy implementation is a dynamic, iterative and complex process, which comprises a series of decisions and activities by managers and employees – affected by a number of inter-related internal and external factors – to turn strategic plans into reality in order to achieve strategic objectives.
Thompson & Strickland (2003)	Strategy implementing/strategy execution task is that part of strategic management which is the most complicated and time-consuming.
Steiner (2011)	Strategy implementation is the translation of a chosen strategy into organisation action so as to achieve strategy goals and objectives. The manner in which an organisation forges towards competitive advantage and a better performance.
Pierce & Robinson, (2010)	It is a process of allocating resources to support the chosen strategies such as managerial activities including matters such as motivation, compensation, management, appraisal, and control processes.

Source: Own Compilation

Figure 2.3 depicts key success factors and distinctive competencies of strategy implementation as espoused within the Basic Design Model by Mintzberg, Ahlstrand & Lampel (1998). The environment is appraised internally and externally, with threats, opportunities, strengths and weaknesses (SWOT) of the organisation assessed. In creating strategy, societal responsibility and managerial values are important. Evaluation and choice of strategy follows ultimately with the implementation of strategy.

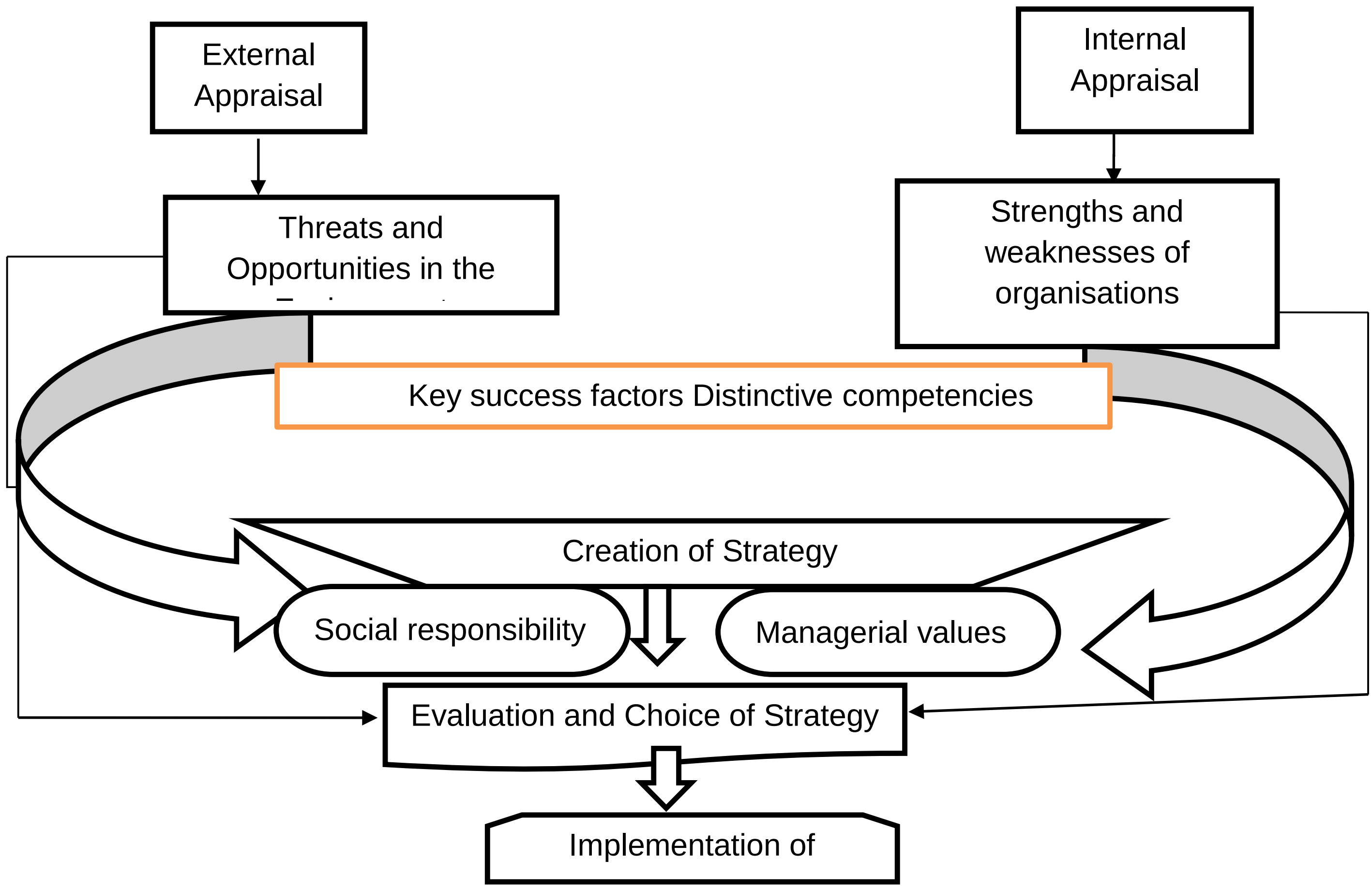


Figure 2.3: Basic design school model **Source:** Mintzberg, Ahlstrand & Lampel (1998)

The origins of strategy and the processes leading to its implementation may be traced back to the works of Alfred Chandler's (1962) Strategy and Structure and Philip Selznick's (1957) Leadership in Administration. With reference to Figure 2.3 and according to Mintzberg et al., (1998) the seven premises of the 'Design Schools' provide an alternative framework to describe the process of strategy formulation up to implementation and those are explained as follows:

Premise 1 – strategy formulation should be a controlled conscious process of thought;
Premise 2 – the responsibility for that action rests with the CEO as "The Strategist";
Premise 3 – the model of formulation must be kept simple and informal;
Premise 4 - strategies should be unique; best are a result of process of creative design;
Premise 5 - fully formulated strategies emerge from this design process; Premise 6 - these strategies should be explicit and, if possible, kept simple; and
Premise 6 - only the unique, full blown, explicit and simple strategies can be implemented.

Figure 2.4 graphically details the various approaches and views on strategy implementation. In tendering explanations, constructs are defined, findings are highlighted, their relevance identified and the way forward is mapped.

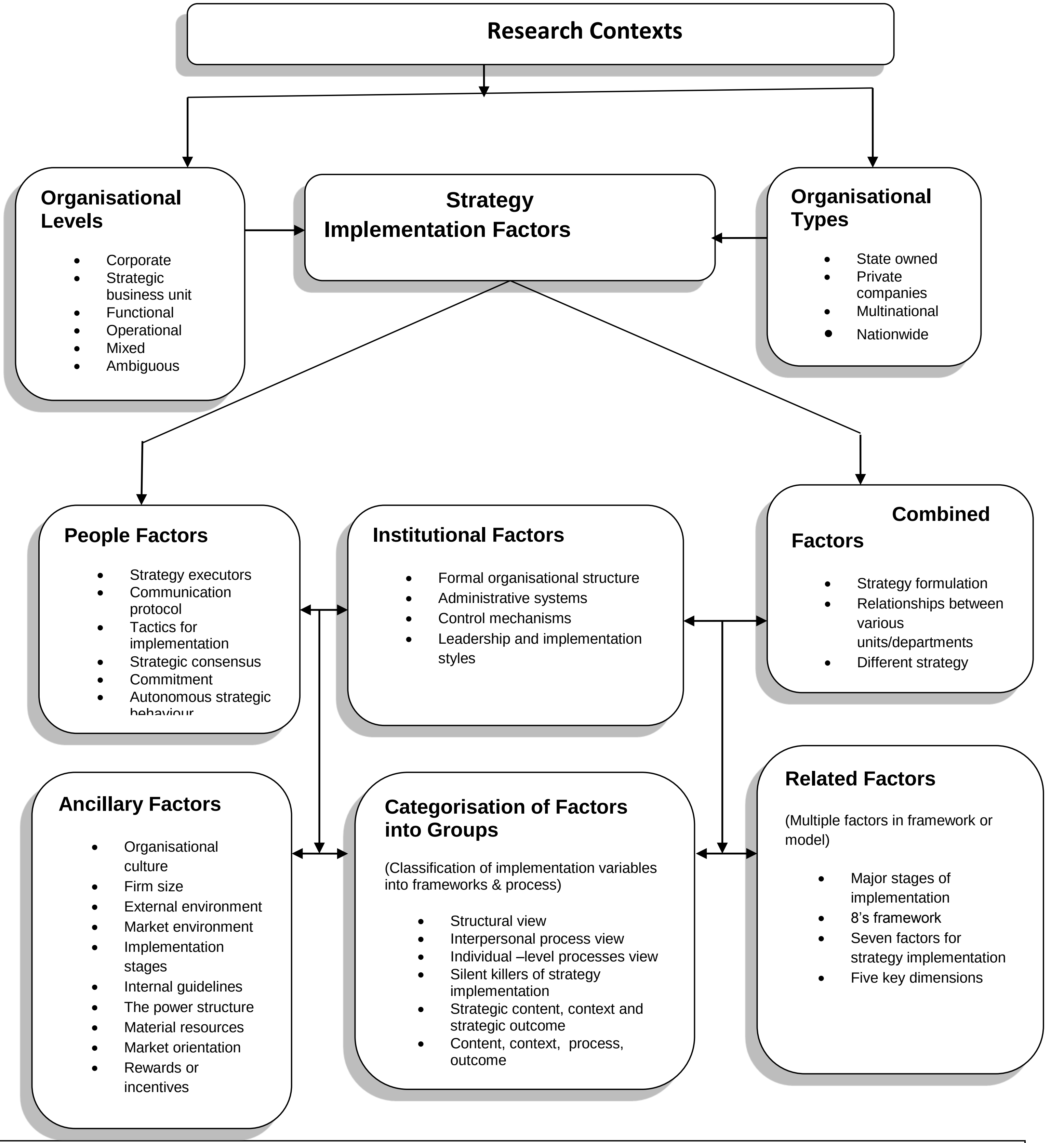


Figure 2.4: Trail Framework on Strategy Implementation Research **Source:** Literature review

2.5 DIVERGENCES ON STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION PERSPECTIVES

Figure 2.4 details the journey of debate into strategy implementation research undertaken so far. The ultimate purpose of this endeavour is to better understand and gain insights into how strategy implementation can be made a success in organisations. An investigation of the literature was undertaken to assess the possible and available options of addressing the strategy implementation gap with a liabilities approach. This journey highlighted areas of debate regarding the routes to be followed.

At the apex of the proposed model is Figure 2.4, the research contexts consist of the following two dimensions (Li et al., 2008:07):

a) *Organisational levels* - studies focus on functional strategies, such as human resources, research & development, marketing and corporate strategies. The *organisational levels* have various sub-levels including the ‘corporate’, ‘strategic business unit’, ‘functional’, ‘operational’, ‘mixed’, and the last one, the ambiguous level which is considered to be non-strategic.

b) *Organisational types* - focus on the kind of organisation studied, in terms of whether it is privately owned or government owned, and specify its operations for whether the operating scope is regional or multinational.

Li et al.’s, (2008:07) findings in their research on strategy environment indicate two types of strategy implementation studies: those clearly indicating the crucial nature of *individual factors* and those making enormous emphasis of how the *individual factors* interrelate and shape a *strategic implementation environment.*

- Within the existing studies of strategy implementation environment.
- Strategy implementation factors result from the *individual factors and the interrelated internal and external factors.*
- The factors are further analysed in terms of People Factors, Institutional Factors, Combined Factors, Ancillary factors, Categorisation of Factors into Groups, Multiple Factors and Related Factors.

2.5.1 Organisational levels perspective

The organisational levels perspective has at least, the already highlighted 6 sub-level strategies including: the corporate, strategic business units, functional, operational, and mixed and the ambiguous sub-levels. The main findings on these studies were discussed and compared with similar studies and their contribution to strategy implementation highlighted.

2.5.1.1 Corporate levels strategies

The proponents for corporate level strategies suggest that organisations should concentrate on reaching a consensus concerning means (competitive strategies) rather than ends when formulating strategies for single mission enterprises, further postulating that firm performance is a necessary ingredient to strategy implementation (Bourgeois, 1980). Corporate strategy consensus according to De Woot, Heyvaert & Martou (1977:78) is an agreement on the means for innovation activities and long-term profitability at the corporate apex of the organisation. Study findings confirm that a firm's performance is not explained by the number of innovations made, but by its capacity for combining technical progress with corporate strategy and efficient decision-making.

Wernham (1985) & Schmidt & Brauer (2006) focused on the strategy implementation at the corporate level strategies. Sandy (1991) presents eight common breakdowns between strategy planning and implementation: a) underestimating the voice of the customer; b) information not being organised for action; c) the process of reaching conclusions not involving the right people; d) fragmented piecemeal, or insufficient solutions; e) no champions; f) few reasons to take on that task; g) people counted on not clear on how to succeed; and h) nobody keeping score. These common breakdowns between strategy planning and implementation might be contributing to the strategy implementation gap. By addressing these breakdowns, guidelines for a successful implementation from the perspective of the practitioner might be developed.

2.5.1.2 Strategic Business Units (SBU) levels strategies

The many researchers who examined the SBU level strategies include Gupta & Govindarajan, 1984; White, 1986; Govindarajan, 1988, 1989; Govindarajan & Fisher, 1990; Skivington & Daft, 1991; Roth & Schweiger & Morrison, 1991; Floyd & Wood lridge, 19992b; Waldersee & Sheather, 1996; Nilsson & Rapp, 1999; Chimhanzi & Morgan, 2005; Polson & Slate & Hult, 2005; Schaap, 2006; and Brenes & Mena &

Molina, 2007. Gupta & Govindarajan (1984) studied the managerial characteristics, Strategic Business Units strategy, and effectiveness at implementation. They suggest that SBU should, in general, have General Managers who portray great marketing and sales experience, greater willingness to take risks, and high tolerance for ambiguity.

2.5.1.3 Functional levels strategies

Some of the studies which focused on the implementation of functional level strategies were done by: Rapert, Lynch & Suter (1996); Sashittal & Wilemon (1960); Piercy (1998); Noble (1999a); Noble & Mokwa (1999); Chimhanzi (2004); Qi (2005); and Viseras, Baines & Sweeney (2005). Some of these studies mainly focused on the 'marketing strategy' (e.g. Sashittal & Wilemon, 1960; Piercy, 1998; Noble & Mokwa, 1999; Chimhanzi, 2004). The studies dedicated to investigating functional strategies are therefore few. Regarding the aspect of manufacturing strategies, the studies focused mainly on the key success factors for the implementation of strategic manufacturing initiatives in the project management. According to Fidler & Johnson (1984), the decision makers' ability to implement innovations at lower levels in the organisation is crucial to organisational success. They observe that the interaction of characteristics such as risk and complexity may cause resistance in organisations, while structural characteristics such as communication cost, types of power and, communication channels can be used by decision makers to overcome the resistance. As a result of these findings, a series of propositions were developed to explore the use of communication tactics to reduce the risk and complexity that inhibit the successful implementation of many new innovations within the organisation. Bonoma & Crittenden (1988) proposed a taxonomy relating structural variables and managerial skills to key issues in implementing marketing strategies. Their taxonomy raises several important issues related to implementation success, which highlight the intertwined nature of strategy and implementation. According to Stagner (1969) managerial cohesiveness, formality, centralisation, satisfaction with process and profitability are essential aspects of strategy implementation success. Findings confirm that there is positive correlation between executive satisfaction on the decision making process and profitability, and further found three important dimensions of decision making process: managerial cohesiveness, formal procedures in decision making, and centralisation-decentralisation.

2.5.1.4 Operational levels strategies

There are a few studies which focused on the actual operational level of strategy implementation such as those done by Bantel (1997); and Homburg, Krohmer & Workman (2004). Bantel (1997) analyses the effects of two key aspects of product strategy (product leadership and product/market focus) on performance, and on two aspects of strategic implementation (stakeholder input and employee empowerment). The study emphasises the relationship between product strategy and several strategic implementation variables. According to Homburg, Krohmer & Workman (2004) market orientation plays a key role for the successful implementation of a premium product differentiation (PPD) strategy. Floyd and Woolridge (1992) examined an approach to implementation that focuses on the level of strategic understanding and commitment shared by managers within the organisation. They went on to describe a technique named consensus mapping as useful for identifying implementation gaps within an organisation and identified some techniques for closing those gaps. Whitney and Smith (1983) maintain that the product manager and strategic planner cohesiveness level and attitude polarisation and knowledge about the strategic plan are the key to strategy implementation and that cohesiveness can result in greater polarisation, thereby impeding the successful implementation of strategy.

2.5.1.5 Mixed levels strategies

These are studies that do fit into any of the four categories explained above. These studies comprise, for example, either ‘both the corporate and SBU level strategy’, ‘corporate, SBU and functional’ or ‘corporate, business, functional and process strategies’. Gupta (1987), Beer & Eisenstat (2000) and Hrebiniak (2006) have undertaken research studies on ‘corporate and SBU level strategy’, whilst Walker & Ruekert (1987) analysed the three levels combination of ‘corporate, SBU and functional’ strategy. Higgins’s (2005) focus was on the corporate, business, functional, and process types of strategies. Process strategies normally cut across the organisation in order to make them more effective and efficient. Studies undertaken by Slater & Olson (2001) analysed marketing’s contribution to the implementation of business strategy. Included under these studies is the focus on the role of project management for strategy implementation. Okumus (2001) examined the implementation of a yield management project and a key client management project in two hotels. Similarly, Peng & Litteljohn (2001) investigated three hotel chains implementing a strategic initiative on yield management. An examination of the synergies among project management and strategy implementation and reviewed strategy tools may help in project management (Grundy, 1998)

2.5.1.6 Ambiguous levels strategies

Here, the scope of the studies is not very explicit or specific as to how they relate to strategic levels. Such include studies by, Bourgeois III & Brodwin (1984), Nutt (1986, 1987, & 1989), Noble (1999b), Lehner (2004), Higgins (2005), Harrington (2006), and Schaap (2006). Bourgeois III & Brodwin (1984) considered a five-process model (commander, change, collaborative, cultural, and crescive) of implementation. Their findings reflect a shift from centralised decision-making for both strategy development and implementation and an increasing blurring of the distinction between "thinkers"' and "'doers''. Attention is drawn to implementation that has traditionally been treated merely as activity following formulation. Their research serves to synthesize advances in the study of implementation, structured around the five models. According to Nutt (1984), implementation prospects improve when the strategy planning process is linked to implementation and when the implementation approach is tailored to fit the internal environment of an organisation. For implementation to be a success organisations might consider a range of implementation techniques and power bases, combined, form appropriate implementation approaches for a variety of planning situations. Nielsen (1983) examined relationships of 'strategic planning and consensus building' with 'external groups and constituencies'. He also discussed the methods for consensus building with external groups during strategic planning and implementation, suggesting that consensus building with external groups will have a positive influence on both strategy development and implementation.

2.5.2 Organisational types perspective

The second research context identified with strategy implementation relates to the organisational types. The types are identified according to their characteristics defined by whether they are: state owned, private, multinational, or national (local) company(s), and strategy implementation research has been undertaken in both state owned and privately owned organisations. From a strategy implementation study by Wernham (1985) in the British Telecom (BT), a United Kingdom nationalised company, factors influencing implementation were found to include: availability of resources of all kinds, top management support, perception of benefits, technical and organisational validity, and history of past implementation attempts. In another study, Alexander (1985) surveyed 93 private sector firms through a questionnaire and the findings indicated that factors associated with successful strategy implementation included: the identification of major problems in and outside of the organisation; time allocated for the completion of the implementation process; and sufficient involvement of people. Several other studies were undertaken in various types of organisations including a national airline; a major financial services firm; a leading packaging goods organisation; a provider of emergency fire and medical services; and a leading firm in the imaging technology industry by Noble (1999a). According to Noble (1999a) the research in some of these companies was mainly on their domestic markets, while other research focused on multinational corporations. Roth, Schweiger & Morrison (1991) and Kim & Mauborgne (1991, 1993) undertook their studies with a focus on the global strategy. Okumus (2001) pursued his research studies at two international hotel groups. The Strategy Implementation Framework he developed was applied on some hotels and findings indicate that the variables identified earlier: environment, strategy formulation, organisational structure, leadership, organisational culture, operational planning, resource allocation, people, communication, control and feedback, outcome and external partner companies were found to be crucial in the implementation process. Forman & Argenti (2005) set out to select five multinational companies as samples, these being Dell, Accenture, FedEx, Sears and Johnson & Johnson. Their studies were considered important in highlighting strategy implementation in state owned corporations, private corporations, local and global (multinational) entities, but studies comparing the similarities and differences could have shed more light in determining whether there are any specific differences which exist in these varied forms of organisation.

2.6 STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION FACTORS

Studies undertaken within the field of strategy implementation fall into the ‘people’, ‘institutional’, ‘combined’ and ‘ancilliary’ factor domains and as the domains interrelate they constitute the ‘strategy implementation environment’. From the wide span of literature review done for implications and potentially valuable insights on strategy implementation, the people–oriented factors or *soft factors* identified were: strategy executors, communication protocol, and tactics for implementation, strategic consensus, commitment, autonomous strategic behaviour, and diffusion. The institutional factors or *hard factors* constitute organisational structure, the administrative systems while the combined factors or *mixed factors* consist of the articulation and development of strategy

2.6.1 People factors perspective

The people factors consist of those effects, positive and negative, found to be important dimensions of strategy implementation affecting people in organisations and the elements of the domain are discussed below.

2.6.1.1. Strategy implementers/executors

There are various groups of people (top management, middle management, lower management and non-management) in the organisation whom we may call individual groups of strategy executors at different hierarchical levels (Li et al., 2008). Top management consists of senior level leaders such as Presidents, Chief Executive officers, Chief Financial Officers and Operations Managers. Middle management consists of operational personnel, while the lower management category is responsible for performing daily routine duties and non-management usually being the support staff. Hrebiniak & Snow, 1992; Smith & Kofron, 1996; Schmit & Brauer, 2006; and Schaap, 2006 have emphasized the effect of top management on strategy implementation and the important figure-head role played by top management in the process of strategy implementation. Schmidt & Brauer (2006) consider the board of directors as one of the key players in strategy implementation and outline the means for assessing a board's effectiveness in guiding strategy execution. Hrebiniak and Snow (1982) indicated that the process of interaction and participation among the top management team typically leads to greater commitment to the firm's goals and strategies. Similarly, Smith & Kofron (1996) confirm that top managers play a critical role not just in the formulation but also in the implementation of strategy.

There are many view-points and approaches regarding the role of middle management and effect on strategy implementation. Personality is the primary determinant of strategy implementation actions and what is critical is the match of strategy and middle manager's leadership style (Gupta & Govindarajan, 1984; Guth & MacMillan, 1986; Govidarajan, 1989; Judge & Stahl, 1995; Heracleous, 2000). The second viewpoint considers as critical, the effect of context on behavior (Waldersee & Sheather, 1996) and the analysis of the impact of relationships between top management and middle management on strategy implementation (Wooldridge & Floyd, 1990, 1997). Very few studies have been undertaken on the impact of lower and non-management, on strategy implementation. Alexander (1985) suggests that the many problems frequently experienced by over half of the corporations include: employees having insufficient capabilities to perform their jobs; inadequate training; and departmental managers providing inadequate leadership and direction. Noble (1999b) maintains that the lack of shared knowledge with the lower level employees creates a barrier to successful implementation. Managerial tactics and leadership styles can play an important part in overcoming the lower level huddles which frustrate implementation efforts. According to Gronroos (1985) organisations must first persuade its employees about the importance of the strategy before turning to customers.

Leaders must engage people throughout their organisations in an honest conversation about their company strategy, the barriers and their underlying causes (Beer & Eisenstat, 2000). Senior managers get lulled into believing that a well-conceived strategy communicated to the organisation equals implementation (Beer & Eisenstat, 1996). According to Govendarajan (1989) the effectiveness of the strategy implementation is at least in part affected by the quality of people involved in the process. Quality in this respect refers to aptitudes, attitudes, skills, capabilities, experiences, and the various other characteristics required of people to perform a specific task or job in a certain position (Peng & Litteljohn, 2001). Following the categorization of 36 key success factors into three research categories of: people, organisation, and systems in the manufacturing industry, Visera, Baines, & Sweeney (2005) indicate that a strategy implementation success is dependent on the human or people side of project management, and less on organisation and system related factors. Accordingly, the findings of Harrington (2006) indicate that a higher total organisational involvement during strategy implementation has positive effects on the level of implementation success, firm profits and the overall firm success.

2.6.1.2 Buy-in in understanding and communication

Numerous researches have emphasised the importance of communication for the process of strategy implementation to succeed (Alexander, 1985; Rapert & Wren, 1998; Peng & Litteljohn, 2001; Heide et al., 2002; Rapert et al., 2002; Forman & Argenti, 2005; and Schaap, 2006). Many strategies in organisations fail because most people believe that only a chosen few elite in the organisation should be concerned, hence insufficient buy-in or understanding of the strategy among those others who need to implement it, an indication that the ‘implementers do not own the strategy’ (Giles, 1991). A strong link exists between organisational commitment, (that is, strong belief in the organisation’s goals and values, willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organisation, and strong desire to maintain membership in the organisation) and employees’ support of the organisation’s strategic plan (Guffey & Nienhaus, 2002).

Rapert & Wren (1998) argue that organisations where employees have easy access to management through open and supportive communication climates tend to out perform those with more restrictive communication environments. Everyone in the organisation should be made to understand the ‘big picture’ to avoid having people simply doing their best by following their instincts to get the job done as best as they can. Failure to communicate and further educate is a huge factor in executing successfully. The findings of Peng & Litteljohn (2001) depict that effective communication is a key requirement for effective strategy implementation.

Heide et al., (2002) opine that organisational communication plays an important role in training and learning as well as in the knowledge dissemination process of strategy implementation. Communication barriers are reported more frequently than any others like organisational structure, learning, personnel management, or cultural barriers. Spore (2004) advocates that good strategic management is a function of people actively considering the strategy as they make day-to-day decisions about the business. They would continually adapt to a changing world and have the involvement of a cross section of management in the strategy choice process. Getting people involved in the creation of the strategic plan is the best thing as they buy-in and feel responsible for it, which ultimately leads to consistent execution. According to Pretorius (2009:39) in sharing the vision through involvement, communication implies that the leader succeeds in transferring the vision to the followers, who then take ownership of it. Followers will pledge buy-in fairly easily but reserve full commitment until such time as legitimacy is confirmed. Failure of buy-in can be averted by effective consensus and commitment of the strategy and its underlying rationale as both are also important, particularly when reaching out beyond the group directly involved in the development of the strategic plan.

2.6.13 Implementation tactics

Implementation tactics are used by managers to respond to needs and opportunities and to revitalize organisations by putting in place, planned changes that alter their organisation's products, services, internal operations, and policies. To be successful, managers must devise tactics that neutralize or at least contain the people who delay making essential commitments, protect turf, posture, or carry out vendettas (Nutt, 1986:230). Researchers who have undertaken research on the effects of implementation tactics on strategy implementation include: Nutt, 1986, 1987, 1989; Bourgeois III & Brodwin, 1984); Lehner, 2004; Sashittal & Wilemon, 1996; Akan, Allen, Helms & Spralls III, 2006). According to Nutt (1986: 242 -251) the four types of implementation tactics used by managers in making planned changes are: *intervention, participation, persuasion*, and *edict*. *Intervention* refers to strategy adjustments during the implementation stage by introducing new norms and practices. *Participation* consists of articulating strategic goals and nominating a task force that develops and proposes corresponding implementation options. *Persuasion* consists of the tactic of using the involved parties to convince employees about the agreed course of actions. The main implementation mechanism in the *edicts* tactics is the issuing of directives. A research on these tactics revealed the following: that the 'interventionist' approach had the best results, the 'persuasion' and 'participation' were the next most effective tactics, and the 'edict' was found to be the least effective.

Another study undertaken by Bourgeois III & Brodwin (1984) examined the five process approaches used to advance strategy implementation. The *Commander Model* is the first and is concerned with the strategic position at the same time guiding the top management in charting the organisations' future and through economic and competitive analyses efficient resource allocation plans might be achieved. The second, *Change Model*, lays emphasis on how the organisational structure, incentive compensation, control systems, and so forth can be used to facilitate the implementation of strategy. Then the *Collaborative Model* entails group decision-making at senior level and involves top management in the formulation process to ensure commitment. The *Cultural Model* endeavors to implement strategy through the use of a corporate culture. Lastly, the *Crescive Model* makes inclinations on managers to develop new opportunities as they see them in the course of their day-to-day management. Lehner (2004) argues that implementation tactics are genuine organisational behaviours and that they are based on the assumption that implementation in general is dependent on the environment, and various strategic and organisational variables. According to Li et al., (2008:22) with these approaches strategy implementation tactics are not viewed as generic recipes for implementation success, but rather as practices that are dependent on the kind of strategy that is implemented. Implementation tactics in themselves are worthless without effective implementers/executors driving the organisation’s strategic choices.

2.6.1.4 Consensus and commitment

Consensus is an important factor in strategy implementation and it is related to decision-making. Strategic consensus is a shared understanding and commitment to a strategic directive between individuals or groups within an organisation. As such Noble (1999) postulates that, the degree to which strategic consensus between managers may influence organisational success towards strategic directives is important. Strategic consensus is also beneficial for the development of a commitment among managers and reduction of uncertainty in the organisation. Negative consensus performance relationship may result in highly complex and uncertain environments. Schwenger et al., (1989) found that groups of middle managers using *dialectical inquiry* and *devil’s advocacy approaches* made significantly higher quality decisions than groups seeking total consensus in the divisions. *Dialectical enquiry* is a form of qualitative research which utilizes the method of dialectics, aiming to discover the truth through examining and interrogating competing ideas, arguments or perspectives. *Devils advocary* is a technique used to improve the quality of decision making in groups, which introduces conflict into the decision making process (Lunenburg, 2012).

A certain amount of diversity of opinions within colleagues may create a healthier environment that produces more effective strategic decisions. However, absolute consensus may result in ‘group think’ and therefore suppress valuable individual opinions (Lunenburg, 2012). Whitney & Smith (1998) maintain that obtaining commitment to a strategic plan at all levels of the organisation may at times be problematic.

Nielson (1983) contends consensus must be achieved from both within and outside the firm in order to successfully implement business strategies. Floyd and Woolridge (1992) define strategic consensus as the agreement among top, middle, and operating-level managers on the fundamental priorities of the organisation and that it can be assessed along both cognitive and emotional dimensions. Cognitively, a lack of consensus is created when managers do not share a common perception of the meaning of strategy. Emotionally, a lack of consensus to act and decide in an agreed upon direction by managers. This then causes employees to put forth efforts that are not always in harmony.Both the cognitive and the affective consensus are necessary for maximised organisational performance. Several studies emphasize middle managers' consensus during strategy formulation and a few notice the important role of consensus in the process of strategy implementation (Nielsen, 1983; Floyd and Wooldridge, 1992a; Dess and Priem, 1995; Rapert et al., 1996; Noble, 1999b; Dooley et al., 2000).

Some scholars treat commitment as a dimension of consensus (Floyd & Wooldridge, 1992a; Noble, 1999a) or an outcome of consensus (Dooley et al., 2000), while some think that strategic commitment involves a deeper intimacy with the strategy (Rapert et al., 1996). There are therefore several inconsistencies pertaining to the definition of commitment and consensus. Strategy implementation initiatives may fail if the strategy does not enjoy support and commitment by the majority of employees and middle management (Li et al., 2008), especially if consultation was not done during the strategy development phase (Heracleous, 2000). Alexander (1985) maintains that obtaining employee commitment and involvement can promote successful strategy implementation. The gulf between strategies conceived by top management and the awareness at lower levels is an 'implementation gap' that can be closed by improving understanding through communication and commitment (Floyd & Woolridge, 1992a).

2.6.1.5 Autonomous strategic behaviours

According to Noble (1999) when strategic consensus does not exist within the firm, organisation members do not operate towards the same goals and objectives. In this environment, managers may with intent and purpose deviate from a management strategic initiative in order to pursue their own desired ends. At times deviation from a strategic institution may be for self-serving purposes such as the protection of personal turf and power bases. These autonomous behaviours could have a profound effect on the success with which a strategic plan is implemented and even on the nature of the strategy that emerges. Geventh & Macmillan (1986) suggested that 'self-interest intervention' on the part of middle managers is likely when their goals and beliefs are not highly congruent with those of senior management. Low personal commitment by middle managers may result in passive compliance, subversive behaviours such as verbal arguments, objecting memos, coalition formation, and a deliberate creation of barriers to implementation or sabotage. An empirical study by Guth & Mac Millan (1986) found that managers who believed that their self-interest was being compromised could redirect a strategy, delay its implementation, reduce the quality of implementation, and even totally sabotage the effort. From another angle, Boroma (1986; 113) views autonomous behaviours as a positive ingredient to strategy implementation, as he asserts that a turbulent business environment requires novel management responses and considers subversives as individuals who challenge old practices and when necessary violate company rules and policy. Such managers have been found to be effective in that they are able to improve under conditions of change and are willing to change long-standing practices, and they tend to be action oriented. Therefore under many conditions a certain amount of autonomous strategic behaviour may be desirable.

2.6.1.6 Diffusion

The 'trickle down' process purports that senior management initiates strategies, which are then communicated through middle management to line workers. At personal level Robertson & Gatignon (1986) suggest that the reputation of the sponsoring senior executive is an important factor in facilitating organisational adoption. Outward thinkers are more apt for early adoption; some organisation members are naturally predisposed to adopt innovation with little hurdles whilst others have to wait for formal directives to adopt (Leonard – Barber & Deschamps, 1988). At the firm level, vertical communication patterns (Fidler & Johnson, 1984; Robertson & Gatignon, 1986), and organisational inertia (Boecker, 1989) may influence the rate of adoption of the new strategies within the organisation.

2.6.1.7 Employees engagement

Employee engagement according to Kahn (1990:894) is defined as "the harnessing of organisation members' selves to their work role: in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances". According to Alfes et al., (2010:05), employee engagement consists of three crucial core facets:

a) 'Intellectual engagement' entailing thinking intimately about the job they perform and devising ways on how to do it better;

b) ‘Effective engagement’ constituting the positive feeling associated with doing a good job; and

c) ‘Social engagement’ as in actively harnessing opportunities to engage on issues related to work improvements collectively. The main thrust of these three aspects of engagement is that through engagement people have a positive feeling about their work, and therefore engaged employees are passionate, in earnest get immersed in their work, are motivated, and are committed. Thus “Engagement has become for practitioners an umbrella concept for capturing the various means by which employers can elicit additional or discretionary effort from employees - a willingness on the part of staff to work beyond contract” (CIPD, 2012:13). In that sense “Managers are attracted to the concept because they like the idea of having engaged employees and dislike the prospect of having disengaged employees” (Guest, 2013:231).

To understand employee engagement, it is important to consider Crawford’s, et al., (2013:59-62) notion of drivers of engagement, which entails the following aspects:

a) Autonomy, constituting the independence, freedom and latitude to which an employee is empowered to perform his/her work. Employees develop a sense of meaningful participation even in decision making which empowers them to consider themselves as shareholders of the business;
b) Opportunities for personal development whereby complex work assignments are assumed and build abilities to advance within the echelons of the organisation;
c) Awarding rewards and recognition of performance with employees being rewarded according to their contribution to the organisation and thereby recognising performance for the potential it has to motivate employees;
d) Variety and diversity requiring that employees should embrace new ways of doing things and should be allowed to experiment on how best to do their work;
e) Job challenges and satisfaction such that that jobs are made more enriching by broadening the scope, with increased responsibility, accountability and authority;
f) Organisational fit by ensuring commonality between what has to be done, skills required and the demands of the environment; and
g) Status of employee performance so that through feedback employees are truly given information pertaining to their performance.

Nienaber & Martins (2016:31) recommend some fundamental guidelines on how best to leverage engagement to benefit strategy implementation. Organisational leadership ought to consider engagement as a driver to enhance strategy implementation. This action must be underpinned by what the organisation intends to achieve (purpose) and the ultimate (long-term) goals and objectives. The purpose to be achieved ought to be driven by the leadership through connecting employees emotionally, underpinned by the importance of recognising the contributions of employees. Of critical importance is ensuring that the work/jobs to be performed are aligned with the organisational goals, as this will visibly guide employees to appreciate their contribution to organisational goals. Lastly, the critical role played by Middle Managers in engagement could be leveraged by ensuring that communication across the organisation is enhanced as this might empower and motivate employees in decision-making processes.

2.6.1.8 Perceived institutional support

Perceived institutional support (PIS) refers to employees' perceptions about how their organisation values their contribution including the way it takes care of their well-being. PIS has been found to be a critical aspect on employee well-being and performance. The thrust of PIS evolved with the realization that if managers (who play a critical role in employee engagement) are concerned with their employees' commitment to the organisation, this encourages employees to get focused on their organisational commitment (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson & Sowa, 1986; Rhodes & Eisenberger, 2002; Shore & Shore, 1995). According to Eisenberger et al., (1986) Organisational Support Theory (OST) proposed that when the organisation is considered to be caring and responsible for its employees and their socio-emotional needs, they develop beliefs in perceived institutional support. PIS is defined as "global beliefs about the extent to which the organisation cares about their welfare and values their contributions" (Eisenberger et al., 1986: 501). In their study "to test the world wide acceptable employee's beliefs concerning support by the organisation, Eisenberger et al., (1986: 501) constructed 36 statements representing the various possible ways to evaluate judgements of the employee". PIS is extrinsically diverse in terms of its nature as it recognizes social and economic exchanges between the employee and the organisation. According to Rhoades & Eisenberger (2002) managers' support, opportunity to develop, working conditions, and rewards are important for PIS to thrive (Wayne, Shores & Liden, 1997), as well as granting of autonomy to schedule and carry out their job (Eisenberger, Rhodes & Cameron, 1999) reciprocated with recognition from top management (Wayne, Shore, Bommer & Tetrick, 2002). Perceived institutional support means rewarding and meeting the socio-emotional needs of employees (Bilgin & Demirer, 2012) and entails mentorship and employee coaching, employee counselling, challenging employee job assignments, protection of employees and, encouraging friendship and role playing between employees (Baranik, Roling & Eby, 2010). PIS is the employees' view of how much the organisation recognizes their effort (Allen et al., 2008). According to Eisenberger et al., (1990) employees are required to find out the extent to which an organisation might reward and recognize their effort, and give priority to their socio-emotional needs, aspects confirmed to be associated with reciprocal employee commitment to the organisation. Rhoades & Eisenberger (2002) examined and concluded the antecedents and consequences of perceived organisational support included: a) fairness in the allocation of resources, b) the magnitude to which the supervisors value the employee effort and, c) the organisational rewards and working conditions which culminate in high organisational commitment, low turnover intentions, increased performance, positive effect, and high job satisfaction.

Eisenberger et al., (1986) maintain that perceived institutional support informs the employees, the organisational support in employee development, recognition of their contribution, and care for their well-being. Employees receive messages, which the organisation views as a strategic resource, and an accumulation over time of favourable treatments makes employees perceive that they are receiving a high level of support from the organisation (Chang & Liao, 2010; Hui, Cao Lou & He, 2014). According to Stamper & Johlke (2013) when organisations provide sufficient support to their employees, they get an acceptable and desirable level of performance in return. This research study, suggests that the presence of PIS that has its focus on employee development, recognition of their contribution, and care for their well-being will create an opportunity for strategy implementation to succeed and thrive

2.6.1.9 Decision making autonomy

For a better understanding, the term 'decision-making autonomy' was analyzed according to the two notions of 'decision-making' and 'autonomy'. The word 'autonomy' originated from the Greek words 'auto' meaning self, and 'nomos' meaning law. Historically 'autonomy' was a political concept defining the right of states to administer their own affairs (Prilandita, Mc Lellan & Tezuka, 2016). Autonomy has since been used to conote dimensions such as the personal autonomy, property of persons, self-determination, self-authorisation, and self-governance. According to (Mrayyan, 2006:166), autonomy refers to a context of authority, responsibility, and accountability, with job autonomy defined as a practice involving a set of practices including the delegation of responsibility down the hierarchy so as to give employees increased decision-making authority in respect to the execution of their primary work tasks (Leach et al., 2003). Autonomy is usually associated with independence and regarded as allowing delegation of power. It is the ability that comes with self-motivation, self-control, self-determination, self-governance, and self-learn; in general people being accountable for their responsibility.

Prilandita, Mc Lellan & Tezuka (2015:3) argue that, “decision making is a very dynamic process in which it is sometimes difficult to distinguish where and how the decision–making process starts or ends”. The common definition of decision-making is a process of identifying and choosing alternatives in order to achieve a certain goal. According to Huber (1980 page), decision-making is defined as the “process through which a course of action is taken”. Decision-making therefore, is understood as a process of making decisions. This is a process which is usually started by identifying problems or goals, and would end after a decision has been made. The decision making process is often regarded as the whole cycle from problem identification up to decision implementation and evaluation, followed by feed-back to problem identification – the generic decision cycle and planning (Prilandita, Mc Lellan & Tezuka, 2016; Montana & Charnov, 2000).

Decision-making autonomy therefore entails the discretion, independence, and freedom availed to employees in arranging their work, as well as determining the necessary processes and procedures for executing it. This acts as a source of motivation and provides a sense of ownership and control over work outcomes (Crawford, Rich, Buckman & Bergeron, 2013:59). According to Prilandita, Mc Lellan & Tezuka (2016:26), autonomous decision-making constitutes a process where decision–makers have the freedom and ability to find problems, select goals, and make decisions for achieving the selected problems/goals by themselves, in a responsible manner and based on available information. Decision-makers are considered an autonomous system or put it in another way, autonomy is a property of each stakeholder who participates in the decision-making process in order to achieve, coupled with freedom to make decisions. Autonomous decision-making considers job autonomy as structural empowerment, through which information, growth opportunities, support, and resources impact the workers' level of control (Kanter, 1993, 1997; Herzberg et al., 1969). Elements within the autonomous decision-making positively affect employees' psychological state, lead to better work conditions, enhance quality of performance, raise levels of work satisfaction and motivation, increase task variability, improve customized care, increase participation in decision-making, all wich result in respectful, supportive supervision and ample advancement opportunities, teamwork and performance based rewards (Wielenga-Meijer et al., 2010).

2.6.2 Institutional factors perpective

These factors are often referred to as *hard factors* and include administrative systems and orgainsational structure of organisations pertinent to strategy implementation.

2.6.2.1 Organisational structure

The second most important issue affecting implementation is the organisational structure (Heide et al., 2002) and this effect can be addressed through a proper strategy and structure alignment for successful implementation (Drazin & Howard, 1984). Strategies often fail because the market conditions they were intended to exploit change before the strategy is fully implemented. Typical of these unanticipated market changes are: shorter product life cycles of products and services; disruptive technologies emerging with greater frequency; and fickle financial markets with many of them experiencing rapid, discontinuous change (Downes, 2001). Technology has the ability to challenge the old rules, regulations and assumptions made on a business and this ultimately creates daunting external obstacles and hindrances associated with execution.

Organisations therefore, should take the time to identify what market conditions have the greatest influence on their strategy. Once they have an understanding of what factors have the greatest impact on their strategy success, they could respond more quickly to emerging changes. Organisations must recognise what they do not know, that is, the 'known unknowns' as stated by Donald Rumsfeld (2002). The use of scenario planning might assist organisations in understanding alternative futures driven by the 'known unknowns'. Organisations can minimise the impact of the 'known unknowns' by changing their strategy or their supporting implementation tactics according to the external environment changes (Sterling, 2003).

According to Gupta (1987) an examination of the relationships between Strategic Business Units (SBU) strategies, aspects of the corporate –SBU relationship, and implementation proved that structures that are more decentralised produce higher levels of SBU effectiveness, regardless of their strategic context. This is echoed by (Schaap, 2006) who maintains that adjusting the organisational structure in line with the strategy pursued will ensure successful strategy implementation. A relevant and clearly developed organisational structure will ensure that there is an effective anticipation of a competitor's reactions to a strategy and therefore a need for a solid competitive intelligence capability (Beer & Eisenstat, 2000). Organisations would need to fully understand competitor's market positions, their relative competitive advantages and disadvantages, and their historical behaviour vis-à-vis competitive advantage. A wide range of training and publications may be specifically designed to improve company capabilities vis-à-vis competitive intelligence (Sterling, 2003). The strategy development process should directly consider potential competitor reactions to a strategy and how an organisation will respond in turn to avert effective competitor response to strategy. Organisations could maintain a basic competitive intelligence capability as a matter of day-to-day strategic management. Challenges pertaining to the *organisational structure* may be mitigated by what (Olson et al., 2005) label as: customer-centric innovators, customer-centric cost controllers, management dominance, and middle ground. All these alternatives would then be matched with specific business strategies in order to identify the combination(s) of structures and behaviours that best serve to facilitate the process of implementing a specific strategy (Li et al., 2008). Challenges on o*rganisational structure* may lead to an organisation loosing focus on specific milestones it intends to achieve if not mitigated.

2.6.2.2 Tradition breaking, organisational kingdoms, and culture

Today's markets are characterised by slogans such as 'the winner takes it all' and it is therefore unfortunate and insufficient for an organisation to consider itself as market–driven where old tradition and organisational kingdoms are still the order of the day. According to Chakravarthy & Lorange (1996) management organisations that still cling to the old traditions do not encapsulate innovative and new ways of creating value and stay stuck with the old conventional ways of doing things. Innovations, experimentation, risk taking are procedurally forbidden and not permissible to those. Amit & Schoemaker (1993) argue that, for survival and sustenance, organisations should focus and sharpen attention on finding business opportunities that are not obvious to everybody else. They should encourage curiosity experimenting, prudent risk-taking, and the joy and excitement of taking on new challenges. Another challenge identified with such organisations is that of 'organisational kingdoms', which refers to situations where departments in an organisation operate as separate and distinct silos/stand-alone entities considering themselves as more important than others, their decisions unquestionable; and as wielding more power and authority than is the case.

The current business landscape consists of flat, project based organisations, but remnants of the traditional 'kingdom creating' are still in existence and rife (Lorange, 1998). The existence of these old traditions and entrenched organisational kingdoms, frustrate and limit the full utilisation of an organisation's potential to create economic rents through effective implementation of its strategic choices. Creating a strategy implementation environment needs a well-ingrained corporate culture within an organisation. Corporate culture may be defined as the collective thoughts and actions of employees that manifest the strategic orientation of the firm. Culture as an internal variable that the firm can control drives strategy, and similarly, changes to strategy are best effected by a change in culture (Dobni, 2003). Middle managers are faced with the mammoth task of dealing with issues such as problem employees, dysfunctional departments, and sloppy practices that include processes that might erode the culture for effective strategy implementation. This may entail at times making very difficult decisions, particularly where there is a need to subordinate the interests of one or a few, or culling problem employees and practices.

For effective implementation, administrative impediments such as tradition breaking (encompassing change), organisational kingdoms (silos) and culture have to be mitigated through a deliberate change management initiative that emphasizes strong vigour and vigilance. Breaking tradition means encouraging flexibility, thriving on constant change, delineating and mobilising task forces for pursuing such opportunities (Wernerfelt, 1984).

2.6.2.3 Administrative systems

According to Govindarajan (1998) few researchers have concentrated their energies on the design of differentiated administrative systems capable of facilitating the implementation of the variety of SBU strategies followed by diversified organisations. Three key administrative mechanisms, which could be enablers that organisations may use to cope with the ever turbulent and uncertain conditions are suggested: a). The design of the organisational structure which should include decentralisation; b) the design of the control systems with more emphasis on budget evaluative style and; c) the recruitment and selection of managers to constitute the locus of control. With the identification of these three aspects, Govindarajan was able to crystallise thus: high managerial internal loss of control and low emphasis on meeting a budget are associated with high performance in SBUs employing a strategy of differentiation. (Govindarajan, 1998)

An alignment of the decentralisation, locus of control, and budget evaluative style led to the meeting of the requirements of SBU strategy exceptional results. Govindarajan & Fisher (1990) maintain that responsible and dedicated leadership characteristics, structural variables, accompanied by control systems have the potential to positively contribute to the effectiveness of the SBUs undertaking low cost and differentiation strategies. Studies by Roth, Scweiger & Morrison (1991) suggest that business units make use of three administrative mechanisms namely: formalisation (undertake ordely deliberate processes), integrating mechanisms (creation of synergy between the various precents) and managerial philosophy (organisational vision and values) with the sole purpose of supporting the internal strategy being implemented.

2.6.2.4 Control mechanisms

Daft & Macintosh (1984) explore the role of formal control systems in strategy implementation. They define organisational control as a three stage cycle including: a) planning a target or standard of performance; b) monitoring or measuring activities designed to reach that target; and c) implementing corrections if targets or standards are not being achieved. Jaworski & Mac Innis (1989) and Jaworski et al., (1993) established that there is a strong relationship between the type of control system in use and a firm's performance. The control system as an implementation effort is critical in decision-making and control systems may need to be flexible in order to evolve as implementation effort unfolds. Studies by Drazin & Howard (1984) and Nilsson & Rapp

(1999) focused on control systems since they are an essential embodiment of administrative systems. Drazin & Howard (1984) discussed the role of formal control systems in the process of strategy implementation. Nilsson & Rapp (1999) in a related study conclude that control systems at management and operational levels are based on varied logics and therefore need to have a different design. Noble (1999b) maintains that the fluidity of a control system positively contributes to the perfection of strategy implementation.

2.6.2.5 Leadership and implementation styles

Noble (1999) maintains the view that the leadership style of senior managers can have a significant effect on implementation elements such as the delegation of authority and decision-making. The management of an implementation process generally requires a driving force in the organisation in order to succeed. In most vibrant organisations, implementation is driven by a change agent normally called ‘champion’ who is generally a high level leader tasked with paving the way for plan adoption by shaping and guiding the planning process. Management tactics and the leadership style can play a critical role in overcoming lower level obstructionism that to some extent is prevalent in many implementation efforts (Nutt, 1986).

According to Bourgeois & Brodwin (1984) there are five general leadership styles in strategy implementation. Each model comprises strategy formulation and implementation as well as general, culture-like characteristics of the firm. The ‘Change Model’ emphasizes how the organisation structure, incentive compensation control systems and the other factors can be used to facilitate the implementation of a new radical strategy. The ‘Commander Model’ is concerned with the strategic position, assist the leadership in charting the organisation into the future and further analysing the competitive and economic plans for resource allocation. The ‘Collaborative Model’ focuses on group decision-making and negotiated outcomes of the firm while the ‘Cultural Model’ suggests that lower level employees can be infused with a strong set of collective values which allow them to participate in the strategic thinking and implementation efforts of the firm. The final, ‘Crescive Model’ suggests that middle managers should be responsible for a great degree of development, championing, and implementing new strategies. The Crescive Model shifts decision-making and implementation authority to lower levels in the organisation.

2.6.3 Combined factors perspective

The process of strategy implementation (development and articulation) consist of both, the soft factors (people-oriented factors) and hard factors institutional factors) and collectively they are all considered as mixed factors.

2.6.3.1 Strategy formulation

Many organisations are unaware that strategies often fail because they are ill conceived. According to Hrebiniak (2006) good execution cannot overcome the shortcomings of a bad strategy or a poor strategic planning effort. Allio (2005) argues that good implementation naturally starts with good strategic input, 'the soup is only as good as the ingredients'. Alexander (1985) postulates that the need to start with a formulated strategy that involves a good idea or concept is most often mentioned in helping to promote successful implementation. Studies in strategy implementation purport that the strategy should be consistent and fitting (Alexander, 1985; Allio, 2005), however, Li, Guohui & Eppler (2008) is of the view that the key question is how the strategy ought to be implemented but not whether it is consistent and fitting. Once ambiguity creeps into strategic plan goals, it leads to confusion and failure in execution. At times it is simply that the organisations have poorly conceived business models. Examples of poorly conceived business models could be business models that are flawed because of the misunderstandings of how demand would be met in the market.

When two or more competing strategies battle each other, for the same resources, the organisation would usually have conflicting priorities, which results in bad strategy, poorly conceived business models, and poor coordination. Pretorius & Holtzhauzen (2008:97) argue that it is easier for a business to respond to operational problems such as inefficiencies, cost relationships, incorrect resource applications, and managerial deficiencies, as there is room to manoeuvre, and the contributing factors are more visible. However, in contrast, strategic causes relate to weak or incorrect positioning in the market, technological changes that govern demand determinants and loss of competitive advantage by the venture. To minimise the liability of bad strategy and poorly conceived business models, middle managers should ensure: a) synergies amongst strategy types and that implementation capabilities exist (Bantel, 1977); b) the procedural justice of strategy formulation process (Kim & Mauborgne, 1991, 1993) is fully undertaken and; c) that the specific cognitive requirements of the strategy implementation process (Singh, 1998) would also influence the implementation outcome. Buy-in in understanding the strategy and communication are the most vital aspects which should be considered at strategy crafting to avert prospects of bad strategy and poorly conceived business models in order to facilitate smooth implementation.

2.6.3.2 Lack of focus

Bad strategy, poorly conceived business models, ineffective organisational structure, and lack of prioritization are the corollary to the need for strategic focus. Most organisations lack focus in terms of what they want to achieve throughout their various strategic choices. The already limited resources are dissipated and priorities are rarely clearly articulated, there is little or no sense of prioritisation, everybody is working to keep the system running without really making positive progress and headway (Sterling, 2003). Obviously not every goal can be a top priority; organisations set themselves for failure by treating them as equal. Organisations lack the energy or focus to take on too many goals at once and thus should develop strategic focus, and set priorities that address the criticality of each goal relative to others, with encouragement as to the degree of simplicity in defining strategy is emphasised. Most shrewd organisations describe their strategy on one page so that it is easy to communicate with the rest of the organisation. Once people's attention has been captured, they get focused and therefore are able to execute (Lorange, 1996).

For focus to be addressed, it must first be appreciated that people can lose focus from time-to-time and how that presents as a challenge in strategy implementation. The emphasis should be on strategy being peoples' work and not just something they do in addition to their work. Symbolic actions are the most important means of reinforcing strategy implementation. These may take various forms such as ceremonies, effective use of language, and stories being told and retold. According to Beer (2002) it is imperative that the company ought to understand its genuine strengths, examine the market place to understand what market positions are unoccupied and focus the company's strategies on bringing its strengths to action in capturing those unoccupied strategic positions. To achieve strategic focus across the organisation the leadership should encourage and foster buy-in in understanding and communication, esprit de corps by and between units/departments and strategy levels.

2.6.3.3 Relationship between units/departments and strategy levels

The relationship between units/departments has been determined as crucial for the effective implementation of strategy and several studies undertaken treat institutional relationships among different units/departments and different strategy levels as a significant factor that affects the outcome of strategy implementation (Walker & Ruekert, 1987; Gupta, 1987; Slater & Olson, 2001: Chimhanzi, 2004; Chimhanzi & Morgan, 2005). According to Walker & Ruekert (1987) business strategy behaviors may be divided into three types: prospectors, differentiated defenders, and low cost defenders. These distinctions between the three find their basis from strategy categories (prospectors, defenders, analysers, reactors) developed by Miles & Snow (1978) and those by Porter (1980), overall cost leadership, differentiation, and focus. Gupta (1987) finds that mutual coordination, incentive systems, and the level of decentralization between a Strategic Business Unit (SBU)'s manager and his/her superior influence SBU effectiveness in strategy implementation. The units seeking to increase: a) market share or trying to pursue differentiation as a competitive strategy, b) its openness in relations and, c) subjectivity in performance assessment have been found to be positively associated with effectiveness (Li et al., 2008:13).

On the one hand, Chimhanzi (2004) asserts that cross unit working relationships play an important role in the successful implementation of marketing decisions and that implementation effectiveness is impacted negatively by conflict and positively by communication and interpersonal relationships. In another study undertaken by Chimhanzi & Morgan (2005), findings indicate that organisations giving much attention to the alignment of marketing and human resources are able to realize greater successes in their strategy implementation and this means that marketing managers have to seek to improve the relationship with their human capital colleagues through joint reward systems and written communication. Slater & Olson (2001) observed that superior performance at the organisational level was achieved when specific marketing strategy types were matched with the four business strategy types of prospectors, analysers, low cost defenders, and differentiated defenders. The relationship between units/departments and strategy levels is vital in that, without harmonization in the relationship between the various units/departments and strategy levels in an organisation the efforts of strategy implementation become worthless as this can be labelled the 'nervous system' of an organisation.

2.6.4 Ancillary factors perspective

The list of factors discussed above cannot be conclusive as there are probably more factors, which affect the implementation of strategy. Some of these factors might not be accorded great prominence in neither analysis nor discussions and research of most academics, as a lot of them may be much difficult to modify or subject to control. We consider these factors to be *Ancillary Factors* as they are similarly very influential and important for the achievement of strategy implementation even though they do not get sufficient prominence in terms of being mentioned and they are not analysed in depth in most research studies. There is also the belief that they are also much harder to control or modify (Li et al., 2008). These factors include *culture* (Heraclous, 2000; Heide, Gronhaug & Johannessen, 2002; Schaap, 2006); *firm size* (Harrington, 2006); the *external environment* (Alexander, 1985); the general *market environment* (Wernham, 1985); the *implementation stages* (Wernham, 1985); *internal guidelines* (Alexander, 1985; Govindarajan & Fisher, 1990; Hrebiniak, 2006); the *power structure* (Hrebiniak, 2006); *material resources* (Wernham, 1985: Alexander, 1985); a company's *market orientation* (Homburg, Krohmer & Workman, 2004); and rewards or *incentives* (Schaap, 2006).

2.7 IMPLEMENTATION VARIABLES

Some studies have categorised implementation variables into the 'organisational context' and 'strategic content' (Pettigrew, 1985; Pettigrew et al., 1992). Implementation variables consist of essential aspects which are necessary to and are preconditions for successful implementation of strategy choices of organisations. Variables can provide further insights into understanding how current and future projects may influence the implementation process of one project, provide ways in which the negative impacts of current and future projects can be overcome, and indicate how lateral integration between these projects can be achieved.

2.7.1 Organisational context variables

Organisational context in the studies indicated above refers to organisational structure, organisational culture, and the environmental context:consisting of uncertainty in general and uncertainty in the task environment, where *process* is concerned with operational planning, resources, people, communication, control and feedback and *strategic outcome (*Okumus, 2001). These studies later became a foundation for studies undertaken by Okumus (2001, 2003) who adapted the organisational context framework by adding three new variables, namely; the *content* (multiple project implementation, strategic decision); the *context* (internal context: organisational structure, organisational culture, organisational learning; external context: environment uncertainty in the general and task environment, the *process* (operational planning, resources allocation, people, communication, monitoring and feedback, external partners) and *outcome* (both intangibles and tangible outcomes of the project) (Li,et al., 2880:28). The strategy implementation framework developed by Okumus (2001) was applied on some hotels and the findings thereafter indicate the earlier identified variables of 'environment', 'strategy formulation', 'organisational structure', 'leadership', 'organisational culture', 'operational planning, 'resource allocation', 'people, 'communication, 'control and feedback', 'outcome, and 'external partner companies' were found to be important for implementation success.

The new implementation framework thus entailed (Li et al., 2008):

a) A 'content variable' that consists of strategic decisions and multiple project(s) implementation;
b) A 'context variable' concerned with the aspects internal to the organisation including organisational structure, organisational culture, and organisational learning, as well as those of the external context pertaining to environmental uncertainty in the general and task environment. Internal context plays a key role in implementing strategic decisions thus Managers should consider the importance of the internal context of organisations in order to create and maintain a receptive context to change;
c) A 'process variable' which is about operational planning, resources allocation, people, communication, monitoring and feedback, and external partners; and
d) An 'outcome variable' which relates to the tangible and intangible outcomes of the project.

Any changes in the strategic 'context variables' was found to have a notable impact on the use and effectiveness of the 'process variables'. Internal context changes created problems of employee engagement, especially where the organisational strategic decisions have not been effectively communicated. Issues of organisational structure, culture, and internal politics had significant impact on implementation. 'Process variables' ought to be utilised in a synergistic way and any problem or inconsistency with one variable influenced the other variables. The 'outcome variable' indicates that there were conflicting views between informants about whether the project had delivered its aims or not. Okumus (2001; 337) suggests that the continuation of all variables working together makes the transformation process possible.

2.7.2 Strategic content variables

According to Okumus (2001:2003) the strategic content variables mainly consisted of the organisational strategic decision and multiple project implementation. Strategic decision pertained to the main thrust of what the organisation was set to achieve, whilst multiple project implementation referred to the capability and ability of the organisation to be able to simultenously undertake various projects.

Findings from the studies show that there was no proper 'fit' between the strategy implemented and the implementation variables relied upon. It was apparent that challenges or inconsistency with one variable would influence another or others leading to low strategy implementation process. This posed a serious challenge in terms of coherence between the relevant implementation variables, especially in dynamic and complex contexts. Ultimately, the total of all the variables linked and working together enable implementation process success. Finally, it was established that the internal context has a major role in the implementation of strategic decisions, and what is desirable is to have a comprehensive overview of the wider context which would provide a clearer view than to focus on the process of implementation alone.

2.8 FRAMEWORKS AND PROCESSES USED IN PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

This section explores the factors that influence research on strategy implementation from a holistic perspective (Li et al., 2008:27), and also how that evolved into various 'frameworks' and 'processes'. Okumus (2003:871) argues that models and frameworks such as the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis, industry structure analysis, and generic strategies have commonly been used for research and by practicing managers in strategy analysis and formulation. There is nevertheless still a lack of consensus on the preferred framework for strategy implementation. Alexander (1991:74) echoes the same sentiments and offers possible reasons for this state of affairs by submitting that:

> "One key reason why implementation fails is that practicing executives, managers and supervisors do not have practical, yet theoretically sound, models to guide their actions during implementation. Without adequate models, they try to implement strategies without a good understanding of a multiple factors that must be addressed, often simultaneously, to make implementation work."

Similarly, Noble (1999b:122) contends that, "to date implementation research has been fairly fragmented due to a lack of clear models on which to build. There is therefore a significant need for detailed and comprehensive conceptual models related to strategy implementation". Okumus (2003: 871) argues that a comprehensive implementation framework has yet to be developed in the strategic management field.

What follows is an overview of previous research into strategy implementation based on 'frameworks' and 'processes'. The strategy implementation framework based on the consultancy work by Waterman, Peters & Phillips (1980) emerges as the most cited. Their argument is that, effective strategy implementation finds its basis on the following seven factors: strategy, structure, staff, style, systems, skills, and subordinate goals. The shortcoming of these factors is that, individually they do not provide clear examples and explanations between themselves, neither is their impact on strategy implementation clear. Waterman et al., (1980) present their own seven factors (strategy formulation, organisational structure, culture, people, communication, control, and outcome) that they claim form a foundation for the development of conceptual frameworks (Stonich, 1982; Hrebiniak & Joyce, 1984; Galbraith & Kazanjian, 1986; and Reed & Buckley, 1988), which nevertheless were never empirically tested. Later, Hrebiniak & Joyce (1984) and Galbraith & Kazanjian (1986) developed framework propositions, which Hambrick & Canella (1989) used on their empirical research project of a multi-business company. The findings of the studies emphasized the role and the importance of communication when implementing strategies. The framework developed by Pettigrew & Whipp (1991) to manage strategic change consists of five factors (environmental assessment, leading change, human resources, linking strategic and operational change, and coherence). Embedded within all these frameworks are specific and deliberate tools calling for the need for change, use of incentives, and rewards.

‘Frameworks’ and ‘processes’ developed by Skivington & Daft (1991) initially comprised sanctions, systems, structure, interactions, and intended strategy, which they used to investigate implementation as it relates to either low-cost and differentiation decisions. Noble (1999b) adapted the work of Skivington & Daft (1991) and reviewed strategy implementation research from a ‘structural view’, focusing on organisational structure and control mechanisms, and from an ‘interpersonal process view’, focusing on strategic consensus, autonomous strategic behaviours, diffusion perspectives, leadership and implementation style, communication and interaction process.

2.8.1 Structural view frameworks and processes

Studies based on structural view research frameworks and processes focus on the formal ‘organisational structure’ and ‘control mechanisms’ of the strategy implementation processes and outcomes.

2.8.1.1 Organisational structure perspective

Proper strategy and structure alignment is a necessary precursor to the successful implementation of new business strategies. Changes in the competitive environment necessitate adjustments to the organisational structure (Drazin & Howard, 1984). Gupta (1987) examined the relationship between strategic business unit (SBU) strategies, aspects of corporate–SBU relationship and implementation and found that structures that are more decentralized produce higher levels of SBU effectiveness regardless of the strategic context.

2.8.1.2 Control mechanisms perspective

Daft and Macintosh (1984) explore the role of formal control systems in strategy implementation. They define organisational control as a three stage cycle including, a) planning a target or standard of performance; b) monitoring or measuring activities designed to reach that target; and c) implementing corrections if targets or standards are not being achieved. Jaworski & Mac Innis (1989) and Jaworski et al., (1993) found that there is a strong relationship between the type of control system in use and a firm’s performance. The control system in an implementation effort is a critical decision and control systems may need to be flexible in order to evolve as implementation effort unfolds.

2.8.2 Interpersonal view frameworks and processes

Interpersonal frameworks and processes are an important part of any strategy implementation effort. The focus here is on aspects of strategic consensus, autonomous strategic behaviours, diffussionary processes, the effects of leaderships and implementation styles, communication and interaction processes.

2.8.2.1 Strategic consensus perspective

The degree of strategic consensus between managers may influence the success with which strategic directives are implemented. Strategic consensus is a shared understanding and commitment to a strategic directive between individuals or groups within an organisation. Strategic consensus is also beneficial for the development of a commitment among managers and reduction of uncertainty in the organisation. Negative consensus will affect performance relationship and ultimately result in highly complex and uncertain environments. Consensus is an important factor in implementation-related decision making. Schwenger et al., (1989) observe that groups of middle managers using ‘dialectical inquiry’ and ‘devil’s advocacy’ approaches made significantly higher quality decisions than groups seeking total consensus in the divisions. A certain amount of diversity of opinions among colleagues may create an environment that produces more effective strategic decisions and which may be healthier. Absolute consensus may inadvertently result in ‘group think’ and therefore suppress valuable individual opinions.

Whitney & Smith (1998) postulate that obtaining commitment to a strategic plan at all levels of the organisation may at times be problematic. For instance, a situation whereby managers are apathetic in response to the planning efforts of upper management may be seen as a threat. Nielson (1983) contends that firms must achieve consensus both from within and from outside the firm in order to successfully implement business strategies. According to Floyd & Woolridge (1992) strategic consensus can be assessed along both cognitive and emotional dimensions. Cognitively, a lack of consensus is created when managers do not share a common perception of the meaning of strategy. Emotionally, a lack of consensus occurs when managers do not act and decide in an agreed upon direction. This then causes individuals to put forth efforts that are not always in harmony. Both the cognitive and affective consensus dimensions are necessary for maximised organisational performance.

2.8.2.2 Autonomous strategic behaviours perspective

According to Noble (1999) when strategic consensus does not exist within the firm organisation members do not operate to achieve the same goals and objectives. In this environment, managers may intentionally deviate from a strategic initiative in order to pursue their own desired ends. At times deviation from a strategic institution may be for self-serving purposes such as the protection of personal turf and power bases.

The autonomous behaviour can have a profound effect on the success with which a strategic plan is implemented and on the nature of the strategy that emerges. Geventh & Macmillan (1986) suggested that ‘self-interest intervention’ on the part of middle managers is very likely when their goals and beliefs are not highly congruent with those of senior management. Low personal commitment by middle managers may result in passive compliance, subversive behaviours such as verbal arguments, objecting memos, coalition formation, the deliberate creation of barriers to implementation, or sabotage. An empirical study by Guth & Mac Millan (1986) revealed that managers who believed that their self-interest was being compromised could redirect a strategy, delay its implementation, reduce the quality of its implementation, and even totally sabotage the effort. On the flipside, Bonoma (1986; 113) argues that autonomous behaviours are at times considered positive. He asserts that a turbulent business environment requires novel management responses and considers subversives as individuals who challenge old practices and when necessary violate company rules and policy in the best interest of the organisation. These managers have been found to be effective in that they are able to improve situations under conditions of change and are often willing to change long-standing practices, while they also tend to be action oriented. Therefore under many conditions a certain amount of autonomous strategic behaviour is desirable.

2.8.2.3 Diffusionary process perspective

The view of ‘trickle down’ process is that senior management initiates strategies, which are then communicated through middle management to line workers. At the personal level the view of Robertson & Gatignon (1986) suggest that the reputation of the sponsoring senior executive is an important factor in facilitating organisational adoption. Outward thinkers are more apt for early adoption; some organisation members are naturally predisposed to adopt an innovation with little hurdles whilst others have to wait for formal directives before they can adopt (Leonard–Barber & Deschamps, 1988). At the firm level, vertical communication patterns (Fidler & Johnson, 1984; Robertson & Gatignon, 1986), and organisational inertia (Boecker, 1989) may influence the rate of adoption of the new strategies within the organisation.

2.8.2.4 Leadership and implementation style

The leadership style of senior managers can have a significant effect on implementation elements such as the delegation of authority and decision-making Noble (1999). The management of an implementation process generally requires a driving force in the organisation in order to succeed. In most vibrant organisations strategy implementation is driven by a designated change agent, normally called the 'champion'; this is generally a high level leader tasked with paving the way for plan adoption by shaping and guiding the planning process. Management tactics and leadership styles can play a critical role in overcoming lower level obstructionism that to some extent is prevalent in many implementation efforts (Nutt, 1986). According to Bourgeois & Brodwin (1984), there are at least five general leadership models in strategy implementation. Each model comprises strategy formulation and implementation as well as general, culture like characteristics of the firm. The 'Commander Model' deals with strategic position of the organisation and its ability to effectively determine its future with prudent management of its resources to achieve its goals.The 'Change Model' emphasizes how the organisation structure, incentive, compensation, control systems and other factors can be used to facilitate the implementation of a new radical strategy. The 'Collaborative Model' focuses on group decision-making and negotiated outcomes of the firm while the 'Cultural Model' suggests that lower level employees can be infused with a strong set of collective values which allow them to participate in the strategic thinking and implementation efforts of the firm. The final, 'Crescive Model' suggests that middle managers should be responsible for a great degree of development, championing, and implementation new strategies. The Crescive Model shifts decision-making and implementation authority to lower levels in the organisation

2.8.2.5 Communication and interaction process perspectives

Vertical and lateral interactions in implementation processes are very important (Hambrick and Cannella, 1989) as they provide guidelines for successful strategy implementation:

- obtaining broad-based inputs and organisational participation at the strategy formulation stage;
- assessing in advance the potential obstacles to implementation;
- making early decision moves in important areas such as resource commitments, organisational structure, and reward mechanisms;
- ‘selling’ the strategy to all affected organisational members, both vertically and laterally and;
- finetuning adjusting, and responding when events and trends arise. Breakdowns in implementation occur when the strategic initiative is not well organised for action, and when necessary information behaviours are not well specified (Sandy, 1991).

Argris (1989) suggests that firms must work actively to eliminate defensive routines if they hope to successfully implement strategy efforts, acknowledging that defensive routines exist in virtually all organisations. Such tendencies stunt the organisational learning, and growth, often leading to perceptual gaps in understanding among organisation members of what needs to be done, which can ultimately hamper implementation efforts.

2.9 INFLUENCE OF INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY ON ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGY DESIGN

Roth, Schweiger & Morrison (1991) empirically examined the importance of an international strategy on organisational strategy design and its influence on the strategy implementation process, drawing from quantitative data collected from 82 business units that were competing in global industries. They identified six influencing factors, which should arguably be considered when designing global or multi-domestic strategies. The six factors are coordination, managerial philosophy, configuration, formalization, centralization, and integrating mechanisms. Their research study suggests that organisational business units use administrative systems to create operational capabilities to support their international strategy choice.

With a proper alignment between strategies, administrative mechanisms, and organisational capabilities during strategy implementation, the achievement of organisational objectives in global and multi-domestic contexts is possible. Yip (1992) proposed a framework for implementing strategy, consisting of four factors, these being: ‘organisational structure’, ‘culture’, ‘people’, and ‘managerial processes’. His argument was that these factors and their individual elements determine the crucial organisational forces that affect a company’s ability to formulate and implement strategies. Hrebiniak (1991) through the incorporation of previous work (Hrebuniak & Joyce, 1984) proposed another conceptual framework to implement strategies in global firms and suggested five new specific implementation factors: ‘leadership’, ‘facilitating global learning’, ‘developing global managers’, ‘having a matrix structure’, and ‘working with external companies’.

There seem to be agreement between the various authors on the congruence between the various factors necessary to facilitate strategy formulation and implementation and that both processes ought to be properly coordinated to achieve implementation success.

Beer & Eisenstat (2000) in their research titled “The Silent Killers of Strategy Implementation and Learning” identified the following six issues that hamper effective global and multi-domestic strategy implementation:

- Unclear strategy and/conflicting priorities;
- An ineffective top management;
- A top down or laissez faire style of the CEO or general manager;
- Poor vertical communication;
- Poor coordination across functions, business or geographic regions; and
- Insufficient leadership skills and non-development of down the line leaders.

The six killers of strategy implementation are further categorised according to ‘quality of direction’, ‘quality of learning’, and ‘quality of implementation’.

2.10 IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

In their study, Beer & Eisenstat (2000) did an in depth examination of 12 profiles from 4 companies; 10 for business units and 2 for corporate; and developed a Strategy Implementation Framework called Organisational Fitness Profiling (OFP). The OFP is an enquiry and action learning method, where a team of senior managers serve as consultants/researchers and co-investigators. This process provides a window for understanding deeply rooted barriers that are common to an array of companies (Beer & Eisenstat, 2002). The methodology applied included at least 4 stages: a) Development of a Statement of Business and Organisational Direction; b) Completion of a broadly validated assessment of the current state of the enterprise; c) Creation of an integrated agenda for action and; d) Development of and mobilisation of the commitment of key managers and stakeholders behind the transformation plan.

According to Beer & Eisenstat (2000) the 'quality of direction' that management provides the rest of the organisation is central and is directly affected by an 'unclear strategy and conflicting priorities', 'ineffective team', and a 'CEO top down or laissez faire leadership style', all of which are interdependent and mutually reinforcing elements. The top team should concentrate on strategy and avoid micro managing the organisation. Poor coordination across functions, business or geographic regions, and insufficient leadership skills and non-development of down-the line-leaders affect the 'quality of implementation'.

Coordination across functions, business units, or regions is essential for a strategy to be well implemented. Poor vertical communication between managers, employees and management creates disengagement which results in lack of sharing of strategic decisions across the communication channels laid out. Inadequate down the line leadership and development prevents organisations from creating innovating teams. With coaching some managers develop into effective team leaders and hence the organisation embraces an organisational learning process.

Beer (2002) maintains that the Organisational Fitness Model (OFM) enables leadership teams to surface out barriers/problems in the organisation that could potentially frustrate the strategy implementation efforts, and make changes that allow the business unit to capitalise on market opportunities it was chartered to exploit. Fitness profiling enables the leadership team to have an honest organisational conversation and clarify their strategy to themselves. Organisational levers needed to implement strategy are changed and these changes affect coordination, commitment, communication, conflict management, and capacity management.

Large organisations implement projects simultaneously and or complementarily. When developing and implementing a project, the potential and actual influence of previous, current and future projects on the intended project should be explored. Additionally, the implications of intended project on the implementation of other existing projects should be evaluated. Okumus (2003) developed a framework consisting of four categories: *strategic content* (includes the development of strategy), *strategic context* (divided into internal and external context). The former includes environmental uncertainty and the latter includes organisational structure, culture and leadership, operational process (includes operational planning, resource allocation, people, communication and control) and outcome (includes results of the implementation process). His findings indicate that, there must be coherence among the implementation factors if the strategy process is to be successful and that there must be harmony among the key implementation factors. The framework will assist managers to follow a holistic approach, which will enable them to evaluate the best implementation options, challenges and enablers and therefore understand the wider implications of the processes of change in their organisation.

The categorisation under *Related Factors* consists of multiple factors in frameworks or models in studies undertaken by (Noble, 1999a; Higgins, 2005; Qi, 2005; Brenes & Mena & Molina, 2007), which seek to group and organise strategy implementation variables in a “web of causal or temporal relationships” (Li et al., 2008). According to Noble (1999a) Strategy Implementation Framework, consist of four main stages: pre-implementation, organising the implementation effort, managing the implementation process, maximising cross-functional performance. For effective and successful strategy implementation, there are four important managerial levers for the identified implementation phases: goals, organisational structure, leadership, communications, and incentives. To ensure the success of the pre-implementation stage, managers should be aware of the organisation strategic goals of the. Through the organisational structure, functional areas should have required slack resources for effective implementation. The leadership should work towards developing employees’ knowledge and appreciation of multiple functional areas. Communication lines should be quite clear and there should be maintenance of regular cross-functional communications to foster understanding and appreciation. Incentives are necessary to reward the development of cross-functional skills to ensure smooth and disruption free implementation.

‘Organising the implementation effort’ entails introducing the goals of the strategy that is being implemented to ensure a match-fit within the organisation’s broader strategic vision. The organisational structure envisaged should include a formal implementation unit and it should be ensured that it is known and visible. Leadership is an important aspect in any implementation effort, and therefore a “champion” has to be appointed with authority over official and cross- functional duties. At this stage, communication is vital to ensure that discussions and resolution of issues of concerns are dispensed with at the earliest possible time. Relevant time and performance-based incentives must be determined at this stage. ‘Managing the implementation processes is the most crucial part of strategy implementation and therefore, there is a need to maintain flexibility and to adapt goals with the understanding that the environment is ever turbulent. The organisational structure has to be flexible and adaptive to ensure equal representation by all those affected by the implementation process. Equal leadership attention is vital to all functional level concerns. Constant feedback and updates to implementation teams and other members of the organisation regarding progress and any changes in objectives is necessary. Frequent assessment of environmental conditions and changes during implementation may necessitate adjustment of incentives.

In ‘maximising cross-functional performance’, there is need to develop and focus on common goals with the view to motivate cross-functional cohesiveness. Normally when strategy implementation starts in many organisations, employees are still expected to continue with the daily routine, which in most cases gives little attention to the implementation project. Noble (1999b) maintains that these key implementation employees have to be temporarily suspended from their normal responsibilities to enable them a focus on the project at hand. Charismatic leadership qualities, coupled with autonomy to perform cross-functional efforts are necessary to install commitment and energy in team members. Communication of implementation progress throughout the whole organisation is key for people to maintain the implementation momentum and foster buy-in. At the end, the main effort concerning incentives would be to establish visible and consistent cross-functional rewards for successful implementation efforts.

According to Higgins's (2005:03) '8 S' framework, strategy implementation comprises:

a) Strategy and purposes - strategies are formulated to achieve organisational purposes and therefore changes in strategic purposes lead to changes in strategy;
b) Structure - organisational structure consist of jobs, the authority to do those jobs, the grouping of jobs in a logical fashion, the manager's span of control, and mechanisms of coordination;
c) re-Sources - those means that should be adequate for an organisation to achieve its strategy. These include staff, technology, and money being the most critical;
d) Shared values - organisational culture; those values shared by members of the organisation that makes it different from other organisations;
e) Style – a consistent pattern of behaviour exhibited by leaders when relating to subordinates and other employees;
f) Staff – the number and types of employees looking at what types of individual and group competencies the firm needs to meet its strategic purposes;
g) Systems and processes - these enable organisations to execute things daily; and
h) Strategic performance - is possessed by an organisation as a whole, or for profit-based parts of the whole.

This heuristic approach enables senior management to craft, monitor, and further assess the cross-functional execution of strategies. Higgins's (2005:03) '8 Ss' of executing strategy is an amendment and revision of Mc Kinsey (cite) '7 Ss' model (structure, style, staff, shared values, skills, system and strategy). The most significant change was in the deletion of skills from the Mc Kinsey model and the addition of re<u>S</u>ources in its place while also adding 'strategic performance' in order to help focus the strategy execution initiative. Higgins (2005:12) indicated in his findings on the '8Ss' of executing strategy that, different strategies required different kinds of structures, systems, style, staffing, resources, and shared values to make them work. Misalignments can and will lead to failure, especially in areas of leadership style and culture; failure to communicate is leadership failure.

2.11 FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

According to Qi (2005) there are seven factors that influence strategy implementation and these are: a) adequate feedback systems, b) sufficient resources, c) good leadership and direction skills, d) motivation for all involved staff, e) communication and coordination, f) an appropriate company structure, and g) an appropriate company culture. Qi (2005:49) asserts that the kinds of support that middle managers need include the provision of sufficient resources, clear instructions, adequate motivation, and effective communications. The kinds of systems that could be put in place to support strategy implementation or organisational change include adequate feedback systems, an appropriate organisational structure, and a culture that encourages and enhances communications between top managers and middle managers. Qi (2005) concludes this research by indicating that there are two main managerial issues which should be addressed: firstly is the issue of cost; top manager’s expectation is that, sufficient support often means investment in human resources, such as setting up training programs, providing motivation to employees financially, meeting all these has cost considerations. Secondly is the issue of time; middle manager’s point of view is that as competition heats up, workloads increase, more time is required to perform assignments and therefore no time is available for staff to undergo training and career progression opportunities dwindle. Therefore, the recommendation is that top managers have to investigate the extent to which demographic characteristics of both top and middle managers affect the level of support received by middle managers in their organisation.

2.12 KEY DIMENSIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Brenes, Mena & Molina (2007) postulate the five key dimensions of successful business strategy implementation, which every organisation should strive for in their efforts to achieve their strategic objectives are the ‘strategy formulation process’, ‘systematic execution’, ‘implementation control and follow-up’, ‘CEO’s leadership and suitable, motivated management and employees’, and, ‘corporate governance’. According to Brenes et al., (2008:591) ‘strategy formulation’ entails mechanisms used by the firm in coming up with a strategy. This includes the extent to which the process has been consciously and formally developed, taking into consideration that the environment, industry and rivals have been surveyed and further that the organisation's internal partners have been involved in order to confirm their commitment to the strategic choice, long term vision, and ensuring effective contribution by all to the strategy implementation. Action taken to implement the predetermined strategy is viewed as 'systematic execution'. Other considerations include the degree to which the organisation has successfully established a priority system of implementation, and has encapsulated other critical implementation components such as organisational culture, structure, and information system. The importance of regular evaluation and control of the implementation progress is vital and hence the 'implementation control and follow-up' mechanisms are necessary. This process comprises performance appraisal systems, monitoring tools, and a periodic culture of control and follow-up. Implementation becomes a complex exercise in the absence of a CEO, as the 'CEO's leadership, and suitable, motivated management and employees are key to building commitment, communication and achieving strategy implementation success. A system of good 'corporate governance' is a prerequisite to successful strategy implementation. (Brenes et al., 2008:591)

Many actions leading and shaping the future require significant investment and therefore all those having interest in the company's prosperity are required to support management in its pursuit of implementing the strategy. The study findings by Brenes, Mena & Molina (2007) and Brenes et al., (2008) indicate the importance of the dimensions of successful strategy implementation The studies provides data to establish the appropriate order of importance for each of the identified components. It confirms that it is hard for companies to alter their performance unless they radically adjust some practices to facilitate the implementation of their strategy choices.

2.13 RESEARCH METHODS FOR EXPLORING STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

The Strategy Implementation Framework developed by Li, (2008:35) was used in the literature reviewed, where various research methods were used to explore strategy implementation, and these comprised of the following:

a) Questionnaire (Gupta & Govindarajan, 1984; Guth & Macmillan, 1986; White, 1986; Gupta, 1987; Govindarajan, 1988, 1989, Govindarajan & Fisher, 1990; Roth & Schweiger & Morrison, 1991; Kim & Mauborgne, 1991, Rapert et al., 1996; Floyd & Wooldridge, 1997; Bantel, 1997; Dooley & Fryxell & Judge, 2000; Slater & Olson, 2001; Rapert & Velliquette & Garretson, 2002; Chimhanzi, 2004; Homburg &Krohmer & Workman Jr, 2004; Viseras, Baines & Sweeney, 2005; Olson, Slater & Hult, 2005; Qi, 2005; Schaap, 2006; Hrebiniak, 2006; Brenes, Mena & Molina, 2007).

b) Questionnaire and /or interviews (Wernham, 1985; Skivington & Daft, 1991; Kim & Mauborgne, 1993, Sashittal & Wilemon, 1996).
c) Questionnaire and interviews (Alexander, 1985; Woolridge & Floyd, 1990; Floyd & Wooldridge, 1993; Shittal & Wilemon, 1996).
d) Conceptual analysis (Guth & Macmillan, 1986; Dess & Priem, 1995; Smith & Kofron, 1996; Heracleous, 2000; Allio, 2005; Schmidt & Brauer, 2006).
e) Case analysis (Nutt, 1986, 1987, 1989; Waldersee & Sheather, 1996, Nilsson & Rapp, 1999; Okumus, 2001; Heide & Gronhaug & Johannessen, 2002; Lehner, 2004, Higgins, 2005).
f) Field investigation (Dess & Priem, 1995, Noble & Mokwa, 1999b; Peng & Litteljohn, 2001; Forman & Argenti, 2005).
g) Other methods such as hypothetical scenario (Bourgeois III & Brodwin, 1984),
h) Literature review (Walker & Ruekert, 1987; Noble, 1999b).
i) A laboratory setting (Singh, 1998).
j) Intervention method comprising of a set of meetings (Beer & Eisenstat, 2000),
k) Archival and records analysis.

The main analytical method used on the studies enumerated above was that the basis was on the research method applied, this being the narrative research where stories of experiences on strategy implementation of participants are collected through a Narrative Capture Questionnaire.

2.14 THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR EXPLORING STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

The various theoretical orientations that have been used in strategy implementation include the: ‘agency theory’ (Govindarajan & Fisher, 1990), ‘organisation theory’ (Govindarajan & Fisher, 1990), ‘psychology theory’ (Kim & Mauborgne, 1991, 1993), ‘social system theory’ (Walker & Ruekert, 1987), ‘social learning theory’ (Govindarajan, 1988), and ‘expectancy theory’ (Guth & Macmillan, 1986; Judge & Stahl, 1995). Although the ‘liabilities theory’ has the potential to facilitate the understanding of and provide more insights into strategy implementation, it appears not to have been explored, yet it could add more knowledge to the current debates and relate the strategy implementation variables to each other in a sufficiently informative way.

According to Li et al., (2008:34-41), strategy implementation lends itself to a multitude of theories that could also be employed in an interdisciplinary manner and future research on strategy implementation could move beyond these approaches and use other approaches such as strategy–as-practice paradigm and the current trend in implementation research to combine different research methods (such as interviews and case studies in order to achieve robust results). Previous studies on strategy implementation provided somewhat incomplete explanations and examples of how implementation factors interact with and influence other factors, what the exact nature of the interactions help or prevent companies from achieving coherence between strategy and key implementation factors (Okumus, 2003:879).

