

**Impact of triadic strategic alignment on organisational performance taking into
account organisational structure in South African companies**

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Abstract

The continuously changing business environment needs organisations to have a well-defined strategy suitable for their environment and supported by other organisational strategies to remain competitive. Strategy can be classified according to its levels, namely; corporate, business and functional/operational. The triadic strategic alignment entails strategy alignment at these three levels in which strategy formulation and implementation occur. This study was intended to assess the impact of triadic strategic alignment on organisational performance, taking into account the organisational structure in South African companies.

The researcher collected data for the explanatory quantitative study from 253 respondents via an online survey. The postulated hypotheses were tested using correlation and regression analyses. The study revealed a moderate positive correlation between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance. However, the study could not confirm organisational structure's mediation or moderation effect on the relationship between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance.

The study provides insights to organisations within the various industry sectors in South Africa on the importance of triadic strategic alignment and impact on organisational performance, regardless of the organisational structure. It is recommended that organisations take a holistic approach towards strategic alignment instead of only focusing on pairwise alignment to improve performance. In addition, the CEO and strategists can use triadic strategic alignment to gauge the status of strategic alignment within their organisations to determine the ideal alignment that will enable the organisation to improve financial performance.

Keywords

Triadic strategic alignment, Organisational performance and Organisational Structure

Declaration

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Corporate Strategy at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

Tendamudzimu Nemusombori

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List of abbreviations and acronyms

ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
BSC	Balanced Scorecard
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
EFA	Exploratory factor analysis
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
LLCI	Lower Level Confidence Interval
MBOs	Multi-Business Organisations
OS	Organisational Structure
PCA	Principal Component Analysis
SAM	Strategic Alignment Model
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
ULCI	Upper Level Confidence Interval

1 Chapter 1 Introduction to the research problem

1.1 Introduction

Strategic alignment entails the configuration of internal strategies within an organisation. Strategy can be classified according to its levels, namely; corporate, business and functional/operational. The triadic strategic alignment entails the strategy alignment at these three levels in which strategy formulation and implementation occur. The study assesses the impact of triadic strategic alignment on organisational performance, taking into account the organisational structure in South African companies. Three constructs, namely, triadic strategic alignment, organisational performance and organisational structure were analysed using the deductive approach.

The section confers the research background, aim and scope. In addition, the theoretical and business relevance of the study. The section concludes by presenting an outline of the remaining chapters of the research report.

1.2 Background to the research problem

The strategy field is vital to practitioners and academics as it is allied to organisational performance (Danso et al., 2019; González-Rodríguez et al., 2018). In the current challenging business environment, organisations should have a well-defined strategy suitable for their environment and supported by other organisational strategies to remain competitive (Liu & Atuahene-Gima, 2018). The alignment of several organisational strategies is essential for organisational performance (Sardana et al., 2016). The study focuses on triadic strategic alignment in South African companies and its impact on organisational performance.

South Africa has several economic industries that contribute towards the real Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Figure 1 presents the sectors of the South African economy (Industrial Development Corporation, 2021).

South Africa's GDP contracted by 7% in 2020 compared with 2019, mainly due to lockdown restrictions introduced to reduce the spread of the virus (Stats SA, 2021). The pandemic increased complexity within the business environment (Donthu & Gustafsson, 2020). However, growth in GDP by 3.1 % for South Africa is anticipated for 2021, equivalent to half of the projected global economy (International Monetary Fund, 2021).

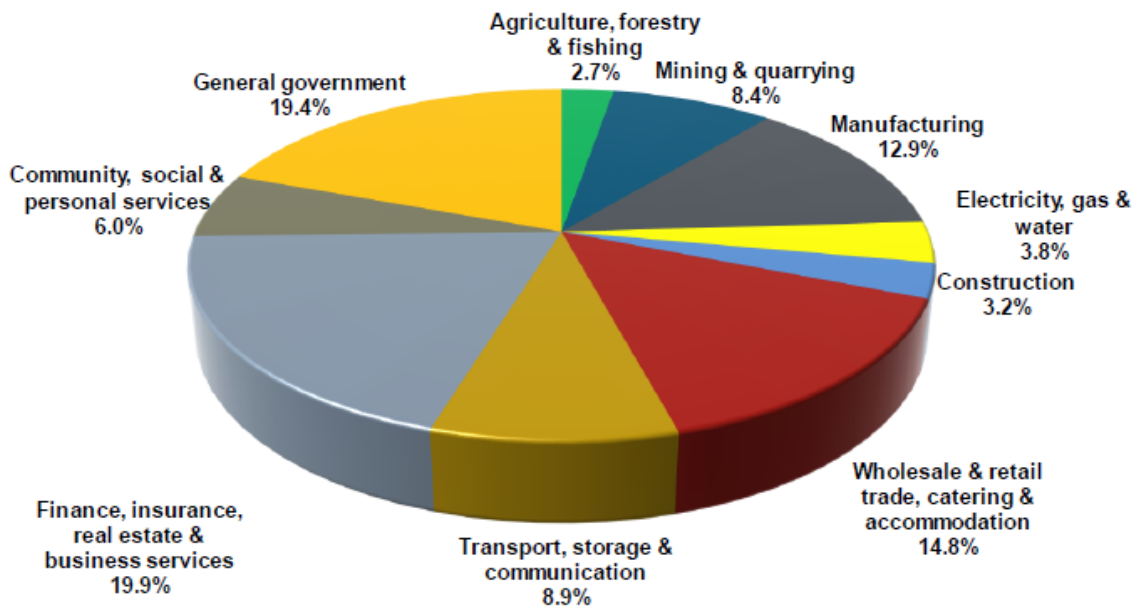


Figure 1: Sectors of the South African economy

Source: IDC

Strategy is at the core of decision-making and serves as a foundation of competitive advantage (Schoenwaelder et al., 2020). Furthermore, strategy can be classified according to its levels, namely; corporate, business and functional (De Bruin, 2020; Dyer et al., 2020; Mirabeau et al., 2018). Research has revealed that organisations' earnings margins are more likely to be twofold above the median when the employees understand the organisation's strategy (Nautin, 2014). Additionally, strategic alignment benefits organisations to achieve competitiveness, strategy execution and performance (Al-Surmi et al., 2020; Sardana et al., 2016; Wadström, 2019).

South Africa's economic growth is underwhelming (IMF, 2020); as a result, any intervention to improve performance is urgently needed to boost GDP growth rates. The expected worldwide economic growth is depicted in Figure 2. While the global economy is expected to rise by 4.2% in 2022, the recovery will be slow and will vary by country and region (National Treasury, 2021).

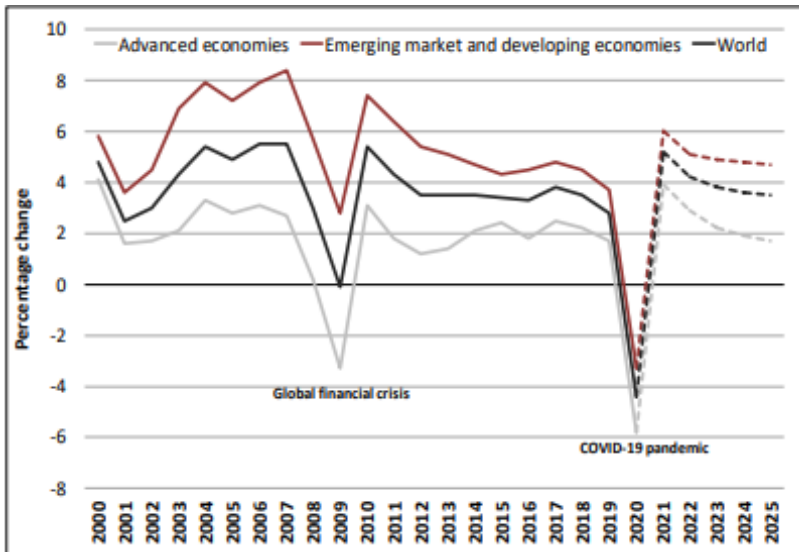


Figure 2: Global real GDP growth

Source: IMF

South African organisations across the various economic industries should consider triadic strategic alignment to determine if it might enhance organisational performance and contribute to GDP growth. Furthermore, according to the Society for Human Resource Management (2017), the organisational structure influences how organisations carry out their strategy and objectives. As a result, organisations must consider their organisational structure in order to achieve strategic alignment.

1.3 Research problem

In contrast to the established literature supporting the enhancement of organisational performance through binary strategic alignment, for example, an alignment between corporate and business unit strategies (Akter et al., 2016; Queiroz et al., 2020; Sardana et al., 2016), literature presenting evidence of a positive impact of triadic strategic alignment on organisational performance” has recently emerged (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p39).

The studies by Al-Surmi et al. (2020, p.39) theoretically linked “triadic strategic alignment to organisational performance”. However, there remains a solid academic need for further research to generalise the findings in other settings (Al-Surmi et al., 2020). This research study, thus, sought to generalise the positive influence of triadic strategic alignment on organisational performance in companies of the various sectors in South Africa. Moreover,

to close the identified research gap by Al-Surmi et al. (2020) of considering the role of the organisational structure on the triadic strategic alignment.

1.4 Research aim

This study proposed to assess the “impact of a triadic strategic alignment on organisational performance”, taking into account organisational structure (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39). The triadic strategic alignment entails the alignment of strategy at three different levels in which strategy formulation and implementation occur (Dyer et al., 2020; Mirabeau et al., 2018; Sardana et al., 2016). Triadic strategic alignment has been recently theoretically associated with organisational performance (Al-Surmi et al., 2020). The study is anchored in contingency theory, which suggests an ultimate array of fits for each context (Al-Surmi et al., 2020).

The study determined whether the research findings by Al-Surmi et al. (2020, p.39) of the positive “impact of triadic strategic alignment on organisational performances” can be generalised across South African industries. In addition, consider the effect of the organisational structure on the triadic strategic alignment. In this regard, the findings and recommendations of Al-Surmi et al. (2019) anchored this research.

Given the above, the main research questions for the study were as follows:

- “To what extent, if any, does triadic strategic alignment lead to organisational performance?” (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.40)
- What is the effect of the organisational structure on the triadic strategic alignment?

1.5 Business relevance of the study

The various industry sectors across South Africa contribute to GDP (Industrial Development Corporation, 2021). The recent economic weakness and the need to return to pre-COVID-19 economic growth levels (Stats SA, 2021) necessitates urgent intervention to improve performance in order to boost GDP growth rates. This also requires an understanding and implementation of triadic strategic alignment across organisations, decision-makers, and policymakers to improve performance, as research has shown that strategic alignment contributes to organisational performance (Al-Surmi et al., 2020; Wadstrom, 2019).

Furthermore, the study provides insights on aspects that the above stakeholders could consider regarding the role of the organisational structure in triadic strategy alignment. Additionally, the triadic strategic alignment approach will enable CEOs and strategists to assess their current strategic alignment status and determine the ideal alignment to improve performance. Triadic strategic alignment could also serve as a mechanism to achieve harmony amongst the different levels of management within organisations resulting in increased efficiency and effectiveness while limiting divisions.

1.6 Theoretical relevance of the study

This study presents a move beyond the pairwise strategic alignment research that entails an alignment between two levels of strategies (Al-Surmi et al., 2019, 2020; González-Rodríguez et al., 2018; McAdam et al., 2019). Literature shows that an alignment in strategy results in organisational performance (Al-Surmi et al., 2020; Sardana et al., 2016; Wadström, 2019). A recent study by Al-Surmi et al. (2020) introduced the concept of triadic strategic alignment and benefits to organisational performance. As the study was focused on a specific setting, this study investigated whether the findings of Al-Surmi et al. (2020) can be generalised in South Africa. Therefore, this study has contributed to the literature to better understand triadic strategic alignment by showing a moderate positive “association between triadic strategic alignment and performance” in South African companies (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39).

Furthermore, in response to Al-Surmi et al. (2020)’s invitation to expand triadic strategic alignment research, this study investigated the role of the organisational structure on the association between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance. This study could not confirm the mediation or moderation effect; therefore, the findings suggest that organisations in South Africa could improve performance regardless of the structure. The study has provided understanding and insights on the mediation and moderation effect of organisational structure on the above association. Additionally, this study has identified the need for qualitative research to explore the underlying organisational structure factors that may be in play.

1.7 Research scope

The recent studies by Al-Surmi et al. (2020) theoretically associated strategic alignment with organisational performance within Yemen, noting further research studies in different

contexts. Therefore, this study investigated whether Al-Surmi et al.'s findings could be generalised in South Africa. The study was restricted to organisations within the various economic industries of South Africa and relied on recently published literature to formulate the research questions and hypothesis.

1.8 Report outline

The study's goal, significance and research gaps are set out in this chapter. The following chapters are arranged as follows:

- Chapter 2- present a review of the literature on the research constructs and identified gaps in the literature.
- Chapter 3 - discusses the hypotheses proposed in order to provide answers to the research questions.
- Chapter 4 - presents the adopted methodology and research instrument used and their suitability for this study. The chapters cover the research design, population, level and unit of analysis, sampling method and size, data gathering and analysis used for the research.
- Chapter 5 - presents the outcomes of the analysed data.
- Chapter 6 - discusses the findings based on the tested hypotheses.
- Chapter 7 - presents the conclusion, including the key study findings, research limitations, implications for managers, and recommendations for future studies.

1.9 Conclusion

This section conferred the context of the study intended to assess the influence of triadic strategic alignment on organisational performance takes account organisational structure. Additionally, it outlined the academic and practitioner implication of the research and the scope. Chapter 2 discusses the examined literature review utilised to formulate the research questions and hypothesis presented in research constructs.

2 Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the literature review relating to the study. Three primary theoretical constructs are covered, namely; triadic strategic alignment, organisational structure and organisational performance. The literature review will also present the various linkages that exist between the constructs. Figure 3 shows the literature review roadmap.

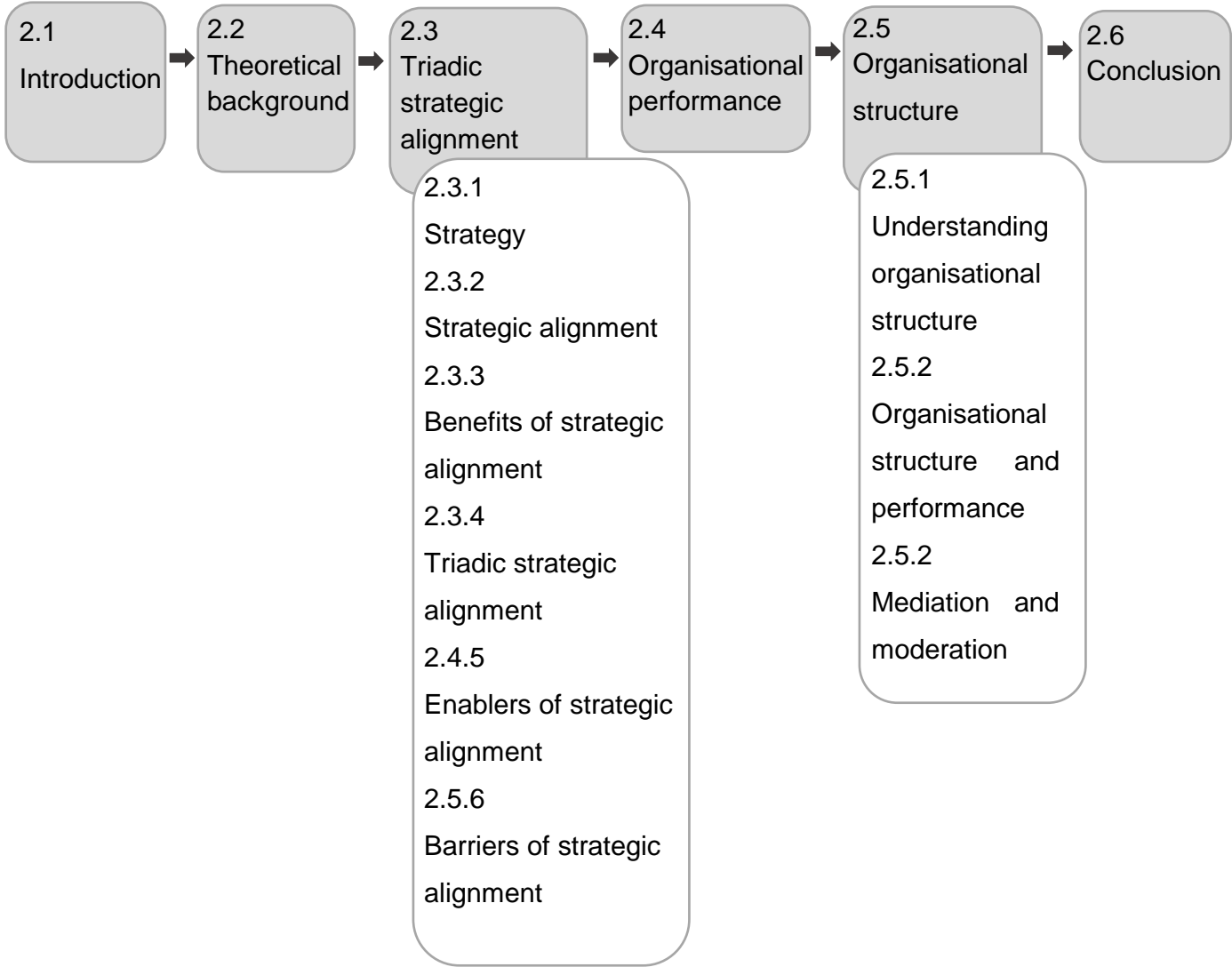


Figure 3: Literature review roadmap
Source: Author

2.2 Theoretical background

When considering relevant theories, contingency, configuration, resource-based and dynamic capabilities theories have been linked to strategic alignment (Al-Surmi et al., 2020; Kumar et al., 2018; Reynolds & Yetton, 2015). This study draws on contingency theory and dynamic capabilities to support the various constructs (Al-Surmi et al., 2020; Teece et al., 2016; Teece et al., 1997).

Many scholars have defined contingency theory in terms of alignment between contingency variables. For example, McAdam et al. (2019) described contingency theory in terms of fit and alignment between contingency variables such as strategy, customer focus, and culture to enhance organisational performance. From this perspective, a contingency fit exists rather than a sole superlative approach to managing organisations (McAdam et al., 2019). Alignment is dynamic and, therefore, a continuous practice as the business environment changes and becomes increasingly complex (McAdam et al., 2019).

