



**SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS STRATEGY FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES IN
KWAZULU-NATAL, SOUTH AFRICA**

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Management Sciences

Specialising in
Business Administration
in the

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A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'M.S.', is positioned above the supervisor's name.

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Date: 11th April 2022

ABSTRACT

Business sustainability in today's world is primarily arduous owing to global economic and financial crises. In the first quarter of 2019, according to Statistics South Africa the Gross Domestic Product deteriorated by 3.2%. Similarly in KwaZulu-Natal, the state of sustainability of Small and Medium Enterprises were on the decline and the majority (75%) of small and medium enterprises failed after operating for three years. The purpose of this research was to formulate a business strategy to achieve sustainability for small and medium enterprises. Small and medium enterprises in KwaZulu-Natal do not sustain themselves for long term periods due to the underlying problem being strategy formulation. Hence, the need for a strategy to achieve sustainability.

The mixed methodology approach was used in this empirical study using the survey and interview methods. The target population of 488 000, a confidence level of 95%, margin of error of 5% and a 50% response rate was used which indicated a sample size of 384 respondents. Upon completion of the data collection, a total of 200 responses were obtained within a capped period of 30 days, which accounted for >52% of the target sample size. Furthermore, the grounded theory was employed on a target of 20 individuals, whereby the participants were interviewed to investigate opinions towards strategy development and sustainability in KwaZulu-Natal.

The core element of 'Strategy' and the sub-elements of 'Change', 'Purpose' and 'Leadership' were investigated. It was found that 'Change', 'Purpose' and 'Leadership' were the main contributors towards achieving sustainability. Furthermore, a Systems Thinking Model was used successfully to indicate the interdependencies to purport the goal of achieving sustainability. Ultimately it was found that 'Strategy', 'Change', 'Purpose', and 'Leadership' were required to achieve a 'Sustainable Business Strategy'. Due cognisance should be taken by leaders, from the perspectives of 'Change', 'Purpose' and 'Leadership', to formulate a strategy which sustains the business. A conceptual framework was developed for small and medium enterprises to achieve a sustainable business strategy.

DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I hereby declare that the work done in this thesis is my original work and has not been submitted previously, either in part or in its entirety, for a degree or qualification at any other university. Furthermore, I declare that this work will not violate or infringe on the rights of others. It must be noted and accepted that all sources which have been cited or quoted in my work are duly indicated and acknowledged by associated references. Lastly, in further support a detailed reference list has been appended to this thesis.



Vinay Bugwandin

11th April 2022

Date

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my family. To my beautiful, loving, intelligent and inspiring best friend and wife, Roshelle. Life with you has taught me several lessons which are simply amazing and unimaginable. As a result, I have grown from strength to strength which has continuously spurred me onwards to persevere and achieve the goals set out in our lives. The completion of this thesis is yet only one of those goals. Thank you for your unwavering support, unconditional love, and continuous inspiration. I love you, always!

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AI	Artificial Intelligence
BI	Business Incubator
COVID-19	Corona Virus Pandemic
CSH	Critical Systems Heuristics
CT	Computed Tomography
EL	Ethical Leadership
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ISO	International Organisation for Standardisation
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
MO	Market Orientation
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NTBE	Non-Theory-Based Evaluation
PERT	Program Evaluation and Review Technique
PDL	Purpose-driven Leadership
PO	Product Orientation
SAST	Strategic Assumption Surfacing and Testing
SME	Small to Medium Enterprise
SMME	Small Medium and Micro-Enterprise
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SSM	Soft Systems Methodology
TBE	Theory-Based Evaluation
TDM	Tool, Die and Mould-making
VSM	Viable System Model

CHAPTER ONE: Introduction and Context of the Study

1.1 Introduction

Businesses are in existence due to possessing primary prerogatives which constitute the provision of financial stimulus to the economy, provision of employment to people, contribution towards the well-being of local communities and enhancement of the environmental landscape of an area and associated country. In essence, the concept of business sustainability is all about considering and involving the economic, social, and environmental aspects related to the business, known as the triple bottom line (Mahajan and Bose 2018: 9). Furthermore, it was buttressed that due confirmatory objectives of business sustainability comprise economic, environment and social spectrums (Ozbekler and Ozturkoglu 2020: 1504).

It must be noted that in the European market, the consensus of business sustainability was to reduce costs, thereby increasing profitability. It was further posited, through a case study, that the entire supply and demand chain should form an all-encompassing domain to obtain business sustainability, as opposed to solely concentrating on the designated operations of a business (Hogevold and Svensson 2012: 149). Whilst, in South Africa, an empirical study on small to medium enterprises (SMEs) revealed that the reason for poor business sustainability was a result of a lack of operational skills (Urban and Naidoo 2012: 159). Although the specified reasons between Europe and South Africa were found to be unrelated, the prevalent factor was business sustainability. It remains fundamentally pertinent to accept that any size business that is in existence in today's era, regardless of location, should ideally consider the achievement of business sustainability as an accomplished goal and indisputable success.

The size of businesses varies from large corporates to medium, small, and micro-enterprises. However, it is important to understand the contributions that these businesses make to the economy. This study involved SMEs and it is noteworthy to understand how to differentiate amongst the various sizes. Figure 1.1 explains the size variants, number of employees, annual turnover, and gross assets, excluding fixed property. As indicated in the figure, a micro-enterprise has fewer than 5 employees, a very small enterprise has fewer than 10 but not exceeding 20 employees, a small enterprise has fewer than 50 employees and a medium enterprise has fewer than 100 but not exceeding 200 employees.

Definitions of SMMEs given in the National Small Business Act			
Enterprise size	Number of employees	Annual turnover	Gross assets, excluding fixed property
Medium	Fewer than 100 to 200, depending on industry	Less than R4 million to R50 million, depending upon industry	Less than R2 million to R18 million, depending on industry
Small	Fewer than 50	Less than R2 million to R25 million, depending on industry	Less than R2 million to R4,5 million, depending on industry
Very small	Fewer than 10 to 20, depending on industry	Less than R200 000 to R500 000, depending on industry	Less than R150 000 to R500 000, depending on industry
Micro	Fewer than 5	Less than R150 000	Less than R100 000

Figure 1. 1 - SMMEs defined (Sitharam and Hoque 2016)

In South Africa, it is understood that 98.5% of the economy is comprised of SMEs and the sectors are varied (Figure 1.2). Furthermore, it remains noteworthy that in similarity to corporate businesses, multi-national businesses and conglomerates which are listed on the stock exchanges worldwide, SMEs are now being considered to satisfy the triple bottom line (Khatun, Amanullah and Khulna 2021: 22). Moreover, large corporates posit that the world of SMEs is the birthplace of their existence and from where their future competition will emanate. Therefore, the pressure to maintain the existence, longevity and sustainability of

SMEs is undoubtedly significant, more especially considering the invaluable contribution which SMEs make towards the economy of any country (Khatun *et al.* 2021: 23).

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
Sectors or sub-sectors in accordance with the Standard Industrial Classification	Size or class of enterprise	Total full-time equivalent of paid employees	Total annual turnover
Agriculture	Medium	51 - 250	≤ 35,0 million
	Small	11 - 50	≤ 17 million
	Micro	0 - 10	≤ 7 million
Mining and Quarrying	Medium	51 - 250	≤ 210 million
	Small	11 - 50	≤ 50 million
	Micro	0 - 10	≤ 15 million
Manufacturing	Medium	51 - 250	≤ 170 million
	Small	11 - 50	≤ 50 million
	Micro	0 - 10	≤ 10 million
Electricity, Gas and Water	Medium	51 - 250	≤ 180 million
	Small	11 - 50	≤ 60 million
	Micro	0 - 10	≤ 10 million
Construction	Medium	51 - 250	≤ 170 million
	Small	11 - 50	≤ 75 million
	Micro	0 - 10	≤ 10 million
Retail, motor trade and repair services	Medium	51 - 250	≤ 80 million
	Small	11 - 50	≤ 25 million
	Micro	0 - 10	≤ 7,5 million
Wholesale	Medium	51 - 250	≤ 220 million
	Small	11 - 50	≤ 80 million
	Micro	0 - 10	≤ 20 million
Catering, Accommodation and other Trade	Medium	51 - 250	≤ 40 million
	Small	11 - 50	≤ 15 million
	Micro	0 - 10	≤ 5 million
Transport, Storage and Communications	Medium	51 - 250	≤ 140 million
	Small	11 - 50	≤ 45 million
	Micro	0 - 10	≤ 7,5 million
Finance and Business Services	Medium	51 - 250	≤ 85 million
	Small	11 - 50	≤ 35 million
	Micro	0 - 10	≤ 7,5 million
Community, Social and Personal Services	Medium	51 - 250	≤ 70 million
	Small	11 - 50	≤ 22 million
	Micro	0 - 10	≤ 5 million

Figure 1. 2 - Industrial Classification of SMEs in South Africa (South Africa, Department of Small Business Development 2019: 2)

However, in South Africa, the growth of SMEs has been on the decline and a multitude of SMEs have closed down altogether (Sitharam and Hoque 2016: 277; GEM 2017: 58). The reasons attributed to the closure of SMEs were related to internal and external factors. The internal factors comprised technological capabilities, managerial competence, skills, and access to finance. Whilst the external factors comprised regulatory factors, macroeconomic factors, competition, globalisation, crime and corruption (Sitharam and Hoque 2016: 286). The authors expressed the main cause of SMEs failing to be poor strategy formulation, related to both internal and external factors influencing the failures. Considering that SMEs are fundamentally important in its contribution to the economy and maintaining stability and sustainability remains objectively necessary.

Whilst KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) is known to be one of the largest provinces in South Africa with SMEs contributing the second largest amount of revenue towards the economy of the country (SEDA 2020: 22), statistical and empirical reports for 2019 and 2020 illustrated a decline in the existence of SMEs (South Africa, Statistics South Africa Client Satisfaction Survey 2019: 19; SEDA 2020: 22). Another important and relative factor that makes SMEs vital to the South African economy rests with strategic decision making to ensure that these businesses are on the correct platform to make efficacious advancements and to ultimately achieve sustainability. These facts have further actuated the need to remedy the state of sustainability of SMEs.

1.2 Challenges faced by SMEs

Whilst SMEs faced various challenges both internally and externally, one main challenge claimed by Cant (2012: 1109) was 'Marketing Skills'. Further deconstructed into understanding of the market and potential growth, market segmentation, market needs analyses, finance to fund marketing activities,

education and training, competitiveness, and marketing of products and services. In the empirical study conducted by Cant, it remained apparent that the lack of focus of SMEs on 'Marketing Skills' was the reason for failure. Furthermore, other challenges that SMEs encountered were inhibition of government policies and laws, lack of information from government departments, high cost of labour, difficulties to obtain finance, high competition and domination by large corporates, inaccessible markets, few support programmes, and lack of self-confidence in the leadership (Ngcobo and Sukdeo 2015: 10).

However, research has proven that other factors such as technology, money, leadership skills, marketing, competition, environmental change, crime and corruption were also challenges that SMEs faced (Sitharam and Hoque 2016: 286). As a result of the substantiation, it is indeed a reality that the challenges faced by SMEs were difficult, hence, it requires intervention and a solution to remediate the failures and declination of SMEs.

1.3 The impact of underperforming SMEs

It cannot be ignored that in today's world of globalisation and neo-liberalism, SMEs have a vital role to play. More especially in developing countries where there is a prevalence of free-market capitalism, deregulation, and reduction in government spending. It is understood that SMEs contribute significantly and have gained importance in developing countries (Kesk n, H.,  nt rk, C., Sungur, O. and K r  , 2010: 183). According to Savlovschi and Robu (2011: 278), a key attribute of SMEs is the creation of two-thirds of all jobs annually and job creation in SMEs is significantly cheaper than in large corporations. However, when SMEs underperform, problems stem from within the economic streams and should be suppressed without delay.

It is common that an underperforming SME will suffer a loss of revenue, workforce and reputation leading to possible insolvency if its owners. In relation, governments reliance on SMEs to boost the economy and to create jobs remain in vain when there is an absence of support from within the business itself (Peter, Adegbuyi, Olokundun, Peter, Amaihian, and Ibidunni 2018: 1). Irrespective of the support that the government provides or even business incubators, the notion of failure of SMEs stems from within and cannot be fully blamed on external factors. This information indicates and confirms the preceding research conducted that both internal and external factors were the cause of SMEs failure.

Furthermore, SMEs are regarded as the backbone of economies around the globe (Peter *et al.* 2018: 1) as a consequence, economies across the globe are affected by the failure. Furthermore, SMEs and other types of businesses are cardinal in existence to contribute towards the economy. If the latter does not occur, the economy, social landscape, and environment are bound to suffer. Thankfully new approaches to sustain SMEs from environmental and digital perspectives are underway (Koutsopoulos 2021: 30); however, the issues of SME characteristics, internal challenges and external challenges have been heeded and still remain problematic. Therefore, it is fundamentally important to prevent the underperformance of SMEs in the economy to ensure sustainability.

1.4 Context of the Study

South Africa is plagued with crime, poverty, unemployment, and a declining gross domestic product (GDP). In the first quarter of 2019, South Africa's GDP deteriorated by 3.2% (South Africa, Statistics South Africa Gross Domestic Product 2019: 2). KZN being one of the largest provinces in South Africa contributed almost 20% towards the national GDP, having almost 11 million people and an estimated 488 000 SMEs (South Africa, Statistics South Africa

Client Satisfaction Survey 2019: 19). Accordingly, a survey conducted by Statistics South Africa concluded that the rating of enhancing SMEs and entrepreneurship requires improvement (South Africa, Statistics South Africa Client Satisfaction Survey 2019: 2).

In essence, the growth rate of SMEs in South Africa was discovered to have been delineated (Sitharam and Hoque 2016: 277). More specifically, it was found that the success rate of SMEs deteriorated in KZN (GEM 2017: 29). Moreover, 75% of SMEs closed down after three years of operating (Siwangaza *et al.* 2014: 163). Research has shown that SMEs continue to experience negative effects on growth (GEM 2017: 58). The authors claimed that the primary cause was a lack of strategy formulation which led to the decline in sustainability. This prompted the need to research the construct of a strategy.

Strategy is explained as the execution of devised operational and tactical plans of an organisation (Skripak, Parsons, Cortes, Walton and Walz 2016: 315). In general, strategy comprises elements devised and selected by the leaders of the organisation; however, the sub-elements of change, purpose and most common leadership styles were addressed in a conceptual framework purporting the objectives of this research. This study concentrated on the convergent parallel mixed methods approach which consisted of a combination of quantitative (closed-ended questions) and qualitative (open-ended questions) that were used to acquire data. The data was analysed separately and compared against each other to check if there was convergence or divergence (Creswell 2014: 269). Ultimately the research problem, that SMEs in KZN are not sustaining themselves appropriately, was addressed by developing a conceptual framework, to formulate an appropriate strategy to achieve sustainability.

1.5 Research Problem

1.5.1 Problem Statement

Business sustainability in today's world is primarily arduous owing to the global economic and financial crises. Accordingly, these crises have prompted researchers and international organisations to reassess positions of sustainable development (United States of America, International Monetary Fund: World Economic Outlook 2019: 65).

Similarly, in KZN the state of sustainability of SMEs are on the decline and 75% of SMEs fail after operating for three years (Siwangaza *et al.* 2014: 163; Fatoki 2014: 3). Additionally, GEM (2017: 29) stated that SMEs in KZN do not sustain themselves for long term periods. The authors explained that the deteriorating growth rate was related directly to unsatisfactory strategy formulation. Moreover, the sustainability of SMEs was established to be low and on a continual decline, primarily due to unsatisfactory strategy formulation (Sitharam and Hoque 2016: 277). It is evident that unsatisfactory strategy formulation is a key problem for SMEs in KZN leading to a decline in growth.

Therefore, the primary research problem being SMEs in KZN are not sustaining themselves appropriately due to unsatisfactory strategy formulation hence the need for a strategy to achieve sustainability (Sitharam and Hoque 2016: 286).

Although there is a proliferation of studies in this research area, a single elemental factor for ensuring a sustainable business strategy remains elusive. Therefore, this prompted the need to additionally focus on the sub-elements of 'Change', 'Purpose' and 'Leadership' which complemented the main problem of strategy formulation in this research. These sub-elements are discussed in the section that follows.

1.5.2 Sub-problems

Further literature on the sub-elements of Change and Purpose indicated that these sub-elements were the main contributing factors towards the sustainability of a business (Becker, Kunze and Vancea 2017: 30). Accordingly, change has been confirmed by businesses to be challenging and consequently require assistance to reach sustainability (Brones, De Carvalho and De Senzi Zancul 2017:8). Moreover, change in any environment is challenging, however, if there is an ability to communicate effectively in an organisation then this becomes an easy task to perform (Govender and Rampersad 2016: 50). Hence prompting the need to evaluate relationships between change and other associated elements.

Furthermore, being purpose driven has been stressed as a fundamentally important element in a socio-economic climate (Dorasamy 2010: 56). Purpose-driven businesses are renowned for augmenting profits however these are predominantly related to joint ventures (Munoz, Cacciotti and Cohen 2018: 149). Since joint ventures have been successful in being purpose driven, the evaluation of purpose is further needed for other types of businesses.

In addition to the elements of Change and Purpose, Allio (2015: 6) claimed that Leadership was essential to achieve business sustainability. The reality of leadership is that the phenomenon is practised in a myriad of styles in the economic environment, educational sectors, industrial areas, and sports fields (Shao, Feng and Hu 2017: 903). Figure 1.1 illustrates the importance of possessing Change, Purpose and Leadership in the hierarchy of Leadership holistically. The graphical representation shows the coherence of the mentioned sub-elements required to assist in formulating a sustainable business strategy. Hence leadership styles were discussed as sub-elements in the formulation of a sustainable strategy, in this study.



Figure 1. 3 - Change, Purpose & Leadership (Mase 2012)

1.6 Research Aim

The aim of this study was to formulate a business strategy by developing a conceptual framework to achieve sustainability for SMEs in KZN. In addition, the core element of strategy and relationships with the sub-elements of purpose, change and leadership were investigated. This further entailed the use of the Systems Thinking Model to indicate the interdependencies to purport the goal of achieving sustainability.

1.7 Objectives

- 1) **To investigate strategies currently being used and establish areas of improvement.** Due to the known declining growth rate of SMEs, the researcher intended to find out what current strategies are employed and to provide possible ways to garner a stronger strategy to obtain business sustainability.

- 2) **To evaluate the effectiveness of the elements that are related to strategies.** Fundamentally, elements that are used in strategies need to be checked for effectiveness prior to being utilised for the intended purpose. This objective was carried out by the researcher as the elements were related to the achievement of a sustainable business strategy.
- 3) **To establish a manager's knowledge of strategy formulation.** A proper understanding of the capacity related to a manager's knowledge to formulate strategies needed to be established due to the declining growth rate of SMEs. The ideology of managers having the adequate knowledge to formulate and implement strategies are fundamental in business sustainability.
- 4) **To develop a conceptual framework to assist SMEs to ensure sustainability.** The researcher's intention was to answer the problem statement of this study by creating a contributing model to assist SMEs to sustain themselves. The benefit of SMEs sustainability was intended to garner a stronger injection of revenues into the economy thereby contributing towards a stronger gross domestic product (GDP), more job creation and further growth of SMEs into larger corporate organisations.

1.8 Research Questions

- 1) What elements are used to form strategies by SMEs? To identify common elements which are used in strategy development and their effects on the organisations.
- 2) Are SMEs in favour of a changing business environment? To identify and confirm if managers embrace and communicate change at the workplace.

- 3) Do SMEs have statements of purpose in their organisations? To identify and measure the quantity of purpose-driven organisations.
- 4) Do managers follow a specific leadership style in their business? To identify leadership styles and determine the effectiveness of their usage.

1.8.1 Research Sub-Questions

- 1) Are managers of SMEs in favour of a continuously changing business environment?
- 2) Are employees of SMEs aware of their organisation's purpose? Is the purpose statement cascaded by managers to all employees?
- 3) Do managers of SMEs believe in a purpose-driven organisation?
- 4) What challenges do managers of SMEs face in the business environment?
- 5) What extent of influence does leadership styles have on organisations?

1.9 Significance of the Study

The statistical and empirical reports recorded a decline in the growth rate of SMEs in KZN, which was further exacerbated by macro-economic factors that debilitate businesses, eventually leading to liquidation and interrelated failure. Whilst it is well known that SMEs contribute significantly to the economy of the country, the mere fact of SMEs existence in the value chain is sufficient to maintain momentum and continuum. As South Africa is considered a developing country and KZN being a part of the contribution towards the economy of the country, the fact that SMEs are needed in developing countries cannot be ignored (Keskgn *et al.* 2010: 183). Due cognisance must be paid to acknowledge the role that SMEs play in the global world (Koutsopoulos, 2021: 30). In particular, attention must be given to the decline of SMEs growth in KZN.

Undoubtedly, the shrinkage in SMEs in the economic market of KZN gave rise to the researcher to fulfil the need to remediate the circumstances by developing a model which contributes towards the achievement of business sustainability. The significance of this study remains reliant on the creation of a conceptual framework to assist SMEs to sustain themselves and simultaneously contribute towards the improvement of the GDP, assist with more job creation, and enable onward growth of SMEs to larger corporate organisations.

1.9.1 Delimitations and Geographical area of the Study

This study was aimed to evaluate the element of 'Strategy', its associated components of 'Planning', 'Control', 'Cost Management', 'Performance Management', 'Performance Evaluation', 'