University of KwaZulu Natal

**The role played by middle managers in the strategy implementation process
within the field sales division at Brandhouse (Pty) Ltd.**

By

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Abstract

Middle managers play a crucial role in the implementation of organizational strategies. Yet, little is known about the views of middle managers on the organizational factors influencing strategy implementation. There are many reasons to believe that effective implementation of strategy has become the goal of many organizations. However, in order for organizations to translate their grand plans into action high rates of failure have been reported among many companies. In many organizations, the responsibility to effectively implement organization' strategy has been left to lower levels of management.

The primary aim for the study is to determine the role played by middle managers in the strategy implementation process within the sales force division at Brandhouse. The findings from this study will help unpack the challenges faced by middle managers when implementing the intended strategies. In nature, this is quantitative study. Data collection involved the distribution of 90 questionnaires to 90 middle managers within the field sales from Brandhouse across South Africa. Quantitative questionnaire known as Likert type scales was used to evaluate middle managers opinions and in addition Brandhouse policy committee has been obtained to the add the richness of the study.

In developing an understanding of middle management's perception of the strategic process, sense can be made of how they translate it into tasks and responsibilities and ultimately the role they play in unfolding strategic plans in the implementation process. The research findings showed that middle managers play a critical role in facilitating the effective implementation of strategy.

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Chapter 1: General Introduction

1.1 Background

Successful strategy execution depends on the implementation, cooperation skills and the collective efforts of all individuals in different levels of the organization who understands the needed changes in order to achieve the required results. The ever changing and complex business environment in South Africa has seen more companies to learn to adapt to the circumstances change and implement new strategies as presented by the ever changing competitive environments. Successful strategy implementation can help companies to remain competitive. The most important phase of the strategic management process is the implementation as it involves putting strategy into action (Lazenby, 2010)

Globalization has brought so many challenges and opportunities in businesses, New technologies and changes in market demands are the main drivers for change in organizations. It also presented companies with access to different markets to compete and being able to differentiate themselves. According to (Lazenby, 2010) only 10 per cent of strategies are implemented effectively it has also been found that nine out of ten organizations fail to implement strategies. As a result organization suffers substantial financial resources losses, time and employees. Senior management gives little attention to the role and challenges faced by the sales division in organisational change.

1.2 The Research Problem

Brandhouse is an organization that was established in 2004. It is a South African joint venture which combines the best three great alcohol beverages companies (Heineken International and Namibian Breweries). Over these years there have been many challenges

Over these years there have been many changes in leadership of the chamber, with the President of the organization changing every two years and numerous

changes in the position of Chief Executive Officers, which have made it exceedingly difficult for the organization to implement its strategies (Johnson, 2011)

The challenge to the idea that middle managers were merely involved in implementing the strategies developed by senior managers essentially came from the conjunction of three separate ideas. First, according to (Mintzberg, 1990) principles of "emergent strategy" gained popularity during the 1970s and 80s, the division between formulation and implementation was seen to be a fallacy. Second, the special position of middle managers as the mediators between strategic and day to day working raised arguments that they were best placed to understand issues and recognise problems and opportunities. Third, the role of social interaction in organisations was being recognised and the idea that strategic planning was based in rationality was seen to be a partial view.

The year 1994 opened the doors for all organizations in South Africa to compete in the international space. These also exposed companies to threats, opportunities, some companies had to right size and some had to downsize due to the fierce competition. Middle managers had to take part in the strategic management process. Strategy formulation takes place at senior or top management level but has also changed in recent years to include wider participation. Researchers have indicated that the implementation of a strategy can be the most difficult part in the strategic management process. In contrast, middle management plays a crucial role in making sure that the strategy is implemented effectively (Lazenby, 2010)

Middle managers link employees to the organization. They have to manage their employee's performance and at the same time ensure the effective implementation of strategies. The author has studied Brandhouse to provide a more detailed example of the problems of the role played by middle managers within the sales force division.

1.3 Research Objectives

The primary aim for the study is to determine the role played by middle managers in the strategy implementation process within the sales force division at Brandhouse. This will help to briefly describe the challenges faced by middle managers when implementing the intended strategies.

1.4. Purpose of the study / Objectives

- To evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy implementation
- To ascertain the involvement of middle managers in strategy implementation process
- To identify the best practices in strategy implementation.
- To establish how the strategy is communicated

1.5. Research Questions

1.5.1 What are the barriers middle managers face that hinders them from successfully implement the intended strategy?
1.5.2 What role do middle managers play in ensuring effective strategy implementation?
1.5.3 What are the key factors to successful strategy implementation?
1.5.4 How well communicated is the strategy to all members of the organization?

1.6 Research Methodology

This is a quantitative study. Data collection was done through the distribution of questionnaires 90 middle managers within the field sales from Brandhouse across South Africa. Quantitative questionnaires called Likert type scales were

used to evaluate middle managers opinions. In addition Brandhouse policy committee were useful.

1.7 Limitations of the study

Sample studied was restricted to the population of middle managers within the field sales division at Brandhouse South Africa. Maybe, a wider pool of management including various divisions within the company would have given the researcher more clarity and insights into the barriers in strategy implementation. The research only focuses on middle managers within the field sales at Brandhouse SA and such finding and recommendations should not be generalized and implemented at Brandhouse Global.

The research also focuses only on the implementation process of the strategy, not on other components of strategic management process. Differences based on cultural factors and on geography could have further influence the results.
The researcher used a very common method to collect data for this research study called Questionnaire. There maybe questions answered incorrectly by respondents due to confidentiality concerns or misunderstanding.

1.8. Conclusion

Strategy implementation involves ensuring that organizations have an appropriate organizational designs and strategic controls. It also ensures that organizations have established effective means to integrate and coordinate activities within the organizations. Most importantly, middle managers play a critical role in ensuring the success in the implementation process (Dess, 2012)

This study is aimed at determining the role-played by middle managers in the strategy implementation process within the sales force division at Brandhouse. In this chapter the researcher has provided an overview for the study, the purpose

and the research problem of the study. The research objectives and research questions were presented. The context of the study will be reviewed by the means of literature review in the next chapter to gain a deeper understanding of the role played by middle managers in the strategy implementation process.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discussed theories relevant to the study. Literature related to the study was also reviewed with the aim of identifying literature gaps. This chapter reviews the concept of strategy and strategy implementation. It begins by examining strategy implementation and then explores several definitions and perspectives on strategy, and various ways of implementing it in organizations. Different authors have put forward interesting views on strategy and the chapter will endeavor to discuss them here. It also examines the factors that affect its successful implementation in organisations.

2.2. Defining Strategy

The word strategy originates from the Greek strategos, meaning military general commander, which in turn originates from stratos "(which means literally a prairie or valley that lies beneath, and figuratively a "camping" or "army") and egos (to conduct or lead)" .There are many definitions of what strategy is. Different authors have come out with interesting perspectives and views on what it means.

According to (Johnson, 2011) strategy is the scope and direction in which the organization intends to achieve over a long term: which achieves competitive advantage for the organization through coordination of resources in challenging environment to meet market demands and achieve stakeholder expectations. In other words, strategy is whereby an organization designs its long term strategy which enables it to decide on which market to competes in (scope and market), outperform its competitors, decides on resources required in order to be competitive, look at external factors that might hinder the business from competing and lastly considering the values and expectations for the market leaders.

(Fred, 2012), defined strategy as the plan, pattern, position and perspective. He also describes strategy as the bridge between high-order goals or policy on the one hand and concrete or tactics action on the other hand. Tactics and strategy connect the gap between means and ends. Strategy is the term referred to a complex web of ideas, thoughts, insights, goals, memories, goals and expectations that directs the actions of one's behavior in realizing a particular end.

Strategy can also be defined as a plan, approach, or series of ways for achieving a specific results or goals (Helsinki, 2012).

According to (Lynch, 2013), a company strategy is the plan or pattern that integrates organization's main goals, policies and action sequences into a unified whole. It normally deals with general principles aimed at achieving objectives; looking at the emphasis why the organization chose a particular route.

2.3. Strategy Implementation

According to (Lazenby, 2010), strategy implementation is defined as a process whereby a selected strategy is turned into actions to ensure that organizational goals are accomplished. Strategy implementation deals with translating organizational goals into action. It is whereby management aligns organizational culture, leadership, organizational structures, policies, reward systems and resource allocation with a chosen strategy or strategies. It involves the issues that are involved in ensuring that the formulated strategy works and it is also vital to spell out on how the strategic choice will be achieved (Barnat, 2014).

There are many reasons to believe that no matter how good the strategy is formulated but if it is not implemented properly, it will not succeed. It is critical to address issues of whom, when and how the desired objectives and goals are to

be achieved to ensure the company's success (Lorette, 2012). Strategy implementation focuses on the entire organization and it normally occurs identifying strategic issues and goals, environmental scans and Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats analyses. Strategy involves allocating of tasks and timelines to individuals to help an organization to realize its vision (Lorette, 2012)

Strategy implementation requires the engagement from everyone in the organization. Successful strategy implementation requires a visible leader who is able to communicate the vision, drive the implementation process and shows the necessary behavior for the achievement. Strategy implementation includes a strategic map, which helps to identify tools or ingredients that helps to direct performance. Such tools include market, operations, work environment, finances, people and partners (Barnat, 2014)

Most organizations and leaders make common mistakes by not taking the ownership of the strategy implementation process. Communication of strategy plays a vital role in ensuring that everyone in organization understands his or her role required to achieve organizational goals (Argenti, 2013)

Successful strategy implementation requires several important elements to be in place. Right people with unique skills and abilities must be ready to assist in the process. Strategy implementation may be very costly, financial resources to ensure it is implemented successfully is critical. In this context management should ensure that a chosen strategy is aligned with budgets in order to support the strategy. (Argenti, 2013) suggests that communication plays a crucial role to ensure that everybody understand what steps needs to be taken in order to achieve organization goals. All necessary technology needs to be in place to make sure management keep track of the implementation. Management should also ensure that everybody is motivated and well aligned (Anderson, 2015)

2.4. Six key factors for successful implementation

Most organizations successfully implement their strategies using the six key supporting factors (Birnbaum 2009)

2.4.1 Action Planning

2.4.2 Organizational Structure

2.4.3 Human Resources

2.4.4 The Annual Business Plan

2.4.5 Monitoring and Control

2.4.6 Linkage
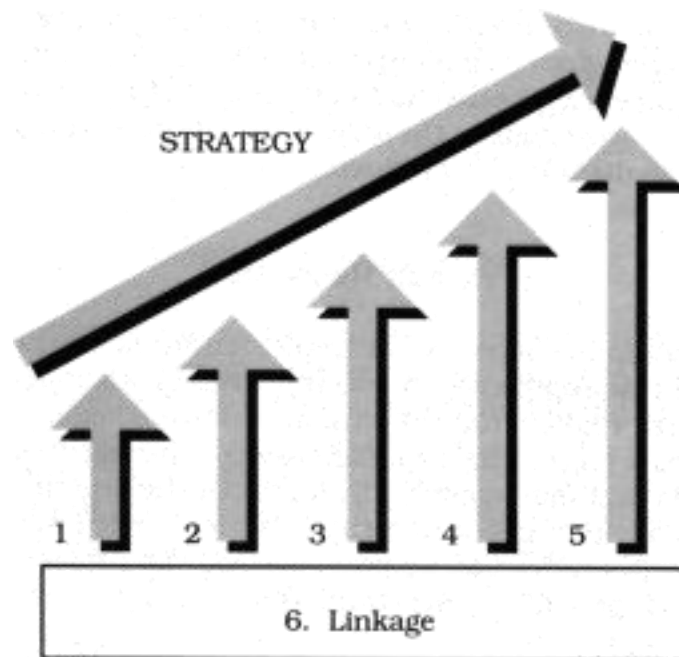
Figure 2.1: **Key factors for successful implementation**

Source (Birnbaum, 2009)

2.4.1. Action Planning

In order for organizations to implement their strategies successfully a detailed action plan which is necessary to their strategies needs to be developed. Individuals need to be assigned with responsibilities to accomplish action plans. Tmelines needs to be clear to estimate the required resources to accomplish each of their action plans. This will then translate the broad strategy statement into work assignments (Birnbaum, 2009)

2.4.2. Organizational Structure

This talks to the alignment between the intended strategy and the organizational structure. The organizational structure should be appropriate to the intended strategy. There are five–sequence procedures that are used as a guide for fitting structure to strategy, namely;

- Describe the key functions and tasks required for the successful strategy implementation
- Determine how critical strategy functions and organizational units relates to those that are normal and also those that provides support for staff.
- Strategy business functions and units to be used as the main organizational building blocks.
- Check the degree of authority that is needed to oversee each organizational unit and not forgetting the costs and benefits of decentralized decision making (Birnbaum, 2009)

2.4.3. Human Resources

Successful organizations in strategy implementation considers human resources as the main factor in ensuring strategies happen. They perceive

human resource issue in two ways. Firstly, management should think about organization's communication needs in order to articulate the strategies so that all people involved with the action steps fully understand what is expected when implementing the strategy. Secondly, managers should be aware of the effects that each strategy might impose on their human resources needs (Birnbaum, 2009)

2.4.4. The Annual Business Plan

For organization strategies to be successful one, needs to be aware of the funds needed for their intended strategies. First, there should be a buy in from top management in the strategy formulation to ensure the strategy is given full support and when developing their action plans. Commitment is vital from all people involved when developing their action plan. Strategies should be linked to organizations annual business plan and their budget (Birnbaum, 2009).

2.4.5 Monitoring & Control

This includes periodically reviewing the plan to keep it on track. This looks at the range of options to ensure the strategy is not derailed and it's on track. Those options includes changing the schedule, changing the strategy, changing of objectives and changing the tactics (Birnbaum, 2009)

2.5. Middle Managers

Many studies have been conducted about the middle managers roles in South Africa and throughout the world. The changing environment has forced organizations to change their strategies on an-ongoing basis in order to stay competitive in the markets. These changes have resulted in the implementation of change management processes. The role for middle managers is to foster the

effective communication between the top management and employees. They are responsible for translation of organizational goals or objectives into action (Dess, 2012)

According to (W.Christian, 2011), the role of middle managers still remains a major concern in determining the success of strategic initiatives. Middle managers play a crucial role in driving top management defined strategic objectives, they drive the strategic-change programs and they are the key strategic drivers in the emergence of strategic change.

Middle managers play an important role within the organizations affording them with the opportunity to influence an organization's strategic activities. In many instances, middle managers have been seen as the agent of change, the drivers of strategic change. But in order for them to be actively involved in the strategy implementation, it is crucial that they believe in themselves as the main drivers and as the forefront of the strategic change (Doll, 2013)

2.6. Uncertainty

The question is how do companies manage strategic initiatives in a complex, unpredictable, frequent and rapid changing environment across the globe? Regardless on the degree of uncertainty, there are different ways and strategies that can be used to improve chances of executing the strategy successfully (Jimmieson, 2000)

Globalization has brought so many changes in the way organizations operate in an unpredictable ways; most organization have felt the increasing pressure on natural resources and demographic shifts (Tobiasson, 2011). Most organizations do not include middle managers in the formulation the strategy and they only get to know about the strategy during the implementation stage. This normally put

most organizations in a compromising position with no sufficient time to understand their strategies (Jimmieson, 2000).

(Jimmieson, 2000) identified several factors that help in reducing uncertainty:

- Support from senior management
- Inputs from middle management in strategy formulation
- Effective communication across the board
- Peer implementation
- Clarity during implementation
- Implementation meeting reviews

2.7. Strategic Planning

According to (McKay, 2011), strategic planning is defined as the process where leaders determine where the organization intends to be in the future and how it plans to get there. Leaders develop the vision for the organization and determine the necessary procedures, priorities and strategies needed to achieve the vision. They also need to set goals, which are realistic, challenging but attainable. Strategic planning simulates that some aspects of the future can be influenced or created by the organization.

(Charles, 2011) proposes the components of strategic planning process, which focuses on the following;
- Defining the business vision
- SWOT analysis
- Choosing the appropriate strategies
- Strategy implementation

The diagram below shows the stages or components of strategic planning process. First stage looks at the formulation of company's mission, vision and

goals. The mission statement looks at the purpose for the organization and how it intends to achieve its goals. The vision identifies what the organization wants to accomplish in the long term.

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                          │ Business Level Strategy │
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    Feedback              │ Corporate Level Strategy │
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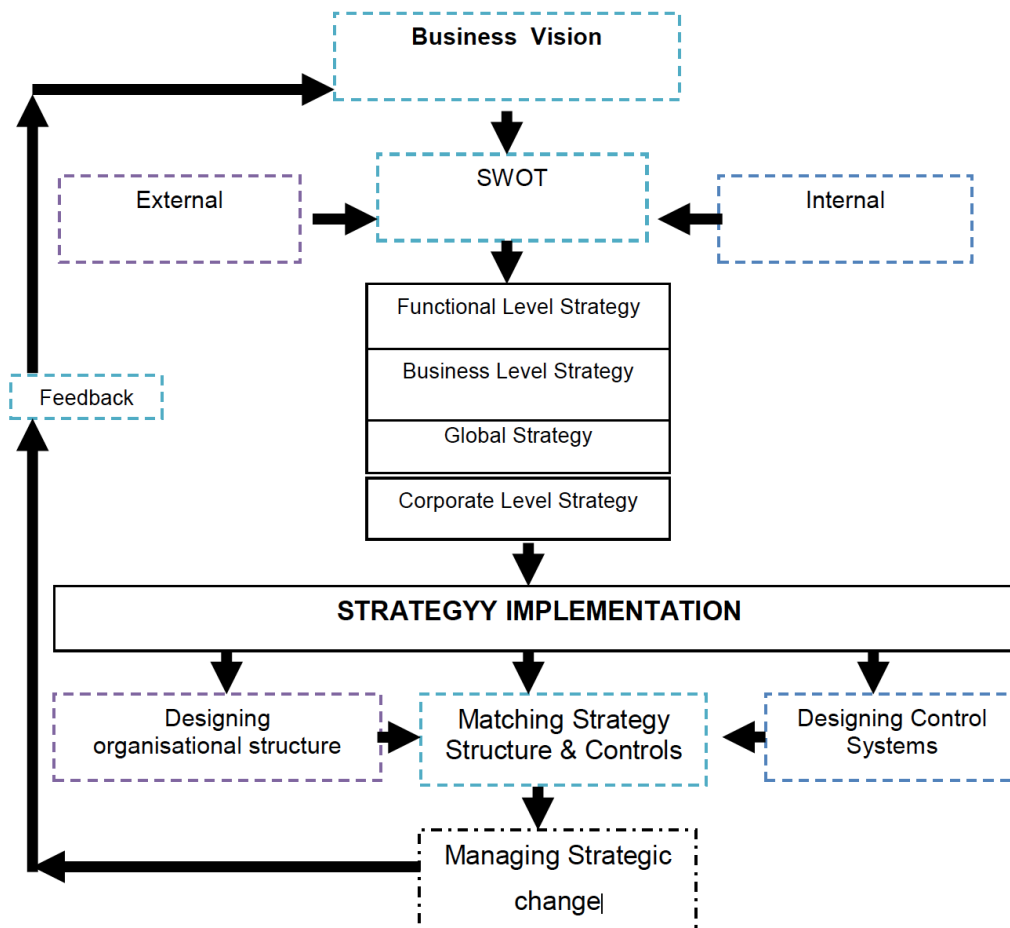
Figure 2.2: The main components of the Strategic Planning Process

Source: (Charles, 2011)

Second stage deals with the SWOT analysis is the best technique for conducting an environmental analysis. It applies to both external and internal environmental analysis. The next crucial stage is choosing or formulating of appropriate strategies, which is the most critical stage to the growth and survival of the organization.