2.15 IDENTIFYING THE IMPLEMENTATION GAP

The ‘journey’ into what has been researched in strategy implementation and within the existing studies, has now been completed and it was found that the research context can be divided into ‘organisational levels’ (corporate, strategic business units, functional, operational, mixed and ambiguous levels strategy) and ‘organisational types’ (research which has been undertaken in strategy implementation focusing on state owned entities, private companies, multinational and nationwide organisations). Within the existing literature in strategy implementation there are ‘individual factors’ and the interrelated ‘internal’ and ‘external factors’ (to form strategy implementation environment). These factors culminate into people, institutional and combined factors, which have been fully described in the literature. However, on the flipside, there are ancillary and, multiple and related factors, which have not been accorded prominence in the research of strategy implementation.

Top management in organisations blamed the strategy implementation gap on predorminant barriers such as lack of resources, inadequate capabilities, and skills (Tait & Nienaber, 2010; Mankins & Steele, 2005; Van de Merwe, 2013, Alexander, 1985). Authors within the Strategic Management field have made calls for the understanding of the implementation gap (Dinwoodie et al., 2014; Schaap, 2012).

The literature review for this study has revealed the following important findings: First, prominence has been given to factors which affect people, especially middle managers, who have been analysed in depth probably because they form a sizeable number of strategy executors/implementers (Gupta & Govindarajan, 1984; Guth & Macmillan, 1986; Govindarajan, 1989; Judge & Stahl, 1995; Waldersee & Sheather, 1996; Woolridge & Floyd, 1990, 1992b; Qi, 2005). Less coverage was made of the role played by non-management, a category often ignored. Second, no studies have been crystal clear on what options may be available to strategy executors should the available frameworks and processes not be successful. Third, Li et al., (2008:33) maintain that different theoretical bases emphasize different issues regarding strategy implementation with few studies focusing on the effect of implementation and the relationships among different strategy levels.

There is no clear picture regarding relationships among the implementation variables. Even though there is a clear trend towards elaborate model based approaches to strategy implementation, the frameworks do not seem to sufficiently address the implementation gap and that they are not adequately informative. Therefore, future implementation frameworks must be based on prior causal analysis, especially regarding individual factors and their relations. Strategy implementation efforts undertaken with the grouping of variables, factors, models and frameworks have not provided any in depth discussion and evaluation that illustrates: How these variables interact; How they influence other variables; and How these could assist in the implementation of strategy choices. Strategy implementation efforts have been undertaken in view of variables, which are usually categorised, for example, into content, context, process and outcome. However, a majority of previous researchers just listed implementation variables, illustrated them graphically, and then went on to describe each individually and noted its importance in the implementation process.
Others, broadly classified them as conceptual and empirical, developed or tested them and further used those developed internationally, yet the road to effective strategy implementation remains bleak.

Through the use of frameworks and business models organisations are unable to leverage their Strategic Assets, those ‘resources that potentially affect rents in a positive direction’ (Barney, 1986). Strategic Assets are scarce, inimitable, non-substitutable, appropriable, and in demand (Annit & Schoemaker, 1993; Barney, 1986, 1989, 1991; Conner, 1991). In order to gain sustainable competitive advantage, organisations encounter strategic liabilities and in the process suffer from protracted competitive disadvantages. If organisations are unable to implement their strategic choices, they forgo opportunity and this might prove to be costly as it detracts them from performance and creation of value, causes inefficiency and have inherent negative market value. Organisations are unaware of the likelihood that at somepoint in time they possess strategic liabilities that can originate from endowments, bad luck, strategic assets, rival actions, and from unfavourable changes in content (Arend, 2004).

Lack of knowledge of Strategy Implementation Liabilities (combination of impediments, encumbrances, disadvantages, barriers, hindrances causing stress, and inconveniences experienced which inhibit effective implementation of a firm’s strategic choices) can negatively impact the performance of an organisation. The result could be low or poor performance and ultimately death and destruction unless efforts to mitigate are taken. According to Beer (2002) in a Darwinian economic environment:

- unfit organisations (those that do not adapt to fit new circumstances) do not survive;
- Organisations would experience inefficiencies (non-optimal processes and systems that inhibit their best potential performance with their current assets) (Arend, 2004); and
- Inertia would creep in, which means that they would develop the inability to make beneficial changes as a response to changes in the competitive environment.

Lieberman & Montgomery (1988) postulate that inertia is the inability of a firm to make a beneficial change resulting from embedded resource and capabilities that were strategic assets in an earlier content. There is an urgent need for organisations to embrace the liabilities approach to address the strategy implementation gap, which has led to the failure of many at implementation.

2.16 CONCLUSION

In this chapter it was indicated that whilst many research scholars appreciate the significance and need for the strategy implementation process, our knowledge of the nature of strategy implementation and the reasons for its success or failure remains limited (Walker & Ruekert, 1987). Within the research context explored in the literature reviewed, strategy implementation processes can be divided into 'organisational levels' and 'organisational types'. Within the existing literature in strategy implementation there are 'individual factors', and the 'interrelated internal' and 'external factors, which comprise the strategy implementation environment. These factors culminate into people, institutional, and combined factors, which have been fully described in the literature. On the other side, there exist ancillary, multiple, and related factors, which are not accorded prominence in research and analysis in the implementation of strategy choices. Various scholars and authors broadly classified these variables and factors and terms of strategy implementation into frameworks, produced conceptual and empirically developed or tested frameworks and further used international frameworks and yet the road to implementation remains bleak. According to Arend (2004) a testable theory with practical prescriptions is what can be more beneficial and progressive in the field of strategy going forward, and ultimately, towards an evolving scientific basis that generates applications for business.

An analysis of strategy implementation in terms of individual factors, organisational factors, both internal and external, models, and frameworks is only one side of the ledger of implementation. A comprehensive analysis of firm factors that destroy rents rather than increase them is urgently needed (Powell, 2001; West & De Castro, 2001). This will enable an analysis and considerations of endogenous contextual elements that define what strategy implementation is, and identify factors an organisation needs to have which can positively and negatively affect its potential rents (Arend, 2004). Currently scholars and researchers invest enormous efforts in analysing factors that have a positive contribution to strategy implementation and conveniently disregard those whose contribution is regarded as negative. Therefore, these negative influences, which we label as 'Strategy Implementation Liabilities' are usually taken for granted as no strategies are ever put in place to avoid having them negatively affect the organisational performance.

2.17 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

Chapter 2 has provided a comprehensive overview of the varied debates on strategy implementation from a wide spectrum of the strategic management field. The chapter has uncovered that literature strategy implementation largely consist of two main classifications of ‘organisational levels’ and ‘organisational types’. Within the existing literature in strategy implementation *individual factors (*people oriented*)* and the *interrelated internal* and *external factors* (strategy implementation environment) exist. Though important but not classified and not accorded prominence in research and analysis in strategy implementation, we have ancillary, multiple and related factors. The chapter concluded with the view that there are other negative influencers called *Strategy Implementation Liabilities* encountred when organisation are trying to implement their strategy choices, which have to be taken into consideration when implementation strategy and these have the potential to affect implementation. Chapter 3 explores the liabilities approach and identifies negative influencers labelled Strategy Implementation Liabilities.

CHAPTER 3: THE LIABILITIES THEORY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

As already highlighted in Chapter 2, the numerous theoretical bases which have previously been used in strategy implementation include the 'agency theory', 'organisation theory', 'psychology theory', 'social system theory', 'social learning theory' and, 'expectancy theory'. Though the liabilities theory has the potential for being more elaborate, thus adding value to the current debate on strategy implementation, it has not been fully exploited.

The most prominent theoretically researched aspect of liabilities is Stephen Hymer's (1960) concept of Liability of Foreignness (LOF) which depicts disadvantages of foreignness in strategy implementation. Whereas the concept has attracted scholarly attention from almost all fields, Hymer (1960/1976) is noted as the first scholar to theorise the rationale behind why foreign firms (outsiders) are likely to encounter competitive disadvantages vis-à-vis home firms (insiders) in the host country. According to Hymer (1976: 34-36) national firms have the advantage of being better informed about their country: its economy, its language, its laws, and its politics. In given countries, foreigners and nationals may receive very different treatment (from government, and suppliers). Foreigners may also have disadvantages, because of their own home government decisions and actions for international operations.

Zaheer (1995:342) defined the liability of foreignness as "the costs of doing business abroad that results in a competitive disadvantage for a multinational enterprise (MNE) subunit". The concept has been broadly defined as all additional costs a firm operating in a market overseas incurs that a local firm would not incur. Denk, Kaufmann & Roesch (2012), maintains that even though the 'liabilities of foreignness' concept was initially introduced by Hymer's (1960), it was only after Zahee (1995) research that the phenomenon, spurred the interests of a myriad of the scholars who have laid its theoretical foundations (Eden & Miller, 2001: Mezias, 2002a; Zaheer, 2002; Denk, Kaufmann & Roesch, 2012), and proposed strategies to overcome the challenges (Bell, Filatotchev & Rasheed, 2012; Hennart, Roehl & Zeng, 2002; Luo & Mezias, 2002; Mezias, 2002b; Sethi & Guisinger, 2002; Zaheer & Mosakowski, 1997). Dunning (1981) maintains that internationalization into foreign markets has the potential to yield benefits for multinational enterprises (MNE's). He however also observes that such a process or initiative is usually accompanied by competitive disadvantages as compared to when national companies are locally well established (Boehe, 2011; Denk, Kaufmann & Roesch, 2012). Kindler (1969) argues that foreign firms also incur consequences of missed business opportunities, suggesting that the liability of foreignness potentially includes revenue and cost consequences.

Arthur Stinchcombe, the American Sociologist and leading scholar in social structure and organisational processes whose ideas are cited to have played a pivotal role in the development of management literature about organisational evolution in 1965 (Cafferata, 2009; Hodgson, 2009; Hodgson & Knudsen, 2010; Breslin, 2011) introduced the construct of the 'liability of newness'. This construct helped in the explanation why organisations face the highest mortality rates within their earliest stages of their life cycle. According to Abatecola, Cafferata and Poggesi (2012) it was only in the mid-seventies that numerous scholars became interested and appreciated Stinchcombe's work. Stichcombe (1965:148) contended that aside from the conditions encouraging men to start new organisations, there are poorly understood conditions that lead to the comparative death rates of new and old organisations.

He posited that as a general rule, a higher proportion of new organisations failed than older ones do. Hence whereby alternative action requires a new organisation form, with much more beneficial aspects than the old one, with the flow of newly acquired benefits compensating for the weakness of the newer social structure. In his seminal essay paper entitled Social Structure and Organisations of 1965, he specifies the "sort of things which make up the liability of newness, and depicts how social conditions affect the degree of liability" Stichcombe (1965:149). He identifies at least the following four aspects which organisations have and that enable them to avoid and reduce the 'liability of newness':

(a) The disadvantage of new organisations is that they need to develop and learn ‘new roles’ as opposed to old organisations that already have ingrained roles which are normally passed from one employee to the other, facilitating succession and continuity in operations.

(b) Organisational ‘processes’ involving the invention of these new roles, the specification of relationships and configuration of rewards, and sanctions to performers and non performers are high in terms of costs, time, worry, conflict, and temporary inefficiency.

(c) The emphasis on ‘social relations’ between strangers is key as the focal point of importance is trust in organisations; either between employees, suppliers and other stakeholders. With old organisations, reputation already exists between the parties as opposed to new organisations who still have to pass the ‘legitimacy test’.

(d) Familiarity with the functioning and use of the organisational products and services as old and existing customers already know these as opposed to new customers who still have to find their way around creating new social systems.

All of these four pivotal points will be elaborated on in this chapter of the literature review, detailing Stichcombe’s (1965) contributions and the influence in management studies. The spectrum of his conceptual and empirical studies ranges from school conflicts and policy practices, craft organisations and industrial efficiency, farm management, offshore oil exploration, financial markets, to also including Caribbean slavery (Abatecola, Cafferata & Poggesi, 2012).

Past research studies within the liabilities approach have as well been identified as areas of future research. Researchers used several labels to describe the relationship between age and failure, and these include:

- the ‘liability of newness’ (Stichcombe, 1965; Freeman, Carroll & Hannan, 1983; Hannan & Freeman, 1984; Singh, Tucker & House, 1986);
- b) ‘liability of smallness’ (Aldrich & Auster, 1986);

- c) the ‘liability of adolescence’ (Levintal & Finchman, 1988; Bruderl & Schussler, 1990);
- d) the ‘liability of obsolescence’ (Baum, 1989; Baum, 1990, Ingram, 1993; Barron, West, & Hannah, 1994);
- e) ‘liability of newness and adolescence’ (Brudel & Schussler,1993);
- f) ‘liability of newness, adolescence and obsolescence’ (Henderson, 1999); g) ‘strategic liabilities’ (Arend, 2004);
- h) ‘turnaround liabilities’ (Pretorius & Holtzhauzen, 2008);
- i) ‘leadership liabilities’ (Pretorius, 2009);
- j) ‘liability of outsidership’ (Johanson & Vahlne, 2009);
- k) ‘liabilities of origin’ (Ramachandran, 2010);
- l) ‘management consultant liabilities’ (Pretorius & Stander, 2012); and
- m) ‘liability of home’ (Stevens, 2012).

With the five decades (1960’s; 1970’s-1980s; 1990s; 2000s) through which the liabilities theory has evolved set out it was possible to determine the link existing between the various constructs and any subsequent related constructs (Abatecola, Cafferata & Poggesi, 2012:403). Lastly, the main implications of each and every liabilities construct identified for research on how organisations might better address strategy implementation influencers through the liabilities approach to improve their performance have been spelt out.

The structure of this chapter entails: a) providing the definitions of every liability construct identified in the literature review; b) highlighting divergent views on the identified liabilities; c) identifying the relevant and applicable liabilities which could be used to determine the Strategy Implementation Framework; and d) forming conclusions and summing-up the chapter. From the review, details on how the liability stream of research evolved over time will be outlined (Abatecola, Cafferata & Poggesi, 2012) through a historical trail which will provide a powerful overview of the theoretical foundations of the liabilities approach to guide scholars to the most relevant future research needs (Denk, Kaufmann & Roesch, 2012). As a result of the review process, potential solutions to low strategy implementation in organisations, which is currently an issue of concern, may emerge.

3.2 DEFINITION OF LIABILITIES

Liabilities are those ‘negative influences’ or ‘negative factors’ (items and means) an organisation might experience, regardless of whether they contribute to or detract organisational performance but are necessary to generate economic rents. Therefore, these factors might be viewed either as positive or negative. Examples of liabilities include: lawsuits, bad-will with customers and labour, management incompetence, and obsolete technology and inventory (Arend, 2004). Liabilities are a ‘combination factor’ resulting from barriers, disadvantages, hindrances, weaknesses, difficulties, accountabilities, and responsibilities which limit an entity’s ability (Henderson, 1999) to successfully strategise, gain competitive advantage, and earn superior economic rents (Pretorius & Holtzhauzen, 2008). These are all those pre-existing conditions such as a dysfunctional culture, inherited consequence of bad decisions, and misleading data that act as obstacles to effective leadership and strategy implementation (Pretorius, 2009:37). Liabilities are situational deficiencies inherited from previous decision–making in the venture and are often referred to as “past decision baggage” (Thornhill & Amit, 2003:500).

Table 3.1 below depicts the general definitions of the individual liabilities constructs with Figure 3.1 showing a graphical presentation, of which will be fully discussed in this chapter, and these include the a) Liability of Newness, b) Liability of Age, Size and Smallness, c) Liability of foreignness, d) Liability of adolescence, e) Liability of obsolescence and senescence, f) Liability of outsidership, g) Strategic liabilities, h) Turnaround liabilities, i) Leadership liabilities, j) Liability of origin, k) Management consultant liabilities, l) Liability of home and m) Liability of multinationality.

Table 3.1: Definitions of liabilities constructs identified in the literature review.

Liabilities construct	Definition	Author
a) Liability of newness	This is a situation in which, young organisations have a higher propensity to die than old organisations because of both their inability to compete effectively with established organisations and their low levels of legitimacy.	Stinchcombe (1965); Freeman, Carroll & Hannan (1983); Carroll (1983); Singh et al. (1986); Hannan & Freeman (1984); Bruderl & Schussler (1990); Hannan & Carroll (1995); Choi & Shepherd (2005); Nagy et al., (2012), Miner et al., (1990), Burgelman (1991), Levinthal (1991)
b) Liability of age, size and smallness	Refers to limitedness in terms of resources and capabilities, and thus vulnerability to environmental changes. Initial size may be measured in terms of either the amount of financial capital or the number of people employed at the time of founding.	Freeman, Carroll & Hannan(1983); Aldrich & Auster (1986); Kale & Arditi (1998)
c) Liability of foreignness	Additional costs incurred by foreign firms when operating internationally, compared to local firms who have better information about their country, economy, laws, culture, politics, related to psychic distance. This is the *cost of doing business abroad* that results in a competitive disadvantage for multinational entreprise subunits due to additional costs a firm operating in a market overseas incurs that a local firm would not otherwise incur.	Hymer (1960,1976); Johanson & Vahlne (1977,2009); Dunning (1981); Zaheer (1995); Zaheer & Mosakowski (1997); Matsuo (2000); Eden & Miller (2001); Mezias (2002); Zaheer (2002); Boehe (2011); Denk, et al. (2012); Buckley & Casson, (1976); Caves (1982); Dunning, (1997); Hennart, (1982); Rugman, (1981). Kindlerberger (1969)
d) Liability of adolescence	The risk of failure increases for a certain time at the beginning of the life of an organisation, reaches a peak, and declines thereafter. The risk of mortality is initially low as the organisation is buffered from failure due to support by external constituents and initial endowments. When these initial resources become depleted, the mortality hazard rises and then declines following the liability of newness pattern.	Levintal & Finchman (1988); Bruderl & Schussler (1990); Fichman & Levinthal (1991); Freeman, Carroll & Harman (1983); Henderson (1999); Baum (1989); Ingram (1993);

		Barron, West & Hannan (1994); Ranger-Moore (1997).
e) Liability of obsolescence and senescence	Defined as a situation where a firm's identifiable founding brand and identification wears off, and gets outdated in relation to the changing environment in which it finds itself in. The *liability of senescence* is defined as a situation where existing, accumulating rules, regulations and processes, routines, and structures place a burden on the efficiency and effectiveness of older firms.	Baum (1989;1990); Ingram (1993); Barron, West & Hannah (1994); Henderson (1999); Abatecola (2012); Barnett 1990; Baum & Oliver, (1991); Baum (1996); Meyer (1990).
f) Liability of outsidership	Situations where a firm enters a business environment without knowing who the business actors are, and their relationships. Describes difficulties related with the entrance to a new foreign market where the firm does not have any position in business or related networks. Outsidership status means the organisation lacks knowledge in, market, business arrangement, and lack of knowledge about language, laws, and rules of a target foreign host.	Johanson & Vahlne (2009); Vahlne et al., (2012); Eriksson et al. (2013); Hilmersson (2013); Schweizer (2013); Vapola (2011).
g) Strategic liabilities	Defined as resources that damage and destroy a firm's ability to generate rents (profits and earnings) and therefore are rent destroyers. They are costly as they reduce a firm performance and value (actual and potential), supply–restricted (scarce and inconvertible) appropriated. In parallel, *Strategic Assets* are defined as resources that potentially affect rents in a positive direction; these are scarce, inimitable, non-substitutable, appropriable and in demand.	Arend (2004); Powell (2001); West & De Castro, (2001; Barney (1986, 1989, 1991, 2001); Penrose (1959); Wenerfelt, (1984); Peteraf (1993); Amit & Schoemaker (1993); Mahoney & Pandian (1992) ; Dierickx & Coll (1989); Kor & Mahoney (2004); Lockett & Thompson (2004); Rugman & Verbeke (2004); Andrews (1971), Christenson & Overdorf (2000); Leonard-Barton (1992); Lieberman & Montgomery (1988).

h) Turnaround liabilities	These are those pre-existing conditions which have to be overcome during turnarounds situations in an organisation. Each turnaround situation has a unique set of pre-existing conditions that serve as a barrier to overcome.	Pretorius & Holtzhauzen, (2008); Pretorius, (2008); Robbins & Pearce (1992); Cannon & Edmondson, (2005). Ooghe & De Prijcker (2008); Crutzen & Van Caillie (2007); Cybinski, (2001)~~;~~ Pearce & Michael, (2006); Lewis & Short, (1975); Smith & Graves (2005); Barker & Duhaime (1997); Cannon & Edmondson, (2005).
i) Leadership liabilities	These are preconditions, such as, either a dysfunctional culture, inherited consequences of bad decisions, misleading data, and acting as obstacles to effective leadership. These liabilities must be contended with by new managerial appointees, as they have the potential to limit their capacity to lead successfully.	Pretorius & Holtzhauzen (2008); Pretorius (2009); Allio (2006); Barker et al. (2001); Shepherd (2005; Le Roux et al. (2006); Pretorius & Stander (2012);
j) Liability of origin	Disadvantages faced by foreign firms in the international markets as a result of their national origins. They arise as a consequence of three inter-related contexts of the foreign firm activities: organisational context, home country context and host country context. Foreign firms (outsiders) are likely to encounter competitive disadvantages as opposed to home firms (insiders) in the host country.	Ramachandran & Pant (2010); Hymer (1960); Buckley & Casson (1998); Zaheer, (2002); Mezias, (2002a): Cuervo – Cazurra, Maloney & Manrakhan (2007); Eden & Miller (2001:01); Zaheer & Monakowski, (1997); Zaheer, (1995, 2002).
k) Management consultant liabilities	Constitute a combination of a unique set of 'inability preconditions' which act as a roadblock and a barrier to management consultant success in the process of assisting organisations with strategizing.	Pretorius & Stander (2012); Lippit & Lippit, (1975); Thomas & Schwenk, (1983), Fincham, (1999); Sergio, (2002); Davenport & Early, (2010); Cater et al., (2008) Petersen & Pulfelt, (2002); Edmunds & Morris, (2000);

l) Liability of home	Disadvantage or hindrances experienced by a firm investing in a foreign country as a consequence of friction caused by attributes of its home country institutions. These were introduced to capture the liabilities faced by MNE due to their country of origin.	Stevens & Shenkar (2012); Scott, (1995), Bilkey & Nes, (1982); Zaheer, (1995); Eden & Miller, (2004); Miller & Parkhe, (2002); Miller & Richards, (2002),
m) Liability of Multinationality	Defined as disadvantages considered intrinsic to the process of managing and ownership of operations across borders which are embedded within the costs of operations within the domestic arena. These are disadvantages which are inherent in foreign operations due to lack of control of foreign assets inhibiting the firms to fully appropriate the returns on their business.	Eden & Miller (2001); Zaheer (2002); Hymer (1960); Kindlerberger (1969); Vernon (1977); Sethi & Judge, (2009); Eden & Miller, (2001); Cuervo-Cazurra et al.,(2007)

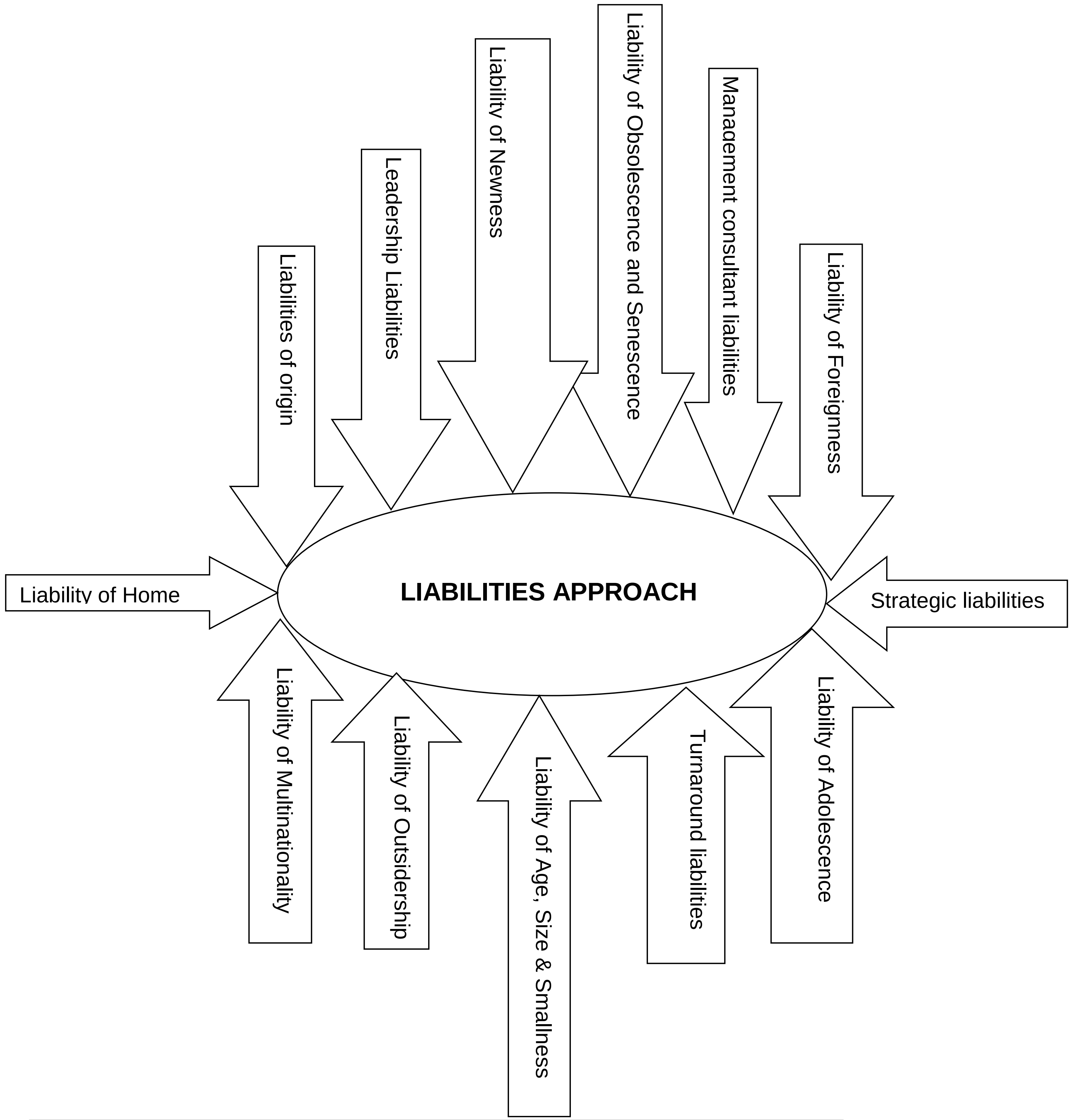


Figure 3.1: The Liabilities Approach: Existing Theories on the Liabilities Theory

3.3 THE LIABILITIES THEORY RESEARCH STREAMS

The approach to the literature review of how the liabilities research developed is structured according to *research streams* from 1960 to the current date as depicted in figure 3.2 below. The literature pertaining to the liabilities research was labelled the ‘liabilities theory’. Appendix 1 gives comprehensive information on all the liabilities which were discussed in this chapter.

The first research stream in the 1960’s encapsulates how the construct ‘liabilities’ evolved, and studies within this category, include the constructs of liability of foreignness and liability of newness. The second research stream which covers the period of the 1970’s and 1980’s comprises liability of newness; liability of smallness (including age and size); liability of foreignness; liability of adolescence, and liability of obsolescence. The third research stream consists of research undertaken in the 1990’s focusing on the liability of newness and adolescence; liability of obsolescence; liability of foreignness; liability of newness, adolescence and obsolescence. The last stream of the liabilities theory research undertaken in the 2000’s focused on areas of the liability of foreignness; strategic liabilities; turnaround liabilities; leadership liabilities; liability of outsidership; liabilities of origin; management consultant liabilities and liability of home.

In each of the identified research streams, the main contributions of the ‘pioneer (s)’ identified with a particular theory or research will serve as a basis of literature discussion for subsequent research that followed. For example, Hymer (1976) was the first to introduce the term ‘costs of doing business abroad’ which was later labelled liability of foreignness (LOF). Thereafter, scholars such as Zaheer (1995) provided the theoretical foundations whilst others attempted to provide empirical perspectives. The initial liabilities conceptualisation within the research streams from 1960 to the current date investigates links which exist between the various liabilities constructs (relationships between the identified liabilities), subsequent and related constructs, and the implications for strategy implementation. The researcher showed the potential which various theoretical foundations (Resource Based View, organisational theory, socioeconomic theory, institutional theory, theories of international expansion, social network theory and other theories) might influence strategy implementation success through the liabilities theory to expand its boundaries in order to incorporate numerous other theoretical streams (Denk et al., 2012).

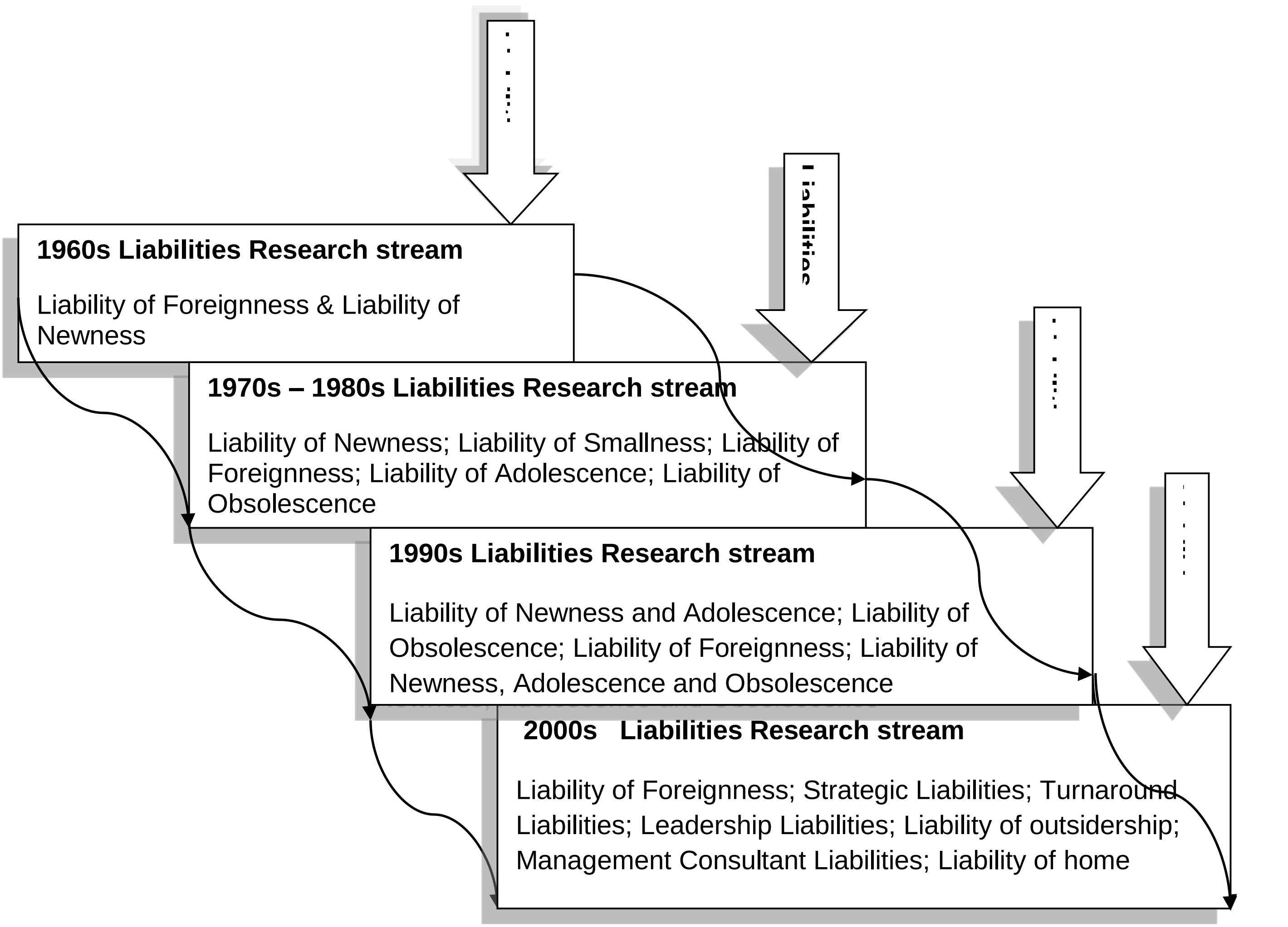


Figure 3.2: Liabilities Theory Research Streams **Source:** Compilation from literature review

3.3.1 Liabilities research stream of the 1960's

According to Baum & Amburgey (2000:04) in organisational ecology, especially dealing with demographic processes, no organisation can be born before it is founded and therefore founding processes have to be considered as part and puzzle of a population. To that end, change and failure processes occur at the organisational and population levels and bearing in mind that most existing organisations have their own histories and structures which ultimately influence their rates of change and failure. Complications occur where it is imperative to consider both organisational failure and change processes at the same time.

The 1960s research stream could be considered to be the birth and evolution of the liabilities era, which had enormous impact on the various fields of sociology, ecology, organisational management to name but a few. The liability of foreignness and the liability of newness were born and this culminated in the research stream of the 1960's which was led by Arthur Stinchcombe, a leading scholar in social structure and organisational processes whose ideas played a pivotal role in the development of management literature about organisational evolution (Cafferata, 2009; Hodgson, 2009; Hodgson & Knudsen, 2010; Breslin, 2011) ánd who in 1965 whilst providing a seminal explanation of the 'struggle for survival' (Darwin, 1859) between newborn and older organisations introduced the construct of the 'liability of newness' (Abatecola et al., 2012). This construct helped in explaining why organisations face the highest mortality rates within the earliest stages of their life cycle. The recognition of the originality and the undoubted potential of the liability of the newness research stream emerged in the mid 1970's where his work was beginning to be quoted and professionally recognised worldwide. Currently the growing management and organisational literature infer that the liability of newness without doubt has provided a theoretical base for most potential and developing conceptual and empirical studies.

Arthur Stinchcombe's (1965) seminal work entitled 'Social Structure and Organisations' presents itself as a historical milestone in analysing why and how organisations originate, evolve and finally demise. He emphasized the general rule that "a higher proportion of new organisations fail than old. This is particularly true of new organisational *forms*, so that *if an alternative requires new organisation*, it has to be much more beneficial than the old before the flow of benefits compensates for the relative weakness of the newer social structure" (Stichcombe, 1965:148). The emphasis here is that most organisations are aware that they experience the liability of newness, where there are embedded 'poorly understood' conditions which inhibit their performance when they enter markets as they are new in the business landscape. Therefore, any potential decision taken to address an organisational challenge where a solution is found to be the creation of a *new* organisation, has to be based on a comprehensive assessment as to the greater benefits to be derived from that decision and curtailing the inherent weaknesses which might arise. Organisations are better off in consolidating their existing organisational settings and arrangements rather than creating new organisations, or in rather extreme circumstances to engage in organisational innovation through which they may mitigate or avert the liability of newness.Through Stinchcombe's seminal work, there was a formalisation of the construct of the liability of newness, which construct enormously enabled the expansion of the scope of many scholars' current thoughts on the birth and mortality of organisations. According to Baum & Amburgey (2000), Stinchcombe's (1965) contributions to the liability of newness may be summarised as follows:

- Young organisations will have high failure rates as they need to learn new social roles, create new organisational routines, lack endorsements and exchange relationships at a time when resources are stretched to the limit.
- To achieve high reproducibility, the selection process would normally favour structurally inert organisations capable of demonstrating reliability and accountability.
- Further to reproducibility, the achievement of institutionalization and routinization increases with age and failure is unlikely (Hannan & Freeman, 1984).

Stinchcombe (1965:148) maintains that there are four answers to the two questions pertaining to: What constitutes the liability of newness? How do social conditions affect the degree of liability? He contends that new organisations, especially new types of organisations, generally involve new roles, which have to be to be learned. Also, new organisations have to get by with generalised skills produced outside the organisation, or have to invest in education, and the ease with which new organisations can recruit skills will determine the degree of disadvantage of organisational innovations.

Regarding the challenge of the 'lack of experience in learning' with which a new organisation has to operate, he asserts that among the many challenges they are faced with when created, the most explicit is of involvement in the new roles which have to be internalized by new employees. The new organisations must build capacity by investing in knowledge and education, as well as recruiting the right calibre of staff during which process the organisational innovation efforts may be seriously affected and infant mortality caused. Should the new organisation survive, they over time experience learning curves that foster the development of significant survival strategies, such as the "exploration and exploitation of successful habits" (Nelson & Winter, 1982; Hodgson & Knudsen, 2004). On the other hand most old organisations have succession plans with established roles for incumbents as successors, who get prepared in work essentials; and decision making processes, procedures and responsibilities, thus continuity is to a great extent guaranteed. The liability of newness calls for both scholars and business practitioners to understand "not only why and how new business ideas can emerge" (Abatecola et al., 2012), but also of the reason why and how new business ideas can fail (Bonazzi, 2008).

Secondly, to address the lack of inventing new roles or innovation and the establishment of relationships and understanding between various departments in an organisation. Stinchcombe (1965) contends that the process of inventing new roles, determining their mutual relations, and of structuring the field rewards and sanctions so as to get maximum performance, have high costs in time, worry, conflict, and temporary inefficiency. Establishing formal organisation structures, with job descriptions, specifying relationships, establishing processes and procedures for assessing job performance through appraisals to either reward performers or punish non-performers in an organisation is one great challenge for a new organisation. In most cases if these are not achieved, the result is a high cost of establishment, and conflict due to confusion in protocol, lack of clear channels of communication, inefficiencies, all leading to ultimate demise. According to Stinchcombe (1965:148) the solution to solving such problems lies in 'standard social routines' in the organisational culture of the population so as to mitigate the liability of newness. Employees must be empowered to take decisive action where required and necessary as this builds and reinforces a sense of commitment, ownership and control on their work and instils discipline, responsibility and in their exercise of initiatives will result in innovation and thereby reduction in the liability of newness.

The third focus is on the ‘lack of reliance on strangers’ which may have an immense impact on the issue of trust for building stable relationships with several organisations, for example, suppliers and current customers. Stinchcombe (1965:150) postulates that new organisations possess minor survival chances than older organisations because they must rely on the social relations and cooperation of ‘strangers’. New organisations face challenges of having to fulfil agreements, build loyalty and business relationships with people they are unknown to, and therefore trust is needed to exploit long-term formal relationships. New organisations require an ingrained culture of relationships that bear promise to deliver on contractual obligations that are purely a business decision. Existing processes and systems of agreements (which enhances collective action within employees and avert conflict) and protocols which govern relationships in business between suppliers and providers coupled with the organisational experience in the relevant business, instil trustworthiness and ultimately the liability of newness is reduced.

Lastly, the aspect of ‘lack of knowledge of the organisational offerings’ (products, services), quality, pricing, supply logistics, and customer base is addressed. Customers for old and established organisations know how to use their products and services, and also know the quality, pricing, and ordering channels. The customers have already made a footprint in the markets, whilst a new organisation faces the task of a) building the brand, b) being accepted by regulating bodies, government and consumers, and c) establishing a series of organisational networks. They still have to build their knowledge and experience in the markets, hence “monotonically declining with age, failure rates are high in the first years of the organisation’s life cycle” (Emery & Trist, 1965:05). According to Stinchcombe (1965) social and economic macro-structures indeed have the potential to enhance the survival changes of infant organisations.

Hymer (1965) was the first pioneer of the liabilities theory with the introduction of the term “costs of doing business abroad” advancing arguments that local firms are better placed to access the relevant market information and that they are deeply rooted in their environment and do not face any foreign exchange risks and this was labelled the ‘liability of foreignness’. He argued that costs of doing business abroad should be measured by the advantages national firms have in their home market settings relative to foreign-owned firms (Eden & Miller, 2002). His arguments spurred wide research initiatives where scholars gave the construct attention from various fields; researchers have focused on the types of firm specific advantages that MNE need to offset these costs. According to Hennart (1982:02) "operations in a foreign country will usually entail higher costs, everything else being equal, than operation at home". Foreign firms entering the new markets overseas incur unfamiliarity costs concerning economic, social, legal and cultural differences (Buckley & Casson, 1976; Caves, 1982; Dunning, 1997; Hennart, 1982; Rugman, 1981), arguing that MNE's face a liability of foreignness in host countries (Zaheer, 1995; Kostova & Zaheer, 1999; Zaheer & Mosakowski, 1997).

Kindlerberger (1969) asserts that foreign firms that operate in host countries also suffer the results of missed business opportunities, suggesting that the liability of foreignness not only has costs but also revenue implications, gains and or losses. In introducing the notion of liability of foreignness, Zaheer (1995) provided proof that indeed such loses existed and subsequent studies by scholars found a 'launching pad' for their investigation of this phenomenon. Zaheer (1995:342-3) defined liability of foreignness as "the costs of doing business abroad that result in a competitive disadvantage for an MNE subunit – have been broadly defined as all additional costs a firm operating in a market overseas incurs that a local firm would not incur". Her assertion is that, the liability of foreignness is a consequence of at least four sources: a) costs directly associated with spatial distance, such as the costs of travel, transportation, and coordination over distance and across time zones; b) firm-specific costs based on a particular company's unfamiliarity with and lack of roots in a local environment; c) costs resulting from the host country environment, such as the lack of legitimacy of foreign firms and economic , and d) costs from the home country environment, such as the restrictions on high technology sales to certain countries imposed on U.S.–owned MNE's'. Ultimately, the implication of the liability of foreignness confirms that foreign firms potentially would make lower profits than indigenous firms. In studying one industry in foreign exchange trading through observation, interviews and multiple surveys conducted in the U.S and Japanese banks in New York and Tokyo, Zaheer (1995:360) reported that "results supported the existence of a liability of foreignness in a competitive industry, foreign exchange trading. The results suggests that firm specific advantage, as embodied in imported organisational practices may be a more effective way for multinational enterprises subunits to overcome the liability of foreignness than imitation of local practices".

Following Zaheer (1995) study, Zaheer & Mosakowski (1997:458) found the opportunity to add a dynamic perspective after they had found that internationalisation challenges decrease as time progresses. Furthermore, there is consensus that Hymer's assertion presents a "rather static picture of both the costs of doing business abroad and of MNE competitive advantage, and is perhaps most useful at understanding the MNE at a point in time, such as the market entry". Gray (1996:51-52) contends: "The disadvantage of being foreign wanes with the duration of being established in the host country and is largely eliminated by foreign direct investment (FDI) through acquisition. The Hymer postulate is still relevant for some young firms with ownership advantages that allow them to compete in niche markets, but for the well-established Transnational Corporations (TNCs) that now dominate international production in well-defined industries and product lines, it is no longer relevant"

3.3.2 Liabilities research stream of the 1970's to 1980's.

The research stream of the 1970s – 1980s era shifted focus from the theoretical foundations previously laid down to empirical theory testing to 'determine the consistence of the liability of newness and foreignness; commitment and focused attention and understanding by ecologists of the potential macro-economic conditions which are necessary to improve businesses; and continuous and consistent engagement by ecologists in implementing their analytical tools for evaluating the liability of newness and foreignness and empirical research'. All these research efforts were rewarded following the development of the following liabilities theories: liability of newness; liability of age, size and smallness; liability of foreignness; liability of adolescence and liability of obsolescence.

3.3.2.1 Liability of newness

The *liability of newness* follows the foundations laid out by Stephen Hymer (1960) a seminal figure in the establishment of the theory of the multinational enterprise and the seminal explanation of the struggle for survival between newborn and older organisations, which became opportune for Stinchcombe to introduce the liability of newness construct. Stinchcombe maintains that although conveniently applicable to the aging of individual organisation, the liability of newness construct can also be associated with entire populations of similar organisations (Abatecola et al., 2012). This is indeed testimony that the construct has great influence even on theoretical and empirical research developed by the organisational ecology literature (Hannan & Freeman, 1977). Ecologists are committed to 'testing the consistence of the liability of newness'. With minor exceptions, for example in Carroll & Hou, 1986 and Sigh et al., 1986, its life and existence has its findings in a number of industries, such as in the newspaper industries, (Carroll & Delacroix, 1982; Freeman et al., 1983), some in labour unions and semi-conductor industries (Freeman et al., 1983), as well as in retail, wholesale and manufacturing industries (Carrol, 1983).

There is committed, focused attention and understanding by ecologists, of the potential macro-economic conditions that are necessary for the discovery and birth of newborn businesses at both the national and community levels. Almost all the findings of newness are consistent with arguments raised by Stinchcombe, especially the argument that the liability of newness finds its basis on knowledge that for the new organisation to be acceptable it should pass the 'legitimacy' test. There is continuous and consistent engagement by ecologists in implementing their analytical tools for evaluating the liability of newness. When research now shifted from theoretical foundations to implementation, it was difficult to determine how the empirical part was to be addressed, for example, how to effectively measure the concept of organisational death (e.g. Freeman et al., 1983). Freeman et al., (1983) provided one of the first empirical evidences about the relationship between age and size, and the findings indicate that an increase of size can somehow reduce and mitigate, but without necessarily eliminating, the effects of the liability of newness.

Organisational failure has had most research and discussion of policy literature and the assumption postulated is that new organisations are more likely to die than old organisations. According to the liability of newness perspective, older organisations have an advantage over younger ones because it is easier for them to create new ones or borrow old ones (Stinchombe, 1965; Nelson & Winter, 1982). Stinchombe (1965) argues that new organisations suffer from a liability of newness, a greater risk of failure than older organisations because they depend on the cooperation of strangers while they have low levels of legitimacy and are unable to compete effectively against established organisations. New organisations of a new form are more likely to fail than new organisations emerging from an established form. As time passes, structures stabilize and ties with environments become durable, causing death rates to fall for organisations with common and innovative forms.

Hannan & Freeman (1984) argue that selection processes tend to favour firms that exhibit high levels of reliability and accountability in their performance, routines, and structure. They maintain that since reliability and accountability tend to increase with age, failure rates tend to decrease as firms grow older. Young firms are particularly likely to fail because they must divert scarce resources away from operations to undertake human capital development, develop internal routines, and establish credible exchange relationships. According to Freeman & Carroll (1983), Stichombe’s argument has been used frequently but has rarely been studied empirically. They maintain that the argument apparently makes such good sense that organisational theorists accept it unquestioningly. However, there are plausible alternative explanations of the age dependable in organisational death rates. Apparent age dependence in any death rate can be due solely to heterogeneity in the population, that is, the rate declines with age simply because units with the highest death rates fail early (Freeman & Carroll, 1983: 692).

Having briefly discussed the historical background of the origins of the liability of newness, we proceed to explore the empirical research undertaken with respect to the liability of

Newness. Freeman & Carrol (1983) maintain that the liability of newness might be liability of smallness since smallest organisations have the highest death rates and the overall death rate in a cohort declines with age as small organisations are screened from the population. The empirical status of liability of newness arguments has broad relevance for current theory and research on organisations. In their empirical research study Freeman & Carroll (1983) set out to explore four elementary but important issues: First, whether there is a liability of newness; second, whether the liability of newness differs for different types of organisational mortality; third, whether the effects of age can be separated from those of size at the founding stage and; fourth, whether there are historical effects confounded with age dependence in death rates. Age dependence in organisational death rates is studied using data on three populations: national labour unions, semiconductor electronic manufacturers, and newspaper publishing companies.

Singh et al., (1986) maintains that the liability of newness thesis has come to occupy an important place in organisational ecology research. According to Carroll (1984) three different levels of analysis may be distinguished in organisational ecology: the organisational level (Carroll & Delacroix, 1982), the population level (Hannan & Freeman, 1977; Freeman & Hannan, 1983), and the community level (Lincoln, 1977, 1979). Singh et al., (1986) postulate that at the organisational level, efforts have been made to examine how low selection processes operate within organisational populations. One major theoretical argument is that younger organisations are subject to stronger selection pressures and hence have a higher propensity to die. Organisational mortality rates have been found to be negatively related with age in newspaper organisations and semi-conductor firms (Freeman, Carroll & Flamon, 1983).

Hannan & Freeman (1997) have previously argued that organisations typically have high levels of structural inertia which makes it difficult for them to make major changes. Recently they have modified their position arguing that structural inertia is a consequence rather than a precursor to selection processes. Singh et al., (1986) maintain that there are processes that underlie the liability of newness for a population of voluntary social service organisations. The main research investigation was to determine whether the liability of newness in a population arises primarily from external or internal processes, by examining the impact on the hazard of the death. The results suggest that the acquisition of external legitimacy corresponds to a significant education in the hazard of death. Most internal organisational changes do not correspond to an increase in the death rate, although there is some evidence for a positive effect of service area change on the death rate. There is some evidence that changing the Chief Executive corresponds with reductions in the death rate. There is empirical evidence support that the liability of newness for organisational populations reflects more low levels of legitimacy of young organisation and their lack of supportive exchange relationships with other significant organisations. The study suggests that the liability of newness may not apply informally to all organisations in a population and that it may not be invariant across organisations. Acquisition of legitimacy attenuates the liability of newness. Attempts by organisations that lead to their becoming externally legitimated either by changes in formal structure (Meyer & Rowan, 1997) or any other means, can significantly alter the liability of newness. The liability of newness does not exist in organisational populations nor are they constant or uniform across all organisations. It is variable and is contingent on factors such as external legitimacy.

The contribution of the study of the liability of newness to the liabilities theory is rich in that numerous answers are provided by various scholars. Freeman's & Carroll's (1983:706-709) research provided the following answers to four questions about age variations in organisational death rates.

- An analysis of three dissimilar organisational populations reveals that there is indeed a liability of newness – death rates at early ages are much higher than those at later years. These findings are applicable to both non parametric and parametric analyses.
- The strength of age dependence differs for two different kinds of organisational death, dissolution and absorption by merger. Even though both dissolution rates and merger absorption rates vary by age for labour unions and newspaper firms, the pattern of age variation differs for the two kinds of organisations.

- The effects of aging can be separated from those of initial size within a plausible parametric model. Analysis of life histories of national labour unions reveals that there is both a liability of smallness in as far as the rate of company dissolution is concerned, for example, for newspapers death rates increase with size. The findings here are that, there is a liability of newness which does not reflect heterogeneity associated with differences in sizes at the time of founding.
- The apparent age dependence of disbanding and merger rates reflects only historical variations in these rates. Age dependence swamps historical dependence.

3.3.2.2 Liability of adolescence

Recently, researchers have argued that firms suffer not from the liability of newness but from a 'liability of adolescence' evidenced by failure rates having an inverted U-shaped relationship with age (Levinthal & Fichman, 1988; Fichman & Levinthal, 1991). Arguments advanced here, suggest that new organisations survive for a time with little risk of failure by drawing on the initial stock of reserves they typically acquire at founding (e.g. venture capital funding, bank loans). As a consequence of this, firms face their highest mortality rates several years after their births. Recent empirical studies (e.g. Freeman, Carroll & Hannan, 1983) confirm that organisational death risks decline monotonically with age. Bruderl & Schussler (1990:530) challenge the liability of newness argument theoretically and empirically and advocate for a 'liability of adolescence'. Their hypothesis distinguishes between two periods of an organisational life cycle. Therefore, an early phase is referred to as adolescence, whereby death risks are low because decision makers are busy monitoring performance, and postponing judgement about success or failure. At this stage, organisational survival hinges on a stock of initial resources accumulated by the company. In the latter phase, initial monitoring has now ended and organisations are subjected to the usual risks of failure. According to Henderson (1999:283) the common factor between the liability of newness and adolescence perspectives is that, a firm's early years of life are the most uncertain, and therefore the rate of failure is surely certain and finally declining due to age. The differences between the two liabilities is that usually failure might be experienced either at the highest level (peak) at founding stages or years thereafter. Some scholars have varied views, postulating that work previously undertaken has forgotten to account for the age-varying effects of the firm size. Should a firm increase its size due to age, and failure rates decrease, then relationships which are negative between age and failure rates are experienced possibly as a consequence of the difference in size rather than to the casual effects of age (Baum, 1989; Ingram, 1993; Barron, West & Hannan, 1994; Ranger-Moore, 1997).

3.3.2.3 Liabilities of age, size and smallness

The ‘liabilities of smallness’ may be considered as an examination of how organisational size influences failure, where small organisations’ propensity to fail occurs. Some of the the problems envisaged here include raising capital, recruiting and training a workforce, paying higher interest rates, and handling costs of regulatory compliance. Aldrich & Auster (1986:165) undertook studies which provided a link between organisational ecology and business strategy literatures by focusing on the liabilities of age and size and their strategic literature implications thereafter. Liabilities of age, size and smallness at the organisational level (through emulation of smaller, newer organisations) and the population level of analysis (through exploitation of smaller, newer organisations) were discussed. Their argument is that large, *aging* organisations face a number of constraints which severely limit their possibilities of metamorphosing and adapting to changing conditions”. They postulate that due to internal and external factors most organisations face limitations to renew themselves and inefficiencies (inertia) creep in. Inertia is a consequence of development processes which have evolved from within the organisation affecting almost all large and aging entities (Aldrich & Fish, 1981; Hannan & Freeman, 1984).

Aldrich & Auster (1986:168) identified four internal factors associated with aging that are an impediment to facilitating change. First, as long as control is in the hands of the founding members of a business, the tendency is to hold onto control and any change is unwelcomed. The likelihood that there will be a crisis in an event of succession is certain, mainly when external conditions significantly call for a change (Boswell, 1973). Second, pressure mounted due to internal consistency which was justified finding the basis for important control and coordination as organisations become of age and these are more conspicuous as the organisational size increases. Third, as organisations come of age and increase in size, interest of owners grows and therefore any change in any form directed to the organisation is viewed with scepticism as these are considered to be forms used by other interested parties to gain power. Forth, with everyone showing interest and wanting to be identified with the organisational success, forces combine with the view to being homogeneous and to be perceived as such. A notable comment by Carroll (1983) is that internal changes, such as development may not necessarily be factors making an organisation susceptible to 'negative selection, but rather the fact of having encountered a succession of environmental jolts until one finally gets in'.

There are also external conditions that are faced by larger, older organisations which are a hindrance to change. Aldrich & Auster (1986) maintain that as organisations age, they become more compatible with their environment, thereby developing 'attachments and dependence that constrain their freedom of action'. Liabilities identified within the external environment include: the status of the organisation, and the protocol of how things are arranged. Organisational commitments, is an assurance by management that past ways of doing things would continue to be done that way. It has been realised that most organisations which enjoy government support and protection do not get strained when new changes emerge as they are able to survive competition and are not vulnerable to any external pressures. Growing and 'aging' entities all face hindrances that inhibit their potential to reinvent themselves. Therefore, the 'liabilities of aging' is basically the "retention of the locus of control by founding members even before the control is effective, tendencies toward internal consistency, including homogeneity, and the hardening of vested interests opposing the envisaged changes" (Aldrich & Auster, 1986:172). Similarly, those organisations who have learned to embrace change, with watertight internal protocol avert these liabilities, as they have the capabilities to change as and when the environment changes. Hannan & Freeman (1984) confirm that "successful transformations place organisations in a position of experiencing the liabilities of newness once again". Empirical research on the liability of smallness and newness has been hampered by the lack of organisational and management literature which fails to show the rate at which 'organisational populations are volatile' (Aldrich & Auster, 1986). Their concern is echoed by Hannan & Freeman (1977:959) who contend that: "the lack of empirical information on rates of selection in populations of organisations-census data are presented in a manner that renders the calculation of failure rates impossible: and little longitudinal research on population has been reported".

The findings of the study by Aldrich & Auster (1986:177) which they label *obstacles to survival* indicate that, new organisations face both internal and external obstacles, which affects their survival. These problems are labelled, liabilities of newness as indicated by Stinchcombe (1965). Within the external environment organisations face several barriers to entry that inhibit their performance, and these include: product differentiation, technology barriers, licensing barriers, barriers to entry as a result of vertical integration, illegitimate practice by competitors, and experiential barriers to entry. Newly created organisations face barriers related to product differentiation as a result to overcome challenges of brand recognition and market acceptance of products of already established firms. In the process to overcome these, there is a need for enormous expenditures to be incurred on advertising, whilst with existing organisations the expenditure is with reinforcing brand loyalty. The technological advantage that exists, for old organisations is that they may have already invested in technology sometime back and therefore this is usually not a major cost on them when they need to produce a new product, unlike new organisations who would have to build a completely new technology infrastructure. The other issue facing a new organisation is one of legitimacy, especially when it has to be incorporated in terms of the country's commercial laws pertaining to registration to commence operations. Countries have laws relating to issues of product, worker safety, and environmental protection prerequisites, which every new organisation must comply with before they start operations.

New organisations face intense competition from already established ones and at times they do not survive and end up dying young. Business strategies such as vertical integration are usually used by existing organisations to scare potential entrants or completely out-compete new organisations. In as much as new organisations face external barriers (liabilities), they also face internal liabilities of newness, which are a result of the creation and clarification of roles and structures in relations to constraints imposed by the external environment, the most critical being the ability to attract and retain new employees (Aldrich & Auster, 1986). Besides the liabilities of newness (barriers/ obstacles to survival) which organisations face from the external and internal environments, organisations similarly face the liabilities of smallness, where dissolution is inevitable. The construct of the ‘liability of smallness’ has formally been introduced in 1986 by Aldrich & Auster. The emergence of this liability has its basis on barriers and obstacles faced by small organisations when they start their operations. Their focus was on factors which make survival a challenge for small and new organisations. They contend that, there are four most severe problems facing a small and new organisation:

First, is the lack of capital necessary to start business? Almost all small organisations raise capital from self-savings from previous employment, inheritance from families, or from selling assets both fixed and liquid. The realisation is that it is indeed very difficult to raise capital, even processes of accessing venture is cumbersome, and it is even expensive. Old and big organisations whose operations span over some decades usually do not have challenges, as they can usually provide security for the required finance, or because of their track record – being credit worthy and trustworthy. They are better placed to negotiate lower interest rates and are able to use their size to borrow funds which they can advance to other small organisations at a lucrative price.

Second, in most countries tax laws are considered a burden to the survival of small organisations. Old and large organisations enjoy the benefit of incurring less tax charges when they acquire smaller ones. The tax treatment of capital gains, are favourable and therefore act as an incentive enjoyed by old or large organisations when they buy small organisations, this increases the temptations by smaller organisations to sell to large organisations. Third, small firms also encounter challenges when they recruit from the labour market as old or large organisations already have better incentives in the form of career development and security of tenure to attract and retain employees, which are always almost not available in the small organisations. Lastly, according to Aldrich & Auster (1986:182-183) smallness compounds the liability of newness with regard to labour, as smaller organisations cannot afford the expenses of properly trained new employees, unlike larger organisations who have established functional human resources structures and who undertake recruitment on behalf of the organisation. Ultimately, an examination of the liabilities of age and size are decimated by liabilities of newness, smallness, and aging, and it also shows that this decimation is balanced by high replacement rates. Findings from this research indicate that the liabilities of newness produce a very high mortality rate for newly established organisations, with the rate declining as organisations overcome this state and that liabilities of smallness produce a higher mortality rate for smaller than for larger organisations, regardless of an organisation's age. Ultimately, smaller and younger organisations usually die young. If they grow, this is often at the expense of their autonomy. Bigger and older organisations, in contrast, survive more easily, and do so in part by preying on the smaller and younger organisations continually being created all around them. According to Abatecola (2012) the liability of smallness has the support of empirical research in the 1980's (e.g. Caroll, 1983, 1984) and following this, ecologists gave it high regard and it was now considered "not as a simple alternative to the liability of newness, but much more as one of its most probable explanations".

3.3.2.4 Liability of obsolescence

According to Abatecola (2012) the liability of aging is a liability construct that was predicted by scholars (e.g. Barnett, 1990; Baum & Oliver, 1991; Barron et al., 1994) in the first half of the 1990s. The observations made in the second half of the 1990's considered aging, obsolescence and senescence. The 'liability of obsolescence' basically carries the assumption that the firm's failure rate increases, rather than decreases, with its age. Baum (1996:83) contends that:

“The liabilities of newness, adolescence, and obsolescence can be treated as complementary rather than competing organisational processes if one is able to understand the contingency factors that cause one, the other, or some combination of these models to predominate”.

The ‘liability of obsolescence’, is defined as a situation where a firm’s identifiable founding brand and identification wears off and gets outdated in relation to the changing environment in which it finds itself in. On the one hand, there is the ‘liability of senescence’ where the existing and accumulating rules, regulations and processes, routines, and structures place a burden on the efficiency and effectiveness of those older firms. Barron et al., (1994:387) contend that ‘Senescence’ and ‘obsolescence’ are two different, though related forms:

Senescent processes cause internal decay that increases failure rates independent of environmental conditions and this is a causal effect of aging. Obsolescent processes do not directly increase failure rates and thus are not, strictly speaking, direct causal effects of age. Instead, age serves as a proxy for the gap between relatively inert organisations and changing environments (Meyer, 1990). Unlike senescence, obsolescence should not penalize organisations unless they are stressed by changing or turbulent conditions. Senescence is ubiquitous, while obsolescence occurs only during times of environmental upheaval.

According to Henderson (1999:283) senescence is a potential threat to all the stable and changing environments within which a firm operates. Even though the liabilities of obsolescence and senescence are quite different in various aspects, they all create a positive relationship between age and failure rates and a negative relationship between age and growth. Studying the firms’ mortality rates within the US computer industry between 1975 and 1992, Henderson (1999:284) finds that the prevalence of newness/adolescence or aging (obsolescence) is contingent to the kind of technological strategy developed by the sampled firms. ‘Proprietary’ strategists exhibit a liability of obsolescence in their failure rates, while ‘standard–based’ strategists exhibit a liability of adolescence.

3.3.2.5 Liability of foreignness

Hymer (1965) was the first scholar to theorize on why foreign firms (outsiders) are likely to encounter competitive disadvantages vs. local firms (insiders) and therefore it may be said that he pioneered the liabilities theory with his introduction of the 'costs of doing business abroad' construct (Miller & Richards, 2002:324). He maintains that local firms are better placed to access the relevant market information and that they are deeply rooted in their environment and do not face any foreign exchange risks and he labelled this the 'liability of foreignness'. He further contends that costs of doing business abroad should be measured by the advantages national firms have in their home market settings relative to foreign-owned firms (Eden & Miller, 2001). His contribution to the literature triggered wide research initiatives where scholars gave it attention from various fields; researchers have focused on the types of firm specific advantages that MNEs need to offset these costs. According to Hennart (1982:02) "operation in a foreign country will usually entail higher costs, everything else being equal, than operation at home".

According to Hymer (1960/1976:34-35) the contention regarding the *costs of doing* business abroad is captured as follows:

"National firms are likely to have advantages over foreigners. National firms have the general advantage of better information about their country: its economy, its language, its law, and its politics. To a foreigner, the cost of acquiring this information may be considerable. But none that it is a fixed cost of a more permanent nature is the barrier to international operations arising from discrimination by government, by consumers, and by suppliers. It is not the general treatment that is important: this affects the domestic firms as well as the foreign firms, but it does not give one firm an advantage over another. What is more important is the fact that in given countries, foreigners and nationals may receive very different treatment".

Nachum (2014) defines the liability of foreignness as a term describing the additional costs that firms operating outside their home countries experience above those incurred by local firms. These costs originate in limited local knowledge, local stakeholders' discriminatory attitudes, and the difficulties of managing organisations whose sub-units are separated by time and distance. One of the most fundamental assumptions that had underlain Hymer's theorisation of foreign direct investment was that these activities create costs for the firms engaged in them. In conclusion, it will be noted that the research stream of 1970s – 1980s shifted focus from the theoretical foundations previously laid down to empirical testing of theory with the view to determine the consistence of the liability of newness; liability of smallness; liability of foreignness; liability of adolescence; and liability of obsolescence. We proceed to consider the research stream undertaken in the 1990s where we discuss the liability of newness and adolescence; liability of obsolescence; liability of foreignness; liability of newness, adolescence and obsolescence.

3.3.3 Liabilities research stream of the 1990's

3.3.3.1 Liability of newness and adolescence

Bruderl & Schussler (1990) undertook a study whose main aim was to empirically test the liabilities of newness and of adolescence through a study based on the complete set of business registrations and deregistration's in the area of Munich and Upper Bavaria (West Germany), from January 1980 to March 1989. As previously indicated under the liability of newness, Stinchcomber's (1965) analysis raised two questions which were of interest to researchers, these are mainly (i) Is it the question of which factors influence the survival or death of organisations? (ii) Is the liability of newness concept univerally applicable regardless of historical time, place and type of organisation?

The other question deals with the assumed generality of the liability of newness concept which Stinchcombe (1965) claims to be universally applicable regardless of historical time, place and type of organisation. Findings from several studies thereafter indicate that, despite population heterogeneity, a genuine inverse relationship exists between age and death rates. Freeman, Carroll and Hannan (1983) found support for the liability of newness and its continuous decline interpretation in survival data of American organisations of semi-conductor producers, local newspapers, and labour unions. Bruderl and Schussler (1990; 533) maintains that the hypothesis on the liability of adolescence states that risks rise for an initial period of an organisation's existence and decline afterwards. The final decline of death risk is assumed for the same reasons that led to the liability of newness hypothesis. It is maintained that the initial period of rising risk should result from the influence brought about by the initial resource stocks and rational behaviour. According to Bruderl & Schussler (1990) the underlying understanding regarding the success or failure of an organisation may not be judged during the very first months of its life. As it is known, it takes a certain period of time to establish business connections, get the technical and administrative structure running, and distinguish between systematic and random components of performance. Similarly all organisations have a certain amount of initial resources and endowments that helps them to survive for some time in order to give them a chance to establish themselves and to help founders, clients, and creditors gain a basis for judging performance. Brunderl & Schussler (1990:533) suggest that there are two reasons why the highest risk for disbandment is not found at the very beginning of an organisational life.

Firstly, organisations can survive because there is an initial stock of resources on which they can live for some time. Secondly, they will not be abandoned by at least minimally rational actor, unless a sufficient amount of negative information about their performance is known. The duration of the initial period of waiting for success which is not specified by the above stated argument gives rise to a liability of adolescence. The relationship between a non–monotonic risk function and initial waiting period termed adolescence may be disciplined formally. Their assumption is that during adolescence an individual organisation faces no death risk at all because this period is co-extensive with the period in which performance cannot be judged sufficiently and decision makers will refrain from abandoning the organisations. (Fichman & Levinthal, 1988; Brunderl & Schussler, 1990)

The contribution of this study to the liabilities theory is evident from the findings made through empirical research. According to Bruderl & Schussler (1990) several recent studies were used on the hypothesis of a liability of newness for organisational death hazards. These supported assertions raised by Stinchcombe (1965) that new organisations face higher death risks than old ones by monotonically declining functions. Because of the problems of the liability of newness they proposed a liability of adolescence. They maintain that individual firms face an adolescence during which mortality is very low yet after this phase, the death risk jumps to a high level followed by a continuous decline. The length of the adolescence varies with the amount of initial resources of a firm. At the population level, they observed an aggregation presentation of these differing individual rates in the form of an inverted U-shaped death rate results. The liability of adolescence can be tested against the liability of newness state of a log-logistic rate model. The results explained above have shown that a liability of adolescence might well resonate with the mortality hazard of profit oriented firms. The liability of adolescence will be observed in most data sets on organisational mortality. Other studies have also provided empirical support in the initial honeymoon period (e.g. Singh, House & Tucker 1986; Mitchele, 1991).

3.3.3.2 Liability of obsolescence

Henderson (1999) maintains that authors and other scholars (e.g. Ingram, 1993; Barron, West & Hannan, 1994) came to conclusions that firms do not suffer from the liabilities of newness (risk of failure is high initially but declines as the organisation ages) nor adolescence (initial low risk of mortality as the organisation is buffered from failure due to support by external constituents and initial endowments). Instead, according to them, organisations suffer from a ‘liability of obsolescence’ (a growing external mismatch with the environment), due to the fact that older firms are so inertial that inefficiency, unresponsiveness and effectiveness creep in and the resultant effect is that they are unable to respond to the external environment. As a result of all these, failure rates are expected increase with age, and growth rates are expected to decline.

Baron, West, & Hannan (1994) and Ranger-Moore (1997) made the distinction between the ‘liability of obsolescence’ (the wearing off of a firms identifiable founding brand and identification), and the ‘liability of senescence’ (concerned with protocols and structures for the efficiency and effectiveness of older firms). According to Henderson (1999:283) senescence is a potential threat to all the stable and changing environments within which a firm operates. Even though the liabilities of obsolescence and senescence are different in various aspects, they all create a positive relationship between age and failure rates and a negative relationship between age and growth. Baum (1996) postulates that, prior ecology studies reported mixed results about whether the relationship between age and failure rates is described by a liability of newness, adolescence, or obsolescence. The liability of obsolescence is considered to be the most all-encompassing of the three liabilities (liabilities of newness, adolescence and obsolescence) as studies have shown that they all include, size as time-varying control and avoid left truncation by observing populations from their beginning (Barron, West, & Hannan, 1994; Ranger-Moore, 1997). Obsolescence is likely to occur within turbulent, rapid and persistent technological changing environments such as the personal computer industry (Steffens, 1994; Anderson, 1995) and obviously the threat of technology getting obsolete is very likely, whether or not senescence is at play (Ranger-Moore, 1997).

Ranger-Moore (1997) undertook an examination of age dependence and studied 154 New York life insurance company archival records dating 1813-1985. Initially, his attempt was to show how sensitive age dependence was on organisational failure including time-varying measures of organisational size. Furthermore, he went on to examine the patterns of age dependence of life insurance companies seeking evidence of obsolescence and senescence. His findings suggest that positive age dependence which is greater than that in stable environments reflects the combined liabilities of obsolescence and senescence. In testing the ideas, he compared estimates of age dependence across several, more or less stable, historical periods. Ultimately, the results found supported the global hypotheses for size and age, depicting that dependence is sensitive to the inclusion of time-varying size and particularly that the liability of newness appeared without size controlled. His other finding is that the liability of aging exhibited by life insurance companies (when size was controlled) pointed to the liability of obsolescence.

3.3,3.3 Liability of foreignness

Zaheer (1995) is known to have introduced the construct of ‘liability of foreignness’ coined from Hymer’s similar contribution, where primary proof of liability of foreignness existed, thereby laying the groundwork for future research (Denk et al., 2012). The construct has become a central pillar of yet more developments of the theory of the multinational enterprise (MNE). According to Zaheer (1995:342-3) the liability of foreignness refers to the 'costs of doing business abroad' that result in a competitive disadvantage for an MNE subunit; such additional tacit and social costs would not be incurred by well-embedded indigenous companies (Eden & Miller, 2004; Hymer, 1976; Kindlerberger, 1969). As previously indicated, the concept of Liability of foreignness attracted a lot of interest after Zaheer introduced the phenomenon in 1995 and it was after this period that many scholars laid out its theoretical foundations, with some of them probing and exploring the drivers of additional internationalization costs, whilst others proposed strategies to overcome the challenges posed by the concept (Denk et al., 2002*).* Zaheer's (1995:343) view is that the liability of foreignness may arise from four sources being: a) costs associated directly with spatial distance, where costs of travel, transportation, and coordination over some distance and across time zones are experienced; b) specified firm costs which arise on particular company's unfamiliarity with and lack of roots in a local environment; c) costs arising from the host country environment, including lack of legitimacy of foreign firms and economic nationalism; and lastly d) home country environment costs which may include, restrictions on high-technology sales to selective countries. Zaheer's (1995) question sought to answer:

"Whether firms in a competitive globally integrated environment face a liability of foreignness and to what extent either importing home-country organisational capabilities or copying the practices of successful local firms can help them overcome the liability?" Results support the existence of a liability of foreignness and the role of a firm's administrative heritage in providing competitive advantage to its multinational subunits. They also highlight the difficulty which firms face in copying organisational practices from other firms.

The implications of Zaheer (1995) study are that, when the strengths or competitive advantage of the firm is on its organisational capabilities, units which have been established in the foreign country should continue with their routines rather than attempt to copy local practices. The results suggest that to avert the liability of foreignness, firm-specific advantages as embodied in imported organisational practices, may be a more effective way for multinational enterprises.

3.3.3.4 Liability of newness

Barron, West, & Hannan (1994:381) set out to investigate two visions of organisational evolution. The first vision suggests that large and old organisations are naturally increasingly dominant over their environment. The second vision suggests that as organisations age they become less able to respond to new challenges. The focus of the study was to investigate which of these visions best describes the evolution of state-chartered credit unions existing in New York City from 1914 through to 1990, through analysing the effects of organisational age, size and population density on rates of organisational failure and growth. They examined the effects of age and size on organisational mortality rates, which shape the age distribution of an organisational population and further examined the effects of age and size on organisational growth rates, which shape the population's size distribution. The organisational world vision suggests that large organisations have major advantages over smaller rivals, due to the fact that they can collude with partners and in the process exercise both economic and political power. Studies undertaken by Barron, West, & Hannan (1994) find their basis on the contribution by Stichcombe's (1965) literature on organisational age and mortality, where he found that organisations experience a liability of newness, in that, new organisations fail at higher rates than old ones mainly due to internal organisational issues and environmental relations. Another vision which finds some basis in Schumpeter's (1947) thesis of 'creative destruction' gets scholars to suggest that new organisations get susceptible to competition from new entrants to the market and this increases with age. The arguments advanced between old and new organisations are that, there is belief that older (in most cases larger) organisations due to bureaucratic inertia find it more difficult to execute decisions timeously. On such basis and because of aging, both old and new organisations are considered to lack speed necessary to respond to environmental challenges and this results in them forfeiting market opportunities. Should old and larger organisations fail to react to challenges from innovative organisations, they would then lose market leadership regardless of the market structure remaining constant.

3.3.3.5 Liability of adolescence and obsolescence

Fichman & Levinthal (1991) maintain that the 'liability of adolescence' predicts a $\cap$ shaped relationship between age and failure. In most cases new organisations begin with a stock of assets, (e.g. goodwill, positive beliefs, commitment, and other resources), all these buffer the organisations during an initial 'honeymoon period' regardless of whether the outcomes are unfavourable or not. The period when the organisation is buffered depends on the initial stock, such that the more the initial stock, the longer the organisation is buffered. As time progresses, and as initial endowments slowly get used up, the organisations become constrained to meet ongoing resource needs, thus they are unable to establish effective routines or stable exchange relations, which raises the likelihood of failure. According to Baum & Amburgey (2000:384) both the liabilities of newness and adolescence provide divergent accounts of age dependence for young organisations, even though they both have implications for a monotonic decline in failure for older organisations. However, subsequent research found that mortality rates do not always decline monotonically from the organisation's initial operations. It has been found that, rates sometimes rise during a short early period of the organisation life span while initial stocks of resources are being utilized, before declining over most of a typical life span (Carroll & Huo, 1988; Aldrich et al., 1990; Brudel & Schussler, 1990; Finchman & Levinthal, 1991). Following these findings, most scholars concluded that failure rates peak during 'adolescence'. Baum & Amburgey (2000:384) argue that the crucial omission made by most scholars on the research on age and organisational mortality is their failure to recognise the importance of age and the differences in the sizes of the organisation. Their arguments are that variations in size over lifetime (due to the great difficulty of finding data on the sizes of all organisations in a population over its history) might account for the observed liability of newness; organisations tend to grow with age, and mortality rates presumably decline with size.

Most research studies undertaken have shown that controlling size has the ultimate effect of making the age positive. Research undertaken by Barnett (1990) reports a positive and significant effect of age on mortality rates for the population of early telephone companies in Pennsylvania and a positive, non-significant effect for a similar population in Iowa. Ranger-Moore (1990, 1991) also reports a positive, marginally significant effect for the population of life insurance companies in New York State during 1975-1937. Banaszak-Holl (1991) however, reports a positive, non-significant effect on the rate of bankruptcy and a significant, positive effect on the rate of absorption for banks in Manhattan during 1840-1980. Baum's & Oliver's (1991) findings indicate a significant positive effect for licensed day-care centres and nurseries in Toronto during 1971-87. Within the brewpubs and microbreweries Caroll & Swaminathan (1992) find a positive and significant effect and a positive but non-significant effect respectively over 1975-90. Lastly, a positive and significant effect of age for the population of U.S credit unions is found during 1980-89 (Amburgey, Dacin & Kelly, 1994).

In reconciling the constructs of the liability of newness and liability of adolescence Henderson (1999:283) eloquently states that "Common to both the newness and the adolescence perspectives is that the early years of a firm's life are the most hazardous, and failure rates eventually decline with age. They differ only about whether failure rates peak at founding or several years later". He argues that taking the overall firm's lifecycle into cognizance, minor differences emerge between newness and adolescence. The views raised by Henderson (1999:284) converge in the argument that "enterprises do face the significant risk of being selected out from their competitive environment more in the first years of their existence, than later". Adolescence may be interpreted as integrating, rather than opposing newness and all these views end up in contrast to the 'liability of aging', another liability construct identified by scholars in the first half of the 1990s (e.g. Barnett, 1990; Baum & Oliver, 1991; Barron et al., 1994). The 'liability of aging' (Baum 1989; Barron et al., 1994; Ranger–Moore, 1997) specifies processes affecting older organisations and therefore predicts that failure increases with the time of aging. Stinchcomber (1965:153) contends that, "...... the organisational inventions that can be made at a time in history depend on the social technology available at that time". Whereas Baum & Amburgey (2000:05) maintain that as environments are ever turbulent, there are bound to be changes and that bounded nationality and structural inertia make it difficult for individuals to keep their organisations aligned with the demands posed by the environment. When environmental changes are experienced, there is a high possibility of exposure of aging organisations to a risk of obsolescence. Aging may be a product of ‘senescence’ (the build up of internal friction, precedent and political pacts) that frustrate action and performance, thereby reducing an organisational performance and chances of survival, something that may occur even in stable environments. The risks posed by senescence and obsolescence are rather separate and distinct in that, senescence is a direct result of aging and obsolescence is a direct effect of environmental change.

3.3.4 Liabilities research stream of the 2000s

The research stream of the 2000 experienced a huge leap into both the conceptual and empirical research of the liabilities phenomena. In this new era, the liability of newness, adolescence and aging continue to experience much needed attention. Several scholars started to identify the kind of liabilities which existed and others started to understand how best to face challenges posed by these liabilities. The research directions pursued by most scholars is generally similar, some followed the call for research into areas identified, whilst others made recommendations, for example, covering the possible relationships between the identified liabilities and others explored theoretical perspectives. Research undertaken by Eisenhardt & Schoonhoven (1990) indicates that some sampled firms’ founding teams, as well as the attributes of the environment of operation in which they competed, managed to mitigate the liability of newness. After such, observations were made, Bruton & Rubanik (2002) undertook a study to analyse the death rates and survival changes of high technology start-up firms in Russia. Their findings indicate that top management size (largeness and capability) to integrate internal resources, and the firm’s ability to innovate in its product range, worked against the liability of newness in the sample of investigation. Findings on studies by Thornhill & Amit (2003) indicate that younger failures can be considered to be a result of the deficiencies that often regard the managerial knowledge and the financial management capabilities of the newly established firms. Liabilities research stream of the 2000s had emphasis and focus on the liability of foreignness, strategic liabilities; turnaround liabilities; leadership liabilities; liability of outsidership; liability of home; management consultant liabilities, liabilities of origin; and Liability of Multinationality.

3.3.4.1 Liability of foreignness (LOF)

Following Zaheer's (1995) introduction of the liability of foreignness (LOF) there was a myriad of scholars who developed interest in this phenomenon and subsequently contributed immensely in laying some theoretical foundations for the concept. (Eden & Miller, 2001; Mezias, 2002a; Zaheer, 2002; Miller & Richards, 2002; Harvey, Novicevic, Buckley & Fung, 2005; Sethi & Guisinger, 2002). There is a plethora of literature on the liability of foreignness in the research stream of the 2000s. According to Dent et al., (2012: 324) the best way to identify the literature review of the LOF is to apply reviews by (Fastoro & Whitelock, 2010; Judge et al., 2007; Transfield et al., 2003) focusing on the leading six general management journals proposed by Tahai & Meyer (1999), and the six top-tier international business outlets as suggested (Du Bois & Reeb, 2000). At the apex of the research on this phenomenon, is Zahee (1995) who is considered to be the pioneer of the LOF, and who provided the primary evidence on the existence of the LOF with predictions tested with a paired sample of 24 foreign exchange trading rooms of major Western and Japanese banks in New York and Tokyo. The research collaboration of Zaheer & Mosakowski (1997:460) ensured that the concept of LOF is further expanded by the addition of a dynamic perspective and this made available, findings that internalisation challenges decrease as time progresses. They established the existence of a liability of foreignness in a global population of currency trading rooms over a 20 year period, and showed how this liability declined as the foreign firm remained in a particular location and declined with increasing deregulation and industry globalisation. It was found that the firm's strategic and organisational factors including the embrace of technological changes affect the firm's internal control systems and this determined their survivals.

Some years later Eden & Miller (2001) set out to answer Zaheer's (2002:350) question as to whether 'the Cost of Doing Business Abroad (CDBA- an economic term which is primarily driven by market costs related to a geographic distance) and Liability of Foreignness (LOF- a sociological concept consisting primarily of structural/relational and legitimacy costs) are synonymous? Were the liabilities of foreignness a subset of the costs of doing business abroad? Or are they an overarching concept within which the costs of doing business abroad fall?' Following Eden & Miller (2001) there was acknowledged by researchers that, indeed there is a difference between LOF and CDBA and the conclusion reached with recommendations being the need to fully understand the liability of foreignness and its ramifications (Zaheer, 2002:357). Eden & Miller (2004) argue that the concept of LOF is about understanding what they term as 'institutional distance' (the cognitive, normative and regulatory) that exists between the home country and the host countries. CDBA is termed as the broader concept that includes LOF and that it is economic activity-based, encompassing such as production, marketing, and distribution costs relating to geographic distance. LOF was classified into the three types of hazards, which came to be known as the 'unfamiliarity', 'discriminatory', and 'relational', the objective of which was to further depict what impact these pillars of institutional distance (regulatory, normative, and cognitive) has on each single hazard.

The 'unfamiliarity hazards' are considered as unfamiliarity costs, which are a reflection of a firm lacking knowledge of, or similar experience in the foreign country it intends to expand its business. According to Caves (1971), the foreign firm is bound to pay more unlike the host country firm who barely pays anything for what they have (due to government subsidies to the local firms) also because unlike the foreign firm, the native firm has more information on which to base its business decisions. The emphasis here regarding the liability of foreignness is not necessarily the age of the MNE, but its experience of doing business in the host country. This therefore implies that the shorter the period of stay in the host country, the more exposure to unfamiliarity hazards, which constitute a measure regarding more/additional costs that the MNE has to incur in order to achieve at least the same level of experience the local firm already has. This vital information may be acquired through ways such as, local engagement in production/manufacturing, marketing initiatives, partnering with local companies (joint ventures), or using previous experience gained from countries similar to the host country.

The ‘discrimination hazards’, which is the second aspect of the liability of foreignness, is the discriminatory treatment which is borne by the foreign investors and not the local investors. This discrimination may be displayed from various players such as from governments, local firms, shareholders, consumers and the general public in the host country. Henisz & Williamson (1999) maintain that the costs resulting from discrimination hazards are a reflection of political hazards, which, Balabanis et al., (2001) refer to as consumer ethnocentricity in the host country. The implication therefore is that discriminatory costs focus on the challenges of earning external legitimacy. Foreignness therefore has to be looked at from the MNE viewpoint of the host country (outside-inside) and the host country’s viewpoint of the MNE (inside –outside).

The last of the aspects of the LOF is ‘relational hazards’ which aspect is critical as it is considered the heartbeat of the foreign firms as it borders on maintaining relations. Masten, Meechan & Snyder (1991) confirm that all firms, one way or the other, have to incur costs in starting their operations, either internally or externally. It is generally accepted that the costs are anticipated to be higher for any foreign firm and Caves (1971) considers this as a penalty imposed on an organisation for it to be effective in its managerial capacity. The MNE’s challenge is the issue of immense uncertainty to deal with; this challenge may either be in terms of external uncertainty, posed by unknown foreign environments, and internal uncertainty posed by the difficulties which may arise when managing people who are at a distance with various cultural orientations (Anderson & Gatignon, 1986). These relationships between the employer and employees, are key and pose uncertainties in terms of relations, hence they cause ‘relational hazards’ in respect of immense administrative costs of managing the relationships between parties engaged in business ventures in the host country (Buckley & Casson, 1998: Henisz & Williamson, 1999).

According to Luo & Mezias (2002:217) in order for MNEs to succeed in foreign markets and to avert disadvantages or the liabilities of foreignness, firms must commit to deploying dynamic capabilities which would generate ownership-specific advantages which are superior to those of the host firms. Numerous emerging markets which provide business opportunities also have enormous LOF. These liabilities are increased by the complexity and uncertainty of the regulatory, legal, social and cultural environments within which the foreign firm has to operate. All these necessitate that the foreign firm must seriously explore and scan these opportunities and also consider the complex LOF within the new international context and ultimately the MNE must adjust their market entry strategies and local operations, and seriously consider integrating their strategies. "A lack of theoretical pluralism limits the scope and level of analysis for investigating LOF. As with most relatively under researched phenomena, there are numerous opportunities to investigate LOF using previously unapplied theoretical perspectives" (Luo & Mezias, 2002:218). Future effective research which could be undertaken under the LOF would give great benefits if new theoretical approaches are emphasised on. There are numerous examples which are presented here: The 'resource dependence theory' (which takes into cognisance that firm growth is an important factor dependant on securing and controlling needed resources from other organisations) could be used in investigating the MNE efforts in reducing local resource dependence and further alignment with the global strategies (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). The 'resource–based theory' (which identifies particular firm capabilities and competencies and adoption of the same) could be used to improve our understanding of how MNE's incur the LOF or how it may be mitigated by the use of rent-generating resources. Networking or networking theories are another avenue which may enlighten our investigative methods of how to overcome LOF. Within the inter-organisational level, local business community, alliances and joint ventures may reduce LOF. Involvement with peer subsidiaries in the host country might enhance networking at the intra-organisational level and mitigate LOF. The use of the learning and evolutionary theories might enable organisational learning, because as firms gain more country-specific knowledge the LOF is anticipated to reduce.