Contrary to the above views, Al-Surmi et al. (2020) indicated that contingency theory suggests that there exist an ultimate array of fits for each context. The findings of Prajogo et al. (2018), which demonstrated that organisations should modify their strategies and practices to retain their fit with changing contextual variables to order to achieve superior performance, corroborate this viewpoint. Al-Surmi et al. (2020) established a theoretical relation between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance founded on contingency and configuration theories (Al-Surmi et al., 2020). Even though the authors have provided a theoretical basis on which further research study on strategic alignment can be investigated, there is an absence of research on other elements that would affect triadic alignments, such as organisational structure (Al-Surmi et al., 2020).

McAdam et al. (2019) indicated that the organisational structure influences the level of alignment, with the contingency fit best suitable for organic organisational structures. Conversely, Arasli et al. (2019) showed that there is no single structure that best serves all circumstances, but instead that each organisation has a structure that is sensitive to its unique circumstances. From this perspective, the study will assess the influence of organisational structure on triadic strategic alignment.

Dynamic capability theory can be considered when considering organisational structures suitable for the various contexts. Teece et al. (1997, p. 516) described dynamic capability as “the businesses' aptitude to incorporate, develop and reshape internal and external competencies in response to changing environmental conditions.” As alluded to by Al-Surmi et al. (2020) recent definitions include sensing, seizing and transforming required for business model design and implementation (Teece, 2018). Furthermore, since “strategy, dynamic capabilities and business models are interlinked”, dynamic capabilities and business models affect the organisational structure (Teece, 2018, p.40)

Kumar et al.(2018) construed dynamic capabilities as a concept anchored in the thought that “the business environment is continuously changing and organisations require non-static capabilities to maintain sustainable performance and remain competitive” (Kumar et al., 2018, p99). Kumar et al. (2018, p.99) characterised dynamic capabilities into “sensing, seizing and reconfiguration.” The authors established a model that showed the importance of dynamic capability between collaborative strategy and sustainability of supply chain performance. The empirical research was conducted via a survey and collected data from multi-industries in India. The findings showed that resource and relationship-based dynamic capabilities are critical for organisations to benefit from strategic collaborations to realise sustainable performance (Kumar et al., 2018).

Additionally, Felin & Powell (2016) argued that classic organisational design techniques such as hierarchy, lines of control and formalised reporting are unsuitable for success in today's turbulent markets. Therefore, the dynamic capabilities “to sense, shape and seize,” as Kumar et al. (2018) described, are necessary for organisations to penetrate new market opportunities (Felin & Powell, 2016, p.80). As a result, businesses need to align their strategies with organisational structure (Felin & Powell, 2016).

The adoption of the dynamic capabilities by other scholars (Ferreira et al., 2020; Yeow et al., 2018) supports the research findings by Kumar et al. (2018). Through a longitudinal study, Yeow et al. (2018) identified dynamic capability as key to how alignment processes unfold within organisations, potentially leading to competitive advantage. Similarly, the research findings of Ferreira et al. (2020) revealed that dynamic capability achieved through creativity and innovation competencies is key to achieving organisational performance and competitiveness. Furthermore, investigations by Fainshmidt et al. (2019)

through a qualitative comparative analysis supported the above findings by showing the relevance of strategic fit in achieving competitive advantage through dynamic capabilities.

This study draws on the contingency theory and dynamic capabilities to support the various constructs used for the research (Al-Surmi et al., 2020; Teece et al., 2016; Teece et al., 1997).

When considering models developed relating to strategic alignment, the primary Strategic Alignment Model (SAM) was established by Venkatraman et al. (1993) and has formed the basis on which other models were built. With a continuously changing business environment, researchers have made efforts to build on the SAM to investigate other factors affecting strategic alignment besides IT. This is evident by the Innovation Strategic Alignment Model (ISAM) developed by Renaud et al. (2016). Baker & Singh, (2019) developed a model to establish the roots of misalignment between IT and business strategies which usually advances unintentionally. The model suggested processes and procedures that encourage or deter strategic alignment (Baker & Singh, 2019). The model identified strategy creation and control processes as crucial for strategic alignment (Baker & Singh, 2019). Although the study could not identify the processes and procedures that can hinder or promote strategic alignment, it did not explore whether a drift in the alignment process could benefit organisations.

While the studies by Baker & Singh (2019) based their studies on a single organisation, Reynolds & Yetton (2015) considered strategic alignment in Multi-Business Organisations (MBOs) as alignment in such business configuration poses a challenge due to the development of strategies at multiple levels. The authors proposed a model guided based on the resource-based theory (Reynolds & Yetton, 2015). The findings have shown value in aligning strategies within MBOs (Reynolds & Yetton, 2015).

2.3 Triadic strategy alignment

2.3.1 Strategy

Strategy is a minimum set of ideal choices essential to inform other decisions (Van Den Steen, 2018). From this perspective, strategy is thus defined according to what it does. On the contrary, other scholars have provided a definition that addresses strategy according to its looks. For example, Zollo et al. (2018) defined strategy as plans that detail how organisations would like to position themselves in the markets

they operate. Similarly, Al-Surmi, et al. (2020) postulated that strategy outlines how an organisation can direct its activities to achieve its goals and objective. The later definitions are most relevant to the research, given the emphasis they place on the end goal of achieving organisational goals.

The formulation and implementation of the strategy occur at three different levels, namely corporate, business and functional units. Thus, strategy can be classified according to these levels (Dyer et al., 2020; Mirabeau et al., 2018).

2.3.2 Strategic alignment

In an era where the business environment is continuously changing and is characterised by emerging disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic, firms need to be flexible, innovative, align their strategies, and adapt to the new business environments to remain competitive. Strategic management is a process used to create synergy between different strategies of an organisation (Sardana et al., 2016).

According to the literature review, there appears to be a shared understanding of strategic alignment amongst researchers. According to Wadstrom (2019), strategic alignment involves the configuration of internal strategies. This perspective is more aligned to the study as it explores the multifactor alignment of internal organisational strategies.

Strategic alignment can either be vertical or horizontal within an organisation (Rodríguez-Escobar & González-Benito, 2017). The vertical strategic alignment adopts a top-down approach to configuration strategies and goals, whereas the horizontal alignment involves the alignment of functional areas and operations (Rodríguez-Escobar & González-Benito, 2017). While Rodríguez-Escobar & González-Benito (2017) considered the vertical and horizontal alignments, Wadstrom (2019) took a step further and incorporated relation alignment that can either be numerical or non-numerical alignments. The findings of the studies by Wadström (2019) suggested that the non-numerical objectives in business strategy may reasonably add to an organisation's competitiveness and may thus be perceived as aligned to corporate strategy. The organisational structure will guide the vertical and horizontal alignment (Wadström, 2019). With the above views, vertical and horizontal

strategic alignments and the relation alignments would influence the level of alignment that an organisation would like to achieve.

Most research paid attention to binary strategic alignment, namely, corporate and business strategies. While the research on pairwise alignment has contributed to the literature in strategic alignment in the form of frameworks, models and insights for considerations by organisations, there is an opportunity to explore more than two factors for strategic alignment.

2.3.3 Benefits of strategic alignment

Strategic alignment has received attention from many researchers as the alignment of strategies has many benefits for organisations. Several research studies' findings have shown consistent evidence of the importance of strategic alignment and benefits to organisation performance (Al-Surmi et al., 2020; Sardana et al., 2016). Al-Surmi et al. (2020) and Sardana et al. (2016) suggested that aligning the different levels of strategies may improve competitiveness, strategy execution, and the organisation's performance. Related to the benefits towards organisational performance are research findings by Wadstrom (2019) which suggested benefits of strategic alignment towards organisational competitiveness. The different findings corroborate the perception of organisational benefits as a result of strategic alignment. The above discussions are relevant to the research topic as they suggest that strategic alignment positively influences organisational performance.

Furthermore, investigations based on the contingency theory by Nair et al. (2021) showed that additional factors could alter the association between alignment and performance. Nair et al. (2021) used regression analysis to show that while aligning manufacturing strategy and process integration is suitable for plant performance, it has a different effect when contingency factors like macroeconomic instability are taken into account. These findings provide insights into possible factors that could affect the association between alignment and performance.

2.3.4 Triadic strategic alignment

Most scholars have explored the area of dyadic strategic alignments. However, there have been only a few considerations for a triadic alignment in the area of strategy. Studies conducted by Al-Surmi et al. (2020, p.39) to establish the "impact of triadic

strategic alignment on organisational performance” revealed that a triadic alignment of strategies positively impacts organisational performance. Although the study cannot be generalised as it focused on a small sample of managers in Yemen, it has provided some insights on the triadic strategic alignment that can be further explored.

Similar to studies by Al-Surmi et al. (2020) on a triadic strategic alignment, Oehlhorn et al. (2020) considered human resource management influence on triadic alignment. The research revealed that an alignment with human resource management adds value to the dyadic alignment between business and functional strategies resulting in a triadic alignment (Oehlhorn et al., 2020). Therefore, the strategies considered for a triadic alignment could vary depending on the organisational structure and environment. These findings provide an opportunity for scholars not only to focus on already established dyadic alignment but also to consider an additional element that may potentially enhance such alignments. As the study focused on triadic strategic alignment, the researcher built onto the above studies to extend the body of knowledge.

2.3.5 Enablers of strategic alignment

There are crucial elements that aid the success of a strategic alignment. Wadstrom (2019) suggested a strategic alignment matrix that organisations can use when selecting a strategic alignment direction and relationships to achieve the set goals. The study's findings revealed the benefits of striking a balance in strategic alignment towards achieving the desired organisational goals (Wadstrom, 2019). However, the study was not universal, as it only focused on a single industry and can therefore not be generalised. In addition, some scholars have shown the importance of strategic management tools in facilitating strategic alignment. For example, Wang & Chien (2016) utilised the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) to examine the strategic alignment between organisational strategies. From this perspective, the measurement of strategic alignment is key to identifying areas of improvement within an organisation to enable strategic alignment.

2.3.6 Barriers to strategic alignment

Organisations may anticipate success for each strategic alignment; however, many factors may impede alignment. A study conducted through a survey by Roelfsema et al. (2016) to explore the practices and trials faced by consultants and executives in strategic alignment has revealed that organisations face challenges in formulating and

executing strategies. The authors identified strategic alignment indicators: culture and shared beliefs, insufficient organisational capabilities, and ineffective communication as barriers to strategic alignment (Roelfsema et al., 2016).

Hardcopf et al. (2017) considered a different method to identify barriers to strategic alignment. In their study to establish the impact of short-term and long-term strategies implemented by managers to close profit gaps on the overall business strategies, the authors suggested that strategies implemented to cut costs likely result in strategic misalignment over a long period (Hardcopf et al., 2017). However, the study did not investigate the dynamics of such short or long-term strategies to close profit gaps on the overall strategic outcomes of the organisation (Hardcopf et al., 2017).

Studies by Ates et al. (2020) provided different insights into the barriers of strategic alignment in the form of differences in visionary leadership and its impact on strategy commitment. Their findings posit that team managers' visionary leadership can destroy the strategic harmony of a team in instances that they are strategically not aligned with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), which could result in a reduction in team commitment to strategy (Ates et al., 2020). This study demonstrated the significance of strategic alignment at a corporate level, in this case, CEO, to that at a business level (team manager). The above literature shows various factors that impede strategic alignment.

Finally, the sections above covered the theoretical frameworks that guided this study. The contingency theory postulated that each context has a variety of fits, suggesting that organisations could align specific strategies to improve performance. Additionally, the dynamic capabilities theory emphasised the need for managers to “sense, seize, reconfigure” and align the business strategies with organisational structure, which directs the business model to be adapted in order to achieve competitive advantage (Kumar et al., 2018, p.99). The literature on triadic strategic alignment showed a shift beyond pairwise strategic alignment that organisations might consider to improve performance (Al-Surmi et al., 2020). Furthermore, the barriers to strategic alignment such as ineffective communication, culture and shared views were explored. Lastly, the enablers for strategic alignment that managers could consider, such as a measurement matrix, were discussed. These elements shaped the triadic strategic alignment construct, which was used to assess the association between triadic strategic alignment

and organisational performance in South African companies. The literature that supports the organisational performance construct is discussed in the next section.

2.4 Organisational performance

According to Singh et al. (2016), organisational performance can be viewed as an output of an organisation's efforts to achieve its goals. Performance could be financial or non-financial (Micheli & Mura, 2017; Shafiq et al., 2019; Singh et al., 2016). Moreover, an organisation needs to measure its performance to determine whether it is achieving its goal or not (Singh et al., 2016). Studies by Micheli & Mura (2017), have shown that a comprehensive performance measurement system leads to enhanced organisation performance autonomously of the strategic approach adopted. While Micheli & Mura (2017) have demonstrated that performance measurement can lead to organisational performance, Bourne et al. (2018), have shown that this paradigm cannot respond to the fast-changing and complex business environment. The authors suggested that organisations be flexible and make performance measurement management an iterative process that considers environmental turbulence. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic injected complexity into the business environment, which compelled businesses to modify their performance systems to assess the ecological changes (Collings et al., 2021). These outcomes support the above proposition by Bourne et al. (2018).

This study considered organisational performance in terms of financial results. This approach is in line with considerations by other scholars who measured organisational performance as a result of triadic strategic alignment by evaluating organisational profitability, dividends, market share and growth in sales (Al-Surmi et al., 2020; Singh et al., 2016). Contrary to achieving organisational performance through strategic alignment, other scholars have explored different factors that would lead to performance. For example, Delphi studies on improving performance using big data analytic capability by Akter et al. (2016) showed that not all organisations can boost performance through big data analytics capability. Furthermore, the findings revealed that business strategy alignment has a moderation effect on the association among big data analytics capability and organisational performance (Akter et al., 2016). Similarly, Flammer & Bansal (2017) empirically showed that providing long term benefits to executives in the form of long-term executive remuneration enhances organisational performance. From this perspective,

managers should not rely on a single approach to performance improvement but rather explore different methodologies depending on the context.

In conclusion, this section defined organisational performance. Additionally, the two categories of organisational performance, financial and non-financial results, were discussed. This study considered performance in terms of financial results (Al-Surmi et al., 2020; Singh et al., 2016). Managers can use measures like market share, profitability and growth in sales to assess their organisation’s performance (Al-Surmi et al., 2020). Furthermore, depending on the context, several approaches should be considered to improve performance. The following section discusses the elements considered for the organisational structure construct.

2.5 Organisational structure

2.5.1 Understanding organisational structure

Most scholars who have studied the area of organisational structure, in particular, Mintzberg (1992,2009), postulated three dimensions of the organisational structure described in terms of their roles such as determination of the organisational success or failure, coordination of the various organisational functions and activities and decentralisation of decision making with the organisation. The type of organisational structure is determined by the specific strategy adopted by an organisation and the extent to which it is implemented (Mintzberg, 1979). When contemplating strategy, managers should evaluate the organisation as a whole and strive to understand the structure, as the difference in strategy may lead to differences in structure (Greenwood et al., 2014). Table 1 summarises the various types of organisational structures.

Table 1: Types of organisational structures

Structural Configuration	Prime Coordinating Mechanism	Key Part of Organization	Type of Decentralization
Simple structure	Direct supervision	Strategic apex	Vertical and horizontal centralization
Machine bureaucracy	Standardization of work processes	Technostructure	Limited horizontal decentralization
Professional bureaucracy	Standardization of skills	Operating core	Vertical and horizontal decentralization
Divisionalized form	Standardization of outputs	Middle line	Limited vertical decentralization
Adhocracy	Mutual adjustment	Support staff	Selective decentralization

Source: Mintzberg, (1979)

Mintzberg (1992, 2009) provided a basis on which other scholars could extend in this area of research. Damanpour (1991) expanded the definition of organisational structure to include the nature of formalities within an organisation and the hierarchy levels.

2.5.2 Organisational structure and performance

According to Oyewobi et al. (2016), there is a contingency link between the competitive strategy, performance and organisational structure (Oyewobi et al., 2016). Additionally, studies by Marx (2016), supported the findings mentioned above by demonstrating that aligning organisational structure with the strategy is a requirement for performance. The organisational structure can be used to achieve optimal organisational performance (Oyewobi et al., 2016). However, the study by Marx (2016) found that organisational structure alone is insufficient for performance enhancement and that organisations must consider additional elements such as internal and external coordination and control mechanisms to optimise performance (Marx, 2016). Furthermore, organisations, whether large or small, private or public, face a similar challenge of keeping strategy and structure aligned with the changing business conditions as all organisations must effectively implement strategies created to meet their objectives (Marx, 2016).

The organisational structure has been advocated to affect internal communications and promote stakeholder interaction, contributing to execution and performance (Puranam, 2018). This suggests that when organisations embark on an effort to increase performance, they should consider the organisational structure.

On the contrary, studies by Al-Surmi et al. (2020) have shown a need for further research to investigate factors such as organisational structure on the triadic strategic alignment. This study responds to this invitation to evaluate the role of the organisational structure on the association between organisational performance and triadic strategic alignment. The organisational structure investigation aimed to respond to the following research question:

- What is the effect of the organisational structure on the triadic strategic alignment?

2.5.3 Mediation and moderation effect

Moderation and mediation effects are common in the strategic management discipline (Aguinis et al., 2016; Salkind, 2007). A mediating effect occurs when the association between independent and dependent variables is explained by their relationship to a third variable. In contrast, a moderation effect occurs when a third variable, also known as an interaction effect, changes the manner of the association among the independent and dependent variables (Aguinis et al., 2016; Hayes, 2013; Iacobucci, 2008).

There appear to be few research papers available on studies that have been conducted to evaluate the role of organisational structure as a moderator or mediator. The organisational structure seems to interact with various factors to produce different results. For example, Neubert et al. (2016) used contingency theory to examine organisational structure as a moderator of the association between servant leadership, nurse behaviour and job satisfaction. According to the study findings, the mentioned association was moderated by organisational structure. Unlike a positive outcome found by Neubert et al. (2016), empirical studies by Jaoua (2014) on the association between strategic management and global performance could not confirm the moderation effect of organisational structure on this association. The findings implied that only strategies described by strategic management increased performance, regardless of the organisational structure. From this perspective, the organisational structure could play various roles in the relationships between variables depending on the underlying factors.