The organization seeks at utilizing its strengths to ensure it follow opportunities, while seeking to avoid threats by making sure that it corrects its weaknesses.

The final stage is strategy implementation, which covers the following elements;

i. **Organizational structure design**

In order to achieve its goals and objectives the work of an organization has to be divided among its members. Some structure is necessary to make possible the effective performance of key activities and to support the efforts of staff. Structure provides the framework of an organization and   for its pattern of management. It is by means of structure that the purpose and work of the organization is carried out. Managers need to understand the importance and effects of organization structure and design. (Mullins, 2012)

Structure provides the framework for the activities of the organization and must harmonize with the organization's goals and objectives. There are many variables, which influence the most appropriate organization structure and system of management. In the final analysis, however, there is an underlying need to establish a framework of order and system of command for the execution of work. This demands that attention be given to certain basic considerations and prescriptions in the design of organization structure.

ii. **Control systems design**

According to (Robert, 2013) maintaining a competitive advantage in today is evolving economy requires more than strategic insight. Nonfinancial measures, drive strategy down to operations, and manage and measure multiple control systems. It helps to explore the critical link among strategy,   performance measurement, organizational design and risk management. It also set up a strategic control framework in an

organization in order to execute its strategy effectively and help to design business units and functions to respond effectively to customers.

Iii   Matching structure, strategy and controls; and

Organizational structure and controls provide framework within which strategies are used. Different structures and controls are required to effectively implement different strategies, they must match structure and controls to strategy and strategy implementation and they must fit between strategy and structure that affects above average returns and performance (Segers, 2013)

iv   Managing strategic change

Many business strategies involve a change of some type. Managing the change aspects successfully during the implementation stage can often be critical to the success of the strategy itself. In selecting an approach to strategic change, most managers struggle with the question of how bold they should be. On the one hand, they usually realize that to fundamentally transform the organization, a break from the past is needed. To achieve strategic renewal it is essential to turn away from the firm's heritage and to start with a clean slate. On the other hand, they also recognize the value of continuity, building on experiences, investments and loyalties. To achieve lasting strategic renewal, people in the organization will need time to learn, adapt and grow into a new organizational reality (Barnat, 2014)

Middle managers are the linking pin between the senior management team and the rest of the organization. They have responsibility for helping their staff through the change process while simultaneously undertaking change themselves. They have four roles to perform. They need to:
- undertake personal change

- help their teams through change - build up and maintain the momentum of change until the change is completed and act as facilitator
- implement the necessary changes in their parts of the business - encourage individuals to use their initiative and put emphasis on teamwork keep the business going in the interim.

Strategic plans normally last up to about two to five years and can be reviewed yearly if anything needs to be changed with the existing strategy or structure.

2.8. Strategic Change

Most organizations develop strategies in order to move the organization from the current state to the desired future state. This is also called "optimal positioning". Strategic change can be described as all actions and efforts that the organization intends to follow in order to move from its current state towards the desired future state in order to increase its profitability and its competitive position (Lazenby, 2010).

Implementation of a new strategy involves substantive changes to the normal routines of the organizations. Strategic change is the proactive change that an organization must go through in order to achieve its strategic objectives. It is concerned about people and their tasks in the organization.

2.9. Types of strategic changes

Strategic change can be described in terms of the scope of change and the nature of change. Scope of change refers to whether a fundamental change of strategic direction is necessary or whether the change happens in the current organizational setting. The nature of change can be revolutionary (sudden, fast and disruptive) or can be incremental (Lazenby, 2010). There are four types of strategic change that can be identified (see Table 2.1)

Table 2.1: Types of strategic changes

		Scope of Change	
		Transformation	**Current Organizational Changes**
Nature of Change	**Incremental**	*Evolution:* Fundamental changes implemented gradually in order to deal with the situation and that can happen over time.	*Adaptation:* Current organizational setting facilitate incremental change that must happen in order to achieve goals.
	Revolutionary	*Revolution:* Strategy involves changes that happens as a result of fast and sudden changing environment	*Reconstruction:* Strategy involves changes that involves sudden alterations in the market conditions can be handled by current organizational setting

Source: (Lazenby, 2010)

It is evidence from Table 2.1 that four different types of strategic change emerge (Scholes, 2012)

- Adaptation – Incremental change can be facilitated by the current organizational change in order to achieve desired goals. It is only necessary to adapt to this new situation.

- Reconstruction – The current organizational change can handle a change that involves a sudden alteration in the market conditions. It may be that only the reconstruction of processes and policies is required to implement the new strategy.

- Evolution – This strategy involves fundamental changes in the way the organization has to deal with the situation, but it can only happen overtime. however, the lack of urgency may cause strategic drift. The ideal situation is that the organization must become a learning organization not to manage this change.

- Revolution – This strategy involves fundamental changes as a result of sudden and fast changing conditions.

2.10. Resistance to strategic change.

The result of strategic change always disrupts normality. Re-engeenering of business processes and organization restructuring requires the creation of new roles and authority relationships amongst subordinates and managers in different divisions and functions. Resistance to change can be considered as the main hindrance in ensuring successful implementation of a strategy (Lazenby, 2010)

2.11. Reasons for resistance and how to overcome resistance.

- Strategic proposals oppositions – this can be overcomed by involving employees in the planning, designing and implementation of the strategy

- Lack of interest – this can be overcomed by education and effective communication.
- Personal Ambitions differences – incentive would help overcome this problem in any organization
- Anxiety – falicilitation and participation will help to deal with the resistance (Dess, 2012)

2.12. Elements of the implementation process

Most companies have a good strategy. Research shows, however, that poor results are in 80% of the cases due to issues with the translation and implementation of your strategy, rather than the strategy itself. Organizations tend to dismiss their strategies too quickly (Cucureddu, 2013)

2.12.1. Main elements of the implementation process

- Clarify your strategy: All too often, strategies are expressed as high-level statements that resonate with board and executive levels but fall flat with mid-level and frontline personnel. Unfortunately, if people don't understand the strategy, they are unable to connect with it. So the first step is to clarify your strategy in a way that people in your organization can rally support its implementation.
- Communicate the strategy: Powerfully communicating the essence of an organizational strategy at every level of the organization using multiple mediums is the key here.
- Cascade the strategy: If strategy is "what" the organization do then tactics are "how" does it do it. And if the organization wants the strategy to be implemented well, it need to cascade it throughout the organization and get to the practical and tactical components of people's jobs every day (Cucureddu, 2013)

The role for leaders in any organizations is to decide on which strategy the organization will embark on and the chosen strategy will then need to be transferred in action in order to achieve desired goals. There are basic steps involved in the process and links between strategy development and implementation. This begins with exploring the nature and limitations of the implementation process itself. The main objective in strategy implementation is to deliver vision, mission and objectives.

2.13. Nine schools of thoughts

Nine school of thoughts on strategy was developed by Henry Mintzberg (Mintzberg, 1990). They are based on their main differentiators and their methodology ranges from prescriptive (Design, Planning, Positioning, Entrepreneurial & Cognitive) to descriptive (Learning, Political, Cultural and Environmental). This is depicted in Table 2.5 below;

Table 2.2: Nine schools of thought on strategy by Mintzberg

	Prescriptive					Descriptive			
Dimensions	Design	Planning	Positioning	Entrepreneurial	Cognitive	Learning	Political	Cultural	Environmental
Key Authors	1965, Andrews	1965, Ansoff	1980, Porter	1934, Schumpeter	1976, Simon	1959, Lindblom 1980, Quinn	1971, Allison 1970, Perrow	1977, Normann	1977, Hannan And Freeman
Base Discipline	None	Systems Theory cybernetics	Economics	None	Psychology	Psychology	Political Science	Anthropology	Biology
Vocabulary	SWOT Model & Fit	Formalizing Programming & budgeting	Analyzing generic strategy	Vision leadership innovation	Bounded rationality, mental model reframe	Incremental emerging	Power Coalition Dominant	Ideology Values	Reaction Selection Retention
Central Actor	President Director	Planners	Analyst	Leaders	Brain	Everybody who learns	Everybody with power	Collectively	Stakeholder
Environment	Opportunity & Threats	Stable & Controlled	Analyze in economic variables	Maneuverable	Cognition	Demanding	Intractable Malleable	Incidental	Dominant
Strategy	Explicit perspective	Explicit plan	Explicit generic positions	Implicit perspective	Mental perspective	Implicit patterns	Positions, plays	Collective perspective	Specific position

Source: (Mintzberg, 1990)

Ungerer (2007), proposed six key viewpoints about strategy (definition and scope) and also agreed that various perspectives on the definition and scope of strategy exist. These are described below;

- Design and Structure – The structure follows the strategy. This give an organization a chance to change its structures in response to changing strategies as may be caused by changing market dynamics.

- Strategic Planning – Planning is emphasized. This is where all the strategic planning process steps needs to be followed in order to produce the plan.

- Competitive position – This is where industry analysis matters the most relative to competitors

- Dynamic competition – This opinion identifies action and implementation as being more important, simply because the ever changing environments in which the organizations operates hence this invalidates positioning frameworks and as well as static planning.

- Core competency – An organization must have a set of key core competencies that it uses to boost its market position.

- Business ecosystem – When implementing strategic change, the organizations must be aware of its own business ecosystem as well as other ecosystems.

2.14. Strategy - Competitive Advantage

A well designed and a well-executed business strategy is essential not only to the long-term success of an organization but also to its very survival. Having a strategy does not necessarily gives a competitive advantage. It's the quality, depth and flexibility of the business strategy that matters most and that makes the difference (Justin, 2000).

Organizations can acquire a competitive advantage by executing value-creating strategies, which is not executed by any present competitors. Most organizations

use strategies as a competitive advantage that organizations follow relative to its competitors (Porter, 1979). An emphasis is on the need to select the right industries with the most competitive positions. Porter's Five Forces of Competitive Position Analysis looks at five forces that determine the competitive intensity and attractiveness of a market in Table 2.4 below;

Porter's Five Forces Framework
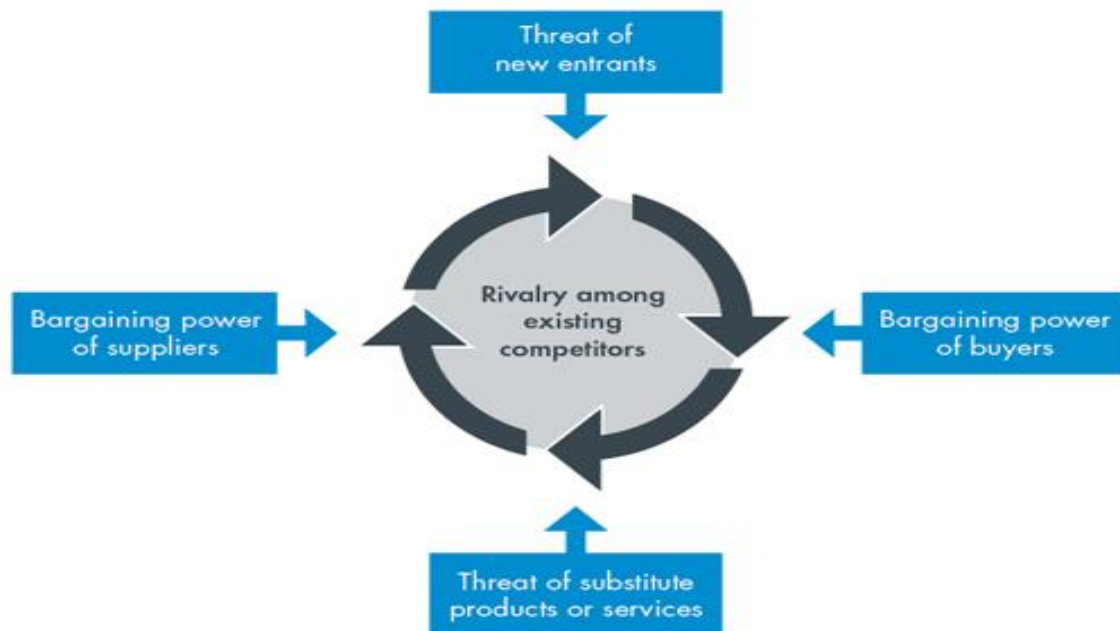
Figure 2.4 Porter's Five Forces Framework
Source (Porter, 1979)

The five forces described as follows:

i) Supplier power

- Suppliers can influence availability, costs and quality of raw materials to organizations in the industry.

ii) Buyer power

- The number of buyers in the market can influence the industry structure. They can dictate terms and they can control the prices by comparing them with that of rival suppliers.

iii) Competitive rivalry –

- The main driver is the level of competition in the market. Competitors offering undifferentiated products and services in the market will reduce market attractiveness.

iv) Threat of substitution –

- Close substitute products have a potential to increase the chances of customer switching to alternative products in response to prices.

v) Threat of new entry –

- New entrants in markets are driven by so many reasons but the main driver is profitable market.

2.15. Strategy as a learning process

Strategy is viewed as a learning process, strategic leaders develop their own organizational strategies, in pursuit of the strategy they get some of the things right and some wrong; they learn from mistakes and successes; and they make adjustments to the strategy based on the learnings.

It is therefore a continuous process and it must be closely monitored from the beginning to the end (Daives, 2012)

Figure 2.5: Strategy as a learning process

Source: (Daives, 2012)

2.16. Strategic Influencing

Strategic Influencing talks to the formation and nurturing of strategic relationships over the long term. The key to the success of the strategic leader is the ability to exert influence with a wide variety of people, over many of whom he has no authority. This influence may be around:

- Getting people aligned in terms of the long-term strategic direction of the business;

- Persuading people as to the wisdom of a particular strategic initiative so that there is real commitment as opposed to mere compliance (or even passive or active resistance);

- Being able to create a significant shift in the way resources are allocated or invested so that this allocation of resources is congruent with the strategic intent;

- Sharing information, insights, observations and opinions with more senior executives around issues relating to strategy formulation, execution/implementation of strategy or the ability of the organization to respond to market or competitor moves.

Strategic leaders needs to understands that without the ability to influence in all directions throughout the organization, the long-term success that effects strategic action may be limited. Real strategic leaders understand this long before they reach the top of the organization. Strategic leaders also need to understand that the key to real success is relationships – both professionally and personally (Daives, 2012)

2.17. Strategic Thinking

Strategic thinking is the discipline of noticing and responding to potential game-changers in order to have the advantage even in an uncertain and chaotic business environment. Strategic thinkers are good at scanning the internal and external landscape in order to ascertain where the business is in terms of its Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (the good old SWOT) (Charles, 2011)

2.18. Strategic Leadership Teams

A strategic leadership team (SLT) is one whose work has strategic implications for the organization, the division, the product line or the business unit. The team might be involved in developing the next generation of products in an innovative company; the team might be charged with the design and implementation of a continuous improvement process; or it might be charged with redesigning the organization's inbound and outbound logistics model (Charles, 2011)

2.19. Strategic Acting

Strategic acting is about the execution of strategic priorities – and is a critical important part of the strategic learning process. In essence, strategic acting is not only about simply getting on with it – it is also about how we learn from the efforts or attempts we make in the execution of strategy. This highlights for us the "experimental nature" of strategic acting – it is a process of learning how to get to where we want to be from where we are. And of course, there is no guarantee that the selected actions are the right ones or the best ones. This means being able to be decisive in the face of uncertainty (Dess, 2012). This is in addition to some other critical competencies that make up strategic acting:
- Setting clear priorities
- Creating conditions in which others can be effective
- Making strategy a learning process
- Acting with both the long and the short-term in mind
- Being willing to stick your neck out for what you believe

2.20. Strategic Learning

Strategic leaders are quite clear that strategy is a learning process – we start with our strategy; we get some things right; we get some things wrong; we learn from our mistakes and successes; and we make adjustments to our strategy.

Organizations can either support the strategy or constrain it. Below either are some of the characteristics of the organizations support it or constrain it.

Table 2.3: Characteristics for a supportive or restraining culture

Supportive Culture	Constraining Culture
Employees are informed about developments in their divisions as well as their areas of responsibilities.	Information is not easily available and is only shared when deemed necessary
Company's mission, vision, values is used to assess the feasibility and desirability of new opportunities.	Compliance with organizational policies and procedures is to assess new opportunities.
Emphasis is on learning and mistakes are acceptable as a part of learning.	Emphasis is on individual competence
Pervasive sense that everyone in the organization has a part to play in the leadership of the business.	Leadership is perceived as a prerogative of certain individuals in senior positions.
There is an excitement and energy in the company and people have confidence and feel that any problem that might arise will be resolved with immediate effect.	There is a sense of powerlessness that infiltrates in the organization.