According to Denk et al., (2012) past research initiatives on LOF focused mainly on the theoretical foundations (e.g Luo & Mezias, 2002), so scholars analysed the determinants of the LOF, together with the impact of these internationalisation challenges on MNEs (Seno-Alday, 2010). Other researchers argue that cultural and spatial distances have an influence on the LOF which the MNE faces in their operations abroad (Eden & Miller, 2004; Ghemawat, 2001; Zaheer, 1995; Calhoun, 2002; Miller & Richards, 2002). Additional drivers of LOF are identified as a lack of international experience (Calhoun, 2002), foreign competition (Miller & Richards, 2002; Zaheer & Mosakowski, 1997) lack of embeddedness (Miller & Richards, 2002; Zaheer & Mosakowski, 1997), and insufficient knowledge of the host market (Petersen & Pedersen, 2002). With the evolution of this phenomenon, some scholars opted to test the impact or effects of the LOFs by mainly using survival and exit rates of MNEs (Zaheer, 1995; Zaheer & Mosakowski, 1997) and other scholars used performance measures (Mezias, 2002a; Sethi & Guisinger, 2002; Zaheer, 1995). Some other measures used included the X-efficiency (Miller & Richards, 2002) and others are classified as probability lawsuits.

In addition to the recommendation by Luo & Mezias (2002) regarding the use of theories, contributions within the research stream in 2000s made use of several theories. Sethi & Guisinger (2002) maintain, drawing on the resource-based view, that the MNE's ability to correctly analyse foreign market characteristics assist in articulating LOF. Through the evolutionary perspective, Hennart et al., (2002) were able to depict that foreign market exits are not necessarily a sign of failure in their bid to expand their businesses nationwide. In their investigations on the phenomenon, organisational theory enabled Petersen & Pedersen (2002) to show the mitigating effects of learning and international experience on the degree of LOF. Henk et al., (2012) answer and agree with the recommendation of Lou & Mezias (2002) that the use of unapplied theoretical perspectives such as theories of international expansion, social network theory, institutional theory and resource based theory, enhances theoretical pluralism as it offers numerous possibilities for research into the future and more understanding of the LOF. Their findings indicate the increasing number of studies which have been applied to LOF which have been single theoretical streams and therefore highlight the need to utilise combined theories which would allow for the integration of different research questions. The various emerging theoretical streams, coupled with new topics in the field of international business would enrich studies in LOF, where managers in organisations would no longer be intimidated by LOF and would work hard in turning disadvantages into opportunities (Aharoni & Brock, 2010; Elango, 2009). Other forms of liabilities identified in the 2000 research streams are explored in the next sections.

3.3.4.2 Strategic liabilities

Strategic liabilities are defined as resources that damage and destroy a firm's ability to generate rents and are rent destroyers. Arend (2004) maintains that research within the resource based view (RBV) of the firm has placed more emphasis on the positive factors that contribute to sustained performance (Powell, 2001; West & De Castro, 2001), but completely ignores the negative factors that detract a firm's performance and he therefore called for research into these negative factors. He asserts that past and present research has contributed significantly to the understanding of the resource-based view of the firm (e.g Barney, 1986, 1989, 1991, 2001; Penrose, 1959; Teece et al., 1997; Wenerfelt, 1984). Scholars have criticised the RBV (e.g Priem and Butler; 2001) with some opting to put more emphasis and effort into clarifying its requirements (Peteraf, 1993), while others interrogated its applicability (e.g Amit and Schoemaker; 1993; Mahoney & Pandian, 1992) and its span (e.g Dierickx & Coll, 1989; Kor & Mahoney, 2004; Lockett & Thompson, 2004; Rugman & Verbeke, 2004). Current research seems to indicate that some firms fail because they lack superior assets and capabilities, however, it may be true that they fail because they retain many destructive holdings and processes (Powell, 2001). It is therefore worthwhile that whilst the positive influences on firm performance are being considered, the negative influences on the firm performance should also be considered in order to objectively evaluate strategy.

In his study, Arend (2004), emphasised the need to thoroughly define the concept of 'strategic liabilities' and to highlight how they differ from 'strategic assets'. Strategic assets are the positive side of the ledger, whilst strategic liabilities are the negative side. He further, asserts that the majority of interest in research by consultants, academics and business people has been drawn towards success factors like strategic assets rather than the strategic liabilities which cause organisational failure, poor performance and non-success (Arend, 2004:1006). He thus proposed a framework for identifying these destructive holdings and for determining the modalities for mitigating their effects for improved performance. In his view, these strategic liabilities have to be defined and their origins be thoroughly examined in order to craft effective implementation strategies in dealing with them. Further, an exploration of the context-dependency of both strategic assets and strategic liabilities is a key aspect. Finally, there should be set out methodologies to effectively prescribe procedures and processes for the management of 'strategic liabilities' and their context.

Arend (2004) views strategic assets as resources that potentially affect rents (profits and earnings) in a positive direction; these are scarce, inimitable, non-substitutable, and appropriable and in demand especially in instances where demand indicates value (Amit and Schoemaker, 1993; Barney, 1986, 1989, 1991; Conner, 1991; Dierickx and Cool, 1989; Peteraf, 1993). Similarly, they arise when factors that can potentially negatively affect performance are controlled and the result is the creation of competitive advantage (Powell, 2001). Normally owners of strategic assets have the ability to earn monopoly profits (exploitation of a market failure) over some range of outputs produced from these assets (Arend, 2004:1005) and they originate from endowment, good luck, and from the use of already owned strategic assets. In most cases, firms with more strategic assets perform better and therefore gain rents by leveraging the strategic assets and finally the heterogeneity of the firm, against other firms and other governance forms; this is based on the special relatedness of the firm's resources and capabilities (Arend, 2004:1005).

Strategic liabilities on the other hand are costly in that they reduce the firm's performance and value, both actual and potential. (Arend, 2004:1007) he asserts that the costliness arises from the liability's role in causing inefficiency in the firm or from the liabilities inherent negative market value in the current context. Strategic liability is supply-restricted in the industry; it is scarce in that not all rivals have it, it cannot be economically converted to a form, and it is at minimum, benign. The high liability costs are appropriated and paid for by the firm because the cost of transferring the liabilities is too high. Strategy owners cannot transfer the responsibility of the liability to another party, in as much as the non-owners of strategic assets cannot transfer the value from owners. The heterogeneity of the firm, against other firms and other governance forms, is based on the special relatedness of the firm's resources and capabilities. Firms with strategic liabilities perform worst and the more a strategic liability fulfils the relevant characteristics, the more it unfavourably affects its owner's performance. Firms lose less value by mitigating strategic liabilities, and they cannot completely reduce liabilities unless they dissolve.

Arend (2004:1008) postulates that there are three main features that determine a strategic liability and it is these that differenciates the notion from that of strategic assets: a) If supplied to all rivals, no relative disadvantage would exist; b) if convertible, the liability could be minimised or eliminated within the firm; c) if not costly, the liability would not detract from rent-generation in the firm. The features enumerated above are a prerequisite of a liability to qualify as a strategic liability. As has been indicated above, Arend (2004) set out to formally define and analyse what constitute strategic liabilities. To that end, he explored other alternative representations of liabilities (Arend, 2004) including the "W" in SWOT (Andrews, 1971), core rigidities (Christenson & Overdorf, 2000; Leonard-Barton, 1992) and, inefficiencies, and inertia (Lieberman & Montgomery, 1988). He indicated that the "W" is not necessarily related to a factor that is costly, nor does it entail an appropriability concern and therefore does not qualify as a strategic liability because other rivals would not hold it by definition (Arend, 2004:1008). Rigidities may occur in employee skills and knowledge, even on a firm's technical, management, and value systems, therefore the need to manage systems to accommodate employee skills to improve the value system (Leornard-Barton, 1992), but these do not qualify as strategic liabilities as these require strict, *not simply implied*, *inconvertibility* and the *non-transferability* characteristics (Arend, 2004:1008). Lastly, strategic liabilities extend beyond a role as a root of inertia. Inertia is defined as the inability of a firm to make beneficial change generally as a response to a change in the competitive environment. However, the causes for inertia, if sufficiently institutionalised to be inconvertible and are relatively scarce and hard to transfer, constitute strategic liabilities (Arend, 2004:1008). Managers have to be aware of the impact that strategic liabilities may have on strategic choices that they make and the ultimate implementation of these choices. Arend (2004:1010) postulates the following implications related to strategic liabilities.

Firstly, the more the strategic liabilities increase, the firm performance is bound to deteriorate as the implication is that the firm pays higher costs and consequently lower profits follow, thereby worsening performance. Second, if the strength of a strategic liability increases in any of its definitional characteristics, the firm's performance is bound to deteriorate. Profitability plummets as a result of high direct costs and scarcity rises, which is an indication that the firm is now open to more attacks from rival players. Thirdly, with the occurrence and increase of complementarity (costs of the firm being higher than if the two liabilities existed differently) among individual strategic liabilities, profitability decreases. Last, strategic assets and strategic liabilities are considered to be the determinants of a joint firm performance. This is because if assets are effectively utilised they reap profits and from liabilities various issues of concern may be diagnosed.

Findings from this Arend (2004) study culminated in the development of prescriptions on how to manage strategic liabilities, the management of factors and contexts out of which strategic liabilities and strategic assets emerge. Managing strategic liabilities in order to positively affect firm rents includes both the identification of such factors and the choice of proper tactics for mitigating the effects of liability (Arend, 2004:1019). Arend (2004) prescription included: Organisation's inability to identify their current strategic liabilities as there is a problem of information availability. Examples would be the firm's inability to identify a cost, and whatever prevents the firm from identifying the source of that cost. Second, when the strategic liabilities are identified these should be isolated and removed from beneficial processes to the extent that the marginal costs of doing so just equals the marginal benefits of doing so.

Arend (2004:1016) postulates that the management of strategic liabilities is essential and therefore firms must undertake to increase rents, and to create, enhance, leverage and defend one or more of their strategic assets within a given context. Firms should mitigate one or more strategic liabilities within a given context and manipulate it to accomplish the situations indicated above or impair the ability of rivals to accomplish the same. Conditions (Influencing Factors) under which rents may decrease include competitive disadvantages and relative cost differences if not properly recorded; cost sources should be easy to identify and firms should have timing or pure informational advantage over others and the strategic liability could either be a stage in the evolution of a strategic asset or may come from an external party. Conditions (Influencing Contexts) under which rents may increase include context manipulation affects; increasing own strategic asset effects, decreasing that in rivals; decreasing own strategic liability effects, increasing that in rivals; more options could be considered in manipulation; both combative and cooperative means and rivals have little capacity and incentive for acting and reacting in kind.

3.3.4.3 Turnaround liabilities

Pretorius (2008: 87) maintains that turnaround situations have, at some stage in their life cycle, become a potential threat for most business ventures. Some ventures experience traumatic processes, while others change directions successfully with less pain, depending on where they hover between the extremes of the success or failure continuum. Each turnaround situation has a unique set of preconditions that serve as a barrier to be overcomed (Ooghe & De Prijcker, 2008:224; Pretorius, 2006:12). Therefore, the decisions that ventures are faced with and the potential consequences of failure have significant and interesting impacts on business decisions (Crutzen & Van Caillie, 2007:02; Cybinski 2001:31). Pretorius (2008) maintains that while the literature suggests strategies that can be employed during a turnaround dilemma, such literature is very silent on turnaround situation liabilities that describe preconditions to be overcome during such turnarounds (Pearce & Michael 2006:203). If at all such research exists, it is done in piece meal and is isolated and therefore entrepreneurs may undertake strategic choices and implement such without control of the actual realities of the situation on the ground. It is therefore to identify and clarify the turnaround liabilities in order to understand what managers face in turnaround situations (Robbins & Pearce 1992: 287).

Pretorius (2008: 89) proposed and identified critical variables from scientific literature on turnaround and crafted a conceptual framework of liabilities with the knowledge and skills pertinent to successfully overcoming the liabilities of the turnaround situation. An understanding of these liabilities will enable and better guide decision making during strategy choices and subsequent implementation. Findings from the Pretorius (2008) study depict that depending on whether a company is private or public, the board or shareholders would in turnaround situations, normally appoint a turnaround manager as an agent to introduce a turnaround in the ailing business venture to avoid it sinking even further. An agent or the agency relationship is where one party (the principal) delegates authority to another (agent) to carry out specific duties and responsibilities on behalf of the former in accordance with specific instructions to further his/her interests. Pretorius & Holtzhauzen (2008: 92) argue that the turnaround manager faces several key liabilities associated with the turnaround situation that should be overcome to be successful in rescuing the venture from further decline. The liabilities have a direct bearing on the decision-making of the turnaround manager and therefore on the perceived results, in comparison with the agency costs, that the board considers as principal. On the basis of the above, they proposed a framework of six liabilities facing a turnaround manager.

a) The turnaround manager faces 'legitimacy' issues with other stakeholders including creditors, staff, labour, unions and suppliers, among others. Legitimacy enquires as to whether the turnaround manger is of the perceived capacity to successfully affect the turnaround, given his or her credibility, reputation, knowledge, skills track record, ability to muster resources, acceptability as a representative to all stakeholders and more (Pretorius & Holtzhauzen, 2008:94). Legitimacy derived from Latin means "right, just, proper, appropriate, suitable, duly" (Lewis & Short 1975:1047).

   This 'liability of legitimacy' is complex as it relates to several issues within an organisation, some of which may be 'soft issues' of a personal nature where someone could be knowledgeable, skillful and some may show signs of offensive behaviour which could be undesirable on the face of the organisational stakeholders. Other examples of liability of legitimacy could be the appointment of the new appointee as turnaround manager at relatively higher remuneration relative to other senior or comparative staff which may raise unfavourable perception issues with stakeholders including staff. Pretorius & Holtzhauzen (2008:95) conclude that this liability is created by the turnaround situation and affects the appointment of either a turnaround manager or new leadership employed to face it. It is therefore a universal liability inherent in the turnaround situation. In as much as the manager may face this liability, they argue that the organisation may also face this liability as perception of customers, suppliers, creditors and others may challenge the legitimacy of a business to be engaged in the future.

b) Resource scarcity (level of resources either abundance or shortage) is usually experienced by organisations at stages of decline, such as stress, crisis or dissolution even though in most cases there may be exaggerations as there could be other underlying issues. Smith & Graves (2005: 307) argue that the 'level of free assets' is also crucial in determining the success of a turnaround intervention. Increased ability to borrow funds and the ability to generate cash (liquidity) from the firm's assets (Barker & Mone, 1998:1231), affords the organisation the ability and opportunity to better act on its strategic recovery choices. Despite this, turnaround proponents argue that resource scarcity is a result of financial mismatch in decision choices. Pretorius (2006.10) maintains that the leadership and origin of the distress, either strategic or operational, determines the resource slack. Resource scarcity appears at the heart of the liabilities faced by a venture in decline (Pretorius, 2008). The liability to overcome the resource scarcity (liability of resource scarcity) appears to be the main liability of all other liabilities as it is central, directly and indirectly and therefore this is the most single important liability that the turnaround manager must overcome in order to effectively operate.

c) The 'liability of strategy options' is another challenge facing an organisation when it intends to operationalize its strategy choices. Strategy options available to the turnaround manager are numerous, but poor choice of strategy may have a more severe impact on potential recovery than poor operational decisions will (Pretorius & Holtzhauzen, 2008: 97). The premise here is that origin of the causes of decline and failure is often categorized as either strategic or operational in nature (Robbins & Pearce 1992: 626). Generally operational problems such as inertia, inefficiencies, resource mismatch, and improper management are easier to address as in most cases their causes can easily be addressed, whilst strategic causes are very difficult to uncover because they usually pertain to technological changes in the environment, misplacement in positioning, wrong product, wrong marketing tools used, and these are all affected and get easily influenced by external factors beyond the control of the organisation. According to Barker & Duhaime (1997:14) for a turnaround strategy to be effective in reversing decline, it has to address the declining firm's core problem. It therefore stands to reason that ineffective turnaround often occurs when management fails to successfully diagnose the causes of their firm's decline and respond inappropriately.

d) The ability to change an organisation culture is closely associated with leadership and therefore the 'liability of leadership' affects the turnaround manager as they are an alternative leadership embodiment of the top management or new CEO or the leadership team (Pretorius & Holtzhauzen, 2008).The leadership's inability to adapt to change and, on the other, with its inability to create the necessary culture to support the strategy leads to decline and failure (Cannon & Edmondson, 2005:302). Pretorius & Holtzhauzen (2008: 99) argue that the leadership is therefore the pillar and core of the organisational decline and failure as cause and precondition, whether through leader's ability or inability to respond to environmental change, adopt strategies and implement actions or decisions in response to the decline.

e) Decision making in most organisations is underscored by data integrity. If the data integrity is questionable stakeholders would doubt the legitimacy of the existence of the organisation, including staff and even management, as decisions made would be based on the whims and notions of all and not on correct, complete and reliable data. Pretorius & Holtzhauzen (2008:99) posit that data integrity refers to correctness, completeness, wholeness, reliability and, truthfulness of the data available for decision making, and warn the turnaround manager that, in the turnaround situation, data for decision-making is subject to misrepresentation, as well as obscuring and suppression for various reasons, and the organisation ends up suffering the 'liability of data integrity'. In as much as some of these cases may be intentional, there are those that are unintentional but occur due to biases, heuristics or perceptive shortcuts and and the like, in which situation the turnaround manager should have the ability to verify and authenticate data for decision making purposes as lack of verification may lead to assumptions and poor choices in strategy.

f) The ultimate responsibility of the turnaround manager is to integrate all the strategies, activities, and resources in a holistic manner to create a 'critical mass' for successful implementation of the strategic choices (Pretorius & Holtzhauzen, 2008). These liabilities are a hindrance to the successful implementation of the strategic choices of the organisation, and the responsibility of integrating these then lies squarely on the shoulders of the turnaround manager. Accordingly therefore, Pretorius & Holtzhauzen (2008:99) postulate that integration requires a concerted effort to implement strategy through cost-cutting in operations and divisions, increasing sales, influencing and motivating staff to achieve goals, improving inefficiencies, creating working capital, and restructuring finance. Efforts directed at integrating all the activities result in organisations mitigating the 'liability of integration'.

In conclusion therefore, the critical turnaround liabilities identified above are stacked against the turnaround manager as he/she faces the daunting task of immense proportion. The turnaround manager is usually appointed by the company and possibilities exist that the incumbent may commit errors through inappropriate selections due to them lacking knowledge, skills, and experience of business rescue and turnaround (Pretorius & Holtzhauzen, 2008:102). Research has shown that liabilities which have been identified through this process are crucial for turnaround managers as they have varied implications for various stakeholders such as strategy practitioners, members of boards, the government, financial institutions and finally academics. Strategy practitioners could use the liabilities to improve their checklist and procedures from strategy crafting up to implementation. Board members are responsible for appointing turnaround managers and could use the highlighted qualities as appointment guidelines. Government as the legislator will be interested in ensuring that the public interest is taken aboard to protect them on their investment in such companies. Ultimately when a decision is reached as to the finance of the turnaround entity, financial institutions would be interested in the due diligence of the entity in question to assess its viability and ultimate sustainability. Lastly, academics could use the liabilities to teach the complexity of turnaround as would enhance the body of knowledge in strategy and business rescue.

3.3.4.4 Leadership liabilities

Research on leadership, (which mostly investigates characteristics, styles, actions, action logistics, situational contexts, and interactions), doesn’t offer any simple, particular model for mastering leadership. In contrast to numerous advices advanced, little attention has been paid to responding to the set of liabilities new managerial appointees must contend with, which limit their capacity to lead successfully (Pretorius, 2009:37). There are seven leadership liabilities which new managerial cadres must be prepared to face in their new positions and these new practices proposed could assist them overcome these liabilities (Pretorius, 2009:37). These liabilities are considered to be preconditions - for example, a dysfunctional culture, inherited consequence of bad decisions, or misleading data – that act as obstacles to effective leadership and strategy implementation. Managers face the a) ‘liability of legitimacy’ in that every new appointee at their workplace faces legitimacy issues with stakeholders, either as team members, superiors, clients, and other departments. These appointees are usually initially judged on subjective issues such as credibility, reputation, skills, ability to perform work, track record, the ability to influence and, many more issues. Even though a new manager may be knowledgeable and skilful and may exhibit behaviour and views which are considered to be objectionable to some potential followers, there are other issues to contend with. Other threats to legitimacy may include being unfamiliar with the new organisational culture, colleagues in the organisation feeling that they ought to have been given the job, and the view of employees on the appointee's compensation as being inappropriate. Pretorius (2009) maintains that the liability of legitimacy is complex and indeed crucial for the new appointee to overcome as it ultimately influences and is influenced by other liabilities. As this is a universal liability, it is inherent in any situation where a manager is appointed.

The b) 'liability of lack of prior knowledge' which could be considered as a lack of prior knowledge on an organisation that may create problematic situations where previous management has been removed for some reason or another and they left with that knowledge of the organisation and the only source of information left is with remaining team members. According to Pretorius (2009) prior knowledge refers to two specific elements which are industry knowledge and network knowledge. For the new appointee to overcome the liability of lack of prior knowledge, he or she is initially judged on the 'technical expertise' and or their skill by the team members. When the appointee gains practical knowledge of the whole organisation, its contacts, suppliers and other stakeholders they gain practical insight and the legitimacy becomes established and therefore the liability of prior knowledge lessens.

The c) 'liability of failing to share a vision' is yet another liability that impairs leadership capabilities of managers. It is believed that many leaders and organisations fail to achieve their objectives because they are unable to share their vision successfully with their followers. According to Pretorius (2009) sharing a vision implies that the leaders succeed in transferring the vision to the followers, who would then take ownership of it. The integral and crucial part of this is that legitimacy depends on the successfully shared vision and this is a prerequisite for being able to share the vision successfully. Pretorius (2009:39) affirms that implementing strategies requires an integrated approach to assimilating different initiatives, activities and people in a holistic way as to create a 'critical mass' for achieving organisational goals and objectives. In the same token, integrating these efforts from activities and people requires the ability to inspire people to see 'the bigger picture' and further manage the detail actions of the processes simultaneously. When concerted effort is achieved in having created a critical mass then effective leadership would be achieved failing which the d) ‘liability of integration’ for critical mass will be experienced.

Communication is one of the most essential aspects and tools for a manager because without it, leaders and managers become ineffective especially in the absence of feedback. Feedback is considered as a ‘mirror’ for followers to rate their performance and behaviour on as this is critical to their continued commitment. In the absence of effective feedback the e) ‘liability of feedback control’ sets in and new appointees are unable to deliver effective and timely feedback to enhance his/her legitimacy to followers. The f) ‘liability of culture’ faces every employee in an organisation especially when they are newly appointed. When implementing the strategy in an organisation, the organisational culture may be conducive or obstructive. Even though organisations differ in terms of culture, others build barriers of resistance to change especially with new appointees to the organisation. The liability of culture plays a pivotal role in other liabilities as it affects all of them. The g) liability of data access and data integrity, remains the most critical after the liability of legitimacy. Data access and the soundness of the information is vital for decision making in order to meet challenges within the organisation. Inadequate information on systems, people and performance pose as a great challenge. Normally data might be available within systems, however the new appointee might have to acquaint themselves with such systems to benefit from the information within the data. Data integrity also plays a crucial part in that, the data must be reliable and bear a true reflection of the situation. Followers in organisations are relied upon to provide reports and data interpretations.

Pretorius (2009:40) maintains that the newly appointed manager should use the available time effectively and further overcome these liabilities by pursuing the best and correct practices, overcome these liabilities faster than expected and a plan has to be put in place to ensure effectiveness. Senior management also has a part to play in that they should identify the success factors which would help the new appointee to overcome these liabilities. Research findings indicate crucial aspects of the liabilities approach which are necessary for effective organisational performance. With the identification of the seven liabilities that limit appointees’ capacity to lead successfully, which act as obstacles to effective leadership and strategy implementation (Pretorius, 2009) organisations would be better placed to understand, plan and implement a liabilities framework to foster successful leadership. In conclusion, the 'liability of legitimacy' is complex but crucial to overcome for whoever is appointed to lead organisations. It influences, and is influenced by, both liabilities of leadership and strategic options. It is therefore a universal liability inherent in any situation (Pretorius & Holtzhauzen, 2008: 87).

3.3.4.5 Liability of outsidership

Johanson & Vahlne (2009) postulate that with numerous changes in the business landscape in terms of practices and theoretical advancement, the business environment is nowadays viewed as a web of relationships, a network, rather than as a neo classical market with several independent suppliers and customers. They argue that markets constitute networks of relationships which are a linkage to each other in many ways, which are complex, and some appear as invisible patterns. The firm's success requires that it should be established in more than one networks, because any beneficial business relationship occurs within the context of any relationship. Any firm which is established in a relevant network or networks is considered to be an insider. It follows therefore that, in international business the most crucial and relevant network(s) need to have an element of insidership. Similarly, a firm which does not have a relevant position in a network is considered to be an 'outsider'. Any firm which does not have any established relationships and networks within any market yet intends to enter that market will suffer from the 'liability of outsidership and foreignness'.

The outsidership status of the firm will disadvantage it from developing a business. However as the internationalisation commences, possibilities exist that a potential partner within the target market might request a service from the local supplier, thus creating the initial insider opportunity. Consequently, this opportunity offers organisational learning, building of trust, and organisational commitment processes initiated which are essential conditions for internationalisation and therefore the cornerstone for networking. The lack of institutional market knowledge and lack of business knowledge require different amounts of time to overcome. The lack of knowledge about language, laws, and rules of a foreign host and the lack of market knowledge which is related to the firm's business environment constitute 'the liability of outsidership' (Erikson, Johanson, Majkgard & Sharma, 1997). Johanson & Vahlne (2009:1426) argue that "a firm's problems and opportunities in international business are becoming less a matter of country-specificity and more one of relationship- specificity and network-specificity". The general conclusion is that entry into any market is similar throughout regardless of the market, because the firm is not aware of the type of actors in the business, how these relate to each other and other actors. This therefore calls for research that may explain the problem of foreign market entry especially where the 'liability of outsidership' appears to be the difficult part.

3.3.4.6 Liability of home (LOH)

Stevens & Shenkar (2012) set out to investigate and introduce a new construct labelled the 'liability of home' (LOH). The purpose of introducing this liability was to capture the liabilities faced by MNE due to their country of origin. LOH is defined as the disadvantage or hindrances experienced by a firm investing in a foreign country as a consequence of friction caused by attributes of its home country institutions. Similar to the constructs of 'country of origin' (COO), 'cost of doing business abroad' (CODBA), and 'liability of foreignness' (LOF) literature, LOH rests on institutional approach (Scott, 1995). The country of origin construct is defined in a narrow sense to refer to the salient impact of a firms' nationality confirmed to the likelihood of purchase and the price the consumer would pay for a product based on perceptions related to its country of origin (Bilkey & Nes, 1992). Liability of foreignness is defined as the 'costs of doing business abroad' that result in a competitive disadvantage for an MNE subunit – have been broadly defined as all additional costs a firm operating in a market overseas incurs that a local firm would not incur (Zaheer, 1995:342-3). Eden & Miller (2004) define the 'cost of doing businesses as the broader concept that includes LOF, also being economic activity-based, which encompasses costs such as production, marketing and distribution costs relating to geographic distance.

Stevens & Shenkar (2012) maintain that the LOH construct contributes to the literature of the liabilities theory in three ways: First, empirical tests confirm that nationality and institutional differences matter, but often in ways not expected or explainable by the currently used constructs (Miller & Parkhe, 2002; Miller & Richards, 2002). LOH offers an approach focused on the friction generated by a firm's home country institutional attributes as they conflict with the host country cognitive, normative and regulatory pillars (Stevens & Shenkar, 2012: 133).

The construct allows researchers to invest their focus on how specific attributes of a firm's home country interact with those of the home country. This is important because, the difference across foreign firms might be more significant regarding performance than the difference between foreign and local firms. They content that this aspect has not been given attention by the literature hence the need for its emphasis. Foreign firms might be allowed to enjoy benefits of home should home country attributes lead them to be viewed favourably than other foreign or even local firms. Second, the change of metaphor distance which is frequently used to signify a disadvantage and use of the word friction creates allowance for a more nuanced approach to understanding how institutional differences impact firm performance pillars, which are not treated in isolation in the international business. Lastly, by broadening the scope to the MNE as a whole, allows researchers to consider the global implications of a firm's nationality beyond the scope of a single host country. It is suggested that any actions instituted by a firm abroad, regardless of its consistency with local practices, can result in provocation and backlash at home, if the view is that it is inconsistent with home country's norms and values. LOH implies that firms must be able to adapt to local norms, regardless of the consequences this could have back home.

3.3.4.7 Management consultant liabilities

According to Pretorius & Stander (2012: 11963) management consultants experience numerous roadblocks to the successful completion of strategy projects and these obstacles create inability to strategize and are the result of inability preconditions. These inability preconditions accumulate into liabilities that not only limit the management consultant’s ability to earn economic rents, but also that of its clients and unmitigated strategizing liabilities may further result in prolonged competitive disadvantage for the management consultant’s client. Pretorius & Stander (2012:11973) undertook their research from a strategy-as-practice perspective, which enabled them to focus on relevant practices and praxis, and they further made recommendations to a theoretical management consultant liabilities framework which would in future through empirical research confirm the practical relevancy of the liabilities, preconditions, interrelationships and mediating or moderating factors identified. Pretorius & Stander (2012: 11964) argue that, academic literature remains silent on the liabilities or hindrances faced by management consultants during the process of strategizing. Academic literature is full of articles investigating the consultant client relationship (Lippit & Lippit, 1975: Thomas and Schwenk, 1983; Fincham, 1999; Sergio, 2002). There are several liabilities which have been identified in the research undertaken by (Pretorius & Stander, 2012), however only a few of them would be covered as the objective is only to highlight findings of the research undertaken within management consultants’ sphere to show the liabilities of management consultant during strategizing and further indicate the knowledge which can be used by organisations in strategizing. In respect of the ‘liability of problem crystallisation’ Pretorius & Stander (2012: 11968) argue that preconditions associated with this liability include; failure to identify the root causes faced by the organisation; the inability to communicate the problem correctly; insufficient knowledge about the problem; inadequate experience in dealing with the problem; organisational reluctance to appoint consultants, and so on. Management styles are an order of the day in most organisations and therefore organisations should be aware of these management styles. The ‘liability of organisation’ places a requirement on consultants to pursue and fully understand the detailed workings of the organisation and why they exist. The work of a consultant is usually limited in terms of power execution and discretion and this therefore restricts the consultant’s ability to effect the intended change (Davenport & Early, 2010), which is the true purpose of a consultant when strategizing (Cater et al., 2008; Petersen and Pulfelt, 2002). Influential power therefore has three preconditions, namely the amount of power granted to the consultant by the organisation; the consultant’s ability to identify the role players with influential power within the organisation; and the consultant's ability to influence management to commit to a proposed strategy (Pretorius & Stander, 2012:11970). In the process the 'liability of influential power' occurs, and this inhibits the consultants to effectively undertake their responsibilities. Consultants are faced with different perceptions from different stakeholders and therefore, they need to deliberately address issues that might be misconstrued as a result thereof, thereby experiencing the 'liability of perception'. Pretorius & Stander (2012: 11970) concluded that information overload is simply having too much information to make sense of or to use effectively and therefore during strategizing, information overload can lead to distractions, a loss of focus, increased errors, and impaired judgment thereby incurring the 'liability of information overload' (Edmunds & Morris, 2000) and may result in a 'fluffy' strategy. Preconditions to the liability of information overload therefore may consist of customer information overload, organisational information overload, personal information overload, and methods overload.

Pretorius & Stander (2012: 11973) maintain that according to their research findings, it appears that for the last two decades academia focused on the relationship between consultants in general and their clients and this was mainly due to academia not regarding consultants as strategists until strategy-as-practice was recognized as a field of strategy research. The final literature documents seven liabilities, namely the liabilities of: 'problem crystallization', 'successful consulting', 'context knowledge', 'influential power', 'information overload', 'integrated activity', and 'time'. These liabilities are each a combination of a unique set of 'inability preconditions' and it is the combined effect of these preconditions that acts as a barrier to management consultant success in the process of assisting organisations with strategizing (Pretorius & Stander, 2012:11973).

3.3.4.8 Liabilities of origin (LOO)

As already alluded to in the literature review, Stephen Hymer (1960) introduced the concept of the liability of foreignness (LOF) whereby foreign firms (outsiders) are likely to encounter competitive disadvantages not experienced by home firms (insiders) in the host country. Buckley and Casson (1998:540) maintain that the foreign "must possess a compensating advantage" with the view to overcome the 'costs of foreignness'. On the other hand, Ramachandran & Pant (2010:03) postulate that "research in subsequent years dwelt on the nature and deployment of the proprietary advantage(s) possessed by foreign firms, whilst less attention was paid to the nature or kind of disadvantage(s) faced by foreign firms" and the ultimate result for "their strategy of internationalization" (Zaheer, 2002: Mezias, 2002a: Cuervo–Cazurra, Maloney & Manrakhan (2007). Eden & Miller (2001:01) concur with the concerns raised by Cuervo-Cazurra et al., (2007) that "*costs* by themselves, have received less emphasis and attention, serving primarily to motivate research on the foreign firms advantages".

Research undertaken by Zaheer & Mosakowski (1997:439) found that the costs of doing business abroad concept seemed to be just usual remarks and therefore not seriously examined. Later on, research work by Zaheer (1995) and Zaheer & Mosakowski (1997) assisted in the clear redirection of attention to the disadvantages incurred by foreign firms in foreign markets. Ramachandran & Pant (2010:04) sought to "propose an in-depth engagement with the nature and the character of the broader set of disadvantages borne by Emerging Economy Multinationals (EE MNEs) during their journey of internationalization". The proposal envisaged comprised: a) that the disadvantages of EE MNE's have been neglected within the literature; b) a need existed to 'complement the insights provided by the LOF with the origin-driven disadvantages' which was labelled 'liabilities of origin'; and c) that the existing literature of organisational identity and institutional entrepreneurship could be a useful source to understand how foreign firms could overcome their liabilities of origin.

Ramachandran & Pant (2010:05) define the 'liability of origin' as disadvantages faced by foreign firms in the international markets as a result of their national origins and that these disadvantages arise as a consequence of three inter-related contexts of the foreign firm activities, these being: the organisational context, the home country context, and the host country context. Their contention is that firms suffer the 'liability of multinationality' - disadvantages which are inherent in foreign operations due to lack of control of foreign assets inhibiting the firms to fully appropriate the returns on their business (Hymer, 1960), and the 'liability of foreignness' that being long–lasting structural/relational and institutional costs of operating in host markets that were borne by foreign subsidiaries that had not yet gained access to local information networks and customer bases (Zaheer & Monakowski, 1997: Zaheer, 1995, 2002).

3.3.4.9 Liability of multinationality (LOM)

According to Eden & Miller (2001) the 'liability of multinationality' are disadvantages considered intrinsic to the process of managing and ownership of operations across borders which are embedded within the costs of operations in the domestic arena. According to Zaheer (2002) the LOF and the LOM are rather completely different from each other. The LOM consist of coordination and complexity costs found within firm operations, which is felt at the onset when cross-border activities are initiated. Hymer (1960) alluded to the risk of foreign exchange, thereby signifying a liability of multinationality, whilst costs of coordination were discussed and confirmed by Kindlerberger (1969) and Vernon (1977). According to Kindlerberger (1969:12) the "costs of operating at a distance" mean that the local firms enjoy their proximity to the decision making bodies and ensures that decisions are made quicker, decisively and without any hindrances and communication distortion.

The implications for the LOO are that costs are incurred in the management of the parent-subsidiary essential networks and relationships, the numerous networks of affiliates and subsidiaries, with further transnational institutions (Sethi& Judge, 2009; Eden & Miller, 2001). Cuervo-Cazurra et al., (2007) maintain that the MNE's lack of ability to ensure firm-specific advantages are transferred to the subsidiary hence the 'liability of multinationality'. Sethi & Judge (2009) maintain that the liabilities of multinationality should be considered to be relevant and be wholly seen useful at the level of MNE headquarters and not the subsidiary level.

3.4 CONCLUSIONS

The debate by academic scholars on the liabilities has shed light on how this theory could be used to address strategy implementation challenges using multiple theoretical perspectives. The liabilities theory has the potential to be exceptionally elaborate and to add value to the current debate on the implementation of organisations strategy choices. The four liabilities research streams discussed have greatly assisted us in identifying the evolution of the various liabilities within the different fields of studies. What remains for scholars is to utilise unapplied theoretical perspectives which have been adequately and eloquently elaborated in this chapter (Lou & Mezias, 2002) as this enhances theoretical pluralism and therefore offers numerous avenues for research into the future. The need for the utilisation of combined theories arises and this would allow for the integration of different research questions. The emerging liabilities theoretical streams such as the liability of home (Stevens, 2012), and liability of origin (Ramachandran, 2010) to name but a few, would enrich studies within the liabilities theory. These would empower managers to build competencies around those theoretical perspectives and develop solutions for challenges. Negative factors that detract from a firm's performance is now 'loud and clear' and this is an urgent agenda. Negative influences on firm performance must be considered to objectively evaluate strategy.

3.5 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter has adequately covered the literature research on the liabilities theory. The 1960s liabilities research stream consisted of the liability of foreignness and the liability of newness. The 1970s – 1980s liabilities research streams increased research efforts in the liability of newness, liability of smallness, liability of foreignness, liability of adolescence and the liability of obsolescence. The 1990s liabilities stream realised efforts towards emphasis on empirical research in the liability of newness and adolescence, liability of obsolescence, liability of foreignness, liability of Newness, liability of adolescence and obsolescence. The liabilities research stream in 2000's was characterised by intense empirical research with the liability of newness, adolescence and aging continuing to experience much needed attention and research into areas with the subsequent identification of new liabilities constructs such as turnaround liabilities, leadership liabilities, liability of outsidership, liabilities of origin, management consultant liabilities and liability of home.

CHAPTER 4: STRATEGY-AS-PRACTICE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

As already highlighted in Chapter 2, strategy researchers postulate that, the word ‘strategy’ derives from the Greek concept of ‘strategia’, which refers to ‘the office of general, command, or generalship’. There is no evidence of it being used in the modern sense, as it was in the Ancient Greek. It however is found in the Byzantine documents of the 6th century onwards (Mintzberg, 1994). The most commonly used word was military strategy, which is defined as a set of ideas implemented by military organisations to pursue desired strategic goals, or the planning and execution of the context between groups of armed adversaries (Hambrick & Chen, 2007). Strategy researchers have developed interest in getting into the ‘bowels’ of strategy-making (Chia & Mac Kay, 2007:218), and the debate on the definition of the concept continues, with some scholars agreeing that there is no consensus on its definition (Bourgeois, 1980; Gluck, Kaufman, & Walleck, 1982; Glueck, 1980; Hatten, 1979; Hofer & Schendel, 1978; Lenz, 1980b; Rumelt, 1979; Spender, 1979; Steiner, 1979).

Proponents of strategy such as Hambrick (1983) suggested that the observed lack of consensus in defining the concept is because the concept is multidimensional and situational hence, will accordingly be viewed differently depending on the. Regardless, some strategy theorists seem to agree that the study of strategy includes both the actions take and the content of strategy, as well as the processes by which actions are decided and implemented. They also agree that intended, emergent, and realised strategies may differ from one another and subsequently agree that the making of strategy involves conceptual as well as analytical exercises (Chaffee, 1985:89).

According to Carter, Clegg & Komberger (2008) on the extreme side of the debate, one strategy researcher Veyne (1997), urges scholars to think about ‘strategy’ in a reverse order to better understand the concept, opining that strategy does not exist as an object, nor as a starting point such that the practises that are associated with it make it acceptable as an object that can be observed and managed. Carter, Clegg & Komberger (2008:92) maintains that, strategy is an initial consideration in decisions which makes people to have an impression that, it is something that can be observed, crafted and managed in organisation's departments even though it is basically an outline and projection of available and possible practices. Strategy in reverse must entail looking at practices which result in lasting and continuing events rather than looking at how the strategy is crafted or manufactured, ultimately the converion of "things" or "events" must now be regarded as strategy. Strategy must not be considered as "independent of a set of practices that form its base"

This assertion postulated by Clegg et al., (2008) will later be revisited when discussing the critiques of the field of strategy as practice in this chapter. They go further to argue that only a few actions done in organisations will be named 'strategy' since these actions are usually around a series of practices that constitute an embodiment of what is considered as strategy.

The main question which researchers have been tirelessly trying to address over the years through developing theories, frameworks, and undertaking empirical studies (Mintzberg, 1994) is, 'How does strategizing work in organisations?' Subsequent to these efforts, varied perceptions of strategy and its concomitant workings evolved overtime. Chandler (1962) argued that strategy consists of the formulation of basic long-term goals, and the concomitant identification of courses of action accompanied with the apportioning of the available resources. Mintzberg & Waters (1982) considered strategy as a 'pattern in a stream of decisions'. According to Whittington (2006a), from time immemorial the strategy discipline was treated as an organisational property, which means most organisations have in one way or another had a strategy framework that was followed. There now seems to be some shift in focus pertaining to how strategy is being seen and also in the way it is practiced (Hambrick, 2004; Jarzabkowski, 2004). This shift in focus and interest on strategy research has ultimately landed itself within the scrutiny of the micro-processes, practices, and activities that have been clandestinely overlooked in traditional research on strategy (Chia & MacKay, 2007). Without doubt, the growth of this new era finds its roots within the strategy process work of the 1980s laid down by

Pettigrew (1985) and Johnson (1987). Jarzabkowski & Spee (2009) posit that people are preoccupied with the work of strategy, whilst the theory of strategy is inundated with multivariate analyses of firms with emphasis on industry-level effects upon firm performance. There is a curious absence of human actors and their actions in most strategy theories, even those that purport to examine the internal dynamics of the firm, such as the resource–based view (Johnson, Melin & Whittington, 2003; Johnson, Langley, Melin & Whittington, 2007). There is increasing attention directed to a new paradigm in strategy research, which has the potential to addressing micro-social practices within organisations (Knights & Morgan, 1991; Barry & Elmes, 1998; Oakes et al., 1998; Hendry, 2000; Levy et al., 2003; Whittington, Jarzabkowski, Mayer, Mounoud, Nahapiet & Rouleau, 2003; Ezzamel & Willmott, 2004). The strategy–as–practice (s-a-p) was born to seriously address these concerns, by bringing to the centre of strategy research, human actors and their actions as well as the way they interact (Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009). The key elements of the emerging s-a-p approach include an emphasis on "where and how is the work of strategizing and organizing actually done; who does this work strategizing and organizing work; what are the skills required for this work and how are they acquired?" (Whittington, 2002:119). According to Whittington (2006:121) the s-a-p researchers are "invited to dive deep into organisations to engage with people's strategy activity in all its intimate detail" (Johnson et al., 2003; Samra-Fredricks, 2003).

4.2 HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES OF STRATEGY-AS-PRACTICE

To enable us better define and understand the s-a-p perspective we need to look at the historical overview of the concept. Whittington (2006) maintains that strategy-as-practice is a part of the broad practice theoretical turn within the contemporary social theory (Ortner, 1984; Reckwitz, 2002; Schatzki et al., 2001; Turner, 1994); the management sciences within the technology field (Ciborra & Lanzara, 1990; Orlikowski, 1992, 2000); the knowing in action perspective (Blackler, 1993, 1995; Boland & Tenkasi, 1995; Cook & Brown, 1999; Gherardi, 2000); communities of practice (Brown & Duguid, 1991, 2001; Wenger, 1998); and accounting in practice (Hopwood & Miller, 1994); a turn that has existed for the last 20 years. This means that the concept has been imported from diverse management fields of technology, knowledge management, organisational learning and accounting. This practice turn has now invaded the field of strategy, which we consider as the practice turn strategy (Chia, 2004; Chia & MacKay, 2007; Hendry, 2000; Hendry & Seidl, 2003; Jarzabkowski, 2003; 2004a; Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009; Jarzabkowski & Wilson, 2002; Johnson et al., 2003; Mc Kiernan & Carter, 2004; Whittington, 1996, 2002, 2003, 2004), where the focus has now shifted to the actual work of strategists and strategizing.

The emergence of this turn is a result of at least two factors: Firstly, strategy research scholars have expressed dissatisfaction regarding the "normative models of science that dominate strategic management research, in that much of the theories in strategy are derived from large-scale studies within the micro-economics tradition, which sort to reduce the necessary complexities of doing strategy to a few casually related variable. Some of these studies have placed their full attention on firm and industry levels of analysis at the expense of the human actors" (Whittington, 2006:614). Secondly, it has been realised that the broader field of strategic management research is frantically seeking more 'humanized' theories that have the potential to bring actors and action in unison and into research action. "The strategy as practice agenda is located within the context of the modern developments in the management sciences and a growing disenchantment with the theoretical contributions, empirical conduct and practical relevance of much strategic management research" (Whittington, 2006:614). The research in practice aims to go deep in organisations in order to make sense of the 'messy realities of doing strategy as lived experience' (Whittington, 2002). It may be concluded that s-a-p consists of: intricate and comprehensive aspects of strategizing; the strategist's patterns of thinking, talking, reflection, action, interaction, and emotion; and the type of technologies, and tools used, and the various implications of their action geared towards strategizing.

A tremendous growth is observed management disciplines, in the analysis of organisations according to: their applied practices, their special capacity to comprehend how organisations function, their limitations, and successes (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011). Within the last 10 years, a stream of research studies with emphasis on practices, micro-processes and activities, which have previously been overlooked in traditional strategy research, have found their way into the field of strategic management under the ubiquitous label of 'strategy-as-practice' (Johnson et al., 2003; Jarzabkowski, 2004b; Golsorkhi, Rouleau, Seidl, & Vaara, 2010; Jarzabkowski, Balogun, & Seidl, 2007; Whittington & Cailluet, 2008). According to Vaara & Whittington (2012) the 'strategy-as-practice' concept merges 'strategy' and 'practice', the former signifying the actions of people in organisations (strategizing) and the latter signalling attempts and efforts to 'humanize' the world of practitioners and to a further commitment to sociological theories of practice. Therefore, s-a-p offers another perspective to decision-making processes acceptable within the strategic management field. Strategy-as-practice shares features with other approaches such as the 'strategy process' (Burgelman, 1983; Mintzberg & Waters, 1985; Pettigrew, 1985) and the recent micro-foundations approaches to strategy (Eisenhardt, Furr & Bingham, 2010; Foss, 2011).

4.2.1 Strategy content and process

Bourgeois (1980) makes a distinction between 'strategy content' and 'strategy process' research. Strategy content research has its focus on the strategic decisions taken, whilst strategy process research examines how a particular organisational strategy emerges. Furthermore, strategy content from time immemorial has studied organisations from a distance through reliance on secondary published data of organisations (Chakravarthy & Doz, 1992), and finds its prediction upon a variable model of explanation (Mohr, 1982) with its basis rooted in the use of contingency thinking (e.g. Porter, 1980, 1985). Criticisms levelled against this strategy approach by various scholars argue that it was too 'coarse–grained' (Tsoukas, 2005:344) thus unable to capture the actual processes undertaken in the making of strategy (Chia & Holt, 2006), while at the same time they fail to capture the complex and dynamic relationship between strategy content and strategy context (Webb & Pettigrew, 1999). The intention with the 'strategy process' research is to capture the realities occurring within fast-paced organisations. The fundamental aspects forming the pillars of the strategy process research approach encapsulate: "time, agency, structure, context, emergence and development" (Pettigrew, 1977:337; Chia & Mac Kay, 2007). According to Whittington (2001), in trying to ensure the dynamism and evolution of qualities of the conduct of humans in social settings, the process perspective is driven by those 'basic strengths of everyday operations' that propel the strategy process. After examining the three senses of what might constitute 'process' within the context of strategy research Van de Ven (1992:179) concluded that: this could be a category to define and describe the 'activities' of individuals or organisations and may also be regarded as a series of events to describe how things evolve. Therefore, it tends to focus on the activities of individuals and organisations, and the sequence of events and causal relationships that lead to organisational change. The strategy process however has limitations and criticisms levelled against it. Pettigrew (1977) maintains that qualitative research lacking insights of any theory method is susceptible to fail the tests of reliability and validity when its knowledge source is challenged. Whittington (1996:734) as well argues that the main focus of processual research is usually directed to the organisation and less is said about the work of the strategy practitioners regardless of the value they add in the process. It is therefore imperative that such shortcomings be addressed as a matter of urgency to ensure smooth progress throughout the strategy formulation to execution.

Regardless of the milestones achieved under the strategy process perspective and the realisation that it has assisted in humanizing the strategy field, Johnson et al., (2003) maintain that a true picture is not shown regarding the "actual tools and practical activities" on the ultimate role of managerial agency in the whole process. Simply put, within the study process research, the all-important functions performed by individuals in strategy formulation and implementation are discounted. To mitigate and avert the organisational challenges posed by this perspective including efforts directed towards improving strategy implementation, academic scholars realised the need to explore new avenues for solutions. Without doubt, the strategy process paradigm advanced in the 1980s by Pettigrew (1985) and Johnson (1987) sowed the seeds , from which the s-a-p was born with its priorities articulated by Johnson et al., (2003) and Jarzabkowski (2004b), emphasizing a 'micro-activities–based' approach to the understanding of strategy and the way in which managers strategize. The emergence of s-a-p raised the need to focus on the key elements of strategy implementation entailing: where and how the work of strategizing and organising is actually done; who is responsible for strategizing and organising; what skills are necessary and required for the work and how these could be acquired (Whittington, 1996).

4.2.2 THEORIES OF PRACTICE

Existing theories of practice consist of three core themes; the society, individuality, and the actors, and cover the Practice in social theory, Practice in management research and Practice in strategy research.

4.2.2.1 Practice in social theory

The practice perspective origins can be traced to Wittgenstein (1951) and Heidegger (1962). Nevertheless, due to the plethora of practice theories explored during the beginning of the year 2000 as the era became referred to as the 'practice turn' within the social sciences circles (Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina, & von Savigny, 2001; Rouse, 2007; Reckwitz, 2002). According to Vaara & Whittington (2012) this turn commands great influence and received numerous contributions from seminal philosophers (Foucault, 1980), sociologists (de Certeau, 1984; Giddens, 1984), anthropologist(s) (Bourdieu, 1990), ethnomethodologist (Garfinkel, 1967), activity theorists (Engestrom, Miettinen, & Punamaki, 1999; Vygotsky, 1978), and discourse scholars (Fairclough, 2003). In as much as these theorists differ in detail, in general terms they share an ambition to overcome the social theory ancient dualism and what is usually characterised as 'individualism' and 'societism' as postulated by Schatzki (2005). There are views that "individualist attribute too much to individual human actors, neglecting macro phenomena, while societies are over-impressed by large social forces, thereby forgetting the micro" (Whittington, 2006:614). The practice theorists espouse the three core themes of: the society, individuality, and the actors. The first core theme, society, is where practice theorists are concerned with how social 'systems' (Giddens,1984) or 'fields' (Bourdieu,1990) clarify the practices as shared understandings, cultural rules, languages and procedures, that guide and enhance human activity. In the second core theme, practice theorists consider individuality by tapping on the sense of practice, relating to the human beings (peoples) actual performing of an activity ‘in practice’. In his study regarding urban living, de Certeau (1984:70) was concerned about “the importance of not just what is done, something that can be understood by counting, but also of how it is done, something requiring close anthropological attention” (Whittington, 2006:615). According to Bourdieu (1990), the challenge is to capture the ‘practical sense’ of how people currently live their lives. The last core theme in the practice turn concerns ‘the actors on whose skills and initiative activity depends on’. According to Bourdieu (1990), card players, who command the skills and flow of the game, and are able to use the same hand differently, could be considered to possess an ambidextrous skill and therefore are deemed artists of practice. Without doubt this turn commands great influence as evidenced by the fact that theorists in general terms share an ambition to overcome the social theory.

4.2.2.2 Practice in management research

The practice turn in management research seems to draw from almost all fields including the technology arena (Dougherty, 1992, 2004; Orlikowski, 2000), the finance and accounting field (Hopwood & Miller, 1994; Ahrens & Chapman, 2006), institutional transformation (Seo & Creed, 2002), marketing management (Holt, 1995; Hirschman, Scot & Wells, 1998) and lastly, the learning at work (Brown & Duguid, 1991; Wenger, 1998; Nicolini, Gherardi & Yanow, 2003). Studies alluded to above depict the ever increasing close attention that the activities people are in or actually do, are receiving. Even the small of the smallest human activity is very importantly ‘linked to and may reinforce wider social phenomena that lie far outside the organisational domain. The strategy discipline is also experiencing the practice perspective’ (Whittington, 2006).

4.2.2.3 Practice in strategy research

According to Whittington (2006) the examination of the practice in strategy research is similar to the extension of research in the traditional way such as managerial work (e.g.

Mintzberg, 1973; Steward, 1967; Whittington, 2003). Tsoukas (1994) maintains that, this tradition seems to have more focus on the individualist attribute especially at the micro-level managerial activity and the concomitant roles at the expense of 'larger social forces on one side in an under-theorised category of context' (Willmott, 1997). However, there are recent theoretical efforts within the strategy literature, which apply and use the practice theory (Hendry, 2000; 2010; Hodgkinson et al., 2006; Whittington, Molloy, Mayer & Smith, 2006; Jorgensen & Messner, 2010; Faure & Rouleau, 2011; Jarzabkowski, 2005; Tsoukas, 1996). The practice-oriented research of recent years comprises the intra and extra-organisational levels indicating that practice approaches are rather diverse. According to Feldman & Orlikowski (2011) at least the three types of the practice approach known to exist include the 'empirical', 'theoretical' and the 'philosophical'. The empirical approach constitutes our daily important activity of organising either in routines or other forms. In applying the concept to s-a-p, this means a micro-focus on instances of 'strategizing', without necessarily leaning to or on practice theory (Johnson et al., 2003). On another side, the theoretical approach relies on other practice theories; on how practices are produced, reinforced, and changed; and the focus of analysis is on the practice effects. The opportunity to make the link between micro-activity and macro institutions is enhanced. The last of the three types, the philosophical approach, entails the ontological commitment to the primacy of social practices, recognised as shaping activity across time and space, a perspective Knights & Morgan (1991) attest can be used in critical analysis. Vaara & Whittington (2012: 287) postulate that, the "potential value of s-a-p should be recognised and unleashing the full potential power of the practice perspective requires drawing deeper on its theoretical insight and taking its ontological commitment much more seriously".

In conclusion, Whittington (2006) described the main aim of the practice theorists as an effort to graduate from the dualism that exists between individualism and societism, and thereby introducing and using a perspective that has respect for both views. A framework for strategy practices was born, with the view to bridge the gap between micro and macro level views on strategy. The three concepts of strategy praxis, practices and practitioners are discussed next.

4.3 STRATEGY PRAXIS, PRACTICES AND PRACTITIONERS

The differences between practices and praxis came about as a result of Reckwitz's (2002:249) contribution to social theory, through his definitions postulated as an 'interpretation' of the dual sense of practice in social theory, both as something that guides activity and as activity itself - that it is fundamentally important to have diverse definitions of practice to enhance an understanding of the concept. These were therefore developed with the view to "provide a consistent vocabulary for themes that while central to the practice tradition, are often expressed in different ways" (Whittington, 2006:619). According to Whittington (2006:619) "*Practices* refer to shared routines of behaviour, including traditions, norms and procedures for thinking, acting and using 'things'. *Practitioners* are strategy's actors or strategy prime movers, these are normally referred to as strategists and they perform the strategy activities and carry out its practices. The Greek word 'praxis' refers to 'activity engaged by free men', that is, the actual activity 'what people do in practice'".

Strategy practitioners' are strategy prime movers, actual human beings responsible for doing the work of making, shaping and executing strategies (Whittington, 2006). "These are actors who shape the construction of practice through who they are, how they act and what resources they draw upon" (Jarzabowski et al., 2007:11). Spender & Grant (1996) maintain that strategy practitoners are not just senior executives for whom strategy is the core of their work. Most of them perform the work of strategy, in most cases as a part of a wider role or a stage in their careers (Grant, 2003; Mantere, 2005). Some of these professionals belong to a defunct profession of strategic planners, but they still play a pivotal role in the crafting of strategy (Davids, 1995). Middle managers, a particular group of strategy practitioners whose role as strategists has been undermined by the dominant top-down view on strategy (Whittington, 2006; Jarzabkowski et al., 2007) play a crucial role. These are the actors and individuals who draw upon and apply the practices in their action. They are therefore part and puzzle of the practices and praxis (Jarzabkowski et al., 2007). They use the practices (behavioural ways, thought processes, emotional expressions, and knowledge) to derive agency, within their social environment, by combining, coordinating and adapting them to their needs in order to act within and influence the society (Reckwitz, 2002:250) whilst staying connected to the situation and context in which the agency is derived (Balogun, Hailey & Willmott, 2005). Practitioners are all those human beings involved in, or seeking to influence strategy making (Vaara & Whittington, 2012). Most organisations have external advisers, also known as strategy advisors, on strategy making and implementation who are usually referred to as strategy consultants. Included in this category are investment bankers, business school gurus and corporate lawyers. All what these practitioners do is ‘strategy praxis’, that being the detailed and various activities involved in the deliberate crafting and ultimate implementation of the organisational strategy (Whittington, 2006).

“Praxis constitute the flow of the various activities through which strategy is accomplished and these are situated, socially accomplished flows of activity that strategically are consequential for the direction and survival of the group, organisation or industry” (Jarzabkowski, 2005; Jarzabkowski et al., 2007:13; Johnson et al., 2007). According to Reckwitz (2002:249) praxis is “an emphatic term which seeks to describe the whole of the human action”. Strategy praxis constitute the intra-organisational work required for strategy crafting and implementation (Whittington, 2006), the bulk of which takes place in more or less extended episodes or sequence of episodes (Hendry & Seidl, 2003) and the episodes come in many forms such as board meetings, management retreats, consulting interventions, team briefings, presentations, and simple talk (Mezias et al., 2001; Westley, 1990).

Sztompka (1991) assists with the delineation of the micro and macro dimensions of this broad definition of praxis by indicating that it depicts the focal point of the happenings within the societal settings and the work that people are doing. Praxis constitute the “interconnection between the actions of different, dispersed individuals and groups and those socially, politically, and economically embedded institutions within which individuals act and to which they contribute” (Jarzabkowski et al., 2007:15). This depicts that the domain of praxis covers a wide array of issues, which inter-alia include: both the routine and non-routine, those informal and formal activities within the corporate circles, and those in the external environment of the organisation (Johnson & Huff, 1997; Regner, 2003). Even though the praxis work is time consuming (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985), the praxis is both an embedded concept that may be operationalised at different levels where it enhances organisational fluidity and interactions between institutional micro and macro levels (Jarzabkowski et al., 2007) and has the potential for significant symbolic and social functions beyond its target (Langley, 1989).

Reckwitz (2002:249) defines ‘practices’ as: “Routinized types of behaviour which consist of several elements, interconnected to one another, forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, ‘things’ and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge.” Practices guide and enhance the actual work (praxis) that has to be done by practitioners and therefore constitute the road map of any strategic initiative, detailing ‘what’ has to be done, ‘who’ has to do what, ‘when’ it has to occur and ‘how’ it has to be coordinated and controlled, for it to be successful. This may be considered similar to some kind of ‘liturgy’ with which strategy practitioners perform ‘quasi-priestly’ roles (Vaara & Whittington, 2012). These practices (tools, norms, and procedures of strategy) are intrinsically connected to the doing of work, and they provide the ‘behavioural, cognitive, procedural, discursive and physical resources which multiple actors’ use to communicate with the view to socially achieve success jointly. Since the resources are used in a routine fashion and result in the formation of patterns, studies to comprehend and construct strategic activities could be facilitated (Whittington, 2006; Jarzabkowski et al., 2007). In the crafting and implementation of an organisational strategy, for example, leaders may insist that the local language (of a population previously disadvantaged through the use of a foreign language) in use at a particular subsidiary should be employed as a means to ease interaction, in order to socially accomplish the transformation of an organisation (e,g. Balon & Johnson, 2004). Jarzabkowski et al., (2007) argue that practices may be used as potential ‘units of analysis’ in the studying of how the strategy-as-practice is built, involving the examination of what practices could be used, the modalities of drawing upon them, how they evolve in their use after time, and the ultimate results of the patterns of use for shaping praxis at various levels.

Similar to other fields of research, the field of strategy-as-practice has criticisms levelled against it. The researcher proceeds to highlight a research article '*Strategy as practice?'* authored by Chris Carter, Steward Clegg and Martin Komberger in 2008. They argue that practice-based approaches investigate the fine details of strategy formations such as expenditure meetings, routines of budgeting (Carter et al., 2008) as well as aspects such as 'praxis, practitioners and practices' (Whittington, 2003), and place emphasis on the micro aspects of strategy research (Johnson et al., 2003). However, these aspects are not new as there have been ealier contributions to the sociological/organisational perspective in the 1970s (e.g. Clegg, 1975; Silverman & Jones, 1976; Clark, 2000). Carter et al., (2008) assert that direction setting, resource allocation, monitoring and control are similar to Henri Fayol's (1918) management principles, which were used by Jarzabkowski (2003) as formal procedures of strategy-as-practice and therefore no new principles are introduced. They further argue that a consideration of key strategists such as Mintzberg (1987a) who have contributed immensely to the works done on 'practice' and 'emerging strategy', including issues of strategy from bottom up, remains ignored within the strategy-as-practice landscape. Rather Whittington coined the term post-Mintzbergian to explain what he calls a new era in research on strategy (Whittington, 2004; Jarzabkowski & Whittington, 2008).

Another controversy raised by Carter et al., (2008) pertains to the ambiguity in Jarzabkowski's (2004b:545) definition of the terms 'practice' and 'practices' where "practice is the actual activity events, or work of strategy, while practices are those traditions, norms, rules and routines through which the work of strategy is constructed". Carter et al., (2008) disagree with Jarzabkowski's (2004b) definitions of ' practice' and 'practices' and assert that practice (a noun?) and practices (a verb) should have different meanings in that 'practice' looks similar to action whereas 'practices' become the formal procedures of organisations. Whilst acknowledging that the definitions are not in or of themselves wrong, using them together defeats congruence and they therefore recommend the use of the concept from social theorists such as Garfinkel (1967), Foucault (1977) or Bourdieu (2002) to avoid ambiguity (Carter et al., 2008:90). With the important themes of strategy-as-practice research having been noted, this research continues to explore the varied or divergent approaches and views on strategy-as-practice as postulated by academic scholars.

4.4 DIVERGENT APPROACHES TO STRATEGY-AS-PRACTICE RESEARCH

4.4.1 Understanding Strategy-as-practice (s-a-p)

Jarzabkowski & Spee (2009:69) maintain that 'strategy-as-practice is concerned with the doing of strategy: who does it, what they do, how they do it, what they use, and what implications this has for shaping strategy. Strategy-as-practice construes strategy as a 'social practice' (Whittington, 1996:731). Strategy as practice research is interested in the detailed activities that comprise strategizing (strategy-making) and the ultimate link *inter se* these activities and larger organisational and societal phenomena (Seidl & Whittington, 2014). The s-a-p approach explicitly emphasizes the link between micro and macro perspectives on strategy as a social practice (Jarzabkowski, 2004b; Whittington, 2006). According to Regner (2008:568), the s-a-p Johnson et al., (2003); Whittington (2006) builds on social theory in a broad basis (Bourdieu, 1990; Giddens, 1984; Sztompka, 1991) and its practice turn in particular (Schatzki et al., 2001). Strategy-as-practice is seen as the ultimate result of a broader constructivist shifts in the field of strategic management research (Mir & Watson, 2000). Research scholars have proposed the s-a-p as a vehicle for delivering the social complexity and causal ambiguity in the implementation of strategy (Ambrosini et al., 2007; Jarzabkowski, 2005; Johnson et al., 2003; Regner, 2008). Strategy-as- practice provides insights over and above the studying of organisational processes and consists of strategizing activities within the wider spectrum of societal practices (Whittington, 2006b, 2007; Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009). Strategy-as-practice research finds its roots in most fields, but it is not limited to, sociological and philosophical developments related to practice theory, such as the works of Bourdieu (1990), de Certeau (1984), Giddens (1984), Schatzki (1996:2002), and Sztompka (1991).

4.4.2 Research priorities of Strategy–as-practice

Chia & Mac Kay (2008) argue that the works of Pettigrew (1985) and Johnson (1987) established the foundation for s-a-p through their strategy process efforts in the 1980's and these were followed by works of Johnson et al., (2003) and Jarzabkowski (2004b) who thereon articulated the research priorities of a s-a-p perspective that laid emphasis on the micro-'activities-based' approach of understanding the strategy and the process followed in strategizing. There was therefore direct attention given to the critical aspect of micro-social practices within most organisations (Knights & Morgan, 1991; Barry & Elmes, 1998; Oakes et al., 1998; Hendry, 2000; Whittington, 2006; Jarzabkowski et al., 2007). "The growth of s-a-p into a field of research arises in part from an increasing dissatisfaction with conventional strategy research" (Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009:69) with the absence of people in "most strategy theories, even those who purport to examine the internal dynamics of the firm, such as the resource-based view" (Johnson et al., 2003;2007). Jarzabkowski et al., (2007:12) maintain that, "research has typically remained on the macro-level of firms and markets while reducing strategy to a few causally related variables in which there is little evidence of human action". Strategy research has lost sight of the human being (Weick, 1979; Bettis, 1991; Ghoshal & Morgan, 1996; Jarzabkowski, 2004b; Lowendahl & Revang, 1998; Tsoukas & Knudsen, 2002; Whittington, 2003:2006).

Vaara & Whittington (2012:286) argue that, "despite the achievements of the s-a-p research stream, opportunities exist for analysis of social practices as research has not yet fully realised the potential that lies in the practice perspective, especially its recognition of how activities are embedded in broader societal or macro-institutional contexts". To this end, there is consensus between scholars for more epistemological and theoretical depth in s-a-p research (Chia & Rasche, 2010; Ezzamel & Willmott, 2010; Mc Cabe, 2010; Orlikowski, 2010). Arguments persist regarding linking institutional theory and s-a-p (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006; Oliver, 1991; Smets, Morris & Greenwood, 2012; Whittington, 2010).

4.4.3 Strategy-as-practice – research and findings

As indicated at the introductory stage of this chapter, Vaara & Whittington (2012:288) note that the origins of the 'practice' perspective ('a link between strategy research and deep traditions of theoretical and empirical work in various disciplines'), span some decades back, to Wittgenstein (1951) or Heidegger (1962) with a notable proliferation of theories of practice termed and considered as a 'practice turn' within the social sciences (Reckwitz, 2002; Rouse, 2007; Schatzi et al.,2001). Included within this 'practice turn' are diverse contributions to theory by philosophers, sociologists, anthropologists, ethnomethodologists, activity theorists, discourse scholars and numerous more. Practice places emphasis on human activity in strategy doing, which is considered as 'praxis' and the behaviour of an individual is almost always entrenched within the network of social practices (Reckwitz, 2002; Vaara & Whittington, 2012). Vaara & Whittington (2012:288) noted assertions from the scholars contribution to the concept of 'practice' as follows: that Foucault (1977) "argues that social practices in general, and discursive practices in particular, were the ways in which the knowledge and power critical to action initially developed"; while (Bourdieu, 1990) observes that "the concept of practice seeks to explain how the objective world and the subjective actor collaborate in societal action". According to Giddens (1984), "the linkage between the social structure and human agency through the theory of structuration, bears insistence on the primacy of social practices, ordered through space and time". In summary therefore, they agree that a person 'human actor' is not considered as a separate and distinct being from their environment, but it is a being with potentials as dictated by the practices they find themselves in daily. Vaara & Whittington (2012) confirm that practice theories are currently having an impact on the technology arena (Dougherty, 1992, 2004; Orlikowski, 2000), the finance and accounting field (Hopwood & Miller, 1994; Ahrens & Chapman, 2006), institutional transformation (Seo & Creed, 2002), marketing management (Holt, 1995; Hirschman, Scot & Wells, 1998) and lastly learning at work (Brown & Duguid, 1991; Wenger, 1998; Nicolini, Gherardi & Yanow, 2003) and the potential to influence implementation of strategy appears positive.

Vaara & Whittington (2012) contend that strategy-as-practice research was the 'brainchild' of the theories of practice, with its roots entrenched within numerous organisational research studies and settings. Some of these studies include but are not limited to strategy making process (Bower, 1982; Burgelman, 1983; Pettigrew, 1985; Mintzberg & Waters, 1985; Johnson, 1987), decision making process (Eisenhardt & Bourgeois, 1988; long range planning (Langley, 1989), sensemaking (Gioia & Chittipedi, 1991; Weick, 1995; Ross, Nilsen & Dewdney, 2002), and middle-manager strategizing (Floyd & Wooldridge, 2000; Rouleau, 2003, 2005; Balogun & Johnson, 2004, 2005). Following some earlier insightful publications by Pettigrew (1985) and Johnson (1987) on their strategy process work in the 1980's, there emerged this new s-a-p paradigm in the early 2000, which was followed by more influential publications, that emphasised micro-social practices in organisations, some of which were theoretical (Barry & Elmes, 1998; Knights & Morgan, 1991; Hendry, 2000; Levy et al., 2003; Whittington, 2002; 2006) while others empirical (Jarzabkowski & Wilson, 2002; Oakes, Townley & Cooper, 1998). These publications seemed to spur more interests in other scholars to undertake research areas previously identified as 'fertile grounds' for research. This saw the growing of more streams of empirical studies either as: individual research studies, or as parts of special issues (Johnson et al., 2003; Rouleau, Allard-Poesi & Warnier, 2007; Jarzabkowski et al., 2007; Whittington & Cailluet, 2008; Mantere, 2005; Hendry & Seidl, 2003), books (Heracleous & Jacobs, 2008; Jarzabkowski, 2005), and conceptual articles (Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009).

The researcher here proceeds to establish a link between strategy-as-practice and strategy implementation with the view to find the relevance and use of this concept to strategy implementation and specifically assisting to address the research questions posed in this research. Key themes of practices, praxis and practitioners are used to assess and ultimately address the strategy implementation influencers. The identification and addressing of strategy implementation influencers referred to herein as 'Strategy Implementation Liabilities' using the liabilities approach and the strategy-as-practice may shed some light on how best to avert, mitigate or address these liabilities.

4.5 LINKING STRATEGY-AS-PRACTICE WITH STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Like other scholars, Johnson et al., (2007) have made calls to relate strategy-as- practice approach to other research streams, and for complementarity to other theories (Ambrosini et al., 2007; Campbell-Hunt, 2007). There has been no research attempting to link strategy-as-practice with strategy implementation, nor to explore the potential that the two might complement each other in addressing organisational challenges. The establishment of the link is therefore proposed. The strategy-as-practice has important characteristics, that might be of help in advancing the analysis of processes and activities that underpin those capabilities.

Through the rigorous use of its themes of strategy practices, strategy praxis and strategy practitioners (Johnson et al., 2003; Whittington, 2006; Jarzabkowski & Spee 2009), the strategy-as-practice approach has the potential to play a critical role in the future development and effectiveness of strategy implementation. By posing more questions under these themes, organisations might be able to answer some questions that remain unanswered as to why most organisations do not succeed in their efforts to implement their strategic choices. The explanation and vocabulary of these three concepts as posed by Whittington (2006:619) are tendered, together with the use of a framework developed by Vaara & Whittington (2012), to indicate the enabling and constraining effects in the use and analysis of practices, praxis, and practitioners when organisations implement their strategies.

Strategy practitioners are the employees within or outside (consultants) the organisation tasked with the work of strategy making, shaping and implementation of strategy (Whittington, 2006:619). The following questions are posed by Whittington (2006).

a) Are these 'just the senior executives for whom strategy is the core of their work?' (Grant & Spender, 1996). Most organisations believe that strategy formulation and strategy implementation are separate and distinct activities and therefore the allocation of duties is also separated. Opportunities exist for organisations to consider the formulation and implementation as a single process activity which could enable executives who were initially involved at the formulation stage to appreciate the implementation part in order to ensure that felt needs and priorities envisaged at the beginning are implemented according to plan.

b) Do ‘many perform strategy work, often as part of a wider role or as a stage in their careers?’ (Grant, 2003; Mantere, 2005). Strategy scholars maintain that in most organisations, the role of strategy implementation is considered either as an after thought process, or a once off project, or an adhoc activity and therefore less energy is channelled into this important initiative hence less success in implementation.

c) Do ‘middle managers also engage in strategy work, not just through implementation, but through middle-top-down processes of agenda seeking, proposal selection and information filtering?’ (Dutton, Ashford & O’Neil, 2001; Floyd & Lane, 2000). Due to the separation of responsibilities in most organisations, some of the official have their roles restricted. They either participate in strategy formulation but not implementation, and vice-versa. This restriction inhibits the fruitful contributions that could otherwise have been used and benefited at either of the stages. Even prominent strategy consultant performance and advice may lead to low strategy implementation success.

Strategy praxis are considered to be all the various activities, processes and procedures implored in the deliberate formulation and implementation of strategy. These constitute the internal organisational work necessary for making strategy and having it executed (Whittington, 2006). It is appreciated that the work of strategy is dispersed however, ‘can a large part of the strategy formulation be seen as taking place in more or less extended episodes or sequence of episodes?’ (Hendry & Seidl, 2003). Praxis in organisations could be enhanced by drawing on the various theories encapsulating episodes in board meetings, management retreats, consulting interventions, team briefs, presentations, and simple talks.’ (Mezias, Grinyer & Guth, 2001; Westley, 1990). Through the rigorous exploration of the domain of praxis which is quite wide, (using the routine and non-routine; the formal and non-formal; most of the processes within corporate organisation; activities external to the organisation (Johnson & Huff, 1997); and the emergence strategies postulated by Mintzberg & Waters (1985), huddles within strategy implementation can be overcome. An analysis of the micro-foundations of strategy dynamics at formulation reflecting on implementation and their inherently social and cultural embeddedness (Regner, 2008) would provide a potentially significant contribution to success.

Strategy practices may refer to tools, norms, and procedures of strategy that practitioners typically draw on in their praxis; whatever practices are considered relevant and crucial to enable organisations achieve strategy implementation. 'Practice' implies more than the simplistic practical side; but it pervades strategy research to internal traditions of empirical and theoretical work within other disciplines Vaara & Whittington (2012). The understanding by organisations, of the implications of practice theory 'in terms of actions of discrete individuals or groups of individuals' Groos (2009); Schatzki et al., (2001) pays attention to praxis (Reckwitz, 2002). The strategy's practices might be organisation specific; as well as encapsulated in routines, cultures, and operating procedures (Nelson & Winter, 1982) and all these have the ability to share the modes of strategizing. It is therefore critical that when organisations undertake to implement their strategies, only relevant and therefore effective strategic practices ("norms of appropriate strategic scale, scope or structures that are able to diffuse through the organisation) are followed (Fligstein, 1990; Djelic, 1998). Organisations are able to exploit the practice approach from either the empirical (studies practices as crucial parts of everyday activity of organising), theoretical (practice effects and how they are produced, reinforced, and changed), and philosophical (ontological commitment to the primacy of social practices, recognised as shaping activity across time and space), perspectives (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011).

4.6 USING STRATEGY–AS-PRACTICE TO ENHANCE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION SUCCESS

Strategy–as-practice draws upon the sociological theories of practice research, something rather absent in other fields, but critical in strategic management, especially in strategy implementation. By linking with some theoretical traditions in strategic management, for example, Weickian's (Date) sensemaking (Balogun & Johnson, 2005; Rouleau, 2005) some insights could be reaped from this arrangement to enhance strategy implementation. A much diverse engagement within the strategic management discipline is facilitated with the social sciences especially drawing on the strategic management social theorist(s) research: Abbott (1988), Bourdian (1990), de Carteau(1984) , Foucault (1980), Gerfinkel (1967) , Giddens (1984), Goofman (1959), Latour (2002) and others (Vaara & Whittington, 2012)

It has always been a challenge to measure the satisfactory level of achievement in strategy implementation in terms of the concept of 'performance'; however strategy-as-practice increases the scope of what strategy implementation measures should encapsulate. Funer, Thomas & Goussevskaia (2008) contend that the word 'performance' was the main one used in strategic management up until 2005, without any tangible outcomes. However s-a-p consists of an array of outcomes, including political implications of a particular episode in strategizing, effects of a particular tool of strategy, and actions of a particular practitioner. The s-a-p enhances the broad and better understanding of performance. Previous strategic management research was mainly concentrated on how supervisors influence and shape the performance of organisations for profit gains (Nag, Hambrick, & Chen, 2007). Studies undertaken within the s-a-p perspectives have shifted attention to examine not-for profit organisations, such as universities, local municipalities, public hospitals, and non-governmental organisations. This increases the sectoral scope of the examination of organisations, which otherwise has the potential to provide useful insights into aspects such as strategy formulation and implementation. Strategy–as-practice has significantly changed the methodological complexion of strategic management. Traditionally the strategic management discipline placed more emphasis on statistical studies, with reliability and accuracy achieved on the basis of sample size increases (Phelan, Ferreira, & Salvador, 2002). However, s-a-p has defied all odds by making efforts to come closer to the subjects being studied. Methods mainly employed include work shadowing (Jarzabkowski & Seidl, 2008), action research (Hecracleous & Jacobs, 2008), video-ethnography (Liu & Maitlis, 2012), photography (Molloy & Whittington, 2005), and participant observation (Sama-Fredericks, 2010), strategy talk and texts closely analysed (Varra, Klayman, & Seristo, 2004); Clarke, Kwon, & Wodak, 2011) and a focus on micro 'episodes' of strategizing, such as a single meeting picking on a few sentences of information exchange (Sampa-Fredericks, 2003; Hendry & Said, 2003).

4.7 CONCLUSIONS

The strategy as practice approach, with its focus on activities and interactions at people-level, has the potential to assist in uncovering micro-foundational mechanisms underlying the organisational level construct strategy implementation, that is, how social mechanisms involving actors, activities and artefacts have the potential to enhance strategy implementation (Regner, 2008). There is a clear call for a practice-based approach to strategy implementation (Jarzabkowski, 2004; Johnson et al., 2003). The approaches have to be sensitive to essential issues and themes (practitioners, praxis and practices) in the strategic management field and should be able to identify research areas that might provide new insights for providing solutions to low strategy implementation and subsequently to add to the great body of knowledge on strategy implementation.

4.8 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

At the introductory stage of this chapter it was considered appropriate to revisit the origins and definition of the concept ‘strategy’ as this is the focal point in this research and some useful insights have been discussed in the chapter. The critique advanced by Clegg & Komberger (2008) where they agreed that the process of strategy has to be looked in reverse in order to be fully understood has been presented and explained. The main question for consideration was “How does strategizing work in organisations?” This question if answered could share better insights in strategy implementation research and thus improve the success rate. Following the concern from various quarters on the absence of human beings in the work of strategy, a solution was uncovered, which is the strategy-as-practice perspective, where various alternatives have been proposed on how to improve strategy formulation and implementation. The theories of practice have been found to be more relevant theoretical lenses within the s-a-p perspective.

CHAPTER 5: MODERATING AND MEDIATING FACTORS AS CONCEPTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Strategic management is multidisciplinary, drawing influence from methodological developments in disciplines such as psychology, social work, sociology, and statistics with research methodology in the field adapting and incorporating techniques from these disciplines. The concepts of ‘moderators’ also known as ‘moderating variables’ for which an intervention has a different effect at different values of the moderating variables, and ‘mediators’ or ‘mediating variables’ that describe the process in which intervention attains its effects, are generally considered useful in research studies as outcome based intervention (Mackinnon, 2011:1675). Recognised relationships between variables within the social sciences in almost all the cases involve more than two variables. Mediating and moderating variables that constitute examples of third variables or ‘test variables’ are usually used to elaborate the context, direction, and meaning of the initial two-variable relationship (Gogineri, Alsup & Gillespie, 1995).

The development and theoretical conceptualisation of the elaboration process by Kendall & Lazarsfeld (1950), Lazarsfeld (1955), and Hyman (1955), and further discussed extensively by Rosenberg (1968) constitute the essential aspects and concepts of strategic management and more specifically of strategy implementation, in describing relationships among multivariate factors. Gogineri et al., (1995) postulate that through the micro-theory and use of experimental design, psychologists (e.g. MacCorquodale & Meehl, 1948; Rozeboom, 1956; Royce, 1963), articulated the theoretical conceptualisation of mediation. Following the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R), Woodworth (1928) introduced the notion of mediation the rationale behind which was that the ‘organism’ mediates the stimulus and the response, and is perceived as an active processor between a stimulus and response (Wu & Zumbo, 2008:369). Roe (2011) links the origins of the notion of ‘mediation’ to research on ‘intervening mechanisms’, which started in the 1920’s. During this era researchers developed interest in explaining relationships between independent and dependent variables from concealed, non-observable mechanisms of human thinking. The concepts ‘mediation’ and ‘mediator’ variables emerged during the 1950s (e.g. Cofer, 1958; Hilgard, 1958). The ‘intervening variables’ were originally seen as theoretical, non-observable, and measurable. Saunders (1955, 1956) introduced the term ‘moderator variable’. The notion of ‘moderation’ emanates from the statistical field, which is normally used with regression analysis. This is a third variable that modifies or moderates the regression of one variable against another.

Mediators and moderators are important aspects that deal with the cause-and-effect relationship, which became a centre of interest in research and spurred many scholars in the fields of social sciences and behavioural sciences. Most researchers would often go beyond the basic illustration of the bivariate cause-and-effect relationship and the ultimate attempt would be to understand the bridges of the causal relationship, the alteration of the magnitude and the direction of the causal relationship (Frazier, Tix & Baron, 2004; Rose, Holmbeck, Coakley & Franks, 2004; Wu & Zumbo, 2008).

In the sections that follow, the general concept and meaning of mediators and moderators are introduced in order to show the relevance and reason for introducing the mediating and moderating variables in this research study, and lastly to indicate how the mediating and moderation variables should be included in the study.

5.2 DEFINING MODERATORS AND MEDIATORS

As already alluded to, mediating and moderating variables are examples of what is usually referred to as ‘third variables’ or ‘test variables’ and their purpose is to “enhance a deeper and more refined understanding of a causal relationship between an independent variable and dependent variable” (Wu & Zumbo, 2008:368). It must be pointed out here that even though researchers in the social sciences have a relatively long tradition of using the terms ‘moderator’ and ‘mediator’ interchangeably (Harkins, Latane & Williams, 1980; Findley & Cooper, 1983) confusion in terms of use still persists. Roe (2011) noted the confusion emanates from: a) as researchers’ interests turned to focus mainly on variables rather than constructs, confusion in the conceptual distinction between moderators and mediators increased; b) as advanced by Blalock (1960), the advent of causal modelling was mainly based on the idea that “partial regression coefficients allowed making causal inferences from data obtained at one moment in time” (Roe, 2011:05); c) lastly was the bringing of mediation and moderation under a single statistical framework as a result of current innovations in multivariate regression analysis, which facilitated the inclusion of both the dependent variables and interaction terms.

In some quarters, examples exist of the inappropriate use of statistical techniques in the testing of mediation and moderation (Rogosch, Chassin & Sher, 1990; Wu & Zumbo, 2008). Even where clarity in terms of the differences between the concepts is not an issue of concern, disagreements are however experienced over the empirical definition of moderation, thereby increasing the intensity of the confusion making comparison between studies a challenge (Sharma, Durand & Gur-Arie, 1981). Therefore, the appreciation of these differences, inconsistencies and inappropriate uses are vital in order to avoid such confusion at the level of the construction, explanation and interpretation of the Strategy Implementation Liabilities theory.

Mackinnon (2011:675) postulates that the ‘third variable effects’ are found within moderators and mediators and these are important for depicting the main focus of the relation between any independent variable X and outcome variable Y. Let us now consider the effects of the ‘third variable’ on various variables including the possible causal relations between them. In the case of ‘two variables’, X causes Y, Y causes X, it means both X and Y are reciprocally related. Considering ‘three variables’, X may cause a third variable Z and Z may cause Y; Y may cause both X and Z, and the relation between X and Y may differ for each value of Z, and along with others. In simple terms, moderation and mediation are a notion given to two third–variable effects types. For, example, if the relation between X and Y is different at different values of Z, then Z is a moderating variable and conversely, if the third—variable Z is intermediate in a causal sequence and in the process, X causes Z and Z causes Y, then Z is a mediating variable, effectively a causal sequence X→ Z →Y.

5.2.1 Mediators

Baron & Kenny (1986:1176) maintain that "a given mediator variable may be said to be a function as a mediator to the extent that it accounts for the relation between the predictor and the criterion. They explain how external physical events take on internal psychological significance". Mediator is considered as a 'third variable' that explains the process of the 'why' and 'how' a cause and an effect occurs (Wu & Zumbo, 2008; Baron & Kenny, 1986) and it is a causal model (Rose et al., 2004; Wengener & Fabrigar, 2000). According to Muller, Judd & Yzerbty (2005:852) an analysis pertaining to mediation entails the "identification of the intermediary process that leads from the independent variable to the dependent variable". In a simplistic form of mediation, the independent variable is assumed to get the mediator into action, which as a result, the mediator causes the dependent variable. On the basis of the foregoing definitions and in general terms, a mediation effect is also usually referred to as 'indirect effect', 'intervening effect', 'intermediate effect', and 'surrogate effect' (MacKinnon, Lockwood, Hoffman, West & Sheets, 2002; MacKinnon, 2011).

James & Brett (1984:307) defined a mediational model as one where "the influence of an antecedent (a thing that comes before something else) is transmitted to a consequence through an intervening mediator and further described two types of mediation, those which are *partial (not fully addressed)* and *complete (fully addressed)*, and these are statistically and conceptually distinct". The requirements fitting the 'complete mediation' are assumptions which are both of causal order and that the mediating variable t "transmits all the influence of an antecedent x to a consequence y, which implies that x and y are indirectly related and that the relation between x and y vanishes" (James & Brett, 1984:310). Regarding 'partial mediation', James & Brett (1984) indicated that this is a situation where "x has both a direct effect on y and an indirect effect on y through t, expressed as the function t=F(x), y=F(x, t). MacKinnon (2011:676) postulates that "a single mediator model represents the addition of a third variable to an X →Y relation so that the causal sequence is modelled such that X causes Y, that is, X→ M → Y. Mediating variables are central to many fields because they are used to understand the process by which two variables are related.

Collins, Graham & Flaherty's (1998) analogy definition of a mediator may be considered comparable to a line of dominos (domino effect, which is a chain reaction, where one event sets off a chain of similar events), where knocking over the first domino starts a sequence where the rest of the dominos are knocked over one after another. "Everything is set in motion after the first domino, but the proximal cause of each domino's fall is not the first domino but the domino that fell just before it. This therefore, means that in a mediated process, everything is set in motion by the independent variable, but the proximal cause of the outcome is the mediator, not the independent variable." (Collins, Graham & Flaherty, 1998: 297). In basic terms, mediation or the mediated process is considered as a planned, and chronologically executed series of events, starting with the independent variable that has an effect on a mediator, which ultimately affects an outcome.

