

**THE STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR: THE
CASE OF A PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT IN THE FREE STATE**

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DECLARATION

I, **Teboho Vincent Nyakane (2004206310)**, declare that the thesis that I herewith submit for the Master of Business Administration at the University of the Free State, is my independent work and that I have not previously submitted it for a qualification at another Institution of Higher Learning.

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November 2022

DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my late mother, Mmataemane Annacletta Nyakane and my late grandmother, Mmasefora Emelia Mangobe-Nyakane; you are forever in my heart, and this is for you.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	II
DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	III
TABLE OF CONTENTS	IV
LIST OF TABLES	X
LIST OF FIGURES	XI
LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	XII
ABSTRACT	XIII
KEYWORDS	XIV
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY AND RESEARCH OUTLINE	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	1
1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM	3
1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM STATEMENT	4
1.4 PRIMARY AND SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS	4
1.4.1 <i>Primary research question</i>	4
1.4.2 <i>Secondary research questions</i>	4
1.5 PRIMARY AND SECONDARY RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	5
1.5.1 <i>Primary research objective</i>	5
1.5.2 <i>Secondary research objectives</i>	5
1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY, RESEARCH METHOD AND RESEARCH DESIGN	5
1.6.1 <i>Introduction</i>	5
1.6.2 <i>Research methodology and research methods</i>	5
1.6.2.1 Quantitative research	6
1.6.2.2 Qualitative research	6
1.6.2.3 Conclusion on research methods	7
1.6.3 <i>Research design</i>	7

1.6.4 <i>Research design for this study</i>	7
1.7 POPULATION AND SAMPLING	7
1.7.1 <i>Target population</i>	7
1.7.2 <i>Sampling</i>	8
1.8 DATA COLLECTION	8
1.8.1 <i>Data analysis</i>	9
1.8.2 <i>Coding</i>	9
1.8.3 <i>Content analysis</i>	9
1.9 PRACTICAL ETHICAL ASPECTS	10
1.9.1 <i>Ethical considerations</i>	10
1.9.2 <i>Obtaining permission</i>	10
1.9.3 <i>Informed consent</i>	10
1.9.4 <i>Confidentiality and anonymity</i>	10
1.9.5 <i>Voluntary participation</i>	11
1.9.6 <i>No harm</i>	11
1.9.7 <i>Deception</i>	12
1.10 DEMARCATION OF THE STUDY	12
1.11 OVERVIEW OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY	12
1.12 DEFINITION OF TERMS	13
1.13 CHAPTER CONCLUSION	15
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	16
2.1 INTRODUCTION	16
2.2 THE CONCEPT OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT	16
2.2.1 <i>Strategic management process and framework</i>	17
2.3 STRATEGIC PLANNING CONCEPT	19
2.3.1 <i>South African strategic planning</i>	20

2.3.2 <i>Perspective on strategic planning in the public sector</i>	20
2.4 STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION	21
2.5 BARRIERS FOR STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR	25
2.5.1 <i>Lack of finance barrier</i>	26
2.5.2 <i>Vision barrier</i>	26
2.5.3 <i>Management practices barrier</i>	26
2.5.4 <i>Human resource barrier</i>	27
2.5.5 <i>People barrier</i>	28
2.5.6 <i>Internal communication barrier</i>	29
2.6 DRIVERS FOR STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR	30
2.6.1 <i>Valid performance measurements</i>	31
2.6.1.1 <i>The performance system conceptual model</i>	31
2.6.2 <i>Strategic leadership</i>	35
2.6.3 <i>Training and development</i>	36
2.6.4 <i>Top management involvement</i>	36
2.6.5 <i>Organisational culture and structure</i>	37
2.7 INSTRUMENTS OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION	37
2.7.1 <i>The role of short-term goals</i>	37
2.7.2 <i>The role of functional tactics</i>	37
2.7.3 <i>The role of policies</i>	38
2.7.4 <i>Strategic control and evaluation</i>	38
2.8 THE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK	38
2.9 THE MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK	40
2.9.1 <i>Free State Growth and Development Strategy (FSGDS)</i>	42
2.10 SUMMARY OF THE MAIN THEMES	42
2.11 CONCLUSION	43

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	45
3.1 INTRODUCTION	45
3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	45
3.2.1 <i>Quantitative research</i>	45
3.2.2 <i>Qualitative research</i>	46
3.2.3 <i>Research methodology for this study</i>	46
3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN	46
3.4 POPULATION AND SAMPLING STRATEGY	48
3.4.1 <i>Target population</i>	48
3.4.2 <i>Sample size</i>	48
3.4.2.1 Non- probability sampling technique	49
3.5 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS	50
3.6 DATA ANALYSIS	51
3.6.1 <i>Grounded theory</i>	51
3.6.2 <i>Qualitative data analysis steps</i>	52
3.6.2.1 Compiling	52
3.6.2.2 Disassembling	52
3.6.2.3 Reassembling	53
3.6.2.4 Interpreting	53
3.6.2.5 Concluding	54
3.7 DATA SATURATION	54
3.8 PRACTICAL ETHICAL ASPECTS	55
3.8.1 <i>Ethical considerations</i>	55
3.8.2 <i>Ensuring permission is obtained</i>	55
3.8.3 <i>Informed consent</i>	55
3.8.4 <i>Voluntary participation</i>	56

3.8.5 <i>Ensuring confidentiality and anonymity</i>	56
3.8.6 <i>Ensuring no harm to participants</i>	57
3.9 CONCLUSION	57
CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION	58
4.1 INTRODUCTION	58
4.2 PRESENTATION AND DATA ANALYSIS	58
4.3 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION	59
4.3.1 <i>Gender</i>	59
4.3.2 <i>Highest qualifications</i>	60
4.3.3 <i>Years of experience</i>	60
4.3.4 <i>Position in the organisation</i>	60
4.4 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA ON RESPONSES FROM PARTICIPANTS	60
4.4.1 <i>Barriers and drivers for strategy implementation</i>	60
4.4.2 <i>The linkage between strategy formulation and its implementation</i>	68
4.4.3 <i>The strategy implementation and alignment to the MTSF of the Government</i>	73
4.4.4 <i>Participants' views on how to improve strategy implementation and how to overcome the barriers for strategy implementation in the department</i>	75
4.5 CONTENT ANALYSIS	80
4.6 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS	81
4.7 CONCLUSION	82
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	83
5.1 INTRODUCTION	83
5.2 RESEARCH SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	83
5.3 MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	85
5.3.1 <i>Lack of financial resources</i>	85

<i>5.3.2 Unskilled workforce and personnel appointed in strategic positions</i>	86
<i>5.3.3 Inclusive participation at all levels in the department</i>	86
<i>5.3.4 The linkage of individual performance agreements with the strategy of the department</i>	87
<i>5.3.5 Inclusive internal communication</i>	87
5.4 LIMITATIONS	88
5.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	88
5.6 FURTHER RESEARCH	89
5.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS	89
REFERENCE LIST	91
LIST OF APPENDICES	100
APPENDIX A: APPROVAL LETTER TO CONDUCT THE RESEARCH IN THE DEPARTMENT	100
APPENDIX B: ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER	101
APPENDIX C: DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE	102
APPENDIX D: POPIA COMPLIANT CONSENT FORM	105
APPENDIX E: LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATE	111

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1: Demographic analysis of the participants.	59
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LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Strategic management framework.	18
Figure 2.2: Performance management system (conceptual model)	32
Figure 2.3: Model proposal for the strategy implementation process.	40
Figure 4.1: Participants' involvement in strategy implementation.	61
Figure 4.2: Supportive factors assisting strategy implementation.	62
Figure 4.3: Barriers for strategy implementation.	64
Figure 4.4: Drivers for strategy implementation.....	66
Figure 4.5: Medium of communication by the department.....	70
Figure 4.6: Measurement of the effectiveness of its strategies.	72
Figure 4.7: Alignment of strategies to the Medium-Term Strategic Framework.....	74
Figure 4.8: Factors to improve strategy implementation.....	76
Figure 4.9: Factors to overcome strategy implementation barriers.	78

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

APP	Annual Performance Plan
DPME	Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
FS	Free State
FSGDS	Free State Growth and Development Strategy
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
MTSF	Medium-Term Strategic Framework
MTEF	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act
SA	South Africa

ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken to evaluate strategic plan implementation in the public sector with a focus on the Provincial Government Department in the Free State. The study also pursued to investigate the barriers and drivers for strategy implementation in the department, the linkage between strategy formulation and its implementation in the department and the strategy implementation of the department and its alignment to the Medium-Term Strategic Framework of Government.

For this study, an exploratory research design and qualitative research methodology were employed. Senior and middle management representatives from the department made up the sample population. Semi-structured interviews and document analysis were used to collect data to meet the study's objectives. Grounded theory was used to analyse the collected information using categories and themes to analyse data.

The findings revealed that a lack of finance, human resources, and internal communication amongst others are barriers for strategy implementation in the department. Additionally, organisational culture and structure, and training and development are drivers for strategy implementation, amongst others. Furthermore, they also revealed that the strategy formulation in the department is not fully linked to its implementation and that there is no proper alignment between the departmental strategies and the MTSF (Medium-Term Strategic Framework). The study established the following as the key findings in the department: lack of financial resources, unskilled workforce and personnel appointed in strategic posts, the linkage of individual performance agreements with the strategy of the department, and inclusive internal communication.

The study's conclusions will be helpful to other public sector stakeholders, academics, strategy consultants, and public sector strategists and practitioners. Furthermore, this study can help the development of models and approaches for strategic planning implementation in the public sector. It is also possible to investigate how well strategies are implemented in the public sector in general as this study only focused on one provincial department.

KEYWORDS

Barriers, Drivers, Strategy, Strategic Management, Strategic Planning, Strategy Formulation, Strategy Implementation, Strategic Monitoring and Evaluation.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY AND RESEARCH OUTLINE

1.1 Introduction and background

In contrast to the private sector, which has profit as its main objective, the public sector's main objective is to serve the community. The creation of a strategy, its execution, and its oversight are all parts of the strategic management process. The strategy formulation process entails an examination of the organisation's environmental elements, both internal and external, that may have a good or negative impact, and the establishment of a mission, objectives, programmes, and vision.

However, because effective plan implementation requires money, public sector organisations must also have money to be able to provide services to the population they serve, which is the primary purpose of any government. The most critical impediment to effectively implement the plan is for employees to misunderstand the strategy and for management to communicate it poorly.

According to Amason and Ward (2020), strategic management, in essence, is a framework for assessing the external environment, integrating internal processes, adapting to change, and generating value for the present and the future. Additionally, it is a framework that can be applied to organisations of any size, whether they are large or little, recent or established, domestic or foreign, for-profit or not for-profit organisation. Additionally, strategic management, according to Pearce and Robinson (2015), is a series of choices and activities that lead to the creation and execution of plans to achieve an organisational goal. Additionally, it comprises the organisation, direction, and management of these actions and choices.

According to Valcik (2016), without a strategic plan or with a very restricted strategic plan, organisations risk facing serious repercussions if resources are wasted, or objectives are not met. In the age of accountability, both public and non-profit organisations will face the challenge of satisfying the public's expectations and scrutiny. Moreover, strategic management practice is more critical in developing Southern Africa, since there are so many variables and sophisticated environmental changes, including economic, social, and political changes, that strategic management should be seen as an integral part of any organisation's management

process. In addition, whether an organisation is a public or private sector, a partnership, a sole proprietorship, a sports club, a church, or a government entity, it cannot survive the turbulent future without effective strategic management (Lazenby, 2018).

According to the National Department of Small Business Development (2018), strategy evaluations are systematic rather than ad hoc activities - which means that the evaluation activities consider the availability of evidence needed to make informed decisions. It also involves the availability of questions that need to be responded to, which then helps an organisation to obtain the evidence requirements in the business improvement of an organisation.

In addition, Hartford (2018), emphasises that the first step in strategic planning evaluation focuses on the evidence required, questions that need to be answered, and then the decisions to be made. Hartford further postulates that the strategic evaluation exercise is meant to generate information that dispenses into the critical decision processes and improvements. Therefore, designing a comprehensive strategy and plan for the gathering and analyzing of data to produce pertinent information for the decision-making process is essential.

The department under study's commitment is based on the national priorities set by the government, particularly 'Economic Transformation and Job Creation', and to achieve this, it focuses on the following areas:

- Growing the economy
- Environmental management
- Creating an ethical and capable state

In the 2019/2020 fiscal year, the department significantly underspent its budget by R 26.242 million, especially on its two key divisions. Additionally, there was a major discrepancy between the accomplishments listed in the annual performance report and the supporting data for the measures indicated in one of the department's main core divisions.

According to the departmental Annual Reports for the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 fiscal years, the Department's two main divisions did not meet their targets.

Furthermore, the 2020/2021 Annual Report indicated that the Free State Province is currently not achieving its tourism goals, given its attractive tourism resources and offerings. This was due to certain inconsistencies between the department's planned and accomplished yearly targets. The Department also failed to meet some of its intended annual targets for the reporting periods.

Geographically centered, the Free State Province is surrounded by the Northern Cape, Eastern Cape, North West, Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal, and Gauteng provinces, as well as Lesotho. The Province's features include its hilly environment, goldfields, widely spaced towns, and agricultural economy. The Province is divided into four district municipalities and one metropolitan municipality, namely Fezile Dabi, Lejweleputswa, Thabo Mofutsanyana, and Xhariep, and Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality.

All South African government departments are required to develop strategic plans by the Public Service Amendment Act (2008, Act No. 30 of 2007) and the Public Finance Management Amendment Act (2003, Act No. 29 of 1999), which have been authorised by their respective executive authorities. All government departments are obliged to table five-year departmental strategic plans, departmental yearly performance plans that adhere to the MTFS, and the MTEF that includes annual and quarterly targets.

Jooste and Fourie (2009) account that South African organisations believe that willingness to implement the strategy is more significant than their willingness to construct the plan and that strategy implementation is more essential than strategy development. Furthermore, the most critical impediment to effectively implementing the plan is for employees to misunderstand the strategy and for management to communicate it poorly to other employees.

1.2 Background to the problem

According to the department's Annual Reports of the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 fiscal years, the main two divisions of the department did not meet their targets as per their annual performance plans for these financial years.

According to the 2020/2021 Annual Report, as required by the public service regulation, no specialised information systems were developed to monitor progress

towards achieving targets, major goals, and service delivery. The creation of tools that allow for efficient performance monitoring, evaluation, and corrective action via quarterly reporting is also mandated by treasury regulations. Moreover, the report indicated that insufficient proof was supplied regarding the accomplishment of the objectives.

There were noticeable shortfalls in the outcomes-based performance evaluation of the three main divisions of the department. The department has expressed concern over the fact that the main distinct priority outcomes, such as economic transformation, job creation, education, skills development, and health, as well as sustainable resource management aimed at protecting and enhancing environmental assets and natural resources, were not achieved. These divisions are critical to the province's economic success, and as a result, the below problem was identified.

1.3 Research problem statement

The problem is that the department's two main divisions did not achieve their planned targets for two consecutive fiscal years. The department has four programmes or main divisions, and out of these four programmes, three are core to the department and if they do not achieve their targets and goals, it will result in the department failing to deliver on its legislative and service delivery mandates.

With the above-mentioned problem, the study will answer the following research questions.

1.4 Primary and secondary research questions

1.4.1 Primary research question

What are the barriers and drivers for strategy implementation affecting the strategy implementation in the department?

1.4.2 Secondary research questions

- To what extent is strategy formulation linked to its implementation in the department?

- To what extent is the strategy implementation of the department aligned to the Medium-Term Strategic Framework of the government?

1.5 Primary and secondary research objectives

1.5.1 Primary research objective

The primary purpose of this study is to evaluate strategic plan implementation in the public sector with a focus on the Provincial Government Department in the Free State.

1.5.2 Secondary research objectives

- To investigate the barriers and drivers for strategy implementation in the department.
- To investigate the linkage between strategy formulation and its implementation in the department.
- To investigate the strategy implementation of the department and its alignment to the Medium-Term Strategic Framework of the government.

1.6 Research methodology, research method and research design

1.6.1 Introduction

The qualitative research approach was used in this study to examine the department's implementation of a strategic planning process. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews via online platforms (Microsoft Teams and Zoom).

1.6.2 Research methodology and research methods

Research approaches are strategies and procedures that cover a wide range of topics, from general theories to specific procedures for collecting, analysing, and comprehending data. The strategy requires many decisions, but it is not necessary to make them in the order we find rational or in which they are laid out here. The key decision is which research methodology should be used to investigate a subject. This decision should be guided by the researcher's philosophical presumptions, study procedures, and specific methods for collecting, analysing, and interpreting data (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

According to Creswell (2014), there are primarily two major philosophical perspectives for data collection: positivistic and phenomenological. Rajasekar *et al.* (2013) describe research philosophy as a methodical approach to issue solving. The methodology of research is a collection of processes for describing, explaining, and forecasting phenomena. Zukauskas *et al.* (2018) define research philosophy as the process of developing, comprehending, and applying a research hypothesis. Two distinct forms of research, qualitative and quantitative, affect research methods (Rajasekar *et al.*, 2013).

1.6.2.1 Quantitative research

The gathering of statistical data, the testing of hypotheses through the examination of correlations between variables, and the mathematical quantification of those variables are all components of quantitative research (Bryman and Bell, 2011). However, Apuke (2017) emphasises that quantitative research is focused on quantifying and evaluating factors to reveal results. Apuke continues by stating that quantitative research uses statistical approaches to assess numerical data. Williams (2011) also claims that in quantitative research, the problem description occurs first, followed by the development of hypotheses, the evaluation of the literature, and ultimately the quantification of the data. In order to collect data for quantitative research, researchers must employ techniques like experiments and surveys as well as data gathering tools to produce statistical data. Quantitative research was not used in this study as it does not allow the researcher to have a deep insight with regard to the topic under study and limit the researcher to learn directly from the participants in understanding what is important to them towards the topic under study.

1.6.2.2 Qualitative research

Johnson and Christensen (2014) state that qualitative research strives to analyse and explain social interactions. According to Moore (2016), qualitative research investigations focus on how, why, and what, resulting in more qualitative than quantitative data collecting. In qualitative research, the researcher collects data using detailed strategies and questions (Moore 2016).

A qualitative research methodology was used for this investigation. The rationale for using this methodology is that it enabled the researcher to gain a deeper comprehension and insight into strategy implementation in the public sector, with particular emphasis on the Provincial Government Department in the Free State.

1.6.2.3 Conclusion on research methods

Qualitative research methodology was chosen in this research study to have a wide spectrum of data in order to have an insight of the underlying challenge and to investigate the barriers and drivers for strategy implementation in the department.

1.6.3 Research design

A research design, according to Akhtar (2016), is a framework for the study, in other words, it is a plan for the proposed research endeavor and acts as the 'glue' that binds the varied parts of a research project. In a nutshell, it is the blueprint for a study. A research design's objective is to address specific research questions through the application of well-developed scientific concepts. Throughout the research process, the researcher tries to answer the questions that led to the need for the study.

This research study only considered officials who are working in core function sections of the department. Additionally, the officials in the following sections were also part of the study because of their support services to the main divisions: human resource management, organisational development and strategic planning, and monitoring and evaluation. The rationale for choosing these participants was based on the fact that more accurate information can be drawn from these participants, which could provide a deeper insight into the underlying challenges within the department.

1.6.4 Research design for this study

The exploratory design was used for this study.

1.7 Population and sampling

1.7.1 Target population

The entirety of all entities having a given set of qualities, such as people, countries, groups, cities, and regions, is referred to as the population, according to Bryman *et al.*

(2015). The collection of concepts being thought about and for which information is required might be referred to as a target population (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

The department has a total number of 696 officials; however, the target population for this study included only fifteen (15) employees. Additionally, the focus was on those employees employed in the department's core divisions and those performing support duties pertinent to the study. The officials in the administration division were identified based on the support function they provide to the core function sections in the organisation, namely human resource management, organisational development, and strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation.

1.7.2 Sampling

The practice of selecting a portion of a population to watch in order to obtain information about the entire population, according to Thompson (2012), is known as sampling. Purposeful sampling is a method the researcher used to select the study's participants (O'Gorman and MacIntosh, 2015). In this study, non-probability sampling technique was used.

The study only considered officials who are working in core function sections of the department. Officials in the following sections were also part of the study because of their support services to the main divisions: human resource management, organisational development and strategic planning, and monitoring and evaluation. The sample size from these sections will be fifteen officials.

1.8 Data collection

Data collection, according to Kabir (2016), is the process of acquiring and logically and methodically analyzing data that leads to the resolution of a certain study issue, the hypothesis being revealed. Kabir goes on to say that the goal of data collecting is to obtain high-quality data, which afterwards plays a crucial role in preserving the integrity of the research study. When the data has been acquired, the appropriate data gathering procedures will aid in the organisation and analysis of the data (Robson 1993).

The information needed to create the primary data was gathered through semi-structured interviews. Secondary data was gathered by examining the department's annual and quarterly reports that were relevant to the study and other publicly available data.

1.8.1 Data analysis

Data collected were examined qualitatively, with an emphasis on making the information presentable, comprehensible, and logical. Qualitative research is a highly interconnected and interactive set of activities that include data gathering, data analysis, and the creation and verification of ideas. Analysis occurs both during and after data gathering. The analysis assists in determining the path of data collecting, particularly when using a more inductive, grounded approach (Saunders *et al.* 2016). Although Robson (1993) claims that data analysis occurs after all the data have been gathered; it is vital to analyse and evaluate data during data collection process when conducting qualitative research (Marshall and Rossman, 1995).

1.8.2 Coding

Coding is the analytic process through which the researcher minimises, reorganises, and integrates the qualitative data obtained to construct a hypothesis. Coding is used to assist the researcher in drawing meaningful inferences about the data (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). This is the process of assigning themes, categories, and perceptions to sections of a relevant text that are related to the study's subject.

1.8.3 Content analysis

The content analysis method enables the researcher to systematically analyse vast amounts of textual material to identify its characteristics, such as the presence of specific words, concepts, characters, themes, or phrases. To do a content analysis on a text, it is first categorised into categories and then analysed conceptually or relationally (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016).

1.9 Practical ethical aspects

1.9.1 Ethical considerations

According to Struwig and Stead (2010), ethics provide the researcher with a code of ethical instruction on how to perform a study in a morally upstanding manner. The researcher will also run into ethical issues as they design and plan the study, approach organizations and people for access, gather, analyze, manage, and publish the results. The term "ethics in research" refers to the values that guide a researcher's conduct when it comes to respecting the rights of individuals who participate in or are impacted by a study (Saunders *et al.* 2016).

1.9.2 Obtaining permission

The permission or approval was granted by the head of the department of the Provincial Government Department to collect data for the research (see Appendix A). Data collection only commenced after the approval of ethical clearance by the University of the Free State (see Appendix B).

1.9.3 Informed consent

Consent forms were sent to all the participants by emails together with an invitation to participate in the study. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect the information through online platforms; as a result, consent needed to be given when participants agreed to participate in the study. Additionally, the forms specified that responses would be kept strictly confidential and will be utilised only for this study.

The idea of informed consent for the study can help to keep research participants safe. It involves supplying participants with sufficient information to enable them to choose whether they want to participate in the research (O’Gorman and MacIntosh, 2015).

1.9.4 Confidentiality and anonymity

Anonymity is the idea of keeping a participant's identity concealed, whereas confidentiality is the non-disclosure of information gained or gathered from participants for purposes other than those for which it was obtained or collected (Mounton, 2012).

Individuals and organisations should be able to keep their anonymity and the data they provide should be managed in a way that it cannot be associated with them unless there is an explicit agreement to credit comments. Affirmation or identification made without permission could be harmful. Furthermore, data dependability is likely to rise when confidentiality and anonymity are maintained. This idea includes the authority to demand strict adherence to agreements about confidentiality and anonymity (Saunders *et al.*, 2016).

Throughout the research study, fictitious names were used to conceal the participants' identities.

1.9.5 Voluntary participation

It is permissible to choose not to participate in a research project. As part of this, you have the right to be involved without being required to put up with harassment. Furthermore, it is improper to try to increase the extent of participation beyond what has been voluntarily provided. Participants can choose how much or how little they want to participate in the data collection process, and they can do so by declining to answer any questions or sets of questions, withholding any information that is requested of them, changing the parameters of their consent, ceasing to participate, and possibly even having previously provided information withdrawn (Saunders *et al.*, 2016). Furthermore, Rubin and Babbie (2008) argue that no participant should be coerced into participating in research and that participation should always be voluntary.

Given the nature of the organisation, volunteers were chosen, and everyone who responded to the request to participate in the study was told of its purpose and goals.

1.9.6 No harm

Every attempt must be made to prevent causing injury to participants. When a person's mental or physical health, social or group cohesion, or emotional well-being are at risk, harm may result. It could show up as embarrassment, anxiety, fear, discomfort, pain, or conflict. It could be brought on by invasive or aggressive study practices that put subjects under mental or interpersonal stress, causing worry or tension. Additionally, it could be set off by harassment or discrimination, as well as a breach of confidentiality

and anonymity guarantees (Saunders *et al.*, 2016). Furthermore, the researcher must guarantee that the research approach employed does not jeopardise the participants' privacy or daily work schedules (Marshall and Rossman, 1989).

The participants were provided with a portion of their interview before the finalisation of data analysis to validate the information and to ensure that they have not been misquoted.

1.9.7 Deception

All participants received an email invitation with the research's purpose, and it was briefly discussed in each session to remind participants of the goal of the study.

The integrity and objectivity of the researcher are key factors in the quality of the study. This means acting honestly, standing up for correctness, and speaking the truth. On the other hand, it requires staying away from unethical behavior, lying, misrepresenting information (such as facts and conclusions), bias, and making careless or deceptive commitments. When applicable, all potential conflicts of interest and business ties should be declared (Saunders *et al.*, 2016).

1.10 Demarcation of the study

The study concentrated on the evaluation of the Free State Provincial Government Department's strategic plan implementation, and was conducted in Bloemfontein, South Africa, in the Central Business District.

The department has a total of 696 people, but for this study, the researcher focusses on five senior managers and ten middle management personnel from the target of fifteen officials. Participants were chosen based on their unit affiliation and their relevance to the study. Even though strategy development and execution are closely intertwined, the study's theme is strategic management, which includes both. However, the emphasis is placed mostly on strategy implementation.

1.11 Overview of the structure of the study

The contents of the five chapters of this study are briefly reviewed below:

Chapter One: This chapter provides background information that is essential from the perspective of strategic planning and strategy implementation. Furthermore, it presents a problem description, study objectives and questions, as well as a definition of significant topics.

Chapter Two: This section contains the literature review, where several sources relevant to the study were consulted. The literature study covered the following topics: concept of strategic management, planning and strategy, strategic planning concept, strategy and implementation, barriers and drivers for strategy implementation, strategy implementation framework, and the Medium-Term Strategic Framework of the government of South Africa.

Chapter Three: This chapter discusses the study's overall methodology and strategy, including the research design, the application of methodology, and the techniques for gathering and analysing data.

Chapter Four: The findings of the analysis and presentation of the data from the semi-structured interviews are presented in this chapter.

Chapter Five: The chapter includes recommendations in addition to the conclusions gained from the research findings.

1.12 Definition of terms

Strategy: A strategy entails identifying objectives, allocating resources, and ensuring that choices and actions are consistent and coherent (Grant, 2018). It is the application of guidelines, procedures, and resources within an organisation to aid in the accomplishment of its goals.

Strategic management: A pattern of important aims, purposes, or goals, as well as crucial policies or strategies for achieving those aims, is known as strategic management. It is presented in such a way as to describe the type of business the organisation will be engaged in (Lynch, 2018).

Strategic planning: Analysis of internal and external variables that may have an influence on the company and its competencies, as well as the development of plans to match the organisation's skills with external variables (Montanari *et al.*, 1990).

Additionally, the strategic planning process is a systematic strategy that gathers data, communicates perspectives, performs analysis, makes choices, guarantees consistency among those decisions, and commits management to specific courses of action and performance objectives (Grant, 2018).

Strategy formulation: Can be summed up as the creation of a plan that describes the objectives, provides a roadmap for achieving them, and forecasts the outcomes of those plans over the long term (Stacey and Mowles, 2016). Furthermore, it entails developing the company's vision and goal, determining external opportunities and threats, analysing internal strengths and weaknesses, establishing long-term goals, creating backup plans, and choosing which techniques to use (David and David, 2016).

Strategy implementation: To ensure that the organisation is on the correct track to achieving its goals, it is necessary to create systems that enable the company to achieve the intended goals or plans and to make necessary adjustments to those systems over time (Stacey and Mowles, 2016). Additionally, this happens when a business aligns its organisational rules and practices with its strategy (Barney and Hesterly, 2019).

Strategic monitoring and evaluation: Strategy review and control include monitoring the execution of the strategy, quantifying actual or realised performance, comparing actual to planned performance, detecting issues, and implementing appropriate corrective measures. It is a continual process that occurs when plans are executed (Venter and Botha, 2019). It is a continuing process for an up-and-coming course of action.

Drivers: Drivers are factors supporting and enhancing strategy execution. It could be people, knowledge, or conditions in the workplace.

Barriers: Barriers are factors that prevent, deter or obstruct strategy execution; it could be human actions, complications arising from processes in the workplace or organisational culture.

1.13 Chapter conclusion

This chapter's introduction includes an explanation of the study's issue statement, aims, research questions, and ethical decisions that were made while conducting the investigation. The next chapter is thorough and provides background information on the study to help the reader understand the study's scope.

The implication is that strategic planning is used to assist organisations in defining their objectives and enabling them to serve their citizens or communities. Additionally, for an organisation to plan well, it must analyse its environment and global conditions. Strategic planning is implemented by breaking down the plan and distributing it throughout the organisation according to the major divisions and their specific missions and activities. To implement the strategy effectively and efficiently, all staff members must be included, and they must also cooperate to prevent the plan from failing.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The notion of strategic management is covered in this chapter, with a focus on how strategies are implemented in the public sector. The purpose of this research study is to evaluate the implementation of strategic plans in the public sector; as a result, a review of the literature on the factors that influence and hinder the implementation of strategies as well as the relationship between the formulation of strategies and their implementation will be discussed.

This chapter highlights available literature from different authors. It starts by giving a brief background discussion of the topic; it then discusses the barriers and drivers for strategy implementation as well as the link between strategy formulation and its implementation.

2.2 The concept of strategic management

Strategic management process includes the development of a strategy, its implementation, monitoring, and oversight. The establishment of a mission, objectives, programmes, and vision is the result of the process of designing a strategy, which entails examining the organisation's internal and external environmental elements that may have a good or negative impact on it (Jeyarathnam, 2008).

Furthermore, according to Pearce and Robinson (2015), strategic management is the process of making choices and taking actions that lead to the creation and implementation of plans to achieve organisational objectives. This is also achieved, among other things, by putting strategic decisions into practice through resource allocations that are budgeted and have an emphasis on task, person, structure, technology, and reward system matching. The choice of annual objectives and short-term plans must coincide with those of the long-term objectives and overall strategy. To inform future decision-making, the evaluation of the strategic process's success is necessary. These critical tasks apply to both profit driven organisations and non-profit driven organisations.

The fundamental objective of the public sector is to serve the community, as opposed to the primary objective of the private sector, which is to make a profit. Public sector organisations, however, also need to have money in order to deliver services to the population, which is the main objective of any government, as efficient plan implementation necessitates financial resources (Lazenby, 2014).

Organisations are divided into divisions or strategic business units. In government departments, these divisions are called main divisions or programmes. According to Lazenby (2018), A sub-programme is a segment or component of a larger program that specifies the tasks or services required to achieve the latter's aims, which are also consistent with the strategic goals of the organization. The purpose of spending should be to improve everyone's social and economic well-being, and public sector organizations should manage their budgets in a way that will enable them to accomplish their objectives. The goals of a department or organisation should be taken into consideration when planning the budget. This assertion serves to highlight the requirement for resources for an organisation to successfully implement its strategy.

According to Grant (2018), a plan that has been developed without regard for its ability for implementation, is a poorly conceived strategy. Also, strategy creation and execution are inextricably linked. Additionally, implementing a strategy entails breaking down long-term goals into a succession of shorter-term plans that serve as a focal point for action and a benchmark for performance measurement. A yearly operational plan is built around a set of performance objectives drawn from the strategic plan.

2.2.1 Strategic management process and framework

To decide on the organisation's long-term goals and how to reach them, management must make a number of decisions, which are referred to as strategic decisions. To accomplish long-term objectives, it entails analysing the performance and environment of an organisation. Additionally, after establishing a mission, tactics for accomplishing it are devised; and to regulate these plans, an organisation must establish a system of strategic management (Alkhafaji, 2003).

Furthermore, according to Alkhafaji (2003), scholars believe that models are the greatest way to comprehend and apply the strategic management process. As a result, numerous models of strategic management have been created and each model is composed of multiple interconnected, dynamic, and continuous components. Consequently, the four key components of strategic management (environmental analysis, formulation, execution, and assessment and control) should be viewed as being inextricably linked and continuous. The components of the strategic management procedure are summarised in Figure 2.1 below.

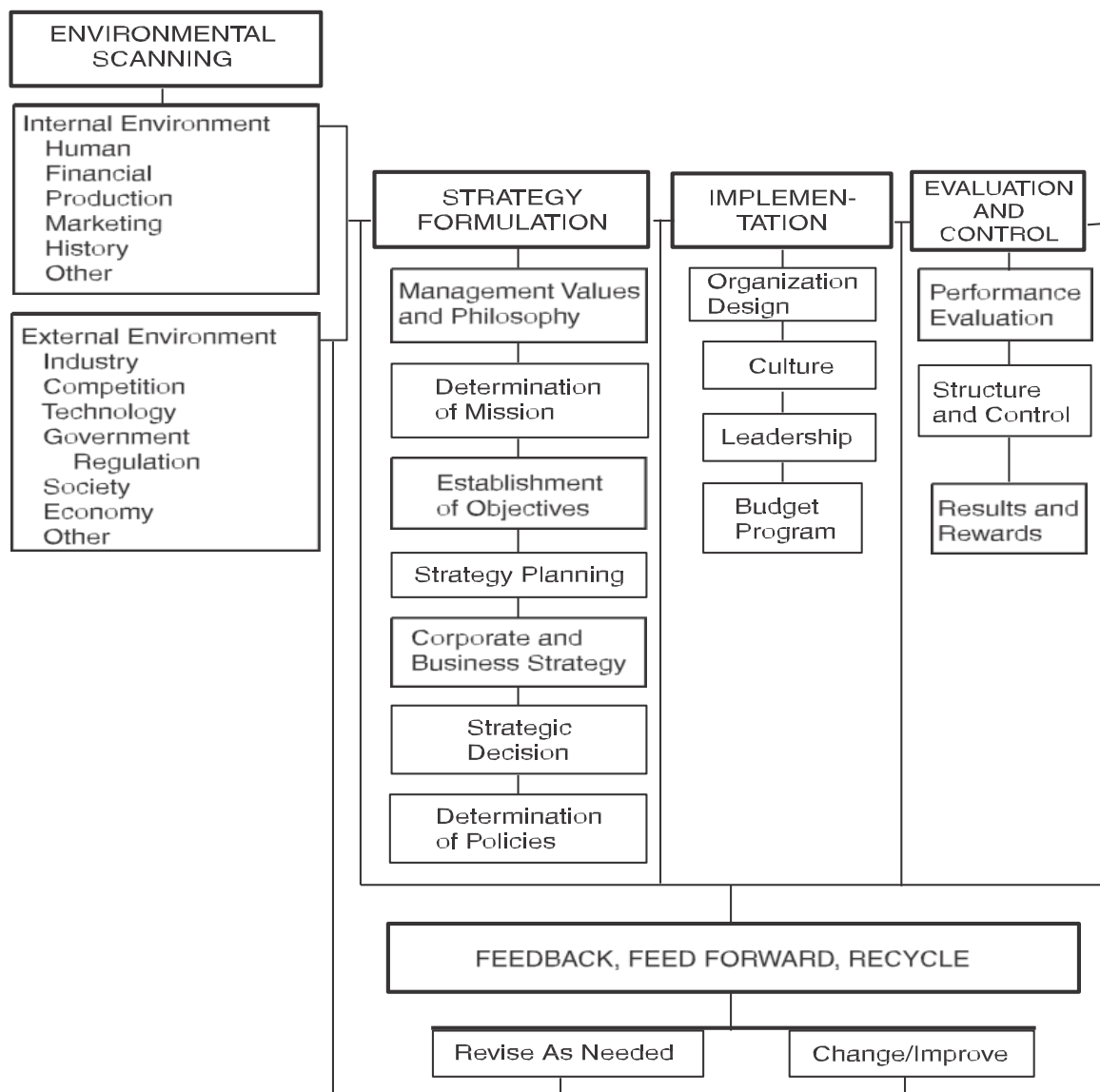


Figure 2.1: Strategic management framework.

Source: Alkhafaji (2003)

Lazenby (2018) defines these phases as follows:

Organisational direction and environmental analysis: A business's strategy must be compatible with its environment. Environmental analysis is critical to determining this match. An organisation's future will be guided by a vision, mission, and organisational values. Without it, progressing effectively to the next phase of the process will be nearly impossible.

Strategy formulation: An organisation must first decide how it will be different from its competitors by selecting a distinct generic approach. It must also understand its industry environment since this will have an impact on the strategic options available to it. After completing the first phase, the organisation is prepared to set long-term goals and plans.

Strategy implementation: An organisation's strategy for the next five years sets out its strategic direction, gives a general direction, and specifies the procedures to be used to accomplish its goals and objectives. Now it is time to apply the specified strategic options. To conduct strategies, specific tactical and operational plans, policies, and other motivating factors must be in place.

Strategic control and evaluation: The final stages of the strategic management process are thought to be strategic control and evaluation as well as the continuous improvement procedure. The implementation and applicability of the approach should be continually assessed and revised. Total quality management and a balanced scorecard are both examples of instruments that can assist managers in successfully regulating the strategic managing process.

2.3 Strategic planning concept

The process of strategic planning by senior management in an organisation entail laying out the organisation's future strategic goals and a vision, followed by efforts to attain and assess these objectives, are necessary for trustworthy and meaningful operating plans and financial resources (Haines, 1995). According to Allison and Kaye (2015), strategic planning is a systematic process that helps an organisation build and maintain key stakeholder commitment to mission-critical and environmentally

conscious goals. Strategic planning guides the purchase and distribution of the resources required to achieve these goals.

Strategic planning is a deliberate, disciplined effort that aims to assist organisations to explain their objectives, mandates, goals, and strategies. Additionally, it entails developing an efficient and responsive strategic management structure that will gradually increase the enterprise's potential for and delivery of success (Bryson, 2017).

To conduct good strategic planning, one must be knowledgeable with the organisation or its surroundings. Strategic planning is based on the idea that for companies to conduct their missions, follow through on their commitments, and win over the community or general public in the years to come, senior management must be effective in executing their plan. These managers will need to make the most of their discretion in the departments or units they oversee, produce successful strategies, and give a solid and clear basis for their decision-making if they are to succeed in the transformed and variable environments (Bryson, 2017).

2.3.1 South African strategic planning

In South African organisations, In order to make strategic decisions that will help the organisation achieve its objectives, strategic management is still seen as a continuous process in which the organisation's competencies must be in alignment with the opportunities and threats in their external surroundings. Similar external environment variables apply to South Africa's public and private sectors (Lazenby, 2014).

Although the public and private sectors have many similar environmental traits, how strategic management is carried out in public sector organisations varies slightly from how it is done in private sector organisations. At national, provincial, and municipal levels, strategic management responsibilities are spread throughout the South African public sector (Eresia-Eke and Soriakumar, 2021).

2.3.2 Perspective on strategic planning in the public sector

In the public sector, strategic planning should be based on a time horizon of at least five years, outlining the organization's goals and objectives for that period based on

the resources available and with the approval of the appropriate executive authority (Lazenby, 2014). To adapt to this ever-changing environment and to provide sustainable, efficient, effective, and high-quality service, managers at public institutions must employ strategic management principles and a strategic approach (Lazenby, 2018). Additionally, the public sector views its operating environment as complex and uncertain. Even though the private sector typically perceives the public sector as the source of certain political and economic decisions, the political and economic decisions of the external environment will have an impact on the public sector. The organisation's strategic plans should center on the crucial concerns and outcome-based objectives that were created within the organisation to carry out its mandates.

2.4 Strategy and implementation

To achieve the desired objectives, plans must be put into action. The likelihood that an organisation will be able to accomplish its goals is increased by well-constructed plans. Planning accomplishes this in two ways: by assisting employees and management in emphasising the organisation's priorities and by fostering better teamwork in achieving those aims (Allison and Kaye, 2015). Hobbs and Heany (1977) stressed the significance of connecting the strategy to the results of its implementation. They emphasise the significance of connecting strategy with the specific operational plans and controls at lower levels and offer five suggestions for improving the linkage:

- Check to make sure an ambitious plan won't overwhelm the essential portions or components.
- Identify the primary issues and shield some organisational sections from them in order to contain the shock waves caused by the new approach.
- Pay close attention to a few crucial areas when tying strategy to operating strategies.
- Keep the planning process active and keep participants active until a list of the precise actions needed to implement the strategy, the benchmarks necessary to gauge the success of the new strategy, as well as the responsibilities assigned to everyone in charge of each important initiative, are developed.

- Ensure that the plan is conveyed to lower levels so that they are aware of the necessary modifications.

When putting the strategy into practice, the organisation's executives should focus on creating value by achieving goals and raising stakeholder satisfaction.

In the public sector, strategy implementation is critical. Without comprehensive and committed execution plans, a strategic plan is meaningless. Implementing a public institution's strategic strategy is an operational procedure. All activities and choices necessary for strategy execution must be identified. Furthermore, the organisation's strategy establishes how its aims and objectives will be accomplished and the operational units required to accomplish it. Additionally, the chosen strategy will indicate the resources that will be required and how these resources will be acquired and distributed during the implementation phase. Successful strategy implementation needs proactive and deliberate steps to guarantee that the process's numerous variables and activities are integrated. All these actions will help managers eliminate the difference between the anticipated strategy and what is implemented. The key to successfully implementing the plan is to close this performance disparity (Lazenby, 2018).

According to David (2016), the strategic management process is not complete once the organisation has decided which strategy or strategies to pursue. There must be a process through which a strategic idea becomes a strategic action. If the organization's management and staff understand the company, have a sense of belonging, and have developed a commitment to the organisational progress as a result of their participation in strategy-building activities, this translation will be substantially easier. Implementing a plan will face substantial challenges in the absence of understanding and commitment. A strategy's implementation has an impact on the entire functional and divisional structure of an organisation, as well as other areas of the organisation. The scope and objective of this research study do not permit examination of all business administration issues and techniques relevant to the implementation of strategies.

David (2016) identifies and discusses the following activities for strategy implementation, which depends on the nature of the organisations.

- **Management perspectives:** It is vital to migrate from strategy generation to strategy implementation, except for small businesses, by handing off responsibilities to divisional and functional managers. This shift in responsibility could lead to implementation issues, especially if middle- and lower-level managers are taken aback by the process of developing a strategy, unless the two are intertwined and managers and employees are motivated more by perceived self-interests than by organisational interests that are incompatible. As a result, divisional and functional managers must fully participate in strategy formulation efforts. Equally important, strategists should be involved in as many as possible activities with regards to strategy implementation.
- **Annual objectives:** An organisation's entire management team should participate directly in setting annual goals, which is a decentralised strategy. Acknowledgement and dedication may result from active engagement in the process of developing annual goals. Annual objectives are crucial for strategy implementation because they (1) lay the foundation for resource allocation, (2) serve as the primary instrument for manager evaluation, (3) serve as the primary instrument for tracking the progress toward long-term goals, and (4) establish organisational, divisional, and departmental priorities. Additionally, success depends on properly defined and communicated objectives in all types and sizes of enterprises.
- **Policies:** The strategic orientation of a company should not often change. Policies are necessary every day to guarantee a strategy's success. Policies direct the strategy's execution and help to resolve recurring problems. In a broad sense, the term policy refers to detailed instructions, procedures, rules, forms, and administrative procedures created to facilitate and promote the accomplishment of objectives. Strategies are put into action by policies. Policies define the types of administrative measures that can be used to reward and punish behavior, and they outline what can and cannot be done to achieve an organisation's goals.
- **Resource allocation:** The core management task of allocating resources makes it possible to carry out strategies. Businesses commonly allocate resources based on political or personal concerns when using a tactical management style. Annual

objectives can be used to prioritise resource allocation through strategic management. Financial, physical, human, and technical resources are available to each organisation to aid in the achievement of its goals. Funding specific divisions and departments does not guarantee that strategies will be implemented successfully.

- **Matching structure with strategy:** A company frequently needs to make structural modifications as a result of changes in strategy for two main reasons. To begin with, structure has a huge impact on how goals and policies are developed. All other responsibilities related to strategy implementation are significantly influenced by the organisational structure through which goals and policies are defined. The structure has an impact on how resources will be allocated, which is the second important reason why strategy changes typically require structure modifications. If an organisation's structure is built on client segments, resources will be allocated properly. Similarly, if an organisation is structured along functional business lines, resources are distributed in accordance with functional areas.
- **Linking performance and salary to strategies:** In order to avoid ignoring long-term business strategy and objectives, bonuses should not be based primarily on short-term performance. Performance rewards that are connected to certain goals and salary scales must be established by the human resources department.
- **Managing resistance to change:** An organisation and/or a person are both susceptible to change. However, the idea of change causes anxiety because people fear losing money, having trouble, being uncertain of what will happen, and having their regular social routines disrupted. It is possible for established patterns of interaction to be disturbed by almost any change to the structure, technology, people, or procedures. People therefore struggle with change resistance. The strategic-management approach has the potential to cause substantial changes in both people and systems. Reorienting a business to promote strategic thought and action is not an easy task.
- **Creating a strategy-supportive culture:** Strategists should attempt to maintain, advance, and improve elements of an existing culture that support recommended new methods. The elements of the current culture that conflict with the suggested

strategy must be recognised and altered. Significant research has shown that market and competitive forces frequently have an impact on new strategies. As a result, adapting a company's culture to embrace a new strategy is frequently more successful than doing the same with a plan.

- **Human resource concerns when implementing strategies:** When all members of the organisation are aware of the precise benefits they will experience personally from the company's success, the empowerment of managers and employees through their participation in strategic management activities is at its most successful. A crucial new strategic role for human resource managers is bridging organisational and individual goals. To execute a strategy, an organisation must define yearly targets, create procedures, inspire people, and allocate resources. The process of implementing a strategy necessitates the creation of a supportive organisational culture, the development of an efficient organisational structure, the reallocation of marketing resources, the creation and use of budgets, the development and use of information systems, and the tying of employee compensation to organisational performance (David and David, 2016).

Many public organisations in South Africa appear to have trouble putting their strategies into action. One could argue that certain government agencies just report on their annual performance plans in order to go by the laws that require them to do so. The study found that employees at lower levels are not as heavily involved in the plan. Due to the constant changes in the environment in which organisations operate, there are challenges that the organisations encounter. These challenges are referred to as barriers and are discussed below.

2.5 Barriers for strategy implementation in the public sector

The definition of a business strategy is an action plan made by a corporate entity that outlines how it will use its resources to offer a good or a service (Mafini, 2017). Before implementing a strategy, strategy implementers must overcome a number of barriers because it is a very difficult procedure. Barriers can be defined as those determinants that restrain the strategic implementation process (Mohammadi and Vakilalroaia, 2013).

2.5.1 Lack of finance barrier

Lack of funding was identified as one of the internal constraints impeding strategy implementation in public sector organisations in a study by Eresia-Eke and Soriakumar (2021) regarding the challenges to and solutions for strategy implementation in South African public sector organisations. The lack of finance affirmed that the participating organisations could not implement their strategies in their respective organisations. In support of the financial scarcity barrier, Elbanna *et al.* (2016) mentioned that the strategy implementation process requires public sector organisations to apply resources for them to have independence. The continued budget cut for public sector organisations by the government aggravated the unsuccessful implementation of strategies in organisations (Eresia-Eke and Soriakumar, 2021). The ever dependence on government finances by public sector organisations has further crippled the strategy implementation processes (Elbanna *et al.*, 2016). Heracleous (2000) asserts that because most implementation attempts are extremely expensive, it is crucial to comprehend the obstacles that prevent successful implementation.

2.5.2 Vision barrier

As one of the barriers to strategy implementation, a vision barrier is described as a failure of an organisation to properly structure its vision and mission statements, which eventually cripples the clarity on business matters that are necessary for business improvement and success (Mafini, 2017). The workforce may not understand the vision and strategy because it was not effectively conveyed to them, and lower levels of management may not understand their role in putting the organisation's strategy into action.

2.5.3 Management practices barrier

According to Mafini (2017), management practices can be defined as how the top management of an organisation roll out their management functions - which include planning, controlling, leading, organising, and staffing. Organisations must have effective management practices in place that ensure that the strategy implementation process is smooth and therefore achieves its intended purpose. On the contrary, a

lack of effective and efficient management practices in an organisation can cripple the endeavor to the implementation of the strategy.

According to research by Moussa (2021), strategic leadership is a type of leadership and management that is crucial for supporting the successful execution of strategies in organisations, according to research on the obstacles to innovation in the Australian public sector. This research serves as evidence for the significance of management practices in the implementation of strategy in public sector organisations. Strategic leadership is a form of leadership that identifies several frameworks and standards that can be utilised in the implementation process, which may be useful in the successful rollout of a strategy. The adoption of strategic leadership provides expert knowledge and guidance - which enhances the creation and delivery of strategic objectives (Moussa, 2021).

The organisation's management may be too preoccupied with finding solutions to immediate problems while ignoring the strategic issues. The findings of the study by Eresia-Eke and Soriakumar (2021) on the obstacles to and solutions for strategy implementation in public sector organisations showed that senior management involvement in the implementation of strategy is essential for its effectiveness. The study also found that the organisation's senior management has a responsibility to see to it that every employee understands the strategy's goal. This is achieved through official channels of communication within the organisation as strategy implementation must involve all employees of the organisation. It is crucial to note that the strategy should be communicated as effectively and clearly as possible throughout the organisation to prevent any ambiguities that can hinder implementation efforts (Eresia-Eke and Soriakumar, 2021).

2.5.4 Human resource barrier

As the organisation's most important resource, human resources are also one of the biggest obstacles to strategy implementation. A strategic approach to managing people that helps an organisation achieve its goals is known as human resource management (Katsikea *et al.*, 2015).

The purpose of human resource management is to hire individuals and to help them enhance their abilities through various initiatives (Jackson *et al.*, 2014). The human resource management system in an organisation needs to be very robust so that the human resource capabilities are effective (Mafini, 2017). The human resource department in an organisation should be competent, skilled, and motivated for the business strategies to be achievable. In support of the human resource capabilities as a barrier for strategy implementation, the outcome of the research by Eresia-Eke and Soriakumar (2021), the issues and solutions surrounding strategy implementation in those public sector organizations, it was discovered that the staff in such organizations has poor skill levels, which has impeded strategy implementation. The inability of the workers to be motivated was also cited as a deterrent to the implementation of the approach.

2.5.5 People barrier

There are two sub-hurdles under the people barrier umbrella, according to research done by Eresia-Eke and Soriakumar (2021), on the challenges to and remedies for strategy implementation in public sector organizations. These include the quality of staff and the lack of cooperation from all the stakeholders of the organisation. The people barrier aligns with the thoughts of Mafini (2017) employee motivation was identified as a barrier to strategy implementation in a study on the challenges facing the implementation of public supply chain management strategies. The definition of motivation is the desire or readiness to carry out a specific job (Dukhan *et al.*, 2017). The achievement of intended organisational goals depends significantly on the employees' motivation. A motivated workforce is capable of meeting or even exceeding quality standards; is self-driven and committed; and is satisfied with their work. Motivation is a crucial component of corporate operations that enhances performance and productivity because it fosters job satisfaction, fosters a sense of pride and success, and increases employees' commitment to their work (Linz *et al.*, 2006). Employee motivation is defined as the skilled high levels of determined attempt towards the attainment of organisational goals (Galli, 2020). Employee motivation gives an insight into the behaviour of the workforce and gives a basis to predict the behaviour of the workforce in the future.

Since employees are the ones who make the strategy's goals a reality, a lack of workforce motivation makes it difficult for organisations to implement their strategies. Employees are the most valuable assets of an organisation (Eresia-Eke and Soriakumar, 2021). Managers in the organisations are not permitted to connect awards to a strategy that does not provide an incentive to alter actions to fit its strategic plan. According to Frederick Herzberg's theory, certain workplace characteristics influence employee contentment with their jobs and, if unavailable, have the opposite effect. The theory is known as the Motivator-Hygiene Theory, which classified variables that lead to job satisfaction as hygiene factors, such as status, job stability, compensation, and fringe benefits, and motivators such as achievement, advancement, and development.

According to Bushiri (2014), Herzberg's theory describes four basic states that could occur:

- High Motivation/High Hygiene: The ideal situation of content and motivated workers.
- High Motivation/Low Hygiene: Dedicated workers who enjoy their jobs, yet frequently complain.
- Low Motivation/High Hygiene: Bored employees punching the clock to be paid.
- Low Motivation/Low Hygiene: A complete mess of bored, disgruntled workers.

Inadequate performance management systems may overlook the fact that meeting employees' hygienic needs does not inspire them. Herzberg believes that the only way to encourage workers is to provide them with genuine motivators like success, growth, and development.

2.5.6 Internal communication barrier

According to a report by Pereira and Santos (2019) on strategic communication and barriers to strategy implementation, communication remains the stronghold of one of the several methods by which an organisation prepares itself for it to accomplish its mission and vision. In today's business world, which is characterised by fierce competition, communication could be an appropriate dimension for business entities to have a massive impact on the execution of their businesses. It is crucial to

effectively convey key information regarding how organisational operations should be conducted. The act of sharing information with individuals or groups inside an organisation is referred to as communication (Dukhan *et al.*, 2017).

An organisation's staff must be successfully informed of its plan through the appropriate means. According to Eresia-Eke and Soriakumar (2021), the communication of an organisational strategy through the hierarchies of the organisation is not always as effective as it should be. This could be a challenge as it may allow employees to execute their actions, which may not be aligned to the strategy implementation efforts. The conclusive results from the outcome of the research by Eresia-Eke and Soriakumar (2021) indicated a few remedies to curb the issue of poor communication which include the open-door policy, accessibility of the strategy and the implementation plans on organisations' internal communication platforms, such as an intranet. With that in mind, Mafini (2017) postulated the need for the existence of both vertical and horizontal communication channels for employees to communicate with anyone at any level.

A well-organised communication system enables managers to coordinate their staff members effectively, communicating and disseminating the organisation's objectives and goals to bring everyone on board. Using trained personnel to convey information is essential; proper communication routes should be developed and utilised to minimize disruptions or misinterpretations of information (Dukhan *et al.*, 2017). Additionally, it is critical for management to communicate with staff members frequently to discuss any issues that may affect them daily. Everyone will agree and grasp the expectations, thanks to this ongoing engagement and communication.

Organisations do not only experience barriers when implementing their strategies. There are also enabling factors that organisations can utilise to implement their chosen strategies. These enablers are regarded as drivers to help organisations achieve their objectives. The drivers are further discussed in the following section.

2.6 Drivers for strategy implementation in the public sector

Strategic management is considered as a collection of decisions and actions that lead to the creation, execution, and monitoring of action plans meant to achieve certain

organisational goals, according to Jawad *et al.* (2017). This stage of the strategic management process is known as the executing phase, and it involves the activities necessary to successfully carry out strategies of an organisation (Venter, 2014). In order to ensure that the stated goals are achieved, strategic implementation, which divides the intended strategy into multiple tasks, is crucial to the strategic management process (Jawad *et al.*, 2017).

Drivers are crucial to the effective implementation of a plan, because they help organisations overcome the constraints that were previously highlighted. The stage of the strategic management process known as strategy implementation is where an organisation's management aligns its strategic leadership, organisational culture, reward systems, policies, and resource allocation with its intended goals. The success of strategy implementation initiatives is influenced by a variety of circumstances, and strategy implementation is seen as the action stage of the strategic management process (Venter, 2014).

2.6.1 Valid performance measurements

This refers to the numerous processes used to evaluate employee performance and determine financial and non-financial incentives. Jawad *et al.* (2017) added that the performance measurements also include effective change in control management, progress measurement systems as well as the evaluation and reporting on the outcome of the performance.

2.6.1.1 The performance system conceptual model

Speculand (2021) states that there is no universally accepted performance management methodology. Numerous experts have discussed the idea in a variety of settings. The model, which contains five essential components and offers guidelines for how a performance management system should be applied in a firm, can be prescribed as a performance management cycle. The performance management system cycle is made up of five parts, and they are:

- The setting of goals.
- Evaluation of the output.
- Results of performance feedback.

- System of rewards based on performance results.
- Modifications to the activities and goals.

The chart below (Figure 2.2) shows how the five fundamental components of the performance management model discussed above relate to one another.

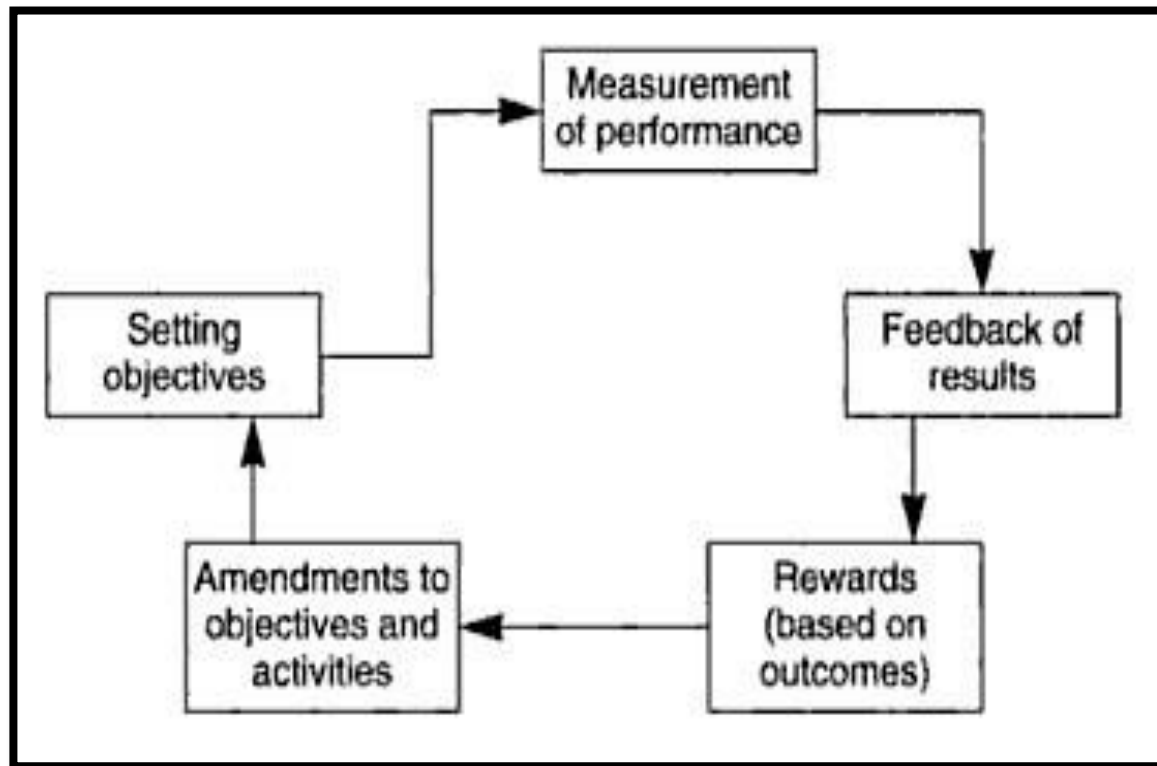


Figure 2.2: Performance management system (conceptual model).

Source: Agarwal (2011)

- **Setting objectives:** The first phase in the paradigm is the process of creating objectives by the supervisor and the supervisee, which is standard across most performance management models. The ‘SMART’ acronym (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound) must be used to guide the staff members’ objectives most of the time. At this stage of goal setting, the individual goals are once again in line with the goals and objectives of the organisation (Speculand, 2021).
- **Measuring the performance:** The process of categorizing specific results within a predetermined timeframe is called the evaluation of performance, and it is how performance concepts are evaluated and reviewed (Coens and Jenkins, 2000).

The maxim "If you can't measure it, you can't manage it, or you can't improve it" lends credence to the argument that businesses should implement a detailed performance measurement system, such as a balanced scorecard. The plan breaks down the broad objectives into smaller, easier-to-achieve activities. After then, employee performance is assessed in relation to the established objectives or targets. The performance evaluation criteria must be unambiguous and well-explained to the staff. Additionally, it must be applicable to the tasks performed by employees at work and also attainable (Platts and Sobotka 2010). Employees must be provided with the training and opportunity for the relevant development they may require completing their responsibilities or activities. Additionally, the evaluation of each employee's performance needs to be more concerned with their behavior and productivity than with their personality (O'Brien and O'Donnell, 2017).

- **Feedback of performance results:** Observations and the documentation of efforts and successes are just a couple of the numerous tasks involved in this stage. Giving employees feedback on their performance requires managers to coach and counsel staff members on how their assessed performance can be improved. The purpose of this step of communication is to make sure that staff members not only understand the goals that have been stated, but also contribute to and take part in its creation. It has been demonstrated that good communication boosts worker productivity and job contentment, which in turn helps an organisation achieve its goals and objectives (Hargie and Tourish, 2019).

Performance evaluations are an excellent approach to support people in deciding how they wish to grow. Individual and team performance both benefit from performance feedback. This leads to a unified workforce if correct performance feedback is affected. Increased job satisfaction, motivation, and employee involvement. Organisational inefficiency may result from a lack of self-evaluation and stress brought on by inadequate or no feedback. Every performance management plan includes performance feedback. It can be characterized as details regarding a worker's prior actions in comparison to accepted norms for worker behavior and output. Effective performance feedback is provided by a reliable source and is behavioral in character, timely, specific, and delivered. Employee engagement, motivation, and job

contentment are all objectives of performance feedback in addition to individual and group performance (Anguis, 2013).

- **Reward system based on performance outcomes:** This stage occurs after giving and receiving feedback on performance, which typically take place at the conclusion of the performance period. Rewarding performance typically involves key tasks including evaluating employee accomplishments and skill sets (Ying Ying, 2012). The procedure assesses how well the entire performance management model or system has worked and how well it has contributed to the overall performance of the organisation. The goal of this is to find any gaps in the system, opening the door for improvements to the overall process. This technique offers input to the entire organisation as well as the personnel. An organisation's performance is based on the caliber of its personnel, the appropriate people in the right positions, and those employees engaging in their areas of expertise.

Furthermore, the organisation needs to make the correct selections and put the appropriate individuals in the right positions. For these employees to perform to the appropriate levels, they must be motivated to work and have access to quality training and development. Organisations should use a mechanism known as pay-for-performance to reward individuals who have met their goals after the evaluation and feedback procedures. The pay-for-performance system connects an employee's salary raise to their performance. Money-based rewards for excellent performance are a crucial instrument for inspiring or fostering the employees' love for their profession (Speculand, 2021).

- **Amendments to objectives and activities:** The management assesses the entire process for any continuous improvement initiatives, such as the process of implementing a plan, at this final stage of the performance management system. The original goals are assessed to see if they have been met. If the goals are not met, a gap analysis can be performed to determine why this is the case. As a result, the original goals may need to be modified to make them more realistically achievable. At this point, evaluations are based mostly on the skill set of the employees and the caliber of their work. Personnel development and rewarding activities are also part of this phase. Positive attitudes about your coworkers directly affect their satisfaction and dedication (Ying Ying, 2012).

Prosser *et al.* (2016) assert that the four essential phases listed below are followed in a highly effective performance management model:

- **Plan:** This involves the work planning and goal setting, performance standards, and competencies. It also involves outlining development plans and getting commitment activities.
- **Monitor and review:** This is about the day to day supervision, feedback, performance review discussion. It also includes assessing against objectives, coaching, and reviewing of documents.
- **Develop:** This includes coaching and mentoring, career and professional development, ongoing learning and training.
- **Recognise:** This includes performance-based incentives, progression and appreciation. Also included here is personal development.

Development of the organisation's mission and objectives, as well as improved internal communication, are important components of a successful performance management system. Individual performance measurement and rewarding systems should then be in place. Individual job tasks and accountabilities should be clearly defined and discussed with employees. Finally, a successful performance management system should work to enhance employee performance that advances their career development in the future (Ying Ying, 2012).

2.6.2 Strategic leadership

In order to provide the organisation with a strategic direction, leadership is essential (Pearce and Robinson, 2005). Strategic leadership is the capacity of the leader to anticipate, visualize, and uphold the flexibility that enables others to accept change as necessary. Strategic leadership is regarded as a general purpose that involves managing through others and therefore helping the team to cope with the new strategy (Jooste and Fourie, 2009). The following characterises the actions of a strategic leader in the strategy implementation process:

- Strategic direction determination.
- Establishing the key performance indicators and controls.
- Organisational resource portfolio management.

- Ensuring that ethical practices are followed.
- Maintaining the organisational culture.

A strategic leader in an organisation must be able to anticipate, empower, and inspire other authorities to implement strategic change.

2.6.3 Training and development

The primary area where employee empowerment may enhance performance is training. Training promotes learning, employee development, and the growth of human resources, according to Harrison (2017). Employee knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behavior are improved through training, whereas employee growth over the long term is more the focus of development. Training can be defined as an educational process that tries to reinforce previously learned knowledge and skills while disseminating new information, thereby increasing workers' job performance (Bushiri, 2014). Consequently, training can be given to help people or teams increase their talents.

2.6.4 Top management involvement

Organisations of all sizes and in all markets struggle to retain the best employees in today's competitive business environment and acknowledge the crucial role they play in attaining the organisation's goals and objectives. Businesses employ a variety of tactics to improve their performance in a highly competitive market. However, few businesses recognise the value of their most valuable resource, the employees, who can contribute to the achievement of the company's objectives. Employees can lead to organisational failure and excessive labor turnover if not handled appropriately (Fisher, 2012). Therefore, it is the senior management's duty to oversee the effective operation of the entire organisation for developing and putting into practice strategy.

Ran (2009) emphasised the need for companies to inspire their staff members for them to work efficiently and have high levels of job satisfaction. The needs of the workforce are diverse and individual. Each person has specific demands, and managers must be aware of these needs to be able to encourage their staff (Gurland and Lam, 2008). Therefore, it is evident that top management is crucial to ensuring the organisation's activities and operations work together in harmony and that they are a key factor in accomplishing organisational objectives.

2.6.5 Organisational culture and structure

In an organisation, culture describes the common ideals that shape how people react to potential adverse circumstances (Pearce and Robinson, 2005). Additionally, this describes how members or staff of an organisation behave in accordance with their guiding ideals, interpersonal customs, and shared beliefs. According to Pearce and Robinson (2005), the organisational structure is the most crucial component and should be connected to the strategy as it serves as the organisation's cornerstone by outlining how the activities are arranged. It is the framework for achieving organisational goals within the strategic management process. It consists of the organisational units or departments and the links that exist between them.

The above factors are critical in ensuring that organisations implement their strategies successfully. In order to achieve an organisation's long-term and short-term goals, strategies are put into place. Therefore, these drivers are also supported by the following instruments in enhancing the organisations' ability to successfully implement their strategies.

2.7 Instruments of strategy implementation

In addition to understanding the organisation's overarching direction, all staff members must be aware of the regular tasks required to accomplish the organisation's strategic goals (Venter, 2014).

2.7.1 The role of short-term goals

Setting priorities for the organisation and its many divisions or sectors can be done with the use of short-term goals. It is crucial for tracking the organisation's long-term goals and progress toward those goals (Dukhan *et al.*, 2017).

2.7.2 The role of functional tactics

Employees in the divisional areas/units are given short-term direction by the functional tactics, which also explain the corporate strategy. Each division must carry out these everyday tasks in order to fulfill the organisational goals (Dukhan *et al.*, 2017).

2.7.3 The role of policies

Policies are rules established by an organisation, methods, procedures, and organisational practices that direct the behavior of its personnel in accordance with the nature of the organisation. The organisation's goals should be supported by the policies as well. They also operate as a guide for routine tasks and actions that encourage good strategy implementation by explaining to managers and staff members of the business their responsibilities and what is expected of them to effectively implement the strategy.

2.7.4 Strategic control and evaluation

During this phase, an organisation's management ensures that implementation operations are carried out effectively and efficiently. They also identify any issues with the strategic plan and take the appropriate corrective measures (Venter, 2014). The most crucial aspects of the strategic management process are assessed at this stage, along with the content of the strategy and its implementation. This is done by detecting and analysing any relevant events that could have an impact on the organisation and drawing attention to them.

2.8 The strategy implementation framework

Wolczek (2019) describes the strategic management process as the creation and application of a plan that can increase an organization's competitive advantage over the long term. Cox *et al.* (2012) postulate that the strategic management process involves the in-depth analysis of the business's internal and external environment to formulate strategies that align with the overall vision of the organisation.

Wolczek (2019) provides a proposal on the strategy implementation process which involve a series of steps on how a strategy in an organisation can be implemented and be sustained. This involves the following steps:

- **Organisational structure:** The process of implementing a strategy in an organisation begins with the appointment of a person in charge of directing and managing the implementation process.

- **Cooperation:** This step entails involving all the stakeholders of an organisation such as the employees from different departments, top management as well as consulting companies.
- **Communication and motivation:** Communication and motivation entail the use of a motivating system to get the buy-in from employees.
- **Implementation and methods:** It involve the use of the implementation programmes, use of strategy maps, balanced scorecard, and scheduling.
- **Control:** This entails monitoring procedures, such as measuring how well work is being done as specified in the strategic management plan.

The strategy implementation process according to Wolczek (2019) is summarized in Figure 2.3 below. There is a clear and common ground of agreement on the strategy implementation process steps. In support of Wolczek (2019), Gallen (2010) refers to these strategy implementation steps as managerial levers which include goals, organisational structure, leadership, communication, and incentives.

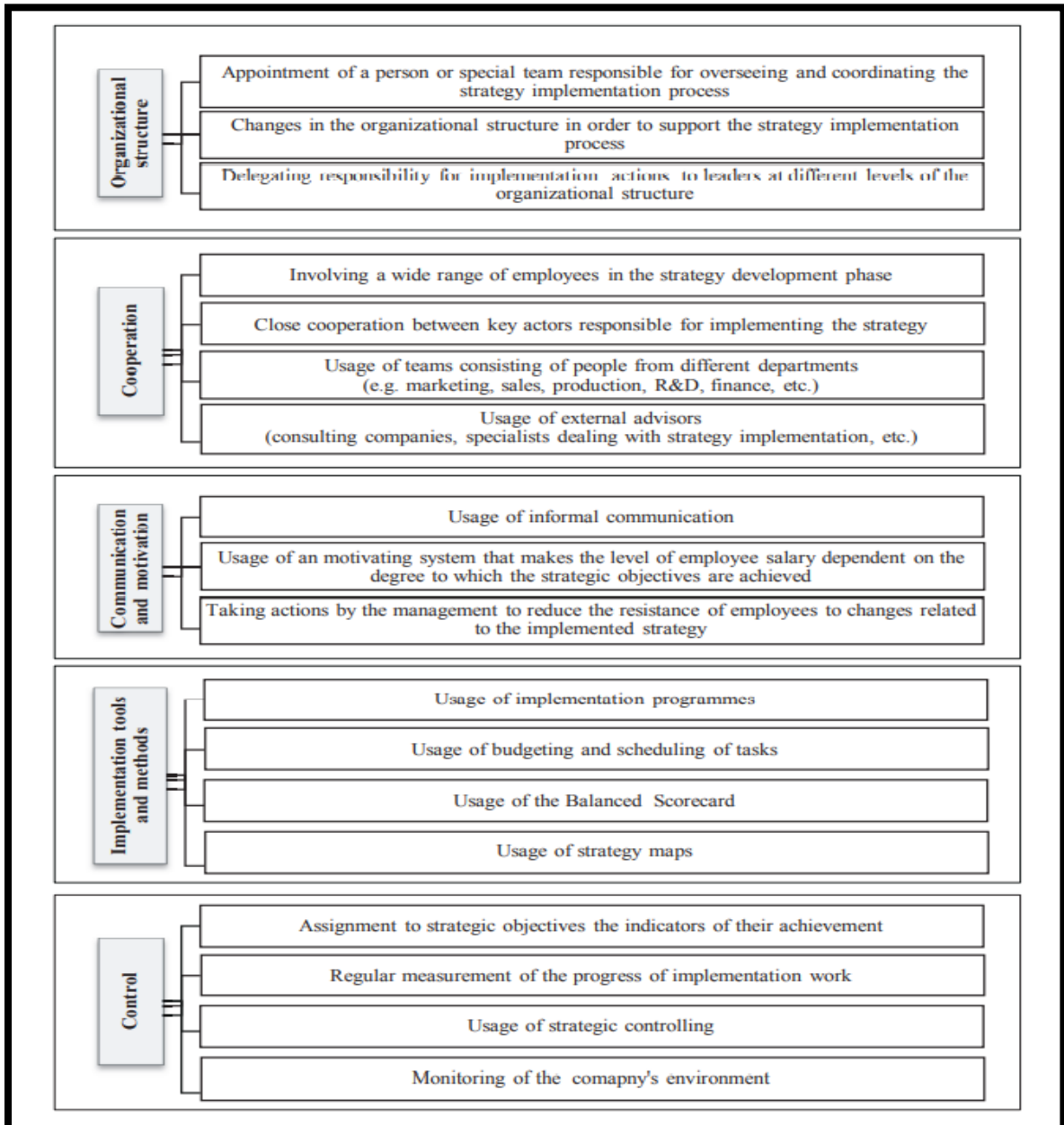


Figure 2.3: Model proposal for the strategy implementation process.

Source: Wolczek (2019)

2.9 The Medium-Term Strategic Framework

The South African government's MTSF is a five-year plan intended to carry out both the electoral mandate and the National Development Plan's (NDP) 2030 objective. The NDP urges society to cooperate in the battle against poverty, unemployment, service delivery, and inequality (Department of planning, monitoring, and evaluation, 2019-2024).

The provisions of Sections 215 and 216 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa govern the Program Management Framework, National Treasury Issues Performance Information, and Framework for Strategic Plans, and Annual Performance Plans. An essential component of the budgeting process is the planning techniques included in the Framework for Strategic Plans and Annual Performance Plans (South Africa: National Treasury, 2010). De Wet *et al.* (2014) assert that a shared set of priorities is provided in the form of a clear, comprehensive declaration of overall public sector policy goals, and that there is a strong connection between the national vision and the annual departmental priority-setting and budgeting processes. Some contend that budgeting and strategic planning naturally conflict, which frequently makes achieving the ideal amount of integration problematic. Since there are cascading relationships between strategic, operational, and budgetary planning within departments, the problem affects all levels of service.

The South African government, like other institutions, creates and uses strategic plans. According to the National Treasury (2010), to effectively implement strategic goals, the South African government departments must track performance quarterly. Performance data demonstrates how effectively an organisation accomplishes its goals and objectives, as well as whether policies and practices are effective. Effective management requires accurate performance information, which includes planning, budgeting, implementing, monitoring, and reporting. To ensure the most efficient and economical delivery of public services possible, all government entities must develop strategic plans, devote resources to their implementation, and monitor and report on their performance.

South Africa publishes financial and non-financial performance indicators, which are critical for assessing the performance of government entities. Non-financial performance monitoring throughout the year (quarterly performance reporting) is critical to the planning and budgeting processes. It makes it possible to investigate differences between original goals and actual results. Quarterly performance reviews alert departments to areas of inadequate performance, potential issues or obstacles, and the need for corrective action, acting as an early warning system (Preparation of Quarterly Performance Reports).

According to Eresia-Eke and Soriakumar (2021), legislation or elected political officeholders' predetermined terms are likely to place time restrictions on public sector organisations. Therefore, it is common for leadership changes to have an impact on the current strategy of public sector organisations.

2.9.1 Free State Growth and Development Strategy (FSGDS)

A basic policy framework for the Free State Provincial Government, the Free State Growth and Development Strategy (FSGDS), aims to match the provincial overall strategic goals and objectives with the national strategic plan's goals and objectives. The FSGDS covers the social, economic, and political environments as well as other fundamental development challenges. It outlines the provincial priorities that spur service delivery, public sector transformation, and economic growth (Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality, 2018).

According to the FSGDS, the following are the drivers or priority areas of intervention for economic growth and development for the province.

- Job creation through all-inclusive economic growth and sustainability.
- Skills development and education innovation.
- Rural development.
- Proper governance and administration.
- Construction of social cohesion.

To ensure performance is assessed and tracked throughout all five key areas, the FSGDS works to identify the priority driver strategies and key performance indicators.

2.10 Summary of the main themes

The factors below were identified as the main themes for the study as indicated by the literature review:

- The literature review indicated that the barriers to strategy implementation include a lack of finance, lack of vision, poor management practices, human resource barriers, and internal communication.

- The drivers to strategy implementation include valid performance measurement, strategic leadership, training and development, top management support and involvement, as well as the organisational culture and structure.
- A linkage between performance agreement and strategy, compliance, commitment, accountability, and responsibility were identified under human resource and people barriers, as crucial towards strategy implementation.
- Lastly, the instruments for strategy implementation include policy development and coordination, monitoring and evaluation, short-term goals, and functional tactics.

2.11 Conclusion

The above literature review shows the important link between strategic planning and the implementation thereof. It shows that a strategic plan should serve as a guide for implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and making necessary adjustments where it is necessary.

The literature review discusses the concept of strategic management, together with the strategic management process and its framework; it indicates where strategy implementation fits into the process. Additionally, the strategic planning concept is also discussed with the specific focus on its perspective in the public sector. Furthermore, with an emphasis on the drivers and barriers for strategy implementation in the public sector, strategy and implementation, as well as the process of implementing a strategy, are explored. Moreover, the instruments of strategy implementation together with the importance of Medium-Term Strategic Framework for government departments, which is a guiding tool for strategic planning and implementation, is also addressed.

The literature review also shows that there has been a considerable amount of research done on the barriers and drivers to strategy implementation in public sector organisations coupled with critical remedies on how organisations in the public sector can successfully implement strategies to remain competitive. Several barriers and drivers of strategy implementation have been identified which will be evaluated in chapter four to determine their applicability in the department.

The methods utilised to conduct this research are discussed in the chapter that follows. It also describes the population, sampling, data collection methods, and ethical considerations that were used in the planning and conduct of this study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter (Chapter 2) provided an overview of the body of research on the creation and application of a strategic plan in the public sector, both internationally and with reference to South Africa, by various academics. It gave information on the forces behind and obstacles to the implementation of strategy in public sector organisations.

This chapter provides a general description of the methodology used in this study. The key issues covered in this chapter are the research design, population sampling, data collection, and data analysis. Aspects of ethics and techniques to build credibility are also covered.

3.2 Research methodology

This section covers the study's research methodologies. The two main philosophical frameworks that can be employed in research to gather data are phenomenology and positivism (Creswell, 2013). Rajasekar *et al.* (2013) describe research philosophy as a methodical approach to resolving a specific issue. A set of processes known as research methodology is used to identify, clarify, and forecast phenomena. Zukauskas *et al.* (2018) summarise research philosophy as the creation of a research hypothesis, its comprehension and nature. Two types of research methods, namely quantitative research and qualitative research, influence research methodology (Rajasekar *et al.*, 2013).

3.2.1 Quantitative research

Mitra (2021) claims that quantitative research entails systematically examining quantitative phenomena and attributes to ascertain their relationship. This is accomplished by using a series of well-structured questions to gather numerical data, which is then analysed. Gathering numerical data, evaluating hypotheses by examining correlations between variables, and quantifying those variables using mathematical methods can all be referred to as the quantitative research strategy. Apuke (2017) goes on to assert that quantitative research, as the name implies, works

with quantifying and evaluating variables in order to reveal results; it uses statistical methods to analyse numerical data. Williams (2011) adds that the research problem is the first step in quantitative research, which is followed by the formulation of hypotheses, a study of the literature, and finally the quantification of the data. A crucial aspect of quantitative research is the use of methods like experiments and surveys as well as data collection tools to produce statistical data.

This methodology was not used because its results are based on numerical responses, which gives the researcher a little less insight into the thoughts, motives, and drivers of the participants, and it does not provide an insightful context.

3.2.2 Qualitative research

Understanding the motivations behind human behavior and developing theories to explain it is the aim of the qualitative research approach (Mitra, 2021). Moreover, a qualitative research strategy is a type of research methodology that gathers data by posing broad questions, which are then examined using theme-based analysis. In support of this, Moore (2016) also notes that qualitative research studies tend to gather more qualitative data than quantitative data because they concentrate on how, why, and what type of questions. Additionally, the qualitative research methodology involves detailed strategies and inquiries to gather data. Johnson and Christensen (2008) cite the purpose of qualitative research as understanding and elucidating social interactions.

3.2.3 Research methodology for this study

The investigation was conducted using a qualitative research methodology. The defense is that qualitative research enabled the researcher to gain a deeper comprehension and insight into how the strategic plan was implemented in the public sector, with an emphasis on the Free State Provincial Government Department.

3.3 Research design

The research design is the strategy for carrying out research that outlines a sequential, logical approach to answering several research questions through the gathering, interpreting, and analysing of data (Thakur 2021). Akhtar (2016) explains a research

design as the research's framework. In essence, it is a study plan since it serves as a template for the suggested research effort and serves as the "glue" that holds all the parts of a research project together. The purpose of a research design is to apply accepted scientific inquiry principles to solve particular research challenges.

Paurav (2008) considers a study's design to be a schedule, plan, and arrangement of duties and activities. To put it simply, it is a plan outlining the approaches and steps the researcher will follow to collect and analyse the crucial data needed to address the research challenge. According to Collis and Hussey (2013), planning (and justification) of the study's design is required in terms of its objectives (exploratory, descriptive, analytical, and predictive), methods (qualitative, quantitative), reasoning (deductive, inductive), and results (basic, applied). The three basic research design categories are discussed below.

- **Exploratory research design:** Sekaran (2003) asserts that exploratory studies are carried out when there is little or no knowledge accessible regarding how the research problem at hand has been solved in the past; when some information is known but more data is required to create a workable theoretical framework. To further understand the nature of the research problem, exploratory investigations are generally conducted.
- **Descriptive research design:** For the purpose of describing a market phenomenon or its features, a descriptive research design is used (Paurav, 2008).
- **Causal research design:** The cause-and-effect relationship is the main emphasis of this research design. In order to identify and clarify which factors (independent factors) generate the effects and which are the results, Paurav (2008) claims that a causal study provides answers to research problems that need responses (dependent variables).

This study employed the exploratory design to assess how well the public sector implemented its strategic plans, with a particular emphasis on the Provincial Government Department in the Free State.

3.4 Population and sampling strategy

3.4.1 Target population

The total sum of all units with the given qualities, such as individuals, nations, organisations, cities, regions, and many more, is referred to as the population, in accordance with Bryman *et al.* (2014), and a target population is the totality of ideas that are being discussed and about which information is desired (Bryman and Bell, 2017).

The fifteen employees from the department's two primary divisions and the officials working in the support services, who were chosen for the study because of the support services they offer to the organisation's core function sections, made up the target group. Their corresponding sections include human resource management, organisational development, and strategic planning, monitoring, and evaluation.

3.4.2 Sample size

According to Thompson (2012), sampling is the process of selecting a subset of the intended population to observe in order to estimate the complete population.

This study only considered ten officials who are working in core function sections of the organisation and five officials from the support functions: human resource management, organisational development, and strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation. The sample size was broken down as follows: five senior management officials (directors) and ten middle management officials (deputy directors).

The rationale for the inclusion of the support function sections from the above sample size is as follows:

- **Human resource management:** For their role in ensuring that the department scout and hire skillful employees.
- **Organisation Development:** For their role in ensuring that the current workforce is capacitated, and relevant training needs are met for the development of the skills of the employees.

- **Strategic Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation:** For their role as the custodians of all the strategic management aspects in the organisation; strategic planning, annual performance plans, and constant monitoring and evaluation to make sure the predetermined goals are met.

Because they make decisions and set direction for the organisation, senior management officials were able to give information about strategy formulation, implementation, and alignment with the Medium-Term Strategic Framework. Middle management officials were able to provide information regarding the challenges that the organisation faces when implementing its strategies. Moreover, from the main divisions of the department, the researcher chose middle managers (deputy directors) representing all the sub-divisions under those main divisions, and they were purposefully selected because these officials are exposed to the strategic planning of the department as opposed to the lower level's officials. With a focus on identifying the main drivers and barriers for strategy implementation within the department, their experience would therefore be useful in assessing the effectiveness of the strategic plan implementation. Furthermore, middle management officials are regarded as the link between senior management and employees on the operational level. Additionally, the sample size consists of seven female officials which make up 46.67% and eight male officials which makes up 53.33% of the group. Furthermore, the study did not include vulnerable people.

3.4.2.1 Non- probability sampling technique

Non-probability sampling is connected to qualitative research and is commonly associated with case study research design, claims Taherdoost (2016). In contrast to the quantitative approach, non-probability sampling frequently concentrates on small samples. Non-probability sampling, on the other hand, is a sampling procedure that does not exist because the items or components have equal chances of occurring, claim Etikan and Bala (2017). There are many non-probabilities sampling methods, such as quota, judgment, convenience, and snowballing. A technique known as judgment sampling is choosing the individuals who will be most beneficial to the study.

Sekaran and Bougie (2016) categorise non-probability sampling into two groups: convenience sampling and purposeful sampling. Some of the sampling techniques are described below.

- **Convenience sampling:** Convenience sampling is the process of gathering data from readily accessible population members. It may be the most effective technique to swiftly and effectively gather some fundamental information because it is usually employed at the exploratory stage of a research study.
- **Purposive sampling:** It may occasionally be crucial to gather information from certain target groups rather than the sources that are the most accessible or convenient. In this case, the sample is restricted to a certain community of individuals who are eligible to provide the necessary information, either because they are the only ones who possess the information or because they satisfy certain criteria that have been specified by the researcher.
 - **Quota sampling:** By assigning a quota, quota sampling makes guarantee that particular groups are fairly represented in the study. The quota that will be set for each subgroup is determined by the population as a whole.
 - **Judgment sampling:** Judgment sampling is the process of choosing individuals who are in the best position to provide the essential information or who will benefit from it. They may reasonably be expected to have specialised expertise based on their own experiences and procedures, and they may be able to provide the researcher with relevant data or information.

Based on the above discussion, judgment sampling under purposive sampling was used for this research study.

3.5 Data collection instruments

Kabir (2016) defines data collection as the deliberate and methodical process of acquiring and analyzing the information acquired to produce conclusions on a specific research subject, with a stated hypothesis. Kabir continues by stating that as the goal of data collection is to obtain high-quality data, data collection is necessary to ensure the integrity of the research project. After all the data has been acquired, the

appropriate data gathering procedures will aid in organising and analysing the data (Robson, 1993).

Semi-structured interviews were utilised for the primary data gathering process. Before each phase began, the study's purpose was explained to all participants. The department's annual and quarterly reports that were pertinent to the study, together with other publicly available data, were used to obtain secondary data. Fifteen interviews were conducted via Microsoft teams and Zoom for both senior management and middle management officials since they were easily accessible through these platforms.

3.6 Data analysis

Qualitative data gathered using interviews, participant observation, or document review are notoriously difficult to analyse due to its enormous corpus of unstructured textual content. Additionally, unlike quantitative data analysis, there are no clear-cut guidelines for doing qualitative data analysis (Bell *et al.*, 2019). According to Robson and McCarrtan (2016), following the collection of all data, the data analysis stage will take place, however, when conducting qualitative research, it is crucial to analyse and understand the data as they are being gathered (Marshall and Rossman, 2021).

According to Williamson *et al.* (2018), field notes and interview transcripts must be properly sorted and categorised as part of qualitative data processing. Making inferences or results out of unprocessed data is the goal. The method by which researchers interpret the data they have obtained in order to present their results to their audience, is known as qualitative data analysis.

3.6.1 Grounded theory

Hair *et al.* (2020) claim that qualitative research is always grounded in the sense that it is built on gathering information about the environment or subject under study. Inductive reasoning and the development of theories are built on solid research findings. Creating theories to understand specific contexts and events is the main goal of grounded theory research. Although the grounded theory may produce, develop, and even validate ideas, the emphasis is frequently on theory creation and development.

- **Coding:** According to Bell *et al.* (2019), a key step in grounded theory is coding, which entails reviewing transcripts and/or field notes and naming the constituent parts that appear to have theoretical significance or stand out particularly in the social environments of the persons being studied.
- **Categorisation:** Categorisation is the process of categorising data units; qualitative researchers categorise data during the coding phase, which entails identifying or labelling instances of the phenomena discovered in the data (Ghauri *et al.*, 2020).

3.6.2 Qualitative data analysis steps

According to Castleberry and Nolen (2018), researchers can investigate the beliefs, principles, and reasons underlying behavior using qualitative research approaches. While recognising the significance of the participants' individual viewpoints, which can only be completely understood within the context of their experience, qualitative research's main objective is to better understand phenomena via the experiences of individuals who have encountered them firsthand. Additionally, there are five general methods that can be used to analyse qualitative data.

3.6.2.1 Compiling

The first stage in producing pertinent responses to the study's questions is the process of assembling the data into a meaningful form, which may entail transcribing so that the researchers can easily see the data. Although this step seems simple, the researcher must examine and reread the data to fully understand it. By being familiar with it, the researcher gets a sense of the entire data set, which improves their understanding of terminology or wording when it is used in context.

3.6.2.2 Disassembling

The process of disassembling data, which involves breaking it down and organising it in ways that are meaningful, separates the data after it has been compiled and organised. Coding is usually used to achieve this, which requires researchers to find data parallels and contrasts. The multi-level process of coding comprises systematically identifying significant data features across the whole data set.

3.6.2.3 Reassembling

The codes, or categories, to which each concept is categorized are then put together to create themes. Themes are coding patterns that group together various parts of connected codes to produce a more comprehensive picture of what is being shown. The researcher begins by gathering all pertinent data into each potential theme, and throughout the process of reassembly, they evaluate each theme to determine whether it is stable in connection to the coded extracts and data collection.

3.6.2.4 Interpreting

During this crucial phase of the research process, the researcher must make analytical deductions from the information provided as codes and then themes. The interpretation step does not necessarily have to occur last even though the steps of data analysis are listed in a linear order. Instead, it ought to take place during the compilation, disassembly, and reassembling phases.

Additionally, after the data has been reassembled through coding, the researcher can use quotes from the data to view them in relation to and in concert with one another. This allows the researcher to begin interpreting what is happening within and across various experiences, beliefs, and histories, and subsequently to begin spotting thematic patterns in the data.

The following are five criteria that every qualitative interpretation should strive for:

- A thorough translation is required. Readers should be able to see how the interpretations were created from beginning to end.
- The interpretations should be fair in the sense that if given the same evidence, other researchers should come to the same conclusion.
- Furthermore, the interpretations must be reliable and indicative of the underlying data.
- Good research will enhance our comprehension of the subject in the light of recent literature.

- The procedures used to collect data and the interpretations that follow, should be credible and earn the respect of peers.

3.6.2.5 Concluding

A strong research question should be the foundation of any research study, and analysis should always address this problem because conclusions are the answers to the research questions or the study's purpose. A thorough description of the coding procedures and criteria, as well as a thorough explanation of how codes and patterns of codes lead to themes and the interpretations that result, can be provided. This will achieve the research's additional goal of producing results that allow for close examination of the researchers' decision-making throughout the analysis process.

3.7 Data saturation

Saunders *et al.* (2017), define saturation as a condition for ceasing data gathering and/or analysis in qualitative research. When a researcher's data collection efforts reach a point of declining returns and no new data is added, this is referred to as data saturation (Aguboshim, 2021). Additionally, data saturation occurs when fresh input from new participants fails to provide new information, new themes, or new comprehension of the research issue as indicated by the themes and sub-themes.

Member checking is a tactic used to combat data overload. Member checking, sometimes referred to as participant or respondent validation, is a method for ensuring that the outcomes are accurate. Participants receive information or findings to confirm their accuracy and consistency with their experiences (Brit *et al.*, 2016). Moreover, in order to achieve data saturation, a data collection technique called member checking creates a dialogue between the researcher and the participants at every stage of the data collection process. Participants are given the opportunity to read the researcher's interpretations and submit any changes or new data. Member checking increases data saturation by examining and verifying interview data for adjustments, additions, or full deletion if the participant withdraws entirely (Aguboshim, 2021).

Once the ethical clearance approval was received, the semi-structured interviews were planned for 10 working days to allow for data saturation. The methodology for the study allowed data to be analysed during its collection process, as a result the

analysed information was sent back to the participants to validate and make corrections where necessary or to provide more clarity to their responses.

3.8 Practical ethical aspects

3.8.1 Ethical considerations

Bryman *et al.* (2017) assert that it is best practice to take prospective ethical difficulties into account early in the research design process rather than after the problem has already arisen. A few ethical issues were considered before the semi-structured interviews began and throughout the study, and these are listed below.

3.8.2 Ensuring permission is obtained

According to Saunders *et al.* (2016), you are likely to run into data access concerns whether you're a worker or group member functioning in the capacity of an internal researcher or participant researcher; but they would not be the same as those that external researchers run into. As an internal researcher, you might still have trouble gaining regular access to your organisation or group and may still need to get official approval before conducting research there.

The researcher requested permission from the head of the department from the Provincial Government Department and permission was granted to conduct the research in the department (see Appendix A).

3.8.3 Informed consent

To ensure that the participants are fully informed about the research that will be conducted, a consent form is provided that contains a brief summary of the study, a time frame for activities, a statement indicating voluntary participation, the name and contact information of the researcher, and an offer to provide detailed information on the study (Bryman and Bell, 2017). Making sure that participants have given their informed agreement for participation in the study is known as informed consent. Van Zyl (2012) asserts that "this is a crucial necessity in any investigation" while Aryl (2010) confirms by saying consent "should be informed, voluntary, and provided by a competent individual." Before someone may choose whether to participate in a study

or not, they will be informed about the study's goals, how the study's findings will be used, and the roles of the participants, among other things.

All of the participants in this research project received consent forms and invitations to participate by email. The agreement of the participants was therefore regarded to have been provided when they decided to participate in the study because semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather the information through online platforms. The consent forms further stated that the answers would be kept confidential and used only for the study (see Appendix D). The form also covered the issues in relation to: voluntary participation, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity as well as ensuring there is no harm to the participants.

3.8.4 Voluntary participation

Participants in research should refuse the option to participate if they have any doubts about their desire to complete the study, however, once the participant has agreed to participate, he or she should comply completely until the research is done (Hair *et al.*, 2020). In addition, Adams *et al.* (2014) state that nobody should be forced to participate in a study.

The participants in this study were not coerced into taking part. Additionally, the research participants were not compensated in any way for their involvement, including with gifts, incentives, or rewards.

3.8.5 Ensuring confidentiality and anonymity

According to Bryman and Bell (2017), pseudonyms must be used in place of first and last names. The names of the respondents wouldn't be required during data collection if pseudonyms weren't used in this research study; instead, each respondent would be given a special identification number.

The results of the study were summarised without highlighting the opinions of specific individuals. Without obtaining the respondents' permission, no one will be given access to the whole set of raw study data. Additionally, participants' right to privacy includes the secrecy of survey responses. Once confidentiality has been guaranteed,

it is critical to safeguard that secrecy. Furthermore, participants' privacy is protected in numerous ways by the researcher (Cooper and Schindler, 2014):

- Getting non-disclosure agreements signed.
- Participant identity is only accessible to a select few.
- Only with written permission may participant information be revealed.
- Access to data instruments with identifiable participants is restricted.
- Data subsets are not disclosed.

3.8.6 Ensuring no harm to participants

To ensure that the study participants would suffer no harm, any potential dangers that they might be exposed to as a result of participating in the study were thoroughly assessed, explained, and mitigated or avoided where appropriate. Currently, the Covid-19 epidemic is being fought globally. For everyone's safety, the researcher had implemented mitigating actions.

The participants were requested to provide their email addresses so that the researcher could send them a link for the online interviews. Since the Covid-19 virus was still a serious threat at the time this study was conducted using online platforms to secure the safety of the participants and the researcher. The virus is very communicable, so everyone must be on guard to stop its spread. The interviews were anticipated to take between thirty and forty-five minutes to complete.

3.9 Conclusion

The research methodology used for this investigation was the primary focus of this chapter. There was usage of the quantitative research methodology. Additionally, relevant aspects of the research study were covered in the chapter, including the research design, research methodologies, sample approaches, and data collection technologies. Additional data analysis-related difficulties and ethical principles that guided the study was also provided.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

The discussion of the research design, the technique of data collecting, and the research methodology for the study were the main topics of the previous chapter. Chapter four's objective is to present and analyse the data that was gathered via semi-structured interviews. This chapter includes the data analysis and findings that are informed by the study's objective. With a focus on the Provincial Government Department in the Free State, the study sought to assess how well strategic plans were implemented in the public sector.

The data was collected from participants using a semi-structured interview schedule (see Appendix C). The schedule consisted of fourteen questions, and it was divided into three sections; Section A required demographic information, and Section B and C contained investigative questions.

4.2 Presentation and data analysis

The data that is presented in this study was obtained from senior management and middle management officials in the Free State Provincial Government Department under study. Senior management officials were expected to provide information in relation to strategy formulation, implementation and its alignment to the Medium-Term Strategic Framework because of their role in decision making and providing direction in the organisation, while middle management officials were expected to provide information regarding the challenges that the organisation faces when implementing its strategies. The data collected provided the information to determine the relationship between strategy formulation and its implementation as well as the degree to which the department's strategy formulation is in line with the MTS of the Government of South Africa. Moreover, in order to aid in evaluating the success of the strategic plan's execution, with a particular emphasis on identifying the major forces behind and obstacles to strategy implementation inside the department.

The analysis of the study is broken down into four sections: demographic data that provides a profile of the participants, drivers and barriers to strategy implementation,

the relationship between the formulation and implementation of strategies, and departmental strategy implementation and alignment with the government's MTSF.

The methodology of the study allows data to be analysed during its collection process; as a result, the analysed information was sent back to the participants to validate and make corrections where necessary or to provide more clarity on their responses. This process enabled the researcher to identify any new themes developing during the data collection process as well as additional information.

4.3 Analysis and interpretation of demographic information

The gender, highest degree held, years of experience, and position of the participants are all demographic criteria that are crucial for data analysis. These demographic indicators serve as a gauge of the significance of strategy execution as well as how well-informed personnel in strategic positions within the department are about the advantages of strategy formulation and how it fits into the overall goals of the organisation. These factors are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Demographic analysis of the participants

Participant	Gender	Position	Highest Qualifications	Years in-service in the department
Official 1	Male	Manager	B.Tech	11 - 15 years
Official 2	Male	Manager	Degree	11 - 15 years
Official 3	Male	Manager	Degree	16 - 20 years
Official 4	Female	Manager	B.Tech	5 - 10 years
Official 5	Female	Senior Manager	B.Tech	16 - 20 years
Official 6	Male	Manager	B.Tech	11 - 15 years
Official 7	Male	Senior Manager	Master's	5 - 10 years
Official 8	Male	Senior Manager	Master's	5 - 10 years
Official 9	Female	Senior Manager	Master's	11 - 15 years
Official 10	Male	Manager	Honours	21+ years
Official 11	Female	Senior Manager	Master's	11 - 15 years

4.3.1 Gender

A total number of eleven participants participated in the research interview. Four of the participants were female, while seven were male.

4.3.2 Highest qualifications

The level of qualifications of the participants of this research study ranged from B.Tech to Master's degree. Of the participants interviewed, four had a Master's degree, six had a bachelor's degree and one participant had an honours degree.

4.3.3 Years of experience

The work experience of the participants ranged between less than ten years to twenty-one plus years. Three of the participants had experience ranging between five and ten years, while five participants had experience of between eleven and fifteen years; two participants had experience of between sixteen and twenty years and only one participant had experience of twenty-one years and more.

4.3.4 Position in the organisation

Table 4.1 shows the different levels of employment of the participants by the Provincial Government Department in the Free State. The study targeted senior and middle management officials in the department. Six participants occupied middle management positions, while five participants occupied senior management positions.

4.4 Analysis and interpretation of data on responses from participants

In order to evaluate the strategic plan implementation in the public sector in the Provincial Government Department in the Free State, the participants' perceptions of the drivers and barriers for strategy implementation in the department were noted as an introduction.

4.4.1 Barriers and drivers for strategy implementation

The interview schedule aimed to establish the involvement of participants in the strategy implementation in the department, supportive factors assisting in the implementation of the strategy, barriers for strategy implementation and how to overcome it, and key drivers for successful strategy implementation in the department. The questions on the barriers and drivers for strategy implementation in the Provincial Government Department in the Free State revealed several determinants.

C1. Have you been involved in strategy implementation in the department?

The question was asked to determine the involvement of the participants in the strategy implementation in the department as well as ensuring that they have the knowledge of the subject for the purpose of the study.

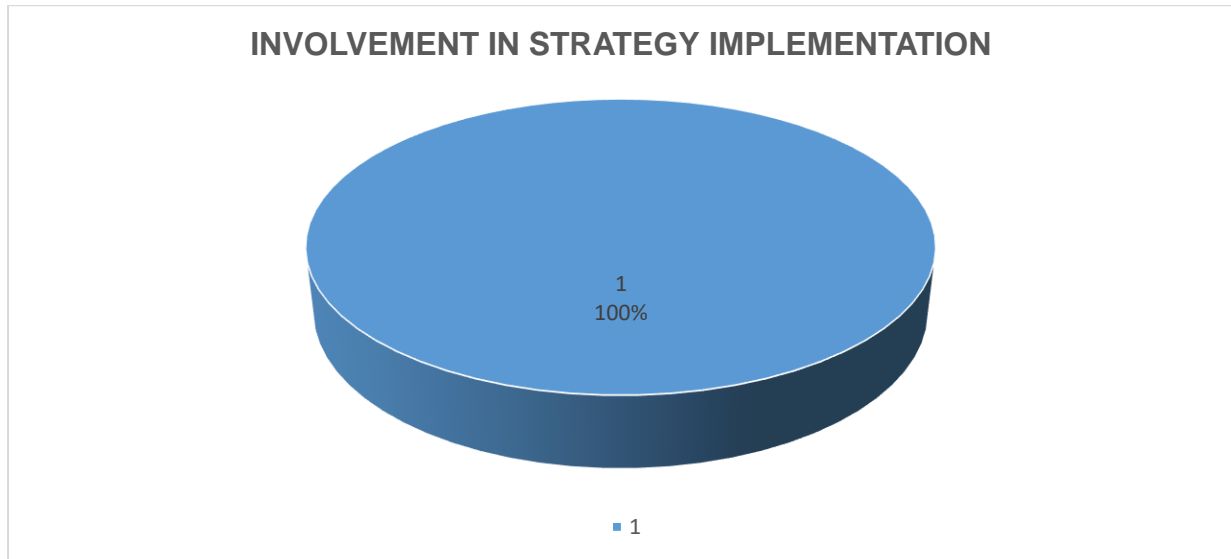


Figure 4.1: Participants' involvement in strategy implementation.

When asked, all the participants indicated that they had been involved in the strategy formulation and implementation for the duration of their service in the department. Other participants also had an opportunity of working in other departments and private sectors before joining the department under study. Figure 4.1 indicates that all the participants answered 'Yes' to the question regarding their involvement in the strategy implementation in the department.

C2. What supportive factors do you think have assisted in the implementation of the strategy in the department?

The question was asked to determine if there are any supportive factors to assist the department in the implementation of its strategies. Figure 4.2 displays the key factors that were identified by the participants that supports the strategy implementation in the department.

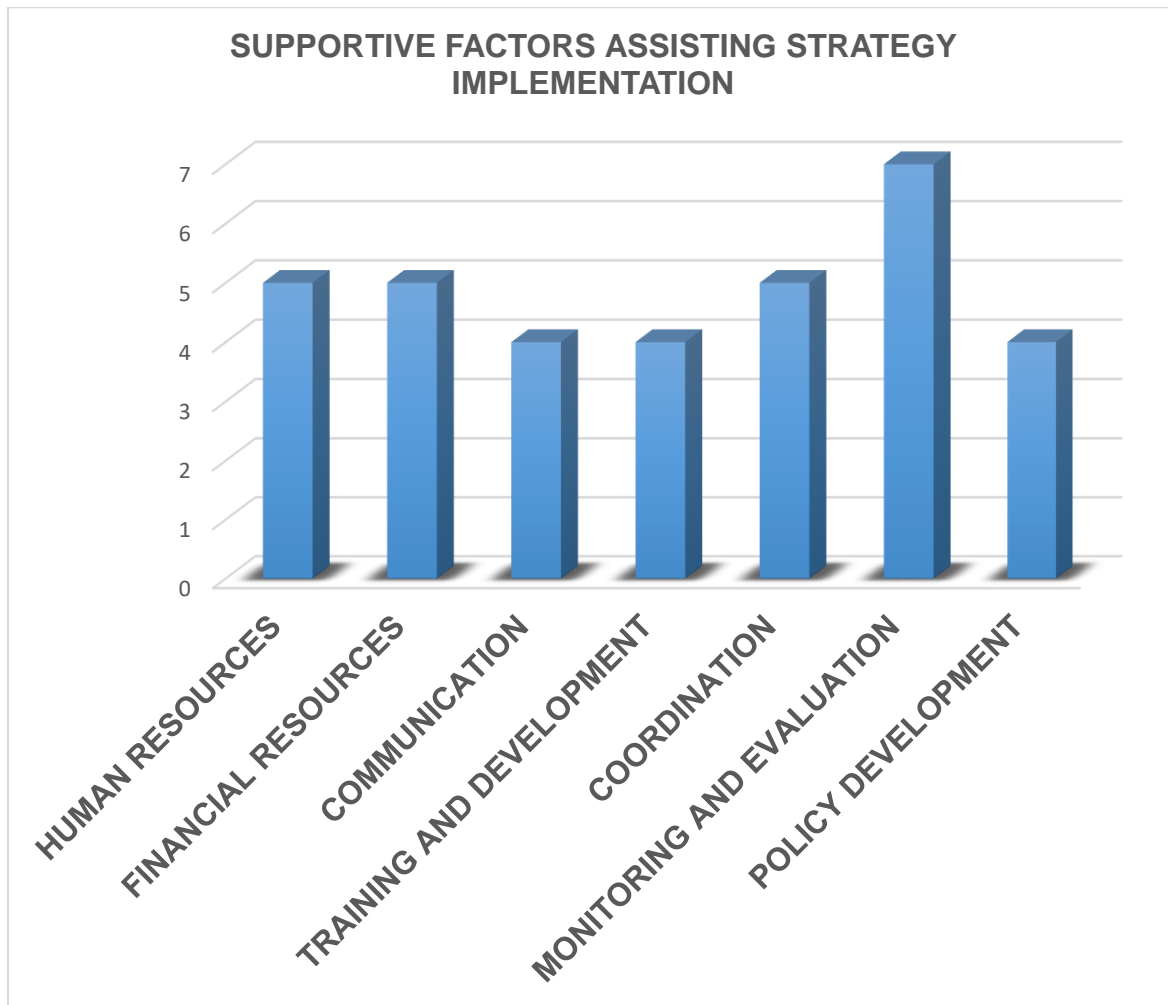


Figure 4.2: Supportive factors assisting strategy implementation.

In responding to this question, the participants mentioned several factors that are key in supporting the strategy implementation in the department. Monitoring and evaluation, coordination, and financial and human resources were dominant in terms of their role in assisting the department to achieve its objectives. Most of the participants mentioned these factors. Some of the responses to this question is given below.

“I would say financial resources, human resources, policy formulation and lastly, the management or strategic leadership. Additionally, regular reporting and monitoring even though this issue of monitoring some of us as managers, we use it for compliance.” (Official 2).

These sentiments were also echoed by other participants as follows:

“Firstly, I think the commitment by management and all officials... And then setting clear goals and targets that will be easy to monitor and track progress. And then also have listed timeframes and then policies and policies guiding implementation. We also need financial resources as well as human resources, and lastly, the environment should also be enabling.” (Official 7).

“I think the Department needs to always ensure that they appoint qualified and competent personnel and also, they need to ensure that they enforce compliance with the rules and regulations. And lastly, I would add that the department can also show support to the strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation unit and also implement the risk management unit recommendations where we have ineffective controls.” (Official 10).

C3. What barriers do you face when implementing strategy in the department?

This question was asked to identify the barriers for strategy implementation. The participants were asked about the barriers that they face when implementing the strategy in the department. The barriers depicted in Figure 4.3 were derived from the literature review and were used as a basis for this question.

Similarly to the supportive factors, the question on barriers was answered by all the participants and several barriers were mentioned. As the participants acknowledged that financial factors, as well as human resources, play a key role in assisting the department for the implementation of the strategies, they indicated that a lack of financial resources is the key barrier for strategy implementation. Internal communication, management practices and well as a lack of motivation for employees, were also identified as contributing factors for the department’s inability to achieve some of its objectives.

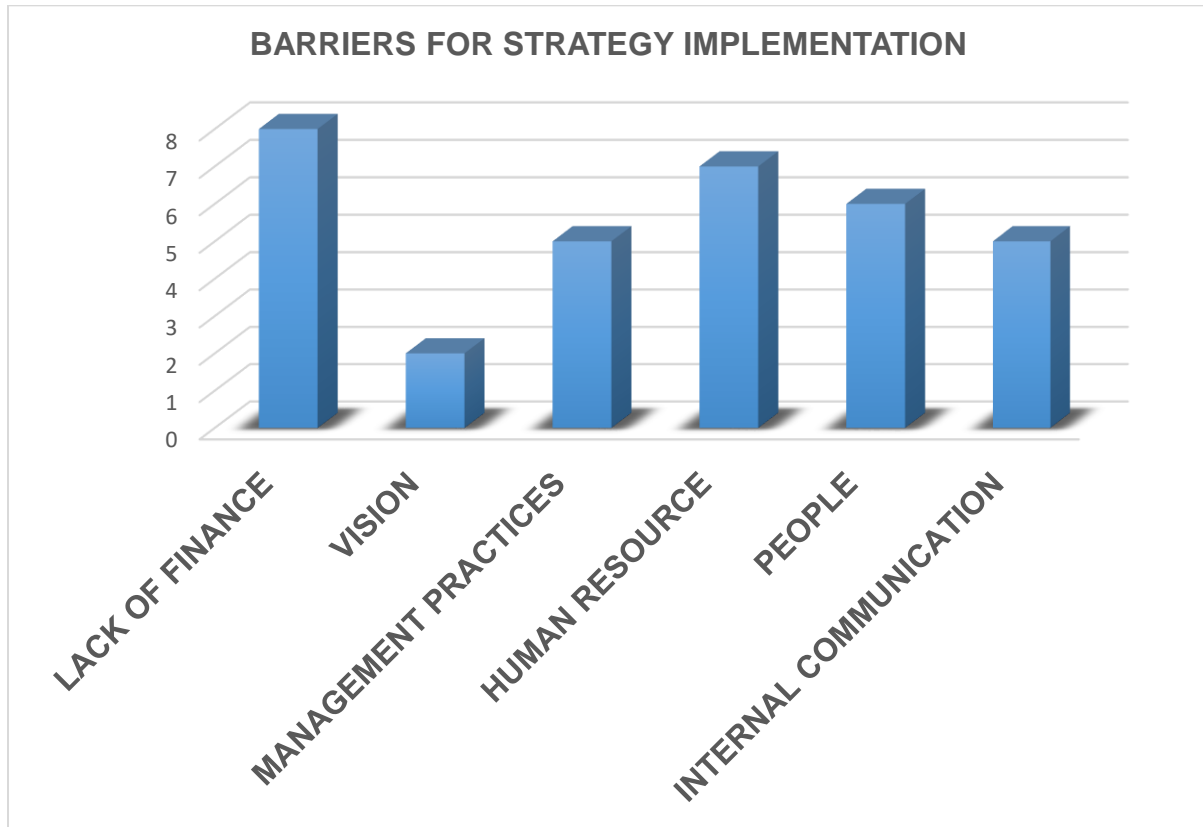


Figure 4.3: Barriers for strategy implementation.

The participants mentioned the issue of lack of both financial and human resources to drive the strategy implementation process and gave the following answers.

“In as much as we appreciate the organisation’s efforts towards continuously developing both medium- and long-term objectives of the organisation to keep abreast with the latest trends, insufficient budgets cripple the whole idea. Firstly, I strongly believe that we do not have leaders with sufficient skills of formulating and implementing achievable strategic goals, and this coupled with inadequate financial resources act as a barrier to strategy implementation in the department.” (Official 1).

“In terms of the barriers we face as an organisation when implementation strategies, I will say..... We have a challenge of budgetary constraints, both financial and human resources and these constraints hinder our endeavor to realise the strategic objectives of the organisation.” (Official 11).

“..... And another factor that I would also like to mention is, having a weak supply chain management system as it makes the department not be able to procure the necessary goods and services that will assist the department to implement the strategy. And then I would say maybe lastly, low staff morale and staff shortages also affect how the strategy is implemented in the department.” (Official 9).

With the above in mind, the participants mentioned regular changes in leadership as a barrier to strategy implementation, and in addition to the leadership barrier, two other challenges emerged from the leadership issue as identified in the interviews. The regular changes in leadership in the department have caused further problems; a lack of accountability as well as a lack of consequence management.

“The lack of consequence management has obviously created a huge problem of no accountability of departmental results, especially from the top management of the organisation. We have the potential to achieve the strategic objectives of the organisation, however, if there is no accountability for all officials for any actions which are in contradiction with the legislative frameworks of government, it will be very difficult to achieve these objectives” (Official 3).

In the literature review in Chapter 2, it was mentioned that the human resource management system in an organisation needs to be very robust so that the human resource capabilities are effective. In support of the human resource capabilities as a barrier for strategy implementation, literature revealed that the skills of the workforce in public sector organisations are under-skilled which therefore has affected the strategy implementation in the public sector organisations.

Additionally, the issue of a lack of financial resources as well as a lack of capable human resources to drive the strategy implementation process resonates well with Moussa (2021) who postulated that strategic leadership is a form of leadership and management that plays a crucial role in promoting the successful implementation of strategies in organisations. Furthermore, strategic leadership was defined as a form of leadership that identifies several frameworks and standards that can be utilised in the implementation process which may be useful in the successful rollout of a strategy.

C4. In your own opinion, what do you think are the drivers for the successful implementation of a strategy?

The question on the barriers faced when implementing strategy in the department revealed several challenges. The strategic management process is viewed as a pack of decisions and processes that results in the formulation, and control of action plans devised to achieve certain set objectives of the organisation. With the above identified barriers in mind, the participants were asked about the key drivers for the successful implementation of strategy in the department and these drivers, like in the case of barriers, were identified through the literature review and were used as a basis for this question. Figure 4.4 displays these drivers and the data obtained from the participants.



Figure 4.4: Drivers for strategy implementation.

In terms of the drivers for strategy implementation, financial resources were mentioned again as an enabling factor for strategy implementation. Another factor that was identified is training and development, where most of the participants indicated that, for the department to achieve its objectives, employees at different levels should be trained and developed on strategy formulation and implementation.

Top management involvement was identified as the most critical driver. Most participants feel that the majority of the senior management officials, after the formulation of the strategy, are involved in strategy implementation.

The participants had this to say:

“In order for the strategy implementation process to be successful, I strongly believe that if all senior management officials of the organisation are committed to the attainment of strategic objectives that would go a long way to ensure that these objectives are achieved.” (Official 4).

“Willingness and commitment by senior management is very crucial. I have noticed that this is lacking and causing a failure in the achievement of strategic goals and objectives..... It is crucial that all officials from different levels in the department understand and get involved in strategy implementation. More so, I guess it is important also to mentor, train, develop and support officials on strategy implementation at their respective levels to fully close all gaps for effective and successful realisation of objectives of the organisation.” (Official 3)

The literature review indicates the importance of strategic leadership in ensuring that the strategic implementation process is a success. In Chapter 2, Pearce and Robinson (2005) accounted that leadership plays a crucial function in any organisation to provide the organisation with a strategic direction. The role of a strategic leader is generally understood to involve managing via others and assisting the team in adjusting to the new strategy. The strategic leader of a company must be able to predict, envision, and enable other officials to bring about strategic change and inspire them.

For employees to work effectively and have a high degree of job satisfaction, supervisors must also motivate them. It is evident that top management is crucial to

ensuring the coordination between the organisation's activities and operations and that they are a key factor in accomplishing organisational objectives.

It was clear throughout the interview sessions that the strategy formulation and implementation process should be a structured process with well-defined objectives or goals. The strategy implementation process should also have its own performance evaluation process where results of the strategy are measured against the baseline objectives.

“Over and above management setting up a tone in behaviour and commitment to strategy implementation, there must be a clear, concise and a fair performance evaluation system to identify challenges so that corrective measures can be implemented to ensure a successful strategy implementation.” (Official 8).

4.4.2 The linkage between strategy formulation and its implementation

The questions were designed to find out how much senior management imposes systems for strategy implementation; how they make sure that strategy and implementation are connected; and how they impose control measures to make sure that planned targets are implemented as specified in the strategic plan and annual performance plan.

C5. In your view, what role does strategy formulation play in the implementation process of the strategy?

To determine the link between the formulation of a plan and its execution, this question was posed to the participants. There were a variety of responses to the question regarding the relationship between developing a strategy and putting it into action from the participants. Most of the participants indicated that strategy formulation provides a guideline and pathway for the organisation to be able to implement its strategies accordingly. Moreover, they indicated that it provides the direction the department is planning to take and how to allocate its resources. Some participants asserted as follows:

“I would say... Strategy formulation clarifies the direction in which, as the department we need to take. It gives us direction on how to allocate our resources. Here I’m talking about our financial, material, and human resources and how these resources need to be coordinated to ensure the success of the strategy that has been implemented or ought to be implemented.” (Official 9).

“It makes it simple to understand which processes to follow and what resources are critical. It also enables progress tracking and proper time management as this would have been defined during the strategy formulation stage outlining what needs to be done and by when.” (Official 6).

The thoughts above are supported by the sentiments in the literature review indicating that a well-designed plan increases the likelihood that an organisation's everyday operations will allow it to accomplish its goals. This serves two purposes: it enhances the practice of teamwork to accomplish those aims and assists employees and management in emphasising the organisation's priorities. John M. Hobbs and Donald F. Heany both stressed the significance of tying the strategy's outcomes to those of its execution. They emphasise the significance of connecting strategy to lower-level operational plans and controls in detail.

“I think strategy formulation assist in organisation’s better planning and decision-making process. It also serves as an analytical tool to figure out the best way to use organisation’s resources. Strategy implementation involves departmental activities associated with the delivery of a strategic plan.” (Official 5).

“Well, I think strategy formulation is an important step in the implementation process. It gives clarity on the direction in which all resources must be coordinated and allocated, and it enables the department to monitor progress of the set objectives to determine if the department is on track or there must be some adjustments or review of some objectives.” (Official 11).

Without comprehensive and committed execution plans, a strategic plan is meaningless. Implementing a public institution's strategic strategy is an operational procedure. All activities and choices necessary for strategy execution must be

identified. Furthermore, the organisation's strategy establishes how its aims and objectives will be accomplished and the operational units required to accomplish them. Additionally, the chosen strategy will indicate the resources that will be required and how these resources will be acquired and distributed during the implementation phase.

C6. How does the department communicate strategic decisions?

This question was asked to determine how and to what extent the department communicates the strategic decisions to all officials.

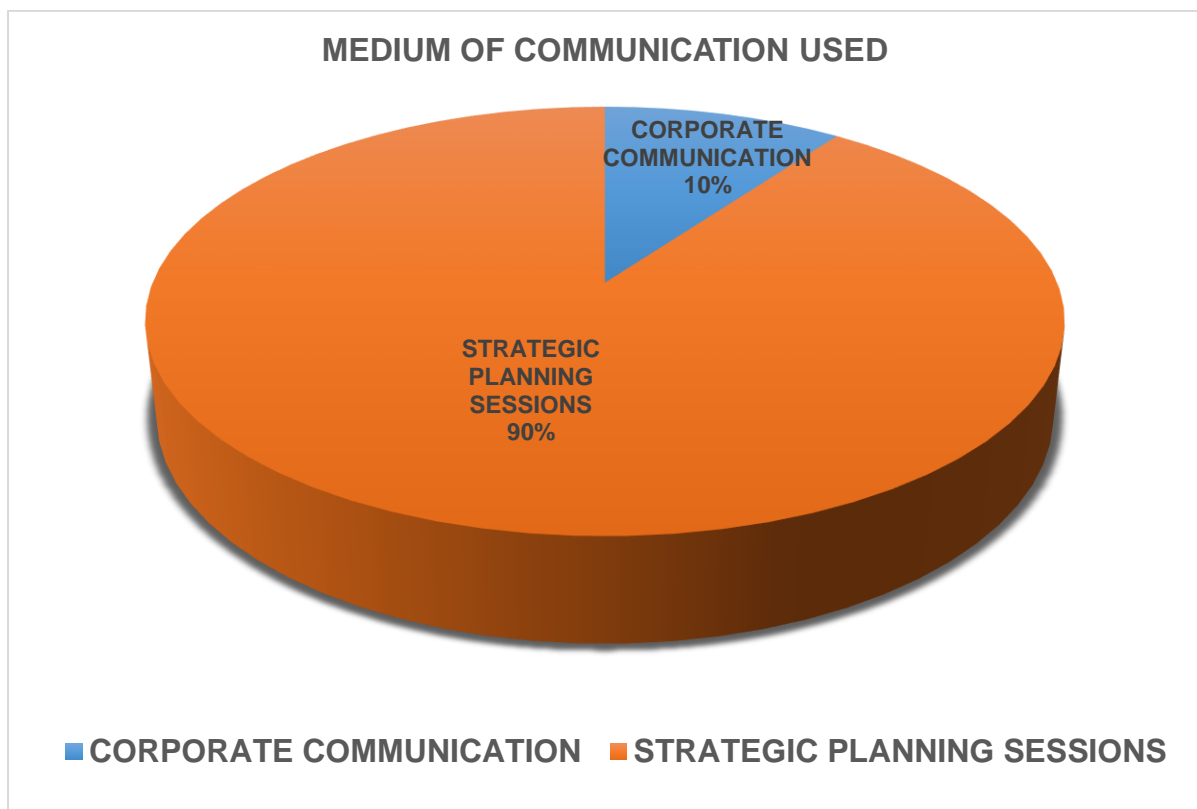


Figure 4.5: Medium of communication by the department.

It was clear throughout the interview process that the strategy implementation process requires involvement of all employees, and clear communication from top management of the organisation right through to all employees. It is necessary to communicate important details on how business operations should be carried out. The strategy of an organisation needs to be communicated effectively to the workforce in the organisation through the right channels.

Figure 4.5 displays the most used medium of communication by the Department when communicating its strategic decisions to the employees. In response to this question, most of the participants shared the same sentiments in that the communication of the strategic decisions in the Department is normally done via strategic planning sessions. And this was regarded as problematic (since these sessions are attended by management only), and as a result the information does not reach all officials. The communication of an organisational strategy through all the hierarchies of the organisation is not always as effective as it should be. This could be a challenge as it may allow employees to execute their actions which may not be aligned to the strategy implementation efforts.

“We normally communicate the decisions through strategic management team meetings and quarterly review meetings which only senior management partake.” (Official 4).

“In terms of communication within our department, I would say it’s very little when it comes to the communication of the strategic decisions, and it’s limited to the executive management only. So, the people who fall under that line of reporting do not get communication when it comes to the strategic decisions taken within the department.” (Official 10).

“I would say we normally communicate the strategic decisions when we have strategic planning sessions....and this is done at executive management level with the expectation that this will be shared to their downline staff, which is not happening in most instances.” (Official 7).

C7. How do you measure the effectiveness of a strategy in the department?

The participants were asked to indicate how the department measures the effectiveness of its strategy. This question was asked to get more inside information regarding the systems that the department is using to measure its strategy.

In response to this question, participants had different views regarding the current approach of the department in measuring its strategies. Three participants chose not to answer or comment in relation to this question. Some participants believed that the department lacks proper systems to measure the effectiveness of its strategies. Figure

4.6 indicates that most of the participants believed that quarterly reviews serve as an effective way the department is measuring its strategies.

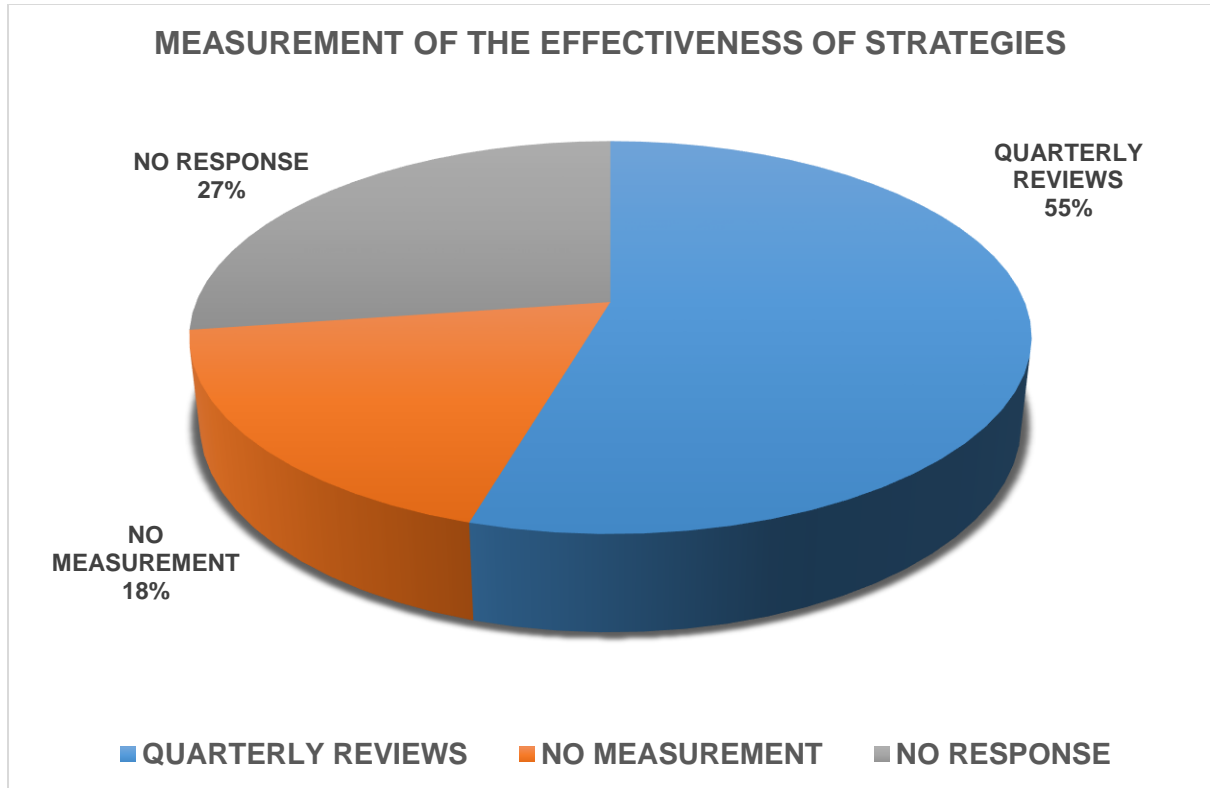


Figure 4.6: Measurement of the effectiveness of its strategies.

“I would say it is not really achieving its intended purpose and, in some instances, I would believe it is regarded as a compliance issue.... Meaning we are just complying with the requirements, not necessarily making sure that, after the assessments, we red-flag any issues arising from the assessments.” (Official 8).

“The Department mainly focuses on achievement of annual performance goals and not necessarily strategy effectiveness.” (Official 11).

However, other participants had different views and they answered the question as follows:

“The department normally measures the effectiveness of its strategies through the quarterly review of the annual performance plan. The quarterly reviews seek to assess if the quarterly and annual targets are met.... And where quarterly targets are not met, sound reasons for deviations are sought with supportive portfolio of evidence from all units in the department.” (Official 1)

“We measure it through performance monitoring and evaluation process.... However, we don’t receive any feedback or report indicating where we can improve or where we can realign or review our strategies so that we can be able to meet the set objectives at the end of financial year.” (Official 6).

“Senior management perform the following to ensure effectiveness of our strategies: develop processes/activities to be followed for the implementation of the strategy; identify risks that may have a negative impact on the achievement of the strategy; develop and implement mitigation strategies to address these risks ... and report regularly on the implementation of the strategy.” (Official 9).

The department holds its internal quarterly review meetings for all units from all main division in the department before the information can be submitted to the responsible department in the Free State Provincial Government responsible for all the provincial departments.

4.4.3 The strategy implementation and alignment to the MTSF of the Government

The purpose of this question was to determine how senior management ensures that there is a shared knowledge of how the MTSF and the strategic plan relate, as well as how important the framework is to the department's planning process.

C8. How does the department ensure alignment of its strategies to the Medium-Term Strategic Framework of the Government of South Africa?

This question was asked to determine the extent to which the strategy implementation of the department is aligned to the Medium-Term Strategic Framework.

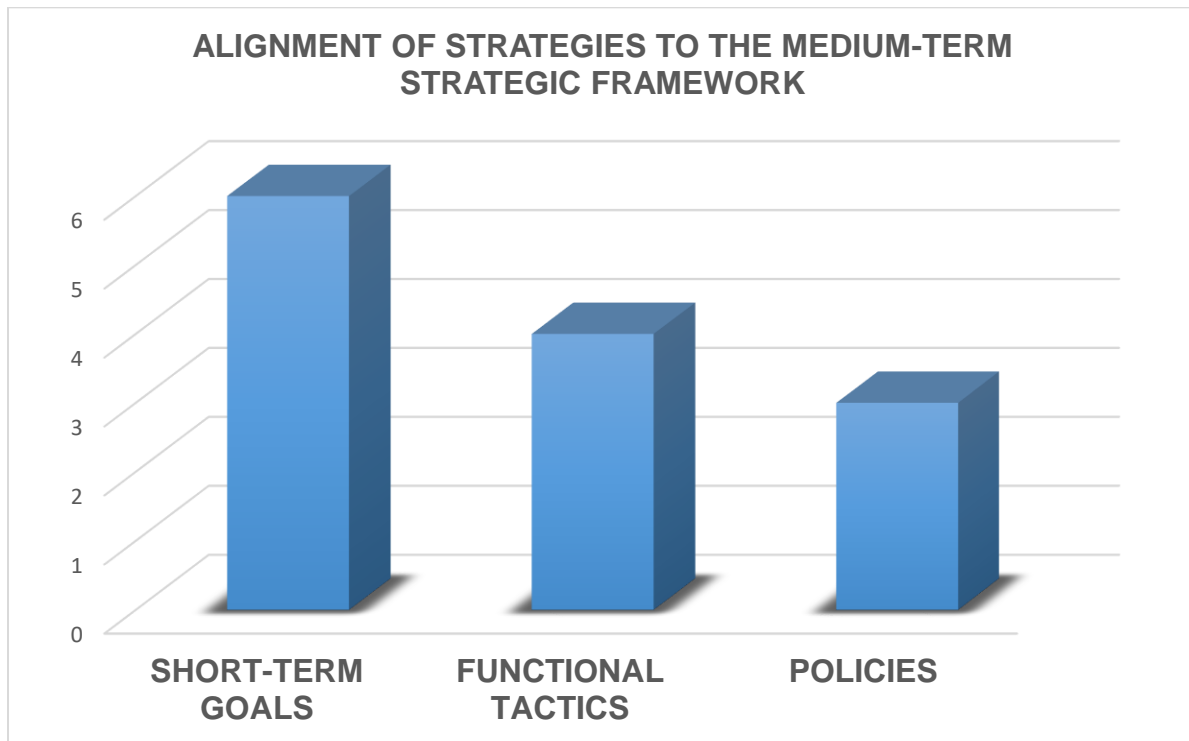


Figure 4.7: Alignment of strategies to the Medium-Term Strategic Framework.

In terms of the literature review, according to the availability of resources, and with the agreement of the relevant executive authority, strategic planning in public sector organisations should be based on a five-year time frame and outline the organisation's goals and vision for those five years.

With that being said, participants shared a similar view on how the department ensures the alignment of its strategies to the Medium-Term Strategic Framework of government, as presented by Figure 4.7. The participants had the following to say:

“Each and every year, the department submits a budget to provincial treasury that provides costing of mandates and policies of the department and the impact on targets outlined in the Medium-Term Strategic Framework. The PMTEC hearings are also used as a platform that encourages joint planning between departments, municipalities, and entities. This further promotes the alignment of department and provincial budgets with strategic planning documents such as the National Development Plan (NDP).” (Official 11).

The five-year strategic plan document is broken down in terms of short-term goals, in the form of annual performance plans. After this, the operational plans are formulated together with the development of policies to guide the implementation of the set objectives of an organisation.

Another participant mentioned the issue of key performance indicators as a standardised form of indication of alignment of strategies to the MTFS.

“The departmental plans are guided by guidelines provided by department of planning, monitoring, and evaluation. From five-year strategic plan, annual performance plan indicators and targets are formulated in conjunction with the revised Medium-Term Strategic Framework.....Additionally, during the strategic planning sessions the Medium-Term Strategic Framework is presented, and managers are expected to note and incorporate relevant MTSF targets into their plans (strategy).” (Official 7).

Participants were also afforded an opportunity to provide their views on how the department can improve strategy implementation and how to overcome the barriers identified.

4.4.4 Participants’ views on how to improve strategy implementation and how to overcome the barriers for strategy implementation in the department

The section on the barriers and drivers to strategy implementation revealed a number of ideas on how the strategy formulation and implementation process can be improved within the department as well as how to overcome the barriers identified.

C9. In your view, what do you think needs to be done to improve the implementation of strategies within the department?

The participants were asked to provide their views regarding the improvements that can be done to advance the strategy implementation in the department. Figure 4.8 shows these factors.

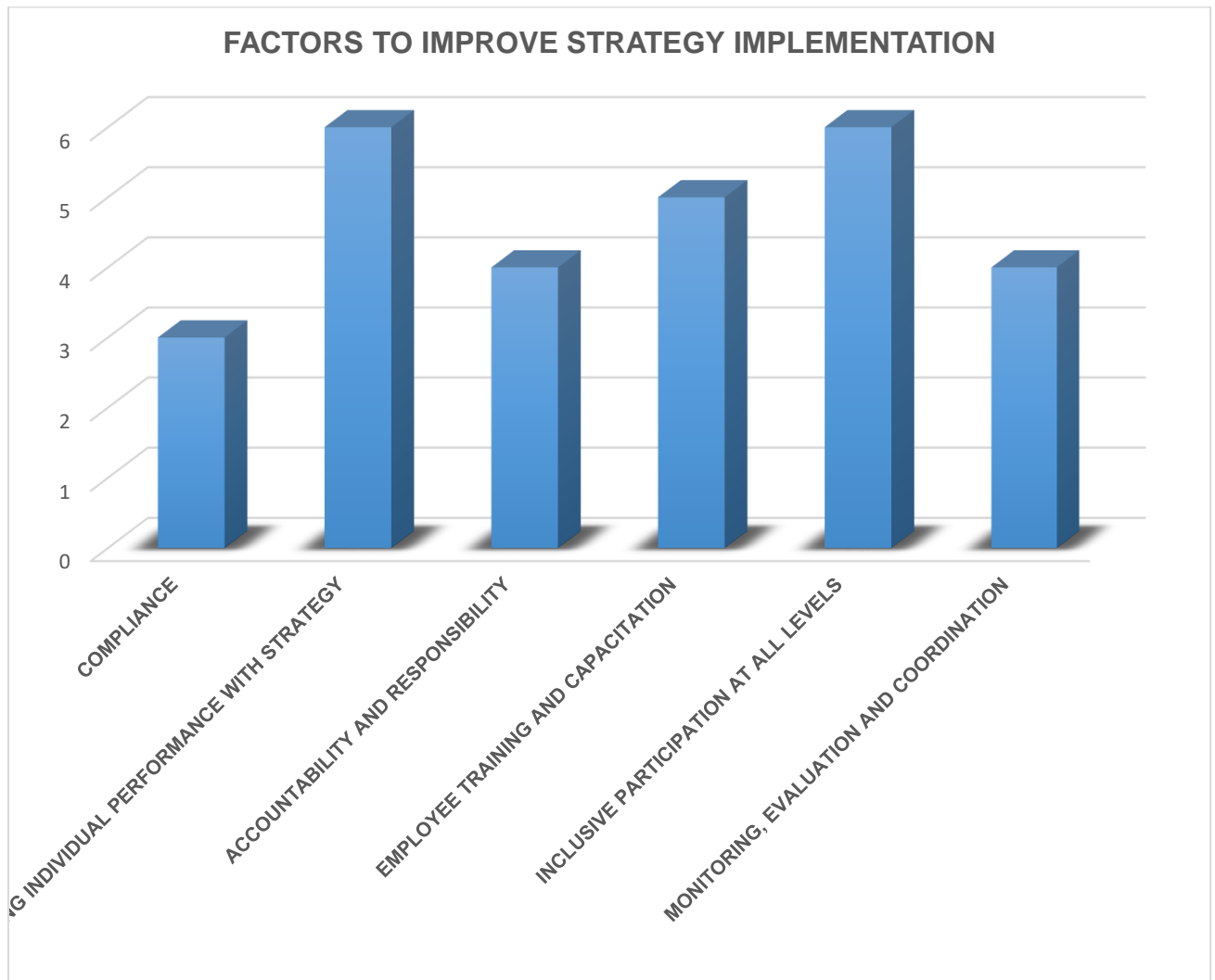


Figure 4.8: Factors to improve strategy implementation.

The Provincial Department must be careful not to neglect opportunities for advancements in its execution of plans and the achievement of its goals. The literature review indicates that a framework for analysing the environment, integrating an organisation's operations, responding to change, and creating value for the present and the future, is at the core of strategic management. Additionally, it is a framework that can be applied to businesses of any size.

With regards to suggestions on how the strategy implementation process can be improved, almost all the participants mentioned the linking of individual performance agreements to the objectives and strategy of the organisation, employee training and capacitation, and inclusive participation at all levels. Additionally, accountability and

responsibility as well as monitoring, evaluation, and coordination were also highlighted.

“All staff members must be involved in strategy development at various levels. Official workshops on strategy development and understanding of the importance of strategy, and its role in ensuring that the strategic goals are achieved. Cascade strategic goals into operational/ implementation plans for lower levels officials and link them with their performance agreements and involve them in the development of implementation plans. Have quarterly meetings with officials to review progress on strategy implementation. This will ensure that the officials have a better understanding and appreciation of the strategy.” (Official 5).

“We need to be constantly equipped on training and development of our managers on strategy development or formulation right through to the implementation and the evaluation of the overall strategy. This will ensure that the employees are equipped with the entire process and its intended purpose.” (Official 10).

This issue of training and development will lead to an overall understanding of the strategy by all employees in the department as indicated by the participants. Furthermore, to the training and development, another participant pointed out that it is necessary for an awareness programme to be run.

“I guess an awareness programme on the strategy is as important as the successful implementation. All stakeholders should be made aware of the strategy and its purpose for the stakeholders to align their activities with the set objectives...I guess that would go a long way to the effective and successful implementation.” (Official 1).

“Understanding of the strategy by all the employees.... And the ability to break the strategy into periodic activities that inform the overall strategy in the long run.... And I think the department can also try to encourage participation at all levels and ensure proper information flow. Lastly, the department needs to hold

responsible parties accountable and have consequence management for non-compliance.” (Official 8).

C10. In your own opinion, what do you think needs to be done to overcome these barriers?

Participants were asked to provide their opinions regarding what can be done in order to overcome the barriers for strategy implementation in the department. The participants highlighted a few barriers for strategy implementation in the department, however, they also provided some opinions on what needs to be done to overcome these barriers. Figure 4.9 shows these factors as mentioned by the participants.

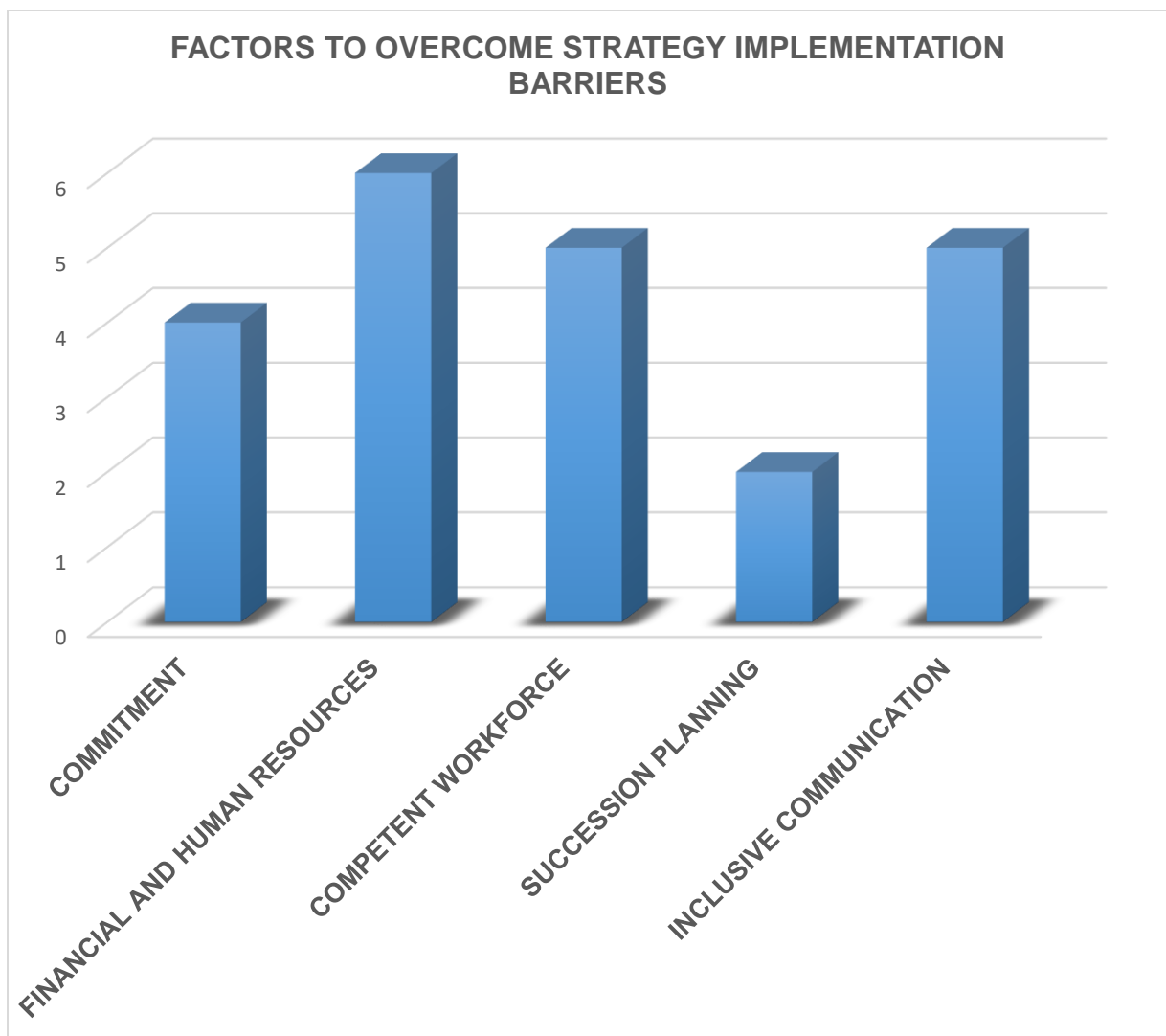


Figure 4.9: Factors to overcome strategy implementation barriers.

The appointment of skilled and suitable or competent workforce was mentioned by most participants, which will enhance the understanding of the strategic management process. Participants further indicated that availability of resources, and both financial and human resources can assist in overcoming the implementation barriers. Additionally, inclusive communication to all employees via the medium of communication which is accessible by all employees is also critical, and the commitment by senior managers and the rest of the workforce.

Participants asserted as follows:

“In order to overcome these barriers, as the department we need to set clear and simple goals understood by everyone in the department....by utilizing available budget for its primary purpose....Providing training and capacitating staff as well as clarifying roles and responsibilities....lastly, a constant progress tracking and taking corrective measures if and when needed.” (Official 2).

In terms of the appointment of qualified and suitable employees, the participants had the following to say:

“In terms of what we need to do as the department to over these barriers...I think we need to appoint qualified and competent personnel....To enforce compliance to rules and regulations applicable to government department.....Support strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation unit and also implement risk management unit recommendations.” (Official 9).

“I would say that there are several factors that can be considered by the organisation to overcome the barriers I have just mentioned...The department must conduct skills audits ...train and capacitate employees. We also need to ensure the proper information flow and to encourage participation in all levels. And lastly, to formulate realistic goals with clear and reasonable timeframes...and hold responsible parties accountable and have consequences management for non-compliance by employees.” (Official 5).

The role of succession planning, which was also emphasized as an emerging factor, is to guarantee that service delivery continues if some senior managers leave the organisation due to retirement or career development.

4.5 Content analysis

In terms of the secondary data, the researcher analysed the departmental annual reports for two financial years, 2019/2022 and 2020/2021. The documents were publicly available.

The Auditor-General (AG) of South Africa provided the department with a qualified opinion for both 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 financial years. The wording of the Auditor-General's opinion was similar for both financial years and the basis for the AG's opinion for the mismatch between the reported objectives and planned objectives were as follows:

“I was unable to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence that systems and processes were established to enable consistent measurement and reliable reporting of performance against the predetermined indicator definitions. This was due to insufficient measurement definitions and processes. I was unable to validate the existence of systems and processes by alternative means. Due to the scope limitations placed on my work, I was also unable to obtain sufficient and appropriate audit evidence for the reasons for the variance between the planned target and reported achievement reported in the annual performance report. I was unable to confirm the reported reason for the variance by alternative means. Consequently, I was unable to determine whether any adjustments were required to the reason for the variance reported.”

“Specific information systems were not implemented to enable the monitoring of progress made towards achieving targets, core objectives, and service delivery, as required by public service regulation 25(1)(e) (i) and (iii).”