Source: (Daives, 2012)

Strategic leadership involves discovering what it is that the organization needs to do well and more importantly *can* do well in order to grow into the future. Having made these discoveries it involves creating the conditions that enable collective effort around their implications. This can only happen if the organization understands strategy as a learning process. The primary role of strategic leadership is to enable organizations to become centers of learning, and to drive this process by continually developing and discovering strategy and holding it in

an ongoing state of becoming – formulation, implementation, reassessment and revision (Daives, 2012)

2.21. Strategy as a systematic process

Ungerer (2007), expresses strategy as a systematic landscaping process that managers use as an invaluable tool (systems thinking) in helping to make strategic thinking visible, as shown in the diagram below;
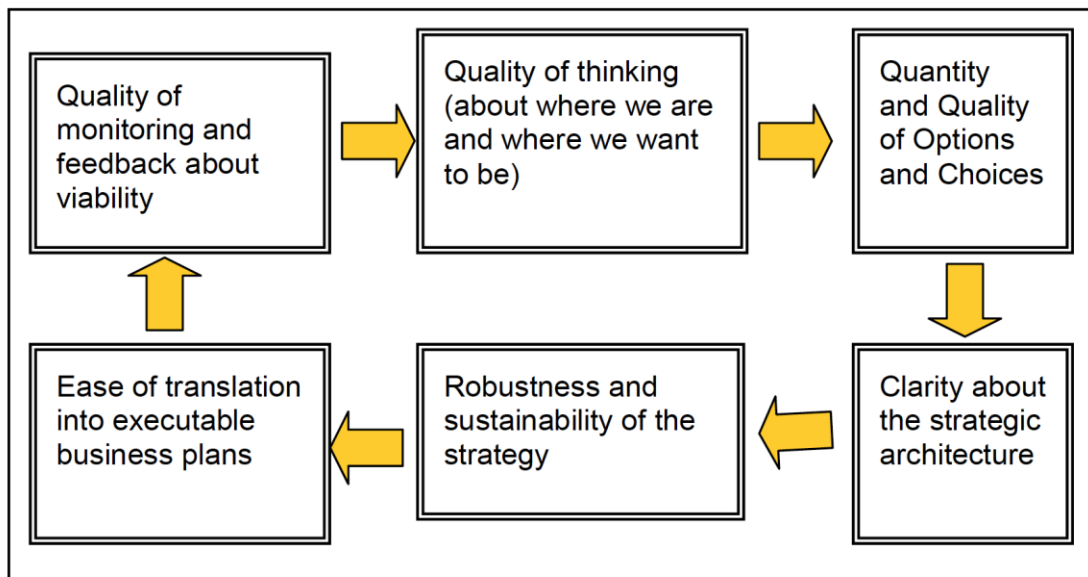
Figure 2.6: Strategy as Systematic Process
Source: (Ungerer, 2007)

The diagram above depicts how organizations start with determining the current state and possible future positions. More time is spent on better understanding the environment and as well as developing insights. Insights will then lead to high quality options being developed. If the options are clear, it will therefore become easier to develop a robustness and sustainability of the strategy. The most important step is the translation of the organizational strategy into actionable business plan and this is where most organizations get it wrong.

According to (Ungerer, 2007), the emphasis is on ensuring that organizations best translate and own the strategy in all different levels. Following the strategy implementation it is crucial that progress is tracked and regular feedbacks into the strategy is provided.

2.22. Strategy as a resource

The aim for business strategy is to achieve competitive advantage through the effective use of organizational resources. Resource-based view provides some insights to the definition of strategic resources and what makes them to generate profits. Top management must determine what resources the company have and how those assets may add value to the strategic process. (Boundless, 2014). There are four alternative growth strategies as outlined by (Ansoff, 1987), they are shown in a diagram below;

Figure 2.7: Alternative Growth Strategies

Source: (Ansoff, 1987)

- Market penetration – organizations seek to increase sales by being more aggressive on promotions and distribution for its products and services
- Market development – organizations seek to increase sales by introducing their present products into the new markets.
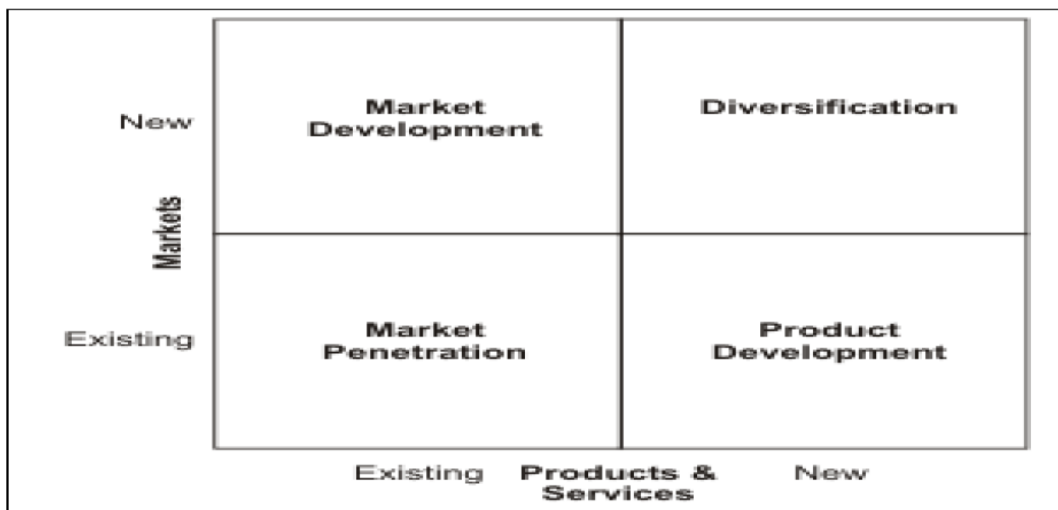
- Product development – organizations seek to increase sales by introducing improved products for present markets.
- Product development – organizations looks at increasing sales by introducing improved products for their current markets.

2.23. Blue and Red Ocean Strategy

According to (Mauborgne, 2004) blue ocean strategy is defined as whereby organizations create uncontested market space. It focuses on creating or capturing new market demands at the product development stage. The primary aim for blue ocean strategy is to promote creative thinking and focusing on creating new markets and opportunities beyond current market boundaries. It aims at creating new markets rather than competing in a contested market space

Unlike red ocean strategy whereby organizations focuses on competing in the existing space. It looks at trying to outperform their rivals in the market and grabbing market share of the existing demand. Due to the crowded market space, growth and produced are reduced. Products become niche and the cut-throat competition turns the red ocean bloody. Difference between the two strategies will be show in the table below;

Table 2.4: Red Ocean vs Blue Ocean Strategy

Red Ocean Strategy	Blue Ocean Strategy
Competes in existing market space	Uncontested market space
Exploit existing demands	Capture and create new demand
Make the value/cost-trade off	Break the value/cost-trade off
Align the whole system of an organization's activities with its strategic choice of low or differentiation.	Align the whole system of an organization's activities of low cost and differentiation.

Source: (R, 2004)

Renee (2011) looks at the principles that drives the successful formulation and flawless execution of blue ocean strategy and these principles mitigates the six risks as tabled below;

Table 2.5: Principles that drives the successful formulation and risks associated

Principles	Risks
Formulation Principles	
Restructuring market boundaries	Search Risk
Focuses on the bigger picture, not figures	Planning risk
Think beyond existing demand	Scale risk
About getting strategic sequence right	Business model risks
Evaluation principles	
Overcome key organizational hurdles	Organizational Risk
Entrench execution into strategy	Management Risk

Source: (Renee, 2011)

2.24. Factors affecting strategy implementation

Organizations use top management teams to foster and direct the strategy management process. Strategic management framework, planning, organizing leading and controlling must be closely monitored to support strategy implementation (Wave, 2011).

Most organizations face challenges during strategy implementation due to various reasons such as government regulations, employee diversity and insufficient resources. Organizations must involve employees and stakeholders in the process of determining the factors that influence decisions in strategy

implementation. (Wicks, 2015) identified steps on how to determine the factors that affects decision implementation in organizations:

Step 1

- Involvement of all stakeholders towards any decision implementation. Stakeholders may want clarity on some issues before implementation of decisions.

Step 2

- Employees to be included in the formulation of a strategy process till the implementation phase and employees to be with the strategy that the organization is pursing and allow them enough time to get more clarity and provide feedback. Use employee feedback to determine the factors that hinders or helps in strategy implementation.

Step 3

- Conduct the industry analysis to identify factors that directly or indirectly affects decision at hand bearing in mind that organization decisions are implemented within a context that includes industry standards, regulations, external economics and social conditions.

Step 4

- Asking the right questions to the relevant people. Consult experts, look at ideal situations and ask probing questions.

Step 5

- Work backwards. Determine why there are barriers in the implementation or why is it necessary to carry out a certain option and not the other. This will help to give an idea as in why the strategy is unclear.

Top management plays a crucial role in the successful implementation of strategic plans or decisions. Top management must avoid controlling on how

organizations makes decisions because this approach will exclude other employees, stakeholders and the technical insight of experts.

(Lazenby, 2010) states that one of the most important barrier to strategy implementation is the failure to possess the management competencies. Some of the reasons that organizations often experience when trying to implement strategies is related to lack of management competencies and these problems include;

- No alignment between the strategy and organizational structure
- Communication and information is inadequate to feedback on the progress of strategy implementation
- Insufficient effective collective coordination of the implementation
- Inadequate leadership and direction provided by top managers and middle managers.
- Goals not clearly articulated and defined an understood by employees
- Top management lack of involvement in the implementation of the strategy.
- Key changes in the strategy that affects employees' responsibilities not clearly defined.

Lazenby (2010), have found that nine out of ten organizations fail to implement their strategies.

They have identified four barriers to strategy implementation and these are shown in 2.8 below;
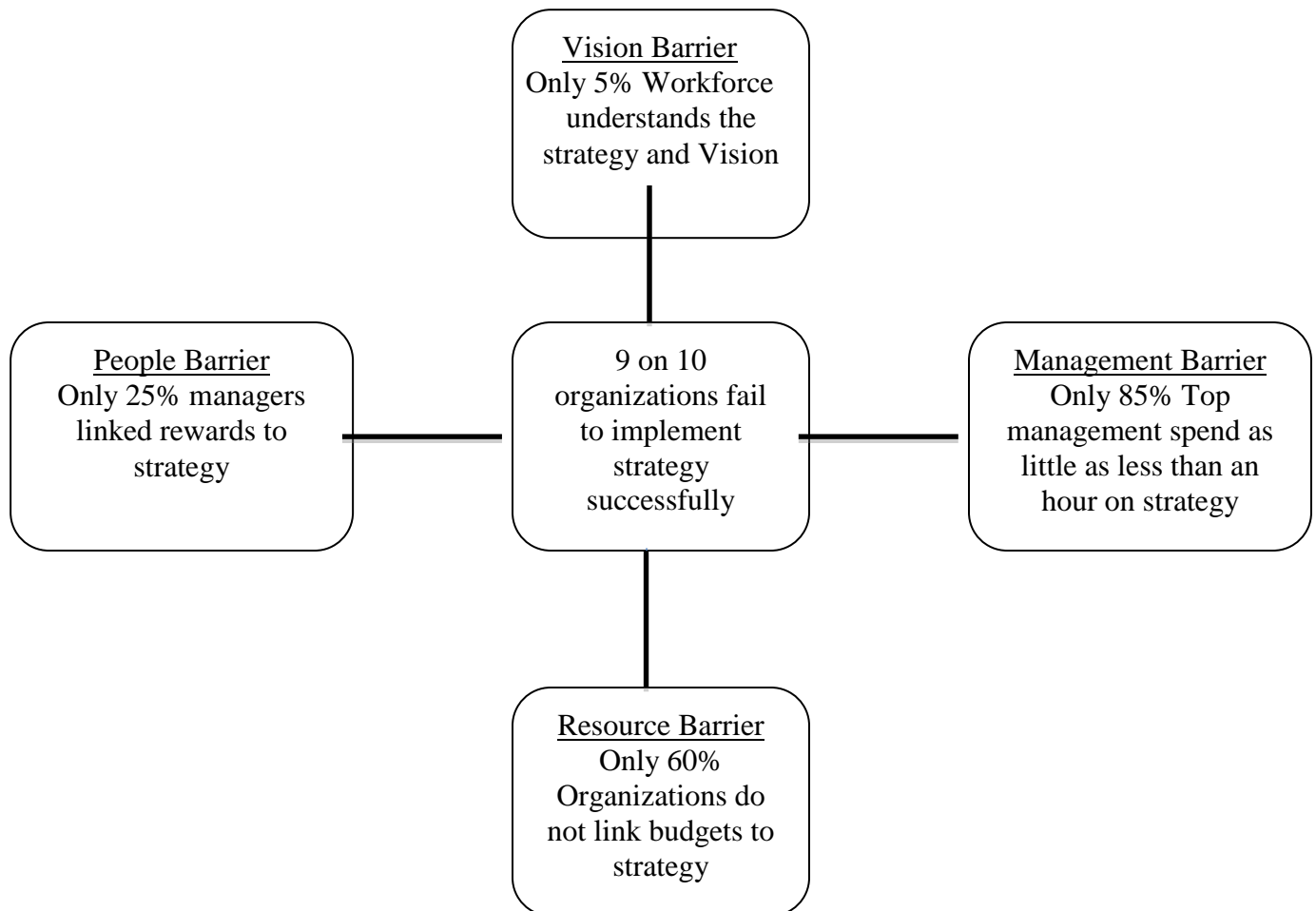
Figure 2.8: Barriers to strategy implementation

Source: (Lazenby, 2010)

Norton (2001)**,** suggests there are four common barriers to strategy execution:

The Vision Barrier

Only 5% of the work force understands the strategy. The "command and control" mechanisms of the industrial age, when employees were merely "spokes in the wheel," who required little knowledge of the company vision are no longer effective in the age of the knowledge-based economy.

The People Barrier

Only 25% of managers have personal objectives and incentives linked to strategy. Most incentive compensation systems are tied to short-term financial results, rather than to the long-term initiatives that support strategy execution.

The Resource Barrier

60% of organizations don't link budgets to strategy. This occurrence is not uncommon, as in many companies the budgeting and strategic planning functions don't interact! Amazing! And since budgets are the traditional tools for planning the allocation of human and financial resources, strategic plans and strategic initiatives may fall short in terms of necessary resources.

The Management Barrier

85% of executive teams spend less than one hour per month discussing strategy. Have you ever conducted a monthly operations review meeting with your staff? When you hold operations reviews, is the majority of time dedicated to a discussion of financial results, focusing on "budget versus actual" variances. Not uncommon. But, since budgets are often not linked to the strategic plan, the discussions may completely avoid any focus on the true value drivers in the business.

2.25. Middle managers and strategy implementation

Most organizations do not include middle managers in the strategy formulation, yet they are more involved in the implementation process. The role for middle managers is to link the organization's strategy and day-to-day activities. They tie strategy to operations (Segers, 2013).

There has been many cases reported about challenges faced by middle managers in strategy implementation. Top management focuses mainly on

strategy formulation and leave the implementation in the hands of middle managers. This has resulted middle managers uncertain about necessary step to follow and uncertainty can lead to ineffective strategy implementation (McKinley, 2000)

In today's environment middle managers need to integrate horizontally, influence upward and engage in more divergent initiatives not by merely downward implementation strategy. (Floyd, 2011) plotted these different roles based on two dimensions; integration versus diverging and upward versus downward. This leads to four different roles see figure 2.9 below;
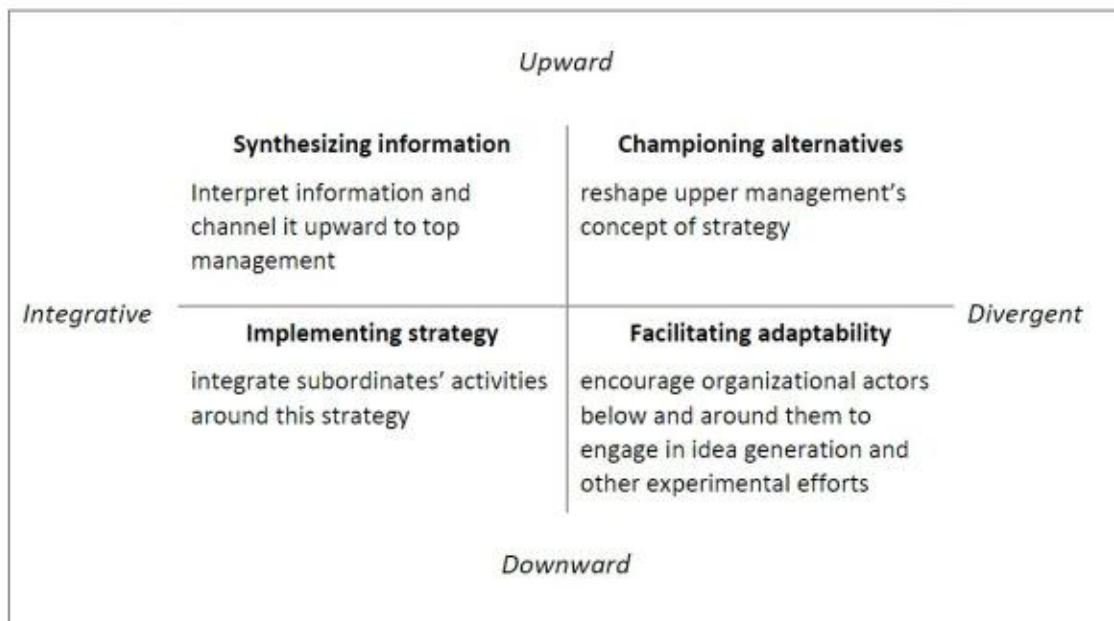
Figure 2.9 integration versus diverging and upward versus downward
Source: (Floyd, 2011)

Middle managers are the implementers of strategy. They can interpret and channel information upward to top management. This two-dimension role is important for organizational performance. Middle managers can also facilitate adaptability by establishing experiments without too much association with the top. Lastly, successful experiments need to be championed upward. These two roles are mainly for organizations with a strategy innovation (Floyd, 2011).

2.27. Linking the Balanced Score Card to Strategy

Institute (2014) describes balanced scorecard as a strategic planning and management system that is used widely in business and industry, non-profit organizations and government worldwide to align business activities with the strategy and vision of the organization. It also helps to improve internal and external communications, and as well as to monitor the performance for the organization against strategic goals. Drs Robert Kaplan and David Norton as a framework for performance management that added non-financial performance measures to the normal financial metrics to give executives and managers a balanced view of organizational performance developed it in the early 1990's.

2.28. McKinsey 7s Model

Jurevicius (2013) describes 'McKinsey as a tool that analyzes firm's organizational design by looking at seven key elements; strategy, structure, systems, shared values, style, staff and skills, in order to identify if they are effectively aligned and allow organization to achieve its objectives."

Waterman (2009) developed a conceptual framework to help managers in the process of implementation while other authors has highlighted the importance of hard aspects such as structure, strategy and systems and have identified four soft aspects such as skills, shared values, style and staff, they are all depicted in figure 2.10 below;
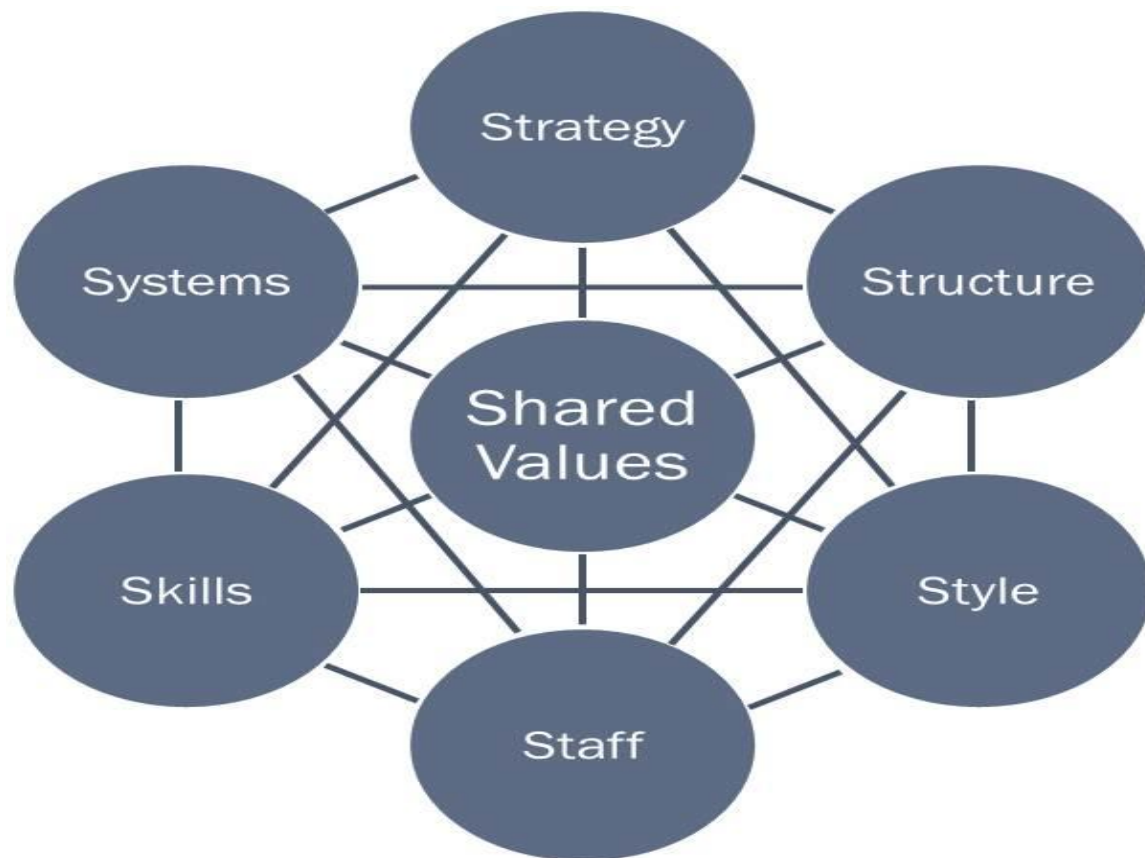
Figure 2.10: McKinsey 7S Model

Source: (Waterman, 2009)

The elements are defined as follows;

Strategy – Organization's alignment of resources and capabilities

Structure – How well the organization is organized.

Systems – Business and technical infrastructure that is used on a daily basis by employees to accomplish their aims and goals.

Shared Values – Behaviors, traits and characteristics that organization's believes in

Style – Culture of interaction and behavioral elements the organizational leadership uses

Staff – Employee base, staffing plans and talent management.

Skills – Ability to do the organization's work. It reflects in the performance of the organization.

The model was developed by McKinsey consultants Robert Waterman, Tom Peters and Julien Phillips in the 1980's. Since the inception, the model has been widely used by practitioners and academics and it has remained as one of the popular strategic tool.

2.26. Conclusion

The literature has explored the effectiveness of strategy and the role played by middle managers in strategy implementation. Six key factors for successful implementation have been briefly described with step-by-processes to ensure the success of the strategy implementation. It has demonstrated various perspectives and school of thought about strategy. The review has also identified several factors that help reducing uncertainty in strategy implementation. The role of middle management in the strategy implementation to ensure successful implementation of the strategy has been covered in detail. It has also covered the main components of the strategic planning process. Strategic change has been covered in details with different types of changes as well managing resistance to change. Factors that affects the strategy implementation has been briefly covered with the detailed steps on how to determine the factors that affects decision implementation in the organizations.

Lastly, the literature looked briefly at the Balanced Scorecard Card as a strategic management tool that helps to align business activities with the strategy and vision of the organization as well as to monitor the performance for the organization against strategic goals. It also looked at conceptual framework to help managers in the process of implementation while other authors has highlighted the importance of hard aspects such as structure, strategy and systems and they have also identified four soft aspects such as skills, shared values, style and staff.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The primary aim for the study is to identify the role played by middle managers in strategy implementation process within the Field Sales at Brandhouse (Pty) Ltd. The findings from this study will help to unpack the challenges faced by middle managers when implementing strategies and identify ways in which they can be improved.

This chapter provides research methodology and techniques used in data collection. In nature, this is a quantitative study. In order to achieve its objectives, this study used both primary and secondary sources. This chapter includes research design; research Methodology, Scientific Research Process, sampling method, sample size, sources of, analysis of data, validity and reliability, ethical considerations and Conclusion.

3.2 Research Design

Research is described as the systematic and logical search that is used to seek new and useful information or to reach a (new) understanding to a particular problem being experienced. Bougie (2014), describes research as the process seeking to find solutions to a particular problem after a thorough analysis and study of situational factors.

According to (Neuman, 2011), research is the process whereby the researchers trying to investigate a particular problem and understating the impact that the problem is actually causing or the researchers trying to identify the areas in which they are interested or concerned. According to (Bougie, 2014), the main purpose for the research process is to improve researcher's knowledge of a particular management or business problem.

(Paul D, 2014), mentioned seven general characteristics of all types of research as listed below;

   i.   Research originates from a question or problem

   ii.   Goal must be clearly articulated

  iii.   Main problem to be divided into sub-problems

  iv.   Research to be guided by specific research problem

   v.   Specific research plan required

  vi.   Critical assumptions required

 vii.   Research problem to be solved by collecting and interpreting data

viii.   In nature, this is a quantitative study. In order to achieve its objectives, the researcher designed and distributed 90 questionnaires to middle managers from Brandhouse nationally. Quantitative questionnaire known as Likert-type scales was used to evaluate middle managers opinions (Bryman, 2012). The adapted questionnaire were helpful in drawing in-depth responses providing details with regards to the effectiveness of the Brandhouse strategy as well as the role played by middle managers in strategy implementation.

3.3 Research Methodology

Research methodology is a systematic investigation to solve a specific problem. It is the science of studying how the research is conducted scientifically. More importantly, the processes that researchers use in explaining, predicting and describing experiences are called research methodology. It is a systematic technique to solve a problem. Its main aim is to discover answers to questions through a scientific study (Bryman, 2012)

Blankenship (2012) describes scientific research as a process that focuses on solving a problem by following a systematic organized, logical and rigorous

process of identifying problem areas, collecting information and drawing conclusion from there.

3.3.1 Scientific Research Process

Scientific research involves a systematic process that focuses on being objective and gathering a multitude of information for analysis so that the researcher can come to a conclusion. This process is used in all research and evaluation projects, regardless of the research method (scientific method of inquiry, evaluation research, or action research). In this process, the study is documented in such a way that another individual can conduct the same study again. This is referred to as replicating the study. Any research done without documenting the study so that others can review the process and results is not an investigation using the scientific research process (Bougie, 2014)

The scientific research process is a multiple-step process where the steps are interlinked with the other steps in the process. If changes are made in one step of the process, the researcher must review all the other steps to ensure that the changes are reflected throughout the process (Bougie, 2014)

3.4 Sampling Methods

Data collection is very crucial in the research as it play an important role in helping to better understand the theoretical framework. According to (Saunders 2009), sampling is described as the processing of carefully selecting the right individuals, events or objects as representatives for the entire population.

Saunders (2009) describes sampling for any sample as the complete list of all the elements in the population from which the sample will be drawn. In many instances, the sampling frame is an existing database, but (Saunders, 2009)

cautions that the following possible problems must be avoided when using existing databases:

- Individual databases are often incomplete;
- The information held about organisations in databases is sometimes inaccurate; and

The information held in databases soon becomes out-of-date

There are two types of sampling design; probability sampling and non-probality sampling. Probability sampling is whereby the elements in the population have nonzero, some known or probability of being chosen as sample subjects. Nonprobability sampling is whereby the elements have an unknown or predetermined chance of being chosen as subjects (Bougie 2014).

Leedy (2013) identifies the two types of sampling design as probability and non-probability sampling, where probability sampling results in each element of the population having a known and equal chance of being selected. It is therefore possible to answer the research question and achieve the objectives that require the researcher to estimate statistically the characteristics of the population from the sample. Non-probability sampling results in an unknown probability of each element being selected from the total population and it is not possible to answer research questions or address objectives that require the researcher to make statistical inferences about the characteristics of the population. The researcher may still be able to generalize about the population from non-probability samples, but not on statistical grounds.

Convenience sampling was determined to be the most appropriate method as it would allow for the collection of data from members of the population who were most conveniently, willing and able to provide it. Bougie (2014) advise that this type of study is most often used in the exploratory phase of a research study and is probably the best method to gain information from a population that would otherwise be difficult to get an adequate response from. As Brandhouse has

1900 employees, convenience sampling would ensure the required sample size is achieved.

Sampling provides a valid alternative to testing an entire population as it may be impractical to test the whole population (Saunders, 2009). The main reasons why there is a need to sample are illustrated below;

- Impractical to survey the entire population
- Costs constraints of surveying entire population
- Time constraints of surveying entire population
- Results required timeously
- Greater accuracy of results when sampling used

Time and cost constraints are the key reasons why testing the entire population is impractical. In the study being conducted, it would be impractical to survey the entire population of 1900 employees, as this would take a significant amount of time; hence, sampling is required.

3.5.1 Population

Bougie (2014) describe a population as the entire group of interest that the researcher wishes to investigate and make inferences about, while an element is a single member of the population.

The population of interest in this study consists of the middle managers within the sales division at Brandhouse. The researcher used the sample frame that consisted of 90 employees at Brandhouse. The sample type used was non-probability sampling and the sampling method used was purposive method. There are two major types of purposive sampling namely; judgment sampling which involves the choice of subjects who are in the best place to provide the kind of information that is required, as well as quota sampling which is the

second type of purposive sampling and which looks at ensuring that certain groups are presented adequately in the study. Judgment sampling was chosen for the purpose of this study hence we studying the role-played by middle managers (Bougie 2014)

3.6 Sample Size

Leedy (2013) note that the size of a sample should be a function of the variation in the population parameters under study and the estimating precision required by the researcher. The estimating precision is a relevant concept as researchers can never be certain that a sample truly reflects a population. (Saunders, 2009) suggest that the choice of the sample sizes is dependent on the confidence level the researcher requires in the study undertaken, the margin of error that the researcher is willing to tolerate within his research, the type of analysis that the researcher will undertake and the size of the total population from which the sample is drawn.

The total population for this study consists of 1900 employees. The total population of 1900 represents the number of all employees at Brandhouse as at 01 January 2015 The sample size table documented in (Bougie, 2014) was used as a guide to determine the required sample size. Based on the table, the total sample size required for this study was to 90 participants.

3.7 Sources of Data

The research design phase is followed by the selection of an appropriate data collection method. There are two way in which information can be obtained, namely; primary data or secondary data. Primary data refer to the original data or the information obtained first hand by the researcher for the specific purpose of study (Bougie, 2014). Primary data also refers to the data that has not been published yet and is more authentic, reliable and objective.

Secondary data refer to the data that is publicly available and that has already been collected and readily available. It also refers to the data that has been reused and data that is quickly obtainable compared to primary data. Secondary data can be obtained from many sources such as literature, magazines, newspapers, publications etc (Kumar, 2011)

Bougie (2014) identify focus groups, interviews, administered questionnaires or observations as sources of primary data, while company records, archives, government publications, and industry analyses are some sources of secondary data. The data represented in this study is primary, as information about role played by middle managers at Brandhouse was be collected for the first time.

The three most popular methods of data collection include interviews (face-to-face and telephonic), questionnaires and observation (Bougie, 2014)

Below are the summarized advantages and disadvantages of each method.

Table 3.6. Advantages and disadvantages of various data collection methods

Data Collection Method	Advantages	Disadvantages
Interviews **(face to face and telephonic)**	- Provides rich data. - Offers the opportunity to establish rapport with the interviewees - Helps to explore and understand complex issues	- Potential to include interviewer bias - Can be expensive and time consuming if sample is large
Questionnaires	Inexpensive	

	method	• Emailed
	• Can be used when	questionnaires
	sample is	have a low
	geographically	response rate
	dispersed	• Excludes
	• Instant feedback	respondents who
	obtained	do not have email
Observation		
	• Can comprehend complex issues.	• Expensive method.
	• Rich data is obtained	• Observer bias may be present

Source (Bougie, 2014)

3.6.1 Description and purpose of Instrument

(Saunders, 2009) note that within business and management research, the greatest use is made of questionnaires as a data collection instrument. When this instrument is used, each respondent is requested to respond to the same set of questions. This is therefore an efficient way of collecting responses from a large sample prior to quantitative analysis.

There are different types of questionnaires that may be administered as outlined in Figure 3.6.1 below;
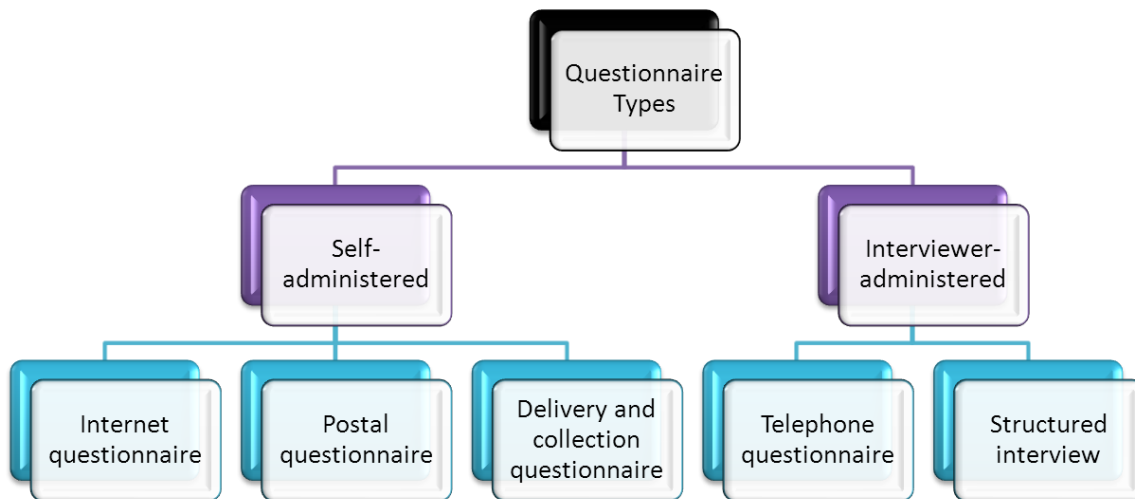
Source (Saunders, 2009)

As the current study was to be self-administered and completed by the respondents themselves, the most efficient approach was to administer the questionnaire electronically using the internet. Postal questionnaires and the delivery and collection of questionnaires by hand would have been inefficient as there was a large sample in this study.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

The important step in ensuring that the research instrument meets the requirements of being valid and reliable and actually tests the concepts that are intended to be tested.

3.9.1 Validity

A valid questionnaire enables accurate data to be collected consistently, and the questions must be understood by the respondent in the context that the researcher intended, and the answers given by the respondent must be

understood by the researcher in the manner intended by the respondent (Saunders, 2009)

Saunders (2009) identified various of validity tests that are used to test the goodness measures and are grouped under the heading of content validity, criterion-related validity and construct validity.

I. Content validity refers to the extent to which the questionnaire provides adequate coverage of the investigative questions. This can be achieved through careful research through the literature reviewed and prior discussion with individuals knowledgeable about the subject matter

II. Criterion-related validity is concerned with the ability of the questions to make accurate predictions. In assessing this aspect of validity, the researcher will be comparing the data from the questionnaire developed with that specified in the criterion in some way

III. Construct validity refers to the extent to which the researcher's questions actually measure the presence of those constructs the researcher intends them to measure. Validation of such constructs against existing data is difficult; hence other methods are used.

Content and construct validity were considered for the current study. By obtaining feedback from the supervisor of this study, the Commercial Director of Brandhouse, other senior managers of Brandhouse who are knowledgeable about the organization and respondents to the pre-test, the researcher was satisfied that the observed responses had adequately covered the objectives of the research study, and was confident that the test of face validity was met.

3.9.2 Reliability

Reliability is fundamentally concerned with the issues of consistency of a measure of a concept. It looks at the measure as reliable to the degree of consistent results when data collection procedure is repeated (Saunders, 2009).

There are two prominent factors that are used to check whether a measure is reliable.

I. Test re-test estimates of reliability are obtained by correlating the data collected with those from the same questionnaire collected under as near equivalent conditions as possible. It hence requires the questionnaire to be administered twice to respondents. It could be difficult to persuade respondents to answer the same questionnaire twice.

II. Internal consistency involves correlating the responses to each question with those to other questions in the questionnaire. The most frequently used method to calculate the internal consistency of a questionnaire is Cronbach's alpha. This will be calculated after the data is collected.

3.10 Administration of the Instrument

Once the questionnaire is designed, pilot tested and amended, the next step is to use the questionnaire to collect data (Saunders, 2009). This final stage is the actual administering of the questionnaire. It is important that a code of ethics is abided by in the collection process. A tick box was provided in which respondents could give their consent to participate.

Section 3.6.1 analyzed the various types of questionnaires available to researchers, and the internet self-administered questionnaire was selected as the most appropriate for this project. (Saunders, 2009) note that it is important to have a clear timetable which identifies the tasks that need to be performed and the resources that will be needed. Internet surveys can be administered either via email or via a website.

In this study the questionnaire was administered via direct email to the identified respondents. A covering letter motivated and encouraged the participation of the respondents. The questionnaire was administered via an online survey tool called Questionpro. This tool tracked all responses received for analysis. A direct

email was sent to the Brandhouse mailing list (which contained the email addresses of middle managers within the sale force division). This email contained an electronic hyperlink to the actual Questionpro survey. Once a respondent received the email and clicked on the hyperlink, they were taken to the survey start page. Three follow up mails were also sent to remind members to take the survey. These follow up emails were spaced one week apart from each other.

3.11 Analysis of Data

After the data have been obtained they must be coded, keyed in and edited. Outliers, inconsistencies and blank responses also have to be identified and managed (Bougie, 2014)

Data must be coded by assigning a number to the participant's responses and then capturing them into a database. Non-responses must also be coded in a consistent manner. The raw data must then be entered into a software programme for analysis. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software programme is one of the most common analysis programmes used and makes it possible to enter, edit and view the contents of the data file. During the editing phase, illogical and inconsistent responses that are not in harmony with other responses must be identified and investigated as they may skew the results (Bougie, 2014)

The electronic questionnaire used for this study was hosted on Questionpro. This electronic tool automatically captures data when respondents click on the survey link and saves the data to a database as the questionnaire is completed. Each variable is assigned a numerical code which may be exported to another programme such as Microsoft Excel or SPSS for further analysis (QuestionPro, 2015)

The analysis of data can be categorized as descriptive statistics (which is the study of the distributions of one variable and is associated with the development of certain indices from raw data) and inferential statistics, (which is concerned with the process of generalization) (Kothari, 2008)

3.12 Ethical considerations

A letter of consent was obtained from the Commercial Director of the Brandhouse in order to be able to conduct this research (Appendix 3). Ethical clearance was also obtained from the University of KwaZulu-Natal and was granted in the form of an ethical clearance letter (Appendix 2). Informed consent was requested from all respondents in the preamble to the questionnaire (Appendix 1).

3.13 Conclusion

An analysis of research processes and of the array of steps involved in research methodology was presented in this chapter. After documenting the various options available to the researcher relating to the participants, the location, the purpose of and approach to the study, the choice of specific research methods for use in this study was described and motivated.

Sampling decisions were tailored to the study and a data collection strategy was articulated incorporating how the data collected will be analysed. The ethical considerations were also outlined in this chapter.

Once sufficient data is collected from the survey instrument per the required sample size, the analysis, presentation and discussion of results will be formulated and documented in the chapter that follows.

Chapter 4: Results Presentation

4.1 Introduction

There are number of descriptive methods that can be used by any researcher to analyze and interpret data collected. SPSS application software was used to analyze the questionnaires. The sample consisted of questionnaires distributed to 90 middle managers from Brandhouse. This chapter presents and discusses result from the data.

4.2 Reliability

The reliability statistics shows that the data were reliable as the Cronbach's Alpha was 0.860 as presented in Table 5.1 below;

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.860	15

4.3 Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using reliability and one-sample chisquare

4.3.1 Brandhouse Employees Profiles

Results on Brandhouse employees profile are discussed under demographics and employment details

4.3.2 Demographics

Age, Gender, Race data were analyzed

4.3.2.1 Age

A total of 90 participants completed the online questionnaire. Participant's age shows that 1.08% of respondents are between 25-29 years, 41.94% respondents are between 30-39 years old. Majority of employees sampled are between 40-49 years old were represented by 47.31% and respondents between 50-59 years old with to 9.68% as shown in Figure 5.1 below;

1

Figure 5.1: Age distribution

4.3.2.2 Gender

As shown in Figure 5.2 below, more than half of the participants were male (59%) with 40.86 females participants.
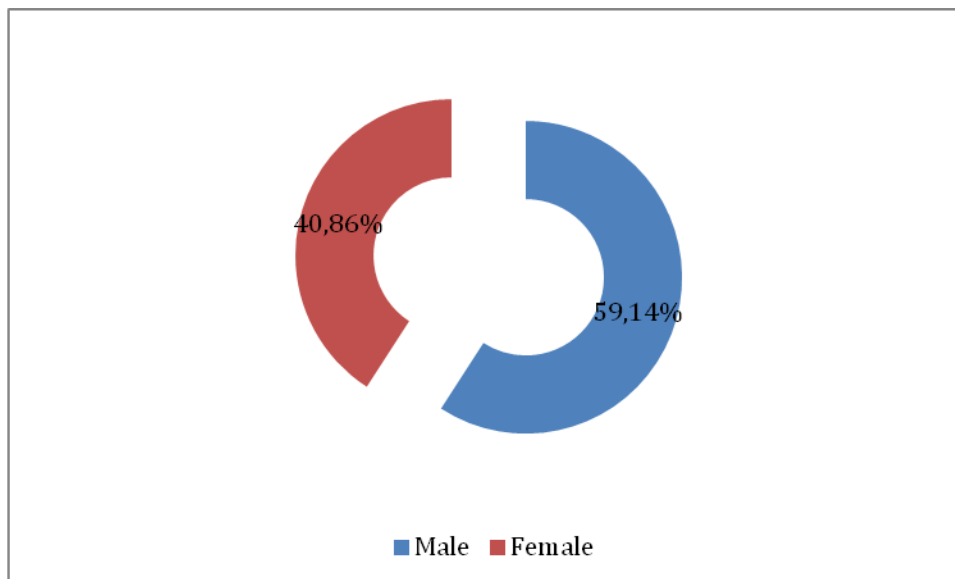
Figure 5.2: Distribution of gender

4.3.2.3 Race

According to Figure 5.3, the Coloured race group (36.56%) constituted the majority of respondents followed by Indian race group at 23.66%. Blacks made up 21.51% and Whites 18.28%.
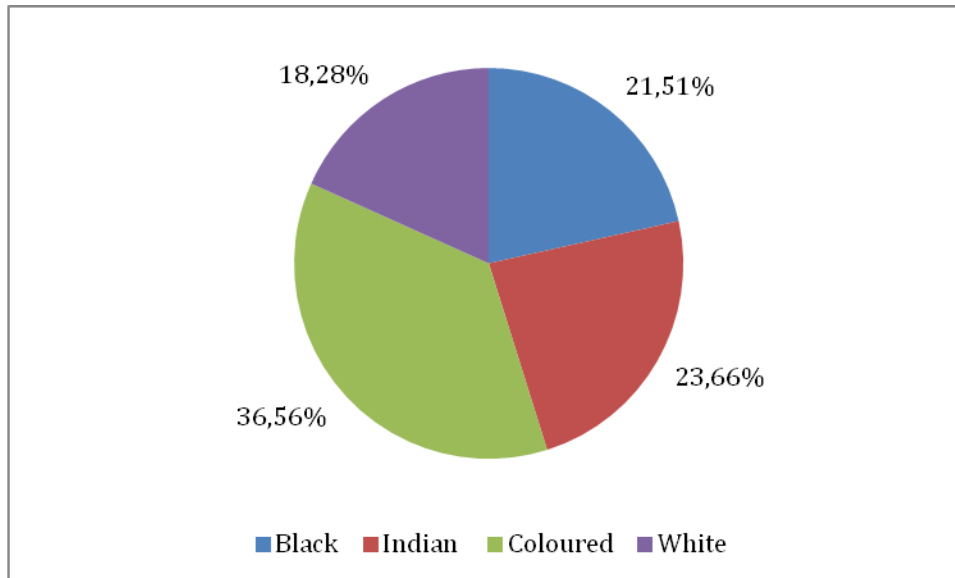
Figure 5.3: Distribution of race

4.3.2.4 Level of Education

According to Figure 5.4, 15.05% of the participants had Matric, 15.05% also have Certificate, 27.96% with Diploma followed by the majority of 29.03% with Bachelors degree, 9.68% with Honours Degree and lastly 3.23% with Master's Degree.
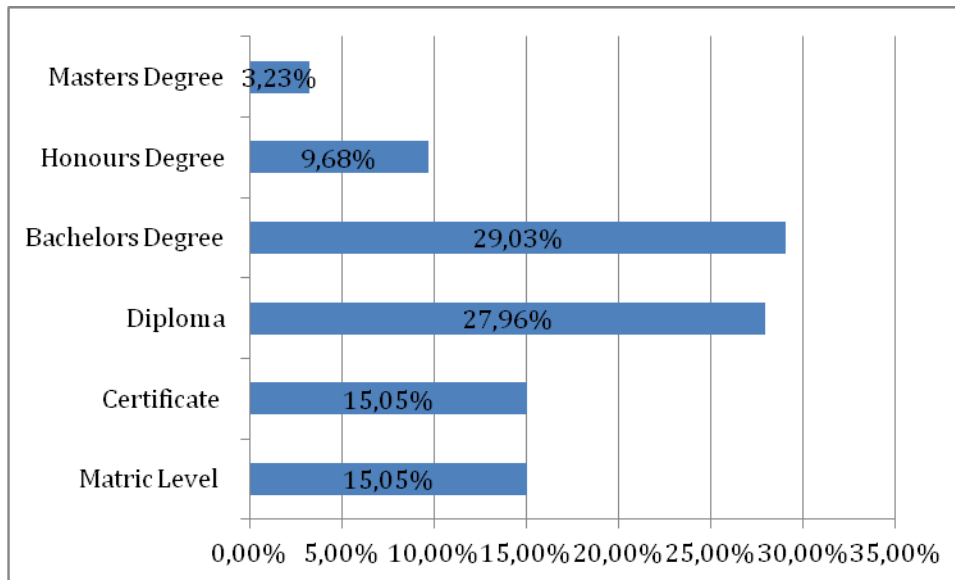
Figure 5.4: Level of education

4.3.2.5 Years of Experience

Figure 5.5 shows that 74.19% majority of the participants had between 5 years and 10 years of experience, followed by 20.43% with less than 5 years and lastly with 5.38% with 11 years and above.
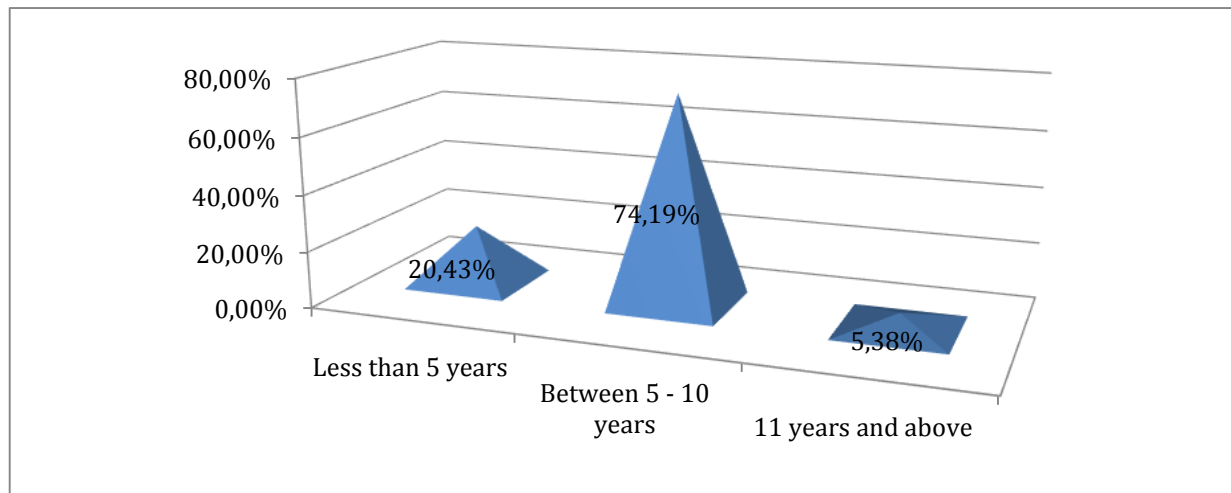
Figure 5.5: Years of experience

4.4. Effectiveness of the implementation of the strategy

Lazenby (2010)**,** defines strategy implementation as the process whereby a selected strategy is turned into actions to ensure that organizational goals are accomplished. Effective strategy implementation requires a visible leader, who is able to communicate the vision, drive the implementation process and shows the necessary behaviour for achievement.

4.5. Link between budgets, rewards and the intended strategy

In response to the link between budgets, rewards and the intended strategy, to support the implementation process, figure 5.6 shows that 2.15% strongly disagree, 6.45% disagreed, 9.68% neither agree, no disagree, 77.42% agree and 4.30% strongly disagree
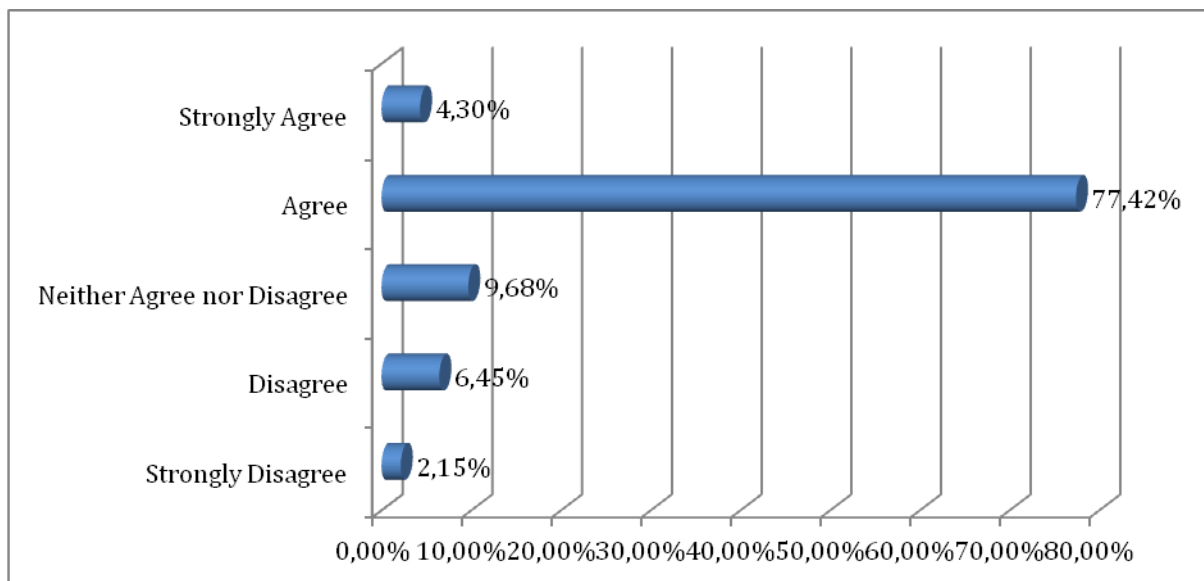
Figure 5.6: Link between budgets, rewards and the intended strategy

4.6. Barriers in implementing the intended strategy

Figure 5.7 which is in response to the question 'Did you feel that there are unrealistic targets and expectations that acts as a barrier to middle managers

when implementing the intended strategy', 0.00% strongly disagree, 3.26% disagreed, 13.04% neither agree no disagree, 65.22% agree and 18.48% strongly agree
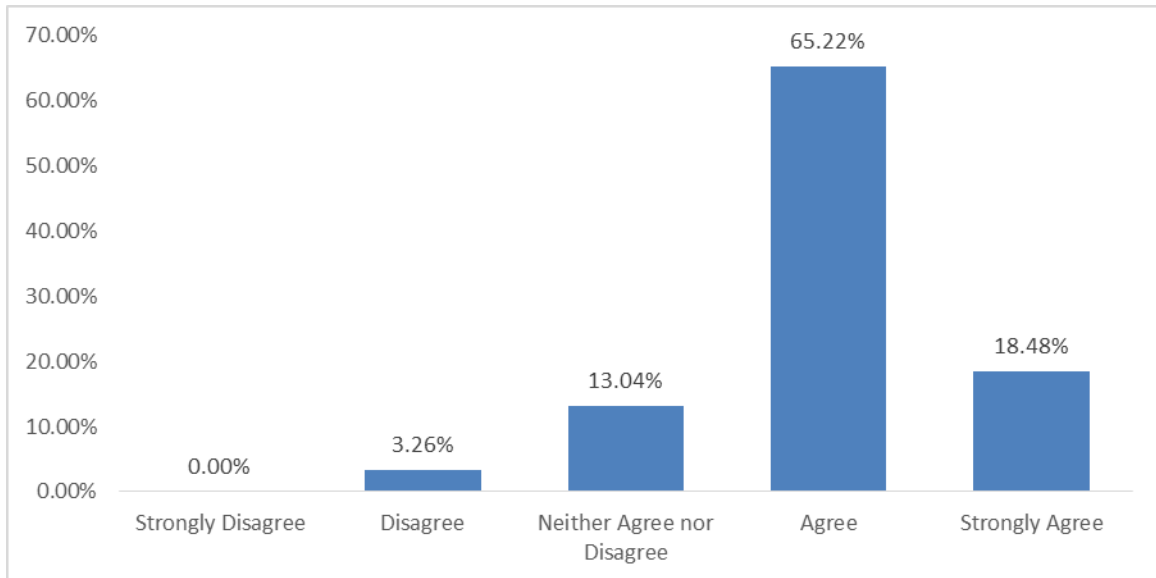
Figure 5.7: Barriers in implementing the intended strategy

4.7. Key changes in the organizational strategy

Figure 5.8 which is in response to the question 'Do you feel that the key changes in the organizational strategy that may affect employees are clearly defined?', 0.00% strongly disagree, 5.43% disagreed, 15.22% neither agree no disagree, 48.91% agree and 30.43% strongly disagreed
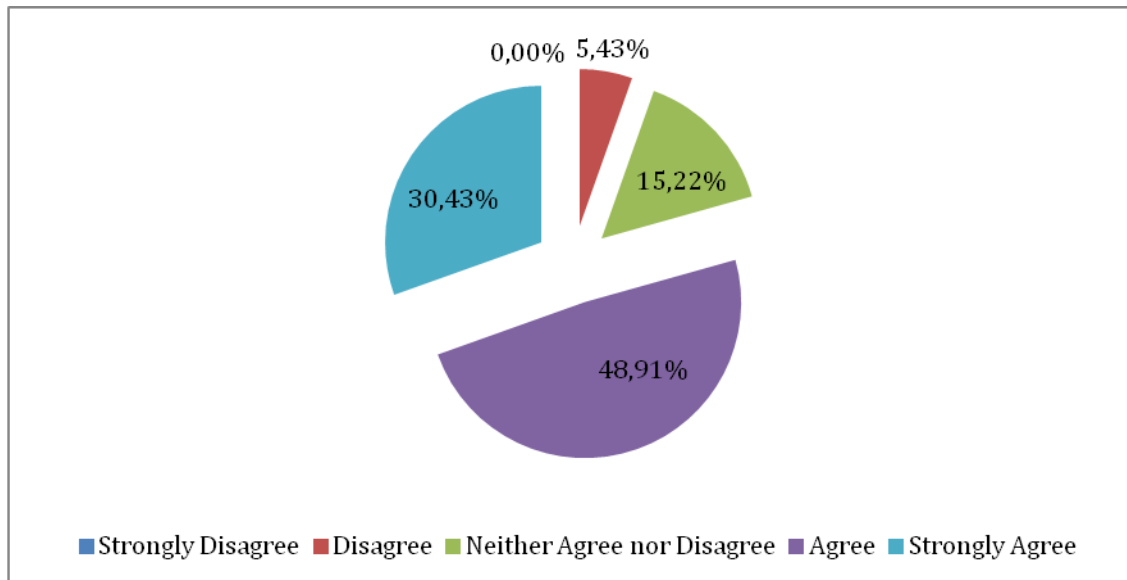
Figure 5.8: Key changes in the organizational strategy

4.8. Understanding the vision and strategy

As evidenced in figure 5.9 as a response to the question 'Does the workforce understands the vision and strategy?', 2.17% strongly disagreed, 5.43% disagreed, 29.35% Indicated neutral, 46.74% agreed and 16.30% strongly agreed.
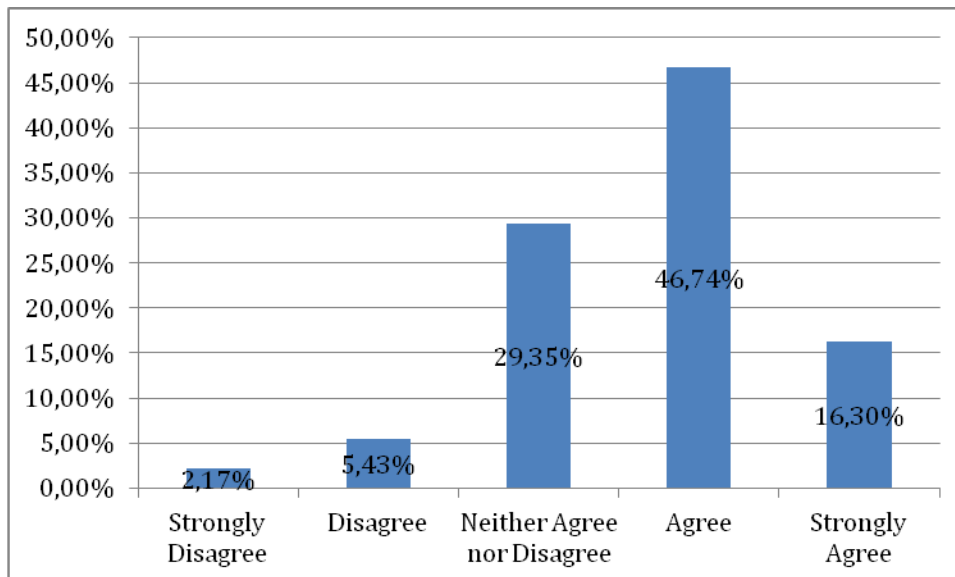
Figure 5.9: Understanding the vision and strategy

4.9. Role of middle managers in strategy implementation

This section looks at the level of involvement of middle managers in the strategy implementation.

4.10. Role in strategy implementation

Figure 5.10 which is in response to the question 'Do you feel you have a role to play in strategy implementation?', 2.17% strongly disagree, 1.09% disagreed, 19.57% neither agree no disagree, 47.83% agree and 29.35% strongly disagree
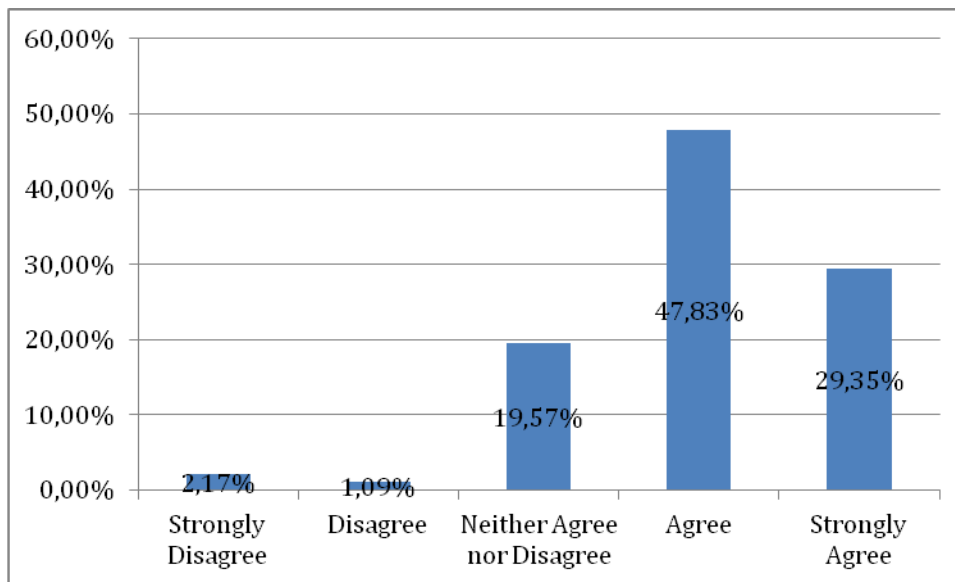
Figure 5.10: Role in strategy implementation

4.11. Support from senior managers

Figure 5.11 which is in response to the question 'Do senior management provides adequate support to middle managers and the rest of the organization in the implementation of the strategy?', 1.09% strongly disagree, 9.78%

disagreed, 27.17% neither agree no disagree, 34.78% agree and 27.17% strongly disagree
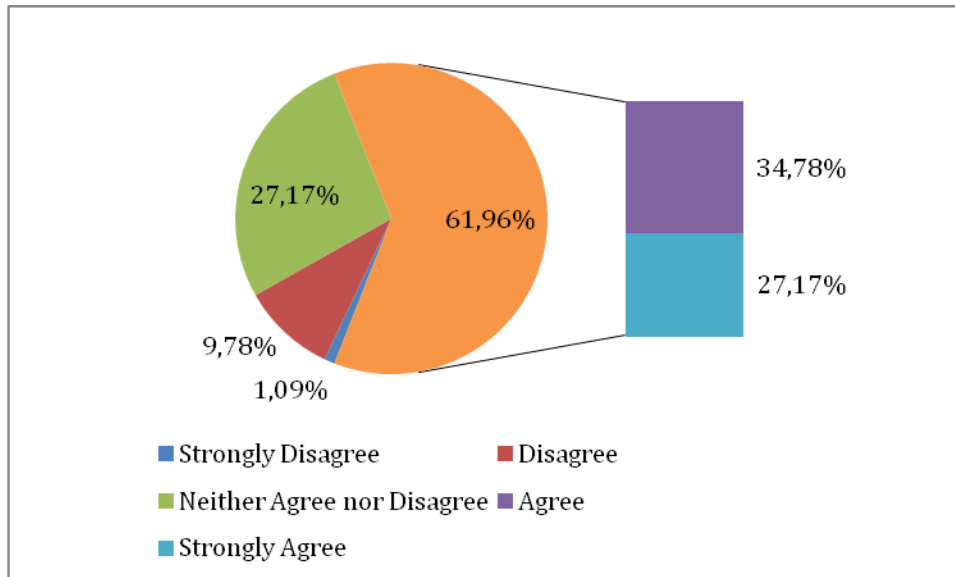
Figure 5.11: Support from senior managers

4.12. Clearly defined goals and well understood

Figure 5.12 which is in response to the question 'Do you feel that goals are sufficiently defined and well understood by employees?', 3.23% strongly disagree, 7.53% disagreed, 15.05% neither agree no disagree, 46.24% agree and 27.96% strongly agree
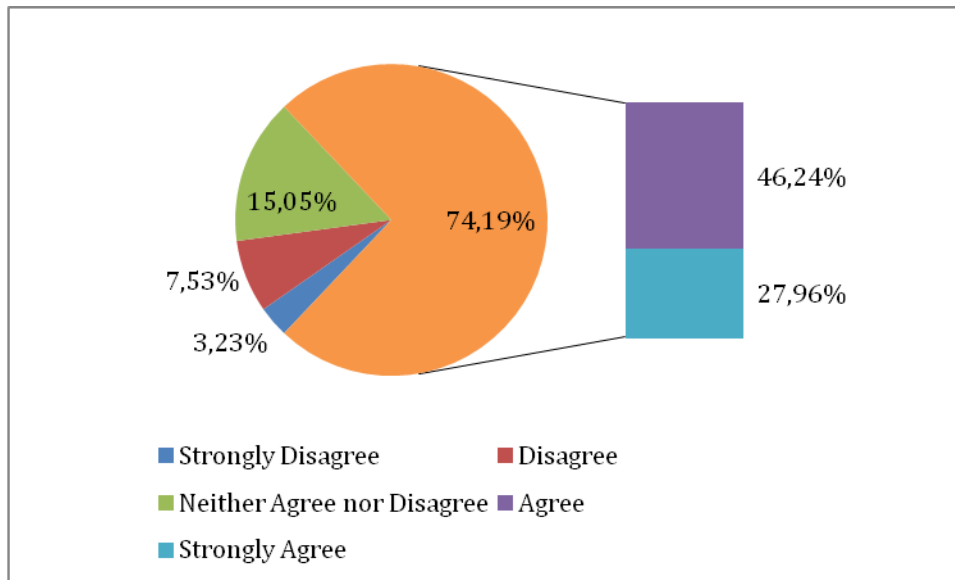
Figure 5.12: Clearly defined goals and well understood

4.13. Necessary skills and expertise

As evidenced in Figure 5.13 the majority of respondents 45.16% agree that they have necessary skills and expertise to ensure successful implementation of a strategy and 4.30% of respondents disagree. Fair amounts of percentage 13.8% are neutral, majority of 45.16% strongly agree and 0.00% strongly disagree
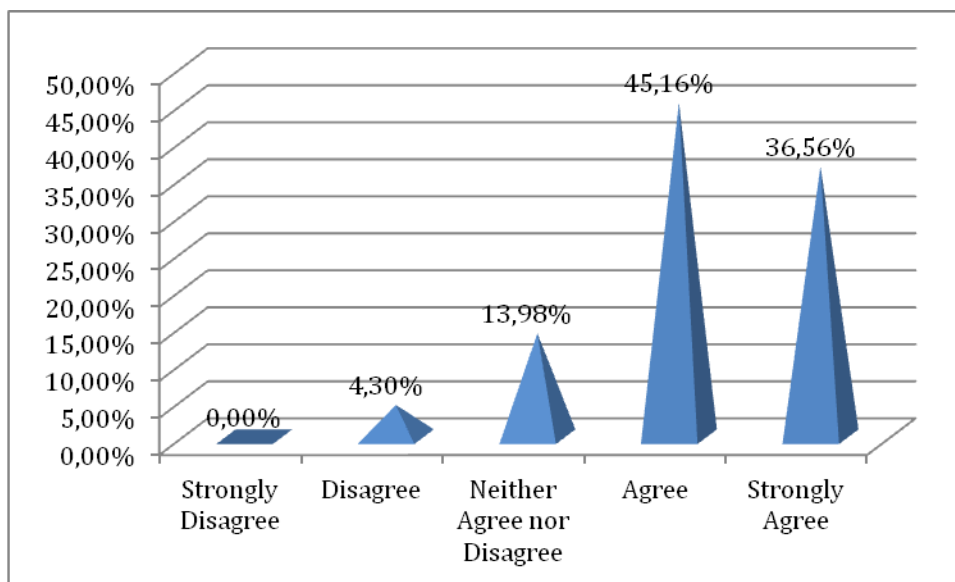
4.14. Key factors to successful strategy implementation

This sections looks at key factors to use to implement strategy successfully

4.15. Detailed action plan and tactics

The data in Figure 5.14 reflects that the majority of respondents 45.16% agree that the detailed action plan and tactics steps needed to successfully implement the strategy is clearly defined and their respective departments they are fully aware about employee participation structures, 0% Strongly disagreed, 4.30% Disagreed, 13.98% Indicated Neutral, and 38.56% Strongly agreed
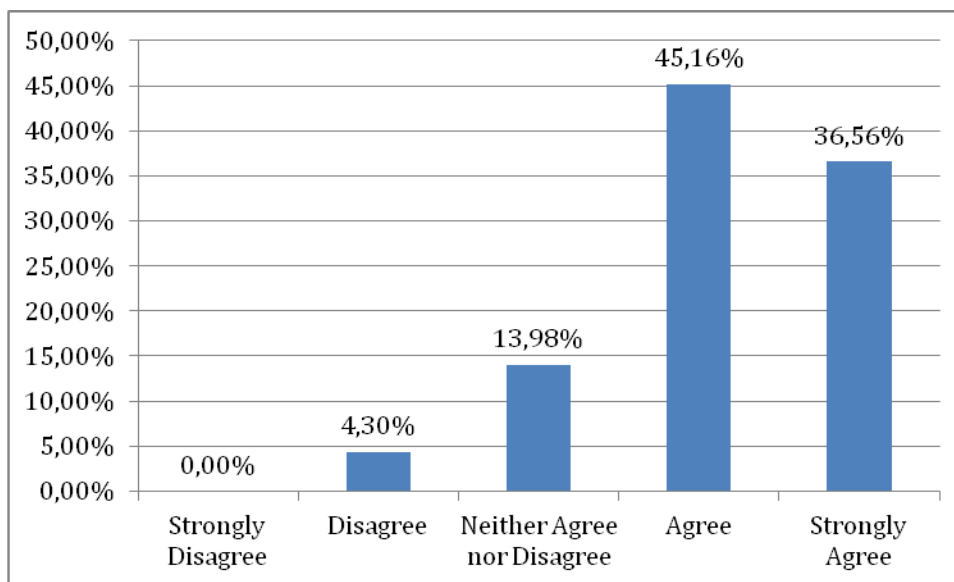
Figure 5.14: Detailed action plan and tactics

4.16. Appropriateness of organizational structure

It is evident from Figure 5.15 that 46.15% of respondents agree that the organizational structure is appropriate to the intended strategy 4.40% strongly

disagreed, 8.79% disagreed, 20.88% indicated neutral, 57.9% and 19.3% strongly agreed.
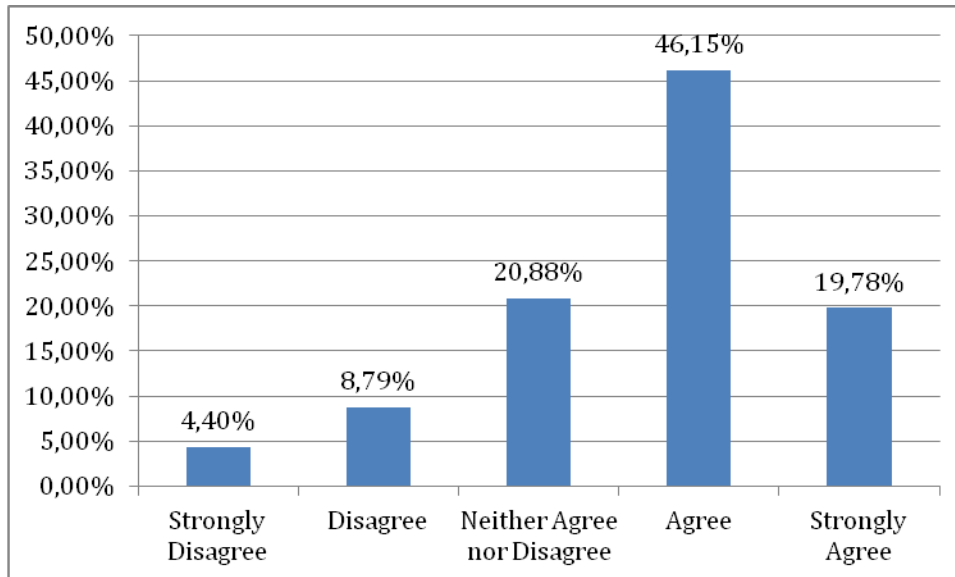
Figure 5.15: Appropriateness of organizational structure

4.17. Human resources as the main factor in strategy implementation

As indicated in Figure 5.16 more than a third 38.04% of the participants agreed that the organization considers human resources as the main factor in ensuring that strategy is implemented successful, 25% strongly disagree, 23.91% neither agree nor disagree, 9.78% disagree and minority of 3.26% strongly disagreed
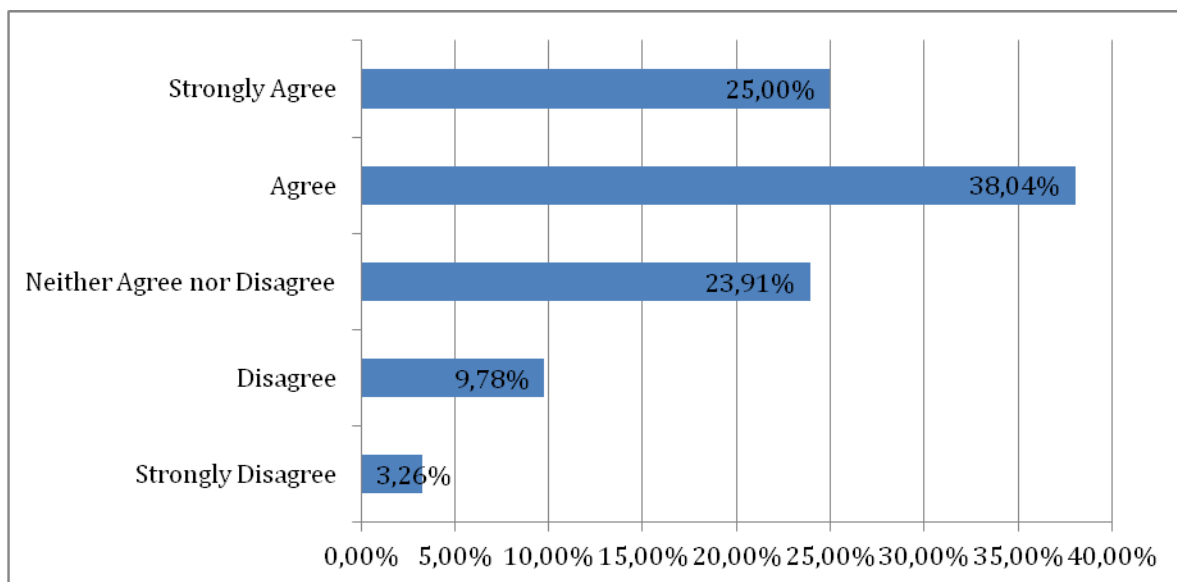
Figure 5.16: Human resources as the main factor in strategy implementation

4.18. Strategy monitoring and controlling

According to Figure 5.17 which is in response to the question 'Does the organization ensures that strategy is closely monitored and controlled to ensure that it does not derailed and it is on track?', 0% strongly disagree, 10.87% disagreed, 20.65% neither agree nor disagree, 43.8% agree and 25% strongly disagree
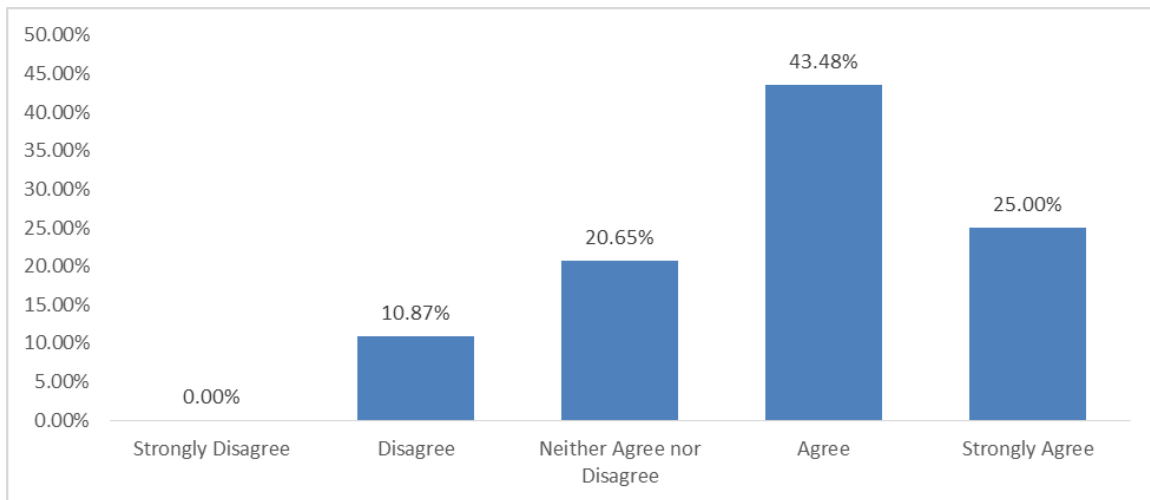
Figure 5.17: Strategy monitoring and controlling

4.19. Strategy Communication to all members of the organization

This section presents the findings whether the strategy was well communicated to all members of the organization.

4.20. Purpose of the strategy clearly communicated

Figure 5.18 clearly highlighted that 53.76% of respondents agree that the purpose of the strategy clearly communicated. 1.08% strongly disagreed, 8.60% disagreed, 26.88% neither agree nor disagree and 9.68 strongly agreed
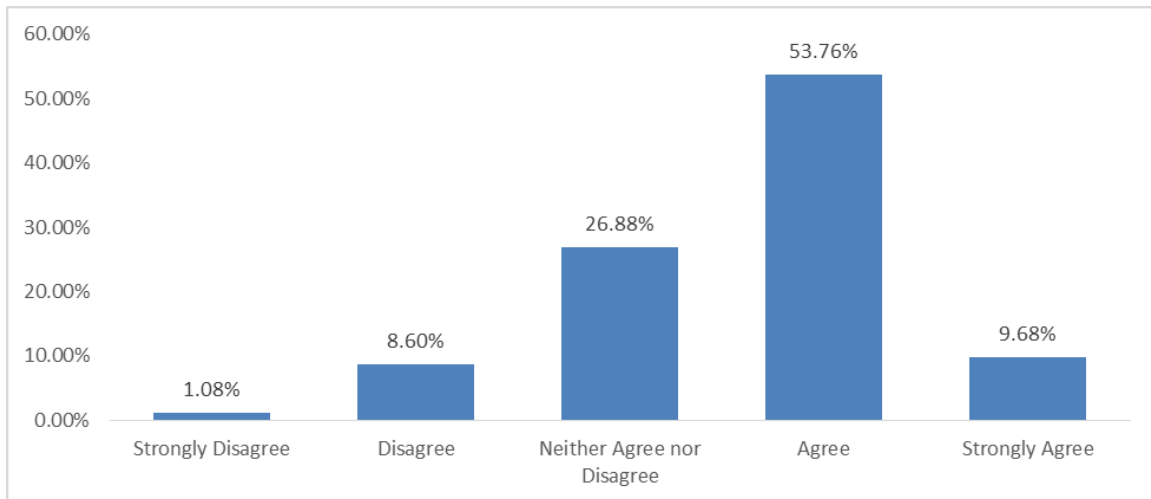
Figure 5.18: Purpose of the strategy clearly communicated

4.21. Future vision clearly communicated

According to Figure 5.19 about the future vision, 60% positively indicated that it is clearly communicated by the leaders to the rest of the organization. 26.88% neither agree or nor disagree, 11.83% disagree and 1.08% strongly disagreed
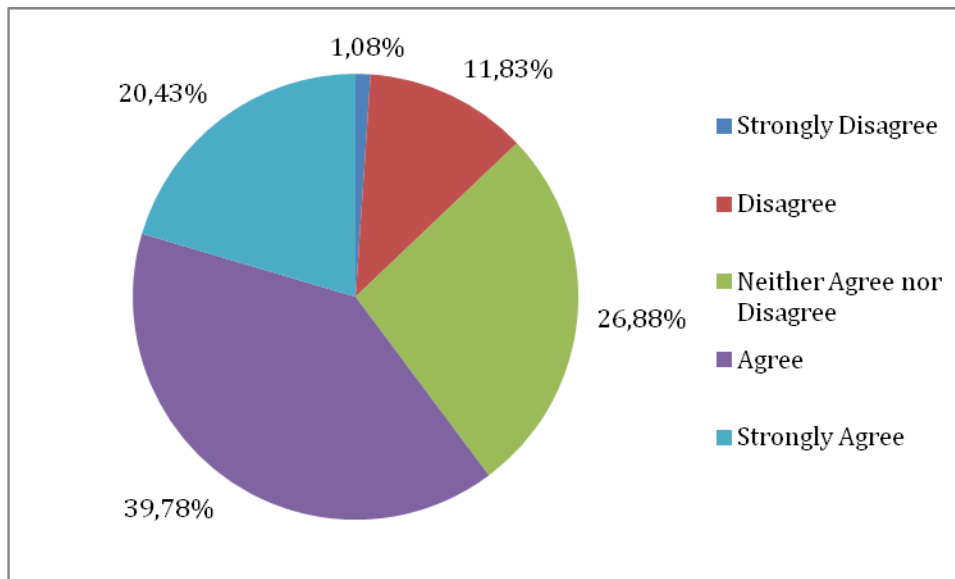
Figure 5.19: Future vision clearly communicated

4.22. Importance of communication to ensure employee alignment

It can be seen in Figure 5.20 that the majority of the participants 81% positively indicated that communication is essential in making sure that everybody understands their role in ensuring the successful implementation of the strategy, 9.68% neither agree nor disagree, 7.53% disagreed and the minority of 2.15% strongly disagreed
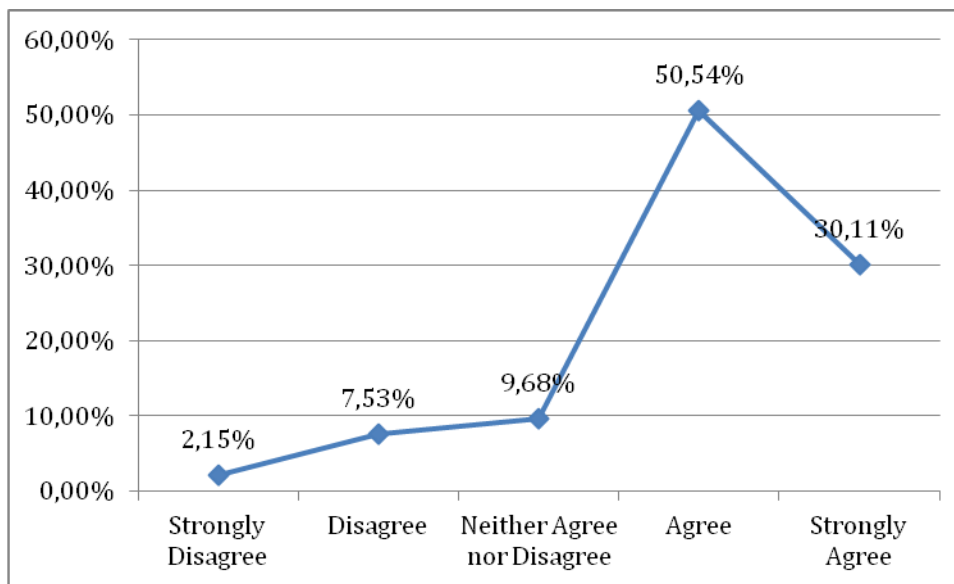
Figure 5.20: Importance of communication to ensure employee alignment

4.23. Clear communication between employees and managers

As evidenced in Figure 5.21 the majority of respondents, 39.78% agree there is a clear communication between employees and managers in terms of how the strategy implementation is linked with the organization vision and mission and 10.75% of respondents disagree with the statement. Fair amounts of percentage 15.5% are neutral, 33.33% strongly agree and 1.08% strongly disagree.
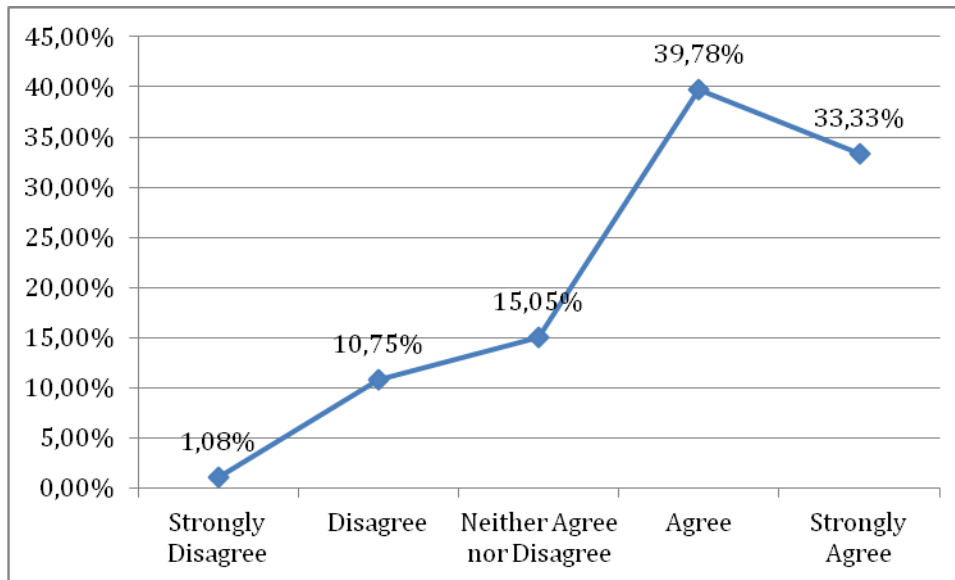
Figure 5.21: Clear communication between employees and managers

4.24. Chi-Square

Chi-squared test of association showed that there was significant association between participants age and statements regarding unrealistic targets and expectations, understanding the vision and strategy, and successfully implement the strategy ($p < 0.05$). For example, more participants who were between the age of 40 years and 49 years agreed that there are unrealistic targets and expectations compared to other age group (Table 2). More young participants agreed that the workforce understands the vision and strategy compared to their older counterparts.

Table 5.2: Association between age and statements regarding unrealistic targets and expectations, understanding the vision and strategy, and successfully implement the strategy

Statements		Age group		Chi-squared	p-value
		<40	>= 40 years		
There are unrealistic targets and expectations that acts as a barrier to middle managers when implementing the intended strategy	Disagree	9	7	2.992	0.084
	Agree	30	41		
The workforce understands the vision and strategy	Disagree	11	23	2.716	0.099
	Agree	29	29		
The detailed action plan and tactics steps is needed to successfully implement the strategy clearly defined	Disagree	6	23	8.566	0.003
	Agree	34	30		

Result showed that participants race was statistically associated with statements regarding successfully implementation of strategy (p<0.05). This indicates that more coloured participants agreed to the detailed action plan and tactics steps are needed to successfully implement the strategy clearly defined and the organization ensures that strategy is closely monitored and controlled to ensure that it does not derailed and it is on track (table 3).

Table 5.3: Association between race statements regarding successfully implementation of strategy

Statements		Race				Chi-squared	p-value
		Black	Indian	Coloured	White		
The detailed action plan and tactics steps are needed to successfully implement the strategy clearly defined	Disagree	8	7	4	10	12.755	0.005
	Agree	12	15	30	7		
The organization ensures that strategy is closely monitored and controlled to ensure that it does not derailed and it is on track	Disagree	7	7	5	10	10.468	0.015
	Agree	13	14	29	7		

The present study found significant association between years of experience and statements regarding strategy (p<0.05). This meant participants with more years of experience agreed that It could be concluded that those having more experiences agreed there is a link between budgets, rewards and the intended strategy to support the implementation process, senior management provides adequate support to middle managers and the rest of the organization in the implementation of the strategy, and the future vision is clearly communicated by the leaders to the rest of the organization (table 4).

Table 5.4: Association between years of service and statements regarding strategy

Statements		Years of service		Chi-squared	p-value
		Less than 5 years	>= 5 years		
There is a link between budgets, rewards and the intended strategy to support the implementation process	Disagree	6	19		
	Agree	13	55	0.268	0.605
Senior management provides adequate support to middle managers and the rest of the organization in the implementation of the strategy	Disagree	8	27		
	Agree	10	47	0.389	0.533
The future vision clearly communicated by the leaders to the rest of the organization	Disagree	10	27		
	Agree	9	47	1.645	0.200

Chapter 5: Discussion of results

5.1 Introduction

The data collected will be discussed and analyzed in this chapter. Research methods in Chapter three provided the direction for the collection of data gathered from middle managers within the sales division at Brandhouse.

The discussion of the findings of the study is placed in the context of relevant prior research in relation to the objectives set. The results of this study may not be generalized to the entire population of Brandhouse employees, due to non-probability sampling being used. Ninety (90) participants began to respond to the questionnaire, of whom 90 completed the entire questionnaire, resulting in the 100% completion rate. The actual time taken to complete the survey was 15 minutes, which was in line with the estimated time.

5.2 Participation

All participants chosen were middle managers and were involved in the strategy implementation and have also been involved in recent change process at Brandhouse. All 90 participants who participated agreed to take part in the research and this was also supported by the Brandhouse Executive Committee. Middle managers who took part in the research have had various positions within the organization and had all direct employees reporting to them.

5.3 Treatment of data

After the initial screening of the data, the data was received was used for analysis. The data are presented in table format and graphically to ensure that

the results are easily understood. Inferential and descriptive statistics are used to present the data.

5.4. Demographic profile of respondents

The demographic profile of the respondents included the age, gender, race, levels of education and years of experience.

In this study we found that 47.31% of the respondents are between the age of 40-49 years, followed by 41.94% of responds between the age of 30-39%, 9.68% of the respondents are between the age of 50-59 and lastly 1.08% are between the age of 25-29 years.

In this the study we found that 59.14% of respondents are male and 40.86% of respondents are female. We also found that Coloured race group constituted the majority of 36.56% respondents followed by the Indian race group at 23.66%. Blacks made up 21.51% and whites 18.28%. It was also found that 29.03% of the participants had Bachelor's Degree, followed by 27.96% with Diploma, 15.05% with Certificate as well as another 15.05% with Matric and lastly 3.23% with Master's Degree.

In this study it was found that a large number of respondents 74.19% have worked for 5-10 years for the company, 20.43% of respondents have worked for less than 5 years and 5.38% worked for 11 years above. This finding reflects that a significant portion of respondents have been with the company for a very long time.

5.5. Objectives of the study

Research objectives for this study were linked to the various questions in the research instrument to ensure that sufficient data were collected in order to

sufficiently and completely answer the research questions. The presentation and discussion of results are set out below for each objective of the study.

5.6. To evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy implementation

This sections looks at the evaluating the effectiveness of the strategy implementation at Brandhouse (Pty) Ltd.

5.7. Link between budgets, rewards and the intended strategy

As was evidenced in Figure 5.7 result showed that the majority 77% of the participants positively identified a link between budgets, rewards and the intended strategy to support the implementation process. This shows that Brandhouse supports the implementation process by linking budgets and rewards to ensure the success for the implementation. This is the evidence that the Brandhouse is finding creative ways to motivate employees and also reward them for aligning themselves to the vision and the strategy. (Charles 2011), suggests that in order for organizational strategy to be successful, one needs to be aware of the fund needed for their intended strategy. In order for any strategy to be implemented successfully, organizations needs to ensure the organizational goals are aligned with budgets and rewards (Mondaq 2011). Brandhouse introduced incentive schemes for different departments to encourage motivation within the organizations and to make sure that goals are achieved.

According to (Lazenby, 2010), nine out of ten organizations fail to implement their planned strategies successful. One of the barriers of strategy implementation is people barriers which suggests that only 25% of managers link rewards to strategy.

5.8. Barriers in implementing the intended strategy

About three-quarters of the participants positively mentioned that there are unrealistic targets and expectations that act as a barrier to middle managers when implementing the intended strategy Figure 5.7 The research shows that over 83% respondents feel that there are unrealistic targets and expectations that act as a barrier when implementing the intended strategy. Contrary to that, 3.26% of respondents disagree that there are unrealistic targets and expectations. However, 13.04% of respondents are neutral.

(Foundry, 2015) suggests that organizations that lacks memorable, clear and embraced strategy often fin it hard to implement their intended strategy and often find top management actions disenchanted and lack effectiveness.

Strategy barriers are normally those factors that hinders, prevent, obstruct, and block the process of strategy implementation. These factors are a stumbling block or an impediment and make it hard for organizations to achieve its goals. These barriers can be either internal or external sources of the organizations. The type of strategy chosen by the organizations can also be the factor of these barriers. The inability and the lack of understanding of a strategy to connect the formulation of a strategy and implementation has a major effect on successful implementation (Lihalo, 2013).

According to (Wicks, 2015), there are five identified steps on how to determine the factors that affects decision implementation in the organzation;
- Involvement of all stakeholders towards any decision implantation. Stakeholders may wants clarity on some issues before implementation of decisions.
- Employees to be included in the formulation of a strategy process till the implementation phase and employees to be with the strategy that the organization is pursing and allow them enough time to get more clarity and

provide feedback. Use employee feedback to determine the factors that hinders or helps in strategy implementation.

- Conduct the industry analysis to identify factors that directly or indirectly affects decision at hand bearing in mind that organization decisions are implemented within a context that includes industry standards, regulations, external economics and social conditions.

- Asking the right questions to the relevant people. Consult experts, look at ideal situations and ask probing questions.

- Work backwards. Determine why there are barriers in the implementation or why is it necessary to carry out a certain option and not the other. This will help to give an idea as in why the strategy is unclear.

5.9. Key changes in the organizational strategy

Figure 5.8 illustrates that the majority respondents 48.91% were of the opinion that key changes in the organizational strategy that may affect employees are clearly defined and also with 30.43% who strongly agreed. However 12.22% of respondents are not sure whether that the key changes in the organizational strategy that may affect employees are clearly defined and 5.43% of respondents disagree. The majority (79%) of the participants indicated that the key changes in the organizational strategy that may affect employees are clearly defined.

(Anderson, 2015) suggest that it is impossible to compete in the market place without a clear business strategy and most organizations have to undergo changes in order to achieve their expected return on investment. Key changes in the organizational strategy will reduce costs and accelerate change. It is empirical to note the people component of your change strategy that involves people's behaviour, emotions, reaction to changes in their mindset and how to engage employees in the formulation and implementation and how to ensure the capacity and commitment to change.

At Brandhouse, employees were resistant to change at the beginning that is illustrated by the majority respondents who were of the opinion that key changes in the organizational strategy may affect employees. (Friedman, 2012), indicated that even when change is commonly understood as an development over the status quo, employees like to stick to their comfort zones because they fear the unknown.

5.10. Understanding the vision and strategy

Figure 5.9. illustrates that 46.74% agreed to understands the vision and the strategy for the organization with 16.30% of respondents who also strongly agreed to be in line with the vision and strategy. However about 29.35% of respondents neither agree nor disagree with understanding the vision and strategy.

According to (Johan Hough, 2011), a strategic vision describes an organization's future business scope, it describes the direction in which the organization is going. It is the responsibility for senior management to ensure that everyone is excited about the future of the organization by developing a 'picture' of the future destination.

5.11. Role of middle managers in strategy implementation

This section discusses the results of the respondent's degree in which they involved in the process of implementing the strategy

5.12. Role in strategy implementation

As was evidenced in Figure 5.10, 47.83% of respondents agree that they have a role to play in strategy implementation with 29.35% strongly agreed to have a role in strategy implementation. Contrary to that, 1.09% of respondents

disagreed to have a role to play in strategy implementation. However, 19.57% of respondents are neutral and small percentages 2.17% of respondents strongly disagreed to have a role in strategy implementation.

Middle managers play an important role within the organizations affording them with the opportunity to influence an organization's strategic activities. In many instances, middle managers have been seen as the agent of change, the drivers of strategic change. But in order for them to be actively involved in the strategies, it is crucial that they believe in themselves as the main drivers and as the forefront of the strategic change (Doll, 2013)

5.14. Support from senior managers

According to Figure 6.2 which in response to the question 'Do senior management provides adequate support to middle managers and the rest of the organization in the implementation of the strategy?', 1.09% strongly disagree, 9.78% disagreed, 27.17% neither agree no disagree, 34.78% agree and 27.17% strongly disagree.

More than half of the participants reported that senior management provides adequate support to middle managers and the rest of the organization in the implementation of the strategy. (Radomska, 2014) suggests that strategy implementation requires lot of support from senior managers because they are the drivers behind the wheels, often employees requires supports and motivation from their immediate managers to keep them ion track in driving the business strategy. Effective strategy implementation requires enough adjustment of capabilities within the organization. This talks particular to the important issues such as knowledge of managers, collective of experience and a functioning decision making instruments.

5.15. Clearly defined goals and well understood

Figure 5.12., illustrates that 74% of the participants positively mentioned of goals are sufficiently defined and well understood by employees. However, 15.05% of respondents are neutral and 26.96% strongly disagree. It is crucial that organizational goals are clearly defined and well understood to all members of the organization to ensure that everyone is moving to the same direction.

According to (Schatcher, 2016), when goals are well understood and clearly defined and that reduce chances that the organizational strategy might be derailed. Well defined goals and clear purpose allows employees to track their own progress throughout the financial year and allows correcting their efforts as necessary. (Ray, 2016) suggests that each member of the organizations needs to be clear and accountable for their deadline, budget and as well as their scope of responsibilities. By doing so, that will allow management to align goals of the organization with the roles of employees.

Brandhouse top management needs to ensure that all the drivers of the implementation process clearly understand their roles in the process of strategy implementation.

5.16. Necessary skills and expertise

As evidenced in Figure 5.13 the majority of respondents 45.16% agree that they have necessary skills and expertise to ensure the successful implementation of a strategy and 4.30% of respondents disagree with the statement. 9% are neutral, majority of 36.56% strongly agree and 0.00% strongly disagree

For successful implementation of a strategy, 72% of the participants agreed that they have necessary skills and expertise.

(George, 2016), suggest that management needs to have necessary skills to commune the business strategy by making sure that the case of change is communicated if needs be and ensure that managers have neccessary skills to build consesus for how to proceed. The strategy drivers needs to ensure that measures and dadlines are established to ensure the smooth implementaton and also make sure that resources all allocated accordingly. Managers should also be able to develop reward structure for those employees who achieves st target in order to motivate them in in ensuring that organizational goals are achieved.

5.17. Key factors to successful strategy implementation

This section discusses the results of the respondent's key factors to successful strategy implementation.

5.18. Detailed action plan and tactics

As evidenced in figure 5.14 that the majority of respondents 45.16% agree that the detailed action plan and tactics steps needed to successfully implement the strategy is clearly defined and their respective departments they are fully aware about employee participation structures, 0% strongly disagreed, 4.30% disagreed, 13.98% indicated neutral, and 38.56% strongly agreed. Result shows 72% of the participants of the view that the detailed action plan and tactics steps are needed to successfully implement the strategy clearly defined.

For organizations to successfully implement their strategies a detailed action plan and a list of tactics steps which is necessary to their strategies needs to be developed. Individuals need to be assigned with responsibilities to accomplish those action plans. Timelines needs to be clear to estimate the required resources to accomplish each of their action plans. This will then translate the broad strategy statement into work assignments (Anderson, 2015). For a a strategy to be succesful, managers needs to ensure that employees understands

the action plan and tactics that needs to be followed to ensure that the organizational strategy is achieved (Birnbaum, 2009)

5.19. Appropriateness of organizational structure

It is evident from Figure 6.6 that 46.15% of respondents Agree that the organizational structure is appropriate to the intended strategy 4.40% Strongly Disagreed, 8.79% Disagreed, 20.88% Indicated Neutral, 57.9% and 19.3% Strongly Agreed. About two-thirds (66%) of the participants mentioned that the organizational structure is appropriate to the intended strategy.

This talks to the alignment between the intended strategy and the organizational structure. The organizational structure should be appropriate to the intended strategy.

The most important aspect of strategy implementation is the need to establish the strategy so that it pervades everyday actions and decisions in a way that is consistent with long term strategic success. Inappropriate organizational structure can hinder the development or implementation of a strategy (Barnat, 2014). There are three important elements that need to be managed to fit the strategy if it has to be established: organizational structure, culture and leadership. Organizational structure is the main concern in implementing a carefully formulated strategy. There is a long history on the linkage between organizational structure, corparate strategy and perfomance.

According to (Ingram, 2017), an organizational structure must support its strategy. All employees must be empowered to be able to complete necessary tasks to company objectives and organizational structure can hinder employees in their roles.

5.20. Human resources as the main factor in strategy implementation

According to Figure 5.16 more than a third (38%) of the participants agreed that the organization considers human resources as the main factor in ensuring that strategy is implemented successful. 25% strongly disagree, 23.91% neither agree nor disagree, 9.78% disagree and minority of 3.26% strongly disagreed

According to (Birnbaum, 2009), a successful organization in strategy implementation considers human resources as the main factor in ensuring strategies happen. They perceive human resource issue in two ways. Firstly, management should think about organization's communication needs in order to articulate the strategies so that all people involved with the action steps fully understand what is expected when implementing the strategy. Secondly, managers should be aware of the effects that each strategy might impose on their human resources needs.

Hameed (2014), mentions that most organizations which are successful in strategy imlememntation considers human resources as a very impornant factor in making strategies happen because according to them, involving human resources requires that management considers the organization's communication needs. Management articulate strategies so that everyone involved wity developing relevant action steps understand the strategy there are to implement. Human resources management function recognize the effects of each new strategy will have n their human resource needs.

5.21. Strategy monitoring and controlling

Result from Figure 5.17, shows that 68.8% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that the organization ensures that strategy is closely monitored and controlled to ensure that it does not derailed and it is on track, 0% strongly

disagree, 10.87% disagreed, 20.65% neither agree no disagree, 43.8% agree and 25% strongly disagree

This includes periodically reviewing the plan to keep it on track. This looks at the range of options to ensure the strategy is not derailed and it's on track. Those options include changing the schedule, changing the strategy, changing of objectives and changing the tactics. It is crucial for management to have well defined objectives and strategies in order to achieve its goals. Management should monitor how it strategies are pursued and implemented as well as review and evaluate them regularly (Charles, 2011)

5.22. Strategy Communication to all members of the organization

This section discusses the level of strategy communication to all members of the organization.

5.23. Purpose of the strategy clearly communicated

According to Figure 5.18 shows that the majority of the participants positively identified the purpose of the strategy was clearly communicated, 1.08% strongly disagreed, 8.60% disagreed, 26.88%, neither agree nor disagree and 9.68 strongly agreed. This shows that management are doing a great job in ensuring that everyone in the organization understand the purpose of the strategy and they clearly understands their role in ensuring the success of the strategy.

Organizations needs to have a deeper meaning as to why do they even exists in order to influence the decision-making, strategy and behaviours at senior levels. Managers should establish relevance with all employees within the organization that makes them care more about the job they do and the company they work for. Simple and inspiring message that is easily to understand and to relate to should be at the core of all communications. Strategy-specific messages linked

to your purpose become tools to help employees connect their day-to-day efforts with the aspiration of the company (Everse, 2013)

5.24. Future vision clearly communicated

As was evidenced in Figure 5.19 with regards to the future vision, 60% positively indicated that it is clearly communicated by the leaders to the rest of the organization. 26.88% neither agree or nor disagree, 11.83% disagree and 1.08% strongly disagreed. With regards to the future vision, 60% positively indicated that it is clearly communicated by the leaders to the rest of the organization.

According to (Stark, 2014), the organization's vision is usually the responsibility for senior management and the challenge is that they are never fully effective in getting the message town to all employees unless supported middle managers and supervisors who makes sure that they keep a close eye in keeping their employees on the loop. (Decker, 2015) suggests that senior management are responsible for translating the vision into different messages that their different teams will respond to. It is also vital to augment logical reasoning with motion to inspire and that is how managers get buy-in and shift the employees to one direction of pursuing the same vision.

5.25. Importance of communication to ensure employee alignment

It can be seen that the majority of the participants 81% positively indicated that Communication is essential in making sure that everybody understands their role in ensuring the successful implementation of the strategy Figure 6.11, 9.68% neither agree nor disagree, 7.53% disagreed and the minority of 2.15% strongly disagreed. It is essential that there is a clear communication from top to bottom to ensure that everyone in the organization understand the vision and strategy that the organization is pursuing.

Myler (2012) suggest that organizations often miss the very component that enhances the development of strategy creation, communication and execution. And that critical element is alignment. For organizations to establish their strategies they rely solely on their on their internal mission, vision and values. A sustainable business strategy can only be realized through the pursuit of alignment. According to (Argenti, 2013), strategic-communication senior executives permit their corporate strategy to drive their communication choices. They are equally skilful at tailoring their communication activities to drive new strategy or to support the existing strategy

5.26. Clear communication between employees and managers

Figure 5.21 shows that the majority of participants 73% highlighted there is a clear communication between employees and managers in terms of how the strategy implementation is linked with the organization vision and mission and 10.75% of respondents disagree with the statement. Fair amounts of percentage 15.03% are neutral, 33.33% strongly agree and 1.08% strongly disagree.

According to (Weal, 2014), managers should ensure that employees are kept up to date with all key information about the organization so they fully understand the role they play within the company, team in order to deliver organizational goals and strategy. In order to achieve to achieve goals managers should keep employees informed and engaged through effective and regular communications, which are timely and relevant.

5.27. Summary

This chapter discussed the findings of this study supported by statutory provisions and journal readings. Key objectives for this study were presented, key findings and relationships were identified after demographic profile of responded were presented. However, top management should look at targets

and expectations that came out clearly in the responses for respondents that they are unrealistic and that might demoralize the middle managers and can also act as barrier when implementing the intended strategy.   The following chapter provide recommendations for top and middle managers and future employees for Brandhouse (Pty) Ltd

Chi-squared test of association showed that there was significant association between participants age and statements regarding unrealistic targets and expectations, understanding the vision and strategy, and successfully implement the strategy ($p < 0.05$). For example, more participants who were between the age of 40 years and 49 years agreed that there are unrealistic targets and expectations compared to other age group (Table 2). More young participants agreed that the workforce understands the vision and strategy compared to their older counterparts.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

Middle managers play a crucial role in the strategy implementation process in organizations and their influence on organizational performance through the involvement in the strategic planning process. (W.Christian, 2011) emphasized that middle managers still remains a driving force in determining the success of strategic initiatives. Middle managers play a crucial role in driving top management defined strategic objectives, they drive the strategic-change programs and they are the key strategic drivers in the emergence of strategic change.

This study has sought to determine the role played by middle managers in the strategy implementation process within the sales force division at Brandhouse. Objectives of the study were identified to determine the level of involvement and The role of middle managers in the strategy implementation process. Data analysis was presented in Chapter 5. This chapter sought to highlight the specific conclusions that may be drawn from the study, will identify limitations of the study, will focus on recommendations based on the findings and lastly, will make recommendations for further research.

6.2 Summary of findings

The research objectives were to establish the role played by middle managers in the strategy implementation process. Sixteen research propositions were postulated.
- Link between budgets, rewards and the intended strategy
- Barriers in implementing the intended strategy
- Key changes in the organizational strategy

- Understanding the vision and strategy
- Role of middle managers in strategy implementation
- Support from senior managers
- Clearly defined goals and well understood
- Necessary skills and expertise
- Detailed action plan and tactics
- Appropriateness of organizational structure
- Human resources as the main factor in strategy implementation
- Strategy monitoring and controlling
- Purpose of the strategy clearly communicated
- Future vision clearly communicated
- Importance of communication to ensure employee alignment
- Clear communication between employees and managers

The research results supports all sixteen propositions except the one that talks to the link between budgets, rewards and the intended strategy to support the implementation process. The research results for the role played by middle managers in the strategy implementation process was achieved.

The research found that Brandhouse middle managers play a crucial role in the implementation of organizational strategies. Findings in the literature review showed that middle managers plays a critical role in strategy implementation and it also showed that they also showed a good grasp of what their role as implementers needed. Research results showed that respondents showed a great interest in becoming more involved in the strategy formulation.

The research also showed that about three-quarters of the participants positively mentioned that there are unrealistic targets and expectations that acts as a barrier to middle managers when implementing the intended strategy.

There were very few factors that slowed down the implementation.

- The link between budgets, rewards and the intended strategy to support the implementation process, whereby about three-quarters of the participants positively mentioned that there are unrealistic targets and expectations that acts as a barrier to middle managers when implementing the intended strategy.

Here are some of the factors that contributed in implementation process.

- Clarity during implementation
- Clearly defined goals and well understood
- Support from senior management
- Effective communication across the board
- Peer implementation
- Implementation meeting reviews
- Purpose of the strategy clearly communicated

6.3 Managers implications

Top management should consider involving middle managers more often in strategic discussions. The sooner top management starts using middle managers for strategic discussions, the sooner they start developing skills to deal with more complex or bigger picture issues. Majority felt that they only used for implementation process and not given the chance to sit in strategic discussions.

As middle manager's role is to drive top management defined strategic objectives, involving them at an early stage would not only benefit the company but would also help them to easily buy into the strategy and ensure they own the implementation process with pride.

6.4 Recommendations for Brandhouse

Question responses were used to make up recommendations for Brandhouse top management to consider for future change processes.

- Research results showed that many respondents showed there were unrealistic targets and expectations that hinder them when implementing the organizational strategy. Therefore, top management should look at designing incentive programmes in order to incentivize middle managers in order to focus on primary issues and also reward them for good performance.

- Middle managers should be involved in strategic issues as mentioned earlier, this will thus give them more confidence as they drive the implementation process.

- Top management should support all employees

- The entire workforce should understand the vision and strategy

- Senior management should provides adequate support to middle managers and the rest of the organization in the implementation of the strategy

- The organizational structure should more be appropriate to the intended strategy

- The future vision is clearly should communicated by the leaders to the rest of the organization

6.5 Recommendations for future research

The research study findings provide guidance for recommendations for further research. Recommendations for future research are presented below;

- Other methods of data collections like interviews, group forums or discussion could have been used as opposed to the common questionnaire method used for this research.

- In this study only the middle managers within the sales force division was used. It would be recommended that the study be replicated on a much larger scale into other divisions in order to get a comprehensive picture for the role played by middle managers at Brandhouse. Perhaps a larger sample would be useful in validating the findings.

- The sample size used is not sufficient to reflect the factual image of middle manager's role in strategy implementation within the entire organization. Perhaps a larger sample would be more useful in validating the findings.

6.6. Conclusion

The research objectives set out for this study has been satisfied. The findings for this study are relevant to improving business practices for Brandhouse. The research result shows that middle managers plays a crucial role in implementing organizational strategies. Findings in the literature review showed that middle managers plays a critical role in strategy implementation and it also showed that they also showed a good grasp of what their role as implementers needed.

The research study also identified that middle managers are often not involved in the strategy formulation process and thus suggested that top management should consider involving middle managers more often in strategic discussions. Top managers also have to develop incentives. The research also suggested that top management should look at ways of incentivizing middle managers for their good performance, incentives programmes should be designed.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Hello:

My name is Sandile Henry Makhanya, Student No: 213570607. I am a Master of Business Administration (MBA) student studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). I am researching "The role played by middle managers in the strategy implementation process within the field sales division at Brandhouse (Pty) Ltd"

You are invited to participate in my survey. In this survey, approximately 90 middle managers will be asked to complete a survey that asks questions pertaining to the topic. It will take approximately 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There are no foreseeable risks associated with this project. However, if you feel uncomfortable answering any questions, you can withdraw from the survey at any point. It is very important for me to learn your opinions.

Your survey responses will be strictly confidential and data from this research will be reported only in the aggregate. Your information will be coded and will remain confidential.

If you have questions at any time about the survey or the procedures, you may contact Dr Abdul Kader on +27 82 901 02 25 or myself on 082 042 6469.

Regards,
Sandile Makhanya

Age

25-29	
30-39	
40-49	
50-59	
60 and older	

Race

Black	
Indian	
Coloured	
White	
Other	

Highest education

Matric Level	
Certificate	
Diploma	
Bachelors Degree	
Honours Degree	
Masters Degree	
Phd	
Other	

Gender

Male	
Female	

Years of service

Less than 5 years	
Between 5 - 10 years	
11 years and above	

Question 1:

What are the barriers middle managers face that hinders them to successfully implement the intended strategy?

a) Is there a link between budgets, rewards and the intended strategy to support the implementation process?

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

b) Did you feel that there are unrealistic targets and expectations that acts as a barrier to middle managers when implementing the intended strategy?

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

c) Do you feel that the key changes in the organizational strategy that may affect employees are clearly defined?

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

d) Does the workforce understands the vision and strategy?

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Question 2:

What role do middle managers play in ensuring effective strategy implementation?

a) Do you feel you have a role to play in strategy implementation?

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

b) Do senior management provides adequate support to middle managers and the rest of the organization in the implementation of the strategy?

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

c) Do you feel that goals are sufficiently defined and well understood by employees?

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

d) Do you feel you have necessary skills and expertise to ensure the successful implementation of a strategy?

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Question 3:

What are the key factors to successful strategy implementation?

a) Is the detailed action plan and tactics steps needed to successfully implement the strategy clearly defined?

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

b) Is the organizational structure appropriate to the intended strategy?

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

c) Does the organization consider human resources as the main factor in ensuring that strategy is implemented successful?

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

d) Does the organization ensures that strategy is closely monitored and controlled to ensure that it does not derailed and it is on track?

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Question 4:

How well communicated is the strategy to all members of the organization?

    a) Is the purpose of the strategy clearly communicated?

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

b) Is the future vision clearly communicated by the leaders to the rest of the organization?

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

c) Is communication essential in making sure that everybody understand their role in ensuring the successful implementation of the strategy?

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

d) Do you feel there is a clear communication between employees and managers in terms of how the strategy implementation is linked with the organization vision and mission?

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Appendix 2: Ethical Clearance

Appendix 3

Gatekeeper's Letter

Appendix 4

Brandhouse Case Study