5.2.2 Moderators

Baron & Kenny (1986:1174) postulate that, "a moderator is a qualitative (e.g., sex, race, class) or quantitative (e.g., level of reward) variable that affects the direction and/or strength of the relation between an independent or predictor variable and a dependent or criterion variable". Cohen & Cohen (1983:305) maintained that, "the term moderator variable has come into use in psychometric psychology to denote a variable that interacts with another so as to enhance predictability of a criterion. Therefore, in usage (the moderator variable) taken alone usually shows less consequential relationship with the criterion". There is consensus between Cohen & Cohen with Baron & Kenny in that "it is desirable that the moderator variable been uncorrelated with both the predictor and the criterion provides a clearly interpretable interaction term" (Baron & Kenny, 1986:1174). According to Wu & Zumbo (2008:370) "a moderation effect is a causal model that postulates *when* or *for whom* an independent variable most strongly (or weakly) causes a dependent variable (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Frazier et al., 2004; Kraemer, Wilson, Fairburn, & Agra, 2002). Basically, a moderator reduces the intensity/strength or direction of a causal relationship, whether positively or negatively. The most commonly used analogy by scholars is that a moderator resembles a 'light dimmer' (devise used to lower the brightness of a light) that adjusts the strength of a switch on the lighting (MacKinnon, 2011).

Sharma, Durand, & Gur-Arie (1981) defined a ‘pure moderator’ as one that does interact with the independent variable to produce an effect but is not related linearly to the dependent variable. Their indication was that the requirements originated in the psychometric literature because if both the moderator and independent variable are related linearly to the dependent variable, then *either* variable can be considered the moderator (Gogineri et al., 1995:60). Gogineri et al., (1995:60) postulate that, “a *quasi-moderator* is one that independently predicts variance in the dependent variable as well as interacting with the independent variable to produce an effect”.
MacKinnon (2011:675-676) contends that moderating variables are those variables for which intervention has a different effect at different values of the moderating variable and mediating variables describe the process by which the intervention achieves its effects. There is “a primary distinction between mediating and moderating variables, in that the *mediating variable* specifies a *causal sequence* in that a moderating variable transmits the causal effect of *X* to *Y* but the moderating variable does not specify a causal relation, only that the relation between *X* and *Y* differs across levels of *Z”.*

Table 5.1 depicts the main distinctions between mediators and moderators, indicating the key features as consisting of: variables, situations in a causal relationship, distinctive questions, analogy, modelling effects, role in causal relationship, the sequence of operation, the relationship with the independent variable, and the design control. Mediators and moderators play a pivotal role in the strategy implementation process such that concerted efforts have to be made to ensure that they are factored in decision making and implementation processes. The section that follows identifies their nature and relevance to research in organisations.

Table 5.1: The Distinction between Mediators and Moderators

Mediators	Features	Moderators
Temporary state, condition of mentality, transitory level of arousal or drive, and currently evoked activities, behaviour, or process.	**Nature of variable**	Trait, which is a relatively stable characteristic, innate attribute, enduring process, or disposition. It can also be a background or contextual variable.
A third variable that links a cause and an effect.	**Function in a causal relationship**	A third variable that modifies a causal effect.
How and why cause leads to effect.	**Type of questions**	For whom and when cause and effect occurs.
Dominos.	**Analogy**	Dimmer switch for lighting.
When causal effect is found?	**When to model it?**	When causal effect is found or not found?
Dual roles: dependent variable for X independent variable for Y.	**Role in a causal relationship**	Single role: auxiliary independent variable for Y.
Follow independent variable and precedes dependent variable.	**Sequence of operation**	Precedes both independent Variable and dependent variable.
Correlated with the independent variable.	**Relationship with the independent variable**	Uncorrelated with the independent variable
Manipulated or observed.	**Design control**	Typically observed.

Source: Adapted from Wu & Zumbo (2008).

Wu & Zumbo (2008:368) argue that “a mediator is a third variable that links a cause and an effect and modifies a causal effect and therefore, in that light testing a causal hypothesis consists of investigating whether a causal inference such as X causes Y is viable.” The three types of what usually is referred to as common causal hypotheses are: ‘moderated causal effects’, ‘meditated causal effects’, and ‘direct causal effects’ (Wegener & Fabrigar, 2000). Regardless of whether there is permission of a causal conclusion by the data, either non-experimental or cross-sectional data, “moderation and mediation models are, by their nature, causal models because the underlying theories suggest directional inferences that are intrinsically causal (Rose et al., 2004). Baron and Kenny (1986:1173-1174) contend that “moderators may at times involve either manipulations or assessments and either situational or person variables. The nature of the moderator is that within a correlational analysis framework it is considered as a third variable that affects the zero-order correlation between two other variables. Furthermore, a moderator effect within a correlational framework may also be said to occur where the direction of the correlation changes”.

Wu & Zumbo (2008) posit that the purpose of moderators and mediators is to effectively ‘enhance a deeper and well-refined comprehension’ of a causal relationship between an independent variable and dependent variable. Scholars usually misunderstand or inadvertently overlook the causal nature of moderation and mediation and consequently this leads to erroneous application and interpretation in research (MacKinnon et al., 2002; Frazier et al., 2004; Rose et al., 2004). Therefore, moderating variables are essential to researchers if and when they want to assess if two variables have the same relation across groupings. Similarly, mediating variables are important whenever a researcher intends to comprehend the detailed process where two variables are related, such that one variable prompts a mediating variable which then prompts a dependent variable.

There are at least two ways in which mediating variables have been put to use in research and these are: “*mediation for design,* where interventions are designed to change a mediating variable and *mediation for explanation,* where mediators are selected after an effect of X to Y has been demonstrated to explain the mediating process by which X affects Y" (MacKinnon, 2008; 2011:676).

Numerous research scholars have stressed the significance and indeed attached great importance of assessing mediation and moderation in intervention research (Baranowski, Anderson, & Carmack, 1998; Fraser & Galinsky, 2010; Judd & Kenny, 1981a, 1981b; Kazdin, 2009; Kraemer, Wilson, Fairburn, & Agra, 2002; MacKinnon, 1994; Weiss, 1997). In any particular research, for instance if an intervention is to prevent sexually transmitted diseases, the intervention may be designed in such a manner as to change mediators of abstinence and condom use. Similarly, if the research is for drug prevention, mediating variables such as social norms, social competence skills, and expectations about drug use are targeted in order to change drug use.

5.3 MODERATING AND MEDIATING VARIABLES IN RESEARCH

MacKinnon (1994, 2008, 2011:677-680) advances reasons for using mediating and moderating variables in research and suggests the modalities of how to include both variables in a research study.

5.3.1 Reasons for including mediating variables in research

At least some seven reasons are proposed as to why mediating variables should be included in a research study:

5.3.1.1 Practical intervention and programme implications

A critical assessment of the intervention programme in terms of its viability and the removal of ineffective hindrances and components is crucial to enable a programme to achieve its goals and provide greater benefits even on limited resources. Mediation analyses may be used as a tool to inform as to whether to continue or halt an intervention process, either if there was failure of the intervention to change the mediator (action theory) or just a failure attributed to a significant relation of the mediator to the outcome (conceptual theory).

5.3.1.2 Improving the intervention programme

The generation of information to identify success or failure of the components of the intervention are derived from the mediation analyses and processes. If there was no visible and effective change through the intervention component, without doubt, the efforts chosen to effect change in the mediating variable have to be improved.

5.3.1.3 Improvement in the measurement

The mediator is considered to be lacking in intervention effect if its measures cannot detect changes. These mediator measures would therefore be considered to be lacking in reliability and validity to detect changes.

5.3.1.4 Checking on the manipulation

Through mediation analyses, a check is made to confirm as to whether the envisaged intervention caused a desired change in the mediating variables it was intended to change. If this did not occur, then it is highly unlikely to obtain the intended effects on the targeted outcome.

5.3.1.5 Constructing and refining theory

Mediating variables pose as the enormous strength and ability to test theories on which intervention programs find their basis. The strengths and abilities of numerous theories are premised on results of cross-sectional relations with at times ‘little or no randomized experimental manipulations’. Theories are better tested through mediation analysis especially in a randomised design, as it possesses the effects of improving causal inference.

5.3.1.6 Enhancement and evaluation of the change process

Evaluation is without doubt essential in the assessment of whether the intended outcomes have been achieved or not. Mediation analysis process provides a medium of information through which the envisaged intervention can be measured as an outcome.

5.3.1.7 Delayed program effect possibilities

Chances exist that the intended intervention may only depict the desired effects on the outcome variable long ‘after the effects of the mediating variable have accumulated overtime’.

Given the reasons outlined above, MacKinnon (2011:677) proposes that in a research study, mediating variables should be considered for inclusion at the stages of planning where the theoretical framework and theory testing would be considered at the logic model. Mediating variables are considered necessary in a research study as it capacitates the researcher to think in a concrete manner about how the intervention could be expected to work both in terms of action and conceptual theory. The second aspect is on how to include mediating variables in the decisions on how to measure theoretical mediating variables. The process could entail adding a measure to a questionnaire or some other measurement procedure. The challenge however, could be that there may not be pre-existing nor measures of relevant mediating constructs and psycho-metric work, which must be done to facilitate the development of measures of mediating variables.

5.3.2 Reasons for including moderating variables in research

The previous sub-section outlined the proposed reasons for why mediating variables should be included in a research study and in the same vein it is worthwhile to consider the reasons why moderating variables should be included in a research study. Six of them are identified and are explained below:

5.3.2.1 Using moderators as theory testers

There are certain situations where it may be prudent to use both mediators and moderators, especially in situations where the effects of intervention may be theoretically expected in one group and not another. Ideally, it would be relevant where it is expected that a theoretical mediating process could be present in one group but not in another.

5.3.2.2 Improvement in measurement

Moderator variables should be of reasonably good reliability in terms of sex, age, or ethnicity, as the lack therefore may be a result of poor measurement of the variable.

5.3.2.3 Results generalised

The strength and ability of a moderation analysis include the provision of a test intervention in determining whether similar effects were experienced across the groups under study. The demonstration regarding the intervention tests the effects obtained of females and males, especially where the program shall be distributed to a whole group comprising females and males.

5.3.2.4 Targeting the effects group

Moderation analysis allows flexibility in groups where intervention was more effective than in the other groups, to get more information in respect of each group and develop target groups with specific intervention strategies.

5.3.2.5 Counterproductive subgroups

Through moderation analysis, subgroups identified and considered to be carrying counterproductive effects and for which intervention causes negative outcomes can be addressed. Similarly, we may have groups that are affected by an intervention in opposite directions. In this instance it would be found that their overall impact may be not significant even if there is a statistically significant intervention effect in both groups, even though in the opposite.

5.3.2.6 Recognition of behaviour complexity and differences

The use of moderating variables introduces various aspects in the field of research such as the complexity of people on behaviour, their experiences, and their relationships. Simpson (1945) maintains that the usual focus on individuals against group effects known within research circles are considered to be lumpers (who seek to group individuals and focus on how persons are the same) or splitters (those who look for differences among groups).

According to MacKinnon (2011:677), moderating variables or moderators such as sex, race and age which are often used in research surveys should be included in research. Also to be included and measured are demographic characteristics such as marital status, number of dependents, number of siblings and family income.

It is therefore important to specify both the moderating and mediating variables before a research study is undertaken. A description of the moderation and mediation theory from the onset enables the clarification of the exact purpose of the intended intervention and ultimately allows for the varied alternatives in interpretations of the research results.

5.4 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, an attempt was made to introduce and define the concepts of moderation (moderation variables) and mediation (mediation variables), as these would be later applied in the research study under consideration – Strategy Implementation Liabilities Chapter 7 (Research Findings). Efforts were made to show the evolution and development of the terms moderators and mediators, their nature and relevance to research. As indicated, mediators and moderators are important aspects that deal with the cause-and-effect relationship and that these have been a centre of interest in research as shown by the great uptake by scholars in the fields of psychology, social sciences and other related fields. Of main interest in this study is to be able to identify Strategy Implementation Liabilities with the use of mediating and moderating variables, which would enhance a deeper and well defined understanding of causal relationships between independent variables and the dependent variables. MacKinnon (2011) proposes modalities of how to include both variables in a research study and the reasons advanced have been highlighted in the chapter.

5.5 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

Chapter 5 has set up the tone and modalities on how the research study on strategy implementation has to proceed in terms of identifying the research design (mediation for design) and methodology, eloquently stating the problem statement, research objectives, the ultimate research findings (mediation explanation). Decisions would have to be taken on how to measure theoretical mediating variables, which process could entail adding measures to questions or some other measurement procedure.

5.5 CONTEXTUALISING THE LITERATURE TO THE STUDY

In the preceding five chapters, a solid background on research in Strategy Implementation was established, with varied debates ensuing on issues of the evolution, growth, and maturity of strategy implementation research, particularly highlighting divergent approaches on how strategy is implemented worldwide. However, there is lack of a framework to address ‘negative influences’ or ‘negative holdings’ known as liabilities in strategy implementation resulting in deficient organisational performance and leading non-implementation in organisations. This research’s main aim is to identify inherent liabilities within beneficial processes of business, and answer the question: How can the liabilities approach and insights gained through its views enhance strategy implementation? The context of which is to address strategy implementation gap using the liabilities approach. In investigating the phenomenon - liabilities (negative influences) experienced at strategy implementation, methods used entailed the collection of data through triads, dyads and in-depth interviews as the as the objective and unit of observation was to elicit narratives, experiences on non implementation of strategy. Narratives/stories shared by respondents about non-strategy implementation are considered key insights necessary to build the implementation framework. The criteria expected for interpreting the findings would be whether better understanding, new or alternative insight into the liabilities encountered at strategy implementation have been achieved. The strategy implementation liabilities framework has been developed and what remains is the practical use of it to resolve the ‘implementation problem’.

CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the preceding chapters, a solid background on research in Strategy Implementation was established, with varied debates ensuing on issues of the evolution, growth, and maturity of strategy implementation research, particularly highlighting divergent approaches on how strategy is implemented worldwide. The classification into 'organisational levels' and 'organisational types' of research contexts of the existing studies in strategy implementation was revealed. The implementation factors at the 'macro level' consist of people, institutional, and combined factors while at the 'micro level' they consist of ancillary, related, and a categorisation of groups into factors.
All these factors culminated into a 'Trail Framework on Strategy Implementation Research', which could enable a better understanding of how strategy could effectively be implemented in organisations. Resulting from a thorough and rigorous literature review, the 'strategy implementation gap' was identified, and the contention is that hindrances, inability preconditions, and negative influencers labelled 'Strategy Implementation Liabilities' can be addressed with a liabilities theory.

A research design is a master plan specifying the methods and procedures for collecting and analysing the needed information (Zikmund, 2003:65). According to Cooper & Schindler (2011:139) research design is defined as the:

- "Blue print for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data.
- An aid to the researcher in the allocation of limited resources by posing crucial choices of methodology.
- Expresses both the structure of the research problem - the framework, organisation, or configuration of the relationships among variables of a study - and the plan of investigation used to obtain empirical evidence on those relationships".
  The literature reviewed enabled the refining of the research purpose, provided important clues for the research design and of the substance being assessed

(Berry & Otleg, 2004; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). It is important to differentiate between ‘research method’ and ‘research methodology’. Jonker & Pennink (2010) define a ‘method’ as steps that might be used to travel between two places on a map, and ‘methodology’ as an anology which refers to a domain or a map showing directions to a specific place.

Therefore, a methodology may be referred to as a model followed and used to conduct a research within some context of a particular paradigm, comprising underlying belief sets guiding an enquirer to choose one research method over others (Wahyuni, 2012). According to Sarantakos (2005) a ‘research method’ is a theoretical aspect consisting of a set of specific techniques, procedures and tools necessary to collect and analyse data independent from paradigms and methodologies.

Table 6.1 depicts the research design components of this study which would be fully explained in the sections that follow.

Table 6.1: Outline of the summary of the research design.

Component	**Description**
Research problem	Lack of a framework to address ‘negative influences’ or ‘negative holdings ’(liabilities) on organisational performance contributing to strategy implementation gap / non-implementation in organisations.
Research aim	To propose a framework to guide strategy practitioners, and management in the implementation of their strategy choices through focusing on liabilities
Research question	How can the liabilities approach and insights gained through its views enhance strategy implementation?
Context	Addressing strategy implementation gap using the liabilities approach.
Phenomenon investigated	Liabilities (negative influences) experienced at strategy implementation.
Unit of observation	Narratives/ stories on strategy implementation.

Method	Data was collected as narratives through narrative capture and in-depth interviews. 'Signifiers' and 'indexes' tagging framework using dyads and triads were considered adequate as the objective was to elicit narratives on non implementation of strategy.
Logic linking the data to the propositions	Narratives/stories shared by respondents about non-strategy implementation are key insights necessary to build the implementation framework.
Criteria for interpreting the findings	To gain better understanding, new or alternative insight into the liabilities encountered at strategy implementation. Practical application of the strategy implementation liabilities framework to strategy formulation and implementation.

Adapted from Yin (2003)

6.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM

Organisations need to examine the 'negative influences' or "destructive holdings"on organisational performance in order to properly evaluate strategy and remove these from beneficial business processes. Many organisations, business people and consultants fail because they retain 'destructive holdings' and 'processes' at the expense of positive influences/success factors Arend (2004), which are usually considered essential to 'enhance' strategy implementation success. Implementation has always been regarded as a problem due to the 'weakest link', most of the literature focus is on chain links which are strong and the liabilities approach works at fixing the links. The explanation, therefore, may be better explained in terms of the well-known metaphor which states that, 'it is clearly a literal fact that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link'. Thomas Reid (1786) qualifies the metaphor by indicating that in every chain of reasoning, the evidence of the last conclusion can be no greater than that of the weakest link of the chain, whatever may be the strength of the rest. The approach in this research is to investigate and potentially address the identified weakest links (*negative influences, destructive holdings* and *processes)* through the liabilities theory.

6.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The primary question which this research seeks to answer is: *How can the liabilities approach and insights gained through its views enhance strategy implementation?* Secondarily: *Are there alternative views on the implementation of strategy forthcoming from the liabilities theory?*

6.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objective of this study focused on the identification and description of negative influencers, destructive holdings and processes labelled ‘Strategy Implementation Liabilities’ (SILs) encountered at strategy implementation, causing the implementation gap. Undertaking to clearly understand how these negative influencers, destructive holdings and processes affect strategy implementation. Developing a theoretical framework for the management of SILs and understanding the potential effects of moderators and mediators on strategy implementation.

6.5 PEELING OFF THE RESEARCH ‘ONION’

Saunders, et al’s., (2009) conception of “research onion” has been used in exploring the research design and methodology for this study. The research onion articulates the necessary thought process that must be covered in developing a research study. According to Bryman (2012) the research onion is an effective tool for depicting the progression undertaken through a research methodology, and can be adapted to fit most research studies within various contexts.

Saunders, et al’s., (2009) research onion model as illustrated in Figure 6.1 has six phases to classify the research:

- the research philosophy must be defined,
- the appropriate research approach is determined,
- the research strategy is adopted,
- the research choices are made,

- the time horizon is specified, and
- the data collection and analysis methodology is identified.

In essence, the research onion creates the phases for systematically aligning all the decisions pertaining to how the study may be taken. The various stages of the research onion are described, with explanations of the concepts involved within each stage.

6.5.1 Research philosophy

Bryman (2012) maintains that, a research philosophy consists of a set of beliefs regarding the nature of the investigated reality. The justification for the way in which the envisaged research will be undertaken is a creation of the assumptions that the research philosophy provides (Flick, 2011). Some researchers would generally choose data collection methods and proceed with their research influenced by the chosen research methodology. This chosen method will obviously be influenced by the theoretical perspectives adopted and ultimately by the epistemological stance of the researcher (Gray, 2014b:19).
Comprehending the research philosophy being utilised greatly assists in explaining the present assumptions within the process of research and the fit in the methodology used. The research methodology is underpinned by philosophical issues related to the question of ontological philosophy as concerned with the nature of reality, and the epistemology which pertains to addressing the facts by asking what acceptable knowledge is, guided by the basic belief of axiology, which focuses on the study of the nature, types, and criteria of values and of value judgements specifically in ethics.

Creswell (2003) postulates that, the practice of research involves much more than philosophical assumptions. Philosophical ideas must be combined with strategies and methods; the broad approaches to research and specific procedures for implementation. Thus, a solid framework that combines the elements of philosophical ideas, strategies, and methods as depicted in Figure 6.1 below is needed. The six layers of the ‘research onion' was incorporated into the framework to facilitate this journey. According to Saunders, et Al., (2009) the 'research onion' layers are:

- research philosophies comprising positivism, realism, interpretivism, objectivism, subjectivism, pragmatism, functionalist, interpretive, radical humanist and radical structuralist;
- research approaches including the deductive and inductive;
- research strategies which are the experiment, surveys, case study, grounded theory, ethnography and action research;
- the research choices comprising mono method, mixed method and multi methods;
- time horizons as in longitudinal and cross sectional; and
- techniques and procedures for data collection and analysis, including narrative and in-depth interviews.

Crotty's (1998:03) findings' in designing a research proposal entails four questions, which in turn probe the researcher into an 'inquiry'.

1. What epistemology (theory of knowledge embedded within the theoretical perspective and methodology) informs the inquiry (e.g., constructivism, subjectivism, objectivism, etc.)?
2. What is the theoretical perspective (philosophical stance) influencing the methodology (e.g., Critical enquiry, interpretivism, pragmatism, positivism, etc.)?
3. What methodology (strategy/plan of action that drives processes) underpins our methods to our objectives (survey research, case study, action research, experiment, (etc.)?
4. What methods (tools, techniques and procedures, protocol) have been identified (e.g., interview, questionnaires, sampling, document analysis, etc.)?

By answering these four questions a road map for this research has been laid out as depicted by Figure 6.1 below. The researcher proceeds by stating his 'knowledge claim', meaning, starting with assumptions in respect of ‘how’ he will learn and ‘what’ he will learn during this research journey (Creswell, 2003). These assumptions, which find their basis in philosophy, might be labelled, epistemologies, and ontologies (Crotty, 1998) and the claims are called ‘paradigms’ (Mertens, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 2000).

A paradigm is a set of assumptions and perceptions commonly shared in research and considered to be part of society and community. These fundamental assumptions and beliefs as to how the world is perceived, address the philosophical dimensions of social sciences (Wahyuni, 2012), and serve as a thinking framework that guides the behaviour of the researcher (Jonker & Pennink, 2010). It is the embodiment of the researcher’s ontology, methodology and epistemology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Therefore, existing research paradigms are generally distinguished between the philosophical paradigms of ‘epistemology’ and ‘ontology’ (Saunders et al., 2009; Kalof, Dan & Dietz, 2008; Laughlin, 1995). Ontology is the understanding and view of how one perceives ‘reality’, the order of things as they actually exist (Wayhuni, 2012) and how this influences the way people behave. It is defined as the study of being, concerned with ‘what is’ with the nature of existence and the structure of reality (Crotty, 1998:03: Gray, 2014b). According to Monette, Sillivan, & DeJong (2005) positivism and constructionism are the two main ontological frameworks that can inform the research process.

The questions posed by epistemology entail the relationship between the ‘knower’ and ‘what is known’ and ‘what we know’ and ‘how we know it’ (Norris, 2005). Then, the question is, what is acceptable ‘knowledge’ about one’s field of research and what information is known to be true as a result of rigorous testing such that it is treated as a fact? Epistemology thus, entails ‘the nature of knowledge, its possibility, scope and general basis’ (Hamlyn, 1995:242; Maynard, 1994:10). Therefore it is concerned with the provision of a philosophical platform in deciding the kinds of knowledge available and ensuring their availability, adequacy and legitimacy. The importance and relevance of the epistemological perspective in research according to Easterby-Smith et al., (2002) is that, it assists with the issues pertaining to the research design suitable for investigating the research question and attaining the set objectives as well as further clarifying research issues of structure, evidence being collected, its location, and interpretation protocol.

Axiology is another paradigm and is concerned with ethics, encompassing the roles of values in the research and the researcher's stance in relation to the subject under study (Wahyuni, 2012). Figure 6.1 depicts knowledge assumptions and philosophical stances, combined with research approaches, research strategies, strategy choices, specified time horizons, and techniques and procedures to gather data, analyse it, validate the process and realise the findings.

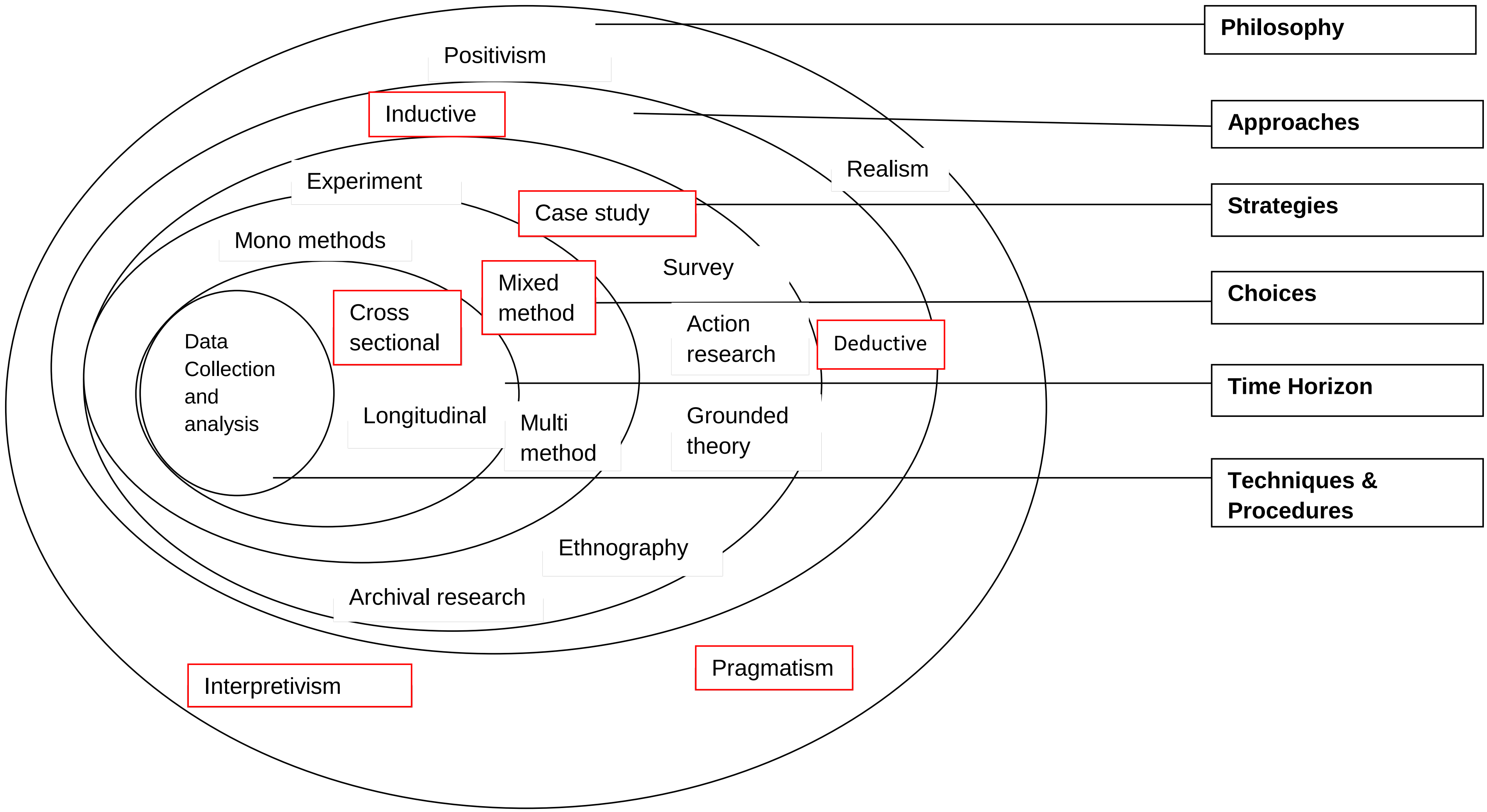


Figure 6.1: Saunders' Research Onion **Source:** Saunders et al., (2009)

6.5.2 Research approach

This study employed an interpretive research approach using qualitative methods. This decision taken was to adopt an appropriate theoretical framework for this research, as it views the world as constructed, interpreted, and experienced by human beings as they interact with others within the wider social systems Maxwell, 2006; Walliman 2006; Creswell, 2012). Walliman (2006) asserts that interpretive research has its basis on the view that a person can only experience the world through his or her perceptions, with the influence of preconceived beliefs and ideas, hence the internal view of the situation under study. The interpretations and meaning that individuals assign to the phenomena under study constitutes this research's approach. The interpretive research was underpinned by the qualitative research methods which assisted to produce holistic understanding of contextual, rich and generally unstructured, non-numeric data Strauss & Corbin (1998), Mason (2002) through engagement in conversations with the subjects in a natural setting Creswell (2009) on the strategy implementation phenomena. This study is descriptive as it aims to understand how strategy implementation is undertaken in organisations. The attempt is to obtain the desired level of understanding, experiences, interpretations and perceptions of respondents within Water Utilities Corporation.

6.5.3 Research strategy

The research strategy provided the overall direction of the research and encompasses the research conduct (Remenyi, Williams, Money, & Swartz, 2003; Bryman, 2008). According to Saunders et al., (2009:600) the research strategy is "the general plan of how the researcher will go about answering the research questions". This study was undertaken as a narrative case study. The choice of a narrative 'case study' method was to facilitate an in-depth investigation of a real–life contemporary phenomenon in its natural context (Woodside, 2010; Yin, 2012). It focused on describing processes, individual or group behaviour in its total setting and the sequence of events in which the behaviour happened. The narrative case study procedures entailed studying one or two individuals, gathering data through collecting their stories, reporting individual experiences, and chronologically ordering the meaning of those experiences. The intention in this study was to collect data from which perspectives and experiences of individuals who had participated in strategy implementation were identified and elicited (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Ray & Goppelt (2011) maintain that people normally make sense of their organisational lives through storytelling, where "organisational members contribute linguistic fragments such as opinions, descriptions, and proto-stories" (Barge, 2004:107)

6.5.4 Research choice

Interpretive research tends to have heavy reliance on qualitative data. The qualitative approach is pertinent to this study as it places requirements on the researcher to avoid imposing their own perception of the meaning of social phenomena upon the respondent (Banister, Bunn, Burman & Daniels, 2011). The main aim is to obtain experiences of respondents on how they interpret their own reality. The most effective means of obtaining their experiences used was through strategy implementation liabilities narrative capture questions with the use of dyads/polarities, triads and in-depth interviews. The researcher developed questions throughout the process in order to ensure that the respondent further expands upon the information provided. Qualitative research has the advantages of a holistic understandings of rich, contextual, and mainly unstructured, non-numeric data through the engagement in conversations with the research respondents mainly in a natural setting (Mason, 2002; Creswell, 2009).

6.5.4.1 Research setting

This study was conducted amongst 200 employees of Water Utilities Corporation (an organisation responsible for the reticulation of water and sewerage disposal throughout Botswana), in Gaborone, Francistown, Lobatse, Kanye, Molepolole and Mahalapye, across the cadres of Top Management, Senior Management and Middle Management who are strategy crafters and implementers. From the 200 employees targeted to participate in this research, only 172 confirmed their willingness to participate, with 28, citing various reasons for non-participation. The choice of the case organisation was mainly influenced by the critical case sampling method which has been found to be relevant to this research, mainly because the Water Utilities Corporation (WUC) is currently undergoing transformation to overcome the ‘challenges’ experienced in the reticulation of water and sewerage across the country.

6.5.4.2 Unit of analysis

According to Prabhu & Venkateswaran (2010:156) the unit of analysis refers to the precise object of the research, the entity one is trying to draw conclusions on. In a case study analysis, the unit of analysis may be a ‘case’ - either a person, group, an organisation or an event, the definition of which is related to the way the initial research questions have been defined. The unit of analysis is the basis of each case. In this study, the unit of analysis is a person (participant/respondent), individual who is in the employ of the organisation selected as a case organisation (Water Utilities Corporation) who has an experience of interest to the study. These individuals, regarded as respondents, are asked in an in-depth research to share their lived experiences Julian & Ofori-Dankwa (2008:102) as they are ‘experts’ and therefore knowledgeable in the implementation of their strategy choice. What is more critical to this research is their individual responses to the questions posed to them. These questions are the characteristics studied and are formally captured as values which would be later analysed to produce the results of the study on strategy implementation.

6.5.4.3 Case organisation

This case organisation was specifically and purposefully selected because for some previous 2-3 years, Botswana, the country where the study was undertaken, had experienced challenges with water reticulation, emanating from a long spell of drought that resulted in the drying up of some major dams. Official and informal links proved to be favourable thus yielded referrals for the case organisation to be studied. In some instances, strategically positioned managers within the Strategy Department, who directly influenced strategy implementation, were used as referrals. Once top management had granted authorisation and access, the participants at the head and branch offices were identified through networking Bryman (2012), for them to share their narratives.

Water Utilities Corporation (WUC) (Also see Appendix K) is a parastatal organisation wholly owned by Botswana Government. The corporation was established in 1970 by an Act of Parliament (Laws of Botswana Cap: 74:02) initially with the single mandate to manage a single project for the supply and distribution of water in what was then called the Shashe Development Area (www.wuc.bw/wuc-content/id/143/corporate-profile/). Over the forty-six years of operation, its mandate (often used concurrent with vision of the organisation) has expanded to supplying portable water to all urban places and rural areas across the country, as well as the managing of wastewater, following the Water Sector Reforms Programme (WSRP) effected from May 2009 and completed in 2013. Since the commencement of this programme the customer base grew from 80,000 in 2009 to 355,000 by the 31st March 2015, with the corporation supplying over 80 million cubic metres of portable water annually to its customerbase (www.wuc.bw/wuc-content/id/143/corporate-profile/).The corporation's net assets total P6 billion consisting of property, plant and equipment, with the infrastructure of nine dams (Gaborone, Nnywane, Bokaa, Shashe Letsibogo, Ntimbale, Dikgatlhong, Lobatse and Thune), the North South Water Carrier which comprise of a 365 km long pipeline, and water treatment and associated pump stations.

6.5.4.4 Combining case study and in-depth interviews

This study commenced with the administration of developed Strategy Implementation Liabilities Narrative Capture Questions on Top Management, Senior Management and Middle Management, which was later followed by in-depth interviews, where the intention was to seek new insights into the 'strategy implementation gap' and how these could assist us to ask questions and assess the phenomena in a new light (Robson, 2002:59) and this was useful in clarifying the understanding of the research problem (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2003).

Table 6.2 details the essential aspects and features of a narrative in-depth interview and case study, goals of using the same, procedure and technique.

Table 6.2: Essential features of in-depth interviews and case study methods, procedure, technique and research type.

Strategy	**Goal**	**Procedure**	**Technique**	**Type of research**
Narrative In-depth Interviews	Find patterns in data	1. Collection of data from respondents using narrative capture method. 2. Evaluate the data, for example, by using narrative method. 3. Identify patterns, especially those which were not expected. 4. Interpret the results.	In-depth interviews, discussions, literature research, narrative questionnaires.	inductive, narrative (story telling),
Case studies	Study the characteristics of a real-life instance	1. Select an instance to study 2. Collect data, analyse and interpret it in a systematic way 3. Understand the reasons for characteristics of the instance	Interviews, discussions, observations, questionnaires	Interpretivist, inductive, qualitative.

Source: Adapted from Hanne (2010)

6.5.5 SAMPLE FRAME SELECTION AND SIZE

6.5.5.1 Sample frame

A sample was selected from the population of the Water Utilities Corporation (WUC) an organisation responsible for reticulation of water resources and sewerage disposal. This organisation has been selected purposefully and subjectively as the only corporation providing water resources in the country. The case organisation in this study was chosen using a non-probability purposive sampling and according to pre-determined reasons (Noy, 2008). The purposive sampling was used specifically to facilitate the use of 'information rich' cases Patton (2002), which are 'vivid and rich' on the basis of their matched criteria in order to answer the research question (Bloor & Wood, 2006; Saunders et al., 2007). A total of 174 employees out of the initial 200 employees across the three cadre of Top Management, Senior Management and Middle Management were purposefully sampled to share their experiences and perception on the strategy implementation process in the organisation. Strategy is regarded by most organisations as a sensitive, confidential and competitive tool and therefore efforts to access all the 200 employees across the organisation was a challenge with only 172 employees sharing their stories. However, it was anticipated and acknowledged that gaining access into the targeted organisation for participation in the case study research would be the most challenging tasks in the research process especially due to the ingrained culture of employees fearing to share information about their establishment some of whom operate in a highly competitive and turbulent utilities environments. In most cases, the sensitivity of the information to be studied seems to be the main factor causing organisations to be hesitant to talk to researchers (Wahyuni, 2012). The researcher used informal links, which proved to be favourable and in fact yielded referrals, and also gained access through strategically positioned managers within the strategy department who directly influenced strategy implementation.

6.5.5.2 Sample selection and sample size

In this interpretive research, the number of participants is relatively small (Holloway, 1997). Because of the complexity of the management and analysis of large volumes of data anticipated from the case organisation Yin (2009:162) has a recommendation that researchers start "with a simple and straightforward case study" comprising of employees/ individuals who have experience of interest to the study.
During the initial planning stages of the research project, I had intentions to cover other areas such as Ghanzi, Maun and Kasane but due to their remote dispersion, the available time and financial resources to sufficiently complete the research did not permit, I therefore decided to limit my sample to 200 employees in areas of Gaborone, Francistown Lobatse, Kanye and Molepolole. The 200 employees consisted of

samples from Top Management (Chief Executive and Executive Management), Senior Management (Senior Managers & Professionals) and Middle Management (Line Managers, Supervisors and staff). The age ranges of the 172 respondents is from 21 years to 65 years. At least 117 story tellers fell within the ages of 31 to 50 years which made a considerable proportion of the workforce (68%). Total contributors of the stories consisted of 99 males and 73 females. At least 52 respondents (30.23%) had experience in strategy implementation of 1 month up to 6 months could be employees newly recruited, 91 story tellers (52.91%) had experience of 24 months and more, while 29 story tellers (16.86%) decided not to share their stories. Participants who are part of Executive Management were 30, Senior Management 48, Middle Mangement 51, Supervisory and Staff were 43.

6.5.6. DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

Data was collected through the use of in-depth interviews, triads and dyads/ polarities. In-depth interviews are qualitative research techniques that allows person to person discussion which have the potential to lead to increased insight into people's thoughts, feelings and behaviour on important issues. They are a form of communication with the practitioners in the organisational coal-face in order to better understand strategy implementation Parker (2003) where respondents, as practitioners in their field, pass on their knowledge to the researcher through the narratives/conversations held during the interview process (Boeije, 2010; Wahyuni, 2010). When selecting research participants for qualitative studies, relevance to the research topic is more important than representativeness Neuman (2003), also realising the difficulty to determine an optimal sample size for qualitative studies (Terre Blanche, Durheim & Painter, 2006).

6.5.6.1 In-depth interviews

"In-depth interviews research assisted in the collection of information from individuals by eliciting their experiences and collecting stories told. In-depth interviewing is a qualitative research technique that enabled the conducting of intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on strategy implementation" (Boyce & Neale, 2006:126). In-depth interviews are important when information was elicited from respondents about their ‘lived experiences’, their stories, or exploring new issues in depth. This is where participants in a study were requested to give details and accounts of themselves and their stories. Respondents provided more detailed information, than what could be availed through other data collection methods such as surveys, as respondents feel more relaxed and comfortable to do so. The framework of the in-depth interview research instrument was modelled around the concept of ‘Signified Mapping’ developed by Dr Beth Meriam (2010) whose “research is grounded in the anthropological understanding that each individual is a unique, energy source responsible for acting upon their socially and cultural inflected interpretations in an equally particular way” (Bateson, 1972:83).

The research used the ‘signifiers’, tagging framework with the objective to elicit narratives regarding non-implementation of strategy from participants. In simple terms, the (Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2002) defines ‘signification’ as “representation or conveying of meaning or the act or the process of signifying by signs or other symbolic means”. According to Seah (2010:06) ‘signification’ is the process whereby experiences shared in the narrative capture are tagged according to respondents using the signifiers which have been designed? Since participants face numerous unique challenges with strategy implementation, designing the signification framework enabled contextualisation to their varied conditions. The purpose of signifying stories was not to interpret the content, but to allow the respondents to add context and meaning to their experiences. This process is usually executed at the collection of data point, when the in-depth interview is being conducted with the participants. The perspective of the participant is obtained regarding strategy implementation with the pre-defined signification framework where the results are less likely to be exposed to the bias of the researcher at the analysis stage.

Probes were prepared in advance, to keep the discussions flowing, but also to clarify some discussion points by asking more details of what would have been said. Once the questions were determined, a peer who has vast experience in conducting interviews was asked to check them to ensure that the wording in the questions would not lead to pre-determined answers (Wahyuni, 2012). Before the formal interview, mock interviews were held with colleagues at the University of Botswana Centre for

Continuing Education (CCE), with the view to fine tune the research instrument. These colleagues were requested to tell stories just like in the actual interviews; hence signifiers were used to denote the meaning they were making of the story. Following the process of piloting the signifier, the set of signifiers that were used for the 1st phase of the story collection were finalised. The intention was to make the signifiers 'sufficiently ambiguous' in order to invoke the human sensing processes (Ray & Goppelt, 2011: 64). As a result of this, some expressions, statements and words were altered and changed to make the questions clearer, so they facilitated and improved the flow of the interviews. Once the instrument was found complete, it was submitted for ethics clearance with the University of Pretoria and the Office of State President Botswana from where the study research permit was issued.

In in order to understand the multiple meanings Snowden (2010), the story-teller was asked to highlight the meaning of the story they relayed, through a series of tags, keywords, and questions. The process entailed the story-teller indexing each story in order to form a type of structured signifier or simply restorying. 'Indexes' were used to capture the actual moments of interaction, of the coming together of individuals in conversational and behavioural exchange (Rapport & Overing, 2000). The 'indexes' were developed purposefully to create questions, when answered, they signified the meaning of a given story as closely as it was possible, to those telling stories, simultaneously building a set that would be relevant for every story-teller. Since this research is non-hypothesis based, and therefore cannot guide our choice of indices, the only alternative was to enlist the assistance of participants to assist in the creation of indexes.

With the use of the same set of possible questions, keywords and tags, emerging patterns and themes were compared between and across the stories. The quantitative data was indexed into the meaning of the various stories and facilitated correlations between groups of stories (Kurtz & Snowden (2007). Ray & Goppelt (2011:63) argue that indexes can contain different types of data with the use of several types of scales such as ordinal scales, nominal scales, and graphic differential scales. The narrative questionnaire used in this research contains questions with differential scales with both ends being undesirable (in excess and absent). This is purposeful so as to "ensure that the scale increases the ambiguity in order for the story teller to less likely respond in ways expected by a dominant discourse and more likely to respond in ways that bring the meaning of the story into focus (Ray & Goppelt, 2011:64). The signified mapping facilitated the design of the signification framework, where formal inputs and informal inputs were used. The former refers to information existing within the organisation in respect of strategy implementation, processes, procedures and protocol. Informal inputs consist of established and general information existing on strategy implementation. The designed signifiers were derived from ‘triads’ and ‘dyads’ (polarities), whereby ‘triads’ are defined as a group or set of three related people or things, and ‘dyads’ as scales with different values at each of the far ends. In this research, ‘dyads’ (polarities) are the linear scales with different values at each extreme. According to Meriam (2010) the dyads and triads indicate the anthropological discipline’s debates including self and other (Geertz, 1973); relativism and universalism and nature versus culture (Levi-Strauss (1966). According to Snowden (2007) polarities are designed around Aristotle’s concept of the Golden Mean. The concept emphasis is on ‘opposing negatives’, where the objective that the organisation (value) intends to achieve is located at the mid/centre of the continuum with extremes. These extremes are the values absent or the values taken to ‘excess’.

The situation described above may be depicted as shown below:

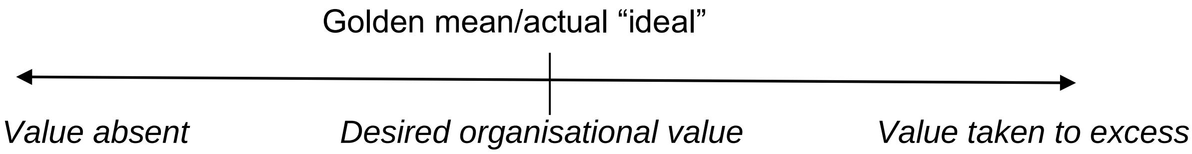


Figure 6.2: Aristotle’s Concept of the Golden Mean **Source:** Own compilation

The un-delineated scale in between the two extremes is intentionally constructed to disguise the intent of the question. The Golden Mean or actual ‘ideal’ is located halfway just between the two extremes. The rationale behind the use of opposing negatives approach is to enable the capturing of the people’s natural, instinctive reaction instead of only providing an idealised answer (Seah, 2010)

6.5.6.2 Triads

The literature reviewed facilitated the development of a strategy implementation liabilities narrative questions which enabled data collection through the use of *dyads/polarities and triads.* Some of the strategy implementation narrative questions used 'signifiers', others 'indexes' tagging framework with the objective to elicit narratives regarding non-implementation of strategy from participants (Meriam, 2010; Ray & Goppelt, 2011). 'Signification' is the process whereby experiences shared in the narrative capture are tagged according to respondents using designed signifiers (Seah, 2010:06). Triads comprise of a series of triangles, each of which contains a series of dots or crosses representing stories/responses received from research respondents. In attempting to answer the question, the respondent is given the choice to decide between three competing elements described at the apex of each triangle which in their story and experience are considered dominant. Then their responses are marked. Analysing data using a triad involves a single entry, six analysis filters, the distance to each corner and the vertical drop, thereby minimizing data entry while maximizing analysis capability.

According to Seah (2010) the triad provides an ambiguous and yet constrained space where respondents are requested to consider and choose from three different values in relative tension to each other. In interpreting the results usually captured in the various formats such as in graphs, the combined responses will be seen as a pattern of dots or crosses, where it will be indicated that, the greater the concentration, is the indication of how people signified that point as being the correct mix of elements in their story. Through this process, the concerns and issues experienced by a majority of people are immediately identified through patterns. Using the same example above, a triad may be used to show the level of commitment of resources in an organisation.

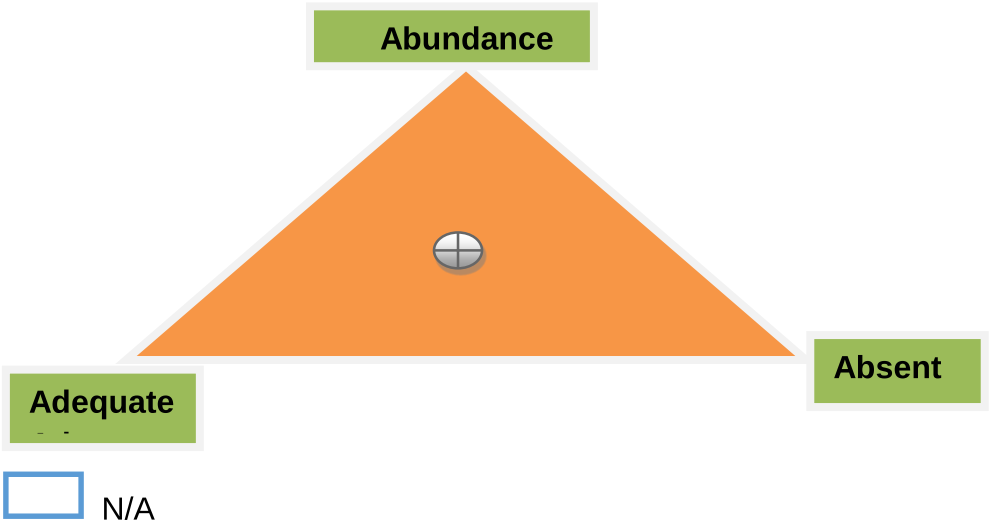


Figure 6.3: Use of triad on resource allocation **Source:** Own compilation

Where the research questionnaire is automated, the participant's responses in both Figures 6.6 and 6.7 were captured in two ways: in Figure 6.6, participants clicked on the bubble, dragged it and placed it along the continuum to a level where they thought was applicable to their experiences. Similarly, in Figure 6.7 they indicated within the triangle by perching the bubble on the apex of any corner, indicating their experiences. In situations where respondents in their own experiences, thought that the elements within a triad should be balanced, they could leave the bubble in the centre of the triangle. Similarly, where the respondent thought that a particular triad was irrelevant in accordance with their shared experience, they could use the 'N/A' (not appropriate) option provided. In interpreting the results of narrative research or narratives, where numerable narratives are signified towards either extreme, it may be an indication of an imbalance which needs to be rectified before it has the chance to become a serious issue (Seah, 2010:07). Appendix A depicts the power-point questionnaire that captured responses and narrative story fragments from respondents and these are expressed as triads and dyads.

6.5.6.3 Dyads/ Polarities

Dyads/polarities are designed around Aristotle's concept of the Golden Mean (Snowden, 2007). The concept emphasis is on 'opposing negatives', where the objective that the organisation intends to achieve (value) is located at the mid/centre of the continuum with extremes - values ‘absent’ or the values taken to ‘excess’. The following topics emerging from the literature provided guidance to the data collection using dyads, triads and the in-depth interviews:

Respondents were invited to indicate a place along a continuum identified with two end labels provided, running from ‘complete absence’ or ‘thing not present’ to ‘excessive abundance’ or ‘thing taken to excess’, which at the very best described a specific aspect of their story. This means that the ‘ideal’ position would be reflected by marking the centre of the scale. In this instance a linear scale with two labels provides two filters of analysis and retrieval, the left hand label represents 100% of itself or 0% of its opposite. By looking at the mean position of all the respondents, immediate insight is allowed into the aggregate strength of that aspect where the ideal position of the mean is conspicuously shown in the centre of the dyad. In case the question is not present in their told stories, a request is made to the respondents to check ‘not appropriate/not applicable’ (Cognitive Edge, 2015).

An example of a dyad (polarity) with opposing extremes in the negative:

‘Overall resource allocation for strategy implementation in my organisation is:’

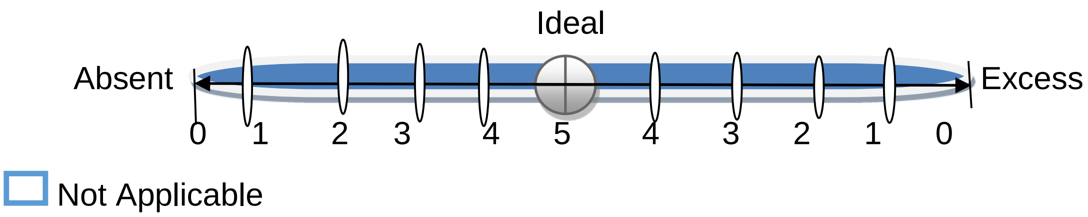


Figure 6.4: Use of polarity on resource allocation **Source:** Own compilation

The polarity example above is to show the extent to which the leadership commits its resources to ensure that strategy implementation is successful. The right extreme reveals ‘excess of resource allocation’ - so much resources that it falls over into naiveté. The left extreme reveals ‘absence of resource allocation’ – non-existence such that the organisation is even unable to implement its strategy choices. Therefore, the ideal answer surely would fall in the middle, known as the Golden Mean or the preferred value and position which the organisation needs to achieve in balancing issues between excess and absent, so that resources would be sufficient and not in excess nor absent.

In crafting the Narrative Capture Instrument for the collection of data through in-depth interviews, triads and dyads, topics derived from the literature review in Table 6.3 were used.

Table 6.3: Topics derived from the literature review.

Triads topics	**Dyads/polarities topics**
• Experience, perception and understanding of strategy implementation. • Responsibility for strategy implementation. • Perceived strategy implementation alignment issues. • Integrating strategy formulation and implementation. • Resource allocation within the implementation process • Potential benefits derivable from implementation • Implementation decisions making and evaluation • Factors perceived to influence implementation • Key skills and competences Essential aspects of the implementation process • Implementation guiding principles • Perception on implementation rules, procedures and processes • Beneficiaries of the implementation process • The future as seen through strategy implementation • The change management process within implementation • Processes undertaken to implement decisions • Employees reaction on implementation instructions • Attitudes displayed towards colleagues • The timing of implementation, relevance and applicability	• Perception about the level of conversation/ talk on strategy implementation • Concern and commitment about implementation • External factors affecting implementation • Employee trust in the process • Employee information sharing • Employee interrelationships • Managing employee emotions • Managing diverse perspectives • Esprit de corps

In-depth interviews
One set of probing narrative in-depth interview questions were directed towards Top Management and Senior Management and others towards Middle Management. The two main probing questions were: 1. Can you tell me about strategy implementation in your organisation? • Respondents would basically assess milestones achieved in strategy implementation in terms of their experience and would indicate issues of success or failure. 2. Can you share a story on strategy implementation in your organisation? • Respondents were at liberty to generally paint a picture on how they experienced and viewed strategy implementation in their organisation without any hindrances.

Source: Own Compilation

Interviews were conducted personally by the researcher and lasted at the most one hour on average. During interviews the interviewer introduced himself to the participants and briefly indicated the aim and objective (sharing experiences, understanding and perception on strategy implementation in your organisation) of the interview discussions. It was impressed on participants that their responses would be treated 'confidential' and would solemnly be used only for educational purpose research. Permission to record the interview was obtained from the interviewees through a Consent Form and it was explained to them that the purpose was to facilitate 'transcribing' and 'analysis' of the interview proceedings. The interview guide enabled the researcher to discuss a range of themes relevant to the study.

6.5.7 RECORDING OF DATA

Data were collected through dyads, triads and in-depth interviews. Dyads data were collected through narrative questionnaire which contains questions with differential scales with both ends being undesirable (in excess and absent). This means that the 'ideal' position would be reflected by marking the centre of the scale. In this instance a linear scale with two labels provides two filters of analysis and retrieval, the left hand label represents 100% of itself or 0% of its opposite. Triads comprise of a series of triangles, each of which contains a series of dots or crosses representing stories/responses received from research respondents. In attempting to answer the question, the respondent is given the choice to decide between three competing elements described at the apex of each triangle which in their story and experience are considered dominant. Two main probing questions were used to collect data through in-depth interviews: Can you tell me about strategy implementation in your organisation? Can you share a story on strategy implementation in your organisation? In recording triad, dyad and in-depth interviews data, respondents were referenced from W1 to W172. Strategy Implementation Liabilities Questions (triads and dyads data) were similar, with two sets of questions for in-depth interviews distributed between Top Management, Senior Management and Middle Management. Once the completed questions were received these would be separated into two main categories using the position which the respondent hold in the organisation.

6.5.8 ANALYSIS OF DATA

Data were analysed from dyad, triad and in-depth interviews. Saturation was achieved after 100 interviews. These were however allowed to continue well over and up to 172 interviews across the cadres, with the open mind that possibilities exist for uncovering new and different stories. Saturation was operationalized in a way that was consistent with the research question, with similar consideration of the theoretical position and analytic framework adopted (Saunders, Kingstone, Baker, Waterfield, Bartlam, Buroughs & Jinks, 2017: 02).

In the analysis of the qualitative data collected, this study employed thematic analysis to search for themes or patterns across the data set. Thematic analysis is essentially a method for identifying and analysing patterns in qualitative data (Clarke & Braum, 2013). Table 6.4 sets out the phases identified within the thematic analysis.

Table 6.4: Phases of thematic analysis

Items	Phase	Description of the process
1	Familiarising yourself with your data	Immersing oneself in data, becoming familiar with extraction of raw data from dyads, triads and in-depth interviews. Reading and re-reading the data.
2	Generation of Codes	Assigning codes to interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the whole data set, assigning codes to relevant data.

3	Searching for themes	Bringing Together codes into potential themes, garnering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4	Reviewing of themes	Cross checking to establish if the themes are in synergy to the coded extracts (Item 1) and the whole data set (Item 2) mapping the analysis process.
5	Defining and naming themes	Continuous detailed analysis of each theme, to refine each themes specifics- what it tells and how it fits into the overall story, identifying the ‘essence’ of each, generating names and defining each theme.
6	Reporting findings	Report findings, putting together analytic narrative and vivid data extracts, relaying it back to the research question and the literature to relay a coherent and persuasive story about the data.

Source: Clarke & Braun (2013:04-05)

6.5.9 STRATEGIES FOR ENSURING QUALITY DATA AND INTERPRETATION

Reliability and validity are concerns which were addressed and these were achieved through careful attention to study’s conceptualization, specifically in the way the data was collected, analysed, interpreted, and finally the way findings were presented (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015b:238). The trustworthiness of the data was directly tied to the trustworthiness of the researcher who collected and analysed the data by demonstrated competence, training, experience, and ‘intellectual’ rigor (Patton, 2015).

According to Lincoln & Guba (1985) both good quality, trustworthiness needs to be considered in terms of the four criteria when qualitative research is undertaken.

- **Credibility:** Data in this study was elicited from employees of Water Utilities Corporation across the cadres of Top Management, Senior Management and Middle Management. Data were personally collected by the researcher with persistence and observation, where it was collected through dyads, triads and in-depth interviews, taking notes, and memos, transcribing it to ensure information is adequate and available for reference.
- **Transferability:** The main purpose underlying this study was to map ways in which the strategy implementation gap can be closed by exploring the liabilities

approach. Transferability in this context relates to how the findings can be seen as relevant and accordingly applied to other strategy implementation initiatives within organisations experiencing the same challenges. Organisations already battling with the ‘implementation problem’ in other diverse settings could use these findings to improve their situation.

- **Dependability:** Certainty and the ‘stability of findings over time’ is guaranteed as the application of the same/similar research respondents within the same /similar contexts will provide similar results. This means that credible results obtained from this research can be depended on.
- **Confirmability:** Raw data recorded on dyads, triads and in-depth interview sheets, memos and interview notes comprise adequate trail information showing how conclusions were attained, how interpretations were made, together with recommendations which all could be traced to the source documents.

By verifying through peer review from academic colleagues, and having more than one pair of eyes looking and thinking about the data, trustworthiness was enhanced in identifying themes and patterns. The peer review and examination conducted entailed discussions with colleagues regarding the process of study, the congruency of emerging findings with the raw data, and tentative interpretations. Adequate engagement during data collection was critical and sufficient time was spent at collection sites with participants to ensure the ‘saturated’ data involved seeking discrepant or negative cases. It was impressed on the respondents who participated in the study that they did so on a voluntary basis, without any undue influence or coercion and that according to the established procedure, having given their consent they were at liberty to exit the interviews at any point should they so wish. It was confirmed to respondents that their participation was anonymous and that their responses would be treated as confidential.

6.11 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter constitutes the research design and methodology. Discussed in detail are the six ‘research onion’ constituents which are: research philosophy, research approach, research strategies, research time horizon, research choice, and research techniques and procedures. The philosophical underpinnings grouding the study have been described. The major process components of research methodology, problem, objectives and hypothesis have been explained and applications to the current study highlighted. Techniques and procedures for collecting and analising the data for answering the questions for this research were spelt out, making clear their constituent parts and relevance in the study. Important issues of reliability and validity of research were discussed at great length indicating the steps taken to avert threats to reliability and validity in relation to observer bias, observer (interviewer) error, subject error, and subject response bias.

Chapter 7: Research Findings

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The narrative capture method was used to conduct the survey with participants, and get them to share their experiences about how strategy was implemented in their respective units, divisions/departments and organisation. The method was used to elicit experiences of participants on the implementation of strategy across sectors of the identified case organisation. Responses were received from both the Strategy Implementation Liabilities Narrative Capture Questions (triads and dyads) and the In-depth Interview Questions administered across the organisation's management and staff levels.

7.2 METHODOLOGY

As previously indicated in section 6.3 of Chapter 6, this research was a qualitative study, using the narrative capture method over a period of three months, covering the WUC head office including three branches in Gaborone and six branches across the country. Participants' experiences were obtained through questions and recorded into general all-encompassing triads and dyads (polarities) data capture instruments.

Examples are depicted below:

7.2.1 Triads data example 1

I would judge strategy implementation in my organisation as:

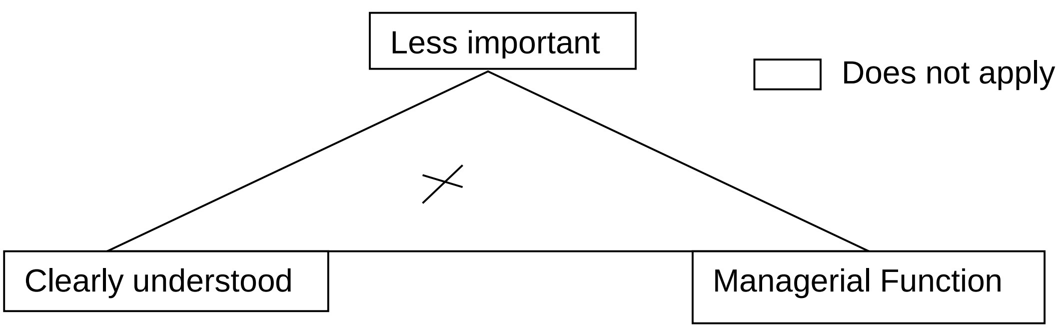


Figure 7.1: Triad used to collect narrative data

7.2.2 Dyads/Polarities data example 2

Where teamwork and effort is requested to execute assignments people............

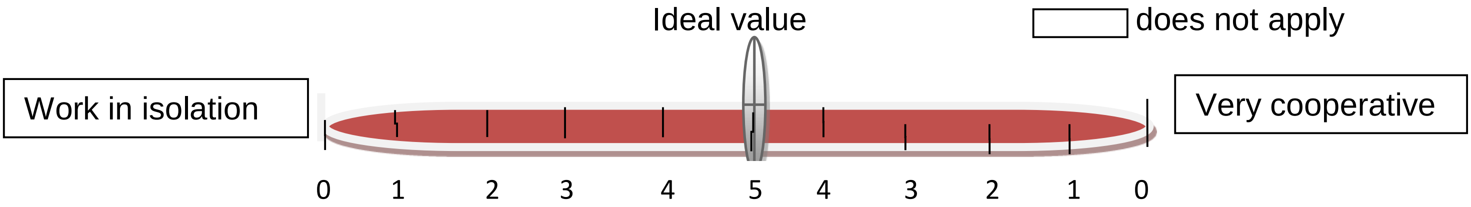


Figure 7.2: Dyads/Polarities for data collection

There are stories behind all the indicators presented because triads and dyads/polarities are based on story occurrences. The final analysis of data in this research was highlighted by interesting and contrasting patterns, finally making sense of the context shared across experiences and stories (Snowden, 2015). Each data set indicated within the triad was a data point which represented a story shared by each respondent or story teller.

7.3 COLLECTED NARRATIVES.

The data presented was ‘story-centric’ which means that all figures are related to stories contributed. Demographic narrative data was reviewed and presented as a story occurrence with the assumption that most respondents entered only one story for each question asked (Snowden, 2015). This demographic data was reviewed and presented per narrative indicating homogeneity and diversity of the various experiences and perspectives presented by the numerous narratives set of data (Snowden, 2010).

Before this research, the case organisation Water Utilities Corporation (WUC) respondents were made aware of the guidance and the rationale of this initiative. An indication and importance of this research into their future endeavours of strategy implementation was also made. These positive statements gave people incentives as a result of which they shared their stories without any hesitation.

Through self-organisation and collective story telling participants are able to identify themselves with the “collective map” and the project research being undertaken especially where there is promise of rapid feedback (Snowden, 2010). It appeared in this study that the participation of story tellers and implementers in strategy implementation also had positive impact on the work performed as incentives were provided.

It should be noted that ‘observations’ of the patterns in the data following analysis and the ‘interpretations’ are related. The purposes of these interpretations are to stimulate thought and further discussions as they relate to the objective of the research. The ‘observations and interpretations’ must not be considered as claims or solutions to most issues in this narrative research, instead the purpose is to assist strategy implementers in appreciating and acknowledging contradictions, diversity and complexity of interpretive patterns as they relate to new ways in stories.

7.4 THE OVERALL STUDY PERSPECTIVES

This research seeks to apply narrative research methods with the aid of the liabilities approach to address the problem of strategy implementation within the Water Utilities Corporation.

In total, 172 responses were received from the organisation, where the narrative capture focused on all the management levels and staff. Through the Strategy Implementation Liabilities Narrative Capture Questions and In-depth Questions participants shared their stories, with the aid of prompting statements (e.g.Tell me about strategy implementation in your organisation. Please share with me information on your organisation about strategy implementation.), and through the use of triads and dyads/polarities.

Stories and story tellers are connected through indicators, with story occurrences depicted in the form of graphs and charts. The essential and main mode of analysis of this research entails focusing on interesting patterns, contrasting patterns identified and further making some sense of the used context with the other questions asked about the stories, similarly focusing on the subset of stories related to patterns qualitatively. According to Snowden (2010) narrative research offers a qualitative-quantitative approach which engages story tellers to make primary qualitative assessment of other stories while further adding layers of meaning.

Figure 7.3 shows the distribution of management levels across the organisation. It should be noted that the figures indicated therein are story counts and therefore are a representation of the perspectives which the narrative data set represents.

7.4.1 Total number of story tellers/ respondents who shared their stories?

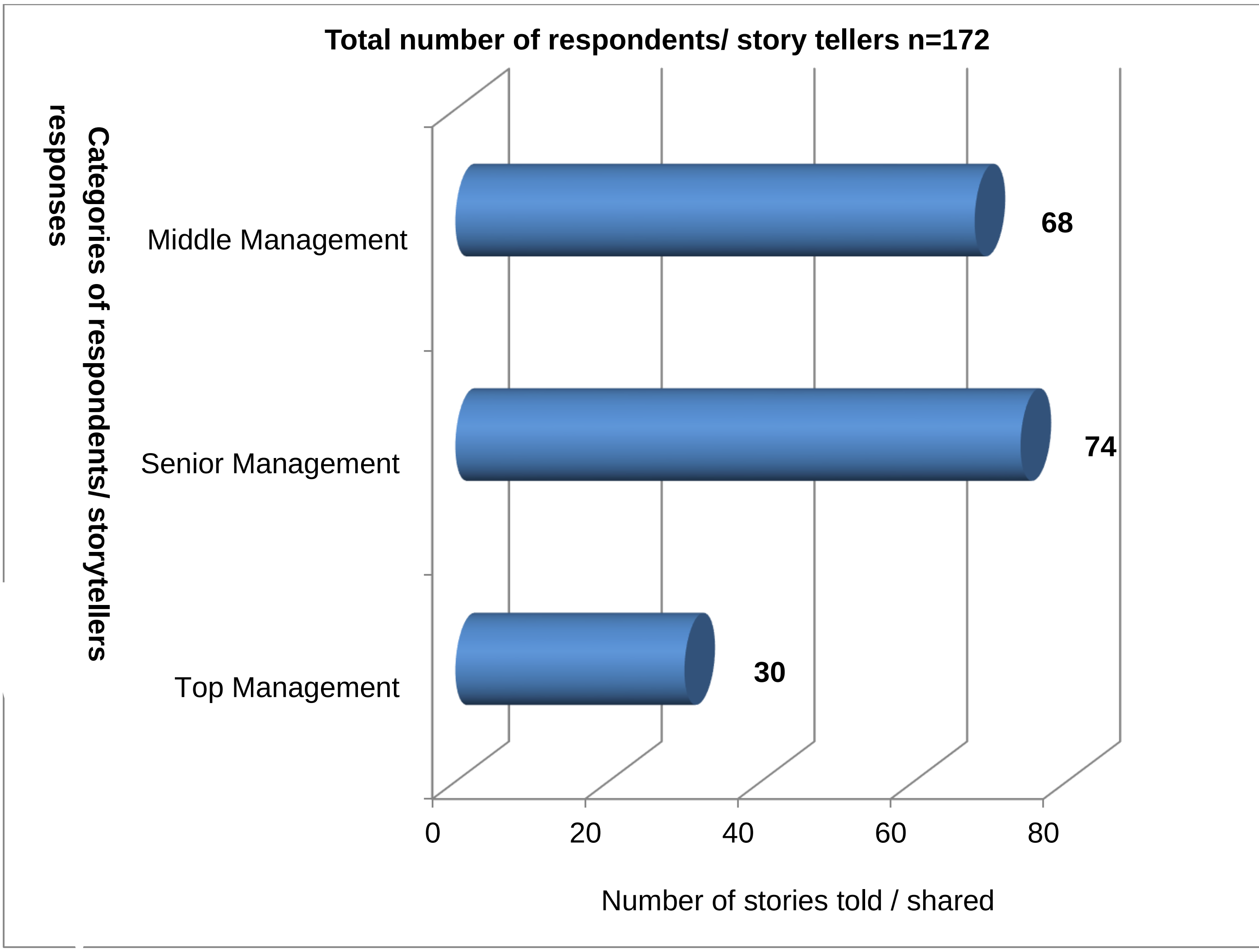


Figure 7.3: Number of stories in each management category

7.5 DEMOGRAPHIC NARRATIVE CAPTURE QUESTIONS

Demographic narrative capture questions and multi choice questions were considered important in this research purely to obtain the profiles of story tellers, their stories and assist to better make sene of the stories shared.

7.5.1 Age range of respondents

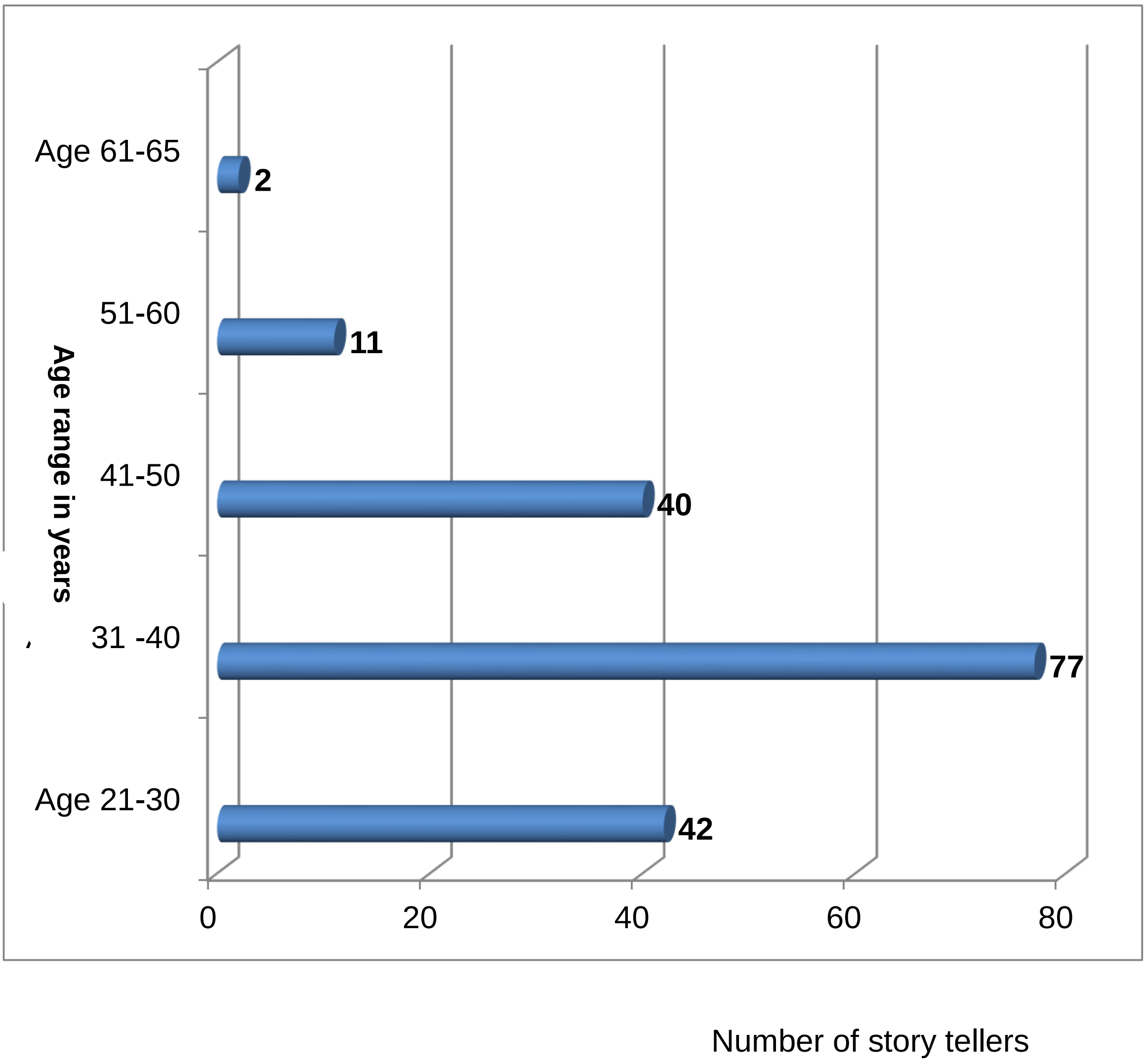


Figure 7.4: Story teller's ages in years

Figure 7.4 depicts the age ranges of the 172 respondents as from 21 years to 65 years. At least 117 story tellers fell within the ages of 31 to 50 years which made a considerable proportion of the workforce (68%). The normal entry level of employment is between 21 and 30 years which consisted of 42 respondents. The 2 respondents between the age ranges of 61 and 65 years are at the employment exit / retirement point.

7.5.2 Gender distribution of respondents

Figure 7.5 indicates that the total contributors of the stories on strategy implementation consisted of 99 male and 73 female respondents across the Head Office and country branches. This means male respondents contributed 58 % of the stories, whilst females contributed 42% of the stories.

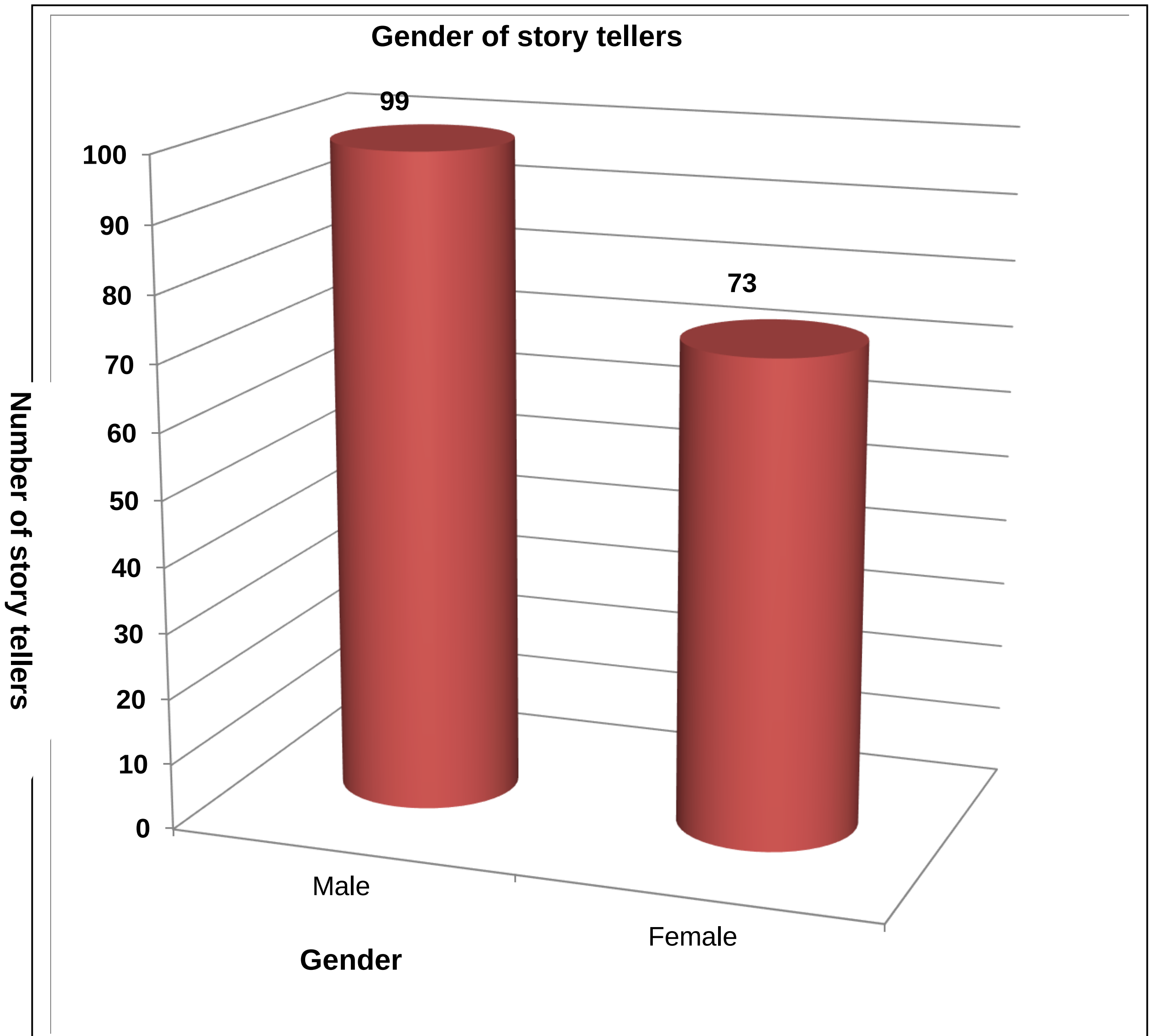


Figure 7.5: Gender of the story tellers

7.5.3 Places where stories were told.

Since the Water Utilities Corporation is tasked with the provision, reticulation of water and sewage disposal throughout the country, it has among others branches in Gaborone City, Francistown City, Lobatse, Kanye, Molepolole, Mahalapye and Palapye as shown in Figure 7.6.

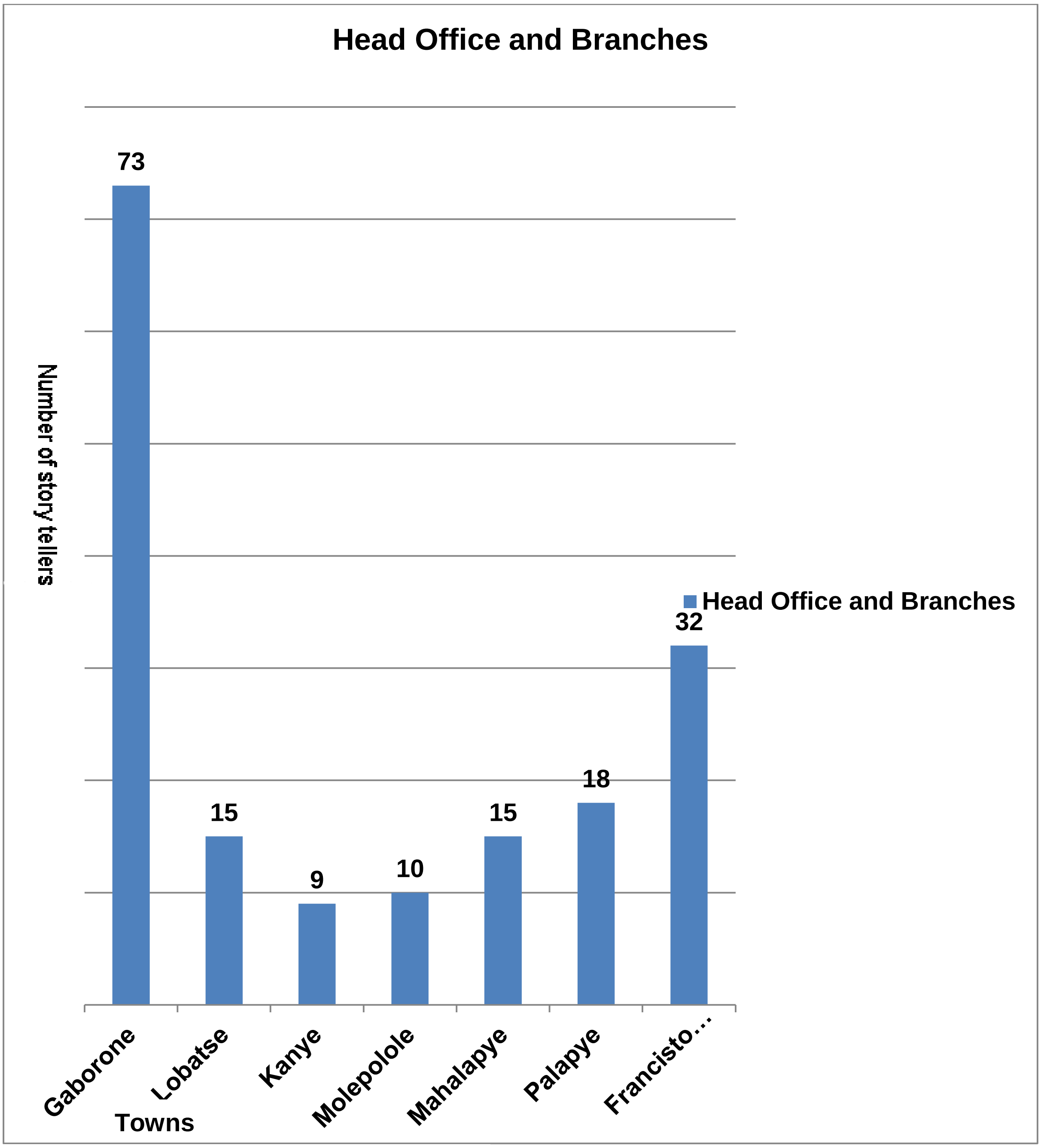


Figure 7.6: Places of story telling

Most stories were contributed from Gaborone (73 stories) followed by Francistown (32 stories) and the least number of stories were contributed from Kanye (9 stories). Gaborone is the main headquarters of the corporation with Francistown being the second largest city and administrative centre of the corporation. Due to financial constraints, other places where the corporation operates such as Maun, Kasane, Ghanzi and Jwaneng could not be covered.

7.5.4 Work experience of story tellers.

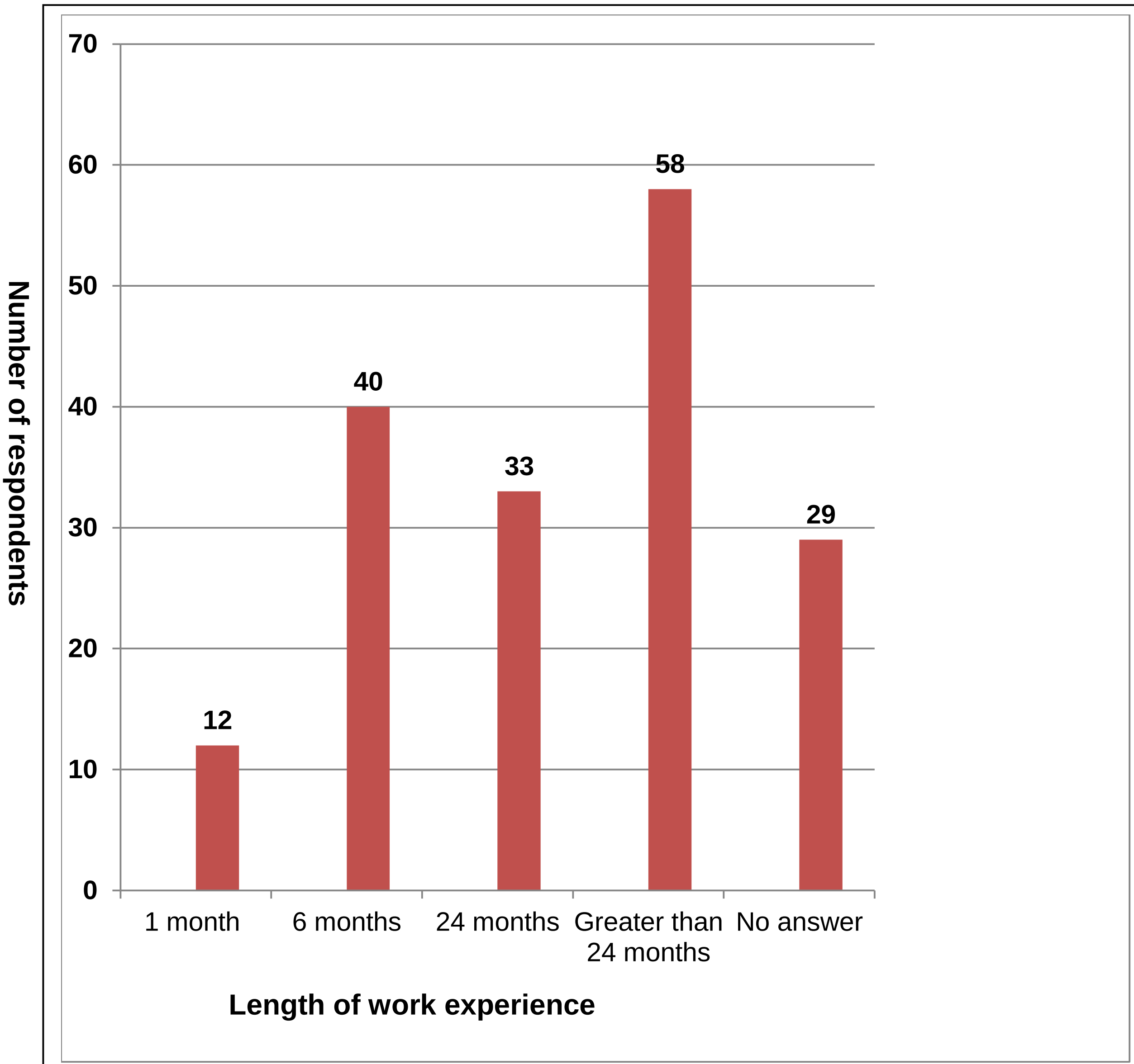


Figure 7.7: Respondents' work experience

As depicted in Figure 7.7, the 52 respondents (30.23%) who had experience of 1 month up to 6 months could be employees newly recruited to the establishment of the corporation. This was an important part of the sample as they could be classified as new to the organisational culture and probably 'less biased' in sharing their stories. At least 91 story tellers (52.91%) had experience of 24 months and more, while 29 story tellers (16.86%) decided not to share their stories on whether they had experienced strategy implementation at WUC.

7.5.5 Story- tellers' primary job position.

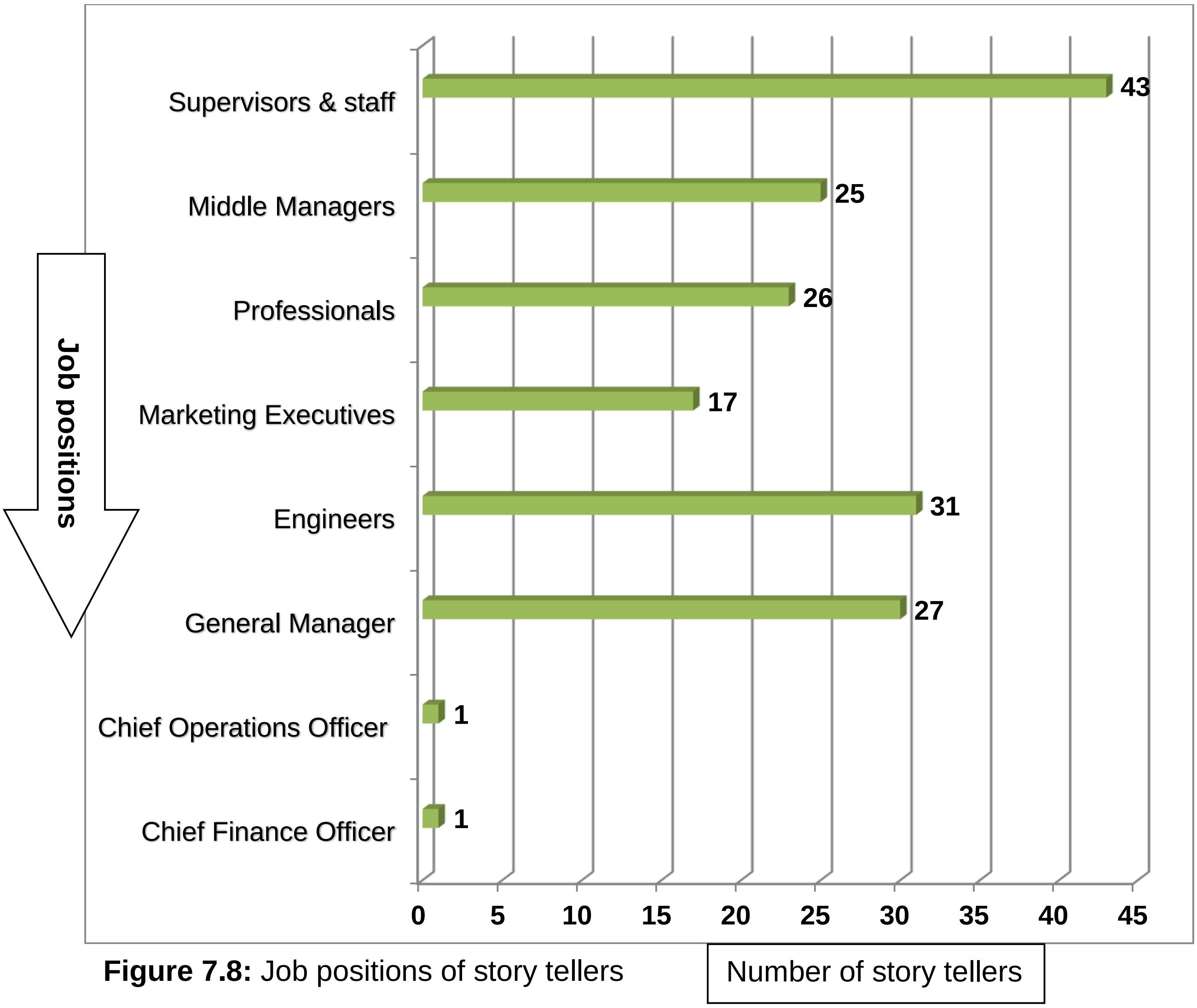


Figure 7.8: Job positions of story tellers

Figure 7.8 shows that, the 172 respondents held various positions within the organisation. The positions were: 1 (.58) Chief Executive Officer, 1 (.58%) Chief Finance Officer, 1 Chief Operations Officer (.58%), 27 (15.70%) General Managers, 31 (18.02%) Engineers, 17 (9.88%) Marketing Executives, 26 (15.12%) Professionals (in various speciality departments), 25 (14.53%) Middle Managers, 43 (25%) Supervisors and Staff. These primary job positions enabled the definition and categorisation of the respondents into 3 broad categories, Top Management, Senior Management and Middle Management.

7.5.6 Respondent's area of speciality (Departments and Units)

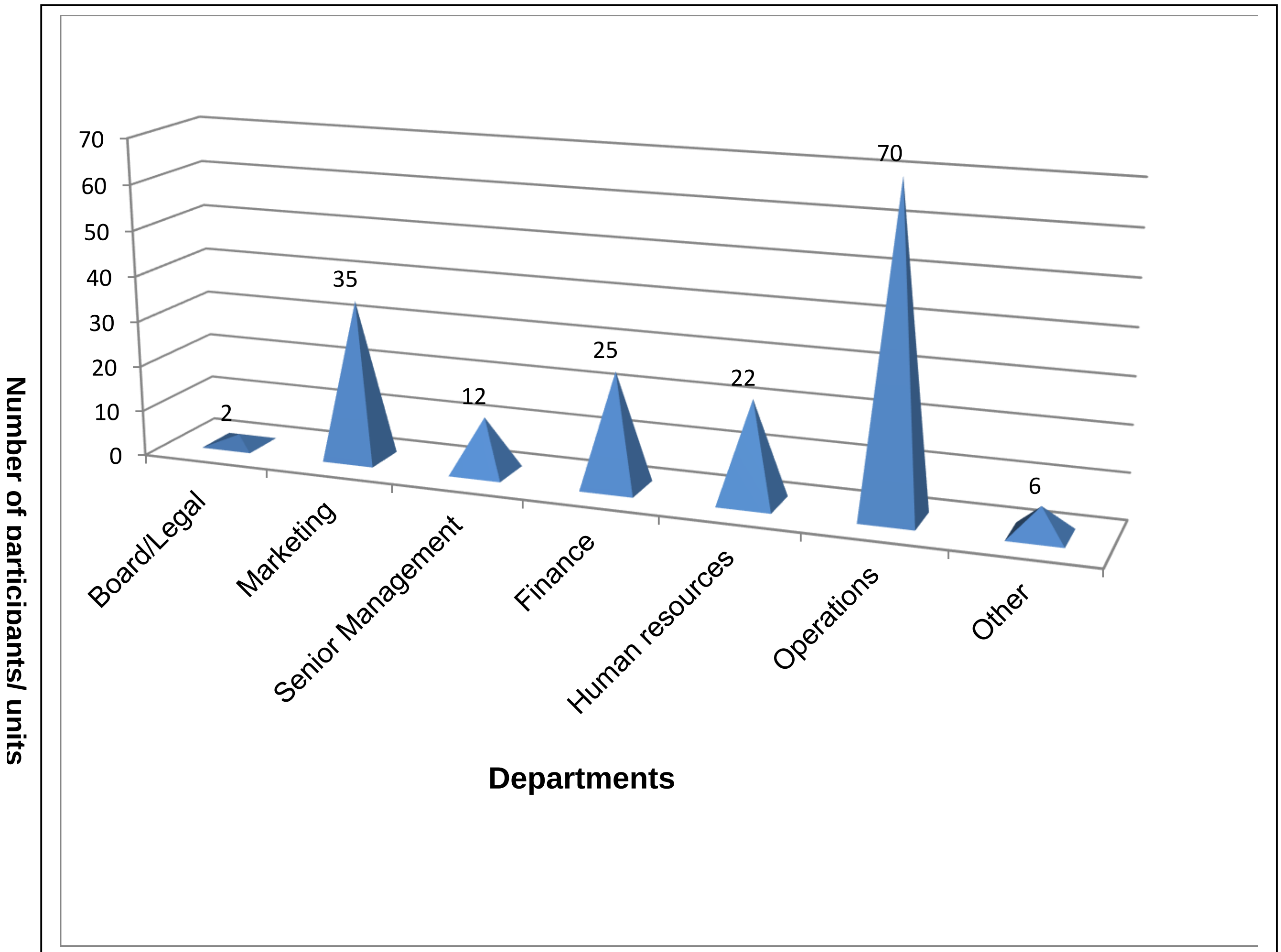


Figure 7.9: Speciality areas of stories collection

Figure 7.9, depicts the various departments within the WUC which contributed the 172 stories in this research. The operations department contributed 70 (40.70%) stories which made the highest number of contributions, followed by the Marketing

Department with 35 (20.35%) stories, then the Finance with 25 (14.53%) stories, and lowest number of stories was contributed by the Board/Legal department with 2 (1.16%) stories.

7.5.7 Story teller's educational attainment.

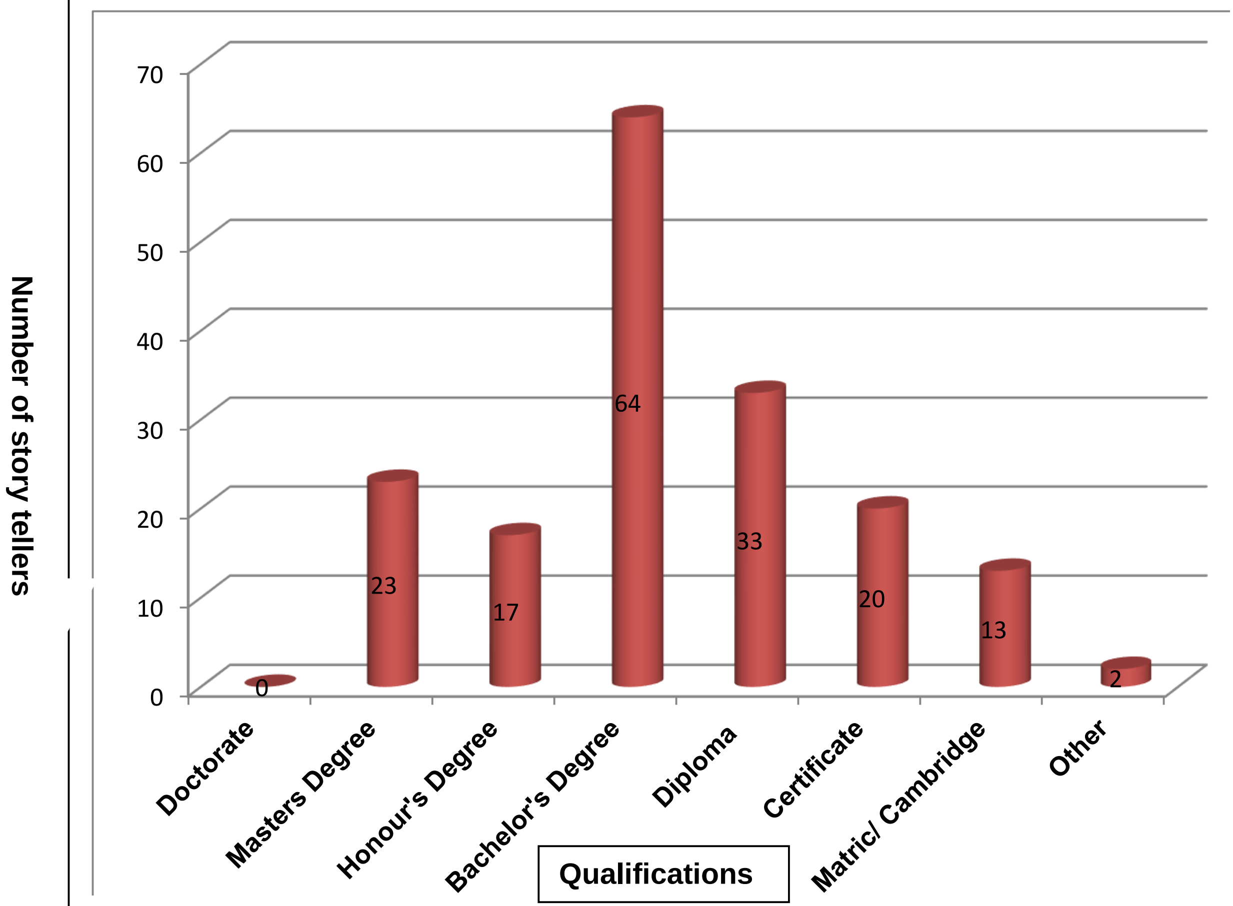


Figure 7.10: Story-tellers academic qualifications.

Figure 7.10 indicates the academic qualifications of the 172 story tellers. Respondents with Bachelors' degrees holders contributed the highest, with 64 (37.21%) stories, followed by Diploma holders at 33 stories (19.18%), and Matric/Cambridge holders being the lowest contributors with 13 (7.56%) story tellers. The category 'Other' includes contributors with qualifications less than Matric/ Cambridge which otherwise have not been specified.

7.5.8 Perception on the prominent business strategy.

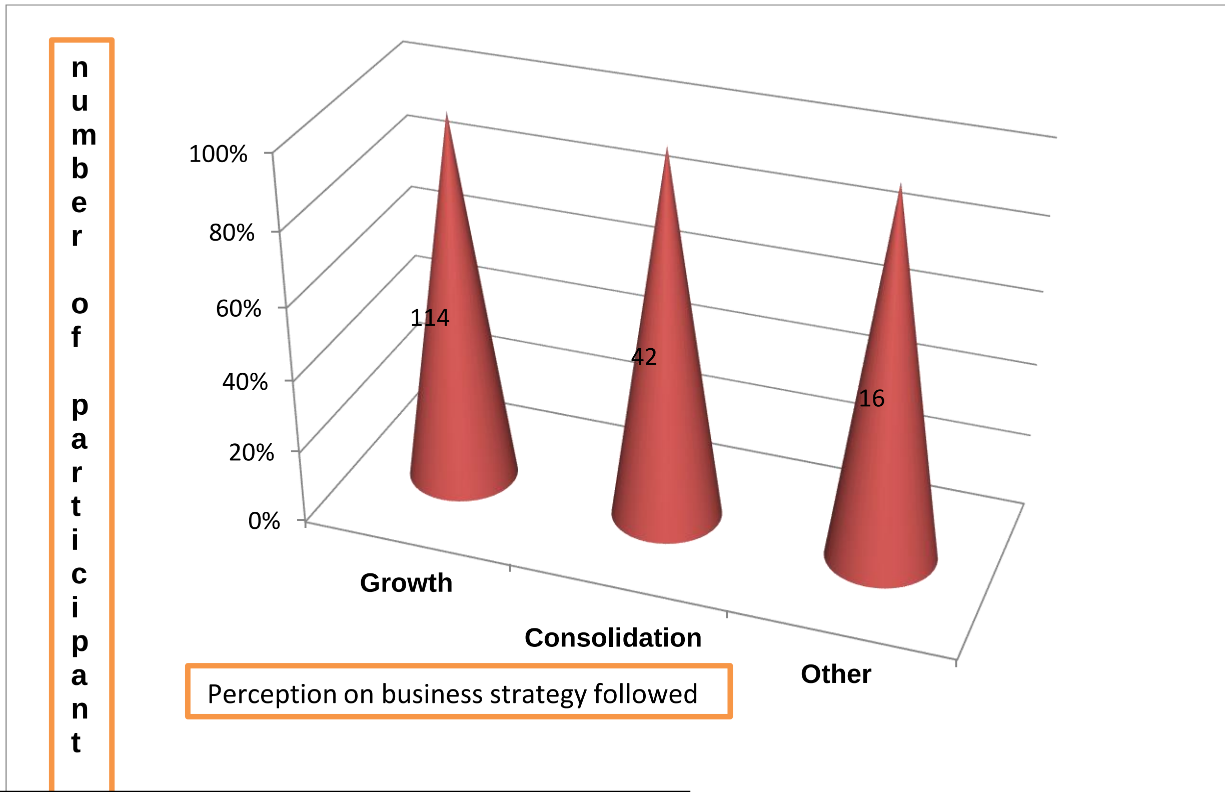


Figure 7.11: Prominent business strategies.

Figure 7:11 presents the organisations' predominant business strategies as perceived by respondents through the stories and they shared and these are 'growth', 'consolidation' and 'other' (not specified). This was an important question in order to assess if story tellers were aware of their organisational business strategy which could assist them in sharing stories on strategy implementation and to "further lay layers of meaning under their stories in the research for solutions" (Snowden, 2010: 243).

The interpretations in this research are meant to stimulate thought and discussions related to the research objective. Any observations, interpretations, and ideas contradicting those previously raised; are purposeful and deliberate as this is to acknowledge the inherent differences regarding interpretative patterns in stories. In this research, the terms 'stories', 'narratives' and 'judgements' were used interchangeably. Similarly the terms 'subjects', 'participants', 'respondents' and 'story tellers' were used when showing how each employee of WUC had shared their stories.

7.6 FINDINGS FROM NARRATIVE CAPTURE TRIAD DATA.

The total 172 subjects studied were divided into three management categories at the analysis stage; Top Management (30 respondents 17%) consisted of Chief Executive Officer, Chief Finance Officer, Chief Operations Officer and General Managers of Departments and Divisions. Senior Management (74 respondents 43%) comprised of Engineers, Marketing Executives and Professionals; and Middle Management comprising of Middle Managers, Supervisors and Staff (68 respondents 40%). Each story shared by the story teller is represented by a data point within the triad and this is easily identifiable by a code number.

The codes for the respondents at the Water Utilities Corporation (WUC) are therefore W1 – W172. For data presented within the triads, Top Management is represented by 'blue' data points, Senior Management by 'green' data points and Middle Management by the 'dark orange' ones. Triad data consisted of a set of 18 questions based on strategy implementation liabilities ranging from Question 10 to Question 27 of the Strategy Implementation Narrative Capture Questions.

The following sub-sections present the data for questions 10 to 27, showing how data was collected through triads, as respondents shared their experiences and stories. Subjects were requested to reflect on three options / alternatives provided: for example if the question asked is: My coffee this morning was made up of…: Three alternatives would be given such as 'Milk', 'Sugar' and 'Coffee'. In sharing their experiences on this issue, respondents may indicate that they use the same quantities to make their coffee or decide to use varying proportions of each ingredient. Such choices would be indicated by an individual making a cross (x) inside a triad where each of them can be attributed to an individual with certainty.

7.6.1Triad 1: (Question 10): I would judge strategy implementation in my organisation as: *Less important, a Managerial function and Clearly understood.*

Figure 7.12 shows that, in sharing their stories on how they 'would judge strategy implementation in their organisation', approximately 50% of the stories were clustered towards the apex 'clearly understood', and consisted mostly of the contributions from Top Management and Senior Management, whilst 35.18% stories were clustering towards the apex 'managerial function' originated mainly from Middle Management. Some stories (5.82%) were shared between the apices 'clearly understood' and 'managerial function' and appeared to be contributions from all the three management categories. The remaining respondents' stories of about 7.2% were shared across the triads with 1.8% not sharing their stories.

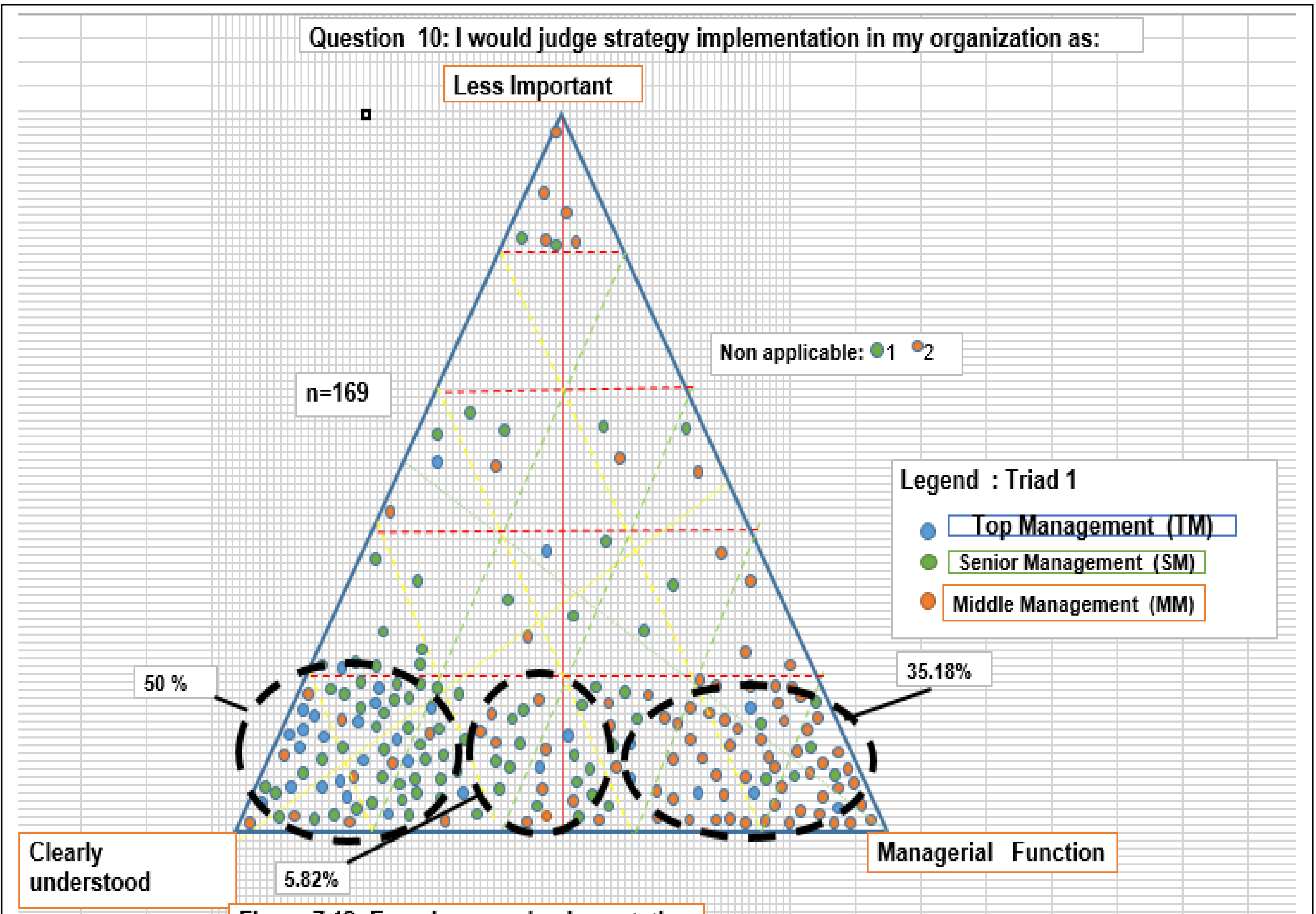


Figure 7.12: Experience on implementation

7.6.2 Triad 2: (Question 11) Responsibility for strategy implementation is taken by: *Everyone, Management and No one*

According to Figure 7.13, most stories were shared towards the apex "everyone" consisting mainly of stories from Top Management and Senior Management at 45.26%, whilst stories shared towards the apex 'management' mainly comprised of the contributions by Middle Management and Senior Management at 38.12%. Some stories were shared between the apices 'everyone' and 'management' by Top Management, Senior Management and Middle Mangement at 12.2%. The remaining 4.42% of the stories was spread and shared across the triad.

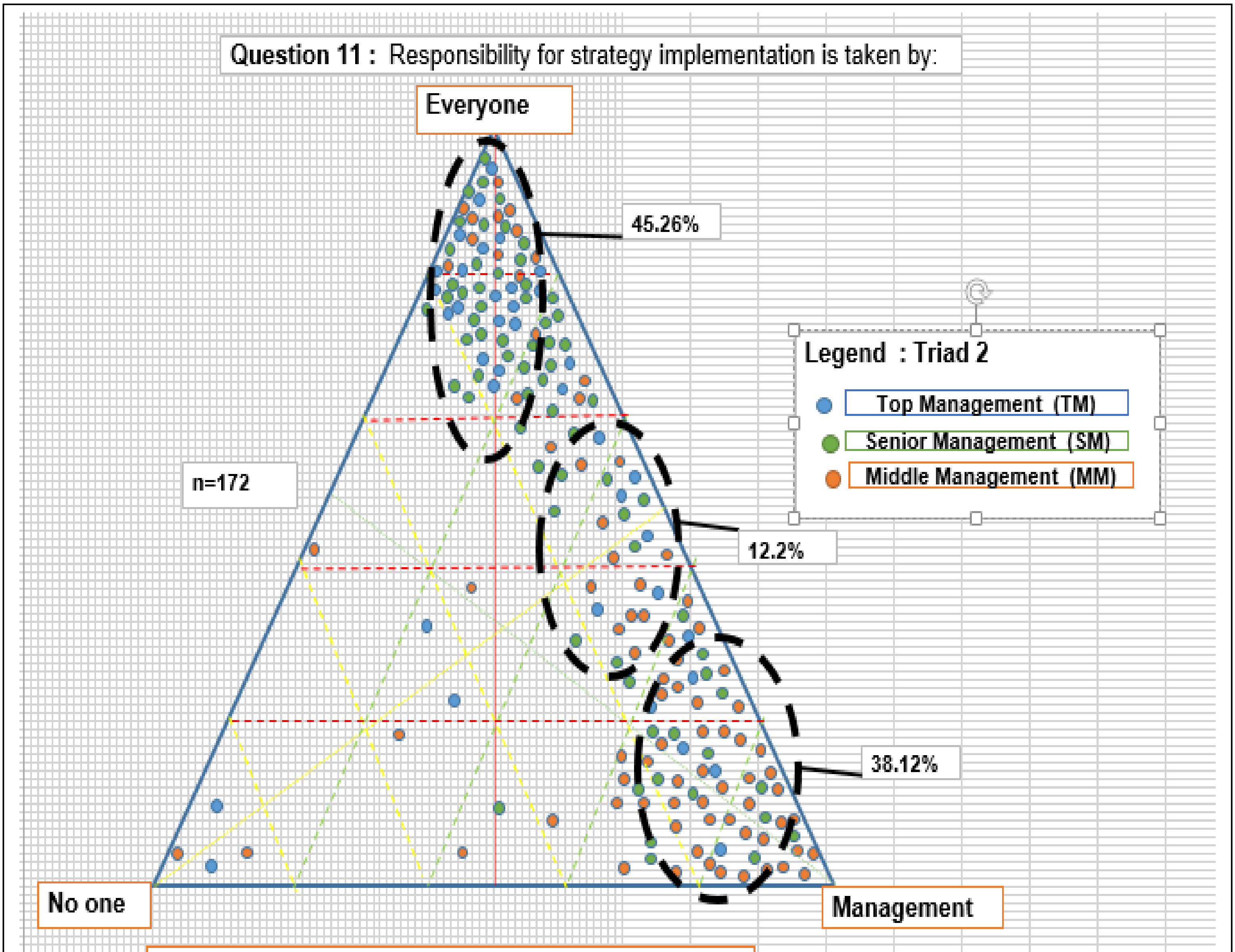


Figure 7.13: Responsibility for strategy implementation

7.6.3 Triad 3: (Question 12). In my story, strategy implementation is aligned with: *Organisational goals, Situation at the time and Resource driven*

By sharing stories on 'strategy implementation is aligned with': Figure 7.14 shows Top Management and Senior Management as seemingly sharing the most stories around the apex 'organisational goals' at 48% of the total stories shared, with Middle Management sharing stories towards the apex 'situation at the time' at 25.59 % and some stories shared between both apices at 15.29%. Some 10.12% stories were clustered towards the the apex 'resource driven', with 1% deciding not to share story.

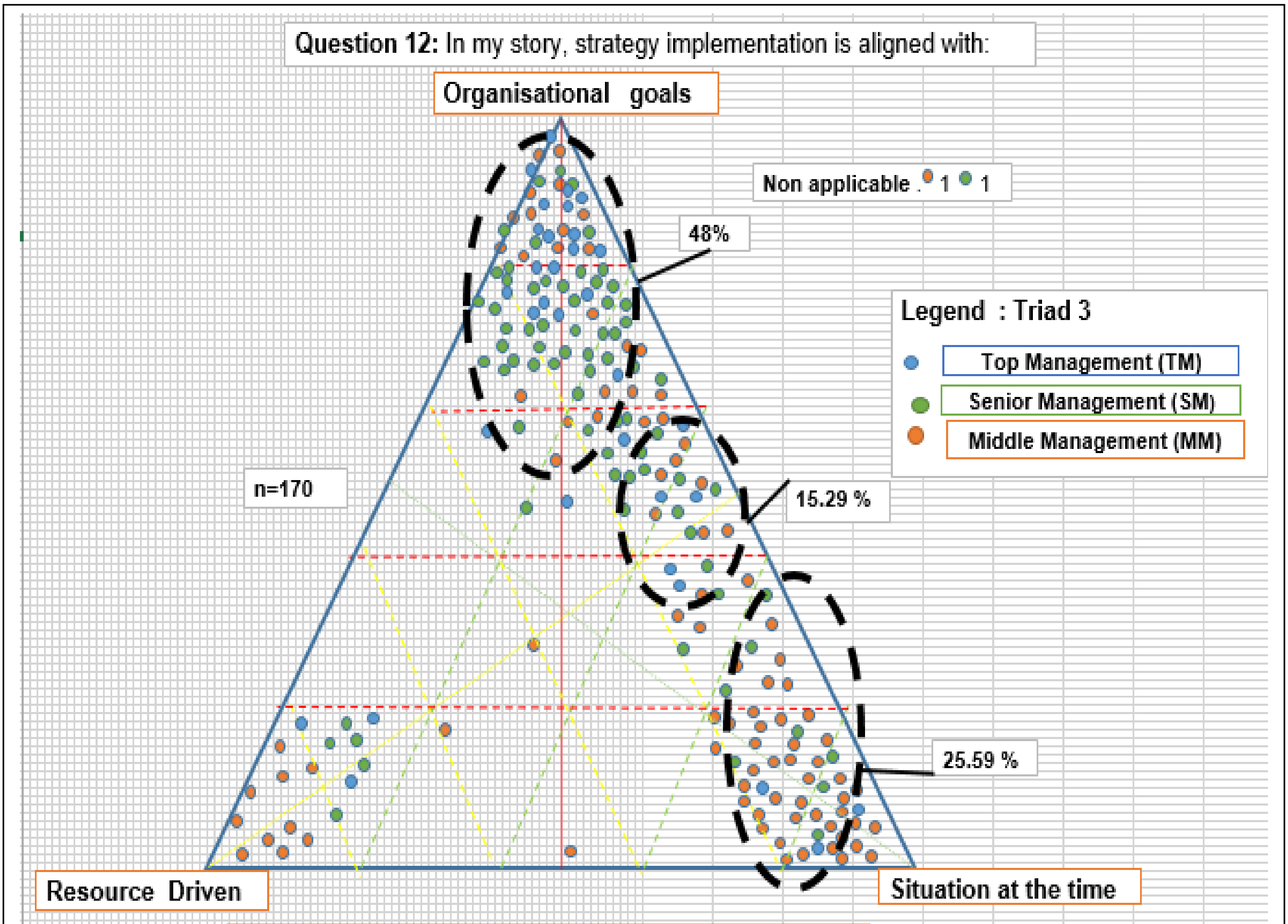


Figure 7.14: Perceived strategy implementation alignment

7.6.4 Triad 4: (Question 13). During strategy formulation, implementation is considered as: *Serving as a reality check, Driver of formulation and Disregarded*.

The triad in Figure 7.15, depicts that stories were clustered towards all apices of 'serving as a reality check', 'driver of formulation' and 'disregarded'. Middle Management stories at 30.36% were clustered towards the apex 'disregarded', expressing the perception that during strategy formulation, implementation is not considered. Top Management and Senior Management stories aggregated towards the apex 'driver of formulation' contributing 36.31% of the total stories. About 15.5% of stories were clustered towards the apex 'serving as a reality check' mainly contributed by Senior Management, with 15.98% stories spread across the triad and 1.2% not sharing their stories.

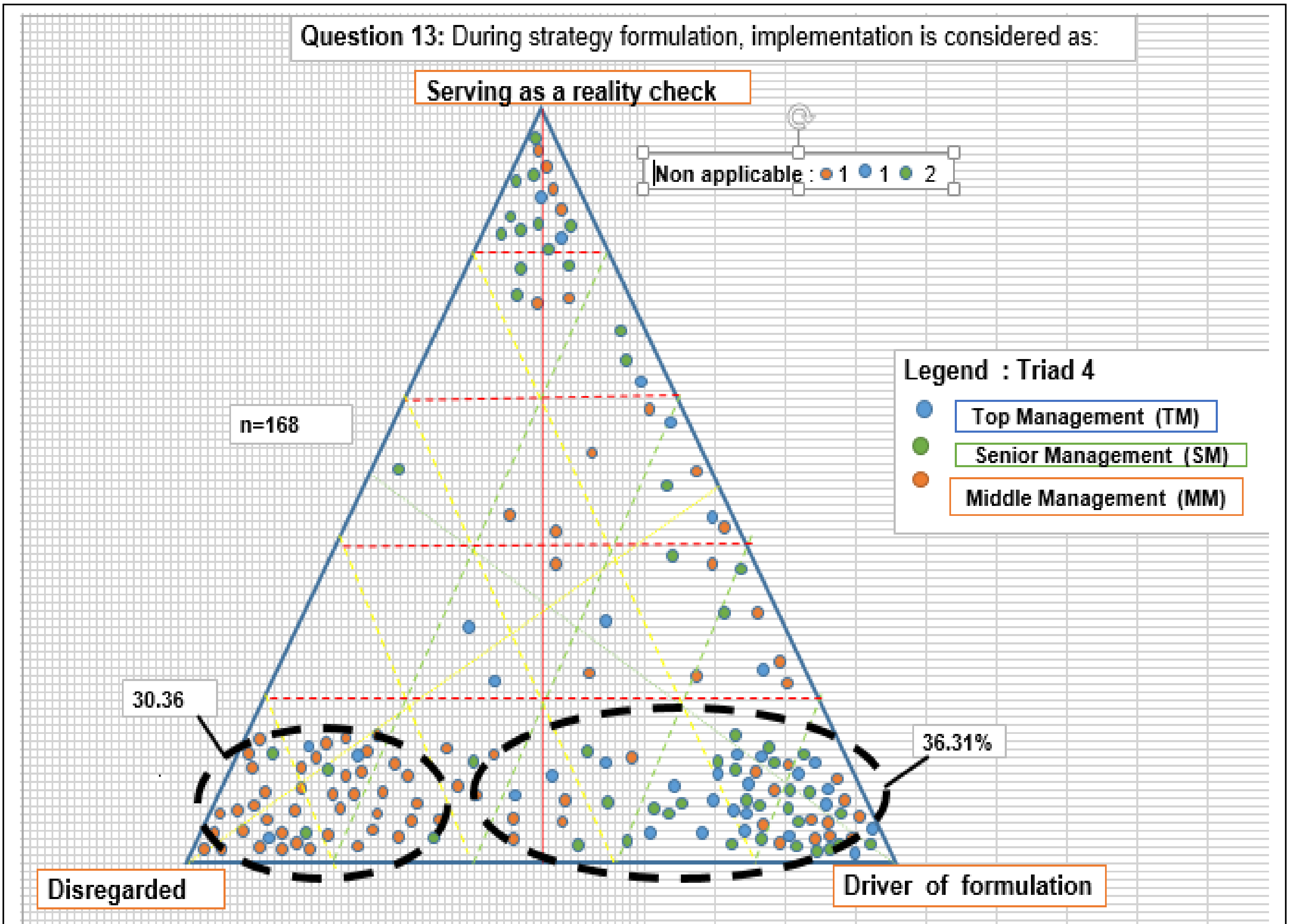


Figure 7.15: Integrating formulation and implementation

7.6.5 Triad 5: (Question 14) Allocation of resources in implementation is generally: *Insufficient, Skewed in distribution and Abundant.*

Figure 7.16 captures stories shared on how resources were allocated at implementation. Stories shared by Midddle Management at 52.90% were clustered towards the apex 'insufficient'. About 39.45% stories clustered towards the apex 'abundant' mainly contributed by Top Management and Senior Management, with some stories shared between apices 'insufficient' and 'abundant', at 4.5% mainly contributed by Senior Management and Middle Management. The remaining 3.15% of stories were shared between apices 'insufficient' and 'skewed in distribution'.

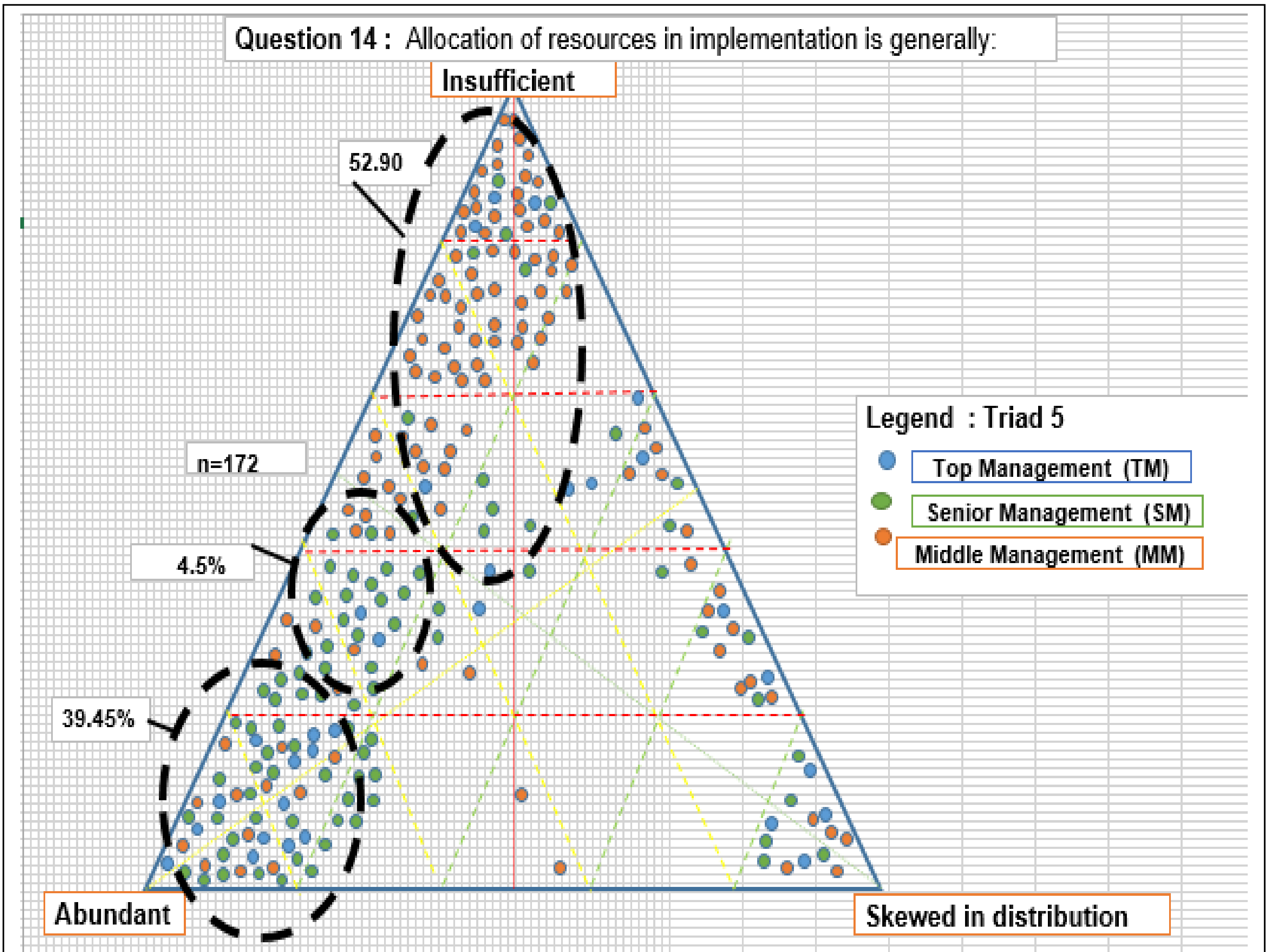


Figure 7.16: Resource allocation within the implementation process

7.6.6 Triad 6: (Question 15). In my story, implementation leads to: *Commitment, Better understanding and Learning.*

Figure 7.17 sought to indicate the benefits which could be derived from implementation. Most stories shared by Top Management, Senior Management and some by Middle Management were clustered towards the apex ‘commitment’at 44.18% , whilst stories clustered towards the apex ‘better understanding’ consisted of stories contributed by Middle Management at 37.79%. Suprisingly, about 6.5% stories were shared towards the apex ‘learning’, where the expectation was that considerable stories could have been shared here, as learning could be regarded as important for implementation. The ideal clustering of stories were expected to be at the centre of the triad because ‘commitment, better understanding and learning’ are collectively considered vital to implementation success. At least 11.53% stories were shared between apices ‘commitment’ and ‘better understanding’.

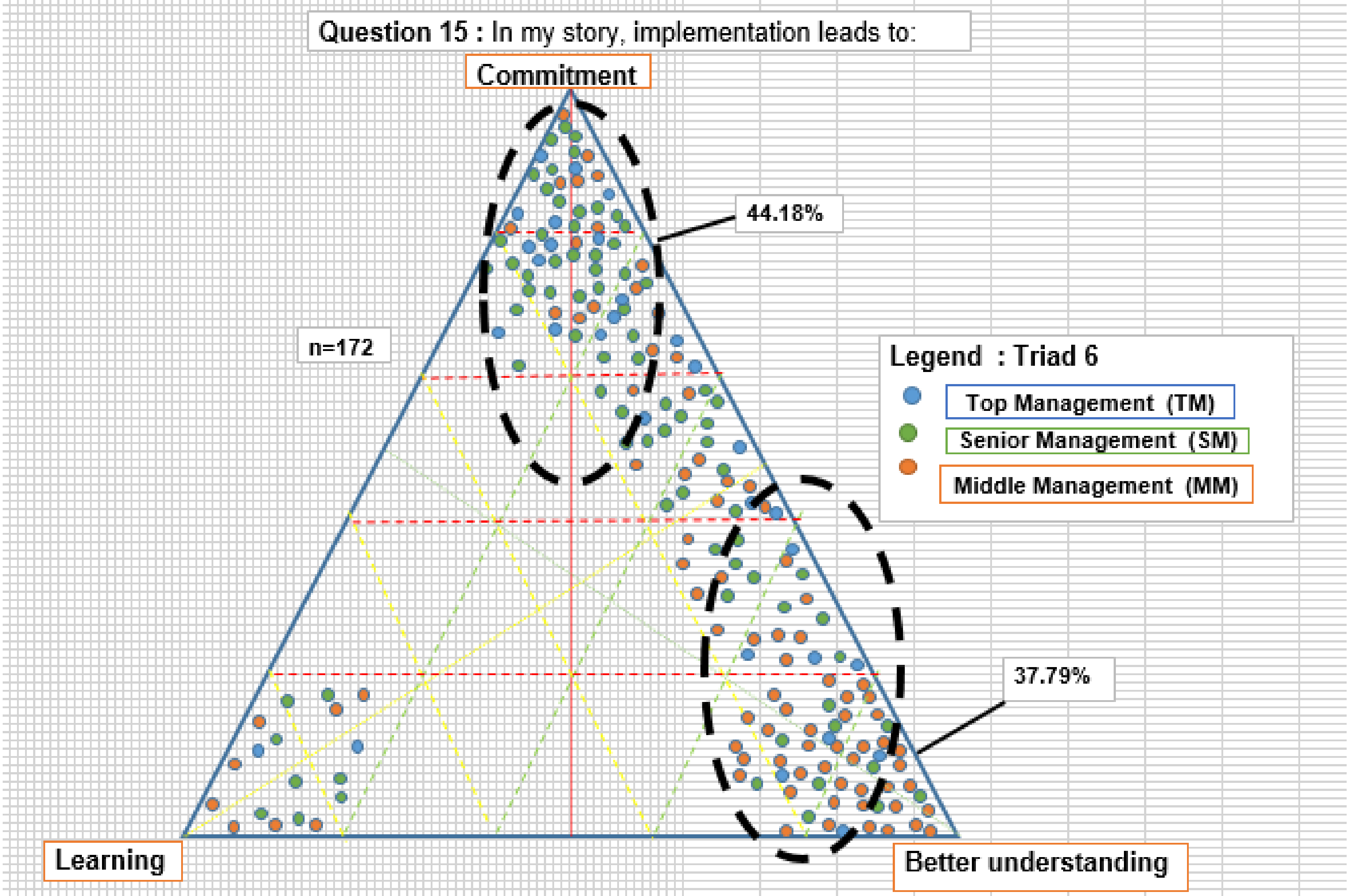


Figure 7.17: Potential benefits derivable from Implementation

7.6.7 Triad 7: (Question 16). Important strategy implementation decisions were: *Situation dependent, Delayed and Decisive*

Figure 7.18 shows that, stories were shared towards all the apices. Notably, about 31.36 % of the total stories shared, clustered towards apex “decisive” shared by Top Management and Senior Management, and 39.64% shared mainly by Middle Management clustered towards the apex ‘delayed’, while 15.97% clustered towards ‘situation dependant’, shared mainly by Senior Management. Some 11.73% stories remained scattered within the triad, mainly towards ‘decisive’ and ‘delayed’ with 1.3% stories not told.

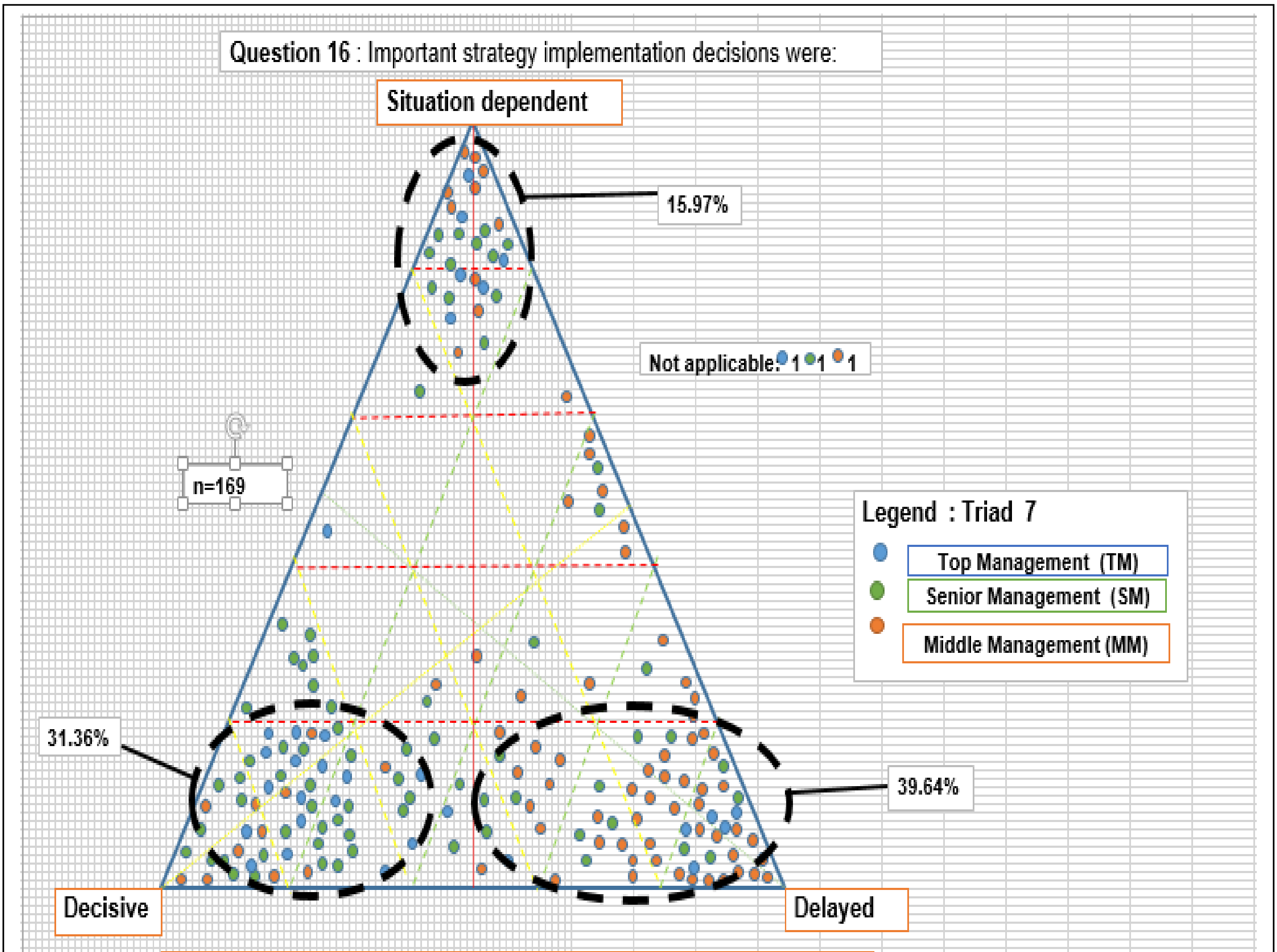


Figure 7.18: Implementation decisions evaluations by management levels

7.6.8 Triad 8: (Question 17). In my story, implementation is influenced by: *Teamwork, Bureaucracy and Lack of focus*

In Figure 7.19, storytellers shared stories on whether strategy implementation was positively or negatively influenced by 'teamwork', 'lack of focus' or 'bureaucracy'. The stories clustered towards the apex 'lack of focus, were mainly shared by Middle Management at 33.53%. Stories mainly by Senior Management and Top Management were at 42.94% and clustered towards the apex 'teamwork' while 11.76% of the stories clustered at 'bureaucracy' and were mainly contributed by Middle Management and Senior Management. At least 11.76% stories were scattered within the triad but towards all the apices.

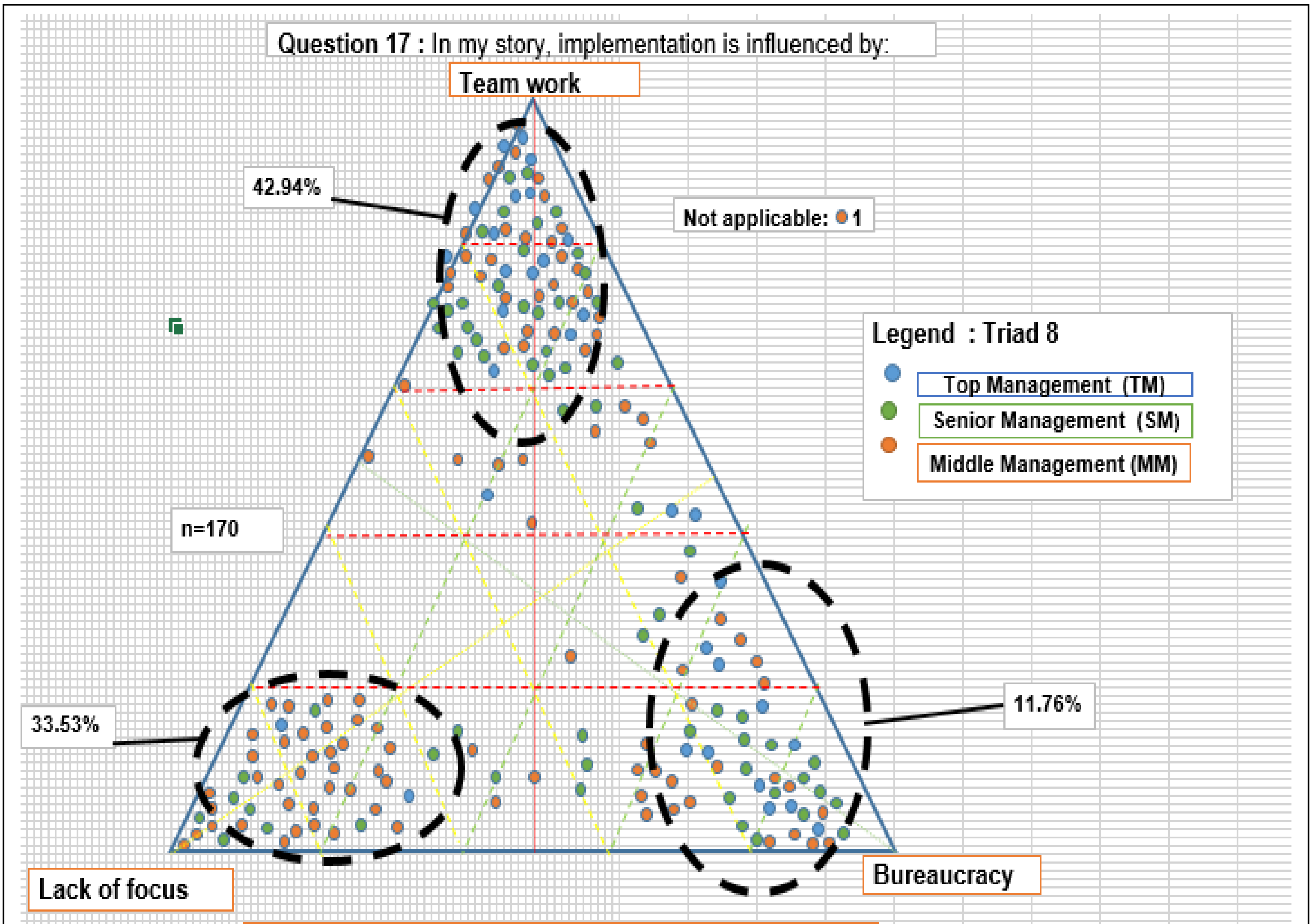


Figure 7.19: Factors perceived to influence implementation

7.6.9 Triad 9: (Question 18). Key skills and ability to implement strategy depends more on: *Understanding business, Professional learned skills and Natural ability*

Figure 7.20 presents the data on the prerequisites for implementation as being ‘understanding business’, ‘natural ability’, and ‘professional learned skills’. Those formulate the key skills and ability to implement strategy. At the apex ‘understanding business’, Top Management and Senior Management shared the most stories at 40.35%, whilst mostly Middle Management respondents at 14.62% shared stories at the apex ‘professional learned skills’. Mainly Senior Management and Middle Management shared stories at 11%, towards the apex ‘natural ability’. The other 34.3% stories seemed to be clustered near the middle of the triad.

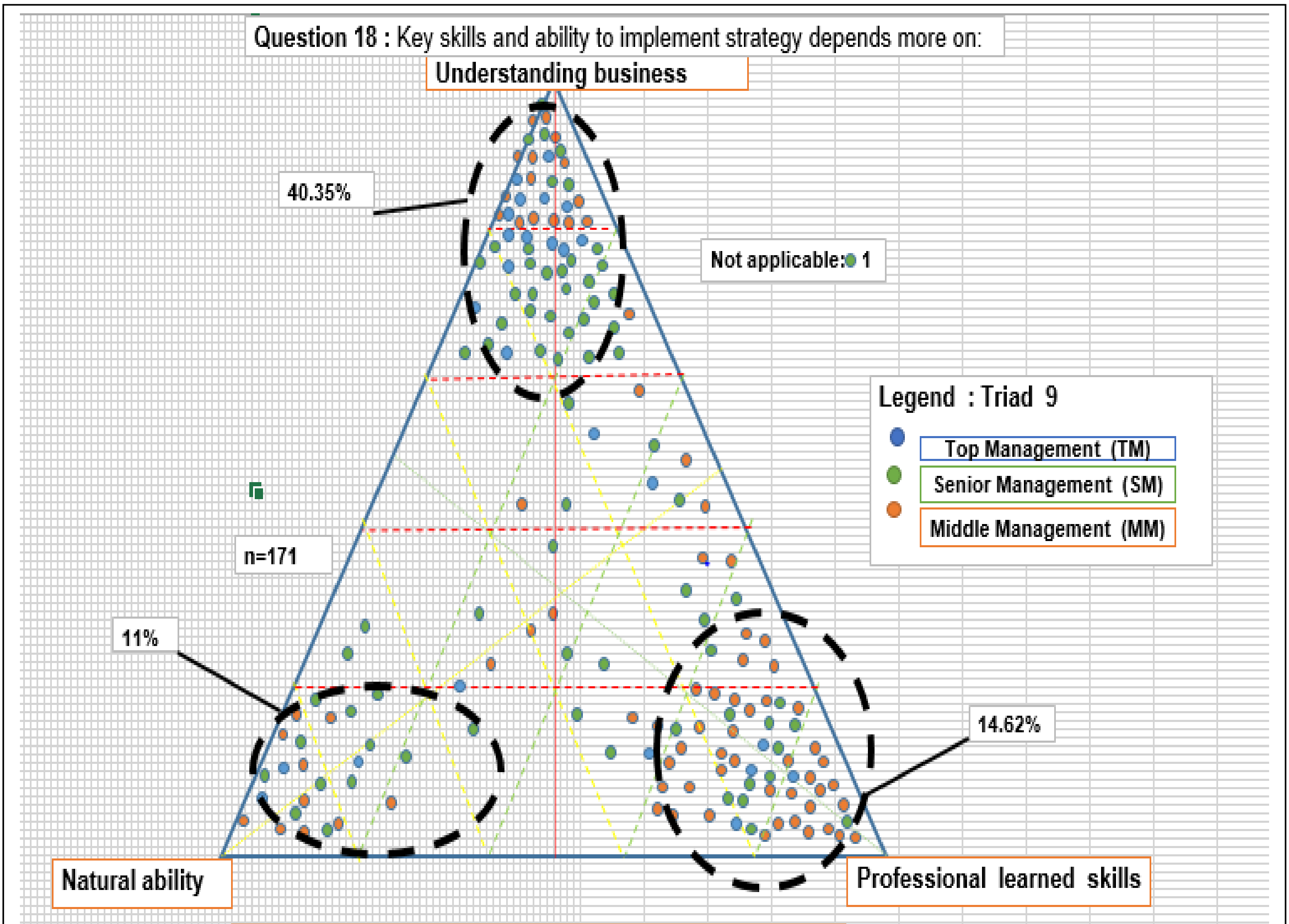


Figure 7.20: Essential aspects of the implementation process

7.6.10 Triad 10: (Question 19). In guiding implementation, leadership appears to be: *Conservative, Open minded and lacking in trust.*

Stories in Figure 7.21 shared insights into the role played by the leadership in guiding implementation. The stories shared the most by Middle Management clustered towards the apex 'conservative' and accounted for about 39.86% of the total stories, with 52.14% comprising mainly Top Management and Senior Management clustered towards the apex 'open minded'. Most of the remaining stories 7% was shared between 'conservative' and 'open minded' and some towards 'lacking in trust', with about 1% not sharing their stories.

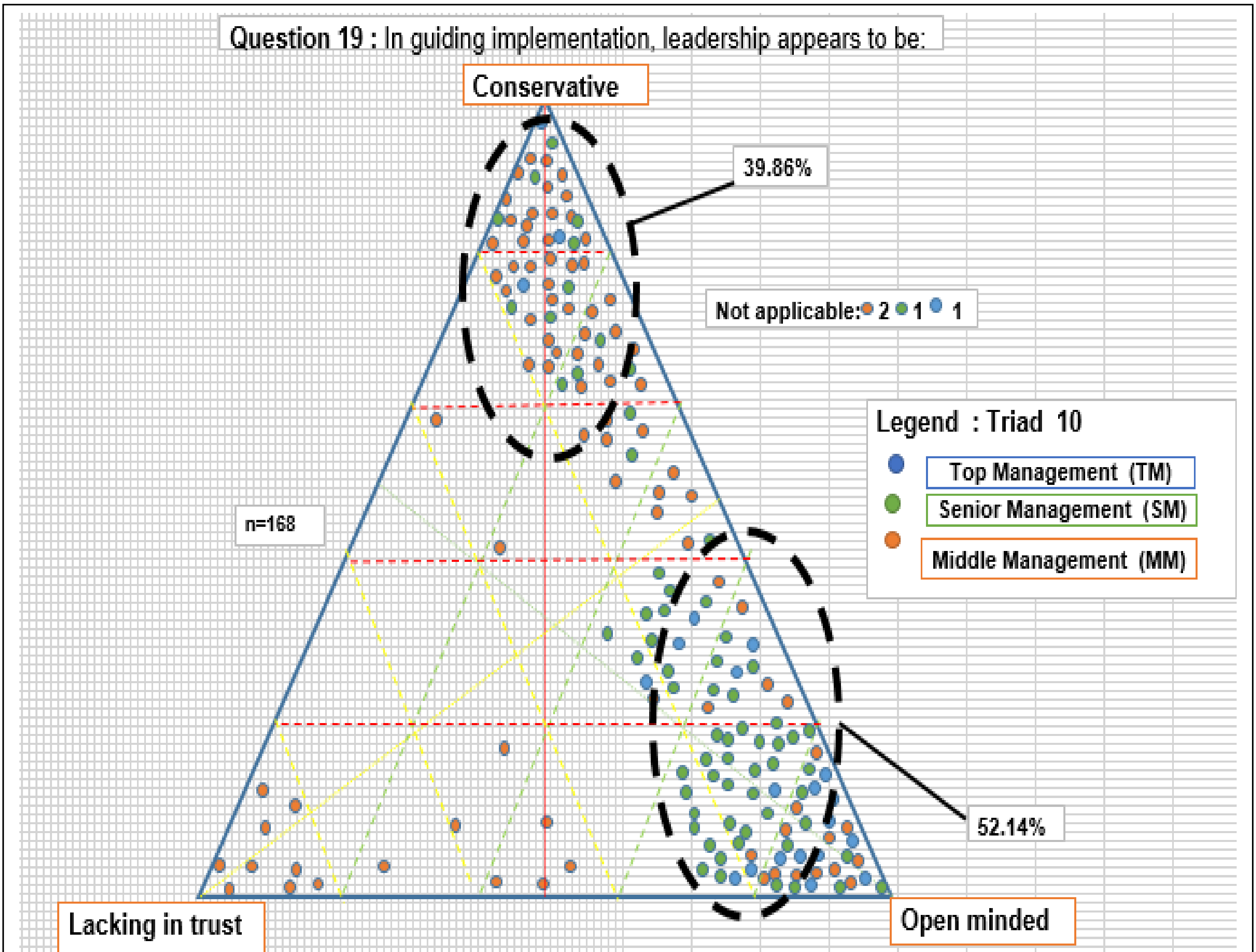


Figure 7.21: Implementation guiding principles

7.6.11 Triad 11: (Question 20). Implementation rules, processes and procedures in my story are: *Heavy-handed, Undefined, Uncertain and Flexible.*

In sharing stories on implementation rules, processes and procedures, Figure 7.22 shows that 26% of stories, mostly by Middle Management, as clustered the apex ‘undefined and uncertain’, with stories shared mostly by Top Management and Senior Management clustered towards the apex ‘flexible’ at 43.70%. Stories contributed mainly by Middle Management and some Senior Management respondents and aggregating towards apex ‘heavy handed’ comprised 11.61%. Respodents who could not share stories accounted for 1.23%, with the remaining 17.49% clustered towards the middle of the triad.

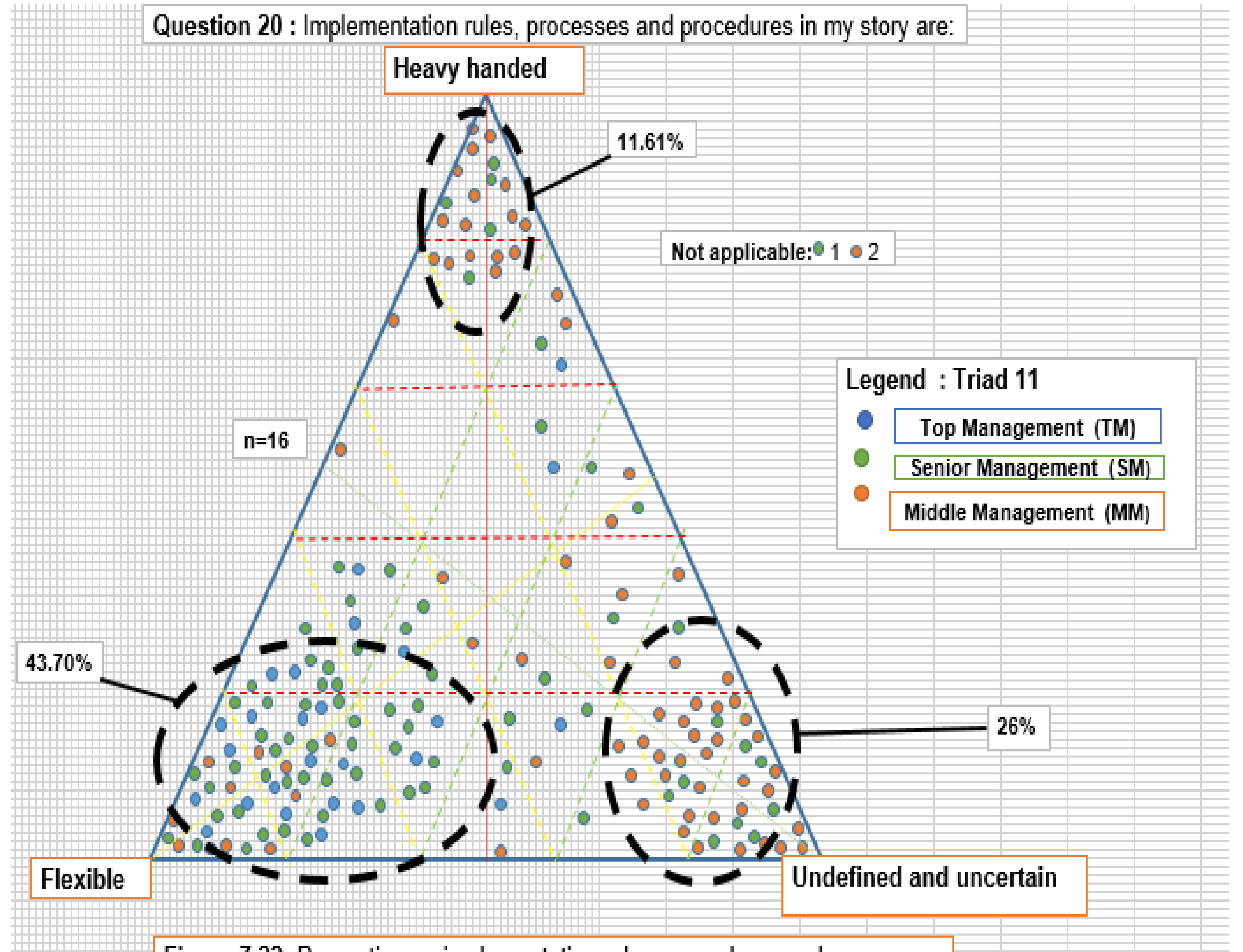


Figure 7.22: Perception on implementation rules, procedures and processes

7.6.12 Triad 12: (Question 21). Who stand to benefit most from implementation in my story? *Shareholders, Employees and Customer*

In sharing stories about 'the potential beneficiaries' of implementation between 'shareholders', 'employees' and 'customers' as shown in Figure 7.23: 11% of mainly Middle Management and Senior Management stories were clustered towards the apex 'employees', with 37.71% of stories mainly contributed by Top Management and Senior Management clustered towards the apex 'shareholders'. Stories shared mostly by Middle Management with 26.32% clustered towards the apex 'customers'. Normally, it should be expected that more of the stories should be clustered towards the centre of the triad, since the ultimate goal of any organisation, is to balance interests of shareholders, employees and customers, rather than the 14.2% stories of stories showing on Figure 7.23. Some 8.87% stories were shared towards all the apices, with 1.90% stories not shared.

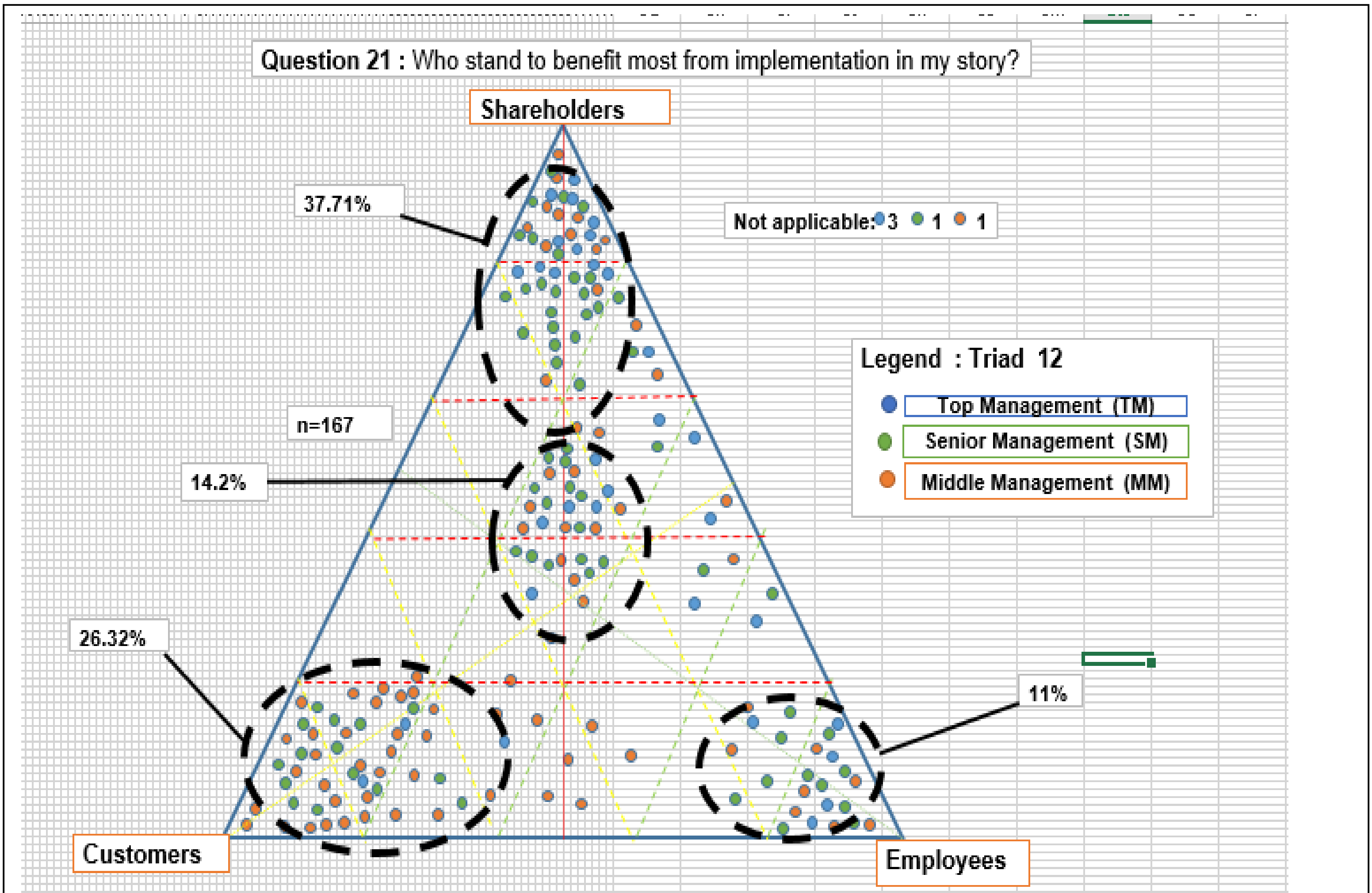


Figure 7.23: Beneficiaries of the implementation process

7.6.13 Triad 13: (Question 22). In my story, the mind-set and understanding of implementation is to: *Maintain the current state, Imagine possibilities and Strengthen systems.*

The perception and understanding of strategy implementation in terms of forward looking into the future, entailed: 'maintain the current state', 'imagine possibilities' and 'strengthen systems' as indicated in Figure 7.24. Story tellers within Middle Management category shared 23.84% of the total stories clustered towards apex 'strengthen systems', 40.12% stories shared by Top Management and Senior Management clustered towards the apex 'imagine possibilities'. As would have been expected, some stories were shared between the apices 'strengthening systems' and 'imagine possibilities' by Top Management, Senior Management and Middle Management. Stories at 36.04% were shared between the bottom apices.

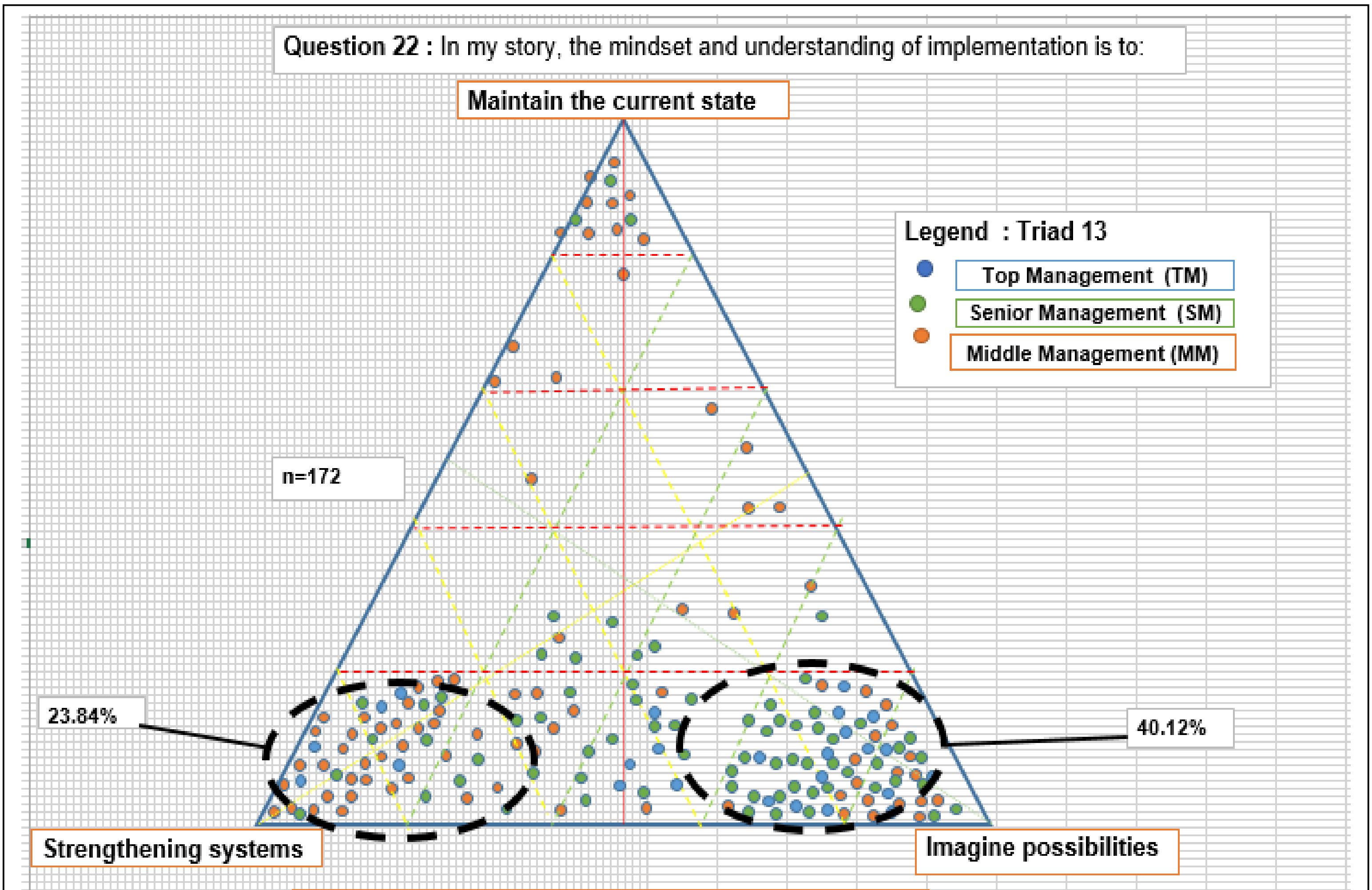


Figure 7.24: Understanding the future of implementation

7.6.14 Triad 14: (Question 23) Implementation changes in my story should be driven by: *Leadership, Systems and Individual /self.*

In Figure 7.25, mostly Top Management and Senior Management shared stories indicate that implementation changes in their organisation should be driven by leadership with 50.58% of stories clustered towards the apex ‘leadership’, 21.51% of the stories shared mostly by Middle Management clustered towards the apex ‘systems’, while 19.19% stories clustered towards the apex ‘individual/self’ were shared mostly by Middle Management and Senior Management. Under normal circumstances, it would be expected that most stories would be shared at the middle of the triad, meaning that all of these aspects are necessary ingredients for strategy implementation success. Stories at 8.72% were shared scattered around the triad.

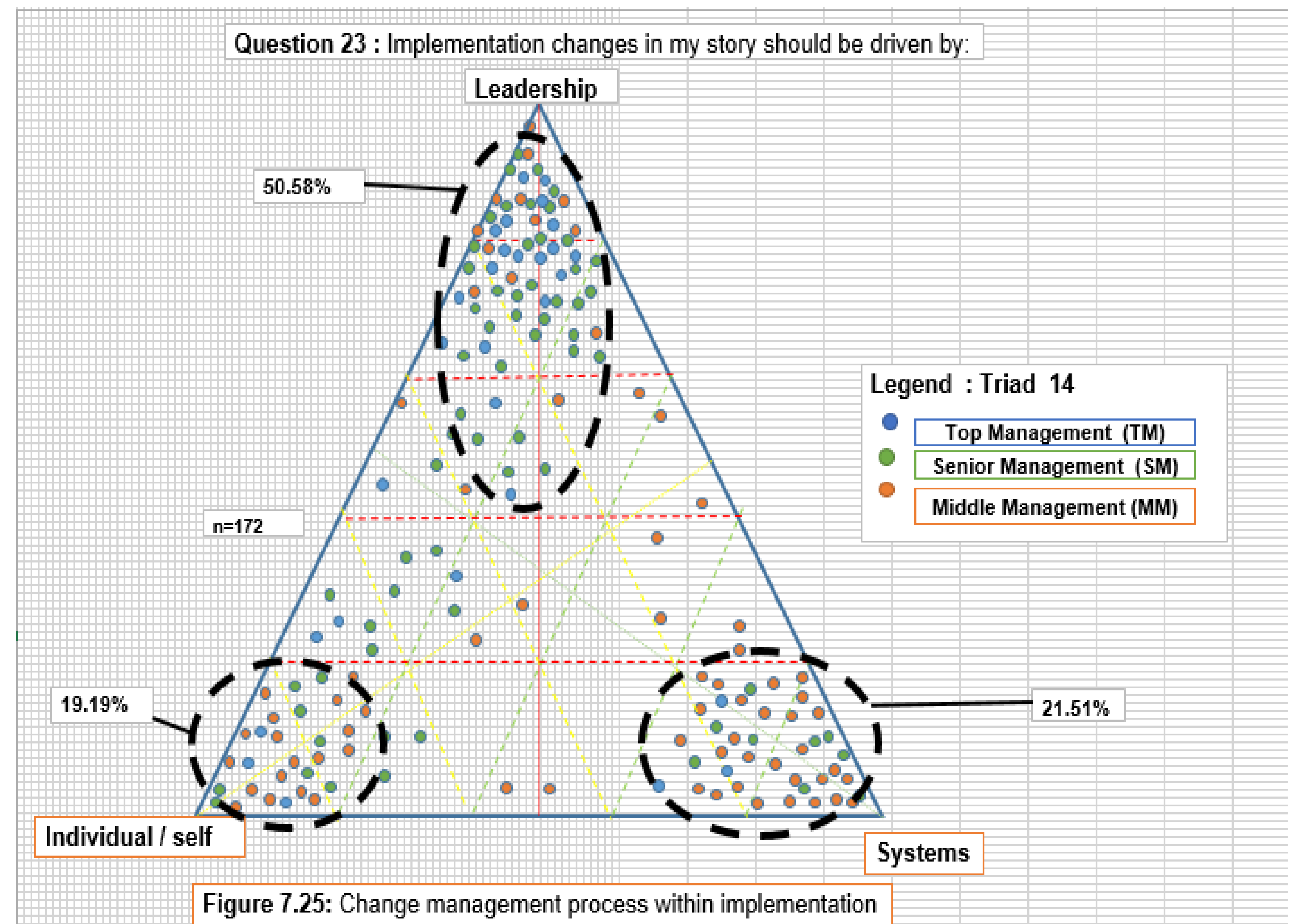


Figure 7.25: Change management process within implementation

7.6.15 Triad 15: (Question 24) When employees acted to address the most critical things, they: *Acted intuitively, Thought deeply about the decision and analysed the issues logicall*

In answering this question and as depicted in Figure 7.26, when employees acted to address the most critical things, they 'acted intuitively', 'analysed the issues logically' and 'thought deeply about the decision'. Middle Management mainly shared about 26.54% stories clustered to the apex 'thought deeply about the decision', with 36.42% stories mainly shared by Top Management and Senior Management clustered towards the apex 'analysed the issues logically'. About 23.46% stories mainly contributed by Middle Management and Senior Management clustered towards the apex 'act intuitively'. Based on common understanding, the expectation was that, the middle of the triad would appear as the most optimal place to share stories as all the aspects raised seem to be relevant in decision making. Lastly, 10.26% stories were scattered within the triad, with 3.32% stories not told.

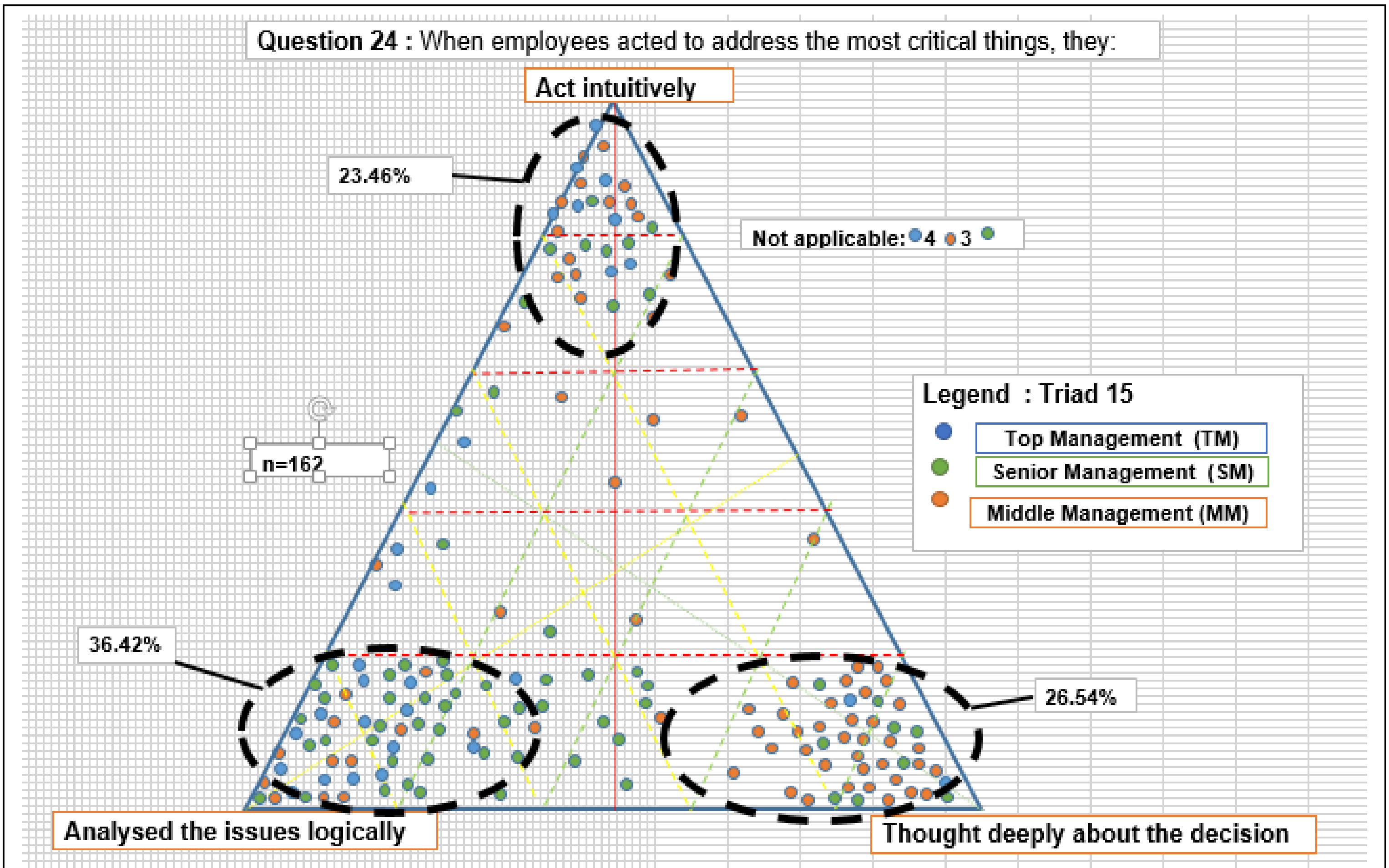


Figure 7.26: Process undertaken to implement decisions

7.6.16 Triad 16: (Question 25) In my story, the reaction of employees to implementation normally is: *Do whatever is required, Be doubtful and sceptical and Question issues not sure about*

Findings:

Figure 7.27, indicates that during the process of strategy execution, the reaction of employees to implementation normally is: ‘Do whatever is required’, ‘question issues not sure about’, or ‘be doubtful and sceptical’. The story clustered for the apex ‘do whatever is required’ shows 20.71% mainly of stories by Middle Management. Stories shared mainly by Top Management and Senior Management and clustered towards the apex ‘question issues not sure about’ were at 37.28%, with 31.95 % stories shared mainly by Middle Management “be doubtful and skeptical’. Further 9.86 stories were scattered throughout the triad, with 1.2% failing to share their story.