When considering the literature on a mediation effect, Luque-Vílchez et al. (2019) conducted a quantitative study to investigate the role of environmental organisational structure on the association between pro-environmental managers' values and environmental disclosure. The research findings confirmed the mediation role that could inform policymakers to design policies that enhance organisations transparency and accountability (Luque-Vílchez et al., 2019). Furthermore, Laudon & Laudon (2020) showed that organisational structure influences performance via innovation and resilience.

There seems to be limited literature investigating a mediation or moderation effect of organisational structure on the association “between triadic strategic alignment and

organisational performance”(Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39). This supports the recommendation by Al-Surimi et al. (2020) for scholars to extend the literature of this nature to understand the role of the organisational structure on the association “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance” (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39). Thus, this study sought to assess the mediation and moderation effect of organisational structure on the association “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance” to answer the research question - What is the effect of organisational structure on triadic strategic alignment? (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39)

2.6 Conclusion

An alignment between the organisation’s corporate strategy, its business units' strategies and operational strategies is essential to remain competitive. While most scholars focused on a dyadic relationship between two levels of strategy, there is an opportunity to explore multiple factor strategic alignment, such as triadic strategic alignment, which has been linked with improved organisational performance than pairwise alignment. This study envisioned to assess “the impact of triadic strategic alignment on organisational performance”, taking into account organisational structure (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39).

The literature on organisational structure has shown that the organisational structure can influence organisational performance. Additionally, available literature has revealed factors that organisations can consider that enable strategic alignment, such as the importance of striking a balance when aligning strategies, assessing the strategic alignment, and ensuring that strategic management and governance processes and procedures are managed adequately. However, researchers have also identified factors that impede strategic alignment and the consequences of short and long-term measures that executives can implement to ensure organisational performance. A shortage of literature on the mediation or moderation effect of organisational structure on the association “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance” was evident (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39).

These findings provide an opportunity for scholars not only to focus on already established dyadic alignment but also to consider triadic strategic alignment to enhance performance. Additionally, consider the role of the organisational structure on the association “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance” (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39).

3 Chapter 3 Research questions and hypotheses

3.1 Introduction

A hypothesis predicts a possible relationship between one or more variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This chapter presents the hypotheses developed as a result of the literature review discussed in chapter 2. The hypotheses that have been developed are intended to respond to the research questions. The initial part of this study encompasses the generalisation of the findings by Al-Surmi et al. (2020, p.39) of the positive “impact of triadic strategic alignment on organisational performance” in the South African context, followed by an extension study to consider the role of organisational structure in the association “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance” (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39).

3.2 Generalisability study

The research question to the generalisation study is as follows:

“To what extent, if any, does triadic strategic alignment lead to organisational performance?” (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.40)

Figure 4 below presents the conceptual framework developed to assist in answering the above research question.

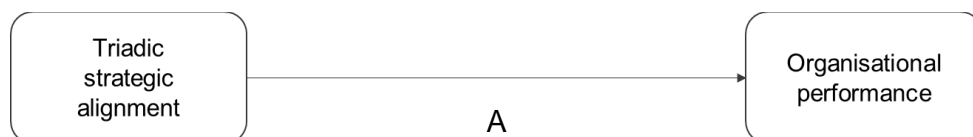


Figure 4: Generalisability study conceptual framework

Source: Author

The conceptual framework illustrates a direct association “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance” (path A) (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39).

The above was translated into a hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1

Null Hypothesis (H0): “Triadic strategic alignment has no positive impact on organisational performance”(Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.40)

Hypothesis (H1): “Triadic strategic alignment has a positive impact on organisational performance” (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.40)

3.3 Extension study

The extension study examined the impact of the organisational structure on the association between triadic strategic alignment and the organisational structure. This was achieved by testing whether the organisational structure has a mediation or moderation “effect on the association between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance” (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39).

The research question to the extension study is:

What is the effect of the organisational structure on triadic strategic alignment?

3.3.1 Mediation effect

Figure 5 below presents the conceptual framework developed to answer the above research question concerning a mediating effect.

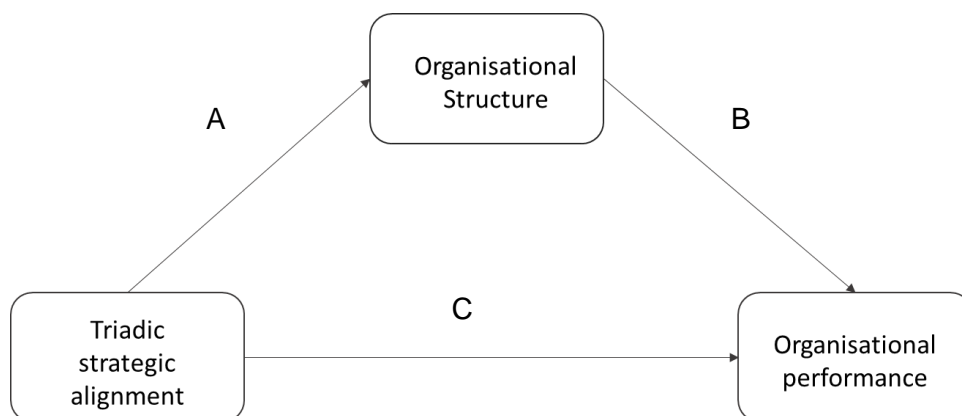


Figure 5: Mediation effect of organisational structure on the association between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance

Source: Adapted from Hayes, (2013)

The conceptual framework illustrates that instead of a direct causality of triadic strategic alignment on organisational performance (path C), an indirect effect (path AB) is formed when the organisational structure plays a mediation role in the association “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance”(Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39).

The above was translated into a hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2

Null Hypothesis (H0): Organisational structure does have not a mediation effect on the association “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance”(Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39).

Hypothesis (H2): Organisational structure has a mediation effect on the association “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance” (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39).

3.3.2 Moderation effect

Figure 6 below presents the conceptual framework developed to respond to the above research question concerning a moderation effect.

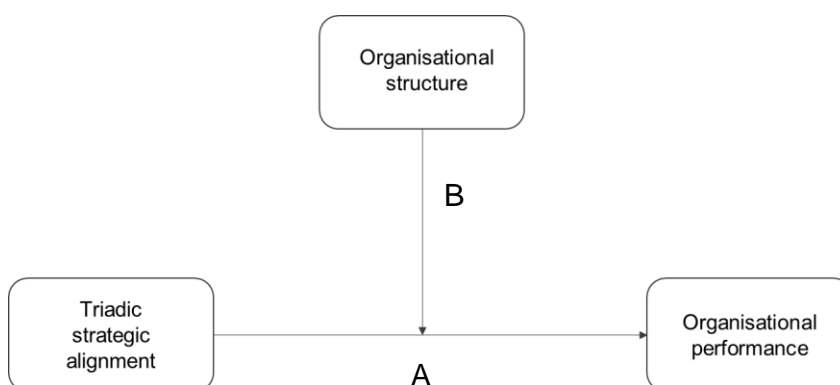


Figure 6: Moderation effect of organisational structure on the association between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance

Source: Adapted from (Hayes, 2013)

The conceptual framework illustrates a direct relationship (direct effect) between the triadic strategic alignment and organisational structure (path A) and an indirect effect (path B) where interaction between triadic strategic alignment and organisational structure can be significant in predicting organisational performance. In such instances, the organisational structure has a moderation effect on the association “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance”(Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39).

The above was translated into a hypothesis as follows:

Hypothesis 3

Null Hypothesis (H0): Organisational structure does not have a moderation effect on the association “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance”(Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39)

Hypothesis (H3): Organisational structure has a moderation “effect on the association between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance”(Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39)

3.4 Conclusion

The conceptual research model and tested hypotheses are presented in this chapter. The conceptual model for hypothesis H1 to test the “impact of triadic strategic alignment on organisational performance” implied that triadic strategic alignment directly affects organisational performance (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39). The conceptual model for the mediation effect of organisational structure on the association “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance” (hypothesis 2) assumed that triadic strategic alignment indirectly impacts organisational performance via organisational structure (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39). Finally, the conceptual model for the moderation effect of organisational structure on the association “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance” entailed an indirect impact where organisational performance is influenced by the interaction “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance” (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39). The next chapter discusses the study's research methodology.

4 Chapter 4 Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter converses the research methodology and design followed for testing the hypotheses formulated in chapter 3. The section covers the research philosophy, choice of methodology, research strategy and design adopted for the study. Next, the population scope, sampling method and size, measurement instrument and ethical considerations are discussed. In addition, the process of data gathering, analysis, research quality and rigour. The chapter close with a summary of the study's limitations. Figure 7 depicts the roadmap for research methodology.

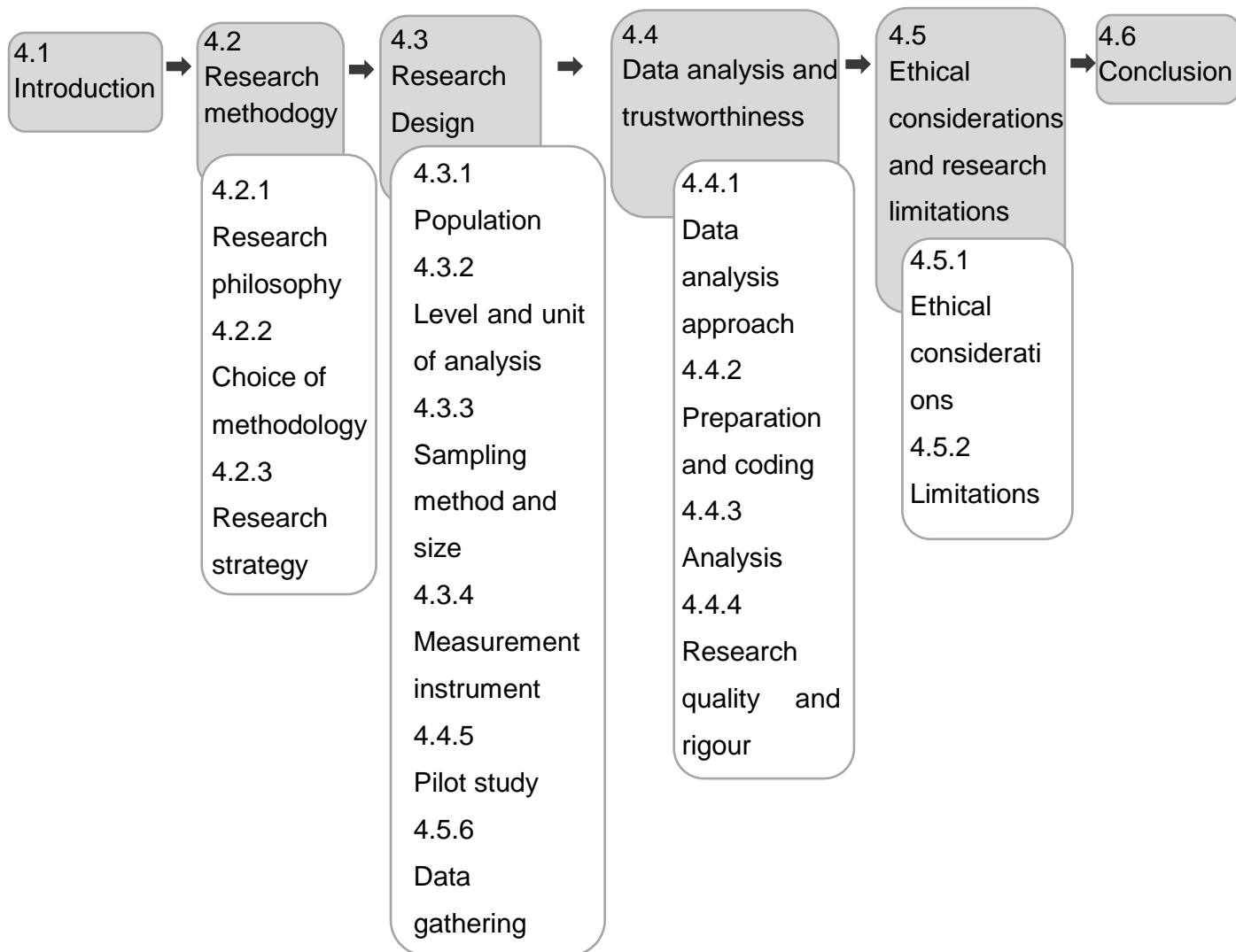


Figure 7: Research methodology roadmap

Source: Author

4.2 Research methodology

4.2.1 Research philosophy

According to Bell et al. (2019), all research is based on assumptions that shape research practice and theoretical deductions drawn from the collected and analysed data. These philosophical assumptions can be presented into three spheres, namely; ontology, epistemology and methodology.

These philosophical assumptions assist researchers in ensuring that their research assumptions are consistent with the selected research method and design (Bell et al., 2019). Ontology relates to the “nature of reality,” whereas epistemology focuses on “understanding how reality can be known” (Bell et al., 2019; Creswell & Creswell, 2017, p. 21; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The methodology entails understanding the best way to conduct the research considering ontology and epistemology assumptions. From this perspective, a positivist philosophical stance was adopted as a lens through which the study was viewed. As positivism requires topics to be dealt with objectively, a well-structured methodology with quantifiable data was utilised to test the hypotheses posed in chapter 3.

4.2.2 Choice of methodology

Following the selection of a positivist philosophical stance, the deductive method was used to test the hypotheses employing objective data gathered from companies in different industrial sectors in South Africa (Saunders & Thornhill, 2016). This approach aided the evaluation of the triadic strategic alignment, organisational performance and organisational structure constructs. The choice of methodology is deemed fit for the study as it has been used by other scholars who conducted similar empirical studies to investigate relationships between different variables. For example, Reddy & Scheepers (2019) investigated the relationship between concepts and variables following a deductive approach, as the study's goal was to extend to current literature rather than theory development.

4.2.3 Research strategy

The research was explanatory in nature, as it aimed to establish a quantitative link between the identified constructs (triadic strategic alignment, organisational performance and organisational structure) discussed in chapter 2. According to Saunders & Thornhill (2016), explanatory studies examine the relationship between

variables. This strategy was guided by the adopted deductive approach discussed above.

Quantitative research necessitates quantifiable data gathering and analysis (Bell et al., 2019). In addition, it provides an opportunity to test and validate existing relationships through hypothesis testing (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Al-Surmi et al. (2020) theoretically linked triadic strategic alignment to organisational performance through a research model rather than an observation. To generalise the findings by Al-Surmi et al. (2020), primary data was collected from companies in different industrial sectors in South Africa to statistically assess the association between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance.

Furthermore, an extension study was conducted to investigate the role of organisational structure “on the association between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance”(Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39). This was achieved by assessing whether the organisational structure has a mediation or moderation effect “on the association between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance” (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39).

4.3 Research design

An online survey was used via a mono-method cross-sectional research design. A mono-method is applied when a single technique is utilised to collect data to be analysed using a relevant procedure (Saunders & Thornhill, 2016). Cross-sectional studies involve collecting quantifiable data at a single point on various cases to identify relationships (Bell et al., 2019). Quantifiable data was gathered via a structured online survey over two months. The collection of primary data enabled the researcher to draw insights based on the recent views of practitioners.

The research design was fit for the study as it intended to collect measurable data utilising an online survey from companies in different industrial sectors in South Africa at a point in time and assess the association between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39; Crane et al., 2018). Additionally, the role of the organisational structure on the association “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance” was assessed (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39). The online survey simplified data collection as most professionals have access to online platforms.

Furthermore, the research design allowed the researcher to compare responses to the same questions from many participants.

4.3.1 Population

According to Saunders & Thornhill (2016), a population is an entire group of participants from which a sample that will answer the research questions is selected. The study's target population considered representatives from all companies in South Africa's economic sectors. This aided in assessing the association "between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance" across different industries (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39). The total number of formal companies in South Africa is 653,530 (Q3 2020) (SEDA, 2020). With a 95% confidence level, a sample size of 384 was calculated using a sample size calculator (Qualtrics, 2021).

4.3.2 Level and unit of analysis

The level and unit of analysis guide the grouping of people or subjects that the study will sample (Bell et al., 2019; Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Since the study was interested in assessing the association "between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance", taking into account the role of organisational structure, the level of analysis for the study was companies based within the South African economy. In contrast, the unit of analysis was perceptions of individuals at three strategic levels (corporate/head office, business and functional/operational) within these companies (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39). Data on these businesses relating to the primary constructs of the study was collected via an online questionnaire. It is expected that these companies would consider the recommendations of the study to enhance performance.

4.3.3 Sampling method and size

According to Saunders & Thornhill (2016), it is not realistic for scholars to gather data across the entire study population owing to resource and time limitations. To increase the sample size, the researcher used a two-stage approach: non-probability convenience sampling and snowballing sampling to increase the sample size (Bell et al., 2019). Convenience sampling entailed sending survey links to her personal network of South African professionals via LinkedIn and Facebook (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The participants were then asked to share the questionnaire with their contacts working in South Africa.

Extensive data collection allows for comparative analysis and generalisation of results (Saunders & Thornhill, 2016). The total number of formal companies in South Africa is 653,530 (Q3 2020), which relates to a sample size of 384 at a 95% confidence level (SEDA, 2020). However, as it was unlikely to receive a comprehensive list of all staff members from companies within the different industrial sectors of South Africa, therefore a sampling frame could not be defined (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). A total of 253 responses was received and all responses received were useable for analysis as the measurement instrument was set to allow for a fully completed questionnaire.

4.3.4 Measurement instrument

The literature review discussed in chapter 2 informed the choice of methodology and research design. A questionnaire survey was selected as a measurement instrument (Appendix A). A five-point Likert scale questionnaire was administered online via ‘Survey Monkey’ to rate each variable as presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Five-point Likert scale

Scale	Descriptor
1	Strongly agree
2	Agree
3	Neutral
4	Disagree
5	Strongly disagree

A Likert scale has also been adopted by academics who have conducted similar studies (Al-Surmi et al., 2020; Reddy & Scheepers, 2019).

Bell & Harley (2019) has indicated that an online survey is becoming popular as it is cost-effective, provides design benefits such as a variety of choices regarding the questionnaire appearance and layout, the ability to set filter questions, and ease of downloading the data onto a database. This instrument saves time and reduces the possibility of data processing errors. The questionnaire encompassed a short introduction to the aim of the study, consent and associated benefits, demographics, and questions related to the triadic strategic alignment, organisational performance and organisational performance constructs. The researcher used existing tested

instruments (Al-Surmi et al., 2019, 2020; Sardana et al. 2016), which can be broken down according to the various constructs as follows:

(a) Triadic strategic alignment – from Sardana et al. (2016) was adopted. The questionnaire evaluated whether:

- the organisational strategies are reviewed regularly;
- the organisational strategies are clearly communicated to all staff members;
- organisational strategies take into account existing capabilities;
- organisational strategies are aligned across all levels of strategy (Corporate, Business and Functional);
- the organisation’s strategy is to leverage the capabilities of the organisation;
- and
- strategic objectives are clearly defined.

(b) Organisational performance – adapted from Al-Surmi et al. (2019, 2020). The questionnaire evaluated the following relative to key competitors:

- market share growth;
- profitability percentage;
- liquidity position;
- return on investment; and
- Sales growth.

(c) Organisational structure – adapted from Batra (2012). The questionnaire evaluated whether:

- a supervisor’s decision is required for action to be taken;
- “employees are encouraged to make their own decisions”(Batra, 2012, p.124);
- the managers’ approval is requested before doing almost everything;
- every decision made by the staff has to be approved by the manager
- all matters are referred higher up for final approval.

4.3.5 Pilot study

Before data gathering, a pilot study was done to confirm that the survey questionnaire was simple to comprehend and use. There were no issues with the survey, according to the feedback obtained. However, the respondents stated that it was unclear how to

conclude or submit the survey once completed. The issue was rectified by introducing a completed checkout box before the survey was sent to many people. Furthermore, the pilot study confirmed the estimated duration of the survey, which was between 10 minutes. The estimated completion time was subsequently adjusted on the introductory part of the survey questionnaire.

4.3.6 Data gathering

An online survey was used to collect quantifiable data as the study was quantitative in nature. The data gathering process was preceded by ethical clearance approval from GIBS' ethics committee. The approach used for gathering the data allowed for faster reach to the potential participants. The data was collected over two months. A hypertext link of the survey questionnaire was embedded and distributed to respondents via direct messaging on LinkedIn and a general post on both LinkedIn and Facebook.

4.4 Data analysis and trustworthiness

4.4.1 Data analysis approach

The Microsoft Excel, IBM Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software, Hayes's SPSS Process macro and AMOS statistical tools were used for data analysis as the study is quantitative in nature. A phased approach data analysis was followed, encompassing data preparation and coding and descriptive and inferential analyses. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to obtain insights about the sample, validate the postulated hypotheses and assess the magnitude of the association between the constructs (Bell et al., 2019; Saunders & Thornhill, 2016).

4.4.2 Data preparation and coding

The data collected using Survey Monkey was exported to Microsoft Excel once the survey was closed. Data preparation allows for data screening to ensure that there is no missing data that would result in standard errors. The questionnaire excluded any questions that would require any free text option; therefore, all questions did not require data cleansing. The survey instrument allowed for easy exportation of the survey responses to Microsoft Excel in a numeric format suitable for statistical analysis using SPSS 26. The Microsoft Excel file was then transferred to SPSS, where a codebook was then prepared by defining and labelling each variable (Appendix C).

4.4.3 Analysis

4.4.3.1 Descriptive statistics

Insights of the sample's characteristics were obtained through descriptive statistics (Pallant, 2010). Descriptive statistics were also utilised to validate if any variables violated statistical techniques' assumptions (Pallant, 2010). The frequency statistics and percentages were determined for the demographic data, while the central tendency and distribution were determined for the Likert scale data.

4.4.3.2 Inferential statistics

Correlation and regression analyses were used to assess the association between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance. Furthermore, the mediation or moderation role of the organisational structure on the association between "triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance was investigated using regression analysis" (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39).

4.4.4 Research quality and rigour

The research quality informs the credibility of a study (Bell et al., 2019). This was evaluated using criteria such as reliability and validity (Saunders & Thornhill, 2016). Reliability focuses on the repeatability of the research results, whereas validity focuses on the integrity of conclusions from the research (Bell et al., 2019; Saunders & Thornhill, 2016).

4.4.4.1 Reliability

The internal reliability for this study was confirmed acceptable utilising Cronbach's alpha test to ensure consistency amongst the various indicator of the scales (Bell et al., 2019; Reddy & Scheepers, 2019). According to Bell et al. (2019), the acceptable value of Cronbach's alpha is 0.8.

4.4.4.2 Validity

Factor analysis determines the extent to which variables combine to form factors or components by reducing a vast set of variables (Bell et al., 2019). The reduced variables must sufficiently represent the observed variables (Hair et al., 2010). This method ensures validity by confirming correlations between survey variables, and it is often used by scholars who are developing or revising scales (Pallant, 2010). Exploratory Factor

Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) are the two methodologies for factor analysis (Pallant, 2010). EFA is used early in a study to investigate the association among a set of variables, whereas CFA is used in the research later to evaluate the hypothesis or theories underlying a set of variables (Pallant, 2010). As the study's questionnaire was based on known scales, the EFA method was chosen to assure validity by confirming that the total number of items for each construct genuinely represent the same construct rather than the CFA method (Finch, 2020; Pallant, 2010). In addition, EFA was used to reveal any of the variables that could substantially impact the hypotheses testing.

The following three steps and conditions were applied for EFA (Pallant, 2010):

- Data appropriateness for factor analysis was evaluated by considering the sample size and conducting the KMO and Bartlett's test for Sphericity. The recommended lower limit sample size is 300 (Pallant, 2010). However, a smaller sample of 150 is sufficient when the results have numerous variable loadings above 0.8 (Stevens, 1996). According to Pallant (2010), a KMO value greater than and a significant Bartlett's test of Sphericity factor analysis outcome signifies the appropriateness for factor analysis.
- Factor extraction to confirm minimum factors that could represent the set of variables. Components with Eigenvalues of 1 or more were only included (Pallant, 2010); and
- factor rotation and interpretation, where the items with the highest loadings are related to the components (Pallant, 2010)

Additionally, validity was confirmed using a standardised survey based on previous surveys wherein Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability were determined to verify reliability (Al-Surmi et al., 2019, 2020; Sardana et al., 2016).

4.5 Ethical considerations and research limitations

4.5.1 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations require researchers to conduct research decently and responsibly (Saunders & Thornhill, 2016). The researcher adhered to business school

ethical guidelines by collecting data only after ethical clearance by the GIBS' Ethics Committee (Appendix B). Personal details of the respondents were not requested to ensure the anonymity of the respondents. Furthermore, the provision of consent for participation was a pre-requisite for participation. Lastly, the respondents were provided with an option to opt-out of the study.

4.5.2 Limitations

The limitations of the research could result from the methodology, which would include population and sample size selection. According to Saunders & Lewis (2018) convenience sampling technique results in reducing respondents' representativity. Additionally, the absence of a sample frame due to the inability to receive a complete list of employees working at the various industries in South Africa prevents the study's findings from being interpreted as an entire population and thus generalised across the population. The selection of standardised instruments offered the opportunity to receive additional insights from respondents. Furthermore, the survey was administered for a specific time and amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Responses can, therefore, be different at another time and when the views and beliefs of the respondents are not distorted based on exceptional periods and circumstances. Lastly, the study presents potential bias as the initial distribution was through a personal network, followed by snowballing, which may result in oversampling of some population members over others.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter describes the methodology used for this study. The research design, population, reliability and validity tests, unit of analysis, sampling method and size, measurement instrument, data gathering and analysis, and ethical considerations were covered in the chapter. The findings of the study are discussed in the following chapter.

5 Chapter 5 Results

5.1 Introduction

The chapter presents the statistical analysis outcomes conducted on the collected data collected via an online survey. The findings were intended to address the research questions and hypotheses presented in Chapter 3. The chapter covers the questionnaire response rate, demographics, reliability and validity, hypothesis testing and conclusion. Figure 8 below outlines the chapter design.

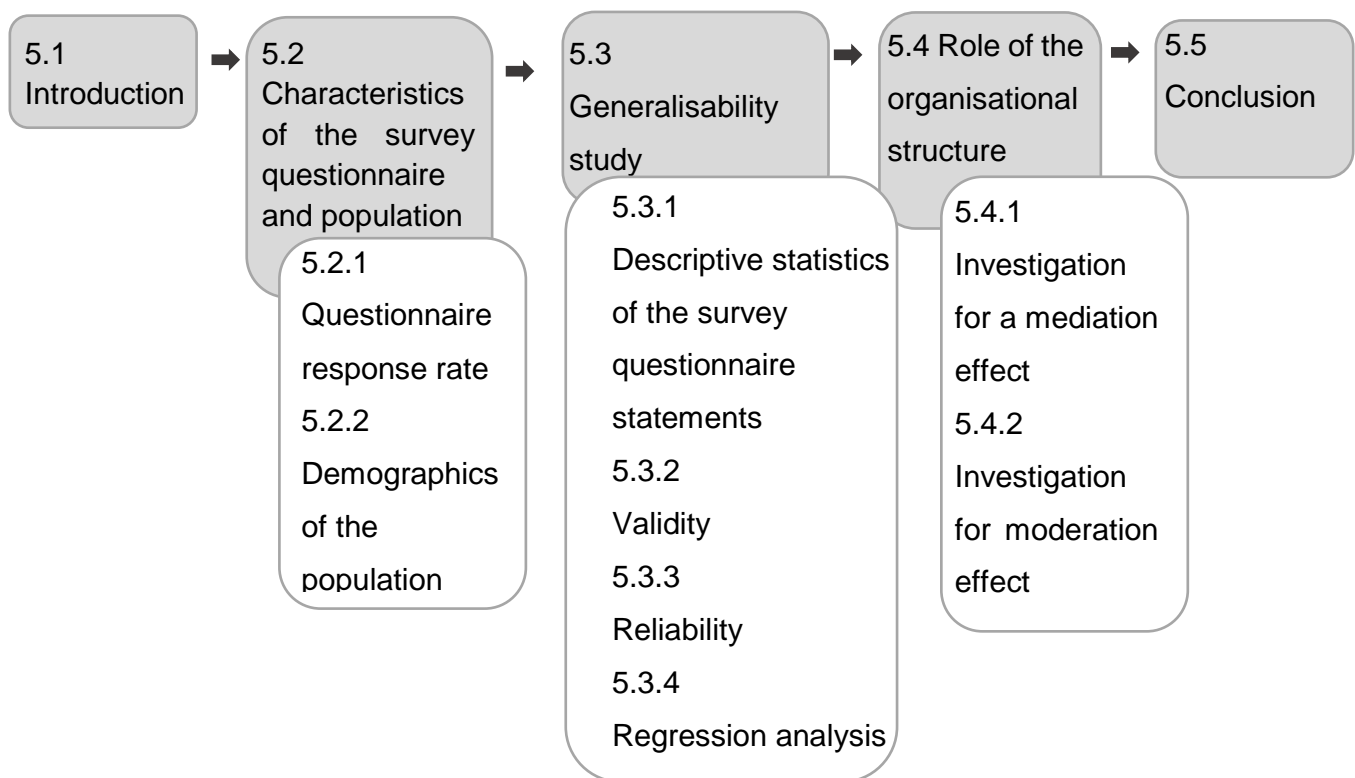


Figure 8: Chapter design

Source: Author

5.2 Characteristics of the survey questionnaire and population

This section covers the questionnaire response rate and the demographics of the sample to understand its characteristics.

5.2.1 Questionnaire response rate

The data collection was spread over two months, starting from 25 July 2021. Total responses of 253 responses were received. A completion rate of 100% was achieved for all questions as the measurement instrument was set to allow for a fully completed questionnaire. Therefore, none of the questions was skipped.

5.2.2 Demographics of the population

The survey questionnaire was completed from a gender perspective, mainly by males with a split of 150 (59.06%) versus 104 (40.94%) females.

Figure 9 presents the percentage contribution of the respondents based on gender.

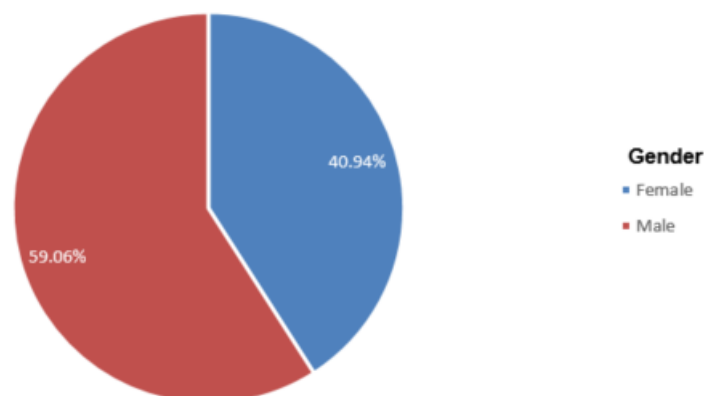


Figure 9: Gender of survey respondents

Source: Author

The respondents' age representation showed that the 30-39 respondents were the most significant (59.45%). The next group is 40-49 (28.35%), followed by ≥ 50 (7.48%) and the last 18-29 (4.72%), as presented in Figure 10.

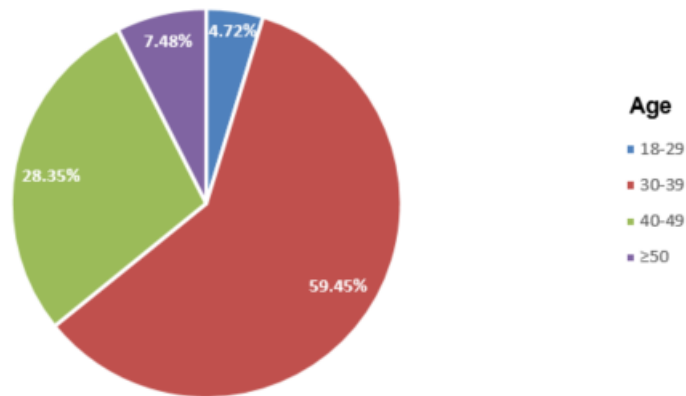


Figure 10: Age of survey respondents

Source: Author

Figure 11 presents the educational levels of the respondents. The educational levels of the respondents were high, with the leading group having a Master's or Doctorate (47.64%). This was followed by respondents with Bachelor's degrees (25.59%) and Postgraduate diplomas (18.50%). Respondents with a certificate or Diploma (5.91%) and matriculants and others with 0.79% and 1.57%, respectively. The online survey distribution method using the LinkedIn platform may be linked to respondents' high level of education as the platform caters to educated professionals. Furthermore, the survey's initial distribution via a personal network may have amplified this bias.

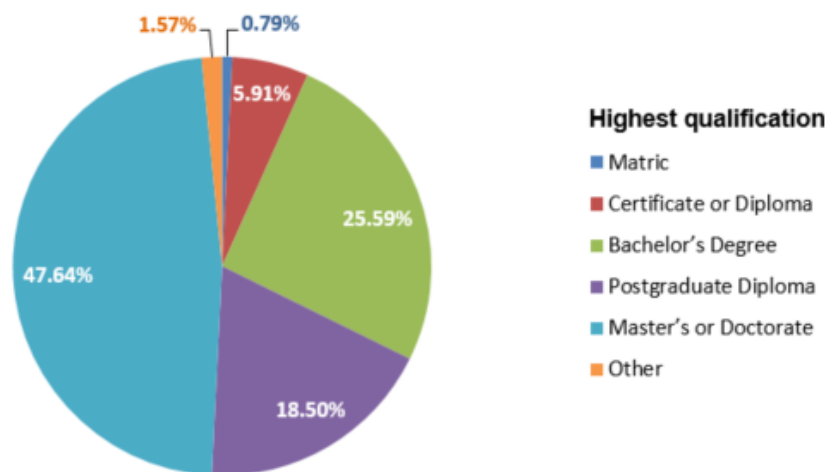


Figure 11: Educational level of the survey respondents

Source: Author

The respondents were spread across all levels of organisational strategies, namely; corporate (Head Office) (35.83%), business (14.17%), with the majority at the functional/operational level (50.00%) as presented in Figure 12.

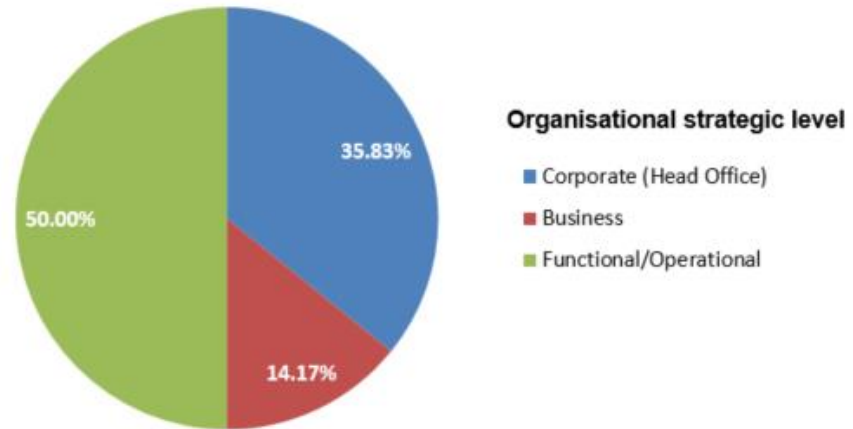


Figure 12: Respondents percentage distribution by strategic level

Source: Author's compilation

As depicted in Figure 13, most (72.05%) of the respondents were at middle or top-level management. This was followed by non-managerial respondents (16.54%). Low-level management made up the balance of 11.42% of participation.

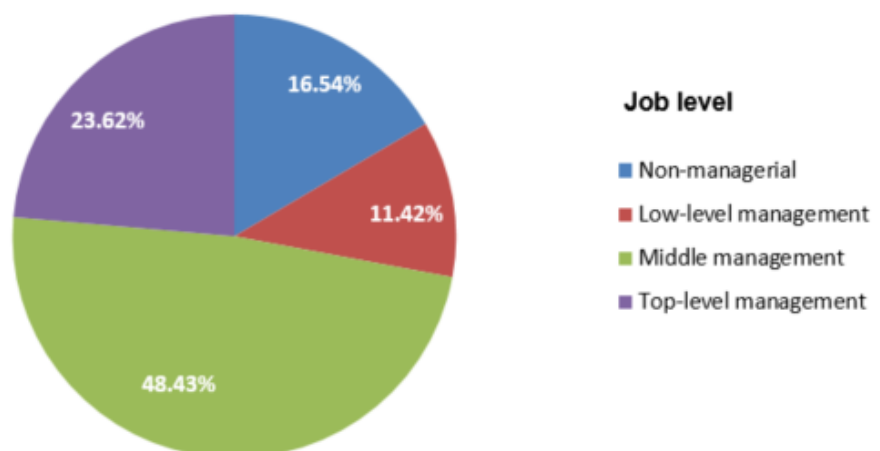


Figure 13: Job level of the survey respondents

Source: Author

Figure 14 presents the respondents' percentage distribution by industry sector. From the various industrial sectors of South Africa, the largest represented sectors were “Finance, insurance, real estate and business services (26.77%) and manufacturing” (23.62%) (Industrial Development Corporation, 2021, p.5). The other significantly represented sectors were mining and quarrying (14.96%) and general government (13.39%). The rest of the sectors made up the remaining 21.26%.

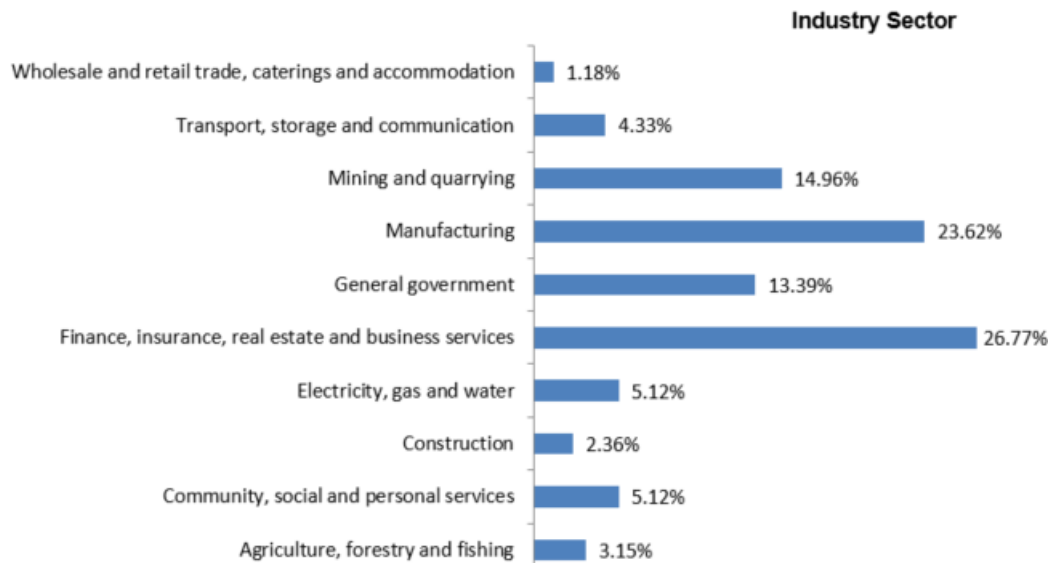


Figure 14: Respondents percentage distribution by industry sector

Source: Author

Figure 15 depicts the Pareto chart of the represented industry sectors. The results show a high propensity towards “Finance, insurance, real estate, and business services and Manufacturing sectors” (Industrial Development Corporation, 2021, p.5).

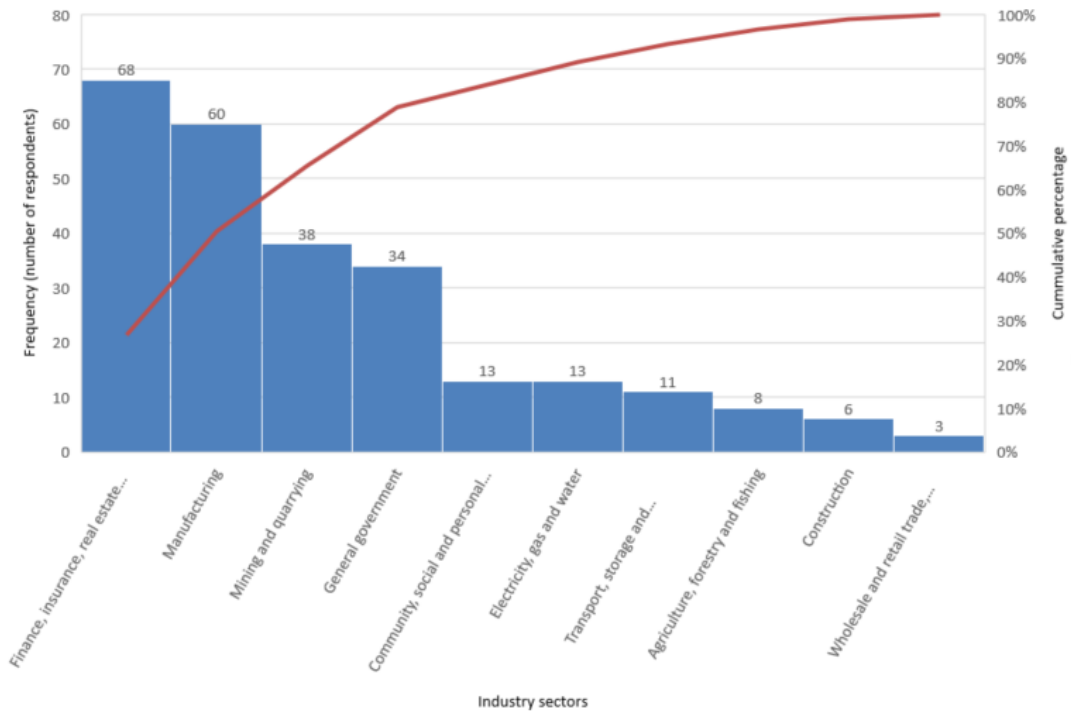


Figure 15: Pareto chart of the respondents' distribution by industry sector

Source: Author

Figure 16 represents the percentage distribution of the respondents' duration in their current role with their organisations. The respondents were in their current roles, mainly between 1 and 5 years (46.06%). This is followed by 6-10 years (27.56%), then greater or equal to 11 years (16.14%) and lastly, less than one year (10.24%).

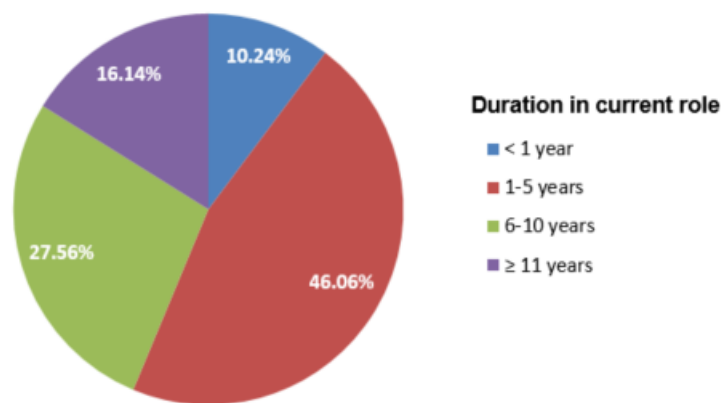


Figure 16: Respondents percentage distribution based on duration in the current role

Source: Author

Figure 17 shows that most respondents indicated that their respective entities employed >250 employees (73.23%). Organisations that employed 51-250 employees were represented by 8.66%, and organisations between 11 and 50, and 0 and 10 were represented by 11.02% and 7.09 %, respectively.

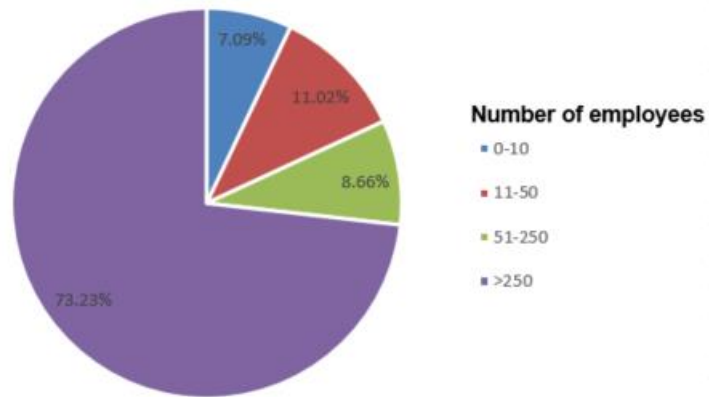


Figure 17: Number of employees

Source: Author

5.3 Generalisability study

5.3.1 Descriptive statistics of the survey questionnaire statements

Selected descriptive statistics summarised below were conducted on each questionnaire statement to measure the central tendency and spread of the sample.

5.3.1.1 Triadic strategic alignment

The triadic strategic alignment construct was composed of 6 statements. The descriptive statistics for each statement that makes up the construct are presented in Table 3 below. The average mean score for the variables of 2.21 indicated that the respondents leaned towards agree. This suggests triadic strategic alignment with most organisations.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics of the triadic strategic alignment construct

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
				Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Organisational strategies are regularly reviewed and adjusted	2.04	0.971	0.943	0.853	0.153	0.181	0.304
Organisational strategies are clearly communicated to all staff members	2.31	1.094	1.197	0.481	.153	-0.814	0.304
Organisational strategies are aligned across all levels of strategy (Corporate, Business and Functional/Operational)	2.44	1.122	1.259	0.480	.153	-0.658	0.304
Organisational strategies take into account existing capabilities	2.42	1.029	1.059	0.619	.153	-0.444	0.304
The organisation's strategy is to leverage the capabilities of the organisation	2.15	0.897	0.805	1.066	.153	1.378	0.304
The strategic objectives of the organisation are clearly defined	2.08	0.909	0.827	0.821	0.153	0.343	0.304

Adapted from authors' SPSS output

5.3.1.2 Organisational Performance

The organisational performance descriptive statistics are summarised in Table 4. The organisational performance construct constituted of 5 questions. The average mean score was 2.68 (SD = 0.950). This shows that the participants leaned more towards agree and neutral. All statements in this construct show a positive skew. The kurtosis values show a relatively flat distribution.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics of the organisational performance construct

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
				Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Our market share growths are superior to that of our key competitors	2.64	1.023	1.046	0.148	0.153	-0.555	0.304
Our net profit is superior to that of our key competitors	2.74	0.968	0.936	0.146	0.153	-0.435	0.304
Our liquidity position is superior to that of our key competitors	2.69	0.899	0.808	0.128	0.153	-0.103	0.304
Our return on investment is superior to that of our key competitors	2.65	0.932	0.869	0.310	0.153	-0.240	0.304
Our sales growth position is superior to that of our key competitors	2.69	0.928	0.862	0.260	0.153	-0.287	0.304

Source: Adapted from authors' SPSS output

Furthermore, the data show a mix of positive and negative skewness, indicating a combination of peaked distribution (clustered at the centre) and grouping at the upper end. The negative kurtosis values show a moderately flat distribution. Tabachnick & Fidell (2007) suggested that analysis with reasonable large samples does not influence the skewness.

5.3.1.3 Organisational structure

Table 5 summarises the organisational structure construct's descriptive statistics. The construct contained five statements that measured the organisational structure. The results indicate that of all the statements, "My manager has to approve every decision that I make" showed the highest mean and variability (3.26, SD=1.352). Furthermore, the data show a mix of positive and negative skewness, indicating a combination of peaked

distribution (clustered at the centre) and grouping at the upper end. The negative kurtosis values show a moderately flat distribution (multiple cases in the extremes).

Table 5: Descriptive statistics of the organisational structure construct

Statement	Mean Statistic	Std. Deviation Statistic	Variance Statistic	Skewness		Kurtosis	
				Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
A supervisor's decision is required for action to be taken	2.37	1.054	1.110	0.551	0.153	-0.662	0.304
I have to request my managers' approval before I do almost everything	3.16	1.228	1.509	-0.304	0.153	-1.137	0.304
"Employees are encouraged to make their own decisions" (Batra, 2012, p.124)	2.60	1.094	1.198	0.467	0.153	-0.624	0.304
My manager has to approve every decision that I make	3.26	1.233	1.519	-0.422	0.153	-0.981	0.304
All matters are referred higher up for final approval	2.76	1.352	1.827	0.106	0.153	-1.340	0.304

Source: Adapted from authors' SPSS output

Table 6 outline the consolidated descriptive statistics of all constructs. The trimmed mean (estimator of central tendency) method was used to check for outliers at either end of the distribution (Pallant, 2010). The assessment of the original mean and trimmed mean assists in determining if the extreme scores strongly influence the mean (Pallant, 2010).

From a central tendency perspective, the original and trimmed mean (5%) of all constructs are close to each other, as the difference between the mean and trimmed mean values for each variable was below 5%, denoting that the outliers were not excessively influencing the average. Therefore, there was no need for the additional investigation of the data points.

The skewness of the triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance constructs are positive, 0.154 and 0.246, respectively. This shows a positive skew (values clustered to the left at the minimum values). In contrast, the organisational structure construct showed a negative skewness, indicating the high-end clustering of scores (right). The kurtosis values show a distribution between the peaked (around the centre) and relatively flat.

Table 6: Consolidated descriptive statistics of the three constructs

Construct			Statistic	Std. Error
Triadic strategic alignment	Mean		2.241	0.049
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	2.144	
		Upper Bound	2.337	
	5% Trimmed Mean		2.208	
	Median		2.167	
	Variance		0.611	
	Std. Deviation		0.782	
	Skewness		0.514	0.153
	Kurtosis		-0.130	0.304
Organisational Performance	Mean		2.681	0.498
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	2.584	
		Upper Bound	2.780	
	5% Trimmed Mean		2.676	

	Median	2.600	
	Variance	0.631	
	Std. Deviation	0.794	
	Skewness	0.246	0.153
	Kurtosis	0.035	0.304
Organisational Structure	Mean	2.927	0.061
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	2.806
		Upper Bound	3.047
	5% Trimmed Mean	2.933	
	Median	3.000	
	Variance	0.957	
	Std. Deviation	0.978	
	Skewness	-0.213	0.153
	Kurtosis	-0.910	0.304

Source: Adapted from authors' SPSS output

5.3.1.4 Normality

The assessment for the normality was conducted for all constructs using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests (Pallant, 2010). A normal distribution is confirmed by p-value < 0.05 (Pallant, 2010). Table 7 presents normality test results for all constructs. The p-value of 0.000 for all constructs suggests a normal distribution for all three constructs (Saunders & Lewis, 2018).

Table 7: Tests for Normality

Construct	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Triadic strategic Alignment	0.105	254	0.000	0.967	254	0.000
Organisational Performance	0.089	254	0.000	0.980	254	0.001
Organisational Structure	0.157	254	0.000	0.955	254	0.000

Source: Adapted from authors' SPSS output

5.3.2 Validity

5.3.2.1 Validity

Data validity reflects whether the measurement instrument measured what it was intended to or not (Blunch, 2013). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Sphericity test were utilised to confirm the appropriateness of the collected data for EFA. "Bartlett's test of Sphericity should be significant ($p < 0.05$) for the factor analysis to be considered appropriate, while the KMO index should range from 0 to 1 with a lower limit of 0.6 for good EFA" (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007, p.646).

5.3.2.2 KMO and Bartlett's test for Sphericity

The sampling adequacy for all statements determined via the KMO test yielded an acceptable index of 0.863, which is higher than the suggested lower limit (0.6). Bartlett's test for Sphericity result is significant with a p-value of 0.000, which is lower than the standard p-value of 0.005, as shown in Table 8 below. The results show that the collected data is appropriate for EFA.

Table 8: KMO and Bartlett's test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.863
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1941.475
	df	105
	Sig.	0.000

Source: Adapted from authors' SPSS output

In addition, the communalities values of the above test were extracted via principal component analysis (PCA). PCA entails a linear reduction of variables under examination into a smaller set that allows for detecting and recognising interrelated variables (Salkind, 2010). The results showed values greater than the lower limit of 0.3 for all variables, as shown in Table 9, which demonstrates the adequacy of the data for EFA after extraction.

Table 9: Communalities

Statements	Initial	Extraction
1. Organisational strategies are regularly reviewed and adjusted	1.000	0.551
2. Organisational strategies are clearly communicated to all staff members	1.000	0.611
3. Organisational strategies are aligned across all levels of strategy (Corporate, Business and Functional/Operational)	1.000	0.678
4. Organisational strategies take into account existing capabilities	1.000	0.697
5. The organisation's strategy is to leverage the capabilities of the organisation	1.000	0.550
6. The strategic objectives of the organisation are clearly defined	1.000	0.555
7. Our market share growths are superior to that of our key competitors	1.000	0.678
8. Our net profit is superior to that of our key competitors	1.000	0.742
9. Our liquidity position is superior to that of our key competitors	1.000	0.597
10. Our return on investment is superior to that of our key competitors	1.000	0.722
11. Our sales growth position is superior to that of our key competitors	1.000	0.768
12. A supervisor's decision is required for action to be taken	1.000	0.391
13. I have to request my managers' approval before I do almost everything	1.000	0.833
14. My manager has to approve every decision that I make	1.000	0.805
15. All matters are referred higher up for final approval	1.000	0.722

Source: Adapted from authors' SPSS output

5.3.2.3 Exploratory factor analysis

As the questionnaire used for the study was based on known scales, the EFA approach was selected to understand the underlying factor structure instead of the CFA described in Chapter 4 (Finch, 2020). In addition, EFA was conducted to reveal any of the variables that would significantly affect the hypotheses testing. The PCA extraction method with a varimax rotation method was applied and identified 15 factors in Table 10 below. All three selected components (the first three) have eigenvalues above 1, which equates to a total

of 65.996% of the variance. The selection criterion is aligned with Kaise’s standard, which indicates that only components with an eigenvalue of 1 or more are considered (Basto & Pereira, 2012).

Table 10: Total variance explained

Statements	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings ^a
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total
	1	5.093	33.952	33.952	5.093	33.952	33.952
2	2.619	17.462	51.414	2.619	17.462	51.414	2.862
3	2.187	14.582	65.996	2.187	14.582	65.996	3.995
4	0.776	5.176	71.172				
5	0.622	4.147	75.319				
6	0.601	4.006	79.326				
7	0.503	3.355	82.681				
8	0.457	3.043	85.724				
9	0.404	2.693	88.417				
10	0.370	2.466	90.884				
11	0.347	2.313	93.196				
12	0.314	2.093	95.290				
13	0.285	1.902	97.192				
14	0.249	1.658	98.850				
15	0.173	1.150	100.000				

Source: Adapted from authors’ SPSS output

Components were rotated by the PCA method to simplify the interpretation. Rotation allows for the presentation of an uncomplicated structure with each variable denoted by as few components as possible. The highest value for each variable was reported. Table 11 below shows that three components with loading factors higher than the minimum loading of 0.3 suggested by Basto & Pereira (2012) were achieved.