Additionally, the Auditor General also commented on the lack of consequence management, as mentioned by some participants.

“I was unable to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence that disciplinary steps were taken against officials who had incurred fruitless and wasteful expenditure, as required by section 38(1)(h)(iii) of the PFMA. This was because investigations into fruitless and wasteful expenditures were not performed.”

4.6 Summary of the findings

The findings from the primary research indicated several barriers and drivers to strategy implementation. The barriers and drivers to strategy implementation that were revealed in the primary research are aligned with those from the literature review. Several supportive factors that could assist in successful realisation of strategy implementation could be deduced from the interviews, as well as the factors to overcome the barriers for strategy implementation. The results also revealed several important factors that contributed to the department's strategic goals being achieved.

The following were identified as key findings to the study:

- The **financial resources** were identified as both a driver and barrier; however, given the limited financial resources experienced by the department, it was identified as one of the key barriers which affected the department to not achieve all its strategic goals.
- The **human resources barrier** (unskilled workforce and personnel appointed in strategic positions) was also identified as a factor that plays a key role in strategy implementation in the department.
- A lack of communication (**internal communication barrier**) was also identified as an important factor for strategy implementation, as inclusive communication of departmental strategies strengthens the relationship between the management of the department and all the employees.
- A lack of communication leads to lack of inclusive participation at all levels and a lack of the linkage between individual performance agreements and the strategic objectives of the department (**people barrier**).

4.7 Conclusion

A thorough data analysis of the study was presented in this chapter. The data analysis indicated both drivers and constraints to the Provincial Government Department in the Free State's process for implementing a strategy. Because there is no connection between the strategic plan and implementation, the findings demonstrate that strategy implementation in the department is still difficult. Of interest from the study findings, was the key drivers identified that could ensure that strategy implementation in the department could be a success going forward as well as the factors to overcome the barriers for strategy implementation in the department. Participants strongly believe that the situation in the department could be turned around if clear goals on the strategies to be implemented are understood by all employees in the department and if adequate resources, both financial and skilled human resources are provided to spearhead strategy implementation processes. The findings, recommendations, and conclusion are summarised in Chapter 5. The study's findings will be considered while making the conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The analysis and presentation of the data gathered through semi-structured interviews were provided in Chapter 4. The research findings from this study are presented in this chapter and based on the results obtained, it offers a conclusion and some recommendations. Additionally, it offers the study's limitations, recommendations for future investigations, and finally the overall study conclusion.

5.2 Research summary and conclusions

The main purpose of the study was to evaluate strategic plan implementation in the public sector with a focus on the Provincial Government Department in the Free State. In order to achieve the primary purpose of the research, the following objectives were identified:

- To investigate the barriers and drivers for strategy implementation in the department.
- To investigate the linkage between strategy formulation and its implementation in the department.
- To investigate the strategy implementation of the department and its alignment to the Medium-Term Strategic Framework of the government.

To address these research objectives, the research was divided into five chapters, and they are summarised as follows:

- **Chapter One** offered a summary and the structure of the study. In addition to the research problem statement, the research primary objective, and the research secondary objectives, it gave the study's background. Finally, it gave definitions for the main terminology employed in the study.
- **Chapter Two** provided the literature review relevant to the study. Through the literature review, drivers and barriers for strategy implementation in the public sector organisations were identified and discussed. The strategy implementation

framework was also discussed as well as the MTSF of the government in South Africa.

- **Chapter Three** described the research approach used for this study. The demographics, sample method, and research design were all covered in this chapter. It also included information on the data collection method, the data analysis procedure, and the study's ethical and practical implications.
- **Chapter Four** presented the critical analysis and interpretation of the collected data based on the themes identified through the literature review. These themes were used as a basis for the data analysis. Furthermore, this chapter summarised the research findings as follows: A lack of resources, financial and human resources, were identified as factors that play a role in the strategy implementation in the department. A lack of communication was also identified as important for strategy implementation, as inclusive communication of departmental strategies strengthens the relationship between the management of the department and all the employees. A lack of communication leads to a lack of inclusive participation at all levels. And lastly, a lack of a linkage between individual performance agreements and the strategic objectives of the department.
- **Chapter Five** summarises the study and provides the recommendations and conclusions based on the research findings identified in chapter four. These recommendations are linked to the specific findings.

Based on the first objective of the study, *“To investigate the barriers and drivers for strategy implementation in the department”*, in terms of the barriers, most of the participants identified a lack of finance, human resources, people, and communication as the main barriers for strategy implementation in the department. A few participants also mentioned vision and management practices as barriers to derail the department in its attempt to implement its strategies. Though the lack of finances was identified as a barrier, most of the participants indicated that it also plays a critical role in enabling the department to implement its strategies. Furthermore, top management involvement, training, and development were identified as main drivers.

In terms of the second objective, *“To investigate the linkage between strategy formulation and its implementation in the department”*, most of the participants indicated they believe that strategy formulation provides the direction the department needs to take and also provides clarity on how the resources can be allocated to enable the strategy implementation. Additionally, even though strategy formulation provides direction for implementation, the actual implementation is still a challenge for the department, and this is due to a lack of the linkage between individual performance agreements to the strategy of the department.

Based on the third objective, *“To investigate the strategy implementation of Department and its alignment to the Medium-Term Strategic Framework of Government”*, short-terms goals, functional tactics, and policies were mentioned by most of the participants as instruments and tools that can be used to align the departmental strategy implementation with the Medium-Term Strategic Framework of the government in South Africa. However, the study revealed that this alignment is not fully effective.

5.3 Main findings and recommendations

This section discusses the findings as emanate from chapter four and provides the recommendations linked to each finding. The following are the main findings that were revealed by the study.

5.3.1 Lack of financial resources

Financial resources were identified as a key driver as well as a barrier for strategy implementation with most of the participants indicating that although they acknowledge the limited budget allocation to the department, financial resources are key in ensuring that the departmental goals are achieved. According to the literature review, among other things, good organisational culture and sufficient resources help make the implementation of a plan successful.

Recommendations:

- Given the limited budget allocations for the department, management of the department should reprioritise its mandates and address the most impactful projects to be able to deliver on its mandates.

- The reprioritisation by the department, might lead to other objectives or plans not being achieved. When creating its strategic plan for the upcoming year, the department must analyse the results of its previous strategic plan in order to include the goals that were not met.
- The Department should take strict actions against anyone who fails to carry out the recommendations made in the approved strategic and annual performance plans and put in place strict measures to ensure that the department's main divisions report on what was planned and approved.

5.3.2 Unskilled workforce and personnel appointed in strategic positions

Most of the participants highlighted the appointment of unqualified leaders in strategic positions as the main barrier for strategy implementation. These appointments lead to a lack of top management involvement in the strategy implementation, as many managers believe that their role ends after the strategy has been formulated.

Recommendations:

- Effective strategy execution requires adequate leadership since it will ensure that all departmental efforts are coordinated and focused on achieving departmental objectives.
- The department needs to train and capacitate all officials regarding the role of strategic planning as well as its implementation in the organisation and should also provide and hold workshops on the strategic plan and the Medium-Term Strategy Framework at the start of each fiscal year's planning process.

5.3.3 Inclusive participation at all levels in the department

In terms of strategy formulation, most of the participants indicated that only middle and senior management officials take part in the strategy formulation of the department, resulting in some of the other officials on lower levels being resistant in accepting the strategy of the department.

Recommendations:

- For the employees to own the implementation process, the department should make sure that they discuss the already developed plans, especially with those who are directly involved in the strategy implementation.

- Employees who will be responsible for putting strategies into action should be fully involved in its formulation. This will prevent the overlooking of crucial implementation concerns or early signals that were identified during the formulation stage.

5.3.4 The linkage of individual performance agreements with the strategy of the department

The study showed that there is no link between the strategic plan and its departmental implementation. The department's officials' individual performance agreements are not connected to the strategies. Consequently, this leads to a disconnection between the MTSF of the government and the strategy implementation in the department.

Recommendations:

- The department should try to match the functional strategies to the organisational strategies as much as possible. As a result, it should guarantee that each individual functional strategy is coordinated and in congruence with others.
- As organisations are positioned to execute its strategy through structure, organisational structure should be compatible with the chosen strategy of the department so that there is a clear reporting channel to ensure that performance agreements of all officials in the department are linked and aligned to the departmental strategic goals.

5.3.5 Inclusive internal communication

The study revealed that the department communicates the strategic decisions mainly via strategic plan sessions. This was identified as a barrier for strategy implementation because only senior management officials and middle management officials form part of the planning sessions. This limits the information reaching the entire workforce of the department.

Recommendations:

- The department needs to make sure that there are processes in place to make it easier to implement the strategic plan, and this information needs to be shared through a channel that is open to all staff members.

- The department needs to ensure that the quarterly review reports are communicated to all officials within the department, highlighting the corrective measures that need to be taken to keep the department on course in achieving its strategic goals.

5.4 Limitations

Flaws in the study's design or methodology, or other constraints, will have an impact on or influence how the results are applied or comprehended. Access to persons and materials was essential for the success of this study. The participation in the study consisted only of senior and middle management in the department, and they travelled often and were not always available. The semi-structured interviews were conducted through online platforms, Microsoft Teams and Zoom, and as a result, the researcher missed the potential opportunity of observing the unspoken words through the reactions of the participants if the interviews were conducted face-to-face.

5.5 Significance of the study

In comparison to the private sector, public sector organisations are relatively new to long-term planning. However, with the MTSF, government departments are starting to properly implement long-term planning. However, there is still an issue with implementing this plan. The goal of this study was to determine the obstacles and drivers that the Free State Provincial Government Department faces in implementing its strategy. The study's conclusions will be helpful to other public sector stakeholders, academics, strategy consultants, and public sector strategists and practitioners.

Strategic managers and practitioners can analyse the existence and scope of these obstacles inside the organisation by being aware of the department's challenges. Implementing certain solutions may then become more likely as a result of realistic responses to these challenges, such as the successful development of systems, processes, and skills. As a result, identifying obstacles may aid the department in allocating resources to address these impediments to the success of strategy implementation. Furthermore, this study can help the development of models and approaches for strategic planning implementation in the public sector.

5.6 Further research

There is a need to expand the scope of this study to include other provincial government departments in the Free State Provincial Government. In order to compare various public organisations, this research should be cross-sectional. It is also possible to investigate how well strategies are implemented in the public sector in general.

5.7 Concluding remarks

The Provincial Government Department in the Free State was chosen as the subject of the study to examine the drivers and barriers for strategy implementation in the department. The study's objective was to evaluate the strategic plan implementation in the public sector. Implementing strategic planning divides the plan into its component parts and distributes it around the organisation's primary divisions according to their distinct missions and activities. To implement the strategy effectively and efficiently, all employees of the organisation must be involved, and they must work together to prevent the plan from failing.

There were factors identified as drivers for strategy implementation, which supported and enabled the department to implement its strategies. There were factors identified as barriers, which derailed the department from achieving its planned objectives. These factors played a key role in the department's main divisions' failure to achieve the planned strategic goals. Reporting is done for compliance rather than to boost performance because there are no repercussions against main divisions that have not met their goals. The Provincial Government Department must make sure that processes are created and put into place to make the strategic plan's execution easier. These systems will guarantee that the development of a strategy and its actual implementation are properly linked.

Additionally, it was discovered that the two primary responsibilities of strategy creation and implementation, which are interrelated, dominate strategic management. For any organisation, the workforce's capacity to carry out the strategy is crucial. Aligning the department's operations and resources with its goals is the core goal of strategy implementation, and it is crucial to note that the activities and work efforts of the

department should directly link to achieving its strategic strategy; if this connection is not created, it will be impossible to put a plan into action.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: APPROVAL LETTER TO CONDUCT THE RESEARCH IN THE DEPARTMENT

Mr. TV. Nyakane
Assistant Director: Budget Management

Bloamfontein
9300

Dear Mr. Nyakane

Application for Permission for Conducting Research in Free State Department

For The Year 2022.

1. With reference to your letter dated the 17th February 2022.
2. Approval is hereby granted for Mr. Nyakane to conduct the research work as detailed in the application.
3. Mr. Nyakane is advised to consult the managers whose sections are relevant to the research in advance for further arrangements and engagements of the research so that their daily activities are not hindered.
4. May I take this opportunity to wish Mr. Nyakane a successful research work

I hope you find the above in order.

Yours faithfully,



Head of Department

DATE: 09/03/2022

APPENDIX B: ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER



GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

15-Jul-2022

Dear Mr Teboho Nyakane

Application Approved

Research Project Title:

THE STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR: THE CASE OF A PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT IN THE FREE STATE.

Ethical Clearance number:

UFS-HSD2022/0747/22

We are pleased to inform you that your application for ethical clearance has been approved. Your ethical clearance is valid for twelve (12) months from the date of issue. We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your study/research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure ethical transparency. Furthermore, you are requested to submit the final report of your study/research project to the ethics office. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension. Thank you for submitting your proposal for ethical clearance; we wish you the best of luck and success with your research.

Yours sincerely

Dr Adri Du Plessis

Chairperson: General/Human Research Ethics Committee

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APPENDIX C: DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE



Research Topic: The strategic plan implementation in the public sector: The case of a provincial government department in the Free State.

Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

SECTION ONE: Demographic Information

1. Gender
2. What is your highest qualification?
3. How many years have you been working for the department?
4. What position do you hold in the department?

SECTION TWO: Barriers and drivers for strategy implementation

<p>1. Have you been involved in strategy implementation in the department?</p>
<p>2. What supportive factors do you think have assisted in the implementation of the strategy in the department?</p>
<p>3. What barriers do you face when implementing strategy in the department?</p>
<p>4. In your own opinion what do you think needs to be done to overcome these barriers?</p>
<p>5. In your own opinion, what do you think are the drivers for the successful implementation of a strategy?</p>

SECTION THREE: The linkage between strategy formulation and its implementation.

1. In your view, what role does strategy formulation play in the implementation process of the strategy?
2. How does the department communicate the strategic decisions?
3. How do you measure the effectiveness of a strategy in the department?
4. How does the department ensure alignment of its strategies to the Medium-Term Strategic Framework of the Government of South Africa?
5. In your view, what do you think needs to be done to improve the implementation of strategies within the department?

THANK YOU

APPENDIX D: POPIA COMPLIANT CONSENT FORM



RESEARCH STUDY INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

DATE

2022 Academic Year

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

THE STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR: THE CASE OF A PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT IN THE FREE STATE.

PRINCIPLE INVESTIGATOR / RESEARCHER(S) NAME(S) AND CONTACT NUMBER(S):

Mr Teboho Vincent Nyakane *2004206310* *076 340 3210 and*
078 476 3147

FACULTY AND DEPARTMENT:

Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences
Business School

STUDY LEADER(S) NAME AND CONTACT NUMBER:

Mr Mark Peters
082 311 9118

WHAT IS THE AIM / PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

The primary purpose of this study is to evaluate strategic plan implementation in the public sector with a focus on a provincial government department in the Free State.

The research is primarily for academic purposes in fulfilment of the Master of Business Administration qualification.

WHO IS DOING THE RESEARCH?

My name is Teboho Vincent Nyakane, an MBA student at the University of the Free State. The main purpose of this research is mainly for academic purposes in fulfilment of the MBA program.



HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICAL APPROVAL?

This study has received approval from the Research Ethics Committee of UFS. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher.

Approval number: UFS-HSD2022/0747/22

WHY ARE YOU INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT?

You were chosen to participate in this research project because of your role in the organization, senior management (Director) or middle management (Deputy Director) level and you are involved in the decision making, strategic planning and strategy implementation of the department as opposed to the lower levels officials. Thus, your experience would be of an assistance in determining the effectiveness of the strategic plan implementation in the department, with the main purpose of identifying the key drivers and barriers for strategy implementation in the department, together with the linkage of strategy formulation and its implementation. And the application of the Strategic Medium-Term Framework of government when formulating and implementing the strategy of the department.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

The role of the participant is to answer the interview questions about the research. Due to the uncertainty with regards to the existing covid-19 pandemic, instead of the face-to-face interviews, interviews will be conducted using online platforms, Microsoft Teams, and Zoom. Fifteen (15) participants are going to be interviewed and the interviews are estimated to take between thirty (30) to forty-five (45) minutes. Due to the busy schedules, and to avoid loss of time, the interviews will be conducted based on the participants' availability during lunchtime, their free time, and or after hours.

CAN THE PARTICIPANT WITHDRAW FROM THE STUDY?

Participation in the research is voluntary and there is no penalty or loss of benefit for non-participation. Being in this study is voluntary, and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. However, please note that it will not be possible to withdraw once the interviews have been conducted and data have been analyzed.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

The findings and recommendations from the research will be shared with the participant on request and the following are potential benefits: (a). Learning benefits in the form of an increased knowledge based on the different thoughts based on the literature in relation to the study, (b). Improved performance benefits: based on the learning benefits by the participant,

this will lead to an improved performance by the organization if the recommendations and findings are adopted.

WHAT IS THE ANTICIPATED INCONVENIENCE OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

There is no potential level of inconvenience and/or discomfort to the participant participating in the study since their personal information will be used only for this research and it will be kept private and confidential. No risk may come from others identifying an individual's participation in the research. Additionally, the data will be collected during lunchtime or free time and after office hours with arrangements in advance.

WILL WHAT I SAY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

Participants' names will not be recorded, anywhere and no one will be able to connect the participants to the answers they provide. The participants' answers will be given a fictitious code number or a pseudonym, and they will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings. Additionally, the answers may only be reviewed by authorized UFS's personnel responsible for making sure that research is done properly, and members of the Research Ethics Committee. Also, your privacy will be protected in any publication of the information and a report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report, and other people will not have access to the data collected.

HOW WILL THE INFORMATION BE STORED AND ULTIMATELY DESTROYED?

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for five years in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet of the University of the Free State for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password-protected laptop. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. Information in the form of soft copies will be deleted permanently from the laptop and all external storage electronics such as memory sticks and external hard drives, while hard copies will be shredded.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

Neither payment nor reward is offered or financial benefits to the participants and participation in this study is voluntary and free.

HOW WILL THE PARTICIPANT BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS / RESULTS OF THE STUDY?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Teboho Nyakane at +27763403210 (calls only) or +27784763147 (calls and WhatsApp or email me at nyakaneteboho@gmail.com. The findings are accessible for five years. Should you require any

further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact +27763403210 (calls only) or +27784763147 (calls and WhatsApp), email address, nyakaneteboho@gmail.com, and office no: (051) 4004755. Should you have concerns about how the research has been conducted, you may contact Mr. Mark J. Peters (supervisor) at +27823119118 or email him at mark@markjpeters.co.za. Any possible level of inconvenience to the participants will be to schedule the interviews during their lunchtime or free time or after hours. Since the interviews will be via Microsoft Teams and Zoom, no possible or foreseeable risks of harm or side effects to the potential participants. Additionally, no risk that may come from others identifying your participation in the research.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, the undersigned,

_____ (*participant's full names to be included*), (the "Participant")

confirm that I voluntarily agree to participate in the research study referred to as the

_____ (the "Study") in relation to

and which Study is being conducted by

(*insert the name of the researcher*), (the "Researcher").

I, the undersigned Participant, further confirm that—

1. the Researcher has explained the nature, procedure, potential benefits, and anticipated inconvenience of my participation in the Study;
2. I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the Study as explained in the attached information sheet;
3. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the Study;
4. I understand that my participation in the study is entirely voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable);
5. I voluntarily provide the UFS and the Researcher with my personal information and consent to the UFS and the Researcher collecting, disclosing, and processing my personal information to conduct the Study and any related activities in relation thereto;
6. I hereby acknowledge and confirm that I understand the purpose for which the UFS and the Researcher may collect, store, use, delete, destroy, outsource, transfer, or otherwise process, as the context and circumstances may require and as contemplated in terms of POPIA, my personal information as set out herein;
7. I am aware that the findings of the Study will be anonymously processed into a research report, journal publications, and/or conference proceedings and that my personal information will be aggregated and deidentified at such stage;
8. I also give the UFS permission to share, without notification, the collected data with other researchers at the UFS or other Higher Education Institutions. This permission is dependent on the same principles of ethical research practices, anonymity/confidentiality, safekeeping of information, and other issues listed above applying.

I, the Participant, agree to the recording of the Microsoft Team or Zooms interviews.

Full Name of Participant: _____

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____





Full Name(s) of Researcher(s): _____
Signature of Researcher: _____ Date: _____



APPENDIX E: LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATE

Dr M Schutte-Smith
Posbus 34995
Faunsig, 9325
084 607 1205
schuttem@ufs.ac.za

14 October 2022

To whom it may concern,

Herewith I, Marietjie Schutte-Smith (ID 8304050227089) declare that I have proofread and edited the following thesis by Teboho Nyakane (Student no. 2004206310): 'THE STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR: THE CASE OF A PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT IN THE FREE STATE'. This include the evaluation of the grammar, content relevance, format of the dissertation, consistency, indexing and referencing. All changes were indicated by track changes and comments. The student confirmed by email that that the changes and suggestions will be addressed.

Best regards,



M Schutte-Smith
PhD (Chemistry, UFS)