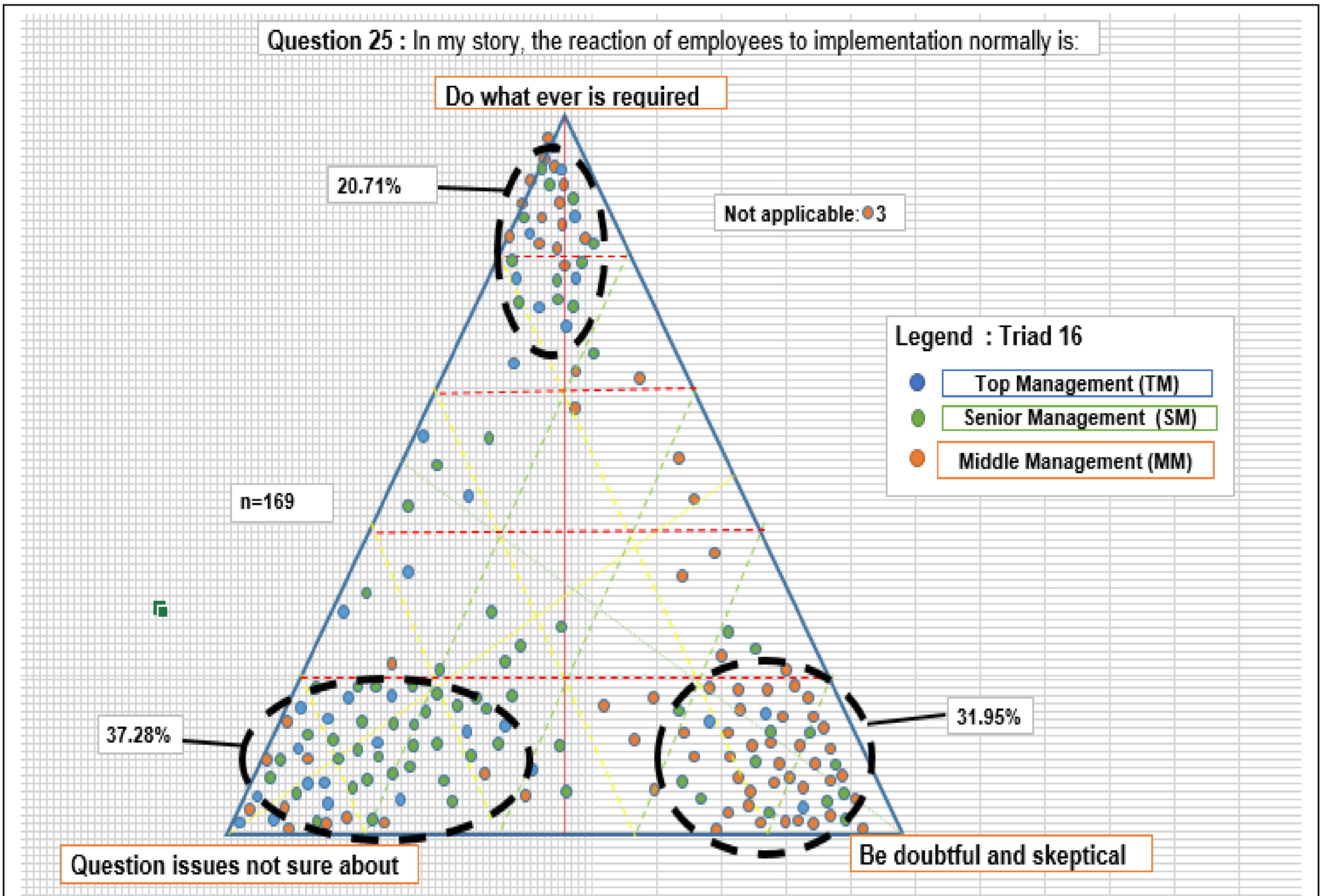


Figure 7.27: Employees reaction on implementation instructions

7.6.17 Triad 17: (Question 26) Attitude towards people in my story was: *Everyone should be treated equally, Diversity is a good thing and Some people are worth more*

Figure 7.28, shows that 26.74% stories contributed mainly by Middle Management were clustered towards the apex 'some people are worth more', with 22.67% stories contributed mainly by Top Management and Senior Management and some Middle Management being clustered towards the apex 'diversity is a good thing', Mainly Senior Management and Top Management acknowledged that 'everyone should be treated equally' with 45.93% of the stories clustered to the top of the triad. Ideally most stories should have been shared in the middle of the triad, as acknowledgement and an indication that all these aspects are essential to strategy success. About 4.66% stories were shared between the two bottom apices.

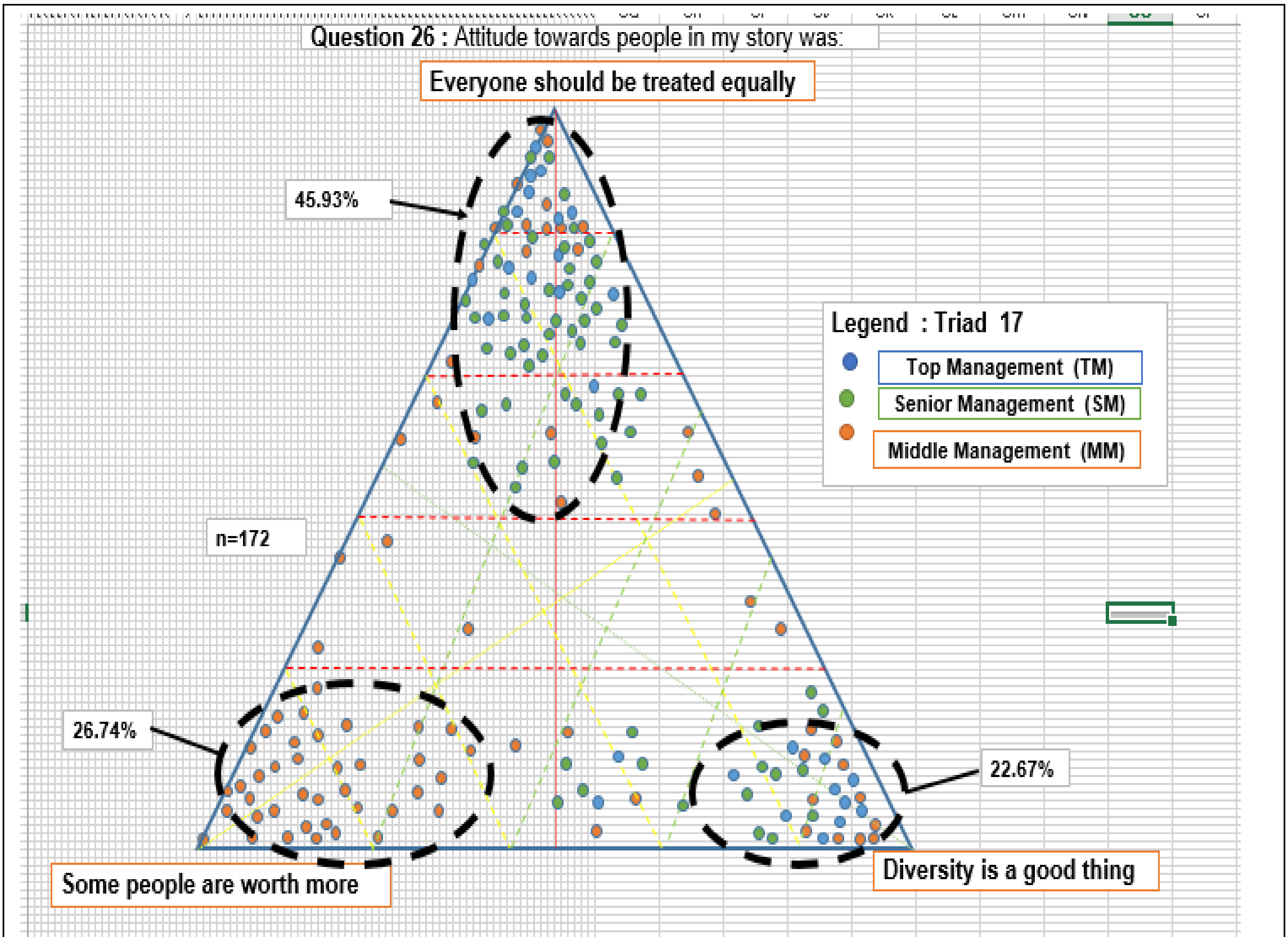


Figure 7.28: Attitudes displayed towards the implementation activities

7.6.18 Triad 18: (Question 27) In my story, strategy implementation applies to: *Present, Future and Past*

In sharing stories regarding the pertinence / relevance of strategy implementation in Figure 7.29 shows that most stories clustered towards the apex 'present' came from both Middle Management 41.18% and 8.2% from Top Management, with 15.29% stories contributed mostly by Senior Management clustered at the apex 'past', and about 38.24% of stories mainly shared by Senior Management and 4.6% from Top Management clustered to the apex 'future'. The expectation was that most stories could have clustered to the centre of the triad, indicating that for strategy implementation to be successful, events and issues of the past, present and the future needed to be infused in decision making. Only 5.28% of stories were shared between the 'present' and 'future' apices.

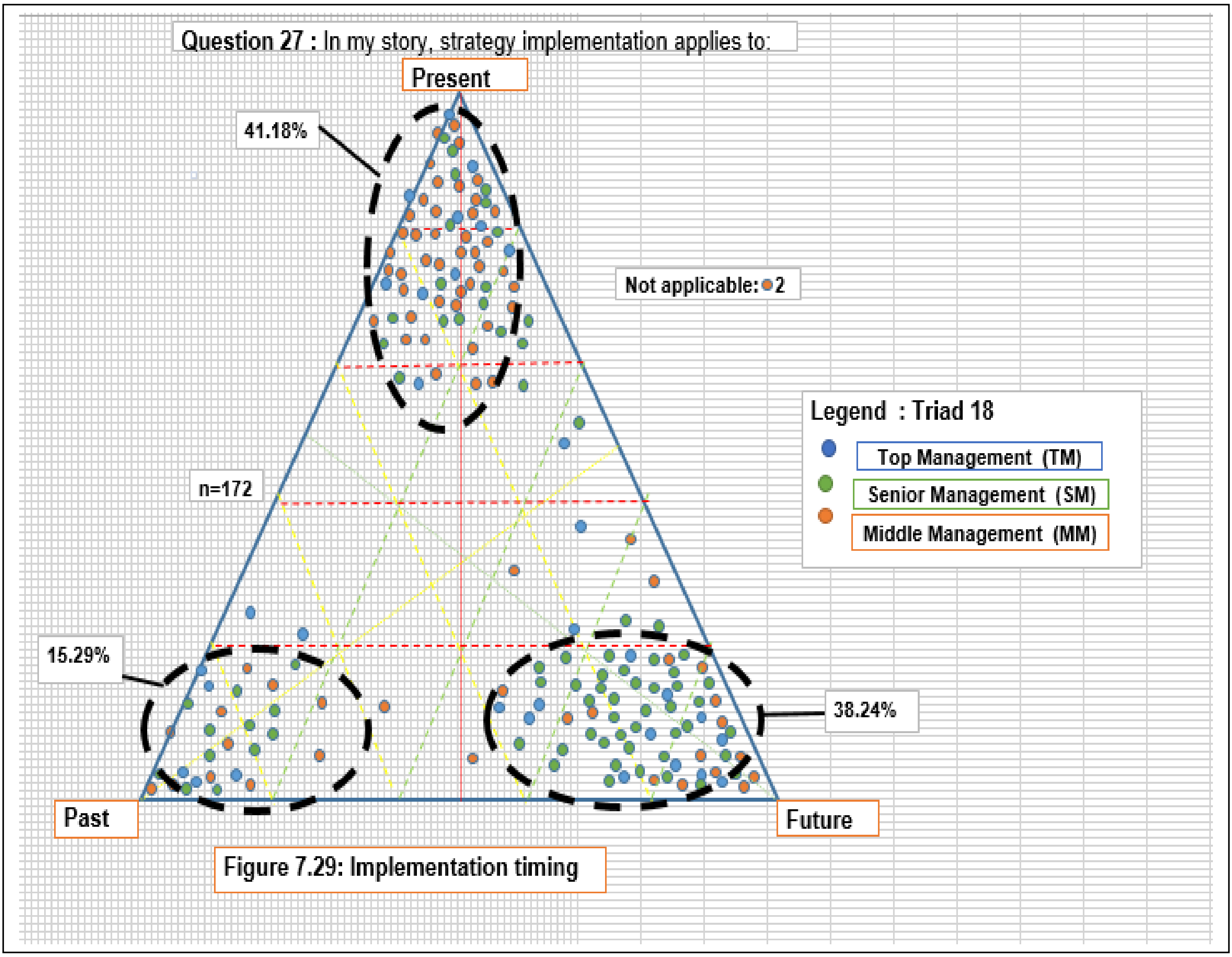


Figure 7.29: Implementation timing

7.7 FINDINGS FROM NARRATIVE DYADS/POLARITIES DATA

Polarities are designed around Aristotle's concept of the Golden Mean.The emphasis is on 'opposing negatives', and the objective (value) the organisation intends to achieve is located at the mid/ centre of the continuum with the extremes of 'values absent' and 'values taken to excess' *(*Snowden, 2007). The dyads data was derived from a set of 9 questions ranging from Question 28 to Question 36. Regarding dyads, two opposing extreme alternatives were used to show if an aspect of strategy implementation was 'present' or 'absent', in 'excess' or was 'deficient'.

The situation described above may be depicted below as follows:

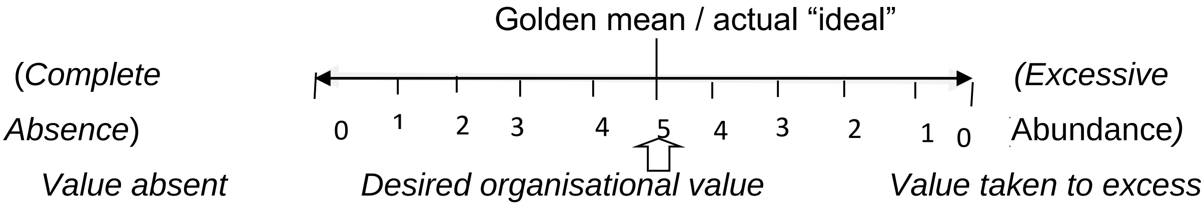


Figure 7.30: Aristotle's Concept of the Golden Mean

Respondents' stories were identified, with two end labels coined as 'the thing not present' (value absent) and alternatively 'the thing taken to excess' *(*value taken to excess)*.* Therefore, when the respondents marked the centre of the scale, this was confirmation that, they represented their Golden Mean (*ideal, anticipated* or *desired)* answer to the question Snowden, Bealing, Cheveldave, Stanbridge & Mc Hugh (2011: B2).

According to Snowden, et al., (2011) the activity in Figure 7.30, is considered as a *deliberately ambiguited signification process* which provide a linear scale having opposing ends that are both labelled with highly favourable or positive attributes, or both with highly unfavourable or negative attributes, and asking the indexer (respondent) to mark the appropriate location for a particular fragment along the scale". A deliberate decision is taken to define and mark the linear scale wide open to capture most stories shared. Histograms below, shows the aggregated stories from the narrative capture, and quantity of stories shared at the different points along the linear scales. With self-signification of narratives, the story contributor determined its place along the continuum (Seah, 2010). Within the histogram, the *blue*, *green* and *orange* bars each represented stories contributed.

7.7.1 Dyad 1: (Question 28) In conversation at work, would you say that talk about strategy implementation has been..........*Very rare and when it does happen is only between a few people........Very common.*

In Figure 7.31, Top Management stories were slightly skewed, towards being more common with only 6/30 stories (20%) around rare conversation and 17/30 stories (56.7%) supporting common conversations. Senior Management stories were evenly spread between rare with 28/72 stories (38.9%) towards common conversations with 39/72 stories (54.2%). Note worthy are the 28/72 stories (38.9%) reported for very rare. Middle Management stories were slightly skewed to, more rare with 37/65 stories (56.9%) but support was found for common conversations with 22/65 stories (33.8%). Overall, 71/167 stories (43 %) identified the conversation to be more rare, and 78/167 stories (47%) as more common, with 18/167 stories (10.8%) finding a balance between the extremes. Five respondents, two from Senior Management and three from Middle Management did not share their stories.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	4	3	2	1	0			
Rating	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5			
												total	Mean	SD
Total	0	20	24	15	11	17	29	27	13	11	0	167	18.56	4.76
Top Ma	0	0	0	2	4	7	9	3	3	2	0	30		
Senior I	0	10	7	7	4	5	12	13	7	7	0	72		
Middle	0	8	15	8	6	6	8	9	3	2	0	65		
												167		

Statement 28: In conversation at work, would you say that talk about strategy implementation has been..........

Very rare and when it does happen is only between a few people — Very common

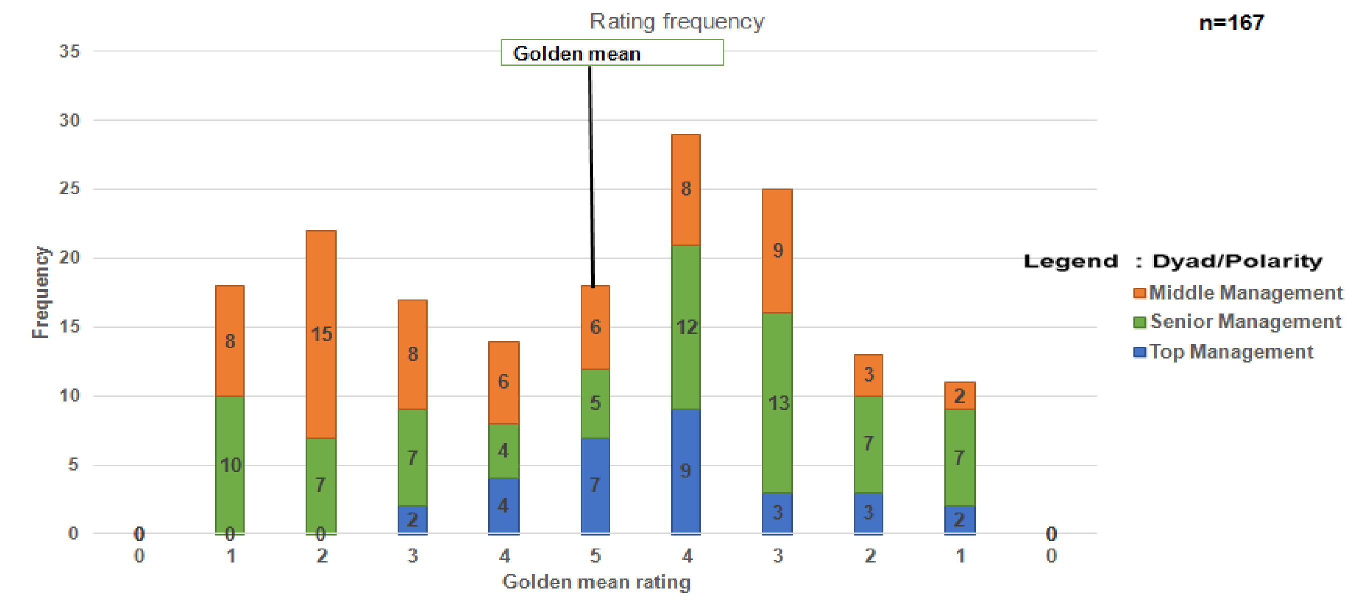


Figure 7.31: Perception about the level of conversation/ talk on implementation

Does not apply: 2 3

7.7.2 Dyad 2: (Question 29) The situation described in this instance is something that…….*I worry about constantly.............Does not concern me at all..*

Figure 7.32 depicts that Top Management stories were slightly skewed towards being concerned with only 6/30 stories (20%), and 21/30 stories (70%) being less concerned. Senior Management stories were spread with 25/71 stories (35.2%) of concern and 33/71 stories (46.3%) towards not concerned. Middle Management stories were skewed towards being concerned with 40/63 stories (63.5%) and 18/63 stories (28.6%) towards less concerned. Note worthy are 40/63 (63.49%) reported to be very concerned. Finally, 71/164 stories (43.3%) were concerned, with 72/164 stories (43.9%) showing no concern, with 21/164 stories (12.8%) having a balanced view. Three Senior Management and five Middle Management did not share.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	4	3	2	1	0			
Rating	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	total	Mean	SD
Total	0	18	22	22	14	21	25	17	13	12	0	164	18.22	5.39
Top Ma	0	2	0	1	3	3	8	6	4	3	0	30		
Senior I	0	4	7	9	5	13	9	6	8	10	0	71		
Middle	0	12	12	10	6	5	8	5	3	2	0	63		
												164		

Statement 29: The situation described in this instance is something..

I worry about constantly and has me quite concerned.

Does not concern me at all

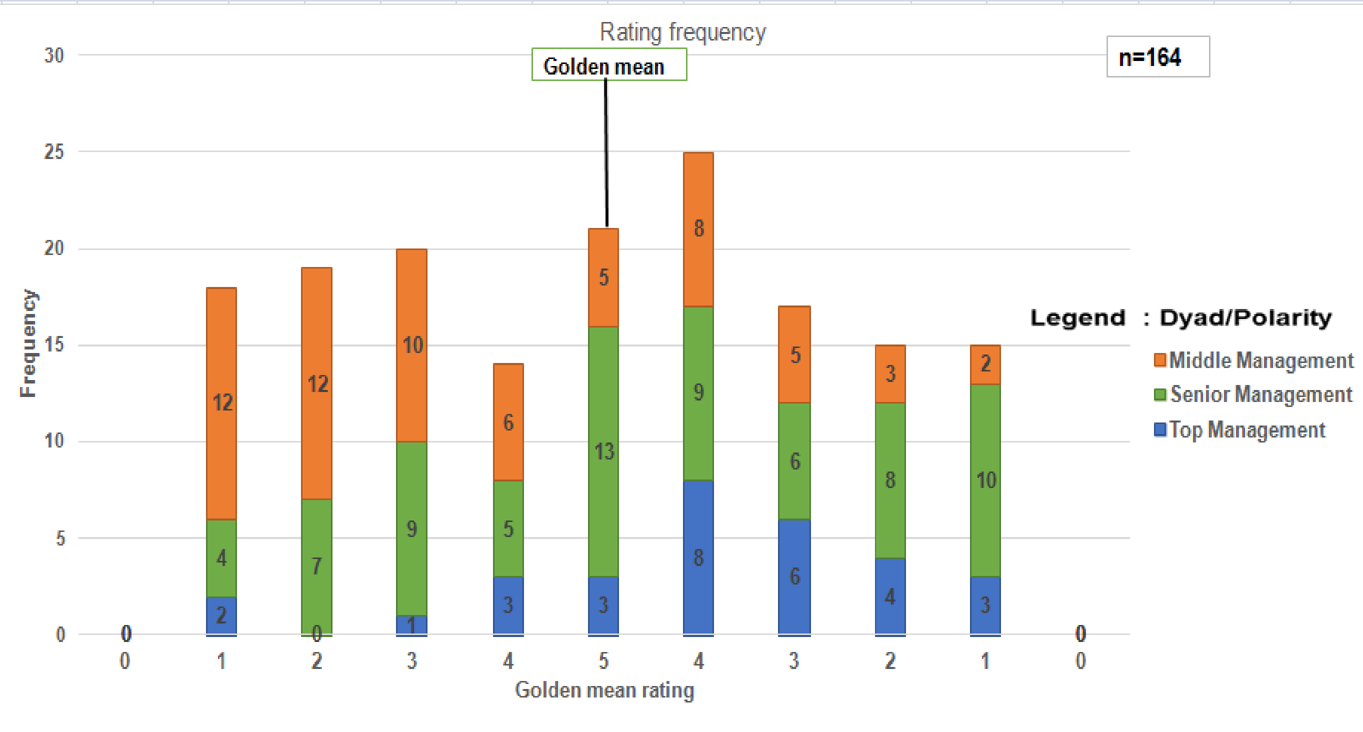


Figure 7.32: Concern and commitment about implementation

Does not apply: 3 5

7.7.3 Dyad 3: (Question 30). The outside factors affecting implementation are ....*Completely unpredictable; chaotic.............Very predictable; stable*

In Figure 7.33, Top Management stories were skewed, towards being predictable with only 8/28 stories (28.6%) and with 17/28 stories (60.7%), supporting more predictability. Senior Management stories were skewed towards being, more predictable with 28/72 stories (38.9%), and most predictable with 29/72 stories (40.3%). Middle Management stories were skewed, towards being very unpredictable with 39/62 stories (62.9%), and 19/62 stories (30.6%) towards being predictable. Note worth are 39/62 stories (62.9%) reported for very unpredictable. Ultimately, 75/162 stories (46.3%) confirmed outside factors being unpredictable, with 65/162 stories (40.1%) indicating them to be predictable and stable. A balanced view is held by 22/162 stories (13.6%), with no response from 10 participants.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	4	3	2	1	0				
Rating	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5				
												total		Mean	SD
Total	0	15	24	23	15	22	25	13	13	12	0	162		18	4.67
Top Ma	0	2	2	1	3	3	5	5	4	3	0	28			
Senior I	0	4	7	10	7	15	8	8	6	7	0	72			
Middle	0	10	12	10	7	4	8	6	3	2	0	62			
												162			

Statement 30: The outside factors affecting implementation are ....

Completely unpredictable; chaotic

Very predictable; stable

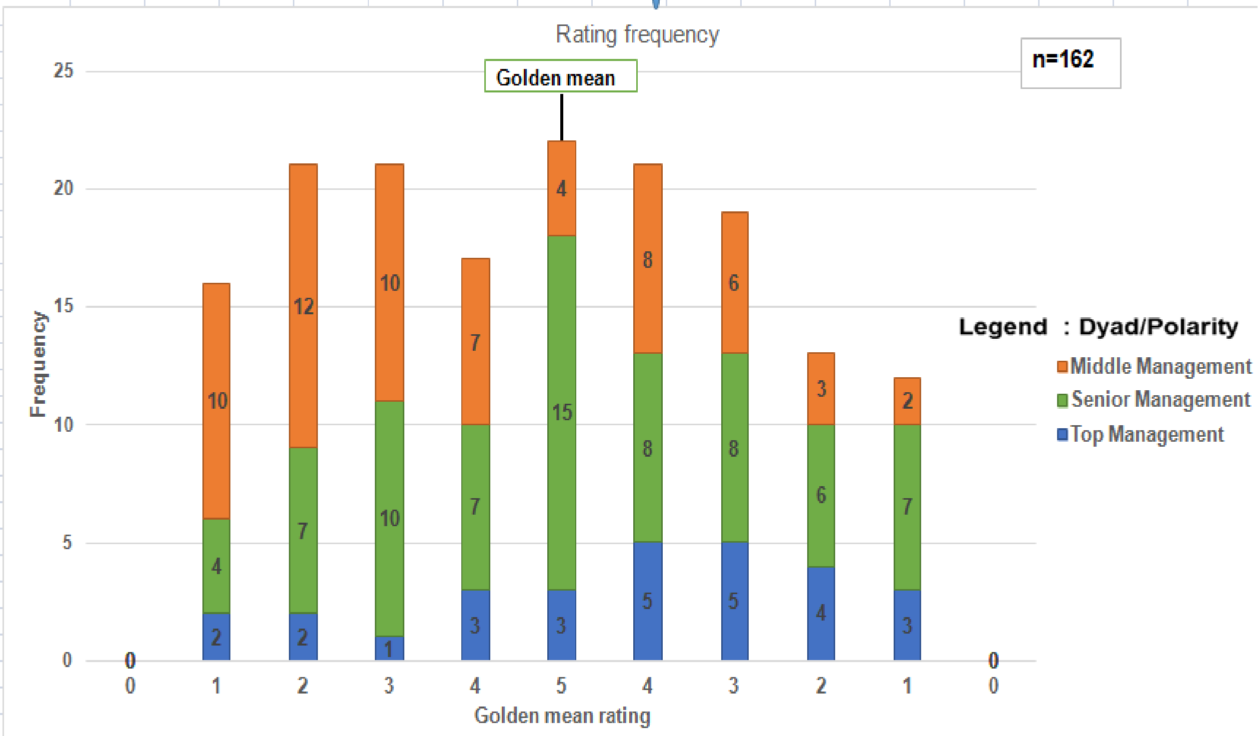


Figure 7.33: Environmental factors affecting implementation

Does not apply: 2 2 6

7.7.4 Dyad 4: (Question 31). Overall employees in this story trust each other....*Blindly without a second thought......Not one bit, they double check…*

In Figure 7.34, Top Management stories were evenly spread, towards being more trusted with 16/30 stories (53.3%), and with only 8/30 stories (26.7%) towards not trusted. Senior Management stories were evenly spread, towards being more trusted with 28/72 stories (38.9%), and with 33/72 stories (45.8%) towards being not trusted. Middle Management stories were evenly spread, towards being more trusted with 24/65 stories (36.9%), and with 34/65 stories (52.3%), towards being not trusted. Overall 68/167 stories (40.7%) confirm blindly trust, with 75/167 stories (44.9%) doubting trust. A balanced view was obtained with 24/167 stories (14.4%), with 5 participants not sharing their story.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	4	3	2	1	0				
Rating	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5				
												total		Mean	SD
Total	0	12	15	15	15	24	32	22	19	13	0	167		18.56	6.09
Top Ma	0	5	4	4	3	6	1	2	2	3	0	30			
Senior l	0	4	8	8	8	11	15	8	6	4	0	72			
Middle	0	4	5	7	8	7	11	10	8	5	0	65			
												167			

Statement 31: Overall employees in this story trust each other ....

Blindly without a second thought

Not one bit, they double check

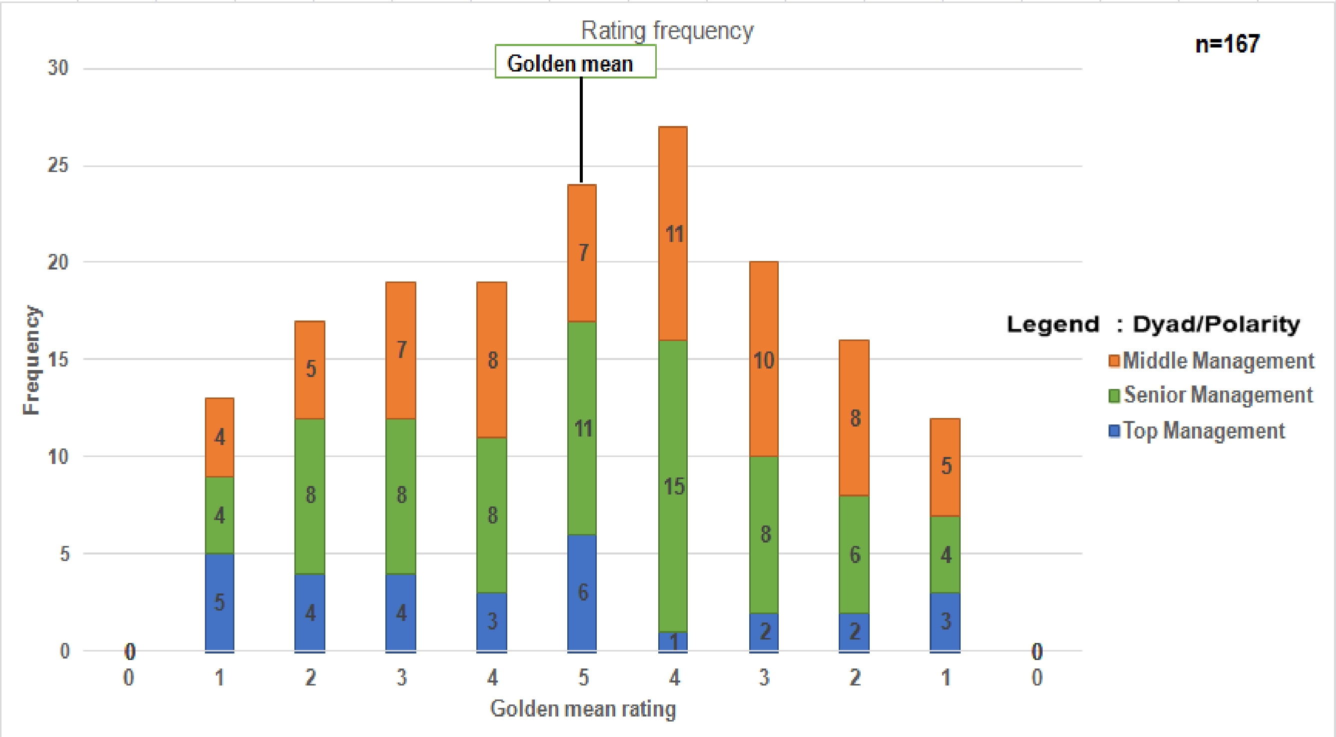


Figure 7.34: Employee's level trust during the implementation

Does not apply : 2 3

7.7.5 Dyad 5: (Question 32). Employees shared information...*too much… too little.*

Figure 7.35, Top Management stories were slightly skewed towards too much information with 7/27 stories (25.9%), and 12/27 stories (44.4%) towards sufficient. Senior Management stories were skewed towards sufficient information with 32/70 stories (45.7%), and 22/70 stories (31.4%) towards more. Middle Management stories were skewed towards more information with 15/62 stories (24.2%), and 41/62 stories (66.1%) towards too little. Finally, 54/159 stories (34%) indicated too much information sharing, with 75/159 stories (47.2%) confirming too little. Balanced responses reported at 30/159 stories (18.9%), with thirteen respondents not sharing.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	4	3	2	1	0				
Rating	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5				
												total		Mean	SD
Total	0	7	11	14	20	31	27	18	14	17	0	159		17.67	7.12
Top Ma	0	0	0	4	3	8	6	5	1	0	0	27			
Senior I	0	5	9	7	11	16	12	5	3	2	0	70			
Middle	0	2	4	3	6	6	8	8	10	15	0	62			
												159			

Statement 32: Employees shared information ....

Way too much

Way too little

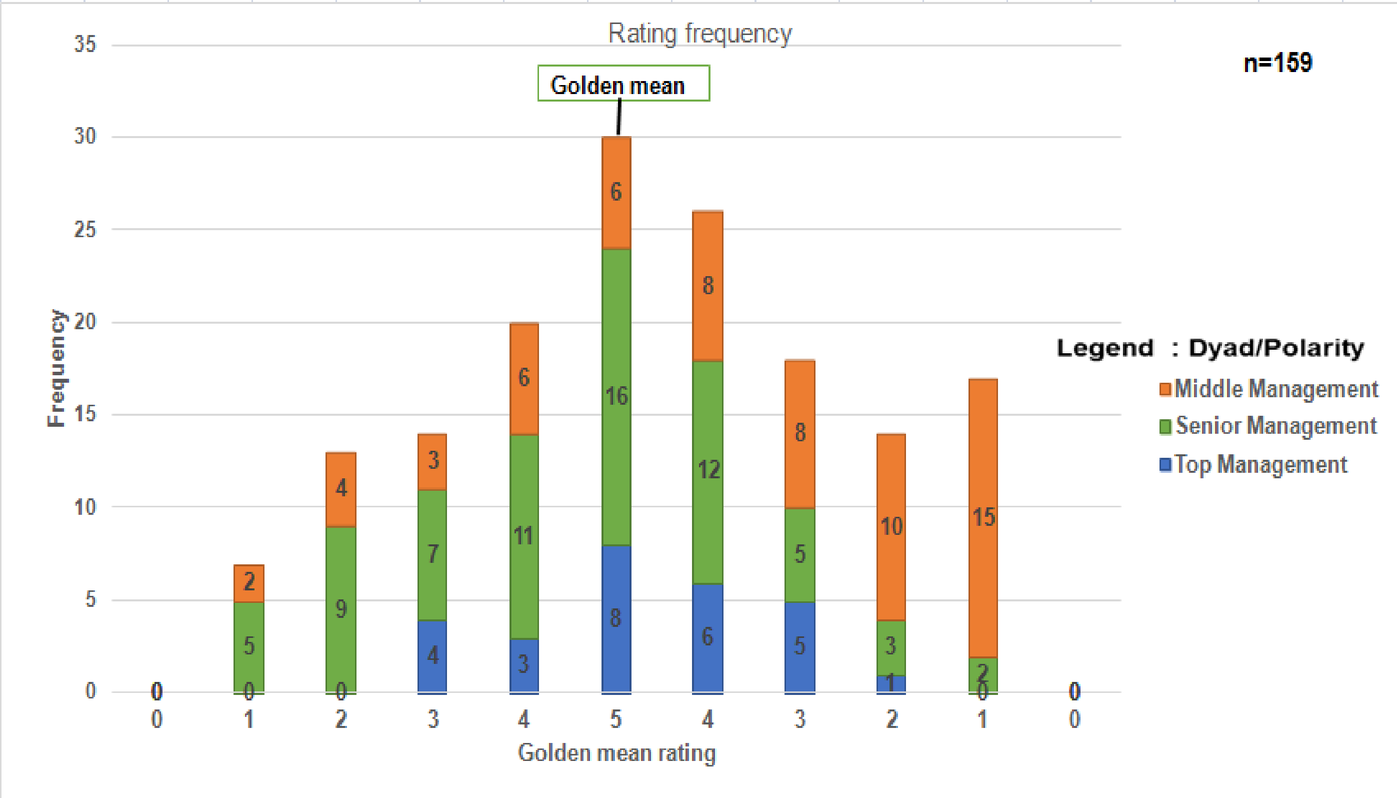


Figure 7.35: Employees' information sharing in the implementation process

Does not apply: 3 4 6

7.7.6 Dyad 6: (Question 33) Employees perceived others....As *objects..... As people*

In Figure 7.36, Top Management stories were evenly spread between perceived less as objects with 6/30 stories (20%) around perceived as objects, 13/30 stories (43.3%) supporting perceived more as people. Senior Management stories skewed towards being perceived less as objects with 8/68 stories (11.8%), and 45/68 stories (66.2%) towards perceived as people. Middle Management stories skewed towards being perceived as objects with 29/59 stories (49.2%) and 24/59 stories (40.7%) towards perceived as people. Perception of people as objects was confirmed by 43/157 stories (27.4%), with 82/157 stories (52.2%) as people. Reported a balanced response 32/15 stories (20.4%), with 15 respondents not sharing.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	4	3	2	1	0			
Rating	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5			
												total	Mean	SD
Total	0	10	9	12	10	33	28	23	22	10	0	157	17.44	8.42
Top Ma	0	0	0	3	3	11	5	5	2	1	0	30		
Senior I	0	1	1	2	4	15	16	10	13	6	0	68		
Middle	0	10	9	7	3	6	7	8	6	3	0	59		
												157		

Statement 33: Employees perceived others ....

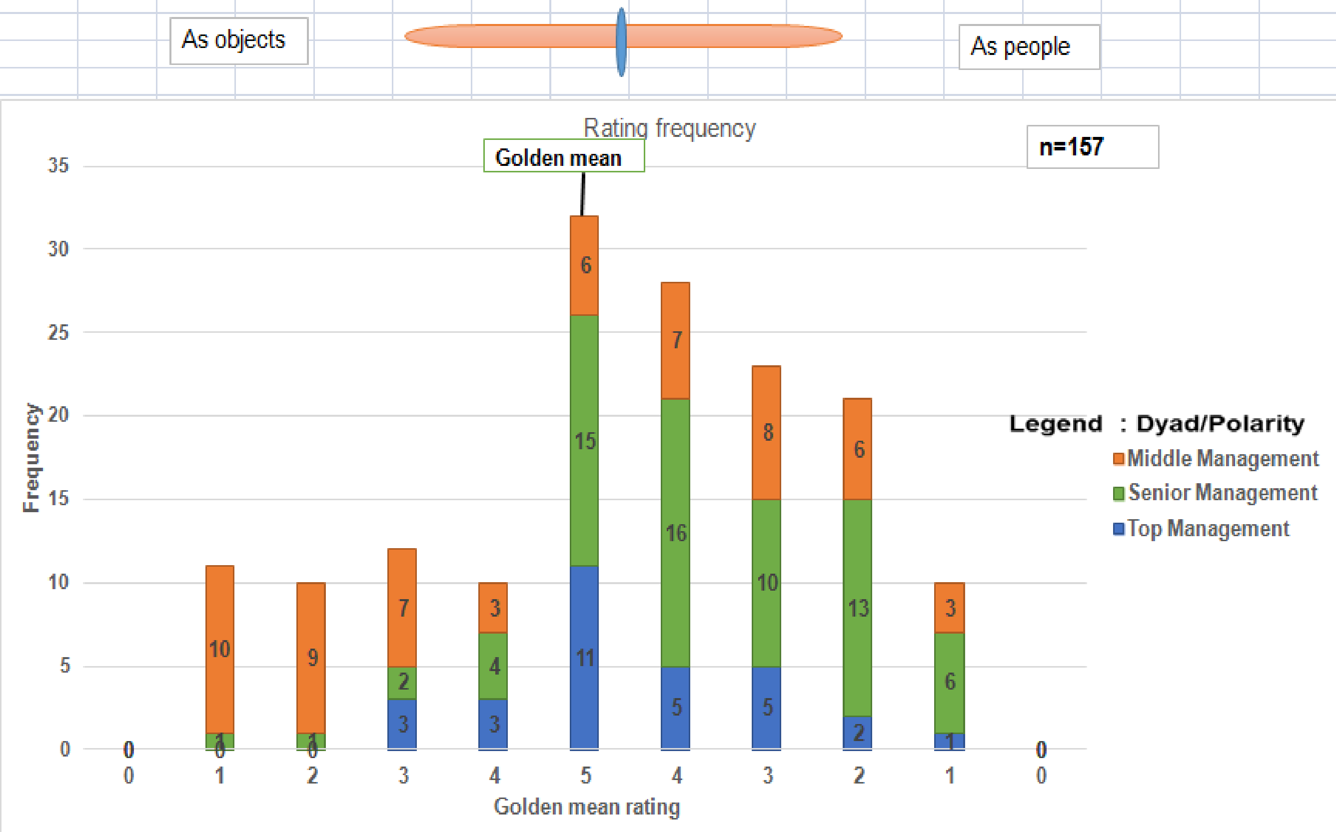


Figure 7.36: Perception amongst employees at implementation

Does not apply: 6 9

7.7.7 Dyad 7: (Question 34) Emotions at implementation were....*Displayed inappropriately….. Hidden completely*

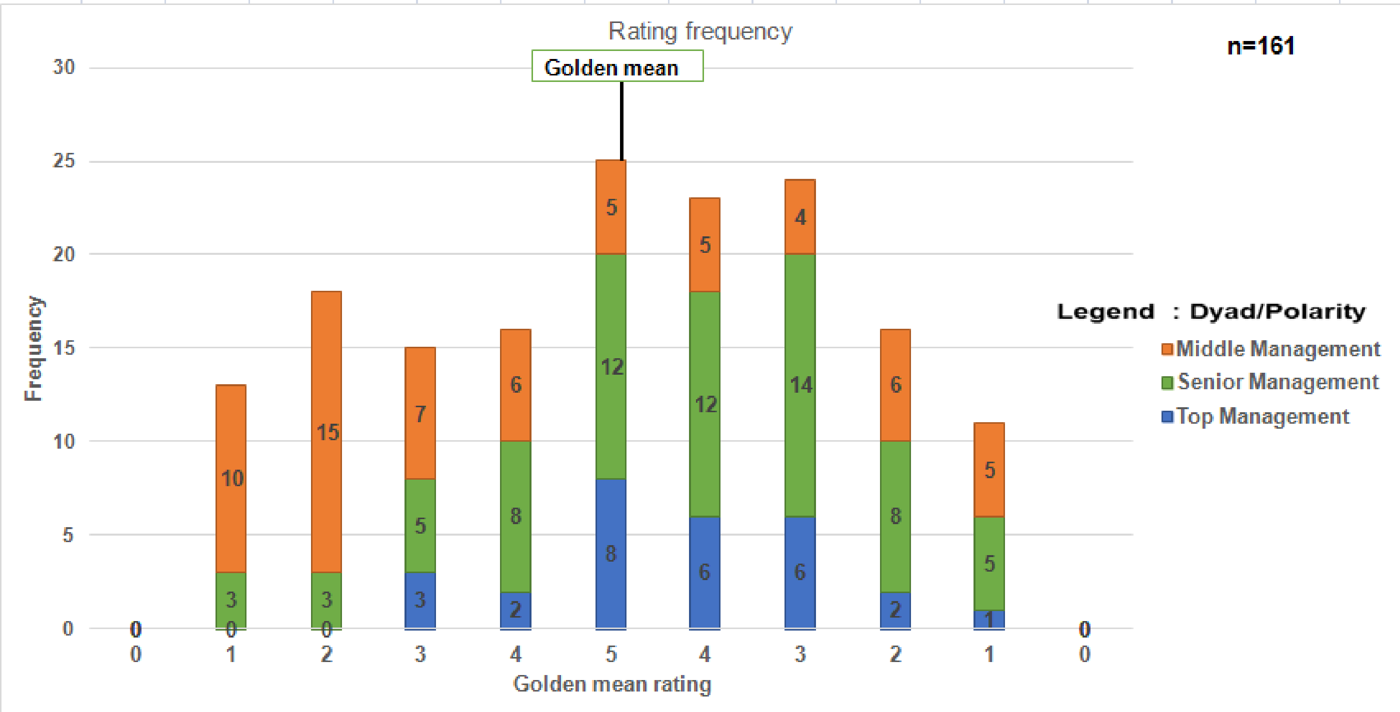
In figure 7.37, Top Management stories were slightly skewed, towards emotional with 5/28 stories (17.9%), and 15/28 stories (53.6%), towards less hidden emotions. Senior Management stories were skewed towards more emotional with 19/70 stories (27.1%), and 39/70 stories (55.7%) being less emotional. Middle Management stories were skewed towards most emotional with 38/63 stories (60.3%), and 20/63 stories (31.7%) towards more emotional. Note-worthy are the 38/63 stories (60.3%) reported for emotional inappropriateness. Reported inappropriate emotions with 62/161 stories (38.5%), with 74/161 stories (46%) hidden emotions. A balanced view / response with 25/161 stories (15.5%), with no response from 11 respondents.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	4	3	2	1	0				
Rating	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5				
												total		Mean	SD
Total	0	13	18	14	16	25	23	25	16	11	0	161		17.89	4.95
Top Ma	0	0	0	3	2	8	6	6	2	1	0	28			
Senior I	0	3	3	5	8	12	12	14	8	5	0	70			
Middle	0	10	15	7	6	5	5	4	6	5	0	63			
												161			

Statement 34: Emotions at implementation were ....

Displayed inappropriately

Hidden completely



Figures 7.37 : Employees level of emotions at implementation

Does not apply: 2 4 5

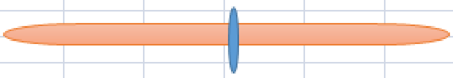
7.7.8 Dyad 8: (Question 35) Differences on how to implement strategy were......*Ignored completely……….Overemphasized.*

According to Figure 7.38, Top Management stories were slightly skewed, towards being ignored with only 5/28 stories (17.9%), and with 15/28 stories (53.6%), towards being emphasized. Senior Management stories were skewed towards being ignored with 18/72 stories (25%) and 41/72 stories (56.9%) being overemphasized. Middle Management stories were skewed towards being ignored completely with 38/63 stories (60.3%), and 16/63 stories (25.4%) being emphasized. Note-worthy are the 31/63 stories (49.2%) confirned for ignored completely. Ultimately 61/163 stories (37.4%) indicated differences ignored, with 72/163 stories (44.2%) overemphasized. The balanced view confirmed by 30/163 stories (18.4%), 9 respondents not sharing.

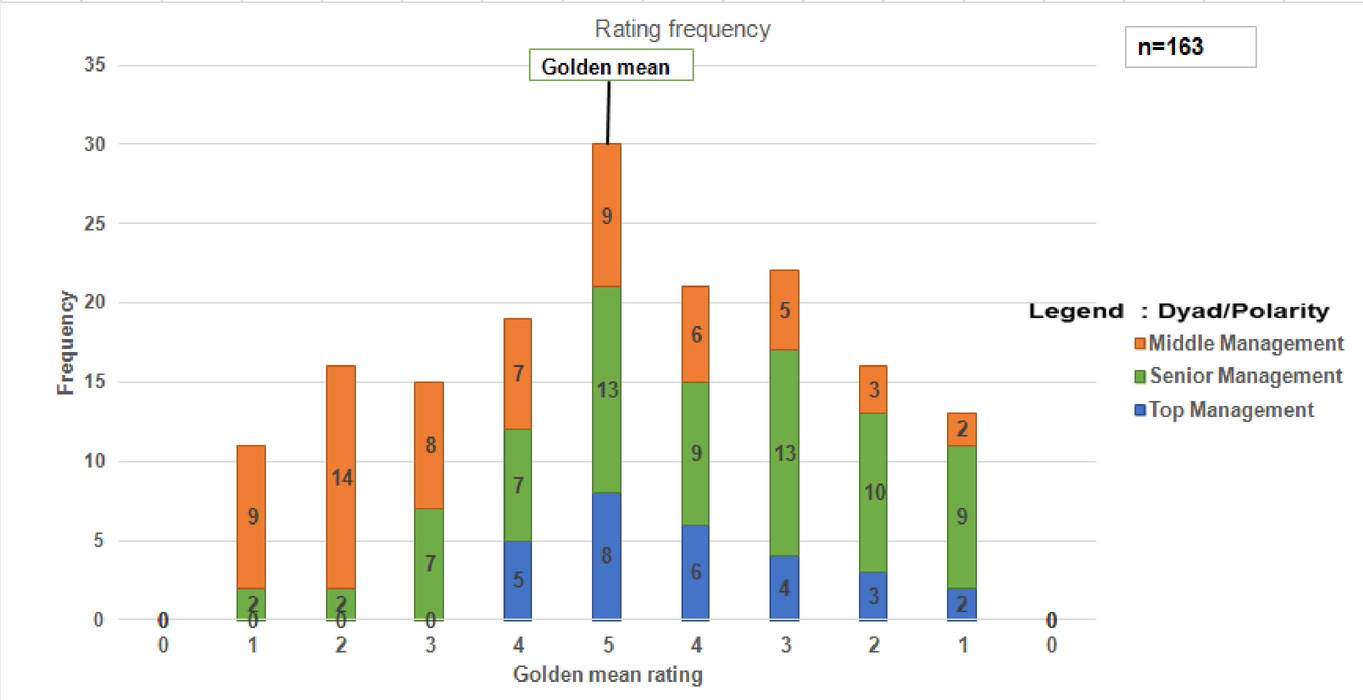
	0	1	2	3	4	5	4	3	2	1	0			
Rating	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5			
												total	Mean	SD
Total	0	11	16	15	19	30	21	22	16	13	0	163	18.11	5.39
Top Ma	0	0	0	0	5	8	6	4	3	2	0	28		
Senior I	0	2	2	7	7	13	9	13	10	9	0	72		
Middle	0	9	14	8	7	9	6	5	3	2	0	63		
												163		

Statement 35: Differences on how to implement strategy was ....

Ignored completely



Overemphasized



Figures 7.38: Accommodating differences at implementation

Does not apply: 2 2 5

7.7.9 Dyads 9: (Question 36) Employees understood each other… *Not at all…All too well….*

In Figure 7.39, Top Management stories were evenly spread between understood with 6/30 stories (20%), and 17/30 stories (56.7%) towards well understood. Senior Management stories were slightly skewed towards not understood with 4/71 stories (5.63%), and towards well understood with 49/71 stories (69.01%). Middle Management stories were skewed towards not understood with 40/64 stories (62.5%), 19/64 stories (25%), towards understood. Reported 50/165 stories (30.3%) not understanding each other, with 85/165 stories (51.5%) too well. Balanced view achieved with 30/165 stories (18.2 %), with 7 respondents not sharing.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	4	3	2	1	0				
Rating	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5				
												total		Mean	SD
Total	0	5	8	15	22	30	27	33	16	9	0	165		18.33	9.59
Top Ma	0	0	0	2	4	7	4	6	4	3	0	30			
Senior I	0	0	1	0	3	18	17	19	9	4	0	71			
Middle	0	5	7	13	15	5	6	6	4	3	0	64			
												165			

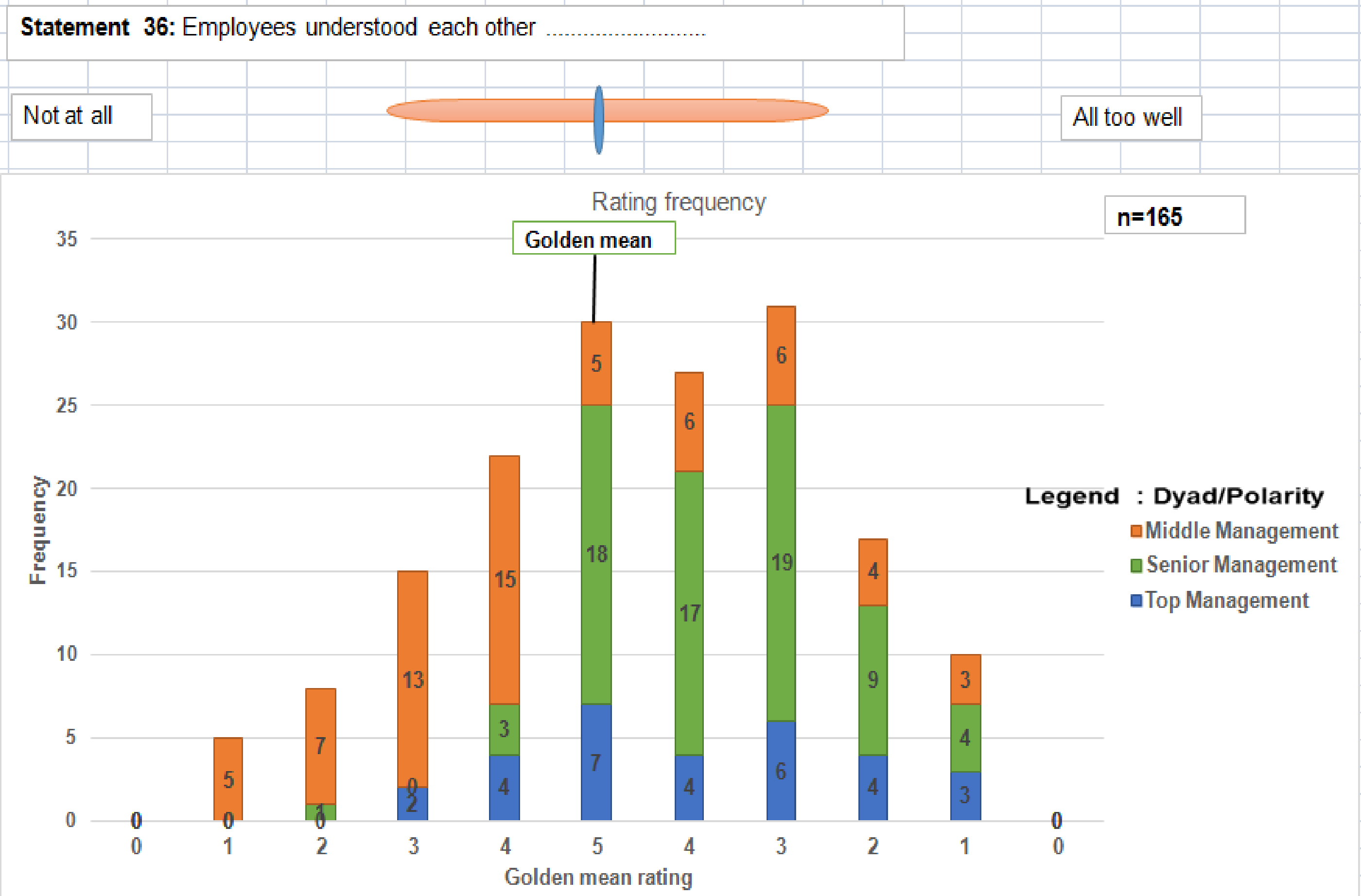


Figure 7.39: The level of employee interrelationships

Does not apply: 3 4

7.8 Findings from In–depth Interviews

As indicated in Chapter 6, this study commenced with the administration of a Strategy Implementation Narrative Capture Questionnaire on respondents, followed by narrative in-depth interviews, where the intention was to seek new insights into the ‘strategy implementation gap’ and how these instruments could assist us to ask questions and assess the phenomena in a new light (Robson, 2002:59). Narrative data was collected from respondents using the narrative questions method which purpose was to elicit data that enabled the sharing of meaning behind captured stories/narratives and to understand the process of strategy implementation in order to answer the research question(s) (Saunders et al., 2003). The collected narrative data was evaluated in Chapter 8, together with findings from triad and dyads data.

A decision was taken not to display findings on narrative capture in-depth interviews responses/ stories collected from Top Management, Senior Management and Middle Management due to the voluminous nature of the data, but showed them as appendices. Appendix F is a measuring instrument consisting of 7 questions, from Question 37 to Question 43 used to elicit narratives through the in-depth interview method on Middle Management over a broad array of issues pertaining to strategy implementation. Responses to these questions were collected through a narrative capture in-depth interview responses labelled ‘Hindrances and Enablers of Strategy Implementation’.Top Management and Senior Management narratives were similarly collected through narrative capture in-depth interview consisting of 12 questions, ranging from Question 44 to Question 55 as depicted with Appendix G, with narratives collected through the same process as with Middle Management.

In-depth interviews verbatim responses were used in Chapter 8 to analyse the narratives shared, this ‘enriched’ triads and dyads findings and added a greater depth of understanding on stories. In-depth interviews represented another source of data which assisted the enquirer to collect more comprehensive data and further check their consistency to allow for the robustness of the research findings. According to Appendix G Middle Management contributed a total of 378 stories (54 respondents multiplied by 7 stories shared) from the narrative capture in-depth interview questions asked. Appendix I shows that Top Management contributed 72 stories (12 respondents multiplied by 6 stories shared), with Senior Management sharing 84 stories (7 respondents multiplied by 12 stories), from the narrative capture in-depth interview questions asked. Altogether, a total of 534 stories (Top Management – 72 stories, Senior Management- 84 stories and Middle Management 378 stories) were shared following the 19 narrative capture in-depth interview questions administered and these were reported verbatim. Verbatim qoutations as shown in Appendices G and I have been extracted as such for the reasons that; they could offer greater depth of understanding, spoken words sometimes show the strength of views of respondents or on the other hand their passivity and lack of engagement (Corden & Sainsbury, 2005a). The presentation of verbatim quotations provided opportunities for respondents to freely give their own view about the phenomena under study (strategy implementation). Furthermore, there is a belief that respondents own spoken words sometimes made more impact than the researcher’s narrative in conveying life experiences (Corden & Sainsbury, 2005b).

7.9 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter has highlighted that the Narrative Capture was successfully used to gather stories from 172 story tellers - respondents within the Water Utilities Corporation. The methodology used entailed a qualitative research study, Strategy Implementation Narrative Capture Questions utilising Triads and Dyads.

The overall study perspectives were presented with Demographic Narrative Capture Questions, which comprised of the applicable age bracket, location where the stories were contributed, work experience of story teller’s, story teller’s primary job positions, respondent’s areas of speciality, story teller’s educational attainment and the perceived organisational prominent business. The overall study perspectives were presented with a total of 17 Triad and 9 Dyad statements.

The research findings highlighted the various stories across the organisation, by Top Management, Senior Management and Middle Management. The triad data collected facilitated the determination of themes across the questions answered which enabled the answering of the research question. These questions enabled the analysis of data where emerging themes and insights were shared pertaining to Strategy

CHAPTER 8: RESEARCH ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Seah (2010:01) “numbers might be useful and objective to analyse and provide solutions to phenomena, even though, they may not be persuasive in themselves since they lack rich context of anecdotal data. Similarly, in as much as anecdotal data may be persuasive, it has its shortcomings and therefore could be dismissed; ultimately what is needed is an approach which can combine the advantages of each”. The experiences shared by story-tellers/respondents through narrative-capture based research are crucial for a better understanding of strategy implementation. The understanding is that the ‘liability’ concept seems to be a latent construct and therefore ‘indicators must be used to identify it’. The construct of strategy implementation is multi-disciplinary and multi-dimensional in nature, thus the reason why it should be looked at differently and from various angles. ‘Diverse indicators have been used to identify, measures and benefits’ (Nienaber & Martins, 2016: 26) arising from the liabilities approach.

In analyzing the responses from the narrative-capture questions and those from the in-depth interviews, the use of the words ‘liability indicator’ sought to explain the source (root cause) of negative influence to strategy implementation. ‘Liability’ refers to inability, hindrance, and negative condition, whilst the word ‘indicator’ points to a weak area within the strategy implementation process, which has the potential to harm and thwart success. In this chapter, ‘liability indicators’ of strategy implementation were identified from the responses to the narrative-capture questions and in-depth interviews, and these were discussed in detail. In analysing and discussing the findings of this research, the ‘strategy-as-practice’, which is concerned with the doing of strategy: who does it, what they do, how they do it, what they use, and what implications this has for shaping strategy (Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009:69) was leveraged on, in order to assist in understanding strategy implementation. Strategy-as-practice detailed activities, comprising strategizing (strategy-making) and the link between these activities, larger organisational and societal phenomena, shared insights on how to address the implementation gap (Seidl & Whittington, 2014).

Venkateswaran & Prabhu (2010:156) maintain that it requires “one to go out and look so as to find ways to capture such activity as it happens, so that it may be examined closely and better understood”. The strategizing process must go far beyond the organisation (Whittington, 2003; Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009) since it has the influences of several stakeholders such as competitors, consultants, policy makers, business schools, and organisational members (Whittington, 2003). Reflection on practitioners (doers of strategy work), practices (material and social symbolic tools), and praxis (the flow of activity) has assisted in supporting findings and discussions.
Innumerable findings were uncovered from this research and provided much more and deeper understanding on how strategy implementation is undertaken in the case organisations and the crucial potential which the liabilities approach has in addressing the implementation gap. Themes emerging following the administration of dyads and triads were used in the presentation of findings. In-depth interviews verbatim responses were used to analyse the narratives shared, this ‘enriched’ triads and dyads findings and added a greater depth of understanding on stories.

The thematic analysis was guided by themes which emerged during the literature review. Three main broad sets of liabilities were identified: ‘Liability of Engagement’ (LOE), ‘Liability of Decision Making Autonomy’ (LODMA), and the ‘Liability of Perceived Institutional Support’ (LOPIS). These identified liability sets are collectively referred to as ‘Strategy Implementation Liabilities’’ (SILs). Themes emerged pertaining to strategy implementation practices within each of the liabilities were named ‘liability indicators’. These are now discussed in detail. In-depth interviews verbatim excerpts were used in support of the findings. There is a belief that respondents own spoken words sometimes made more impact than the researcher’s narrative in conveying life experiences (Corden & Sainsbury, 2005b). Most excerpts were not used due to the voluminous data collected.

8.2 LIABILITY OF ENGAGEMENT (LOE)

The ‘liability of engagement’, places emphasis on the importance of recognising the emotional, cognitive and physical role strategy implementer’s play in the workplace to enable the organisation achieve its intended goals and objectives. If lack of engagement is experienced, inabilities, and hindrances creep in, thwarting implementation.

8.2.1 Theme 1: Perception on strategy implementation, conversation/talk as ritual

Top Management and Senior Management's perception at 50% was that strategy implementation in the organisation was 'clearly understood', whilst 35% of Middle Management considered it as a 'managerial function'. Even though Senior Management 'perception on strategy implementation' seemed balanced between the two apices, there appears a clear indication of differences. These differences which might be due to lack of engagement across the organisation's echelons and within the three levels of management. It therefore stands to reason that, basic tenets of strategy-as-practice which are concerned with the doing of strategy: who does it, what they do, how they do it, what they use, and what implications this has for shaping strategy might be lacking within the organisation (Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009:69). In getting into the "bowels" of strategy-making, employees might develop interest in the concept of implementation, and might appreciate the differences in the explanation and understanding of the concept as it is multidimensional with varied perceptions (Chia & Mac Kay, 2007; Hambrick, 1983).

Findings further indicate that Top Management confirmed that 'conversation/talk as ritual' about strategy within the WUC is not *rare* but *common* and not necessarily *very common* as would be expected. Strategy formulation and implementation ought to be embraced as culture through continuous conversations and talk across the organisation to enhance employee engagement and commitment. Senior Management's stories reveals that conversation and talk about strategy implementation is quite *rare* and to some extent *common,* this is viewed as a deficiency comparative to Top Management's response. Middle Management stories shared indicate that strategy conversation and talk is *very rare* and when it does happen it is only between a few people. If strategy conversation and talk is very rare, this might be an indication that the communication and sharing of strategy implementation information might be lacking. WUC could rely on important dimensions such as symbolic actions, which may take various forms such as celebrating success, rewarding performance, ceremonies, and effective use of language, with past success stories being told and retold; these could reinforce employee engagement and cohesiveness (Lorange, 1996).

Excerpts from the in-depth interviews support these themes.

Top Management and Senior Management: W1 "The ideal honesty is that the strategy in place is not owned for it is not understood". W124: "Strategy implementation initiatives have made considerable progress". W7: "It seems to be well, even though it is at its early stage as it has just started in April 2016". W 145: "Imposition into people without prior engagement to feel and belonging to decisions agreed on the projects seem improper. W13: "The management did not communicate well with employees". W41: "People should be taken on board right from the beginning".
Middle Management: W2 "Most employees are aware of it but are clueless as to the proceedings". W38:"The strategy has been cascaded but the problem is implementation" W152:"Strategy implementation in my organisation is only management business, other staff, are just being directed about what is going on." W137: "It is generally overlooked but it is very important to achieve buy in". W46: "Very little interaction between the staff was just delegated duties to do". W51: "Sharing of ideas and ways on how to improve the organisation performance was done". W126: "Generally, discussions on the strategy are infrequent, spending too much time on operations".

8.2.2 Theme 2: Integrating the differences between strategy formulation and implementation through organisational renewal.

Integration between strategy formulation and implementation has always been a dilemma and a serious challenge for organisations. The experiences of story tellers were sought to share some insights as to whether during strategy formulation, implementation could be considered as *serving a reality check* (control mechanism), *driver of formulation* (catalyst process) or whether it is unnecessary (fad) and therefore should be *disregarded*. Top Management and Senior Management agreed that implementation is a *driver for formulation* (30.4%). Middle Management held a different view in that, as far as they are concerned, during formulation, implementation is in most cases *disregarded* (36.3%). It therefore stands to reason that strategy formulation and implementation be considered simultaneously to ensure that processes flowing from the formulating stage are accordingly captured at the implementation stage. These processes may not be divorced as they are considered to be similar to some kind of 'liturgy' with which strategy practitioners perform 'quasi-priestly' role (Vaara & Whittington, 2012). The main reason for the lack of strategy success appears to include the separation between strategy formulation and implementation (Garcia, Cortes, Marco-Lajara, & Zaragoza-Saez, 2014; Ankor, 2012) due to lack of synergy between the two processes where inappropriate goal setting and strategy formulation leads to problematic execution strategies (Aalbers & Dolfsma, 2014).

Further experiences were elicited from respondents pertaining to the relevance of *leadership*, *systems* and *individual/self*-changes in strategy implementation in trying to cement the integration. Top Management and Senior Management indicated that they view the role played by *leadership* as critical to the process of implementation for strategic direction (50.6%), whilst Middle Management and some part of Senior Management view *systems* and *individuals* (21.5%) and (19.2%) respectively as also important to enhance and support the process of implementation. However, the most ideal situation could have been the sharing of stories at the centre of the triad which would be considered balanced and favourable and would mean that *leadership*, *systems* and the *individual* are collectively necessary to enhance and support implementation. To address the apparent lack of coherence between *leadership*, *systems*, and the *individual* reflecting at WUC, and for the organisation to be effective in regulation, it ought to be responsive to changes in the environment (economic, cultural, legal, social) in which it operates to ensure compliance, failing which its strategy choices might be affected when implementation initiatives are pursued (Chong & Chang, 2014; Paton & Wagner, 2014). This calls for the WUC to use *leadership*, *systems* and *individual* to motivate the organisational human resource to drive implementation changes (Sparrow, 2000; Wu, Gide & Jewell, 2014). WUC needs to be capacitated in terms of economic, financial, expertise, information resources, authority and legitimacy, strategic position, and organisational resources in pursuance of attaining identified goals. It is imperative for the WUC to continuously assess its performance in alignment with its objectives and modify its tools Karplan & Norton (1996) and strategies accordingly (Harrington, 2005; Jain & Singal, 2014; Papagiannidis & Westlan, 2014; Chatain, 2014; Wang & Chang, 2013).

The verbatim quotations bear testimony that the integration is necessary through organisational renewal.

Top Management and Senior Management: W30: “Quite discouraging and not necessarily positive”. W112: “We formulate strategy, however when it comes to implementation it is fire – fighting”. W115: “Customers never discussed with fellow employees, a lot of us are learning the formulation and implementation”. W169: “First of all people do not understand our organisation’s strategy. They deal with business situations and not necessarily strategy implementations”. W11: “Supervising operational issues”. W 11 “Corporate financial turnaround strategy should be taken seriously”. W11: “Employee engagement and their willingness to effect the necessary changes is important”.
Middle Management: W41: “People should be taken on board right from the beginning”. W83: “We were only briefed as employees but not really took part in the exercise”. W119: “Our management depends on consultants when formulating strategies. This affects most of staff because customer grievances backfire from staff”. W112:”Yes, leadership, we and systems should be changed to be in keeping with global trends”. W171: “Management waits until there is a crisis that is when they start implementing certain changes in strategies”.

8.2.3 Theme 3: Enhancing commitment, understanding and loyalty through implementation process ownership.

More stories were shared between apices *commitment* and *better understanding*, indicating that these are important aspects. Top Management and Senior Management both agreed that *commitment* seems to be the only most essential ingredient than, *better understanding* and *learning* and that they may be less effective and not necessarily contribute to better strategy execution in organisations. Middle Management had a different view, in that they maintained that implementation leads to better understanding of most aspects of the organisation. It therefore stands to reason that, the absence of appreciation by all the three levels of management is that all the aspects; *commitment*, *better understanding* and *learning* are collectively essential to implementation, an indicator that depicts an anomaly and an imbalance. Education and learning are generally recognised as forms of employee empowerment which enhances engagement, with the role of management being to provide fertile ground for these processes to occur, with the individual employee also taking some initiatives to augment the efforts of management (Paton & Wagner, 2014; Sila, 2013).

WUC could achieve consensus both within and outside the firm in order to successfully implement business strategies through the deliberate effort of engaging employees Lantz & Hjort (2013). To improve effectiveness of employee commitment, WUC could rely on affective commitment, an emotional attachment to, as well as identification and involvement with the organisation by employees, to enhance antecedents of work engagement (Yalabik, Popaitoon, Chowne & Rayton, 2013).

Furthermore, Top Management and Senior Management shared their stories indicating that the expected reaction of employees during the implementation process was to *question issues not sure about* so that clarity can be advanced to reduce prospects of confusion, uncertainty and to *do whatever is required*, in order to ensure that instructions, directives and plans are followed without fail. Middle Management indicated that their experience and expectation concerning the 'implementation process ownership' was that, employees appeared to be *doubtful and sceptical*, and that they also had to *do whatever was required* of them. It would appear that Top Management and Senior Management encouraged employees to question issues not sure about, facilitating conversations, and thus creating a conducive working environment, where employees would develop a sense of 'personal ownership' of the strategy implemented. It would be prudent and to the best interest of the WUC to accommodate, appreciate and recognise dissenting voices during the process of implementation as this will ensure that everybody pull their weight towards achieving goals. The challenge which WUC might have to deal with is to be wary of low personal motivation and commitment by middle managers as a result of low level of engagement which may result in passive compliance, subversive behaviours such as verbal arguments, objecting memos, coalition formation, and deliberate creation of barriers to implementation. Organisational engagement might promote interest and excitement in jobs, while effectively recognising the importance of social interaction and stress reduction (Nienaber & Martins, 2016)

In-depth interviews clearly articulate the stories contributed in enhancing commitment, understanding and loyalty.

Top Management and Senior Management: W2: "It encourages personal ownership and hence effectiveness. Strategy implementation needs to be owned first by those

on the level to enable easy of cascading". W 115: "To meet and set day to day goals, activities of customer satisfaction, revenue generation, all these increases efficiency and effectiveness in delivery'. W13: "The management did not communicate well with employees". W119:"Updating our records was not easy. Customers were not cooperating to provide information." W 50: "Progressing quite favourably but not sure whether goals will be reached". W10: "I feel the management most always feel their opinions are reasonable and they don't allow just anyone in the department to employ their ideas". W159: "We are never involved in the strategy formulation, everything will be done and completed and we are expected to be committed".
Middle Management: W 15: "The organisation needs commitment, understanding and knowledge derived from education, growth in order to focus on how they educate employees". W18: "It is poor and haphazard there is no commitment and therefore ownership from lower level employees". W38: "Management does not encourage the staff to implement the strategy and this leads to demotivation". W54: "We were only involved after strategy experts had left the WUC and were expected to start work without any clue of expectations from us". W64: The CEO, Heads and managers just agree and implement things without consulting us at the bottom". W83: "For everyone to own up and feel part of the strategy implementation, they should be involved one way or the other".

8.2.4 Theme 4: Facilitating harmonious interrelationships through personal recognition and nurturing employee attitudes.

Top Management stories indicated that employees understood each other *all too well* during the process of strategy implementation. Senior Management also indicated that during this process employees seemed to understand each other *quite well.* What can be inferred from these findings is that there appears to be good relationship and interaction between employees as far as the organisational leadership is concerned. Middle Management stories reveal that employees did not understand each other, meaning that the relationships, interrelationships in the process of strategy implementation did not exist. Issues considered to have had an impact on the interrelationships between employees varied; departments operating as silos, some departments considered more superior, with others inferior as a result of the work they do and the skew of their responsibilities. Interrelationships play an important part of group cohesiveness of employees in any organisation and teamwork to pursue and complete tasks enhances all these. The relationship between units/departments and strategy levels within WUC is vital in that if there is no harmonization in the relationship between the various units/departments and strategy levels in an organisation, the efforts of strategy implementation become worthless (Slater & Olson, 2001). WUC strategy implementation initiatives and employee engagement might fail if the strategy does not enjoy support by the majority of employees and middle management due to poor working relationships and personal interrelationships.

Appreciation is a fundamental human need, and once employees are recognised, their self-esteem, satisfaction and productivity increase. Top Management and Senior Management stories shared indicated that employees were *not perceived as objects*, but as people, indicating that from stories shared, employees' attitudes displayed during the implementation process were such that everyone should be *treated equally* and that *diversity is a good thing.* Middle Management took a different stand to indicate that they were not necessarily perceived as people but rather *as objects as some people are worth more,* however acknowledging that diversity is a good thing. The ideal concentration of stories was expected between the apices: *diversity is a good thing* and *everyone should be treated equally*, indicating that both aspects are equally important and therefore should be recognised as they have the potential to influence the success of strategy implementation. The clustering of stories at the far ends of the apices is an indicator that there is an imbalance which could be prevalent and therefore needs attention. People ought to be treated equally and fairly in the organisation for them to identify themselves as human capital assets for the success of strategy implementation. Strategy implementation success is dependant on the human or people side of project management, and less on organisation and system related factors. WUC could embark on a strategy to assess the motivation of its employees and accordingly reward performance (Visera, Baines, & Sweeney, 2005). Human capital must be recognized as particularly important because of the skills, experiences, knowledge and attitudes brought into the organisation (Campell, Coff & Krycynski, 2012; Whelan & Carcary, 2011; Lockwood, 2007; Lewis, 2011). Ultimately, WUC members' involvement during strategy implementation could have positive effects on the level of implementation success, profits, and the overall firm success.

The quotations below support this theme indicating the need for employee recognition.

Top Management and Senior Management: W11: “Moving slowly, still dealing with changing individual attitude towards organisational change”. W44: “Constant engagement of staff as the strategy implementation progresses”. W 8: “Lack of responding to emails by some staff”. W 131: “Communications by email at most times, memos. I do share information”. W7: “It will take some time to understand each other”. W166: “The interaction was perfect as it was well communicated”. W7: “It is a new tool in our organisation so it might take time for staff to adapt, but it is good and there is interaction between staff and management”.
Middle Management: W76: “There is no consultation between the organisation and employees”. W54: “The management should have consulted staff prior so that they could have questioned some issues and probably agreed with them. There were no updates on progress and no follow ups”. W69: “This will lead to employees being at different levels of understanding on what strategy implementation is all about”. W134: “There is poor interaction as people who are expected to execute strategy lacks direction of what was expected from them as they were not involved from the initial stage”.

8.2.5 Theme 5: Employee trust, emotional commitment and negative reactions.

The perceived level of trust across the WUC, which might be a hindrance to strategy implementation was examined. In sharing stories on whether employees trust each other during the process of strategy implementation, Top Management stories appeared consistent across the golden mean rating, indicating that, employees in general trust each other. However, Senior Management had a different view in that, overall employees did not trust each other in the implementation process, and this could result in them having to *cross check and double check things* which are a cost to the organisation in terms of time and effort. Middle Management responses were evenly spread within the golden mean rating depicted that employees *did not trust each other, even a bit* and therefore had to double check everything. The level of trust which influences employee’s engagement, constitute a leader’s ability to achieve with employee’s honesty and integrity and this is contingent upon their perceptions. Organisational member’s interactions influence their experience and perceptions of work, which drive their attitudes and behaviours. It is accepted that Middle Managers play a pivotal role in influencing employees' choice to engage or disengage" (Nienaber & Martins, 2016). Strategy implementation frustration sets in if harmful elements, notably distrust, are experienced in the organisation (Nicholson, 2013).

Emotions are another phenomenon that has received immense attention in organisations for the good reasons as they serve numerous functions; as social, communicative function, and as a decision-making function. The perceived level of emotions experienced at strategy implementation were examined, Top Management indicated that emotions at implementation were *displayed appropriately*- employees were less emotional about the process of strategy implementation. Senior Management also seems to agree that emotions were *displayed appropriately* – the process was less emotional. Middle Management stories shared, indicated that emotions at implementation were *displayed inappropriately* as shown by employees being most emotional. It would seem that, even though Top Management and Senior Management indicated that the issue of emotions was never a challenge at implementation, however, they would have to contend with and manage emotions, whether pre or post implementation to establish the root cause of the problems. Emotions are considered important aspects of human nature and they need to be nurtured through engagement with the view to obtain maximum results from people.

It would be prudent for the WUC to seriously consider employee emotions and their mental state as they can significantly influence the quality of thinking and behaviour which in turn, affects organisational engagement, performance organisational settings, and employee engagement (Barsade, 2002; van Zomeren, Spears, & Fischer, 2004; Xiong & King, 2015).

In-depth interviews excerpts buttress findings that employee trust is important.

Top and Senior Management: W118: 'It seems everything which needs to be done is like a directive no involvement with everybody in the organisation'. W7: "People feel important as they feel being part of the organisation strategy". W159: "It is very important to involve people because when implementation comes, everyone would be on the same wavelength because they were part of the decision that was taken. W 8: "Through workshops for WUC staff and SHE talks". W106: "Following directives

from management on how work will be distributed, a lot of supervisors and some part of management and employees were disgruntled as they were not previously engaged".W127: "We had anticipated that there was going to be counselling of emotions as some employees had to be laid off as they did not fit into the envisaged structures".
Middle Management: W13 "As part of junior management and on the ground, I strongly believe that we should be consulted, also the strategy implementation should be done by consultants with no interference from management as legitimacy will prevail". W18: "It is always tense and the management feels staff is accusing them and management always find ways to elude issues of concern". W18: "There were chaos regarding back pays which were only made to certain individuals whilst others were left in the lurch". W62: "It built trust between staff and the management". W96: "The decision was made by juniors and it was not approved through constructive engagement. The executive always separate themselves from juniors". W 30: "Quite discouraging and not necessarily positive". W157: "Restructuring at our work place, people were retrenched and not afforded counselling services." W159: "Staff is never happy about them not been involved and they tend to be slow in implementation". W113: "Loss of confidence in management as they had promised to fully consult and engage people during implementation, but nothing happened".

8.3 LIABILITY OF DECISION MAKING AUTONOMY (LODMA)

The *liability of decision-making autonomy* relates to hindrances encountered in organisations by employees when the decision-making process is stifled of discretion, independence, freedom and authority in execution of their primary tasks consequently rendering strategy implementation unsuccessful.

8.3.1 Theme 1: Decision making responsiveness and empowerment.

Middle Management stories shared indicate that strategy implementation decisions were *delayed*, with both Top Management and Senior Management indicating that such decisions were *situation dependent* (decisions were taken to address a particular situation) and *decisive* (taken at the right time). Strategy implementation decisions making is considered to be a process (ongoing) and not an event (once off), therefore it is appreciated that, decisions to amend, terminate of introduce new changes might occur frequently in an ordered fashion. It is imperative that whenever changes are anticipated, such information must be shared across the organisation such that everyone gets to appreciate any underlying issues and their impact. If decisions are not communicated timely throughout the organisation, employees might find themselves pursuing their own agendas, relying on their own whims and notions and not following decisions necessary for them to be effective in performance and effectively making implementation patchy and sometimes contradictory (Walters et al., 2010). The critical decision-making assessment by WUC, should not only entail current or existing performance but should also entail an understanding of the activities (long term challenges) Flanagin et al., (2014) which detract the organisation from achieving any objectives, and even assess beyond the scope of the current objectives which could be said to be 'off the radar' (Sparrow, 2003). It is imperative that the WUC could continuously make decisions to assess its performance in conformance with its objectives and modify its tools and strategies accordingly (Jain & Singal, 2014; Papagiannidis & Westlan, 2014).

Similarly, Top Management and Senior Management indicated that when they are confronted with a decision to address critical issues, they *acted intuitively* and *analysed the issues logically*. Middle Management insisted that they *thought deeply about the decision* when they acted to address the most critical things. It is generally accepted that the decision thinking and making process of Top Management and Senior Management could differ with that of Middle Management due to managerial intuition, exposure, decision making skills and strategic thinking. When decisions have to be made to address critical issues within the implementation process, these decisions could entail addressing issues of utmost importance in terms of lives, security and risk and this means, immediate action would be required with intuitive action and logical analysis of issues. WUC need to have adequate goal definition, high capacity for demanding decision-making, to avoid abandonment of implementation strategies (Cater & Pucko, 2010) as this may produce irrational and unimplementable strategies (Aboutaleebi, 2016b). Strategy decisions within the WUC must be consistent and fitting in all respects to ensure that no fatal errors occur at implementation.

Additional stories contributed by Top Management and Senior Management collected through in-depth interviews shed more light.

Top Management and Senior Management: W115: “Having to rely or exchange information with fellow staff members who are doubtful and less conversant with the issues”. W10: “I believe organisations should consider how strategy should be implemented, to make people feel and find out if they are comfortable working by or on such implementation initiatives”. W89: “It is very good to involve people so that we can share ideas on different views of people as we consider diversity as very important”.
Middle Management: W46: “Poorly, the only implementation comes from management who are not whole heartedly interested in the organisation, and ignore the input of workers who are well acquainted in the field”. W157: “Important organisational decisions such as down-sizing should be conducted in a sensitive manner and that such decisions should be communicated in time with those affected”. W159: “They are very slow when it comes to dealing with situations they only fix a problem when it is causing more harm to the business and by the time they consider strategy implementation it is too late”.

8.3.2 Theme 2: Balancing incompatible, varied and sometimes disorderly demands.

Top Management and Senior Management at 48% indicated that strategy implementation is aligned with organisational goals, with 25.6% represented by Middle Management indicating that it is aligned with the situation at the time. However, within the three levels of management, *organisational goals* and *situation at the time*, were found to be important for strategy implementation. The divergence between Top Management and Senior Management regarding alignment can be viewed from various perspectives.

Organisations with multiple stakeholders usually are confronted with challenges to balance the varied and sometimes disorderly requests. At the strategy formulation phase efforts would have been made to align strategy with organisational goals, taking into account the available and always limited resources only for the influential and major stakeholders to vary the implementation process by seeking to address completely out of plan situations. WUC like most organisations have to deal with frequent incompatible demands from a series of external actors such as governments, investors, labour and shareholders and to avert this situation, robust policies ought to be in place to guide decision makers.These numerous and frequent incompatible demands, disagreements on governance issues (Da Silva & Trkman, 2014), offensive organisational policies (Kaplan & Norton, 2008), result in drastic decisions undertaken affecting the law and policies, which ultimately thwart strategy implementation.

Stories shared through in-depth interviews buttress theme 2.

Top Management and Senior Management: W7: "There was need for training to better understand to align strategy to goals for operations". W 15: "Active financial stability and sustainability". W62: "Opened my mind in achieving goals". W126: "Following strategy development, my section was well prepared as individuals were aligned to the organisational scorecard".
Middle Management: W54: "The organisation has strategy in place but what seems to be the problem is the organisation itself, implementation". W119: "Numerous strategies were implemented and if things were done well, we could be very far when it comes to good service delivery". W121: "When employees (people) are participants they own the strategy, and work hard to make it successful".

8.3.3 Theme 3: Impairment in focus and timing.

Indicators affecting strategy implementation are *teamwork*, *bureaucracy* and *lack of focus*. These have been found to be more pronounced at 42.9% with stories shared by all the three levels of management, indicating that teamwork is key to implementation. Middle Management stories are more pronounced at 33.5 % at the apices *lack of focus* indicating an anomaly that has to be addressed. Some 11.8% of all three levels of management indicated that *bureaucracy* has influence on implementation. WUC have to develop focus in terms of what they want to achieve throughout their various strategic choices because lack of plan for planning, confusion over planning terms, strategy by numbers, too much detail too soon, and once-a-year ritual planning may frustrate strategy implementation (Chatain, 2014; Mc Donald & Westbal, 2011). Issues of poor preparation of line management, the faulty definition of strategic business units, and excessive focus on numbers could be indicators pointing to the organisational perception of lack of focus, which ought to be fully investigated within WUC (Chatain, 2014; Wang & Shaver, 2014). Another critical matter of concern that could be explored includes the general transition from strategy formulation and implementation with emphasis on the budgeting and allocation of resources to various projects undertaken to confirm prioritisation (Olson, Slater, Tomas & Hult, 2005). Challenges are experienced where organisational limited resources are dissipated and priorities are rarely clearly articulated, with little or no sense of prioritisation.

During the implementation process, critical changes might need to be made in order to align to the requirements both within the internal and external environment necessitating adjustments into the plans and thereby giving the process an increased life cycle. Timing the implementation process becomes vital in that; reflections have to be made on how we used to undertake the process (past experiences), which informs the present situation giving insights on how best to proceed into the future. Top Management and Senior Management shared stories that strategy implementation is a process which uses experiences and insights of the *past* to determine the *future*, deciding not to share *present* or *current* stories. Middle Management indicated that the *present* experiences and insights are seen as critical to enhance implementation success. However, the balanced or ideal sharing of stories could have been concentrated in the middle of the triads, which would recognise the importance of using *past* experiences and insights, exploiting the *present* condition and further forecasting and make plans into the *future*. Creating a strategy implementation environment for WUC needs a well-ingrained corporate culture within the organisation, as well as managerial education for managers (D'Aunno, 2005), and employees with professional education and training to enhance engagement and improve decision-making necessary for strategy implementation to thrive (Paton & Wagner, 2014; Sila, 2013).

Stories on impairment in focus and timing supported by findings from in-depth interviews.

Top Management and Senior Management: W1: "Change of goal posts along the way". W11: "Moving at a slow pace". W124: "Makes it more focused". W7: "Team work influenced the strategy implementation". W46: "Poorly, the only implementation comes from management who are not whole heartedly interested in

the organisation, and ignore the input of workers who are well acquainted in the field". WI: "Poor implementation timing". W54: "My feeling is that everybody should be involved right from the beginning and throughout the whole process so that we can have a sense of ownership".
Middle Management: W41: "It is very shady and never given the necessary attention as focus seems to be the problem". W149: I feel the implementation is ever changing and therefore a need for continuous re-focus. The objective seem to be more concerned about pleasing certain individuals instead of treating employees as a team". W126: "Generally, discussions on the strategy are infrequent spending too much time on operations". W15: "Customer satisfaction, performance and delivering of products and services is enhanced". W78: W126: "Involvement is key as it leads to buy-in; employees complain that consultation was not adequate. For example, considering restructuring, this was arrived at by swinging the strategy development session where management and board participated".

8.3.4 Theme 4: Required critical competencies, tactics underpinned by guidance and direction.

The question here sought to establish and confirm whether the key skills and ability to implement strategy depends more on *understanding business*, respondent's *professional learne*d skills or just *natural ability* or other indicators*.* Top Management and Senior Management indicated and emphasized the importance of *understanding business* during the implementation process with Middle Management confirming that *professional learned skills* and *natural ability* are similarly important. Effectively, Top Management and Senior Management contributed 69 stories (40.35%) clustered towards the apex *understanding business*, with Middle Management contributing 25 stories (14.62%) clustering towards the apex *professional learned skills,* with all the story tellers contributing 19 stories (11%) clustering towards the apex natural *ability*. Since all the three levels of Management have confirmed the importance of all the three indicators, it stands to reason that, ideally stories could have been shared in the middle of the triad to signify this. Critical skill indentified within the country's National Strategy include entrepreneurship, where the role of the national government would be to develop and enable the business environment (Nieman & Nieuwenhuizen, 2017). To ensure that critical competencies and tactics are utilised by WUC to enhance strategy implementation, issues which management need to deal with include, inappropriate corporate attitudes and behaviours. Implementation tactics could be explored by the WUC managers to respond to the needs and opportunities and, revitalize the organisation by setting in place planned changes that alter organisation's products, services, internal operations, and policies. Strategy implementation calls for creative skills, feedback mechanisms and, unique and sophisticated control, to enhance operations and better align these with business strategy which aspects WUC might explore to enhance its current status (Cocks, 2010). WUC could unravel the complexity of policy implementation to facilitate direct decision making authority and participation, improve and expedite communication, channels across the organisation and further ensure that the working conditions are condusive (Maclenna, 2011; Anderson & Vakulenko, 2014).

Focusing on the effectiveness of leadership, stories shared by Top Management and Senior Management indicated that leadership appeared *open minded* during the implementation process. Middle Management, however indicated that the leadership appeared *conservative* and this had the effect of distracting the implementation process. In essence, Top Management and Senior Management mostly contributed 81 stories (48.21%) clustered towards the apex *open minded*, with Middle Management mostly contributing 43 stories (25.60%) clustered towards the apex *conservative*, with all the story tellers collectively contributing 15 stories (8.93%) clustered between the apices *open minded* and *conservative*. In-depth interviews shed more light on the role leadership played during the process of strategy implementation. The role of WUC leadership is to ensure that there is clear and effective direction necessary to share the organisational strategy as well as facilitation of other processes including clarifying important issues relating to strategy formulation and implementation (Park & Jang, 2014). The WUC leadership should in charting the direction the organisation intends to take towards implementation, bear in mind that the leadership style used can have a significant effect on implementation elements such as the delegation of authority and decision-making. Frustration and emotional detachment towards the process of strategy implementation within WUC could result in the lack of direction and commitment to the strategy and the organisation (Singh, Cranage, & Lee, 2014) and thereby giving implementation a low priority, engaging in foot-dragging (Lantz & Hjort, 2013).

In-depth interview findings added another layer of new meaning to dyads and triads.

Top Management and Senior Management: W11: “Conversant, I trust my supervisees are not very fluent in English and mostly themes are in English”. W124: “The geographical spread of the operations of the corporation requires concerted effort and specialised skills of management”. W116: “Through determination and hard work, the water laboratory gained international accreditation”. W50: “Challenges include constant feedback top, bottom and celebrating achievement of goals and milestones”. W131: “Project supervision for successful completion is seriously lacking”. W62: “The new CEO encouraged employees throughout the organisation that we adopt and implement the strategic management system in place, even though it took time and there was some resistance the ball is now rolling”.
Middle Management: W15: “Attract develop and retain talent to ensure effective knowledge management to employees”. W10: “I feel they somehow leave those staff members who possess the skills and knowledge of what is being implemented”.W41: “Unfortunately, we are not empowered to participate in projects and therefore, how are we expected to gain experience”. W18: “There is lack of ownership and the organisation does not want to pay in order to attract competent and qualified personnel and the best”. W18: “It is still not well executed because the CEO and Top Management always present new strategy and none of all these ever and never get implemented”. W38: “We were only involved during cascading time after that, everything stopped maybe the problem is with management.

8.3.5 Theme 5: Managing human capital with diverse perspectives.

Normally people would want to be recognised for the work they do, failing which they would disengage due to demotivation. Appreciation is a fundamental human need, and once employees are recognised, their self-esteem, satisfaction and productivity increase. Top Management stories shared indicated that employees were not perceived as *objects*, but as *people*. Similarly, Senior Management also perceived employees as *people*, with Middle Management taking a different stand indicating that they were not necessarily perceived as people but rather as *objects*. There might have been numerous factors associated with this anomaly, some of which could be that normally not all employees participate in strategy formulation, even though a large number of them are required to execute it; lack of engagement in decision making, lack of support, and lack of ownership of the process has the potential to hinder progress. Engaged employees give their organisation a competitive edge with greater emphasis on the positive relationship between engaged and recognised employees. WUC would have to note that the achievement of goals is motivated by Middle Managers, who constitute an engagement link between the organisation and employees. The focal point they occupy as an important resource in mobilizing and engaging employees is very critical to the achievement of goals and employee engagement. The important reasons put forward for enhancing organisational performance find their roots in strategy implementation non-success due to insufficient resources, particularly the required skills and knowledge from the 'human capital' (Nienaber & Martins, 2016).

At the same time, Top Management stories confirmed that, differences on how to implement strategy were *emphasized*, with Senior Management also concurring with their view. Possibly, there could be strategies in place to ensure that *diversity* is encouraged in the workplace and therefore during the process of implementation, employees were afforded the latitude to deal with issues as they saw fit and therefore had control on how best they managed their work. Middle Management's stories shared indicated that differences on how to implement strategy were *ignored completely*. There could be several reasons for this variation, either that the implementation process itself was not properly communicated, autonomy and independence to execute the process were centralised, employees were not granted "ownership" of the projects. In accommodating diverse perspectives, effectiveness of the strategy implementation within WUC is at least in part affected by the quality of people involved in the process. Quality in this respect refers to aptitudes, attitudes, skills, capabilities, experiences and the various characteristics which are required from people to perform a specific task or job in a certain position (Peng & Litteljohn, 2001). It is therefore important for WUC to emphasize the need for diversity within its workforce, which effectively means that any organisation requires people with varied experiences, exposure and competences necessary to undertake the process of strategy implementation. The most important goal that WUC could achieve is the utilisation of the talents of all employees, with employees in the periphery incorporated as part of the mainstream, thus recognizing the value of diversity (Loden & Rosener, 1991; Rocha, 2005).

In-depth interviews contributed more narratives which assisted in addressing the human capital question.

Top Management and Senior Management: W10: "I believe organisations should consider how that has been implemented, make people feel and find out if they are comfortable working by or on such implementation initiatives". W46: "Very little unity was achieved, the staff were a very vital part in the functioning of the organisation but were not treated with, as much respect as they should have been". W171: "Management was interacting perfectly only other supervisors told the staff to come back to their normal duties". W I: "Proper explanation of the intended outcome of the project in an open discussion form". W10: "Often times it is just delivered and not allowing those who are instructed to voice their opinions".
Middle Management: W72: "Cannot say such because juniors are never involved". W46: "Very little interaction between the staff were just delegated duties to do". W64: "The management at head office do not interact with staff". W76: "People feel very happy and very important". W10: "Often times it is just delivered and not allowing those who are instructed to voice their opinions". W151: "I help a lot because more people will bring their ideas which may be of great importance to the organisation". W151: "It was welcomed and everyone showed interest on offering and having a helping hand in the implementation process".

8.4 LIABILITY OF PERCEIVED INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT (LOPIS).

The *liability of perceived institutional support* may be defined as the hindrances, inabilities, uncertainty and the unavailability of resources (economic, financial, expertise, information resources, authority and legitimacy, strategic position and organisational capacity) and any other required support geared towards ensuring that the various activities necessary to achieve strategy implementation are available.

8.4.1 Theme 1: Responsibility clarity, information sharing and its availability.

In understanding the story regarding who the responsibility of strategy implementation belongs to, most stories were shared towards the apex *everyone,* and these were contributed by Top Management and Senior Management, with those clustered towards the apex *management* contributed by Middle Management. The perception by Top Management and Senior Management is that the *responsibility* for strategy implementation lies squarely with *everyone* in the organisation. Some 31 stories (18%) have been shared between the two apices of *everyone* and *management*, which means that some respondents within the three categories above, shared similar stories that the responsibility for strategy implementation is both the work for *everyone* and *management*. This might be true as they might have seen the process of implementation unfolding overtime. To better clarify, simplify and address the issue of responsibility of either strategy formulation or implementation, praxis could be explored to provide guidance. These are socially accomplished flows of activity that strategically are consequential for the direction and survival of the WUC (Jarzabkowski et al., 2007; 2005). Strategy praxis could enhance the intra-organisational work required for strategy crafting and implementation (Whittington, 2006), where the bulk of the implementation work, would take place in a more or less extended episodes or sequences of episodes (Hendry & Seidl, 2003) and the episodes would come in many forms such as board meetings, management retreats, consulting interventions, team briefings, presentations and simple talk (Mezias et al., 2001; Westley, 1990). The WUC organisational structure constitutes the chain of command for the detailed responsibilities and decision-making levels in the organisation, thus has a great influence on the process of strategy implementation as well as articulating the jobs and duties which have to be undertaken (Chatain, 2014; Wang & Shaver, 2014). An inappropriate organisational structure may cause frustration because of the disconnection experienced between the lower and functional levels within the organisation (Friesl & Silberzahn, 2012; Martin & To, 2013.

Similarly, Top Management responses indicated that information sharing was *sufficient*, Senior Management indicating that generally it was way *too much*. Too much information during this process could lead to information overload and subsequent confusion as directives and information memos might not even be understood. Excessive and irrelevant information might delay evaluation and processing of decisions necessary to enhance implementation capabilities. Employees might have challenges in understanding issues, when dealing with more information than they are able to process and make sensible decisions and might even make wrong decisions. This calls for organisational leadership to create information sources, which are simplified, filtered to make them shorter, written clearly, and focusing on quality information relevant to enhance strategy implementation. Middle Management stories were skewed towards being *more* and *being too little* indicating that *inadequate information* was available to effectively execute the implementation processes. This has the effect of frustrating employees as they would not be empowered to take decisions and this might be an indicator that information sharing across the WUC could be a challenge and therefore a "grey area" that could have to been investigated and addressed. Too much information during this process could lead to information overload and subsequent confusion as directives and information memos might not even be understood. Excessive and irrelevant information might delay evaluation and processing of decisions necessary to enhance implementation capabilities. Employees might have challenges in understanding issues, when dealing with more information than they are able to process and and this may deter them from making the right and sensible decisions. This calls for organisational leadership to create information sources, which are simplified, filtered to make them shorter, written clearly, and focused on quality information relevant to enhance strategy implementation. This implies that WUC might have to acknowledge that, organisational information, its availability and communication plays an important role in training, knowledge dissemination and learning during the process of strategy implementation and the absence of all these is an ingredient for disaster. This is buttressed by findings that information availability and communication barriers are reported more frequently than other types of barrier such as: organisational structure barriers, learning barriers, personnel management barriers or cultural barriers (Heide et al., 2002; Alexander, 1985; Rapert & Wren, 1998; Peng & Litteljohn, 2001). The WUC leadership's ability to share knowledge and information, communicate, adapt to change, and create the necessary culture to support the strategy, remains key to effective strategy implementation.

In-depth interviews which were shared by Top Management, Senior Management and Middle Management shared some insights into this question in that the extent of excess or absence of information is substantiated

Excerpts from in-depth interviews enriched the dyads and triads.

Top Management and Senior Management: W1: “Implementation needs to be owned first by those on the level to enable easy of cascading”. W 145: **“**Ownership and accountability should be everyone’s’ business for the success of implementation”. W121: “It is not fairly communicated across the whole organisation. W136: “There is a gap in the implementation, continuous monitoring and evaluation lacking”. W2: “Sufficient information is being shared between the parties involved. W11: “Through briefing, videos and colourful stickers and placards”. W 11: “Emails and circulars, yes always sharing”. W 8: “Memos, emails”. W115: “Yes, effective communication enhanced even by provision of cell phone gadgets”. W 141: “Meetings in different localities and internal staff workshop”. W 141: “Information flow to lower levels is not always smooth”.
Middle Management include: W18: **“**It is poor and haphazard there is no ownership from lower level employees.” W125: **“**Not all employees were carried on board. There is lack of communication”. W134: **“**Strategy implementation seem to be a concern to management and the rest of the organisation is left behind which makes it difficult to buy in and drive the strategy”. It is not fairly communicated across the whole organisation. W33:” Not much education is done”. W83: “A lot of us in the organisation need to be educated on strategy and what it means for them and the organisation because currently the perception is that strategy is for a certain group of people in the organisation”.

8.4.2 Theme 2: Resource allocation, protocol and compliance.

The perceived level of allocation of resources during implementation were signified as *insufficient*, *abundant* and *skewed in distribution.* The three levels of management responded differently to the statement regarding the allocation of resources within WUC. Middle Management indicated that the allocation of resources had been *insufficien*t at 52.9%, with Top Management and Senior Management collectively agreeing that the allocation was *abundant* at 39.5%, with at least 4.5% of all the three levels of management agreeing that it is *sufficient.* However, Middle Management indicated in their story that the allocation of resources in the implementation process was generally *insufficient.* Information on the resources capacity and the actual resources at the disposal of the organisation should be a subject of discussion when employees are engaged to execute strategy assignments to enable them to have meaningful participation, to appreciate the amount of resources at their disposal so that they can fully be responsible for their actions, in order to "own" the projects (Aalbers & Dolfsmaa, 2014; Wu, Gide, & Jewell, 2014). It is not crystal clear if the allocation of resources within the WUC is insufficient since figures were not extrapolated to prove otherwise however, such issues should not be taken for granted. It is generally agreed that skewed, unavailable, or insufficient allocation of resources happen to be an impediment to successful strategy implementation especially when resources may once in a while be disorderly diverted to cater for other functions (Garcia, et al., 2014; Blumentritt, 2006); classical remnants of poor project management practices (Curty & Zhang, 2013). Existing difficulties within the WUC related to resources, which may hamper strategy implementation, must be fully explored to avoid 'management denial' which may be defined as the failure to acknowledge the existence of challenges facing the organisation in respect of any other difficulty including resource allocation (Hathroubi, Peypoch & Robinot, 2014; Backer & Barry, 2013).

Concerning issues of 'protocol and compliance' Top Management and Senior Management indicated that they considered the implementation rules, processes being *flexible* at 43.7%, with Middle Management indicating that they were *undefined and uncertain* with 26%, also shared stories at the apex at 11.6% confirming that they were somehow *heavy handed*. Many possibilities exist to explain the stories shared by Middle Management. The statement sought to confirm the 'lived' experiences of the respondents, in terms of how they viewed implementation *rules*, *processes* and *procedures*. WUC policies constitute controls to decisions which define some discretion through which employees carry out their business endeavours, entailing indirect control over actions requiring independence of action and spelling out how things should be done (Pearce & Robinson, 2013). In assessing the regulatory systems of compliance worldwide and even within WUC, these are analysed by the tools which are deployed, which constitute the legal, economic, social, political, environmental aspects, and the whom deploying them, be it government, the market, the community or other stakeholders (Baldwin & Cave, 1999; Cater & Pucko, 2010). It is easy to assume that a full array of tools is always available at WUC and that the given toolkit or set of rules is appropriate on a continuing basis (Baldwin and Black, 2008; Jain & Singal, 2014; Papagiannidis & Westlan, 2014). The challenge posed regarding the WUC rules and tools for regulation in an attempt to comply, emanates from the principal (Government) regarding policy, which can always be amended as and when conditions arise including legislation which has to be complied with. Effecting changes within the WUC strategy process is of critical importance as conditions might have changed necessitating such; failure to take action might lead to non-success (Aurik, Fabel & Jonk, 2015).

In-depth interviews sharing issues on resource allocation, protocol and compliance

Top Management and Senior Management: W8: “Strategy is available but very limited resources have been committed”. W11: “I do not think the strategy project was a success due to financial constraints”. W 141: “Lack of funding for effective implementation of the strategy”. W137: "One challenge pertains to resource constraints and the strategy is sometimes shelved and focus is on business as usual. W30: “Workshops are run for staff, address to customers and the general public. There is little strategic communication, just operational or tactical staff”. W112: “Strategy implementation is reflected in the scorecard, which is to be reviewed monthly”. W131: “There are communication tools in place”. W141: “Balance score card and quality management system at DWA”.
Middle Management: W8: “Strategy is available but very limited resources have been committed”. W124: “Resource allocation is a challenge”. W 30: “Resource shortages”. W100: “Slow to act probably due to financial constraints”. W 38: “The already limited resources are at times diverted to other issues which are not core to the business.” W35: “The organisation has to find ways to augment the available meagre resources through other sources. W142: “The roles are not clear and not

communicated extensively to the masses". W138: "My experience was with the implementation of prepaid water metering systems strategy for the disadvantaged members of the public in 2013-2014 where procedures and processes were rather inconsistent and confusing".

8.4.3 Theme 3: Nurturing and embracing the spirit of selflessness.

Stories shared by the three levels of management seem scattered towards the three apices and the middle of the triad, and this may be an indication of diversity in stories. Middle Management stories concentrated at 26.3% towards the *customer* apex indicating that customers benefit from the implementation process, whilst Top Management and Senior Management indications are that *shareholders* seem to be the preferred candidates to benefit from implementation at 37.7%. Mixed stories contributed by all the three levels of management were realised at the centre of the triad with 14.2%, indicating that the *customer, shareholders* and *employees* stand to benefit in the process of implementation. Employees' perceptions differ in terms of how they view their contribution to their organisations and this is underpinned by the understanding of their roles.

Many employees are unaware of the vital roles they play in contributing to the achievement of their organisational goals and objectives, neither do they appreciate the role played by other stakeholders within their business such as shareholders and customers and the collective roles each have to play to enhance the prospects of implementation success. There are three interested parties who have a stake in this corporation: Botswana Government as the major shareholder, Water Utilities as an agency tasked with the reticulation of water and wastewater, and the Public (citizens) as consumers of the corporation services. In delivering its mandate, the expectation is that the corporation has to ensure that every party is satisfied with the delivery of its products and services to ensure that the purpose its existence is to offer products and services to customers, as well as create employment and wealth (Goldman, Nienaber & Pretorius, 2015). Organisational engagement within the WUC could be enhanced through the development of what is usually referred to as 'high-involvement management' and each partnership sector to show the spirit of selflessness as in subjecting individual interest and putting the organisation interest first. The understanding being that employees will increase their involvement with the organisation when they are regarded as partners, and when given the chance to understand and manage their work roles. Middle Managers as internal stakeholders play a role during the process of employee engagement when there are disagreements on sub-goals with Top Management, especially where the former might not be aware of confidential information shared with the major stakeholder regarding certain action needed to address an emergent political question (Chang & Wu, 2014).

Stories contributed by Top Management and Senior Management from in-depth interviews enriched both the triad and dyad data.

Top Management and Senior Management: W8: "Strategy implementation within WUC is influenced by the objectives government intends to achieve". W50: "Communication between the various departments and the general public seem to be lacking". W62: "Strategy implementation at my organisation has been a great experience since it has opened, minds of both staff and management and the organisation serve customer best and most goals are met in time".
Middle Management: W166: "I judge strategy as a cost benefit process to the organisation as it brought efficiency". W64: "It is important because we must work as a team and we at the bottom are the ones who know the operations and interact with stakeholders and customers on daily basis". W64: "The management is quick to blame us at the lower levels. They will not want to consider our views on issue we consider important but rather will be quick to respond, without even considering contributions from stakeholders or customers".

8.4.4 Theme 4: Implementation landscape and process systemisation.

Top Management contention is that external factors affecting implementation seem *predictable* - predictability and stability with outside factors affecting implementation, indicating the no opportunity for complacency and therefore no "red flags" are necessary as everything seem to be under control. Senior Management's response was similar to Top Management as they indicated that external factors affecting implementation seem *predictable.* This consensus could be an indication that, they are aware of strategies in place within the organisation to mitigate against any uncertainties. Middle Management stories seem to indicate that they are not content with outside factors affecting implementation and therefore consider them *most unpredictable-* reveals an excess of unpredictable and chaotic external factors, so much excessive and dangerous in proportions. To address this seemingly contradictory situation, either Middle Management lack the knowledge and information privy to both Top Management and Senior Management by virtue of their seniority or that action needs to be taken to address this anomaly. In addressing challenges of unpredictable environment factors, WUC could rely on the institutional theory perspectives, and appreciate that any strategic choice an organisation intends to undertake is limited by a variety of both internal and external environmental pressures, with the understanding that these pressures are collective and interconnected, requiring that it must accordingly respond to given external demands and expectations for it to survive. These pressures within the environment constitute hindrances, obstructions and obstacles for the WUC to effectively implement their objectives more importantly in the absence of the necessary institutional support. Continual revision of decisions made is necessary to accommodate new changes in the environment, because most strategies fail because the market conditions they were intended to exploit change before the strategy is fully implemented (Downes, 2001).

Top Management and Senior Management stories shared, indicate that the prospects and the understanding of implementation into the future entail *imagining existing possibilities,* whilst Middle Management indicated that *strengthening systems* should be the route the organisation has to follow. The differences in thinking could be attributed to the levels of job roles and responsibilities, as it is accepted that the role of Top Management and Senior Management entails the management of strategy hence their varied perception into the future by *imagining possibilities*, whilst Middle Management roles are operational in nature, hence inwardly looking into strengthening systems. The ideal scenario could have been in the apex and middle indicator *imagining existing possibilities and strengthening systems* where most stories ought to have been shared to signify the importance and relevance of “peeping” into the future to see which opportunities could be exploited and simultaneously strengthening the systems already in place. It would not be advisable to retain the *status quo*, except to use story telling and re-telling to reinforce the implementation process. It is prudent for WUC to start encouraging curiosity, experimenting, prudent risk-taking, and to appreciate the joy and excitement of taking on new challenges facing the organisation (Amit & Schoemaker, 1993). Proactive and agile management at the face-off of strategy implementation is required, accompanied by institutionalized controls and systems removed from beneficial processes of strategy implementation (Chatain, 2014); Miyashita, 2014) with objective self-assessment, sufficient action dealing, and effective participation across functions (Wang & Chang, 2013). It is critical that the WUC embarks on the process of revising its strategy choices through strong top and line management support, with a convergence in the operational and the strategic planning (Mc Donald & Westphal, 2011), the view being to enhance it's administrative and control systems.

Contributions by Top Management, Senior Management and Middle Management seemed to tally with information obtained from dyads and triads.

Top Management and Senior Management: W172: "Increase in tariffs- so many complaints from customers because of the bill brought by change in tariffs". W 18: "Financial pressure to undertake projects coming as emergencies as directed by the shareholder". W162: "Political interference where representatives of various political parties would want to be given preference when programmes are undertaken." WI: "360 degrees could be method used if employee assessment has to be the best and honest ratings. Currently have none". W138: "Middle managers and line managers were less keen in participating in this implementation exercise. It proved difficult for them to learn new systems that were a major problem". W138: "This is a water utility parastatal- the responsiveness to general business situations is very low due to the size of the organisation".
Middle Management: W15: "Development of infrastructure and improving efficiency". W134: "As the organisation is providing essential service, business situations are understood well and the challenges coming with them are dealt with accordingly though they are sometimes beyond the organisations control". W136: "The challenges which face the organisation mostly are political which deter the organisation from implementing the strategy and most of the time will be spent on overcoming the anticipated challenges because of pressure from the public". W18: "If people own the strategy, the company grows, e.g. apple, Facebook, Google etc."

W38: “The management consults the staff during cascading. There are no follow ups or updates of progress”.

8.4.5 Theme 5: Esprit de corps.

WUC employees reacted, by sharing their experiences and stories on the concept of *esprit de corps*- a feeling of pride and mutual loyalty shared by members within the organisation, what they think the future should be regarding the process of strategy implementation. Whether employees should be concerned if the various processes plans and requirements necessary to attain successful implementation are accordingly discussed and effected within the implementation process. Top Management stories indicated that they were *concerne*d when the strategy implementation process was not proceeding according to set out plans. Senior Management stories in overall showed that they were *more concerned* if the plan set for the strategy choices were not addressed, with Middle Management showing a very *high level of concern*. All these may be taken to be bothering on what might be called organisational allegiance-employees commitment and loyalty to the cause the organisation is pursuing.

An element that might play an important role in the success of WUC strategy implementation and which is usually neglected is ‘esprit de corps’. There is constant concern and worry by the story-tellers that the WUC lacks this aspect of strong shared team spirit, mutual solidarity and fellowship, as well as sense of duty and devotion to a cause among members of a group (Fayol, 1917). The concern of lack of empowerment raised through in-depth interviews could be addressed, as long as the WUC considers itself as a team and members consider themselves as members of the team, which results in members engaging and developing a feeling of belonging among them, and they each contribute to the achievement of organisational goals. This sense of togetherness assists employees to perform with greater efficiency and display positive attributes embodying a sense of commitment towards the work of strategy implementation (Hodge, 2002). There are numerous issues affecting Middle Management that have the potential to motivate or demotivate employees in executing their work to achieve success in organisational goals (Shantz & Alfes, 2012). It is therefore critical that Middle Management is aware of treatment accorded to employees, specifically with respect to fairness, providing independence to employees, and clarifying expectations (Nienaber & Martins, 2016).

In-depth interviews shared by Top Management, Senior Management and Middle Management went a long way in trying to bring clarity to the research question.

Top Management and Senior Management: W145: “Audit reports enacting findings and recommendations of how efficiently to improve, and how internal processes are not fully adhered to.” W46: “I was allowed to bring forth ideas but nothing came of it even though they were good ideas. There was lack of will to follow through, I ended up being demoralized”. W152: “It is very crucial to involve people because after all the strategy being implemented is for their benefit. As south is far from north so is the people and those implementing the strategy?”
Middle Management: W13:” At my workplace strategy implementation is still in progress, it is moving at snail pace because of the numerous reasons experienced in the organisation”. W38: “The management consults the staff during cascading. There are no follow ups or updates of progress”. W41: “Not applicable as we are not empowered to participate in projects and therefore, how are we expected to gain experience”. W46: “Some management would get upset when we started looking for employment elsewhere”.

8.5 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

Three main sets of liabilities were identified namely: The Liability of Engagement (LOE), Liability of Decision-Making Autonomy (LODMA), and the Liability of Perceived Institutional Support (LOPIS).

The liability of engagement, places emphasis on the importance of recognizing the role strategy implementers’ play in the workplace to enable the organisation to achieve its intended goals and objectives. It constitutes hindrances and inabilities encountered within the strategy implementation process when management and employees, specifically middle management, fail to collaborate and converge their concerted efforts towards the achievement of their organisational goals and objectives.

The liability of decision-making autonomy relates to hindrances encountered in organisations when the decision-making process seems to be skewed towards some priviledged organisational members, units, or departments consequently rendering strategy implementation unsuccessful. This liability is considered to be dealing with 'soft issues' such as strategy choices necessary to support the implementation process as it progresses, with the potential to hinder and impair strategy success if absent.

The liability of perceived institutional support may be defined as the uncertainty and the unavailability of resources (normally financial and human) and any other required support geared towards ensuring that the various activities necessary to achieve implementation are available. The liability of perceived institutional support constitutes hindrances, inabilities, and failure of management to recognize human resources or to allocate material resources to attain economic rents and these are experienced at strategy implementation where concerted organisational efforts have not been successful.

These identified three sets of liabilities are collectively referred to as strategy implementation liabilities (SILs) as depicted in Figure 8.10. The liability indicators are classified into mediators and moderators to depict their impact on the liabilities showing their potential to thwart strategy implementation.

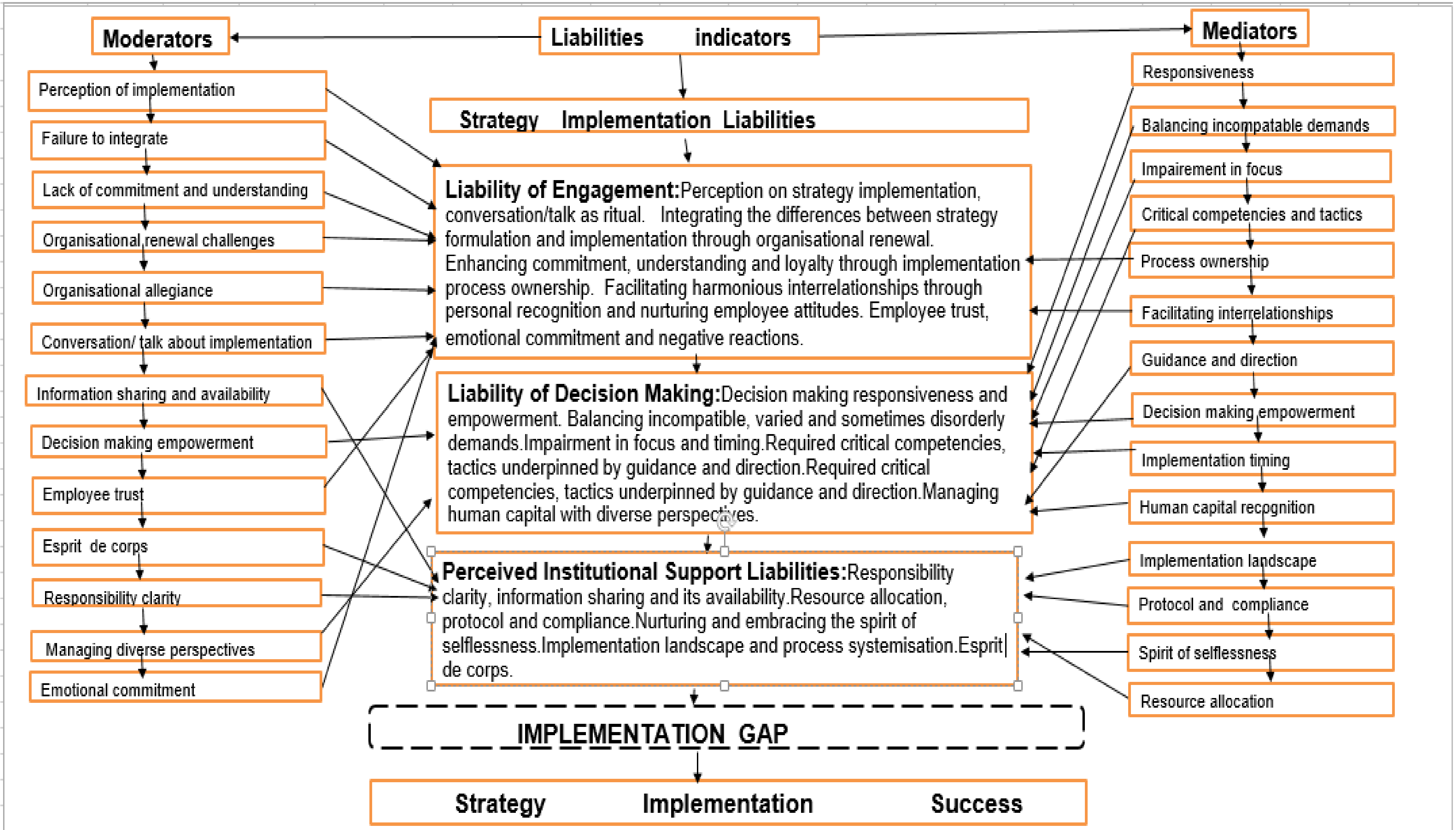


Figure 8.10 : Proposed Strategy Implementation Liabilities Framework (SILS) **Source:** Own Compilation

CHAPTER 9: RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS

9.1 INTRODUCTION

It has been shown that a plethora of studies have been undertaken in strategy implementation within the field of strategic management, where theories including the ‘agency theory’, ‘organisational theory’, ‘social system theory’, ‘social learning theory’, and ‘expectancy theory’ were explored. This clearly indicates that strategy implementation continues to pose a serious hurdle for organisations seeking to implement their strategy choices. From time in memorial, poor implementation has remained a matter of grave concern in organisations (Li, 2008; Chimhanzi, 2004). Early writers (e.g. Barksdale & Darden, 1971; Felton, 1959; Churchman, 1975), label it ‘the implementation problem’. The various frameworks, models, analytical tools and techniques, methodologies and, evaluation and measurement instruments developed have not been successful in addressing this problem. Organisations, business people, consultants, and academics in research have only been concerned with success factors and disregarded the negative factors that could shed some light into implementation success. This study thus sought to gain some new insights into the ‘negative factors’, ‘influences’, ‘destructive holdings’, and ‘processes’ encountered at implementation and known as ‘liabilities’, by identifying, describing and developing a Strategy Implementation Liabilities Framework (Figure 8.10) since it may enable us to determine why organisations experience non-success or low levels of achievement in strategy implementation.

Chapter 1 covered the ‘Introduction and the Research Design’, providing the background to the research, the definition of contructs, an articulation of research problem, and the statement of purpose of the study, as well as the presentation of the primary and secondary research objective. The research design explained the sample selection and population, and the importance and benefits of the study. Chapter 2 explored the ‘Strategy Implementation’ concept; gave an introduction to the field of Strategic Management, while defining the concepts of ‘strategy and strategy implementation' and discussing divergent approaches and contribution to strategy implementation. In Chapter 3, the 'Liabilities Theory' was introduced, and the concept 'liability' defined and, the various types of liabilities within the theory as captured by various research streams (1960's, 1970's, 1980's, 1990's and 2000's) were highlighted. Chapter 4 shared some insights into the 'Strategy-As-Practice' (s-a-p), revealing the historical perspective, strategy praxis, practices, and practitioners and further acknowledging the divergent approaches to strategy, how it has evolved and how strategy implementation can be linked to other concepts within the strategic management field.

Chapter 5 discussed the 'Moderating and Mediating factors as Concepts', defined the concepts and considered the nature, relevance of moderators and mediators, and their potential to influence strategy implementation. Chapter 6 addressed the 'Research Design and Methodology' of this study including the research design and tactics. The notion of 'peeling off the research onion' was explained for how it assists in articulating a well thought out methodology that includes: the research philosophy and philosophical stance, research approach, research strategy especially combining case study and in-depth interview methods, reseach choice, and research time horizon. Research methodology was discussed with the research problem and objectives revisited. A description of the hypothesis, design and development of the in-depth interview questions, techniques and procedures for data collection and analysis was provided; also indicating how reliability and validity would be established in the research.

Chapter 7 presents the findings of this study, exploring the narratives collected from the in-depth interviews and the survey questionnaire out of which responses were mapped onto triads and dyads. The stories collected by means of the procedures mentioned here facilitated the identification of the Strategy Implementation Liabilities experienced by WUC at strategy implementation. In the Chapter 8 of discussion, set of three liabilities emerged: 'Liability of Engagement', 'Liability of Decision-Making Autonomy', and 'Liability of Perceived Institutional Support'. These liabilities constitute inability, hindrances and failure which management has to contend with in the journey of implementing their strategy choices.

9.2 OVERVIEW OF THE LITERATURE STUDY

This research study provided a spring board for future empirical studies and exploration on strategy implementation using new theories and approaches in the quest to find solutions to strategy implementation. The literature on strategy implementation highlighted that, despite numerous frameworks and theories developed trying to address non implementation, more emphasis has been placed on the positive factors contributing to sustained performance (Powell, 2001; West and De Castro, 2001), completely ignoring those negative factors (liabilities) that detract firms from optimal performance (Arend, 2004). Liabilities are those ‘negative influences’ or ‘negative factors’ (items and means) an organisation has access to, regardless of whether they contribute or detract organisational performance to generate economic rents. The ‘Strategy Implementation Liabilities Framework’ – SILs (see Appendix H) would serve as a springboard, platform and measurement to launch studies into various fields and not only strategic management.

9.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES REVISITED

The primary and secondary research objectives of the study are revisited and discussed below:

9.3.1 Primary research objective

The primary research objective of this study was to ‘Identify’ liabilities experienced at implementation and ‘describe’ how the liabilities approach and its insight(s) could address the strategy implementation gap.

Three SILs were identified from the literature review and from the analysis of triad, dyad, and in-depth interview narratives contributed by the Top Management, Senior, and Middle Management at WUC to satisfy the primary research objective. The liabilities approach described in Chapter 3 detailed, described and explained the various stages through which research was undertaken, within the field, up to the recent trends. Insights on how to avert, remove or mitigate liabilities from beneficial processes of WUC to achieve success in strategy implementation have been shared.

9.3.2 Secondary research objectives

The secondary research objectives of this study were to: Identify and describe 'negative influencers', 'destructive holdings', and 'processes' labelled as 'Strategy Implementation Liabilities' (SILs) and encountered at strategy implementation, causing the implementation gap; to clearly understand how these, affect strategy implementation and propose a theoretical framework for the management of SILs.

Three broad sets of liability indicators were elaborately described, and their applicability to the WUC organisational setting unveiled to provide insight to address the strategy implementation hindrances and inabilities. A total of 172 WUC respondents contributed stories, which provided some insights into 'grey' areas needing attention within the WUC. The liability indicators' potential to affect and distract organisational efforts to attain economic rent and to enhance strategy implementation has been adequately addressed, with recommendations on how to contend with them or to mitigate their strength addressed. Collectively this set of three liabilities is referred to as 'Strategy Implementation Liabilities'.

9.4 CONCLUSIONS

9.4.1 Summary of main conclusions

Chapter 1 outlined the 'Introduction of the research and the Research Design', and the introductory definitions of research constructs of strategy, strategy implementation, strategic management, liabilities, and strategy implementation liabilities (SILs). These facilitated the build up to the research problem: 'How to address the strategy implementation gap with a liabilities approach?' with the purpose of the study being to 'Identify, describe and explain how the liabilities approach and its insight(s) could address the implementation gap. Research question- *How can the liabilities approach and insights gained enhance strategy implementation?*. The research design enabled the identification of the sample selection and population at WUC comprising: 30 Top Management, 74 Senior Management, and 68 Middle Management participants for the study. The importance and benefits of the study was also explained as to demonstrate how 'processes of strategy formulation and implementation could be better enhanced through the understanding of the strategy implementation liabilities which are complex phenomena’. Chapter 2, detailed the definitions of the ‘Strategy Implementation’, ‘Strategic Management’, and ‘liabilities’ concepts. Divergent approaches and contribution to strategy implementation into three broad categories of organisational level, organisational type and implementation were considered. In Chapter 3, broad literature on the ‘Liabilities Theory’ covering the various research streams of the 1960’s, 1970’s, 1980’s, 1990’s and 2000’s were explored. Chapter 4 reviewed ‘Strategy-As-Practice’ (s-a-p), with more emphasis on, ‘strategy praxis’, ‘practices’ and ‘practitioners’, indicating its link and how it could be adopted in strategy implementation to address the implementation gap.

In Chapter 5, the SILs Framework was built using the liability indicators of ‘moderators’ and ‘mediators’, taking cognisance of their potential to influence strategy implementation. In Chapter 6, the ‘Research Design’ and ‘Methodology’ were enhanced through the ‘peeling the research onion’ tactic, which ensured that aspects of ‘research philosophy and philosophical stance’, ‘research approach’, ‘research strategies combining case study and in-depth interview methods’, ‘reseach choice’ and ‘research time horizon’ were all incorporated in the methodology. The main conclusions of Chapter 7 included the research findings of the study, which used triads, dyads, and narratives for analysis of collected data. Chapter 8, discussions enabled a better understanding and the gaining of new insights on ‘negative factors’, ‘influences’, ‘destructive holdings’, and ‘processes’ all known as liabilities encountered at implementation. These are summarily the ‘Liability of Engagement’, ‘Liability of Decision-Making Autonomy’, and ‘Liability of Perceived Institutional Support’. These are collectively referred to as Strategy Implementation Liabilities (SILs).

9.4.2 Reflecting on internal validity and reliability

This study was rigorously conducted, and new insights on strategy implementation were revealed using the ‘Liabilities Theory’ as the lens of the study. Conclusions have been well thought out to ‘ring true’ to other researchers, practitioners and readers (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011; Merrian & Tisdell, 2015) as they reflected on the important aspects of the research, confirming that they have been achieved. Included are ; the research problem, purpose of the study, research objectives, the research design and the benefits and importance of the study.

This qualitative study had sufficient detail to show that, procedures were followed faithfully, with WUC respondents ‘acting in events’ structured for the study (Firestone, 1987), and the criteria applied to assess the trustworthiness of the study (Creswell, 2015). The primary rationale of this qualitative study was to ‘better understand’, how the implementation gap could be addressed, and therefore the criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of the study are different from when ‘testing a hypothesis in a study or for discovery of a law’. The authenticity and trustworthiness of this study was based on questions congruent with the philosophical assumptions underlying the strategy implementation and the liabilities perspective (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015b).

In addressing the important issues of ‘internal validity’ and ‘reliability’ in this research, criteria, guidelines, and insights were drawn from (Tracy, 2013; Merrian &Tisdell, 2015b; Patton, 2015; and Maxwell, 2013). Internal validity constitutes the extent to which research findings are credible, which is addressed by using triangulation, checking intepretations of individuals interviewed or observed, staying on site over a period of time, asking peers to comment on emerging findings, and clarifying research biases and assumptions. Reliability on the other hand is the extent to which there is consistency in the findings, which is enhanced by the investigator explaining the assumptions and theory underlying the study, by triangulating data, and by leaving an audit trail - by describing in detail how the study was conducted and how the findings were derived from the data. Rich, thick descriptions facilitate transferability of results (Merrian &Tisdell, 2015b: 243).

The use of triangulation enabled this research to employ more than one data collection method and theoretical views: a) in-depth interviews, observations, and documents and all yielded multiple data sources allowing for comparing and cross-checking data collected at different times and places where the WUC branches are; b) multiple theories (strategy-as-practice and liabilities theory), and this represents a powerful strategy for increasing internal validity for this study (Patton, 2015).

Tracy’s (2013) ‘big-tent’ criteria for conducting ‘excellent’ qualitative research resonates well with this research study: a) The research was on a worthy topic – ‘Addressing the strategy implementation gap with liabilities approach’, b) rich rigor - triangulation, multiple theories, and varied methods of data analyses c) sincerity -

methods used were transparent, d) credibility - that the research resonates with a variety of audiences, e) makes a significant contribution to the field of strategic management, specifically in strategy implementation, f) paid attention to ethical considerations, and finally, e) the study has meaningful coherence - meaningfully interconnects literature search, questions, findings, and interpretations.

Merriam's & Tisdell's (2015b) eight strategies for promoting internal validity and reliability was used to mirror activities undertaken in this research.

- Triangulation - use of more than one data collection method, multiple data sources, and multiple investigations;
- Member Checks/Respondent Validation – feedback was solicited on the preliminary and emerging findings from the respondents interviewed. This was necessary to ensure that there was no possibility to misinterpret the meaning respondents say and do, or their perspectives on what is going on in the organisation, and this enabled the identification of my own biases and misunderstanding of what was observed (Maxwell, 2013: 126-127);
- Adequate engagement in data collection - was found helpful in getting as close as possible to the respondents for them to understand the strategy implementation phenomenon under consideration;
- Researcher's position – this entailed critical reflection on assumptions, worldview, biases, theoretical orientation, and relationship to the study;
- Peer Review/Examination – discussions were initiated with senior colleagues regarding the process of study, the congruence of emerging findings with the raw data, and tentative intepretations, with a detailed account of the methods, procedures, and decision points in carrying out the study;
- Audit Trail – information on which future reference may be made on.
- Rich, thick descriptions – provided sufficient descriptions to contextualize the study such that readers will be able to determine the extent to which their situations match the research context and whether findings could be transferred.
- External validity in this study, the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations was found important. Can this study be generalizable?

As a qualitative research, a single case study on the WUC or a small non-probability, purposeful sample of 172 respondents selected precisely because this research wished to understand the particular depth on addressing the strategy implementation gap, not to find out what is generally true of many (Merrian & Tisdell, 2015). According to Lincoln & Guba (1985), the burden of proof lies less with the original investigator than the person seeking to apply the notion of transferability, as the investigator has provided 'sufficient descriptive data' in order to make transferability possible. The controversy is that "every study, every case, every situation is theoretically an example of something else. The general lies in the particular, that is, what we learn in a particular situation we can transfer or generalise to similar situations subsequently encountered" (Merrian & Tisdell, 2015: 255).

Lastly, the trustworthiness of this qualitative study also depends on the researcher, who was conscious of the ethical issues that pervade the research process and in the process examined his philosophical orientation vis-à-vis guidelines and regulations if there was need to deal with any ethical concerns.

9.4.3 Study limitations

It has to be acknowledged that this study was conducted under the best environment possible, exploring the various methodologies and designs available with the view to address the research question and identified objectives. It is imperative that the research limitations be pointed out. WUC has branches dispersed throughout the country and only about a third of the branches were covered, mainly two cities and five towns, due to information access, time and financial constraints.

- Restricted access

Despite the production of the authority letter from the WUC to undertake research, there seemed to have been some hesitance from some employees across the organisation (mainly at Head Office) to share stories through the Narrative Data Capture Questionnaire and the in-depth interviews. Despite the reassurances that permission had been granted to collect their experiences, concerns were continually raised about the confidentiality of information shared in the research process. These factors placed limits on the amount of narratives / stories which could have been collected. Surprisingly, positive reception was experienced at some country branches of WUC, this was made possible through the generous assistance of General Managers heading such establishments.

- Investigator triangulation (analysts)

Due to financial contraints, it was not possible to have investigator traingulation as in conducting multiple investigations, collecting and analysing the same qualitative data and comparing their findings (Patton, 2015:665).

- Delayed access

As previously indicated, the Water Utilities Corporation is a parastatal organisation (wholly owned) by Botswana Government, where prior research permission was required. It took about 2 months for the research permit to be granted by WUC, probably because internal consultations took more than was anticipated. Strategy is regarded by most organisations as a sensitive, confidential and competitive tool, possibly that was why there was the delay (Wahyuni, 2012-73).

- Sample selection

The case organisation WUC was chosen using non-probability purposive/convenience sampling specifically to facilitate the contribution/sharing of narratives according to pre-determined reasons (Noy, 2008). Reluctance of some Top, Senior, and Middle Management, who were lukewarm or indifferent to calls and invitation to partake, was alleged to be due to their project engagements outside their work stations or to attending scheduled professional development short courses. This might have influenced the sample selection and therefore could be viewed as bias.

- In-depth interviews

The collection of fragments through the in-depth interviews, other approaches and measures were followed to mitigate observer error and bias, as the likelihood existed. However, general prompt questions enabled the respondents to share their stories as they wished and in no particular order, since there were no direct pre-determined questions which led them on how to answer.

- Aggrieved respondents

Encounters with aggressive individuals who just wanted to vent their unhappiness with the organisation posed serious challenges. In the researchers view, it is possible that more narratives could be collected in future to try and address this situation possibly through internal processes. Events such as internal seminars, professional training and regional meetings attended by a cross section of the employees from different branches including Head Office could be exploited as an alternative where these issues may be addressed.

- Branch coverage

WUC has branches dispersed throughout the country and only about a third of the branches were covered, mainly two cities and five towns, due to information access, time and financial constraints.

9.5 Research contributions/ recommendations and future research.

The main study contributions/recommendations can be divided into two parts: issues requiring the attention of WUC and contribution to the academic discipline of strategic management. Issues needing attention of the organisation include the following: Current WUC efforts to achieve implementation suggests that the issue of buy-in, into the various initiatives undertaken by the corporation needs to be addresssed at a broader level and across levels; this is of utmost importancee especially since the organisation is statutorily tasked to provide water resources across the country (critical function). Within its strategic initiatives, WUC should concentrate on revitalization and engagement of emloyees through narrative-based research.

9.5.1 Practical recommendations

Findings and their discussions have highlighted critical issues arising from hindrances, inabilities encountered within the strategy implementation process. The following findings might assist the WUC to effectively implement its strategy choices.

Table 9.1: WUC proposed practical recommendations

LIABILITY OF ENGAGEMENT (LOE)	
Identified Themes	**Proposed remedies**
Theme 1: Perception on strategy implementation, conversation/talk as ritual (from section 8.2.1).	• Continuous strategy implementation training foremployees across the organisation. • Effectively communicate and share information.
Theme 2: Integrating the differences between strategy formulation and implementation through organisational renewal. (from section 8.2.2).	• Training of strategy formulators and implementers on the integration of the separation of strategy formulation and implementation. • Be responsive to changes in the environment (economic, cultural, legal, social, political etc.),
Theme 3: Enhancing commitment, understanding and loyalty through implementation process ownership. (from section 8.2.3).	• Creation of strategies to foster employee's engagement. • Leadership must create a favourable work environment by encouraging employees to question issues and voice grievances.
Theme 4: Facilitating harmonious interrelationships through personal recognition and nurturing employee attitudes. (from section 8.2.4).	• Consult, empower, encourage and recognise diversity. • Encourage group cohesiveness of employees through team building training.
Theme 5: Employee trust, emotional commitment and negative reactions. (from section 8.2.5).	• Empower employees to make and own decisions. • Contend with and manage emotions, whether pre or post implementation.
LIABILITY OF DECISION-MAKING AUTONOMY (LODMA).	
Identified Themes	**Proposed remedies**
Theme 1: Decision making responsiveness and empowerment.(from section 8.3.1)	• Support better faster decision making. • Support and encourage, autonomous processes, procedures and protocols in decision making.

Theme 2: Balancing incompatible, varied and sometimes disorderly demands. (from section 8.3.2)	• Engage all pertinent stakeholders from strategy formulation to implementation. • Develop robust policy framework to support both strategy formulation and implementation
Theme 3: Impairment in focus and timing.(from section 8.3.3)	• Develop strategic focus and set priorities. • Create deliberate plans with a focus into the future and ensure implementation is neither early nor late.
Theme 4: Required critical competencies, tactics underpinned by guidance and direction. (from section 8.3.4)	• Undertake employee training on critical competencies and tactics. • Develop consultative, directional and clarification mechanisms on important issues.
Theme 5: Managing human capital with diverse perspectives. (from section 8.3.5)	• Emphasize diversity within workforce. • Develop policies to manage and support diversity. • Develop human resources through training.
LIABILITY OF PERCEIVED INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT (LOPIS)	
Identified Themes	**Proposed remedies**
Theme 1: Responsibility clarity, information sharing and its availability. (from section 8.4.1)	• Create, avail and share information sources, which are simplified, written clearly, and focused on quality information. • Continuously communicate the organisational strategic intent and organisational structure.
Theme 2: Resource allocation, protocol and compliance.(from section 8.4.2)	• Provide information on resources capacity and the actual resources at the disposal of the organisation. • Provide fluidity and flexibility in rules, processes and procedures to empower and instil a sense of ownership in employees.
Theme 3: Nurturing and embracing the spirit of selflessness.(from section 8.4.3)	• Recognise the role played by internal stakeholders to embrace the spirit of selflessness.

Theme 4: Implementation landscape and process systemisation. (from section 8.4.4)	• Undertake SWOT analysis to determine factors external to and affecting strategy implementation. • Create proactive and agile management, accompanied by institutionalized controls and systems.
Theme 5: Esprit de corps. (from section 8.4.5)	• Maintain group cohesion and organisational allegiance through training. • Provide a conducive work environment for creativity and innovation to thrive.

Practical recommendations and contributions from this research study are now discussed in detail below:

9.5.1.1 Liability of Engagement

- Organisational leadership ought to consider engagement as a driver to enhance strategy implementation. This action must be underpinned by what the organisation intends to achieve (purpose) and the ultimate (long-term) goals and objectives in order to avert the liability of engagement.
- Employee engagement becomes complete if employee voice policies are entrenched in an organisation as this enables them to effectively communicate to the management, both positive and negative experiences encountered in the work situation.
- Strategy formulation and implementation ought to be considered simultaneously to ensure that synergy between the two processes are integrated with employees engaged at both levels of decision-making, during goal setting and execution.
- To improve effectiveness of employee commitment, WUC could rely on affective commitment, which is an emotional attachment to, as well as identification and involvement with the organisation by employees, to enhance antecedents of work engagement.
- Consultations on the responsibility for changes in the work environment must be engaged on and ought to involve a wide array of employees within the organisation. These consultations should clarify when the change should be done, why it should be done, by whom, how, and where.

- Managing attitudes between employees, units and departments poses the greatest challenge in the organisation, especially where there is less or no culture of working in teams and group cohesiveness. Low level of consultation, limited employee engagement, empowerment and recognition for diversity seemed to be lacking.
- Strategy formulation and implementation ought to be embraced as the culture of continuous 'conversations and talk' across the organisation to enhance employee engagement and commitment. Important dimensions such as symbolic actions, which are the most important means of reinforcing strategy implementation could be relied upon.
- Low levels of trust seem to be a daunting task for the organisation to tackle and the root cause of this could be emanating from numerous sources such as ingrained organisational culture, lack of consultation, lack of transparency and recognition.
- It would seem that, even though Top Management and Senior Management indicated that the issue of emotions was never a challenge at implementation, however, they would have to contend with and manage emotions, whether pre or post implementation to establish the root cause of the problems.
- To 'confer' ownership of the process of implementation, It would be prudent and to the best interest of the WUC to accommodate, appreciate and recognise dissenting voices during the process of implementation as this could ensure that everybody pull their weight towards achieving goals
- WUC cross-units working relationships, coupled with middle manager engagement, has the potential to play an important role in the successful implementation of decisions and that implementation effectiveness is impacted negatively by conflict and positively by communication and interpersonal relationships.

9.5.1.2 Liability of Decision-making Autonomy

- The liability of decision-making autonomy ought to be averted through the decentralisation of the decision-making process and that organisational members, units, and departments need to be afforded the opportunity to take part in determining the future of their organisation.

- Responsiveness to amend, terminate or introduce new changes ought to occur frequently in an ordered fashion. Whenever changes are anticipated, such information must be shared across the organisation such that everyone gets to appreciate any underlying issues and their impact.
- WUC similar to public institutions are confronted with numerous, frequent, disorderly and incompatible demands from a series of external actors. This calls for a framework within the law and policy to make clear some set of priorities and outcome objectives from which to work with.
- There might be lack of focus in attaining objectives due to destructive 'noise' and hindrances not related to the mandate of the corporation, but arising from both the internal and external environment. WUC changes in legislation and policy geared to addressing public interest or averting national disaster could be cases in point.
- The essential, critical competencies and tactics of understanding business, professional learned skills, and natural ability are the necessary ingredients for effective strategy implementation. The challenge is now for the WUC management to ensure that these are infused into the work of strategy right from formulation up to implementation as they influence the 'organisational thinking and action' termed 'implementation tactics'.
- To avert or mitigate the liability of 'decision-making empowerment', WUC might consider autonomous processes, procedures and protocols in decision-making across the organisation, synergies amongst strategy types and implementation capabilities, and ensure that the procedural justice of strategy formulation is entirely undertaken.
- WUC could put in place strategies to encourage diversity in the workplace where during the process of implementation, employees could be afforded the latitude to deal with issues as they see fit and therefore have control on how best they can manage their work.
- Recognition of people, their treatment with utmost respect and dignity are key in building self-esteem, satisfaction, increasing productivity and building good working relationships. The work of strategy implementation involves numerous players and as such their conduct has to be controlled in anticipation of potential areas of conflict which might frustrate the process of strategy implementation.

9.5.1.3 Liability of Perceived Institutional Support (LOPIS).

- WUC might have to acknowledge that, organisational information, its availability and communication plays an important role in training, knowledge dissemination and learning during the process of strategy implementation and the absence of all these is an ingredient for disaster.
- To better clarify, simplify and address the issue of responsibility clarity of either strategy formulation or implementation, praxis could be explored to provide guidance. These are socially accomplished flows of activity that strategically are consequential for the direction and survival of the WUC.
- Information on the organisational resource capacity and the actual resources at the disposal of the organisation should be a subject of discussion when employees are engaged to execute strategy assignments, to enable them have meaningful participation, appreciate the amount of resources at their disposal so that they can be fully responsible for their actions and ‘own’ the projects knowing quite well what is at their disposal.
- The strategizing process within WUC needs to go beyond the organisation since there are multiple players such as consultants, policy makers, and competitors who might assist with practices applied in the organisations whose strategies they analyze, critique, enact, develop, and change, thereby infusing plurality of actors. Organisational engagement within the WUC could be enhanced through the development of what is usually referred to as ‘high-involvement management’ and each partnership sector to show the spirit of selflessness.
- It is prudent for WUC to start encouraging curiosity, experimenting, prudent risk-taking, and to appreciate the joy and excitement of taking on new challenges such as processes systemization facing the organisation. Proactive and agile management at the face-off of strategy implementation is required, accompanied by institutionalized controls and systems.
- In addressing challenges of unpredictable environment factors, WUC could rely on the institutional theory perspectives, and appreciate that any strategic choice

an organisation intends to undertake is limited by a variety of external environmental pressures within the strategy implementation landscape.

- The WUC can reinforce 'esprit de corps' through employee engagement at three levels namely: organisational contribution- through the creation of an environment with open communication channels, trusted leadership, promotion of diversity in decision making. At team level, cooperation when assignments are executed, and realizing and recognizing individual concerns. Lastly, at the employee level this might entail appreciation of individual contribution to organisational overall objectives.

Conclusions enunciated from the above depict that organisations are unaware that they experience hindrances and inabilities in their quest to implement their strategy choices. Strategy implementation is still regarded as an afterthought in the field of strategic management and this is a serious oversight because if these are not removed from beneficial processes of business, organisations would fail to maximise economic rents.

9.5.2 Recommendations to the literature

WUC employees have not been aware that they may be failing because they retain many *destructive holdings* and *processes*, because in many instances, they may only be examining the positive influences at strategy implementation in their quest to implement their strategy choices. Implementation gaps have been identified through the literature and the research undertaken. This research has established that, the experiences shared by story tellers/ respondents through narrative-based research are crucial for better understanding of strategy implementation. The experiences shared culminated into the identification of three set of liabilities; Liability of Engagement (LOE), Liability of Decision Making Autonomy (LODMA) and Liability of Perceived Institutional Support (LOPIS). There is a resounding call from Top Management, Senior Management and Middle Management that these experienced liabilities should be objectively assessed to evaluate strategy as they have the potential to negatively influence the organisation's performance at strategy implementation.

The assessment and evaluation process could include:

- Identification and definition of these negative implementation factors;
- Evaluation of the identified negative factors interrelationships.
- An in-depth examination of the "conception" and "birth" of these factors, to enable organisations better avert or mitigate their impact;
- Facilitation of the exploration of the context-dependency of these identified implementation liabilities and;
- Effective utilisation of this proposed theoretical framework for the management of these liabilities.

These revelations, calls for more research in strategy implementation embracing the liabilities approach with the view to determine the impact of these liabilities and how they could be mitigated to achieve positive organisational performance. Academics and researchers could introduce new powerful and pragmatic liabilities frameworks, models and tools to address negative factors (liabilities) experienced at implementation.

This study has better identified, described, explained and illuminated the understanding of new insights into these *negative factors*, *influences, destructive holdings* and *processes* known as *liabilities,* encountered at implementation, by identifying, describing and developing a Strategy Implementation Liabilities Framework (as shown in Appendix A, Figure 8.10). This framework has the potential to enable us to determine why organisations experience non-success or low levels of achievement.

9.5.3 Future research

Opportunities to explore the liabilities approach, which has so far been neglected, though with the potential to address numerous strategy implementation challenges faced by organisations, exist and this could be an area of priority for future research in strategic management. In trying to provide solutions to organisational problems, many organisations have not been successful in addressing the *implementation gap*. Poor implementation or organisational performance is and continues to be a matter of grave concern in organisations. Water Utilities Corporation the only entity entrusted with the reticulation of water and sewerage in the country has to execute its implementation strategy exceedingly well to ensure that its social objectives are achieved especially as water is a critical resource required across the country.

Subjects were requested to share stories and experiences of strategy implementation with the view to infuse these into the contemporary practices of implementation and evaluate what best insights could be revealed to assist organisations in better carrying out the process of strategy implementation. The critical recommendation would be to test the existence or prevalence of these *Strategy Implementation Liabilities* in other organisational settings and use the proposed theoretical framework as a guideline. The strength of the correlations between these liabilities should be determined in order to identify those liabilities which might be considered to be critical, as this will enable management to address as a matter of priority. This means that, the interrelationships between these identified liabilities and the extent to which they may affect the organisation should be investigated.

9.6 Concluding remarks

The theoretical Strategy Implementation Liabilities framework proposed contribute to setting up new body of knowledge in strategic management more specifically on strategy implementation, to enhance knowledge in the strategy-as-practice field and research. Strengths and weaknesses of organisations at implementation may be reinforced with the development of this conceptual tool to assist Project Team Managers and Strategy Practitioners mitigate the liabilities when they implement strategy. The focus which has been directed towards organisations, business people, consultants, including academics who in research have only been concerned with success factors may now shift to recognise that negative factors which had been disregarded in research might shed some light into strategy implementation success. The possibility of identifying and recognising liabilities at the strategy formulation process (strategy formulation liabilities) could be an option such that these are noted at strategy implementation where processes would be put in place either to remove them or mitigate their strength through the Strategy Implementation Liabilities framework

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APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Economic and

Management Sciences

Letter of Introduction and Informed Consent

Department of Economic and Management Sciences

Addressing the Strategy Implementation Gap with a Liabilities Approach

<u>Research conducted by</u>:

Mr G.A.K Maotwanyane (12118398)

Cell: 00267 71326282/ 0027 733 88 5423

Dear Participant

You are invited to participate in an academic research study conducted by Gabriel Maotwanyane, Doctoral student from the Department Of Economic and Management Sciences at the University of Pretoria.

The purpose of the study is to bbetter understand and gain new insights into the liabilities encountered at strategy implementation labeled “the weakest link” (negative influences, destructive holdings and processes), the ultimate goal being to fix these with a liabilities approach.

Please note the following:

- Narrative research is the lens for this study, and a narrative instrument known as Strategy Implementation Narrative Capture Questions would be used.
- Narrative research is generally about stories of life experiences. Study participants would be asked in-depth interviews to give an account of their experiences and their story about strategy implementation rather than to answer a predetermined list of questions.
- Secondary data required will consist of annual reports (hard copies & electronic), information from the website, quarterly reports and available research articles.

- This is an anonymous study survey as your name will not appear on the questionnaire. The answers you give will be treated as strictly confidential as you cannot be identified in person based on the answers you give.
- Your participation in this study is very important to us. You may, however, choose not to participate and you may also stop participating at any time without any negative consequences.
- Kindly mark the appropriate spot inside the triangle or in a box to your right with a cross sign **X** to indicate your response to the question and please answer the questions as completely and honestly as possible. This should not take more than 45 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 our findings on request.
- Please contact my study leader, **Professor Marius Pretorius, at +27 12 420 3394** and or email address Marius.Pretorius@up.ac.zaif you have any questions or comments regarding the study.

Please sign the form to indicate that:

- You have read and understand the information provided above.
- You give your consent to participate in the study on a voluntary basis.

______________________________ ______________________

Participant's signature **Date**

APPENDIX B

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Economic and

Management Sciences

Chief Executive Officer

Water Utilities Corporation

Private Bag 00276

Gaborone, Botswana.

Dear Sir/Madam;

Letter of Introduction and Request to Undertake Research –PhD Research Project Strategy Implementation

Mr Gabriel A.K Maotwanyane is a registered PhD Entrepreneurship degree student on his final year at the University of Pretoria in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences who is currently busy with his research project. The title of his research is: “Addressing the strategy implementation gap with a liabilities approach”.

Numerous studies have been undertaken in the field of strategy implementation and yet there is lack of success within organisations, even those which are making relentless efforts to execute their strategy choices. Without doubt implementation of strategy is a serious hurdle and challenge for organisations nowadays.Corboy & Corbin (1999) found that nearly 70 percent of strategic plans and strategies are never successfully implemented. Allio (2005) confirms that a survey conducted by the Economist survey has found that a discouraging 57 percent of organisations were unsuccessful at executing their strategic choices over the past years and Li, Guohui & Eppler (2008) confirms that strategy implementation is a key challenge to today’s organisations.

The purpose of this study is to Better understand and gain new insights into the liabilities encountered at strategy implementation labeled “the weakest link” (negative influences, destructive holdings and processes), the ultimate goal being to fix these with a liabilities approach. This may enable the determination as to why organisations experience non-success or low levels of achievement at implementation, and better understand the implementation phenomena. The research question which this study seeks to answer is: “How to address the strategy implementation gap with a liabilities approach?”

The research problem is the ill understanding and lack of acknowledgement of the strategy implementation concept, which considers positive aspects and neglects the negative which has the potential to provide solutions to this “implementation problem”.

The primary research objectives are to:

- Describe how the liabilities approach and its insights could address the strategy implementation gap.
- Identify and describe negative influencers, destructive holdings and processes labeled Strategy Implementation Liabilities- SILS encountered at implementation.
- Develop guidelines on how to mitigate the SILS.
- Develop a theoretical framework for the management of SILS.

Narrative research is the lens for this study, and a narrative instrument known as Strategy Implementation Narrative Capture Questions would be used. Narrative research is generally about stories of life experiences. Study participants would be asked in-depth interviews to give an account of their experiences and their story about strategy implementation rather than to answer a predetermined list of questions. Secondary data required will consist of annual reports (hard copies & electronic), information from the website, quarterly reports and available research articles.

Enclosed herewith are documents necessary to conduct the research:

1. Research Ethics Clearance from the University of Pretoria.
2. Permission from the Office of the President (Botswana).
3. Informed consent letter (s).
4. Data Collection Instrument

The success of this study depends largely on your cooperation and it will be appreciated if you could assist him in this regard. 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 our findings on request.

Please contact me on **+27 12 420 3394 and or Marius.Pretorius@up.ac.za** if you have any questions or comments regarding the study.

Thank you very much for your co-operation.

…………………………………

Professor Marius Pretorius

Study Leader/ Supervisor

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Economic and

Management Sciences

Chief Executive Officer

Water Utilities Corporation

Private Bag 00276

Gaborone, Botswana.

Dear Sir/Madam;

Request To Undertake Research –PhD Research Project Strategy Implementation

Attached herewith is a letter of introduction and a request from the University of Pretoria Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences to allow me undertake research in strategy implementation in your establishment. The title of my research is: “Addressing the strategy implementation gap with a liabilities approach”.

My contacts are telephone: 3935409 Cell: 71326282 email: maotwanyaneg@mopipi.ub.bw or maogurus@gmail.com ,if you have any questions or comments regarding the study.

Thank you very much for your co-operation.

…………………………………

Gabriel A.K. Maotwanyane

Researcher

APPENDIX C: Measuring Instrument – In depth Interviews with Top Management and Senior Management

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences

Interview Discussion Guides

Phase 1: Interviews with Top Management and Senior Management

Introduction

The interviewer introduced himself and briefly indicated the aim and objective of the interview discussions (Tell us a story about the implementation of strategy in your organisation), being to elicit views of the interviewees on strategy implementation and whether insights gained from the liabilities approach might address the implementation gap. It was confirmed to respondents that their responses would be treated as *confidential* and that they would be solemnly used for educational purpose, and that WUC was informed that they would be furnished with the final report should they be interested to receive it.

Permission was obtained from every participant using a ***Consent Form*** *(See Appendix B*) to record the interview and it was explained to the participants that the purpose of this was to facilitate *transcribing and analysis* of the interview proceedings. Demographic information on each participant will be asked for.

Section A: Demographic Narrative Capture Questions (Personal information on each participant)

7.4.1 Indicate your applicable age bracket

Age in years				
21-30			61-70	
31-40				
41-50				
51-60				

7.4.2 Indicate your gender

Male		Female		

7.4.3 Where is your place of work?

Head office		
Branch name		

7.4.4 Over how many months were you involved in a strategy implementation project?

1 month	
6 months	
24 months	
Greater than 24 months	
No answer	

7.4.5 Indicate your current primary job position

Chairperson	
Managing Director (MD)	
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	
Chief Financial Officer (CFO)	
Chief Operations Officer (COO)	
Executive Director	
General Manager	
Other (please specify)	

7.4.6 State your current area of speciality (applicable department)

Board/Legal	
Marketing	

Senior Management	
Finance	
Human resources	
Operations	
Other (please indicate)	

74.7 State your highest academic qualification

Doctorate	
Master’s degree	
Honour’s degree	
Bachelor’s degree	
Diploma	
Certificate	
Matric / Cambridge	
Other (please indicate)	

7.4.8 Indicate what you perceive to be the predominant business strategy of your organisation

Growth (expanding into new markets and offering new products and services)		
Consolidation (concentrating on your core business offerings)		
Other (please indicate)		

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
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Faculty of Economic and

Management Sciences

Interviews with Middle Management

Section A: Demographic Narrative Capture Questions

Interview Discussion Guides

Phase 1: Interviews with Top Management and Senior Management

Introduction

The interviewer introduced himself and briefly indicated the aim and objective of the interview discussions (Tell us a story about the implementation of strategy in your organisation), being to elicit views of the interviewees on strategy implementation and whether insights gained from the liabilities approach might address the implementation gap. It was confirmed to respondents that their responses would be treated as *confidential* and that they would be solemnly used for educational purpose, and that WUC was informed that they would be furnished with the final report should they be interested to receive it.

Permission was obtained from every participant using a ***Consent Form*** *(See Appendix B*) to record the interview and it was explained to the participants that the purpose of this was to facilitate *transcribing and analysis* of the interview proceedings. Demographic information on each participant will be asked for.

Demographic Narrative Capture Questions (Personal information on each participant)

7.4.1 Indicate your applicable age bracket

Age in years				
21-30			61-70	
31-40				
41-50				
51-60				

7.4.3 Indicate your gender

Male		Female		

7.4.3 Where is your place of work?

Head office		
Branch name		

7.4.4 Over how many months were you involved in a strategy implementation project?

1 month	
6 months	
24 months	
Greater than 24 months	
No answer	

7.4.5 Indicate your current primary job position

Chairperson	
Managing Director (MD)	
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	
Chief Financial Officer (CFO)	
Chief Operations Officer (COO)	
Executive Director	
General Manager	
Other (please specify)	

7.4.6 State your current area of speciality (applicable department)

Board/Legal	
Marketing	

Senior Management	
Finance	
Human resources	
Operations	
Other (please indicate)	

74.7 State your highest academic qualification

Doctorate	
Master's degree	
Honour's degree	
Bachelor's degree	
Diploma	
Certificate	
Matric / Cambridge	
Other (please indicate)	

7.4.8 Indicate what you perceive to be the predominant business strategy of your organisation

Growth (expanding into new markets and offering new products and services)		
Consolidation (concentrating on your core business offerings)		
Other (please indicate)		

APPENDIX E: Measuring Instrument – Strategy Implementation Liabilities Narrative Capture Questions (on power-point slides)

Section C- Strategy Implementation Narrative Capture Questions

The Strategy Implementation Liabilities Narrative Capture Questions were used to elicit stories through the use of triads and dyads.

Instructions to participants:

1 **Triads**- participants were requeted to mark the appropriate spot inside the Triad (triangle) with a sign **X** indicating their response or in a box indicating that their story my not be shared "not applicable".

2 **Dyads/Polarities-** participants were invited to indicate by a cross sign **X** along the scale on the continuum running from complete ***absence*** to excessive ***abundance*** or in a box " does not apply" that best describes a specific aspect of their story.

Strategy Implementation Liabilities Narrative Capture Questions

Research Title: Addressing the strategy implementation gap with liabilities approach

1

Triad Data

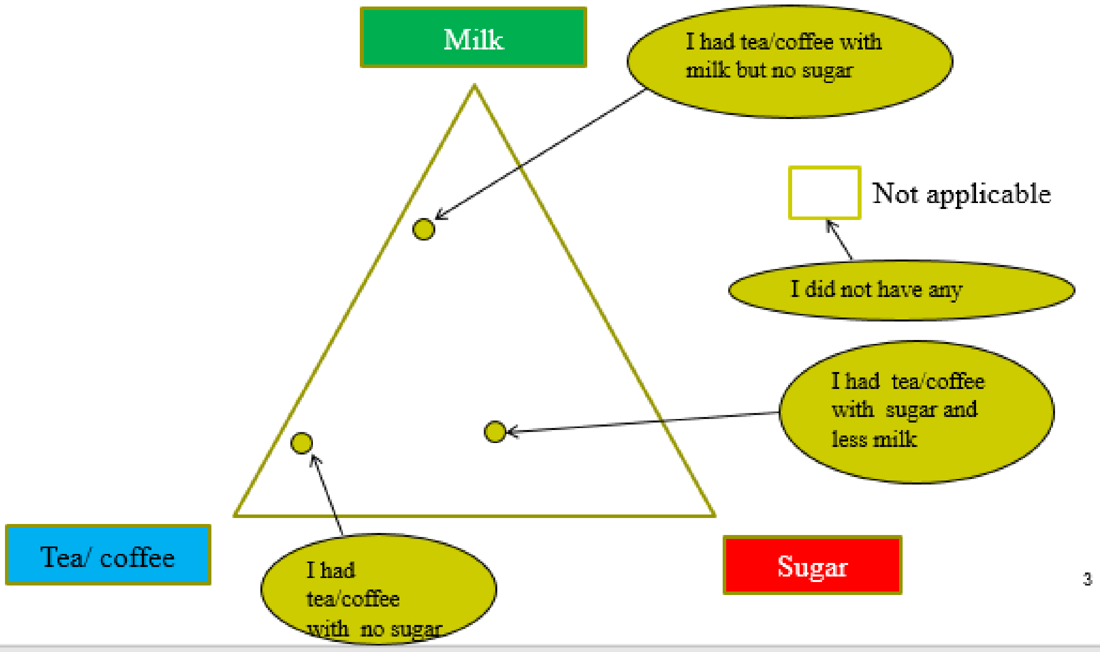
Instructions

1. Kindly mark an appropriate spot inside the triangle or in a box to your right with a sign **X** to indicate your response to the question.
2. An illustration has been been made for you in the next slide.
3. Kindly send back your response to email: (maotwanyaneg@mopipi.ub.bw/ maogurus@gmail.com) or the completed copy will be collected.

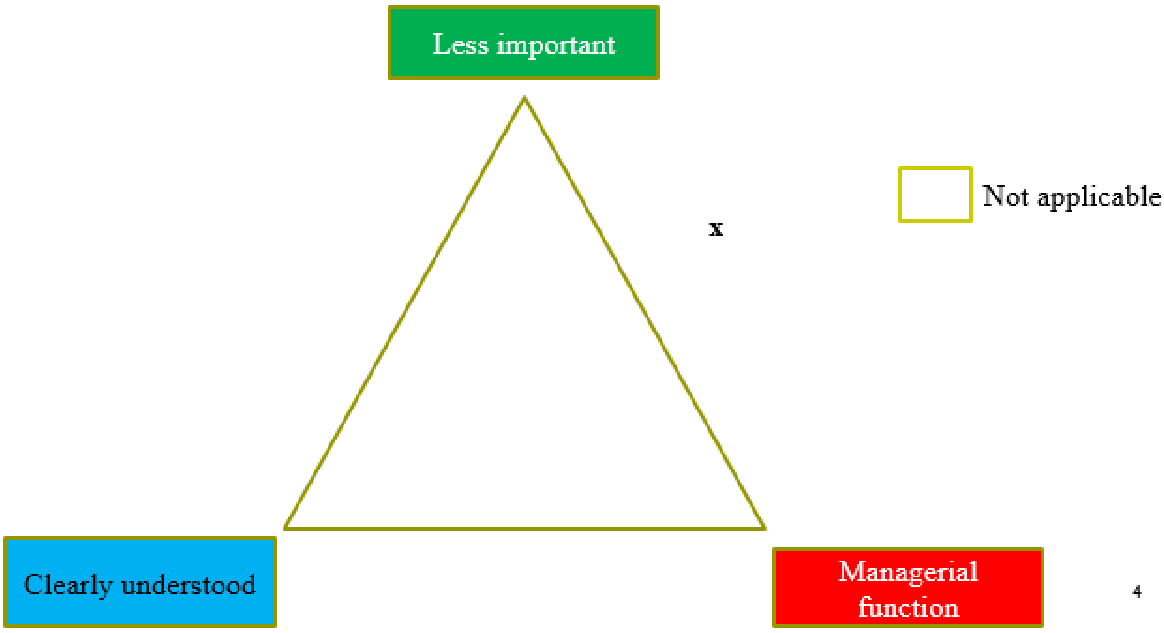
Triad Data **Source:** Meriam, 2010; Seah, 2010; Cognitive Edge, 2010

2

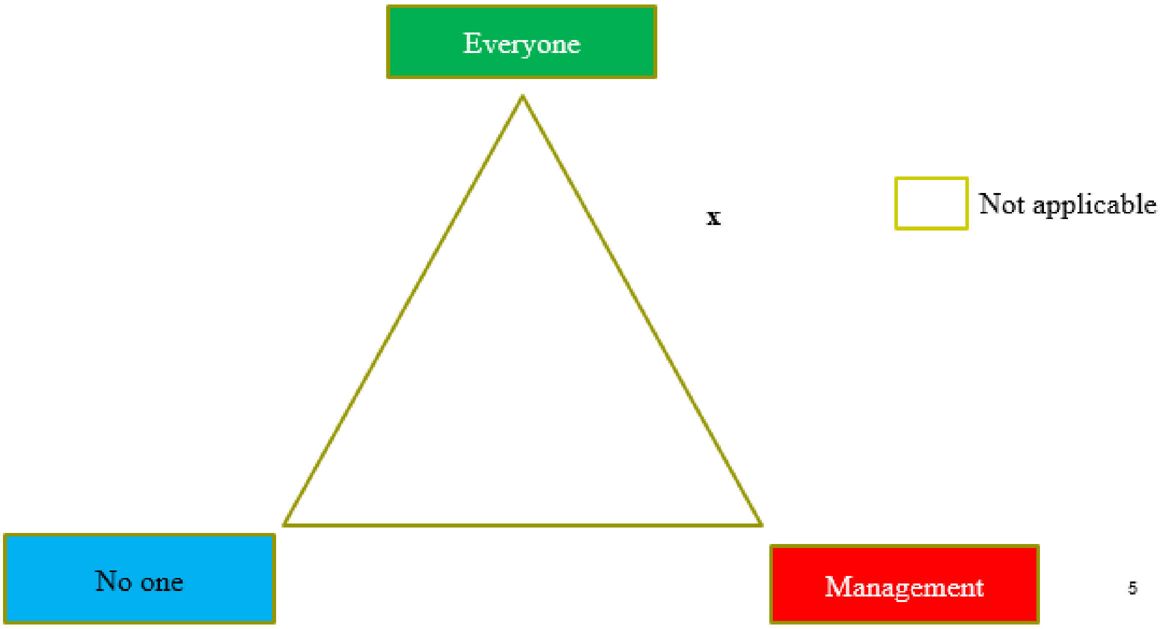
Example: My tea / coffee this morning was made up of:



- **Question 10**
- I would judge strategy implementation in my organization as:

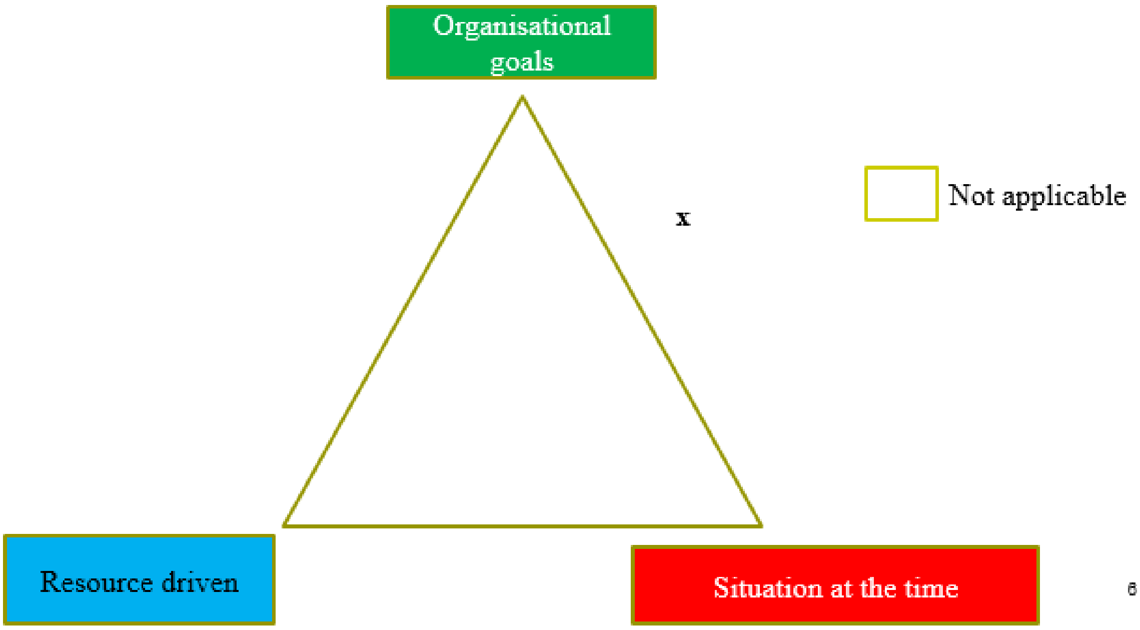


- **Question 11**
- Responsibility for strategy implementation is taken by:



5

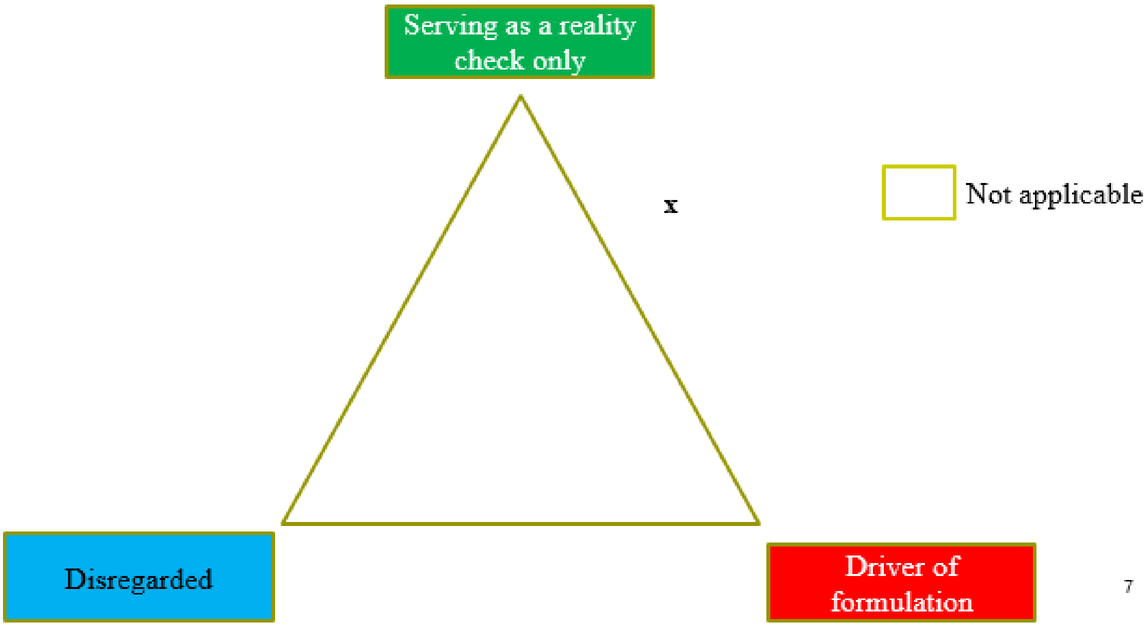
- **Question 12**
- In my story, strategy implementation is aligned with:



6

❑Question 13

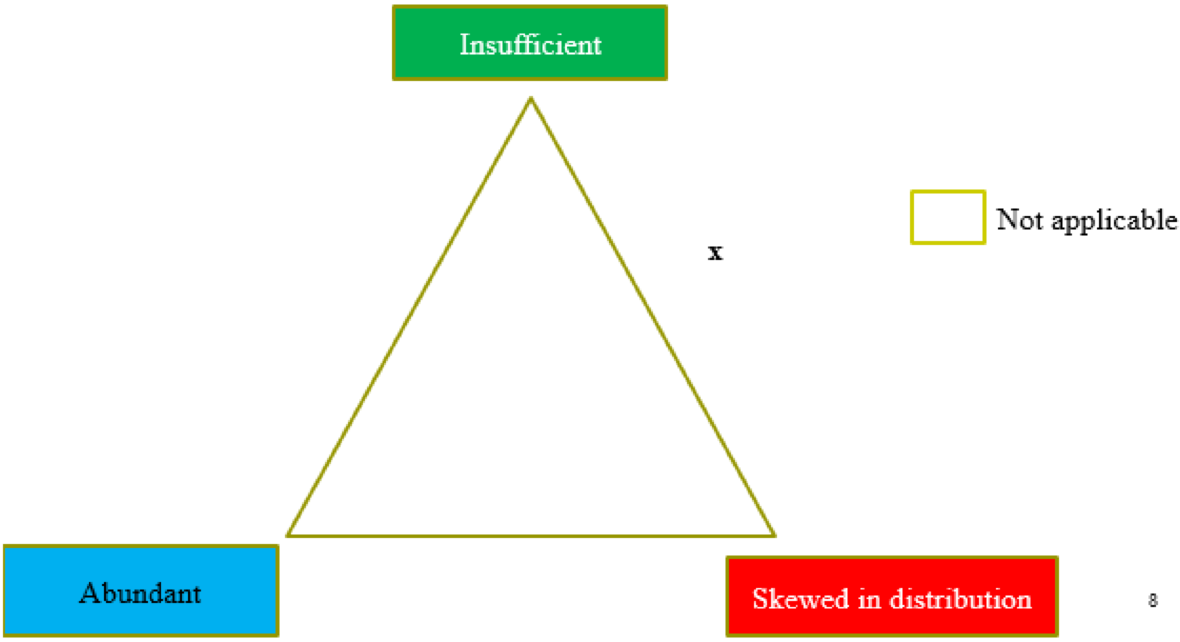
❑ During strategy formulation, implementation is considered as:



7

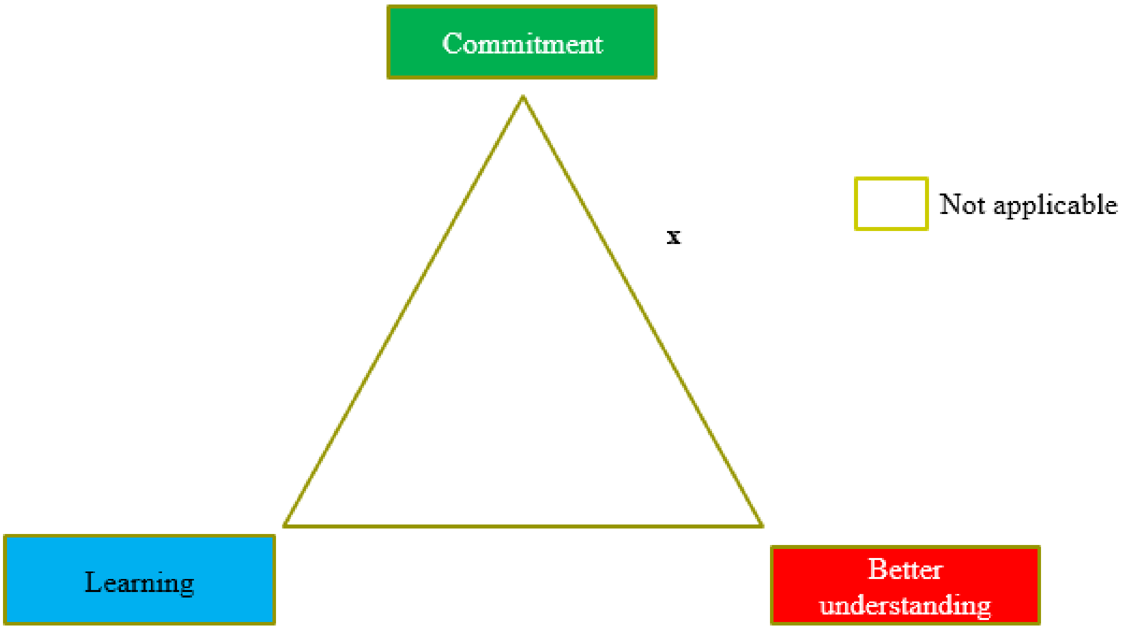
❑ Question 14

❑ Allocation of resources in implementation is generally:



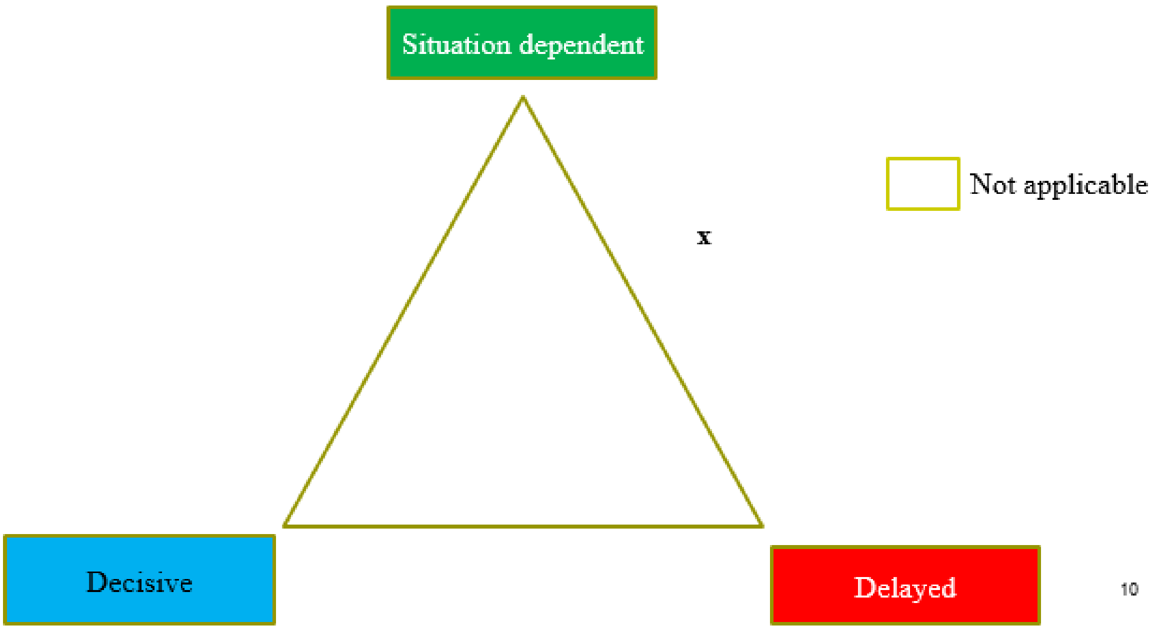
8

- **Question 15**
- In my story, implementation leads to:



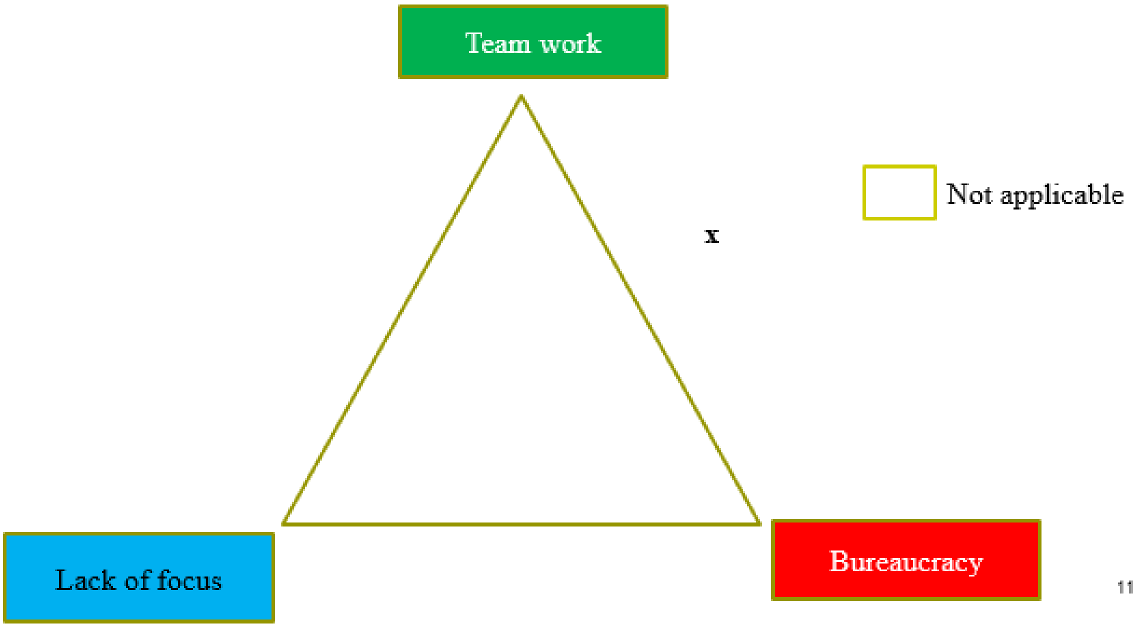
9

- **Question 16**
- Important strategy implementation decisions were:



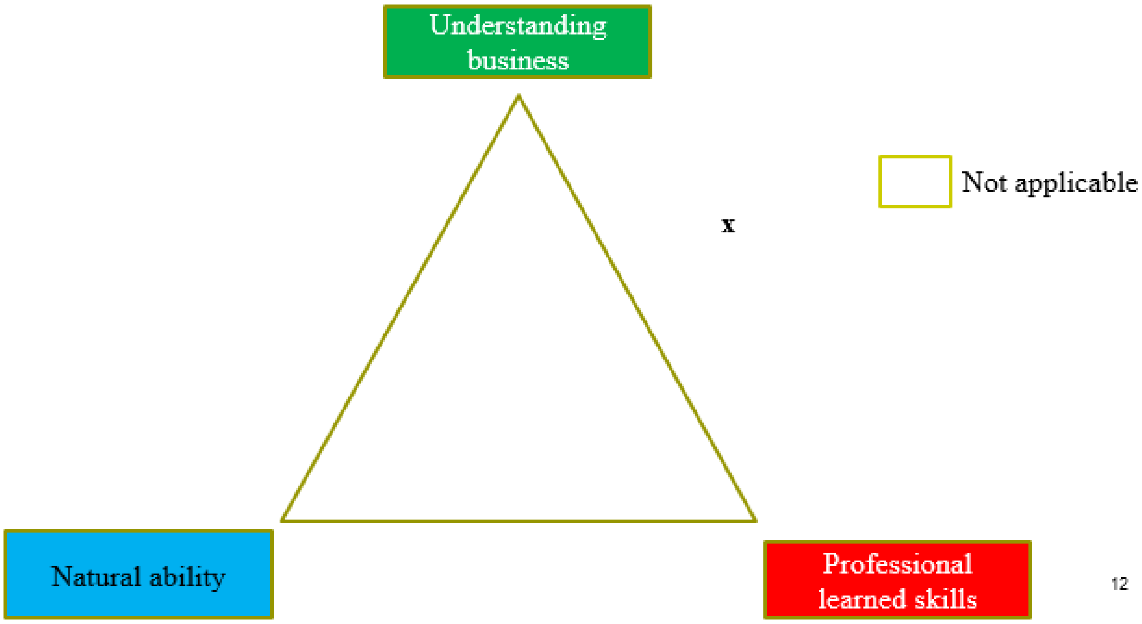
10

- **Question 17**
- In my story, implementation is influenced by :



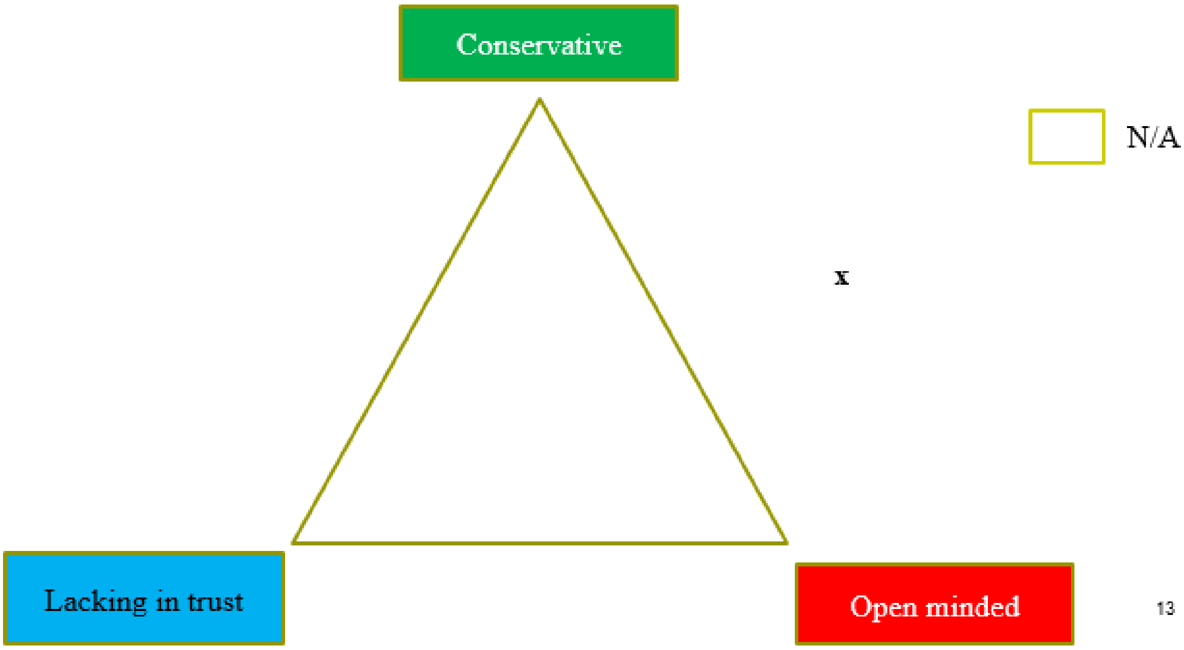
11

- **Question 18**
- Key skills and ability to implement strategy depends more on :



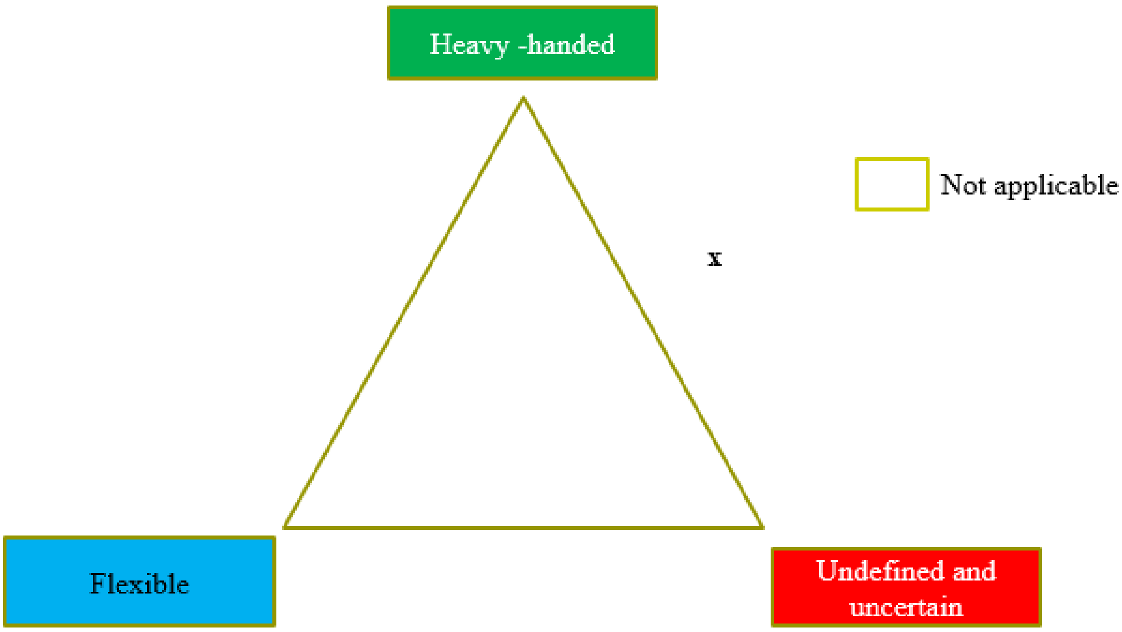
12

- **Question 19**
- In guiding implementation, leadership appears to be:



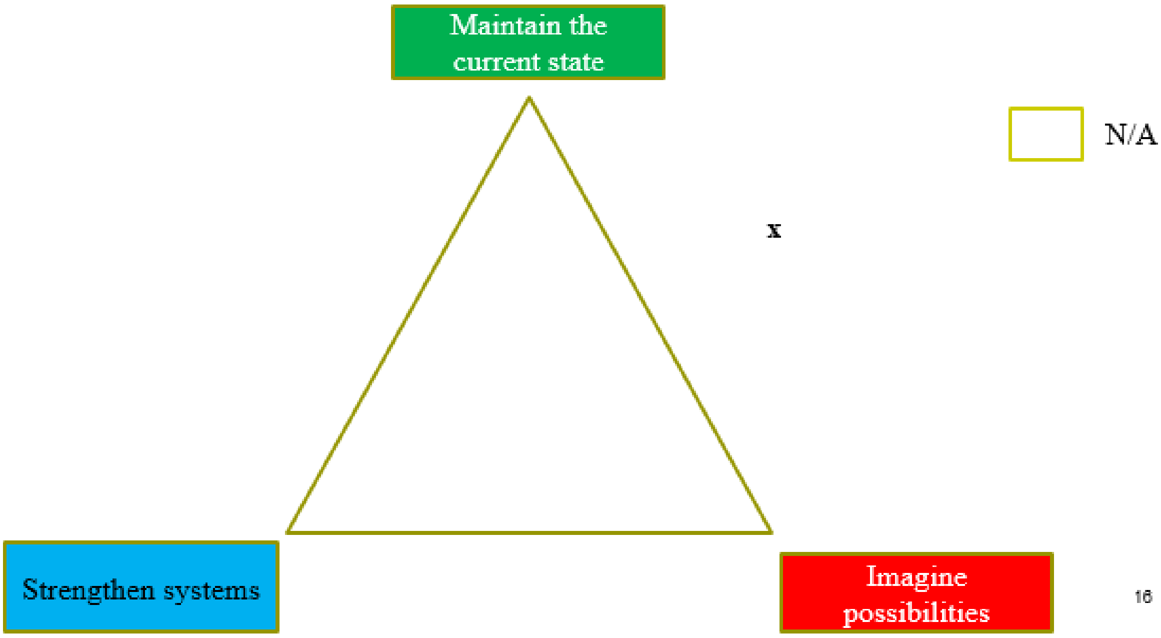
13

- **Question 20**
- Implementation rules, processes and procedures in my story are:



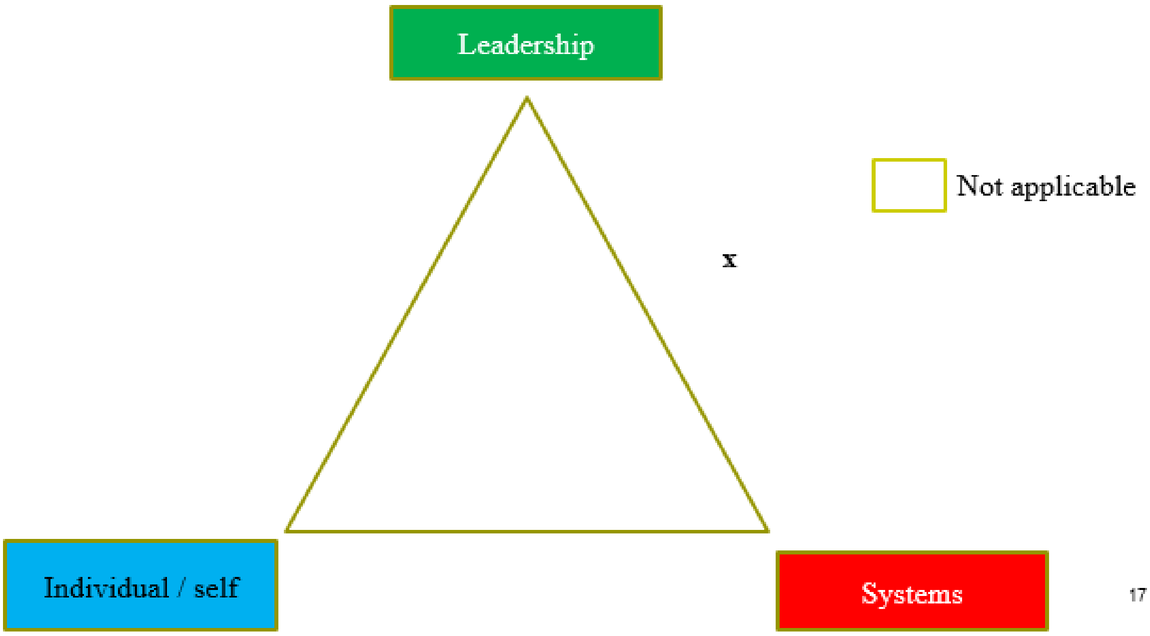
14

- **Question 22**
- In my story, the mindset and understanding of implementation is to:



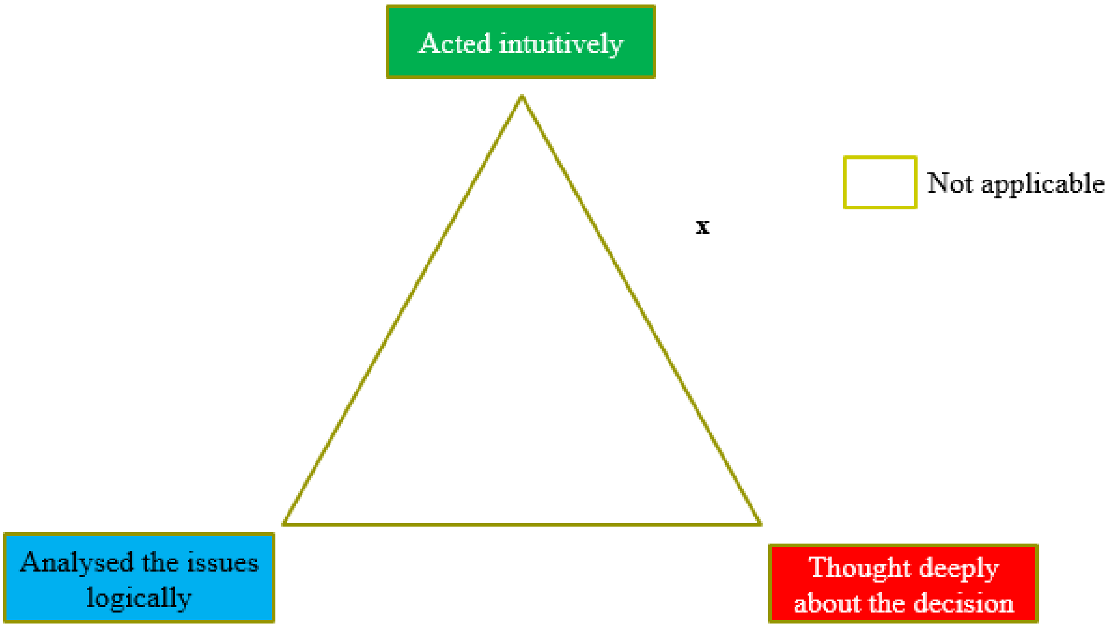
16

- **Question 23**
- Implementation changes in my story should be driven by:



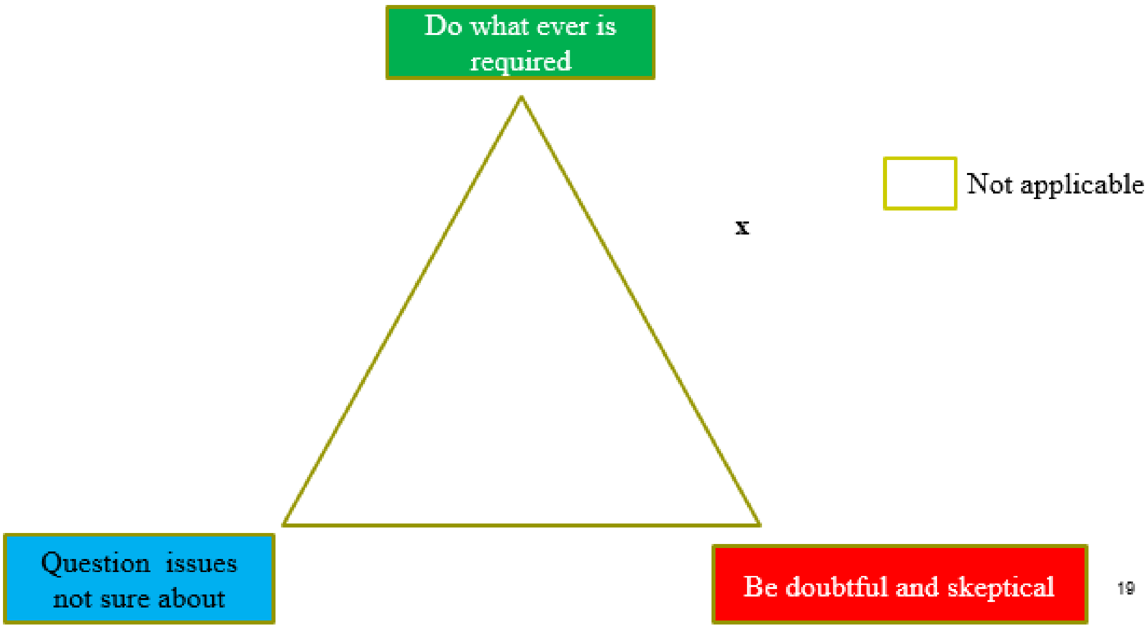
17

- **Question 24**
- When employees acted to address the most critical things, they:



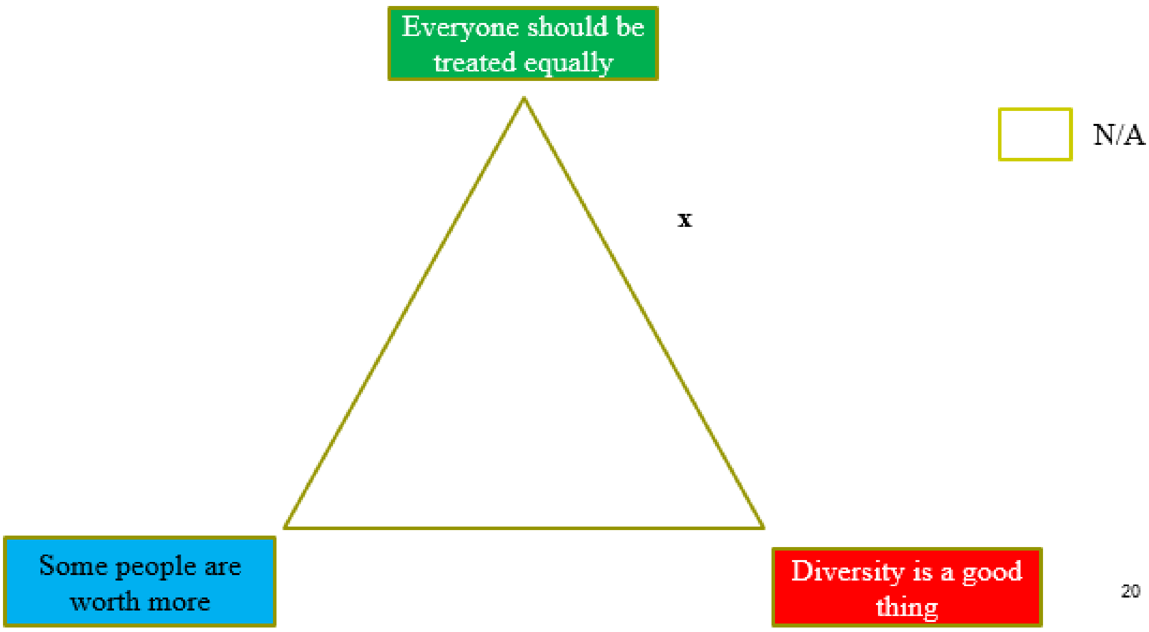
18

- **Question 25**
- In my story, the reaction of employees to implementation normally is :



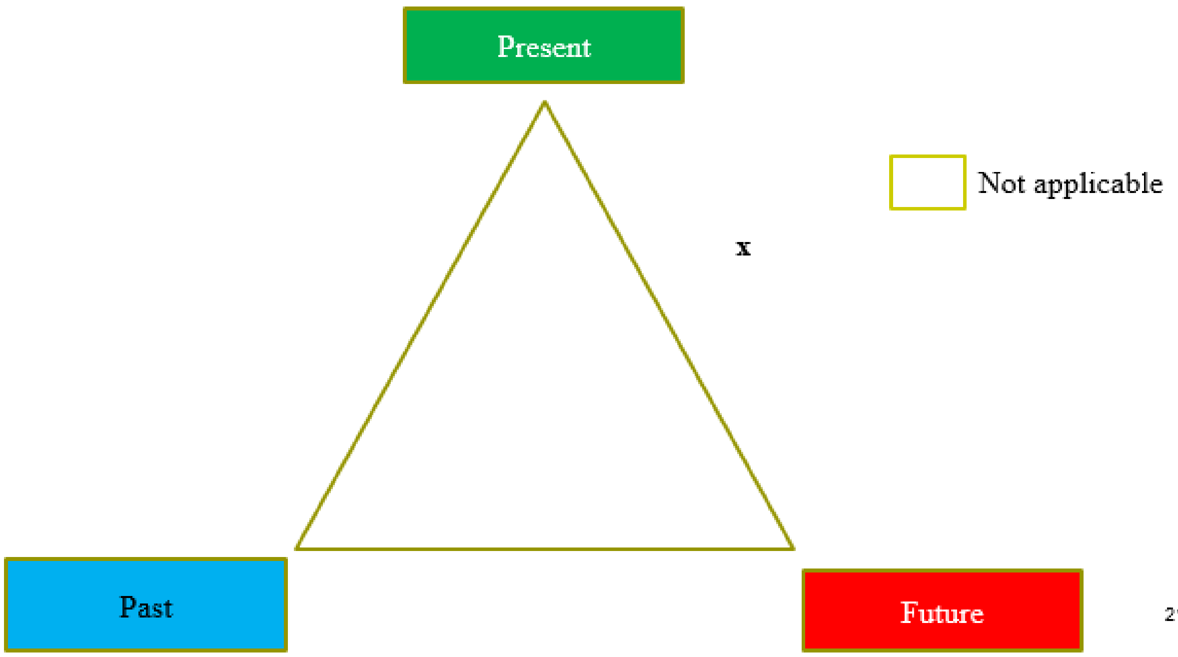
19

- **Question 26**
- Attitude towards people in my story was:



20

- **Question 27**
- In my story, strategy implementation applies to:



21

Dyads / Polarities Data

Instructions:

1. You are invited to respond to questions below by placing the sign **x** along the continuum that best describes a specific aspect of your story
2. Where the question is not present in your story, you may use " does not apply"

Example: Where teamwork and effort is requested to execute assignments people……………………

Work in isolation — x — Very cooperative

☐ Does not apply

22

Dyads/ Polarities **Source:** Cognitive Edge Pte Ltd 2015

Question 28

In conversation at work, would you say that talk about strategy implementation has been……..

Very rare and when it does happen is only between a few people — Very common

☐ Does not apply

23

- **Question 29**
- The situation described in this instance is something that…….

I worry about constantly and has me quite concerned

Does not concern me at all

☐ Does not apply

24

- **Question 30**
- The outside factors affecting implementation are ……

Completely unpredictable; chaotic

Very predictable; stable

☐ Does not apply

25

- **Question 31**
- Overall employees in this story trust each other.

Blindly without a second thought

Not one bit, they double check everything

Does not apply

26

- **Question 32**

Employees shared information..............................

Way too much

Way too little

Does not apply

27

❑Question 33

Employees perceived others……………………………….

As objects

As people

Does not apply

28

❑ Question 34

Emotions at implementation were………………………………….

Displayed inappropriately

Hidden completely

Does not apply

29

❑ Question 35
Differences on how to implement strategy was…………..

Ignored completely | Over emphasized

☐ Does not apply

30

❑ Question 36
Employees understood each other……………………………….

Not at all | All too well

☐ Does not apply

31

- ❑ **Appreciation**

Thank you very much for taking the time to share your insights on your organisation and your anticipated generous contribution to this study.

32

APPENDIX F: Measuring Instrument – Narrative Capture –In-Depth Interview Questions from Middle Management

Prompting Questions:
Q 37. Tell me stories about strategy implementation in your organisation? Can you share a story on strategy implementation in your organisation?
Q 38. Share your experience on how you judge strategy implementation in your organisation?
Q 39. Please share your experience in participating in a strategy implementation project in your organisation. Explain what happened?
Q 40. Tell me about interaction between staff and the Management. What happened?
Q 41. Share your experience on the importance of involving people, people's feeling as being a part of the organisation, agreement on strategy implementation in all levels within the organisation.
Q 42. Share your recent experience where a significant strategy implementation decision was made. What happened?
Q 43. Tell me of your experience regarding your organisation's state or quality of being connected in clear thought, understanding and executing strategy implementation.

APPENDIX G: **Narrative Capture In-Depth Interviews Responses from Middle Management**

HINDRANCES AND ENABLERS OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Res no.	Question no.	
W2	37	Most employees are aware of it but are clueless as to the proceedings.
W2	38	Sufficient information is being shared between the parties involved.
W2	39	It encourages ownership and hence effectiveness.
W2	40	I don’t know. Res no.
W2	37	Most employees are aware of it but are clueless as to the proceedings.
W2	38	Sufficient information is being shared between the parties involved.
W2	39	It encourages ownership and hence effectiveness.
W2	40	I don’t know.
W2	41	I have no experience as I have not worked in projects.
W7	37	It seems to be well, even though it is at its early stage as it has just started in April 2016
W7	38	Team work influenced the strategy implementation
W7	39	It is a new tool in our organisation so it might take time for staff to adapt, but it is good and there is interaction between staff and management.
W7	40	People feel important as they feel being part of the organisation strategy.
W7	41	There was need for training to better understand to align strategy to goals for operations.
W7	42	It will take some time to understand each other
W10	37	Often times it is just delivered and not allowing those who are instructed to voice their opinions.
W10	38	No answer.
W10	39	I feel the management most always feel their opinions are reasonable and they don’t allow just anyone in the department to employ their ideas.
W10	40	I believe organisations should consider how that has been implemented, make people feel and find out if they are comfortable working by or on such implementation initiatives.
W10	41	The supervisor of a certain department I imploded ideas with felt that if she made a decision it should stick that wayway though even though it was inconveniencing most staff.
W10	42	I feel they somehow leave the staff that needs knowledge to what is being implemented.
W10		
W10		
W13	37	The management did not communicate well with employees.
W13	38	The implementation policy was not followed accordingly.
W13	39	Since I am part of junior management, we never had a chance to participate as it was top down communication only.

W13	40	The staff felt that the management was not involving them as much as possible. Some posts were downgraded, others with numbers reduced way off.
W13		
W13	41	At my workplace strategy implementation is still in progress, it is moving at snail pace because of the numerous reasons experienced in the organisation.
W13	42	The strategy issue is still at its infancy stage and is still in the process of being aligned to the business situation.
W13	43	As part of junior management and on the ground, I strongly believe that we should be consulted, also the strategy implementation should be done by consultants with no interference from management as legitimacy will prevail.
W13		
W 15	37	Customer satisfaction and their performance and delivering of products and services.
W 15	38	Staff retreat and training this also included workshops.
W 15	39	Knowledge of education and growth and focus on how you educate employees.
W 15	40	Attract developing and retain talent to ensure effective knowledge of management and staff.
W 15	41	Active financial stability and sustainability.
W 15	42	Development of infrastructure and improving efficiency.
W18	35	It is poor and haphazard there is no ownership from lower level employees.
W18	36	There is lack of ownership and the organisation does not want to pay in order to attract competent and qualified personnel and the best.
W18	37	It is always tense and the management feels staff is accusing them and management always find ways to elude issues of concern.
W18	40	If people own the strategy, the company grows,e.g. apple,facebook, google etc
W18	41	There was chaos regarding back pays which were only made to certain individuals whilst others were left in the
W18		lurch.
W18	42	It is still not well executed because the CEO and Top Management always presents new strategy and none of all these ever and never gets implemented.
W27	37	They normally take long to implement the approved strategy.
W27	38	They normally wait for the CEO to authorize the strategy implementation.
W27	39	The interaction is normally around preparing for Christmas parties and events.
W27	40	Nothing ever happens.
W27	41	Not applicable
W33	37	Not much education is done.
W33	38	Not yet participated.

W33	39	Not effective
W33	40	They end up owning the strategy and it is implemented well.
W33	41	Not experienced it yet.
W33	42	Not experienced it yet..
W38	37	The strategy has been cascaded but the problem is that they do not implement it.
W38	38	We were only involved during cascading time after that everything stopped maybe the problem is with management.
W38	39	The management consults the staff during cascading. There are no follow ups or updates of progress.
W38	40	People should be involved so that they can have a sense of ownership and continued commitment towards achievement of objectives.
W38	41	The management does not encourage the staff to implement the strategy.
W38	42	The organisation does have strategy but the problem is the implementation. I think that there is a problem of resistant to change across the organisation.
W41	37	It is very shady and never given the necessary attention.
W41	38	Not applicable
W41	39	Very minimum interaction.
W41	40	People should be taken on board right from the beginning.
W41	41	Not applicable
W41	42	Not applicable as we are not empowered to participate in projects and therefore, how are we expected to gain experience.
W46	37	Poorly, the only implementation comes from management who are not whole heartedly interested in the organisation, and ignore the input of workers who are well acquainted in the field.
W46	38	I was allowed to bring forth ideas but nothing came of it even though they were good ideas. There was lack of will to follow through, I ended up being demoralized.
W46	39	Very little interaction between the staff were just delegated duties to do.
W46	40	Very little unity was achieved, the staff were a very vital part in the functioning of the organisation but were not treated with as much respect as they should have been.
W46	41	Some management would get upset when we started looking for employment elsewhere.
W46	42	This never happened I was only there for 3 months and all we did was talk about great ideas which were never followed through.
W46	43	It was poor throughout, all there ever was talk, but nothing grand ever happened. We desperately needed funds but no implementation was achieved in terms of strategy implementation.
W51	37	Strategy was explained to everyone before it was rolled out.
W51	38	Workshops were held and employees participated.

W51	39	Sharing of ideas and ways on how to improve the organisation performance was done.
W51	40	Everyone felt not left out in the process.
W51	41	Working as a group for a common goal.
W51	42	Strategy has improved the organisational performance.
W54	37	Strategy was explained to everyone before it was rolled out.
W54	38	Workshops were held and employees participated.
W54	39	Sharing of ideas and ways on how to improve the organisation performance was done.
W54	40	Everyone felt not left out in the process.
W54	41	Working as a group for a common goal.
W54	42	Strategy has improved the organisational performance.
W54		
W59	37	Is perceived to be the work for the top management of the organisation.
W59	38	Was not involved.
W62	37	It good for the growth of the organisation.
W62	38	Opened my mind in achieving goals.
W62	39	It built trust between staff and the management.
W62	40	When people are involved the feeling is that they develop a sense of ownership and gain the willingness to achieve any set target.
W62	41	The new CEO encouraged employees throughout the organisation that we adopt and implement the strategic management system in place, even though it took time and there was some resistance the ball is now rolling.
W62	42	Strategy implementation at my organisation has been a great experience since it has opened, minds of both staff and management and the organisation serves customers best and most goals are met in time.
W64	37	The CEO, Heads and managers just agree and implement things without consulting us at the bottom.
W64	38	We are never engaged in strategy implementation.
W64	39	The management at head office do not interact with staff.
W64	40	It is important because we must work as a team and we at the bottom are the ones who knows the operations and interact with stakeholders and customers on daily basis.
W64	41	Not applicable
W64	42	The management is quick to blame us at the lower levels. They will not want to hear our views on things rather will be quick to respond without hearing your story if ever there was a complaint from stakeholders or customers.
W69	37	Not applicable
W69	38	Not applicable
W69	39	Not applicable

W69	40	This will lead to employees being on the same level and understanding that is what strategic implementation is all about.
W69	41	Not applicable
W69	42	Not applicable
W72	37	Cannot say such because juniors are never involved.
W72	38	Not applicable
W72	39	Not applicable
W72	40	Everyone should be involved as such it affects everyone.
W72	41	Not applicable
	42	
W76	37	There is no consultation between the organisation and employees.
W76	38	Not applicable
W76	39	The staff does not know what the management is doing.
W76	40	The people will feel very happy and very important.
W76	41	Dismissal without written warning
W76	42	Not applicable
W78	37	They take too long to come up with strategy clear to the employee due to management poor performance.
W78	38	I was never involved but just here that something is going on towards strategy formulation.
W78	39	Management have appointed a group of people to re-visit the strategy and their performance is poor, no feedback, and no communication.
W78	40	It is important to involve people because this will make them to understand such strategy at the end, and even contribute with ideas.
W78	41	The organisation I am working for does not consider time management as important, does not ensure that understanding of strategy to employees is a priority.
W78	42	Implementation is poorly performaned due to too much resignation of staff and ignorance.
W81	37	Am thinking and not sure that strategy implementation is a good move, and whether it can help the organisation grow in all its operations hence the income could end up skilling employees in return.
W81	38	Not applicable
W81	39	Not applicable
W81	40	Not applicable
W81	41	Not applicable
W83	37	It is generally perceived as a top management thing.
W83	38	We were only briefed as employees but not really took part in the exercise.
W83	39	Management just informed staff about the new strategy and that they will share it once it is completed.
W83	40	For everyone to own up and feel part of the strategy implementation, they should be involved one way or the other.
W83	41	A strategy was completed by a consultant and shared with everyone, the feeling was that it is for them not us.

W83	42	A lot of us in the organisation need to be educated on strategy and what it means for them and the organisation because currently the perception is that strategy is for a certain group of people in the organisation.
W89	37	Strategy implementation is taken in a very serious manner.
W89	38	We worked together to achieve one goal, team work.
W89	39	The staff and management worked together to strategize and implement changes.
W89	40	It is very good to involve people so that we can share ideas on different views of people as we consider diversity are very important.
W89	41	Not applicable
W89	42	We come up with different options and new business ideas to implement in the new strategy.
W91	37	Not applicable
W91	38	Not applicable
W91	39	No cooperation between staff.
W91	40	They do not want to explain anything to the staff.
W91	41	Not applicable
W91	42	Not applicable
W95	37	Most of the plan activities has been implemented (about 85%).
W95	38	The organisation's contribution of money towards staff Christmas party was established/introduced, the moral of staff members was thereafter boasted.
W95	39	There was interaction, junior staff appreciated the time given by management to socialize with them.
W95	40	There will be ownership of decision making by members of staff.
W95	41	Media reported that our business is closing down, management quickly called a press conference to address customers and staff to set the record straight.
W96	37	It is one sided, only favourites are listened to.
W96	38	I was earmarked to be the manager PA but was not agreed to because I was not the favorite.
W96	39	The upper management favour another one and do not mingle with juniors.
W96	40	People are all equal, so we should all be listened to and action taken.
W96	41	The decision was made by juniors and it was not approved through constructive engagement.
W96	42	The executive always separate themselves from juniors.
W100	37	Does not exist.
W100	38	Only a few people participated.
W100	39	Nothing
W100	40	Involvement of people is important because people own the outcome.
W100	41	Not done
W100	42	Slow to act probably due to financial constraints
W109	37	It's a repetition of promises not fulfilled.

W109	38	No participation
W109	39	Back biting, favouritism, nepotism
W109	40	More ideas
W109	41	Management less concerned with the rest of staff.
W109	42	They are only concerned with the increment of their salaries.
W116	37	Slow to pick up
W116	38	Through determination and hard work, the water laboratory was able to gain international recognition through accreditation.
W116	39	Management heeded the needs of the employees appreciated the input of management.
W116	40	Everyone has an input on implementation of strategy as we all have differing points of view.
W116	41	Not applicable
W116	42	Not applicable
W119	37	Numerous strategies were implemented in our organisation and if things were done well we could be very far when it comes to good service delivery.
W119	38	Updating our records was not easy. Customers were not cooperating to provide information. We formulated so many strategies but still yet achieved nothing.
W119	39	They take too long to meet the staff therefore create gaps. They formulate some strategies without seeking our ideas.
W119	40	Our management depends on them when formulating strategies. This affects most of staff because customer grievances backfire from staff. That is when making billing adjustments they usually increase customer charges.
W119	41	Intern students and those in the internship program help in the backlog. By accepting them, they benefit learning and we benefit service delivery.
W119	42	Mobile connection, the objective is to provide maximum service to the surrounding villages in this point my organisation understands but the problem arise or mostly whereby we travel long distance but customer’s response is negative. We spend more money and our costs are mostly high than expenses.
W121	37	It is not fairly communicated across the whole organisation.
W121	38	Not applicable
W121	39	No liaison between the two parties, as it must be the case.
W121	40	When employees (people) are participants they own the strategy and work hard to make it successful.
W121	41	Not applicable.
W121	42	They are reluctant to react to the situation
W125	37	Not all employees were carried on board. There is lack of communication.
W125	38	Failure to involve employees during strategy formulation leads to employee not owning the strategy.
W125	39	There is less interaction and no communication
W125	40	Employees become committed and own the strategy implementation
W125	41	Not applicable

W125	42	The organisation takes time to implement recommendations leading to low staff morale hence poor performance by the organisation.
W126	37	Generally, discussions on the strategy are infrequent spending too much time on operations.
W126	38	Following strategy development, my section as well prepared as individuals aligned to the scorecard.
W126	39	Limited, there were focus groups, committees prior to the strategy development, thereafter strategy was shared with employees, but not at all levels.
W126	40	Involvement is key as it leads to buy in, in most cases, employees complain that consultation was not adequate. For example, considering restructuring, this was arrived at by swinging the strategy development session where management and board participated.
W126	41	Limited to regional implementation updates, which are done mainly to meet some reporting requirements.
W128	37	Waste of time and resources
W128	38	Ended up in the air
W128	39	Very low
W128	40	This will make them feel on the same boat with management and be open.
W128	41	Started scary and not completed
W128	42	Started serious and end up pumped incomplete.
W131	37	Strategy formulation and efficient planning are well coordinated then the recommendations for implementation are shelved.
W131	38	The strategic plan is not followed; once it is completed we revert to business as usual.
W131	39	Management isolates itself from staff, so there is no interaction.
W131	40	It is crucial to engage employee throughout but most employees do not feel the importance of strategy because they are excluded in most decisions
W131	41	Not experienced in it
W131	42	Not applicable.
W134	37	Strategy formulation seem to be a concern to management and the rest of the organisation is left behind which makes it difficult to buy in and drive the strategy.
W134	38	The corporation strategy did not bring the anticipated changes.
W134	39	There is poor interaction as people who are expected to execute strategy lacks direction of what was expected from them as they were not involved from the initial stage.
W134	40	Involvement of people is crucial for formulating strategy as the need for buy in, ownership, understanding and commitment will be achieved.
W134	41	As the organisation is providing essential service, business situations are understood well and the challenges coming with them are dealt with accordingly though they are sometimes beyond the organisations control.
W134	42	The challenges which faces the organisation mostly political sometime deter the organisation from implementing the strategy and

		most of the time will be spent on overcoming the anticipated challenges because of pressure from the public
W136	37	There is a gap in the implementation, continuous monitoring and evaluation lacking.
W136	38	Unknown
W136	39	Not really sure
W136	40	Not applicable
W136	41	Not applicable
W137	37	It is fair and can be improved
W137	38	The level of understanding is generally not the same, leading to lengthy discussions
W137	39	Sometimes employees view the strategy as something that belongs to management
W137	40	It is generally overlooked but it is very important to achieve buy in.
W137	41	The cascading was encompassing.
W137		One challenge pertains to resource constraints, the strategy is sometimes shelved and focus is on business as usual.
W138	37	Strategy implementation is very poor. We develop strategy and from then on focus is on something else neglecting strategy.
W138	38	My experience was with the implementation of prepaid water metering systems strategy for the disadvantaged members of the public in 2013-2014.
W138	39	The aim was to replace old legacy system and introduce new more technologically advanced systems. All in all it was a successful implementation.
W138	40	Middle managers and line managers were less keen in participating in this implementation exercise. It proved difficult for them to learn new systems that were a major problem.
W138	41	To get people on board was key, the “foot soldiers” meter readers, were more involved. The public also was very helpful. Senior management involvement went a long way in availing the necessary resources like transport.
W138	42	The introduction of cluster domestic water dispenser meters to remote villages. It is a variation as the prepaid systems which was available was aimed at relieving remote dwellers.
W138	43	This is a water utility parastatal- the responsiveness to general business situations is very low due to the size of the organisation.
W140	37	Lack of execution, no performance monitoring by both supervisor and supervisee.
W140	38	No alignment to daily operation and strategy.
W140	39	Employees at lower levels are not involved during strategy development hence there is no ownership when it comes to implementation.
W140	40	Poor communication, strategy being rolled out to employees too late often approved, levels of understanding which hampers implementation.

W140	41	The ideas are well understood, there is buy-in and support from all employees, and hence objectives of the organisation are met.
W140		Slow to implement, no sense of urgency.
W142	37	The roles are not clear and not communicated extensively to the mass.
W142	38	During when it was consultation process there was a lot of questions which indicated that people lacked information.
W142	39	The interaction was average since the two were taking time to understand each other.
W142	40	It creates ownership to all. Unknown as communication levels are rather unclear
W142	41	Not sure as we are unable to ask issues not sure of
W144	37	It is poor
W144	38	Not always explained
W144	39	Management fielded questions
W144	40	Implementation is driven by people, as such people must be carefully involved.
W144	41	A restructuring exercise, still on-going.
W144	42	Safe to lack of funds a lot is being done.
W147	37	It is key and requires periodic reviews.
W147	38	Understanding the objective and imparting it downwards the hierarchy
W147	39	It is an open door policy set-up
W147	40	It is key to achieve buy – in
W147	41	Water supply and security
W147	42	Prompt against all – odds.
W149	37	I feel the implementation is ever changing, the objective seem to be more concerned about pleasing a certain individual.
W149	38	Leadership seem not committed enough to allocate resources and rarely requires update on progress.
W149	39	Management does not know what to allocate for in implementation and what to do. Staff and management as the strategic plan drivers should all participate in my organisation.
W149	40	It is important that there is buy-in from lowest persons because they are the ones doing the job. It is very important for the organisation to work as a team in order to achieve the goals.
W151	37	I see the strategy implementation as average in our organisation.
W151	38	I was involved in coming up with new ways of best serving our clients/customers to ensure that we give them the best service.
W151	39	Management gave the staff to come up with new ways of doing the best to fulfill their duties as they are the ones who deal with them.
W151	40	I help a lot because more people will bring their ideas which may be of great importance to the organisation.
W151	41	It was welcomed and everyone showed interest on offering and having a helping hand in the implementation process.

W151	42	Our organisation is very keen to welcome new strategies which will help in adapting to new business situations as they do come.
W152	37	Strategy implementation in my organisation is done by management and human capital, other staff members are just being told about what is going on every month.
W152	38	We just being told what is going on, the organisation is implementing a strategy not really involving us in decision making.
W152	39	Poor interaction between staff and management.
W152	40	It is very crucial to involve people because after all the strategy being implemented is for them. As south is far from north so is the people and those implementing the strategy
W152	41	Unknown and not necessarily sure
W152	42	My organisation is rather slow in dealing with business situations and executing strategy implementation
W155	37	It is not transparent.
W155	38	I have not participated fully as deemed to be lower in hierarchy
W155	39	Staff is always not happy with decisions made by management as it always jeopardizes them.
W155	40	It is important as people will own to the decisions made as they will be part of those decisions.
W155	41	Organisational re-structuring which went sour and hostility prevailed.
W155	42	My organisation is bad at dealing with business situations especially staff welfare issues.
W157	37	Management will make strategy without enquiring with us.
W157	38	Strategy is done by management.
W157	39	There is a gap between management and staff. We don’t meet.
W157	40	Everyone can have his/her own saying.
W157	41	Restructuring at our work place, people were retrenched.
W157	42	It takes long to be implemented.
W159	37	We are never involved in the strategy implementation everything will be done and completed then you are given to implement something you did not have a say in it.
W159	38	I have never participated in strategy implementation.
W159	39	Staff is never happy about them not been involved and they tend to be slow in implementation.
W159	40	It is very important to involve people because when implementation comes everyone will be on the same page because they were part of decision that was taken.
W159	41	Not sure
W159	42	They are very slow when it comes to dealing with situations they only fix a problem when it is causing more harm to the business that is when it is causing more harm to the business that is business that is when they come with a strategy implementation when it is too late.
W162	37	No buy in from executives
W162	38	Auction sale strategy is to make extra cash for organisation

W162	39	Management did not pass information to junior staff auction sale was a disaster.
W162	40	People may revolt and not buy in if not properly consulted.
W162	41	Everything slows no keeners.
W166	37	I judge strategy as a cost beneficiary to the organisation as it brought efficiency.
W166	38	I was not involved in the project.
W166	39	The interaction was perfect as it was well communicated.
W166	40	Everyone is important as they are the driver of the strategy in the organisation for it to achieve.
W166	41	It brought good results and the organisation's objectives achieved.
W169	37	First of all people do not understand our organisation's strategy.
W169	38	People have to be taught about strategy and what it stands for and the importance.
W169	39	Management knows the strategy and they do not come forth to teach and discuss strategic issues with the staff.
W169	40	A strategy can never be implemented if people do not understand or know little about it.
W169	41	I have little information on current strategies.
W169	42	They deal with business situations. Strategy implementations I have no comment.
W170	37	It is more of a response mode approach rather than forecast.
W170	38	Told what has been decided.
W170	39	Management announces plans and decisions what employees think does not matter.
W170	40	Not applicable
W170	41	Unknown
W170	42	No one seem to know what has to be done and by who.
W171	37	Management waits until there is a crisis that is when they start implementing certain strategies.
W171	38	Data clean up strategy. It has never come to an end because some employees were pulled back during the project.
W171	39	Management was interacting perfectly only other supervisors told the staff to come back to their normal duties.
W171	40	People will work as a team and work collectively.
W171	41	We were all willing to execute what was said to be done.
W171	42	They do understand unfortunately there are so many people to report to and too many instructions from different supervisors or management.
W172	37	Clearly understood
W172	38	No consultation with the junior staff on how best to implement. Most of the time managers will come with a complete idea instead of getting it from employees.
W172	39	Management wants to take full responsibility rather than let staff own the strategy.
W172	40	Improve ownership by customer for service rendered.

W172	41	Increase in tariffs- so many complaints from customers because of the bill brought by change in tariffs.
W172	42	Very quick to react to the situation.
W2	41	I have no experience as I have not worked in projects.
W7	37	It seems to be well, even though it is at its early stage as it has just started in April 2016
W7	38	Team work influenced the strategy implementation
W7	39	It is a new tool in our organisation so it might take time for staff to adapt, but it is good and there is interaction between staff and management.
W7	40	People feel important as they feel being part of the organisation strategy.
W7	41	There was need for training to better understand to align strategy to goals for operations.
W7	42	It will take some time to understand each other
W10	37	Often times it is just delivered and not allowing those who are instructed to voice their opinions.
W10	38	No answer.
W10	39	I feel the management most always feel their opinions are reasonable and they don't allow just anyone in the department to employ their ideas.
W10	40	I believe organisations should consider how that has been implemented, make people feel and find out if they are comfortable working by or on such implementation initiatives.
W10	41	The supervisor of a certain department I imploded ideas with felt that if she made a decision it should stick that wayway though even though it was inconveniencing most staff.
W10	42	I feel they somehow leave the staff that needs knowledge to what is being implemented.
W10		
W10		
W13	37	The management did not communicate well with employees.
W13	38	The implementation policy was not followed accordingly.
W13	39	Since I am part of junior management, we never had a chance to participate as it was top down communication only.
W13	40	The staff felt that the management was not involving them as much as possible. Some posts were downgraded, others with numbers reduced way off.
W13		
W13	41	At my workplace strategy implementation is still in progress, it is moving at snail pace because of the numerous reasons experienced in the organisation.
W13	42	The strategy issue is still at its infancy stage and is still in the process of being aligned to the business situation.
W13	43	As part of junior management and on the ground, I strongly believe that we should be consulted, also the strategy implementation should be done by consultants with no interference from management as legitimacy will prevail.
W13		

W 15	37	Customer satisfaction and their performance and delivering of products and services.
W 15	38	Staff retreat and training this also included workshops.
W 15	39	Knowledge of education and growth and focus on how you educate employees.
W 15	40	Attract developing and retain talent to ensure effective knowledge of management and staff.
W 15	41	Active financial stability and sustainability.
W 15	42	Development of infrastructure and improving efficiency.
W18	35	It is poor and haphazard there is no ownership from lower level employees.
W18	36	There is lack of ownership and the organisation does not want to pay in order to attract competent and qualified personnel and the best.
W18	37	It is always tense and the management feels staff is accusing them and management always find ways to elude issues of concern.
W18	40	If people own the strategy, the company grows,e.g. apple,facebook, google etc
W18	41	There was chaos regarding back pays which were only made to certain individuals whilst others were left in the
W18		lurch.
W18	42	It is still not well executed because the CEO and Top Management always presents new strategy and none of all these ever and never gets implemented.
W27	37	They normally take long to implement the approved strategy.
W27	38	They normally wait for the CEO to authorize the strategy implementation.
W27	39	The interaction is normally around preparing for Christmas parties and events.
W27	40	Nothing ever happens.
W27	41	Not applicable
W33	37	Not much education is done.
W33	38	Not yet participated.
W33	39	Not effective
W33	40	They end up owning the strategy and it is implemented well.
W33	41	Not experienced it yet.
W33	42	Not experienced it yet..
W38	37	The strategy has been cascaded but the problem is that they do not implement it.
W38	38	We were only involved during cascading time after that everything stopped maybe the problem is with management.
W38	39	The management consults the staff during cascading. There are no follow ups or updates of progress.
W38	40	People should be involved so that they can have a sense of ownership and continued commitment towards achievement of objectives.

W38	41	The management does not encourage the staff to implement the strategy.
W38	42	The organisation does have strategy but the problem is the implementation. I think that there is a problem of resistant to change across the organisation.
W41	37	It is very shady and never given the necessary attention.
W41	38	Not applicable
W41	39	Very minimum interaction.
W41	40	People should be taken on board right from the beginning.
W41	41	Not applicable
W41	42	Not applicable as we are not empowered to participate in projects and therefore, how are we expected to gain experience.
W46	37	Poorly, the only implementation comes from management who are not whole heartedly interested in the organisation, and ignore the input of workers who are well acquainted in the field.
W46	38	I was allowed to bring forth ideas but nothing came of it even though they were good ideas. There was lack of will to follow through, I ended up being demoralized.
W46	39	Very little interaction between the staff were just delegated duties to do.
W46	40	Very little unity was achieved, the staff were a very vital part in the functioning of the organisation but were not treated with as much respect as they should have been.
W46	41	Some management would get upset when we started looking for employment elsewhere.
W46	42	This never happened I was only there for 3 months and all we did was talk about great ideas which were never followed through.
W46	43	It was poor throughout, all there ever was talk, but nothing grand ever happened. We desperately needed funds but no implementation was achieved in terms of strategy implementation.
W51	37	Strategy was explained to everyone before it was rolled out.
W51	38	Workshops were held and employees participated.
W51	39	Sharing of ideas and ways on how to improve the organisation performance was done.
W51	40	Everyone felt not left out in the process.
W51	41	Working as a group for a common goal.
W51	42	Strategy has improved the organisational performance.
W54	37	Strategy was explained to everyone before it was rolled out.
W54	38	Workshops were held and employees participated.
W54	39	Sharing of ideas and ways on how to improve the organisation performance was done.
W54	40	Everyone felt not left out in the process.
W54	41	Working as a group for a common goal.
W54	42	Strategy has improved the organisational performance.
W54		

W59	37	Is perceived to be the work for the top management of the organisation.
W59	38	Was not involved.
W62	37	It good for the growth of the organisation.
W62	38	Opened my mind in achieving goals.
W62	39	It built trust between staff and the management.
W62	40	When people are involved the feeling is that they develop a sense of ownership and gain the willingness to achieve any set target.
W62	41	The new CEO encouraged employees throughout the organisation that we adopt and implement the strategic management system in place, even though it took time and there was some resistance the ball is now rolling.
W62	42	Strategy implementation at my organisation has been a great experience since it has opened, minds of both staff and management and the organisation serves customers best and most goals are met in time.
W64	37	The CEO, Heads and managers just agree and implement things without consulting us at the bottom.
W64	38	We are never engaged in strategy implementation.
W64	39	The management at head office do not interact with staff.
W64	40	It is important because we must work as a team and we at the bottom are the ones who knows the operations and interact with stakeholders and customers on daily basis.
W64	41	Not applicable
W64	42	The management is quick to blame us at the lower levels. They will not want to hear our views on things rather will be quick to respond without hearing your story if ever there was a complaint from stakeholders or customers.
W69	37	Not applicable
W69	38	Not applicable
W69	39	Not applicable
W69	40	This will lead to employees being on the same level and understanding that is what strategic implementation is all about.
W69	41	Not applicable
W69	42	Not applicable
W72	37	Cannot say such because juniors are never involved.
W72	38	Not applicable
W72	39	Not applicable
W72	40	Everyone should be involved as such it affects everyone.
W72	41	Not applicable
	42	
W76	37	There is no consultation between the organisation and employees.
W76	38	Not applicable
W76	39	The staff does not know what the management is doing.
W76	40	The people will feel very happy and very important.

W76	41	Dismissal without written warning
W76	42	Not applicable
W78	37	They take too long to come up with strategy clear to the employee due to management poor performance.
W78	38	I was never involved but just here that something is going on towards strategy formulation.
W78	39	Management have appointed a group of people to re-visit the strategy and their performance is poor, no feedback, and no communication.
W78	40	It is important to involve people because this will make them to understand such strategy at the end, and even contribute with ideas.
W78	41	The organisation I am working for does not consider time management as important, does not ensure that understanding of strategy to employees is a priority.
W78	42	Implementation is poorly performaned due to too much resignation of staff and ignorance.
W81	37	Am thinking and not sure that strategy implementation is a good move, and whether it can help the organisation grow in all its operations hence the income could end up skilling employees in return.
W81	38	Not applicable
W81	39	Not applicable
W81	40	Not applicable
W81	41	Not applicable
W83	37	It is generally perceived as a top management thing.
W83	38	We were only briefed as employees but not really took part in the exercise.
W83	39	Management just informed staff about the new strategy and that they will share it once it is completed.
W83	40	For everyone to own up and feel part of the strategy implementation, they should be involved one way or the other.
W83	41	A strategy was completed by a consultant and shared with everyone, the feeling was that it is for them not us.
W83	42	A lot of us in the organisation need to be educated on strategy and what it means for them and the organisation because currently the perception is that strategy is for a certain group of people in the organisation.
W89	37	Strategy implementation is taken in a very serious manner.
W89	38	We worked together to achieve one goal, team work.
W89	39	The staff and management worked together to strategize and implement changes.
W89	40	It is very good to involve people so that we can share ideas on different views of people as we consider diversity are very important.
W89	41	Not applicable
W89	42	We come up with different options and new business ideas to implement in the new strategy.

W91	37	Not applicable
W91	38	Not applicable
W91	39	No cooperation between staff.
W91	40	They do not want to explain anything to the staff.
W91	41	Not applicable
W91	42	Not applicable
W95	37	Most of the plan activities has been implemented (about 85%).
W95	38	The organisation's contribution of money towards staff Christmas party was established/introduced, the moral of staff members was thereafter boasted.
W95	39	There was interaction, junior staff appreciated the time given by management to socialize with them.
W95	40	There will be ownership of decision making by members of staff.
W95	41	Media reported that our business is closing down, management quickly called a press conference to address customers and staff to set the record straight.
W96	37	It is one sided, only favourites are listened to.
W96	38	I was earmarked to be the manager PA but was not agreed to because I was not the favorite.
W96	39	The upper management favour another one and do not mingle with juniors.
W96	40	People are all equal, so we should all be listened to and action taken.
W96	41	The decision was made by juniors and it was not approved through constructive engagement.
W96	42	The executive always separate themselves from juniors.
W100	37	Does not exist.
W100	38	Only a few people participated.
W100	39	Nothing
W100	40	Involvement of people is important because people own the outcome.
W100	41	Not done
W100	42	Slow to act probably due to financial constraints
W109	37	It's a repetition of promises not fulfilled.
W109	38	No participation
W109	39	Back biting, favouritism,nepotism
W109	40	More ideas
W109	41	Management less concerned with the rest of staff.
W109	42	They are only concerned with the increment of their salaries.
W116	37	Slow to pick up
W116	38	Through determination and hard work, the water laboratory was able to gain international recognition through accreditation.
W116	39	Management heeded the needs of the employees appreciated the input of management.
W116	40	Everyone has an input on implementation of strategy as we all have differing points of view.
W116	41	Not applicable
W116	42	Not applicable

W119	37	Numerous strategies were implemented in our organisation and if things were done well we could be very far when it comes to good service delivery.
W119	38	Updating our records was not easy. Customers were not cooperating to provide information. We formulated so many strategies but still yet achieved nothing.
W119	39	They take too long to meet the staff therefore create gaps. They formulate some strategies without seeking our ideas.
W119	40	Our management depends on them when formulating strategies. This affects most of staff because customer grievances backfire from staff. That is when making billing adjustments they usually increase customer charges.
W119	41	Intern students and those in the internship program help in the backlog. By accepting them, they benefit learning and we benefit service delivery.
W119	42	Mobile connection, the objective is to provide maximum service to the surrounding villages in this point my organisation understands but the problem arise or mostly whereby we travel long distance but customer's response is negative. We spend more money and our costs are mostly high than expenses.
W121	37	It is not fairly communicated across the whole organisation.
W121	38	Not applicable
W121	39	No liaison between the two parties, as it must be the case.
W121	40	When employees (people) are participants they own the strategy and work hard to make it successful.
W121	41	Not applicable.
W121	42	They are reluctant to react to the situation
W125	37	Not all employees were carried on board. There is lack of communication.
W125	38	Failure to involve employees during strategy formulation leads to employee not owning the strategy.
W125	39	There is less interaction and no communication
W125	40	Employees become committed and own the strategy implementation
W125	41	Not applicable
W125	42	The organisation takes time to implement recommendations leading to low staff morale hence poor performance by the organisation.
W126	37	Generally, discussions on the strategy are infrequent spending too much time on operations.
W126	38	Following strategy development, my section as well prepared as individuals aligned to the scorecard.
W126	39	Limited, there were focus groups, committees prior to the strategy development, thereafter strategy was shared with employees, but not at all levels.
W126	40	Involvement is key as it leads to buy in, in most cases, employees complain that consultation was not adequate. For example, considering restructuring, this was arrived at by swinging the strategy development session where management and board participated.

W126	41	Limited to regional implementation updates, which are done mainly to meet some reporting requirements.
W128	37	Waste of time and resources
W128	38	Ended up in the air
W128	39	Very low
W128	40	This will make them feel on the same boat with management and be open.
W128	41	Started scary and not completed
W128	42	Started serious and end up pumped incomplete.
W131	37	Strategy formulation and efficient planning are well coordinated then the recommendations for implementation are shelved.
W131	38	The strategic plan is not followed; once it is completed we revert to business as usual.
W131	39	Management isolates itself from staff, so there is no interaction.
W131	40	It is crucial to engage employee throughout but most employees do not feel the importance of strategy because they are excluded in most decisions
W131	41	Not experienced in it
W131	42	Not applicable.
W134	37	Strategy formulation seem to be a concern to management and the rest of the organisation is left behind which makes it difficult to buy in and drive the strategy.
W134	38	The corporation strategy did not bring the anticipated changes.
W134	39	There is poor interaction as people who are expected to execute strategy lacks direction of what was expected from them as they were not involved from the initial stage.
W134	40	Involvement of people is crucial for formulating strategy as the need for buy in, ownership, understanding and commitment will be achieved.
W134	41	As the organisation is providing essential service, business situations are understood well and the challenges coming with them are dealt with accordingly though they are sometimes beyond the organisations control.
W134	42	The challenges which faces the organisation mostly political sometime deter the organisation from implementing the strategy and most of the time will be spent on overcoming the anticipated challenges because of pressure from the public
W136	37	There is a gap in the implementation, continuous monitoring and evaluation lacking.
W136	38	Unknown
W136	39	Not really sure
W136	40	Not applicable
W136	41	Not applicable
W137	37	It is fair and can be improved
W137	38	The level of understanding is generally not the same, leading to lengthy discussions

W137	39	Sometimes employees view the strategy as something that belongs to management
W137	40	It is generally overlooked but it is very important to achieve buy in.
W137	41	The cascading was encompassing.
W137		One challenge pertains to resource constraints, the strategy is sometimes shelved and focus is on business as usual.
W138	37	Strategy implementation is very poor. We develop strategy and from then on focus is on something else neglecting strategy.
W138	38	My experience was with the implementation of prepaid water metering systems strategy for the disadvantaged members of the public in 2013-2014.
W138	39	The aim was to replace old legacy system and introduce new more technologically advanced systems. All in all it was a successful implementation.
W138	40	Middle managers and line managers were less keen in participating in this implementation exercise. It proved difficult for them to learn new systems that were a major problem.
W138	41	To get people on board was key, the “foot soldiers” meter readers, were more involved. The public also was very helpful. Senior management involvement went a long way in availing the necessary resources like transport.
W138	42	The introduction of cluster domestic water dispenser meters to remote villages. It is a variation as the prepaid systems which was available was aimed at relieving remote dwellers.
W138	43	This is a water utility parastatal- the responsiveness to general business situations is very low due to the size of the organisation.
W140	37	Lack of execution, no performance monitoring by both supervisor and supervisee.
W140	38	No alignment to daily operation and strategy.
W140	39	Employees at lower levels are not involved during strategy development hence there is no ownership when it comes to implementation.
W140	40	Poor communication, strategy being rolled out to employees too late often approved, levels of understanding which hampers implementation.
W140	41	The ideas are well understood, there is buy-in and support from all employees, and hence objectives of the organisation are met.
W140		Slow to implement, no sense of urgency.
W142	37	The roles are not clear and not communicated extensively to the mass.
W142	38	During when it was consultation process there was a lot of questions which indicated that people lacked information.
W142	39	The interaction was average since the two were taking time to understand each other.
W142	40	It creates ownership to all. Unknown as communication levels are rather unclear

W142	41	Not sure as we are unable to ask issues not sure of
W144	37	It is poor
W144	38	Not always explained
W144	39	Management fielded questions
W144	40	Implementation is driven by people, as such people must be carefully involved.
W144	41	A restructuring exercise, still on-going.
W144	42	Safe to lack of funds a lot is being done.
W147	37	It is key and requires periodic reviews.
W147	38	Understanding the objective and imparting it downwards the hierarchy
W147	39	It is an open door policy set-up
W147	40	It is key to achieve buy – in
W147	41	Water supply and security
W147	42	Prompt against all – odds.
W149	37	I feel the implementation is ever changing, the objective seem to be more concerned about pleasing a certain individual.
W149	38	Leadership seem not committed enough to allocate resources and rarely requires update on progress.
W149	39	Management does not know what to allocate for in implementation and what to do. Staff and management as the strategic plan drivers should all participate in my organisation.
W149	40	It is important that there is buy-in from lowest persons because they are the ones doing the job. It is very important for the organisation to work as a team in order to achieve the goals.
W151	37	I see the strategy implementation as average in our organisation.
W151	38	I was involved in coming up with new ways of best serving our clients/customers to ensure that we give them the best service.
W151	39	Management gave the staff to come up with new ways of doing the best to fulfill their duties as they are the ones who deal with them.
W151	40	I help a lot because more people will bring their ideas which may be of great importance to the organisation.
W151	41	It was welcomed and everyone showed interest on offering and having a helping hand in the implementation process.
W151	42	Our organisation is very keen to welcome new strategies which will help in adapting to new business situations as they do come.
W152	37	Strategy implementation in my organisation is done by management and human capital, other staff members are just being told about what is going on every month.
W152	38	We just being told what is going on, the organisation is implementing a strategy not really involving us in decision making.
W152	39	Poor interaction between staff and management.
W152	40	It is very crucial to involve people because after all the strategy being implemented is for them. As south is far from north so is the people and those implementing the strategy
W152	41	Unknown and not necessarily sure

W152	42	My organisation is rather slow in dealing with business situations and executing strategy implementation
W155	37	It is not transparent.
W155	38	I have not participated fully as deemed to be lower in hierarchy
W155	39	Staff is always not happy with decisions made by management as it always jeopardizes them.
W155	40	It is important as people will own to the decisions made as they will be part of those decisions.
W155	41	Organisational re-structuring which went sour and hostility prevailed.
W155	42	My organisation is bad at dealing with business situations especially staff welfare issues.
W157	37	Management will make strategy without enquiring with us.
W157	38	Strategy is done by management.
W157	39	There is a gap between management and staff. We don't meet.
W157	40	Everyone can have his/her own saying.
W157	41	Restructuring at our work place, people were retrenched.
W157	42	It takes long to be implemented.
W159	37	We are never involved in the strategy implementation everything will be done and completed then you are given to implement something you did not have a say in it.
W159	38	I have never participated in strategy implementation.
W159	39	Staff is never happy about them not been involved and they tend to be slow in implementation.
W159	40	It is very important to involve people because when implementation comes everyone will be on the same page because they were part of decision that was taken.
W159	41	Not sure
W159	42	They are very slow when it comes to dealing with situations they only fix a problem when it is causing more harm to the business that is when it is causing more harm to the business that is business that is when they come with a strategy implementation when it is too late.
W162	37	No buy in from executives
W162	38	Auction sale strategy is to make extra cash for organisation
W162	39	Management did not pass information to junior staff auction sale was a disaster.
W162	40	People may revolt and not buy in if not properly consulted.
W162	41	Everything slows no keeners.
W166	37	I judge strategy as a cost beneficiary to the organisation as it brought efficiency.
W166	38	I was not involved in the project.
W166	39	The interaction was perfect as it was well communicated.
W166	40	Everyone is important as they are the driver of the strategy in the organisation for it to achieve.
W166	41	It brought good results and the organisation's objectives achieved.

W169	37	First of all people do not understand our organisation's strategy.
W169	38	People have to be taught about strategy and what it stands for and the importance.
W169	39	Management knows the strategy and they do not come forth to teach and discuss strategic issues with the staff.
W169	40	A strategy can never be implemented if people do not understand or know little about it.
W169	41	I have little information on current strategies.
W169	42	They deal with business situations. Strategy implementations I have no comment.
W170	37	It is more of a response mode approach rather than forecast.
W170	38	Told what has been decided.
W170	39	Management announces plans and decisions what employees think does not matter.
W170	40	Not applicable
W170	41	Unknown
W170	42	No one seem to know what has to be done and by who.
W171	37	Management waits until there is a crisis that is when they start implementing certain strategies.
W171	38	Data clean up strategy. It has never come to an end because some employees were pulled back during the project.
W171	39	Management was interacting perfectly only other supervisors told the staff to come back to their normal duties.
W171	40	People will work as a team and work collectively.
W171	41	We were all willing to execute what was said to be done.
W171	42	They do understand unfortunately there are so many people to report to and too many instructions from different supervisors or management.
W172	37	Clearly understood
W172	38	No consultation with the junior staff on how best to implement. Most of the time managers will come with a complete idea instead of getting it from employees.
W172	39	Management wants to take full responsibility rather than let staff own the strategy.
W172	40	Improve ownership by customer for service rendered.
W172	41	Increase in tariffs- so many complaints from customers because of the bill brought by change in tariffs.
W172	42	Very quick to react to the situation.

APPENDIX H: Measuring Instrument – Narrative Capture Questions –In-Depth Interview from Top Management and Senior Management

Opening Questions:
Q 44. Tell me about strategy implementation in your organisation. Please share with me information on your organisation.
Q 45. Can you tell me about what you do in your organisation?
Q 46. How long have you worked in this position? What did you do before your took this position?
Q47. Can you tell me about your other experience in strategy implementation?
Q 48. Can you tell me about any strategy project you have previously been engaged in? What strategy project are you currently engaged on.
Q 49. How do you address or explain this strategy project to customers? How did you explain or address the strategy project to your staff?
Q 50. What role did you play in implementing the strategy in the project?
Q 51. What communications process is in place between the head office and branch offices? Have you ever shared any communication package (memos, circulars etc?) with your staff?
Q 52. What have been your biggest communications obstacles in implementing the project?
Q 53. How has the strategy project affected your job and the organisation in general?
Q 54. In your view, would you describe the strategy project as a success?
Q 55. What concerns do you have about some issues in the project?

APPENDIX I: Narrative Capture In-Depth Interviews Responses from Top Management and Senior Management

HINDRANCES AND ENABLERS OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

W 1	44	The ideal honesty is that strategy in place is not owned for it is not understood.
W 1	45	I manage water and waste water resources.
W1	46	10 Years and I did manage DWA Molepolole region.
W I	47	Strategy implementation needs to be owned first by those on the level to enable easy of cascading.
W I	48	360 method if employee assessment for the bet and honest ratings. Currently have none.
W I	49	Proper explanation of the intended outcome of the project in an open discussion form.
W I	50	Team leader.
W I	51	No comment.
W I	52	Change of goal posts along the way.
W I	53	Not known.
W I	54	Poor implementation.
W I	55	
W 8	44	Strategy is available but very limited resources have been committed.
W 8	45	Work as Principal Occupational Health and Safety Officer
W 8	46	5 years
W 8	47	Strategy implementation within WUC is influenced by the objectives government intends to achieve.
W 8	48	Not applicable
W 8	49	Through workshops for WUC staff and SHE talks.
W 8	50	Not applicable
W 8	51	Memos, emails
W 8	52	Lack of responding to emails by some staff.
W 8	53	Delayed drafting of the individual balance score card.
W 8	54	50% at the least
W 8	55	Lack of resources to achieve the organisational strategy goals.
W 11	44	Moving at a slow pace.
W 11	45	Supervising operational issues
W 11	46	6 years
W 11	47	Not applicable
W 11	48	Corporation financial turnaround strategy
W 11	49	Through briefing and videos and colourful stickers and placards.
W 11	50	Change agent
W 11	51	Emails and circulars, yes always sharing.
W 11	52	Conversant I trust my supervisees are not very fluent in English and mostly themes are in English.
W 11	53	Moving slowly, still dealing with changing individual attitude towards change.
W 11	54	Not really, more ground work needs to be done.

W 11	55	Employee engagement and their willingness to effect the necessary changes.
W 30	44	Quite discouraging and not necessarily positive.
W 30	45	Middle Management functions on all water functions generally.
W 30	46	12 years
W 30	47	Engagement on various projects in the past
W 30	48	Water reticulation and provision of related services.
W 30	49	Workshops are ran for staff, address to customers and the general public.
W 30	50	Facilitator going all out
W 30	51	Memos, notices
W 30	52	Little strategic communication, just operational or tactical staff
W 30	53	Not quite successful
W 30	54	Not quite successful
W 30	55	Resources shortages
W 44	44	Not quite explained to all staff
W 44	45	Not applicable
W 44	46	Years Water purification
W 44	47	Training over more than 5 years
W 44	48	Water purification projects
W 44	49	Coordinator of the projects
W 44	50	Workshops and meetings in villages
W 44	51	Memos and circulars were used.
W 44	52	Head office communication with branches not adequately covered.
W 44	53	Not affected at all
W 44	54	To some extent probably
W 44	55	Constant engagement of staff as the strategy implementation progresses
W 50	44	It needs to well-planned and strategized.
W 50	45	I implement projects
W 50	46	15 years
W 50	47	Partake in the strategy implementation
W 50	48	None so far
W 50	49	I re-directed them
W 50	50	I am an actor
W 50	51	Memos and internal emails and intra net
W 50	52	Communication between the various departments and the general public
W 50	53	To some extend it has assisted in streamlining our job functions
W 50	54	Progressing quite favorably but not sure whether goals will be reached
W 50	55	Challenges include constant feedback top, bottom and celebrating achievement of goals and milestones
W 112	44	Strategy implementation is reflected in the scorecard, which is to be reviewed monthly.
W 112	45	Technical advice and engineering services

W 112	46	5 years so far
W 112	47	We formulate strategy however when it comes to implementation it is fire – fighting
W 112	48	Francistown water meter plan, Chobe –Zambezi – looking beyond 2026.
W 112	49	Reference / Technical committee and the P.I.A. address public.
W 112	50	Engineering services
W 112	51	Yes memos are shared
W 112	52	Lack of resources which issues are rarely communicated to staff
W 112	53	Increased revenue for the organisation
W 112	54	Yes, negatively as there are now job differences.
W 112	55	Local contractor engaged by this organisation is generally poor in delivery.
W 115	44	Mixed feeling, not necessarily good according to our expectations
W 115	45	Water Quality Inspector
W 115	46	2 years since leaving university education
W 115	47	1 year experience
W 115	48	Never before, but current of will strategy at water quality section.
W 115	49	Customers never discussed with fellow employees, a lot of us are learning the formulation and implementation.
W 115	50	To meet set goals by day to day, activities of customer satisfaction, revenue generation, timely reporting of laboratory results, increase accessibility
W 115	51	Yes, effective communication enhanced even by provision of cell phone gadgets.
W 115	52	Having to rely or exchange information with fellow staff members that are doubtful and less conversant with the issues.
W 115	53	There is some level of improvement though insignificant. Generally it is believed on paper but lack serious implementation.
W 115	54	No, 20% success rate
W 115	55	The lower staff cadre disowned the strategy because management had implemented the strategy structure, where the lower level was left out and they felt management be littled them
W 118	44	No much about any because the one which was introduced to me to be part of did not work well, failed and later was discontinued.
W 118	45	Moving in customers in order to be billed
W 118	46	Five years
W 118	47	No idea
W 118	48	Never worked
W 118	49	Failed before a completion was done, dead on the way.
W 118	50	Partially
W 118	51	It seems everything which needs to be done is like directive no involvement with everybody in the organisation.
W 118	52	Lack of information was impediment to employees
W 118	53	Indeed it did affect the organisation because it did not benefit the organisation, did not meet its goal.
W 118	54	I do not think the strategy project was a success due to financial constraints.
W 118	55	Projects are being initiated but never fulfilled.

W 124	44	Strategy implementation initiatives have made considerable progress.
W 124	45	As SHEQ Manager I ensure implementation of safety Health Quality and Environment programs.
W 124	46	6 years.
W 124	47	Was part of the strategy implementation and monitoring project team in the past
W 124	48	Water Quality Monitoring.
W 124	49	Through internal workshops.
W 124	50	As part of management, I also participate in formulation, monitoring.
W 124	51	Interact, workshops.
W 124	52	The geographical spread of the operations of the corporation.
W 124	53	Makes it more focused.
W 124	54	There is room for improvement.
W 124	55	Resource allocation is a challenge.
W 131	44	Strategy implementation in general is not taken serious.
W 131	45	Non-Revenue Management.
W 131	46	4 1/2 years.
W 131	47	6 years to date.
W 131	48	Water less reduction in greater Gaborone area.
W 131	49	There are communication tools in places.
W 131	50	Project supervision for successful completion.
W 131	51	Communications by email at most times, memos. I do share information.
W 131	52	None.
W 131	53	Did not affect negatively but rather positively.
W 131	54	Yes.
W 131	55	Lack of buy- in from management.
W 141	44	Strategy formulated by Senior Management and cascaded down to the rest of the staff
W 141	45	Profit implementation
W 141	46	6 years
W 141	47	Balance score card and quality management system at DWA
W 141	48	Public Education
W 141	49	Meetings in different localities and internal staff workshop
W 141	50	Supervisor water resources
W 141	51	Use of emails, memos. Staff notices are used to relay the message.
W 141	52	Information flow to lower levels is not always smooth
W 141	53	Got me involved in various projects which at times is hectic.
W 141	54	Relative
W 141	55	Lack of funding in effective implementation of the strategy.
W 145	44	Top down
W 145	45	Audit
W 145	46	5 years, before worked in another organisation
W 145	47	Linking employment contract performance objectives to strategy in place
W 145	48	Currently running strategy 2016-2018
W 145	49	Staff monthly meetings and strategy review sessions

W 145	50	Coordinator of workshops/ public engagements
W 145	51	Audit reports enacting findings and recommendations of how efficiently improve internal processes are not fully adhered to.
W 145	52	Ownership and accountability
W 145	53	Improve a bit
W 145	54	It should be a success if implemented properly
W 145	55	Imposition into people without prior engagement to feel belonging to decisions agreed on the projects

APPENDIX J

ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations were used in this text:

AMJ – Academy of Management Journal

AMR – Academy of Management Review

BT -British Telecom

CDBA – Cost of Doing Business Abroad

COO – Country of Origin

EEMNEs – Emerging Economy Multinational Enterprises

IBR – International Business Review

LOF- Liability of Foreignness

LOH – Liability of Home

LOM – Liability of Multinationality

MIR – Management International Review

MNE – Multinational Enterprise

OFM – Organisational Fitness Model

OFP – Organisational Fitness Profiling

RVB – Resource Base View

S-A-P – Strategy –As- Practice

SBU – Strategic Business Unit

SILS – Strategy Implementation Liabilities

SMJ- Strategic Management Journal

S-O-R – Stimulus-Organism-Response

SWOT – Strength Weakness Opportunities and Threats

WUC – Water Utilities Corporation

SWOT – Strength Weakness Opportunities and Threats

TNCs - Transnational Corporations

WSRP - Water Sector Reforms Programme

WUC – Water Utilities Corporation

APPENDIX K:

Case Organisation – Water Utilities Corporation (WUC)

1. Introduction

WUC is a parastatal organisation wholly owned by the Government of Botswana. It was established in 1970 by an Act of Parliament with a mandate to manage a single project for the supply and distribution of water in what was then called the Shashe Development Area. In the forty –six years since its inception, the Corporations mandate has expanded to supplying portable water to all urban centres and villages in the country, as well as managing wastewater and sanitation.

2. Strategic objectives

The WUC has identified key strategic objectives to guide its business activities, focus and the allocation of resources for its 2015-2018 planning period. The corporation's strategic intent include; financial growth sustainability, stakeholder management, service delivery and quality assurance, leadership effectiveness , infrastructure development and operational efficiency underpinned by the mission to provide sustainable water and wastewater management services in a cost effective and environmentally friendly manner to the economy (www.wuc.bw/wuc-content/id/143/corporate-profile/). In implementing its strategy choice the corporation used a strategic framework critical to its business success - the Balanced Score Card. The perspectives encapsulated therein include: Financial perspective, Customer perspective, Learning and innovation perspective and Internal business perspective.

3. Strategy

It was anticipated and acknowledged that gaining access into the targeted organisation for participation in the case study research would be the most challenging tasks in the research process especially due to the ingrained culture of employees fearing to share information. As previously indicated there was water crisis in the country in 2015/2016 such that it because a 'political issue' and therefore, the sensitivity of the information to be shared seemed to be the main factor causing the organisation to be hesitant to share their strategy including the strategy plans in blue print form.

The corporation was adamant to share its strategy, but the identified strategic intents outlined above and enumerated below shared some insights as to the possible strategy being pursued.

Table 1: Strategic intent and themes of Water Utilities Corporation

Strategic Intent	Strategic Themes
• Leadership effectiveness	- To improve the performance culture of the organisation. - To improve staff morale and motivation.
• Stakeholder management	- To increase stakeholder satisfaction.
• Service delivery and quality assurance	- To develop and implement a Rural Water Supply Services Policy. - To develop and implement a new business model. - To align existing policies with the operating model. - To meet water demand. - To reduce water losses.
• Financial growth sustainability	- To reduce debt. - To identify new product lines to increase revenue. - To have a tariff structure that its cost reflective. - To identify areas for cost containment in line with enhancing WUC's image.
• Infrastructure Development and Operational Efficiency	- To develop short, medium and long –term capital programmes to ensure water security.

4. Vision

In a bid to achieve its vision of “to be a world class water utility”, the Water Utilities needs to be able to satisfy customers and ensure compliance with internationally accepted corporate governance practices. The Water Utilities Corporation identified key strategic objectives to guide its activities, business focus and the allocation of resources for its planning period of 2015-2018.

5. Decision making process

The Board of Directors of the corporation is appointed by the Minister of Mineral Resources and Green Technology. The board comprises a fair balance of skills, knowledge and experience to meet the corporations' objectives. The role of the Board is to determine corporate policy and provide strategic direction.

5.1 Corporate structure of Water Utilities Corporation