Table 11: Rotated component matrix of 15 statements

Statements	Component		
	1	2	3
Organisational strategies take into account existing capabilities	0.835		
Organisational strategies are aligned across all levels of strategy (Corporate, Business and Functional/Operational)	0.809		
Organisational strategies are clearly communicated to all staff members	0.792		
The organisation's strategy is to leverage the capabilities of the organisation	0.746		
The strategic objectives of the organisation are clearly defined	0.716		
Organisational strategies are regularly reviewed and adjusted	0.708		
I have to request my managers' approval before I do almost everything		0.895	
My manager has to approve every decision that I make		0.879	
All matters are referred higher up for final approval		0.844	
A supervisor's decision is required for action to be taken		0.620	
Our sales growth position is superior to that of our key competitors			-0.885
Our net profit is superior to that of our key competitors			-0.863
Our market share growths are superior to that of our key competitors			-0.821
Our return on investment is superior to that of our key competitors			-0.818
Our liquidity position is superior to that of our key competitors			-0.764

Source: Adapted from authors' SPSS output

Component 1

This factor contains all six statements of the Strategic Alignment construct. These statements returned coefficient values of 0.835, 0.809, 0.792, 0.716, and 0.708,

respectively, above the threshold of 0.3. This demonstrates a significant correlation between these statements.

Component 2

Component 2 contains four statements from the organisational structure construct. The four statements returned coefficient values of 0.895, 0.879, 0.844 and 0.620, respectively, which are all above the threshold of 0.3. This demonstrates a significant correlation between the statements.

Component 3

The component contains all statements from the organisational performance construct. The absolute factor values of all statements are above the 0.3 threshold; however, the items are negatively related to the factor as they have a negative sign.

5.3.3 Reliability

The Cronbach's alpha was used to measure the reliability of the measurement instrument. According to Hair et al. (2010), a Cronbach's alpha equivalent to 0.5 is considered acceptable, whereas a value equal to or above 0.7 is deemed suitable for an indicator. The reliability scores of all constructs presented below were above 0.7, which shows that the measurement instrument was reliable.

5.3.3.1 Triadic strategic alignment

The reliability statistics for the triadic strategic alignment construct in Table 12 indicate a high overall Cronbach's alpha of 0.868 for all statements. This is above the 0.7 threshold, which implies that the level of internal consistency of scale is good (Pallant, 2010).

Table 12: Reliability Statistics for triadic strategic alignment

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardised Items	N of Items
0.868	0.868	6

Source: Adapted from authors' SPSS output

All statements were included, with no statement was deleted for this factor. Therefore all statements for the construct are appropriate and utilised for hypothesis testing. Table 13 shows that the deletion of any statement would not improve Cronbach's alpha value.

Table 13: Triadic strategic alignment statements deleted items analysis

Statements	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Organisational strategies are regularly reviewed and adjusted	11.40	16.170	0.624	0.399	0.852
Organisational strategies are clearly communicated to all staff members	11.13	15.110	0.668	0.460	0.845
Organisational strategies are aligned across all levels of strategy (Corporate, Business and Functional/Operational)	11.01	14.466	0.734	0.552	0.833
Organisational strategies take into account existing capabilities	11.02	15.090	0.730	0.557	0.833
The organisation's strategy is to leverage the capabilities of the organisation	11.30	16.677	0.615	0.421	0.854
The strategic objectives of the organisation are clearly defined	11.36	16.524	0.627	0.395	0.852

Source: Adapted from SPSS output

5.3.3.2 Organisational performance

The reliability statistics for the organisational performance construct in Table 14 indicate a high overall Cronbach's alpha of 0.892 for all statements. This is above the 0.7 threshold, which suggests that the level of internal consistency of scale is good (Pallant, 2010).

Table 14: Reliability statistics for organisational performance

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardised Items	N of Items
0.892	0.892	5

Source: Adapted from authors' SPSS output

Table 15: Organisational performance statements deleted item analysis

Statement	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Our market share growths are superior to that of our key competitors	10.77	10.082	0.716	0.533	0.874
Our net profit is superior to that of our key competitors	10.67	10.112	0.768	0.591	0.861
Our liquidity position is superior to that of our key competitors	10.72	11.040	0.658	0.448	0.885
Our return on investment is superior to that of our key competitors	10.76	10.389	0.752	0.584	0.865
Our sales growth position is superior to that of our key competitors	10.72	10.228	0.789	0.637	0.856

Source: Adapted from authors' SPSS output

Table 15 above indicates the level to which each statement relates to the total score. Reviewing the reliability statistics shows that removing any of the statements would not significantly boost Cronbach's Alpha. All statements were, therefore, included with no statement deleted for this factor.

5.3.3.3 Organisational structure

The reliability statistics in Table 16 of the organisational structure construct show that an overall Cronbach's alpha of 0.575 can be considered acceptable but not good (Hair et al., 2010).

Table 16: Reliability Statistics for organisational structure

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardised Items	N of Items
0.575	0.532	5

Source: Adapted from authors' SPSS output

The organisational structure statement deleted item analysis presented in Table 17 was then reviewed to determine items that would improve the Cronbach's alpha if deleted.

Table 17: Organisational structure statements deleted item analysis

Statements	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
A supervisor's decision is required for action to be taken	11.77	9.687	0.377	0.177	0.500
"Employees are encouraged to make their own decisions" (Batra, 2012 p.124)	11.54	16.044	-0.453	0.218	0.838
I have to request my managers' approval	10.98	7.039	0.725	0.712	0.262

before I do almost everything					
My manager has to approve every decision that I make	10.88	7.290	0.671	0.692	0.301
All matters are referred higher up for final approval	11.38	6.924	0.636	0.536	0.306

Source: Adapted from authors' SPSS output

From Table 17 above, only one statement, “Employees are encouraged to make their own decisions”(Batra, 2012, p.124), would improve Cronbach’s alpha if removed for the organisational structure construct. The “Employees are encouraged to make their own decisions”(Batra, 2012) statement was thus removed from this construct. The removal of the “Employees are encouraged to make their own decisions”(Batra, 2012, p.124) statement improved the reliability score (Cronbach’s Alpha) to 0.838, as demonstrated in Table 18 below. The updated value present good internal consistency reliability for the scale.

Table 18: Updated reliability statistics for organisational structure

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardised Items	N of Items
0.838	0.833	4

Source: Adapted from authors' SPSS output

5.3.4 Regression analysis

The section below presents the hypothesis (H1) testing findings achieved through Pearson correlation and regression analysis. The outcomes of the research questions are presented in terms of null and alternate hypotheses. The correlation coefficients quantify the “direction and the strength of a linear association between independent and dependent variables and range from -1 (negative) to +1 (positive) correlation” (Pallant, 2010, p.126). The linear regression analysis was used to assess the impact of triadic strategic alignment on organisational performance (Thrane, 2020).

5.3.4.1 Influence of triadic strategic alignment on organisational performance

A linearity check was conducted before the regression analysis as regression analysis necessitates a linear relationship between the constructs (Thrane, 2020). Figure 18 presents a scatterplot used to examine the linearity of the association “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance” (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39). The scatterplot shows linearity “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance” (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39).

The equation of the plot is as follows:

$$\text{Organisational Performance} = 0.37 \text{ Triadic strategic alignment} + 1.85$$

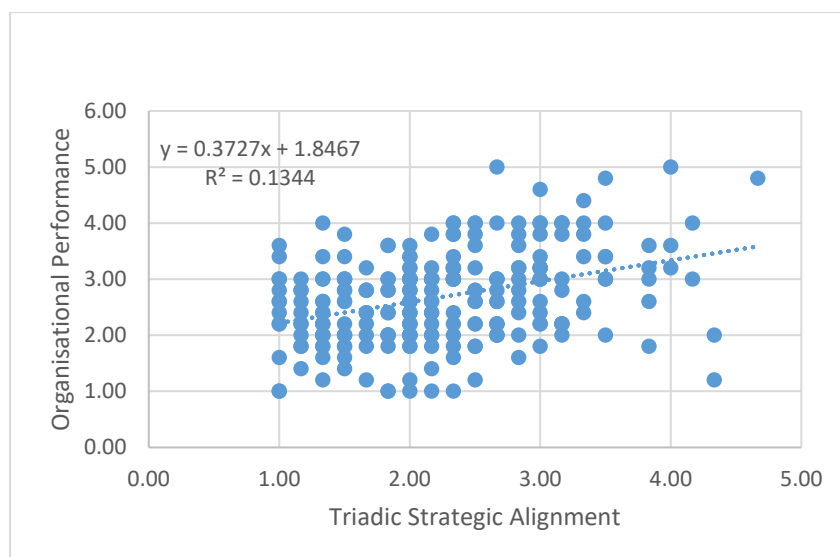


Figure 18: Scatter plot of the association between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance

Source: Adapted from authors' SPSS output

The Pearson correlation was used to explore the strength of the relationship between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance. When conducting the Pearson correlation Coefficient, a “positive linear relationship with a value greater than +1 denotes that as one variable increases in value, the other also increases linearly” (Pallant, 2010, p.126). Values between 0 - 0.3 have a “weak positive relationship, while values between 0.3 and 0.7 indicate a moderate positive relationship. Values of 0.7 to 1.0 represent a strong positive linear relationship” (Pallant, 2010, p.132). The Pearson correlation between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance presented in Table 19 shows a p-value of 0.000 less than 0.01, indicating a strong association. The Pearson

Correlation coefficient (0.367) results show that the “relationship between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance” is moderate (Al-Surmi et al., 2020 p.39).

Table 19: Pearson’s correlation between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance

		Triadic strategic alignment	Organisational performance
Pearson Correlation	Triadic strategic alignment	1	0.367**
Sig. (2-tailed)			0.000
Pearson Correlation	Organisational performance	0.367**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	

Source: Adapted from authors’ SPSS output

The influence of triadic strategic alignment on organisational performance was tested by using regression analysis. The tested hypothesis is as follows:

Null Hypothesis (H0): “Triadic strategic alignment has no positive impact on organisational performance”(Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.8)

(H1): “Triadic strategic alignment has a positive impact on organisational performance” (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.8)

Table 20 presents the regression analysis model of the above relationship. The R-square measures magnitude of the variance in the dependent variable described by the model (Pallant, 2010). In this case, the R square value is 0.134, which is equivalent to 13.4%. This implies that triadic strategic alignment accounts for 13.4% of the variance in organisational performance.

Table 20: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.367 ^a	0.134	0.131	0.741

Source: Adapted from authors' SPSS output

The ANOVA presented in Table 21 tests whether the proposed model is adequate for the data that the F value is 39.142, the p-value is 0.000, which is significantly less than (Sig.) <0.01; therefore, it can be concluded that triadic strategic alignment accounts for 13.4% of the variance in organisational performance and that this finding is positive.

Table 21: ANOVA

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	21.465	1	21.465	39.142	0.000
	Residual	138.192	252	0.548		
	Total	159.657	253			

Source: Adapted from authors' SPSS output

The regression model summarised in Table 22 shows a coefficient of 0.373 and a p-value (0.000) less than the threshold of 0.01. A significant equation was found $F=39.142$, $p < 0.01$ with an R^2 of 0.134. This suggests that the H_0 can be rejected and can conclude that triadic strategic alignment positively impacts organisational performance.

Table 22: Regression model

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.847	0.141		13.065	0.000
Triadic strategic alignment	0.373	0.060	0.367	6.256	0.000

Source: Adapted from authors' SPSS output

In conclusion, the results of the linear regression analysis indicated that the null hypothesis H0: “Triadic strategic alignment has no positive impact on organisational performance”(Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.8) can be rejected and that the hypothesis (H1): “Triadic strategic alignment has a positive impact on organisational performance” (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.8), cannot be rejected.

5.4 The role of the organisational structure

The extension part of the study entailed evaluating the role of the organisational structure on the association between triadic strategic alignment and organisational structure.

5.4.1 Investigation for a mediation effect

The section investigates whether the organisational structure has a mediation effect on the association “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance”(Al-Surmi et al., 2020). Mediation entails explaining a relationship between two variables by their relationship to a third variable (Hayes, 2013). Regression analysis was conducted using SPSS Process v4.0 to validate the hypothesised mediation role of organisational structure on the association “between triadic strategic alignment on organisational performance” (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39; Hayes, 2013).

Null Hypothesis (H0): Organisational structure does not have a mediation effect on the association “between triadic strategic alignment on organisational performance” (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39)

(H2): Organisational structure has a mediation effect on the association “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance” (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39).

Table 23 presents the regression analysis for the mediation effect of organisational structure on the association between triadic strategic alignment and organisational structure.

Table 23: Regression analysis for the mediation effect of organisational structure on the association between triadic strategic alignment and organisational structure

Model summary: outcome variable: Organisational structure

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
0.197	0.036	0.926	9.512	1.000	250.000	0.002

Model

R	Coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	3.462	0.187	18.845	0.000	3.099	3.823
Triadic strategic alignment	-0.239	0.077	-3.084	0.002	-0.391	-0.086

Model summary: outcome variable: Organisational performance

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
0.370	0.137	0.549	19.937	2.000	251.000	0.000

Model

R	Coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	1.994	0.219	9.084	0.000	1.562	2.426
Triadic strategic alignment	0.363	0.607	5.972	0.000	0.243	0.482
Organisational structure	-0.043	0.485	-0.877	0.3816	-0.138	0.053

Model summary: outcome variable: Organisational performance

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
0.367	0.134	0.548	39.142	1.000	252.000	0.000

Model

R	Coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	1.8477	0.141	13.065	0.000	1.568	2.125

Triadic strategic alignment	0.373	0.059	6.256	0.000	0.255	0.490
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The total effect of triadic strategic alignment on organisational performance

Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
0.373	0.059	6.256	0.000	0.255	0.490

Direct effect of triadic strategic alignment on organisational performance

Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
0.363	0.061	5.971	0.000	0.243	0.482

Bootstrapping - Indirect effect of triadic strategic alignment on organisational performance

Model	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
Organisational structure	0.010	0.013	-0.011	0.039

The results indicate that the outcome variable organisational structure is not significant as the p-value is greater than 0.001. The direct effect from organisational structure to triadic strategic alignment was negative and insignificant ($b = -0.239$, $MSE = 0.077$, $p > 0.001$).

For the outcome variable organisational performance, the direct effect from triadic strategic alignment to organisational performance was positive and significant ($b = 0.373$, $S.E. = 0.059$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates a significant correlation “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance” based on the survey responses (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39).

For the outcome variable organisational performance, the direct effect from organisational structure to organisational performance was negative and insignificant ($b = -0.043$, $s.e. = 0.046$, $p > 0.001$). In addition, the indirect effect results is statistically not significant at 95% ($b = 0.0101$, $CI = -0.0111; 0.0396$). The findings do not support the mediation hypothesis.

The strength of the direct and indirect effects of triadic strategic alignment on organisational performance is presented in Figure 19 below.

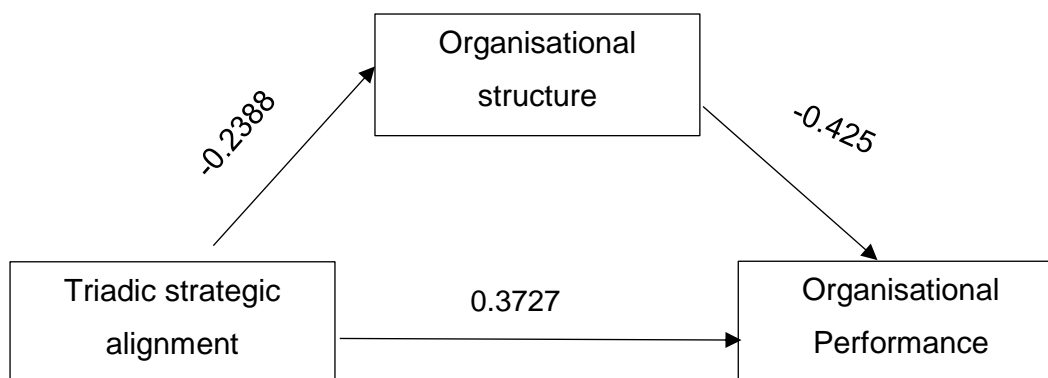


Figure 19: Mediating effect model following the analysis

Source: Author

The indirect effect is not statistically significant as zero falls between LLCI and ULCL. Although the direct association between triadic strategic alignment and organisational structure is moderate (0.3727), the mediated effect with the organisational structure is negative and weak (-0.425). Therefore, the organisational structure does not mediate the association “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance”(Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39).

In conclusion, the investigation results for a mediation effect of organisational structure on the association indicated that the H0: organisational structure does not have a mediation effect on the association “between triadic strategic alignment on organisational performance” may not be rejected and that organisational structure does not mediate the association “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance” (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39). As a result, hypothesis H2: organisational structure has a mediation effect on the association “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance”, may be rejected (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39).

5.4.2 Investigation for a moderation effect

The section investigates whether the organisational structure moderates the association “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance” (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39).

Null Hypothesis (H0): Organisational structure does not have a moderation effect on the association “between triadic strategic alignment on organisational performance”(Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39)

(H3): Organisational structure has a moderation effect on the association “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance” (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39).

The moderation hypothesis was tested using regression analysis on SPSS Process v4.0 (Hayes, 2013). Moderation is confirmed by a significant interaction among variables (Hayes, 2013). To conclude on whether the interaction is significant or not, the confidence intervals are examined to see if zero falls within the lower-level confidence interval (LLCI) and upper-level confidence intervals (ULCI). If it does, the interaction is not significant (Hayes, 2013). In addition, a p-value < 0.001 is required for a significant outcome. Table 24 presents the regression analysis for the moderation effect of organisational structure on the association between triadic strategic alignment and organisational structure.

Table 24: Regression for the moderation effect of organisational structure on the association between triadic strategic alignment and organisational structure (Source: Adapted from SPSS Process output)

Model summary: outcome variable: Organisational performance

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
0.370	0.137	0.9551	13.251	3.000	250.000	0.000

Model

R	Coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	2.063	0.443	4.659	0.000	1.191	2.936
Triadic strategic alignment	0.331	0.184	1.795	0.074	-0.032	0.694
Organisational structure	-0.065	0.135	-0.483	0.629	-0.331	0.201
Int_1	0.011	0.059	0.181	0.857	-0.105	0.126

Int_1: Triadic strategic alignment x Organisational structure

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s)					
	R2-chng	F	df1	df2	p

Triadic strategic alignment x Organisational structure	0.001	0.033	1.000	250.000	0.857
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Table 25: The provisional outcome of the focal predictor:

Triadic strategic alignment	Organisational Structure	Organisational performance
1.3333	1.9333	2.4058
2.1667	1.9333	2.6987
3.0000	1.9333	2.9916
1.3333	3.0000	2.3511
2.1667	3.0000	2.6535
3.0000	3.0000	2.9558
1.3333	4.0000	2.2999
2.1667	4.0000	2.6111
3.0000	4.0000	2.9222
Confidence level: 95%		

The results indicate that the outcome variable (dependant variable) organisational performance is significant with a p-value < 0.001. The overall model: $F=13.254$, $p=0.0000$ and $R^2 = 0.1372$. This means that the model is significant and that 13.7% of the variability is explained by the triadic strategic alignment and organisational structure variables on organisational performance.

The moderator effect model presented in Figure 21 has a b value of 0.3311, $t = 1.7949$, and $p>0.001$. This indicates that the association is not significant. The organisational structure ($b= -0.0653$, $t = -0.4834$ and $p >0.001$) is also not significant. The interaction (Int_1) result, $b=0.106$, $t=-0.4834$ and $p>0.00$ is not significant. In addition, zero falls between LLCI (-0.1045) and ULCI (0.1257), confirming that it is not significant.

The interaction effect is presented in Figure 20 below, where OS (the organisational structure is the moderator variable). The blue line shows the low-level OS effect, the red line shows the medium-level OS effect, and the green represents a significant level of OS effect.

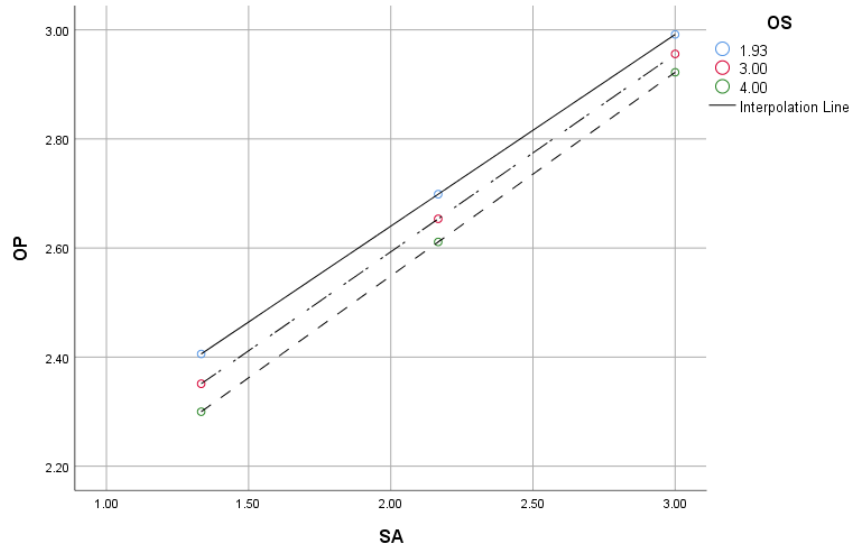


Figure 20: Visual presentation of the effect of organisational structure on the association between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance

Source: Adapted from SPSS Process output

Figure 20 demonstrates that there is no interaction “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance” via the organisational structure (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39). Additionally, the p-values for all variables were not significant. Lastly, zero lies between the LLCI and ULCI, an indication of no interaction. Therefore, the organisational structure has no moderation effect on the association “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance” (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39).

Figure 21 below shows a summary of the outcomes of the moderation effect.

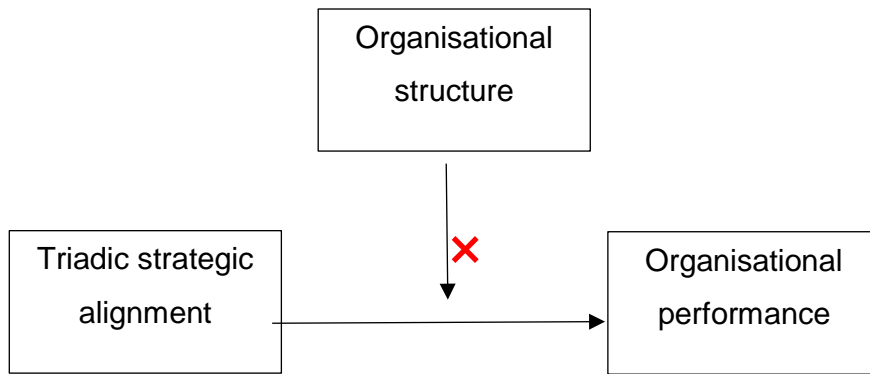


Figure 21: Moderation effect model following the analysis

Source: Author

Based on the research findings, the moderation effect does not hold as indicated by an x in the figure above.

In conclusion, the investigation results for a mediation effect of organisational structure on the association indicated that the H0:organisational structure does not have a moderation effect on the association “between triadic strategic alignment on organisational performance” may not be rejected and that organisational structure does not mediate the association “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance” (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39). Therefore, hypothesis H3:organisational structure has a moderation effect on the association “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance”, may be rejected (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39).

Table 26 summarises the outcomes of the tested hypotheses.

Table 26: Summary results of the hypotheses

Research question	Hypotheses	conclusion
“To what extent, if any, does triadic strategic	Null Hypothesis (H0): “Triadic strategic alignment has no positive impact on organisational performance” (Al-Surmi et al., 2019, p.39)	rejected

alignment lead to organisational performance?" (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.40)	Hypothesis (H1): "Triadic strategic alignment has a positive impact on organisational performance" (Al-Surmi et al., 2019, p.39)	Fail to be rejected
What is the effect of the organisational structure on the triadic strategic alignment?	Null Hypothesis (H0): Organisational structure does not have a mediation effect on the association "between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance"(Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39)	rejected
	Hypothesis (H2): Organisational structure has a mediation effect on the association "between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance" (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39).	rejected
	Null Hypothesis (H0): Organisational structure does not have a moderation effect on the association "between triadic strategic alignment on organisational performance" (Al-Surmi et al., 2020,p.39)	rejected
	Hypothesis (H3): Organisational structure has a moderation effect on the association "between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance" (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39)	rejected

Source: Author

5.5 Conclusion

The chapter converses the findings of the research data. The demographics of the population showed the profile of the respondents. The descriptive analysis provided information about the sample. Reliability and validity were tested to determine the level of

applicability of the research instrument to analyse the data and assess the generalisability of the findings. The regression and correlation analyses were used to test the hypothesis for the generalisation study.

The research outcomes indicated that triadic strategic alignment positively impacts organisational performance, as summarised in Table 26. The investigation of the role of the organisational structure on the association “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance showed an absence of a mediation or moderation effect of organisational structure on the “association between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance” based on the responses (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39).

6 Chapter 6 Discussion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the analysis of the results from Chapter 5 in order to respond to the research questions via the tested hypothesis. The research findings will be compared to the work of other scholars in the form of similarities and differences in the literature review presented in Chapter 2. The chapter is organised around the hypotheses proposed in Chapter 3. The chapter layout is depicted in Figure 22 below.

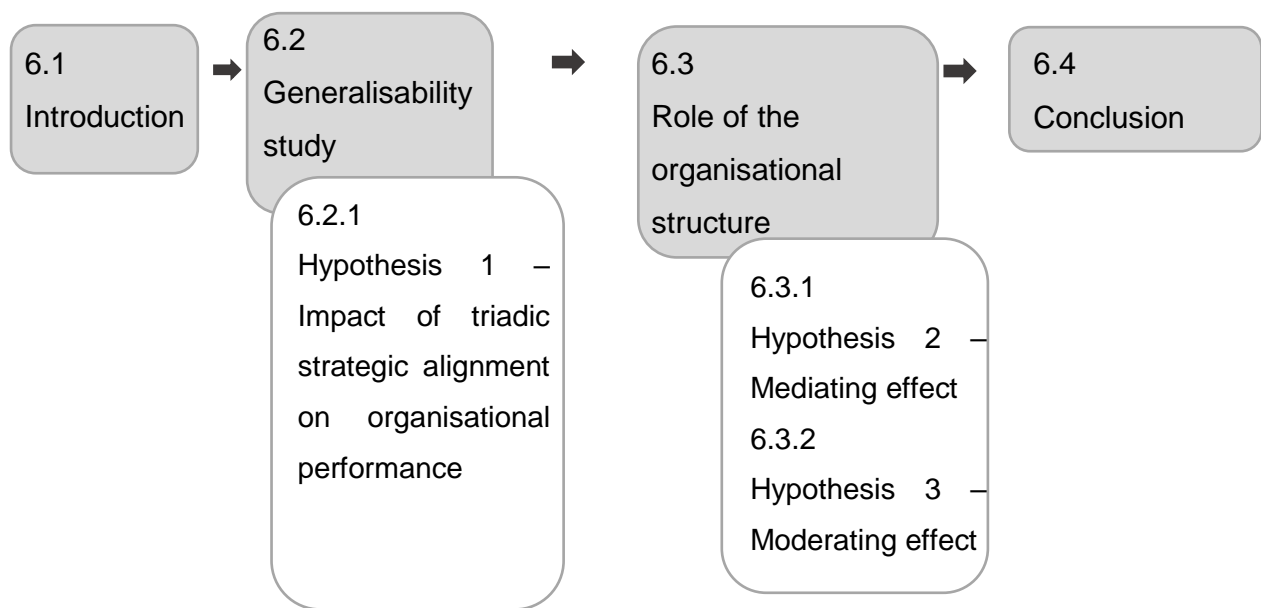


Figure 22: The discussion roadmap

Source: Author

6.2 Generalisability study

6.2.1 Hypothesis 1

As indicated in chapter 3, hypothesis 1 is as follows:

H0: “Triadic strategic alignment has no positive impact on organisational performance”
(Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39)

H1: “Triadic strategic alignment has a positive impact on organisational performance”
(Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39)

The research findings summarised in Table 26 indicated that strategic alignment has a positive influence on organisational performance. The results confirm the findings by other scholars (Al-Surmi et al., 2020; Carter & Greer, 2013; Oehlhorn et al., 2020; Sardana et

al., 2016), which showed that strategic alignment in particular triadic strategic alignment positively impacts organisational performance.

Based on the research outcomes, there seems to be a slight difference in the strength of this relationship compared to that obtained by Al-Surmi et al., (2019, 2020). This research study showed a moderate relationship (0.37), whereas the study by Al-Surmi et al., (2019, 2020) indicated a slightly lower (0.28) relationship. Therefore, this study confirms the generalisability of the findings by Al-Surmi et al., (2020).

These findings suggest that South African organisations that achieve a triadic strategic alignment are more likely to improve organisational performance. However, since the results of this study indicate a moderate relationship, there may be more than a single factor influencing organisational performance in addition to triadic strategic alignment. Organisations should therefore strike a balance when embarking on initiatives to improve performance. Thus, these findings necessitate further research to understand the triadic strategic alignment better.

Furthermore, the outcomes of this study suggest that triadic strategic alignment can be viewed as an enhanced form of strategic alignment compared to pairwise strategic alignment in terms of facilitating the attainment of organisational goals. Moreover, this may result in the emergence of an integrated organisation. Additionally, the findings imply that by establishing a triadic strategic alignment, CEOs and management teams can better understand the organisation's elements and identify strategies that may hinder performance improvement to attain an ideal alignment.

South Africa's GDP increased by 1.2% in the second quarter of 2021 (Stats SA, 2021). According to the sectoral breakdown shown in Figure 23, the primary drivers of growth were "transport, & communication (6.9%), agriculture (6.2%), personal services (2.5%) and trade (2.2%) sectors" (STATS SA, 2021, p.1). "Finance (-0.4%), manufacturing (-0.8%), government (-0.9%) and construction (-1.4%) on the other hand, contracted" (Stats SA, 2021, p.1). These statistics show that it is still critical to implement interventions to improve organisational performance in order to aid GDP growth. Therefore, organisations should consider formulating business and operational strategies that coherently support the corporate strategy to increase performance.

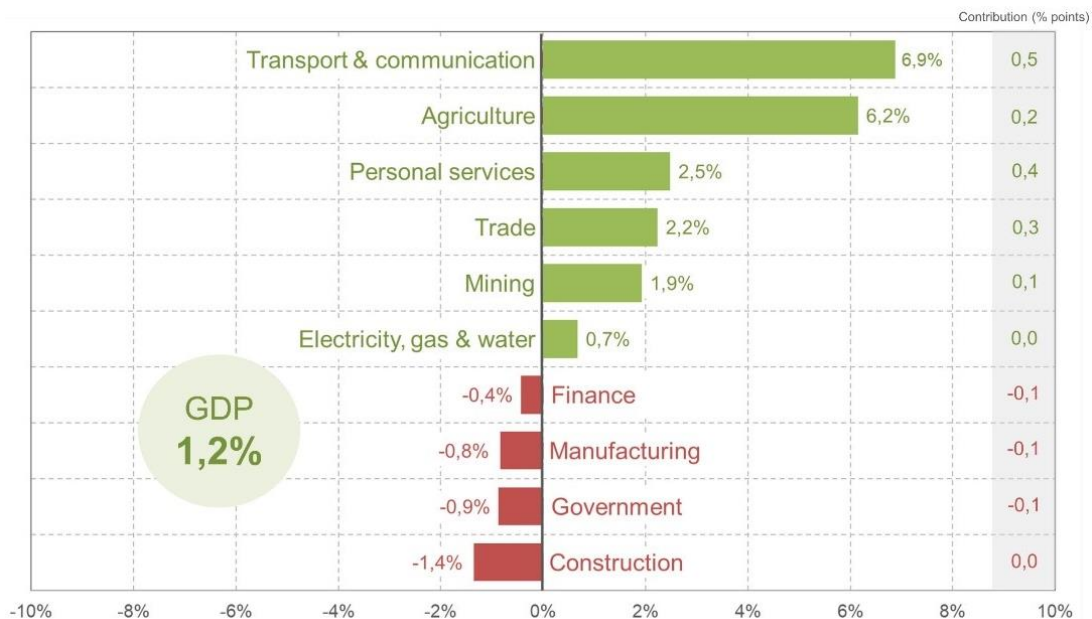


Figure 23: South Africa's GDP sector performance (Q2 2021)

Source: Stats SA

For example, an organisation within the financial sector like a commercial bank could achieve triadic strategic alignment by ensuring that business managers formulate strategies that support the strategic vision and goals defined at the corporate level. Similarly, front line bank managers should support the business strategy in their operations. The improved sectoral performance would then contribute towards GDP growth. Additionally, aligning the corporate, business and operational strategies may improve communication and reduce contradictions amongst managers.

Triadic strategic alignment can also assist managers in identifying operations that have little bearing on the organisations' overall success, saving time. Furthermore, triadic strategic alignment may facilitate mutual understanding of organisational goals and allow managers to visualise where they and their teams fit into the context of the entire organisation.

6.3 The role of the organisational structure

The organisational structure involves how employees are organised within an organisation or how their roles are coordinated and centralised (Mintzberg, 2009). This can also be extended to the nature of formalities and layers of hierarchy (Damanpour, 1991). Studies by Oyewobi et al., (2016) showed that organisational structure can be used as a vehicle for realising optimum organisational performance. The aim of hypotheses 2 and 3, was to

fill a research gap indicated in chapter 2 by investigating the mediation or moderation effect of organisational structure on the association “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance” (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39).

6.3.1 Hypothesis 2

Null Hypothesis (H0): Organisational structure does not have a mediation effect on the association “between triadic strategic alignment on organisational performance” (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39)

(H2): Organisational structure has a mediation effect on the association “between triadic strategic alignment on organisational performance” (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39).

Hypothesis 2 was tested using regression analysis. This approach has also been used by other scholars who have conducted similar mediation analyses. For example, Oyewobi et al. (2016) utilised regression analysis to assess the influence of organisational structure on strategies in construction companies. This study results presented in Table 23 indicated a significant correlation “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance” (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39) based on the survey responses ($b = 0.373$, $S.E. = 0.059$, $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, the outcomes of the bootstrap estimation indicated that the indirect coefficient was not significant at 95% ($b = 0.0101$, $CI = -0.0111; 0.0396$). The results imply that the null hypothesis is supported.

The findings of this study indicate that organisational structure does not have a mediation effect on the association “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance” (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39). The results do not support the mediation hypothesis. The findings suggest that there may not be adequate evidence in the collected data to conclude a mediation effect in the population. The dynamic nature of the organisational structure may be contributing to the outcomes as no single structure best serves all circumstances (Arasli et al., 2019). Additionally, organic structures are unsuitable for today’s turbulent markets (Felin & Powell, 2016). As a result, managers could use dynamic capabilities when implementing triadic strategic alignment to align the organisational structure with the current business environment (Kumar et al., 2018). Since the study was quantitative, underlying factors

or additional organisational structure characteristics that might be in play could not be determined.

The research outcomes could not be directly compared with current literature as the study extends the literature based on recent findings and recommendations by Al-Surmi et al. (2020, p.39) to investigate the role of the organisational structure on the association “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance”. From the context of this study, the findings suggest that organisations could enhance performance due to a triadic strategic alignment whatever the organisational structure. This necessitates further investigation to extend the existing literature at different geographic locations as a mediating effect does not hold in the South African context. In addition, qualitative studies could enhance a richer understanding of the underlying factors.

6.3.2 Hypothesis 3

Null Hypothesis (H0): Organisational structure does not have a moderation effect on the association “between triadic strategic alignment on organisational performance” (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39)

(H3): Organisational structure has a moderation effect on the association “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance” (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39).

Regression analysis was used to investigate the above hypothesis. Results in Table 24 show that the model was significant ($p=0.000$) and that $R^2 = 0.370$, which means that 37.0% of the variability is explained by the triadic strategic alignment and organisational structure variables on organisational performance. The moderator effect model presented a $b = 0.3311$, $t = 1.7949$ and $p>0.001$; this shows that the association is insignificant. The organisational structure ($b= -0.0653$, $t = -0.4834$ and $p >0.001$) and the interaction (Int_1), $b=0.106$, $t=-0.4834$ and $p>0.001$ are also not significant. In addition, zero falls between LLCI (-0.1045) and ULCI (0.1257), confirming that it is not significant.

The finding infers that the null hypothesis is supported. This study suggests that organisational structure has no moderation effect on the association between triadic

strategic alignment and organisational performance. These findings are restricted to the South African context. Additionally, the outcomes could differ at a different time as there may not be adequate evidence in the collected data to conclude a moderation effect.

These findings imply that South African companies that achieve a triadic strategic alignment could achieve organisational performance whatever the organisational structure. Since the study was quantitative, underlying factors or additional organisational structure characteristics that might be in play could not be determined. The topic requires further qualitative investigations to understand the underlying elements or other attributes of the organisational structure.

Triadic strategic alignment has not received much attention, hence the recommendation by Al-Surmi et al. (2020) for other scholars to investigate the possibility of this effect. It was, therefore, not possible to make a direct comparison to similar studies. However, this researcher examined similar studies investigating the role of the organisational structure on relationships that lead to performance. For example, Jaoua (2014, p.383) conducted an empirical study to investigate the moderation effect of organisational structure on the association “between strategic management and global performance”. Jaoua (2014, p.383) research findings showed no moderation effect organisational structure on the association “between strategic management and global performance”. The findings of this research study confirm the above results. This necessitates further investigation on the topic. Additionally, more organisational structure attributes or underlying factors might affect the association between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance than a mediation or moderation effect. From the context of this study, the findings suggest that organisations could enhance organisations with a triadic strategic alignment whatever the organisational structure.

6.4 Conclusion

The chapter covers the analysis of the results presented in chapter 5. This study assessed the “impact of triadic strategic alignment on organisational performance”, taking into account organisational structure (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39). The results of the study based on the collected data to test the postulated hypotheses are as follows:

- There is a moderate positive association between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance. The outcome confirms the findings by (Al-Surmi et al., 2020).
- There was no evidence of the organisational structure's mediation or moderation effect on the association of triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance. This result is consistent with current literature, which could not ascertain organisational structure's mediation or moderation effect on the “relationship between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance” (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39).
- Additionally, qualitative investigations might reveal the underlying factors that might be in play.

7 Chapter 7 Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

Triadic strategic alignment has recently been theoretically linked to organisational performance (Al-Surmi et al., 2020). This study intended to evaluate the “impact of triadic strategic alignment on organisational performance”, taking into account the role of the organisational structure in South African companies (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39). Contingency theory is at the core of this study, and it suggests a contingency fit and dynamic alignment within each context, rather than a superlative approach to managing organisations (McAdam et al., 2019). This section converses the principal conclusions and the academic contribution. Additionally, it provides the research implications for organisations and management. Lastly, it confers the study's limitations and suggestions for future research.

7.2 Principle conclusions

The study's results showed that triadic strategic alignment moderately affects organisational performance in South African companies, as discussed in Chapter 6. The results confirmed the generalisability of the research findings by Al-Surmi et al. (2020) in the South African context. A triadic strategic alignment can assist organisations in improving performance (Al-Surmi et al., 2020). Additionally, there appears to be an absence of a mediation or moderation effect of organisational structure on the association “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance” (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39). The research findings are consistent with other studies that failed to establish a moderation effect of the organisational structure of performance-related constructs (Jaoua, 2014). There was insufficient evidence in the collected data to conclude a mediating or moderating effect in the population. From the context of this study, the findings suggest that organisations could enhance organisational performance due to a triadic strategic alignment whatever the organisational structure.

7.3 Academic research contribution

Strategic alignment within the strategic management field has received attention from many scholars (Rodríguez-Escobar & González-Benito, 2017; Sardana et al., 2016; Wadstrom, 2019). In particular, the association between a pairwise strategic alignment between two levels of strategy and organisational performance, for example, alignment of corporate and business strategies or business and functional strategies (Rodríguez-Escobar & González-Benito, 2017; Sardana et al., 2016; Wadstrom, 2019). Research

studies on the association between triadic strategic alignments and organisational performance have received little attention (Al-Surmi et al., 2020). Additionally, studies considered the role of organisational structure in such an association (Al-Surmi et al., 2020).

The study has extended knowledge in the current literature around strategic alignment, which is beyond research findings based on a pairwise approach to strategic alignment. These research findings also confirmed the generalisability of the results of other scholars who conducted a similar study in a different geographic location (Al-Surmi et al., 2020). Furthermore, based on the analysis, it appears that there is no mediation or moderation effect of organisational structure on the association “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance” based on the received responses, this suggests that there may be more characteristics of organisational structure that could be in effect and could be explored to add into the body of literature (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39).

7.4 Recommendation for management and other stakeholders

The COVID-19 pandemic has injected more complexities within the business environment (Donthu & Gustafsson, 2020). This shift compels businesses to modify their performance systems to assess the ecological changes (Collings et al., 2021). Additionally, to be flexible, adaptable and to seek new opportunities to increase performance (Felin & Powell, 2016). The study provides new insights for organisations, CEOs, policymakers and other stakeholders.

The outcomes of this study have shown a positive correlation “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance” (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39). The study provides insight to CEOs and managers to better understand the association “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance” (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39). Managers could thus use these findings to aid performance improvement (Al-Surmi et al., 2020; Sardana et al., 2016; Wadström, 2019). For example, to increase responsiveness to the market and competitiveness (Sardana et al., 2016; Wadstrom, 2019).

Furthermore, organisations should consider this alternative approach to strategic alignment, which considers all three levels of strategy, instead of focusing on improving performance through pairwise strategic alignment. This could be accomplished through frequent interactions among corporate, business and operational management teams to

foster mutual understanding and, additionally, achieved through knowledge sharing and participation in other departments' initiatives. Lastly, managers from both the business and operational levels should be involved when developing the corporate strategy.

The research findings suggest that organisations following a specific corporate strategy to attain excellent performance should also affect suitable business and functional strategies. For example, if an organisation pursues a digital strategy, the human resource and information technology strategies should be appropriate to support that goal. However, as the business environment evolves, the alignment should be adapted to align with the context. Additionally, the triadic strategic alignment approach will enable CEOs and strategists to assess their current strategic alignment status and determine the ideal alignment to improve performance. This could be achieved through an elimination process, where the alignment is adjusted according to the desired organisational performance. Triadic strategic alignment could also serve as a mechanism to achieve harmony amongst the different levels of management within organisations, resulting in increased efficiency and effectiveness while limiting divisions or working in silos.

Furthermore, the study provides policymakers such as the board of directors and the Department of trade, Industry and Competition with insights into triadic strategic alignment, mainly considering organisational policies that enable a triadic strategic alignment (Corporate, business and functional) within organisations. This allows organisations to improve performance through triadic strategic alignment. Additionally, if various South Africa's industry sectors improve their performance, this may eventually contribute to GDP growth.

Although the research findings could not confirm a mediation or moderation effect of organisational performance on the association "between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance", CEOs, management teams and strategists should continue to pay attention to the organisational structure, as has been shown that the organisational structure can be used as a tool for ensuring performance (Al-Surmi et al., 2020 p.39; Oyewobi et al., 2016). Beyond the mediation and moderation effect, additional organisational structure characteristics or underlying factors may influence the association between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance.

When implementing a triadic strategic alignment to improve performance, CEOs and management teams should monitor the impact of the organisational structure on performance, as the organisational structure influences the decentralisation of decision-making (Mintzberg, 1992, 2009).

7.5 Limitation of the search

The limitations of the study have been grouped by theme:

Timing

The decrease in businesses performance amid the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to the contraction of 7% in GDP in 2020 compared with 2019 (Stats SA, 2021). The pandemic setting suggests that responses can be different at another time and when the views and beliefs of the respondents are not distorted based on exceptional periods and circumstances.

Generalisability to other countries

The study applies to organisations across the industrial sectors of South Africa. Therefore, the generalisability of the study is limited to South Africa. Similar research in different geographical regions might repudiate or confirm the findings of this study.

Sampling method and size

According to Saunders & Lewis (2018) non-probability sampling technique results in reducing respondents' representativity. The study adopted a two-stage sampling approach: non-probability convenience sampling and snowballing sampling to increase the sample size (Bell et al., 2019). Although the respondents represent various industry sectors in South Africa, the sampling technique reduced the respondents' representability. The results showed a high propensity towards "Finance, insurance, real estate, and business services and Manufacturing sectors" (Industrial Development Corporation, 2021, p.5). Additionally, the questionnaire was distributed via LinkedIn and Facebook using a personal network, resulting in potential bias. Although sufficient responses (253) were received, a more significant sample could contribute to the vigour of the research findings.

7.6 Suggestions for future research

A similar study is recommended in a different context to confirm or repudiate the research findings of the association between triadic strategic alignment and organisational

performance, as this study was restricted to the South African context. Contrary to anticipated, the investigation findings into the mediation or moderation effect of organisational structure on the association “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance” did not support the postulated hypothesis (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39). Therefore, future qualitative research could focus on understanding more organisational structure characteristics than those with a moderating or mediating effect. Furthermore, explain why or how this is the case.

Furthermore, future research could consider a sampling method that would better represent the various industry sectors of South Africa.

Finally, a qualitative study to gain insight into the “relationship between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance” would also allow a better understanding of the organisational structure's underlying factors or characteristics beyond a mediating or moderating effect (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39).

7.7 Conclusion

The study envisioned to assess the “impact of triadic strategic alignment on organisational performance” in South African companies, taking into account the organisational structure. A literature review was conducted to establish research constructs and hypotheses (discussed in Chapters 2 and 3) (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39). The hypotheses were tested through correlation and regression analyses. The research findings indicated a moderate positive “association between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance” (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39). Based on the research findings, organisational structure's mediation or moderation effect on the association “between triadic strategic alignment and organisational performance” could not be established (Al-Surmi et al., 2020, p.39).

8 References

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Appendices

8.1 Appendix A: Survey questionnaire

Dear Participant

I am conducting a research study on triadic strategic alignment and its impact on organisational performance taking into account the organisational structure towards partial fulfilment of MPhil degree in Corporate Strategy at the Gordon Institute of Business Sciences. The objective of the research is to assess the impact of triadic strategic alignment on organisational performance taking into account the organisational structure. The findings will expand on the current literature and provide practitioners' recommendations on whether triadic strategic alignment impacts organisational performance to ensure that they remain competitive. Your voluntary participation will therefore be appreciated. Your participation is confidential as I will not see your identity and participants can withdraw from participation at any time with no penalties. Completion of the survey will imply voluntary participation. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete and only aggregated will be reported. Please contact me or my supervisor for questions and clarity.

Contact details:

Researcher: Tendamudzimu Nemusombori – 29706433@mygibs.co.za

Supervisor: Hugh Myres – myresh@gibs.co.za

Section 1: General Information

Please select the most appropriate answer:

1.1 Gender:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Female
<input type="checkbox"/>	Male
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other

1.2 Age group:

<input type="checkbox"/>	18 -29
<input type="checkbox"/>	30-39
<input type="checkbox"/>	40-49
<input type="checkbox"/>	≥50

1.3 Highest qualification:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Matric
<input type="checkbox"/>	Certificate or Diploma
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bachelor's Degree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Postgraduate Diploma
<input type="checkbox"/>	Master's or Doctorate
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other

1.4 I belong to the following strategic level within my organisation:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Corporate
<input type="checkbox"/>	Business
<input type="checkbox"/>	Functional/Operational

1.5 My job level is:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-managerial
<input type="checkbox"/>	Low-level management
<input type="checkbox"/>	Middle management
<input type="checkbox"/>	Top-level management

1.6 My organisation belongs to the following industrial sector:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Agriculture, forestry and fishing
<input type="checkbox"/>	Community, social and personal services
<input type="checkbox"/>	Construction
<input type="checkbox"/>	Electricity, gas and water
<input type="checkbox"/>	Finance, insurance, real estate and business services
<input type="checkbox"/>	General government
<input type="checkbox"/>	Manufacturing
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mining and quarrying
<input type="checkbox"/>	Transport, storage and communication
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wholesale and retail trade, caterings and accommodation

1.7 The estimated number of employees within my organisation is:

<input type="checkbox"/>	0-10
<input type="checkbox"/>	11-50
<input type="checkbox"/>	51-250
<input type="checkbox"/>	>250

1.8 Number of years in the current role:

<input type="checkbox"/>	< 1 year
<input type="checkbox"/>	1-5 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	6-10 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	≥ 11 years

Section 2: Strategic Alignment

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following concerning your organisation:

Item No.	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
2.1	Organisational strategies are regularly reviewed and adjusted					
2.2	Organisational strategies are clearly communicated to all staff members					
2.3	Organisational strategies are aligned across all levels of strategy (Corporate, Business and Functional/Operational)					
2.4	Organisational strategies take into account existing capabilities					
2.5	The organisation's strategy is to leverage the capabilities of the organisation					
2.6	The strategic objectives of the organisation are clearly defined					

Section 3: Organisational Performance

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following concerning your organisation:

Item No.	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
3.1	Our market share growths are superior to that of our key competitors					
3.2	Our net profit is superior to that of our key competitors					
3.3	Our liquidity position is superior to that of our key competitors					
3.4	Our return on investment is superior to that of our key competitors					
3.5	Our sales growth position is superior to that of our key competitors					

Section 4: Organisational Structure

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following concerning your organisation:

Item No.	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
4.1	A supervisor's decision is required for action to be taken					
4.2	Employees are encouraged to make their own decisions					
4.3	I have to request my managers' approval before I do almost everything					
4.4	My manager has to approve every decision that I make					
4.5	All matters are referred higher up for final approval					

8.2 Appendix B: Ethical Clearance

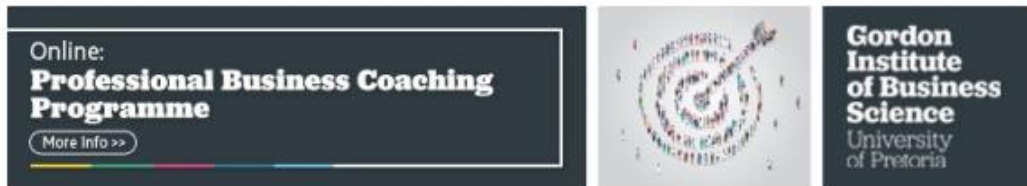
**Gordon Institute
of Business Science**
University of Pretoria

Tendamudzimu Nemusombori <29706433@mygibs.co.za>

Ethical Clearance Approved

Masters Research <MastersResearch@gibs.co.za>
To: "29706433@mygibs.co.za" <29706433@mygibs.co.za>
Cc: Masters Research <MastersResearch@gibs.co.za>

16 July 2021 at 11:41



**Gordon Institute
of Business Science**
University of Pretoria

Ethical Clearance Approved

Dear Tendamudzimu Nemusombori,

Please be advised that your application for Ethical Clearance has been approved.

You are therefore allowed to continue collecting your data.

We wish you everything of the best for the rest of the project.

[Ethical Clearance Form](#)

Kind Regards

This email has been sent from an unmonitored email account. If you have any comments or concerns, please contact the GIBS Research Admin team.

Masters Research

Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria

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8.3 Appendix C: Codebook

Table 27: Demographics information codebook

Variable	Label	Code
Gender	What is your gender?	1 = Female
		2 = Male
Age	What is your age?	1 = 18-29
		2 = 30 -39
		3 = 40 -49
		4 = ≥ 50
Highest qualification	What is your highest qualification?	1 = Matric
		2 = Certificate or Diploma
		3 = Bachelor Degree
		4 = Postgraduate Diploma
		5 = Masters or Doctorate
		6 = Other
Strategic level	I belong to the following strategic level within my organisation:	1 = Corporate/Head Office
		2 = Business
		3 = Functional/Operational
Job level	My job level is:	1 = Non-managerial
		2 = Low-level management
		3 = Middle management
		4 = Top-level management
Industry sector	My organisation belongs to the following industrial sector:	1 = Agriculture, forestry and fishing
		2 = Community, social and personal services
		3 = Construction
		4 = Electricity, gas and water
		5 = Finance, insurance, real estate and business services
		6 = General government
		7 = Manufacturing
		8 = Mining and quarrying
		9 = Transport, storage and communication
		10 = Wholesale and retail trade, caterings and accommodation

Variable	Label	Code
Employee size	The estimated number of employees within my organisation is:	1 = 0-10
		2 = 11-50
		3 = 51-250
		4 = >250
Years in current role	Number of years in the current role:	1 = < 1 year
		2 = 1-5 years
		3 = 6-10 years
		4 = ≥ 11 years

Table 28: Likert scale codebook

Likert scale responses	Code
Strongly Agree	1
Agree	2
Neutral	3
Disagree	4
Strongly Disagree	5

Table 29: Triadic strategic alignment survey questions codebook

Question	Label
Organisational strategies are regularly reviewed and adjusted	StrategicAlignment1
Organisational strategies are clearly communicated to all staff members	StrategicAlignment2
Organisational strategies are aligned across all levels of strategy (Corporate, Business and Functional/Operational)	StrategicAlignment3
Organisational strategies take into account existing capabilities	StrategicAlignment4
The organisation's strategy is to leverage the capabilities of the organisation	StrategicAlignment5
The strategic objectives of the organisation are clearly defined	StrategicAlignment6

Table 30: Organisational performance survey questions codebook

Question	Label
Our market share growths are superior to that of our key competitors	OrganisationalPerformance1
Our net profit is superior to that of our key competitors	OrganisationalPerformance2
Our liquidity position is superior to that of our key competitors	OrganisationalPerformance3
Our return on investment is superior to that of our key competitors	OrganisationalPerformance4
Our sales growth position is superior to that of our key competitors	OrganisationalPerformance5

Table 31: Organisational performance

Question	Label
A supervisor's decision is required for action to be taken	OrgnnisationalStructure1
Employees are encouraged to make their own decisions	OrgnnisationalStructure2
I have to request my managers' approval before I do almost everything	OrgnnisationalStructure3
My manager has to approve every decision that I make	OrgnnisationalStructure4
All matters are referred higher up for final approval	OrgnnisationalStructure5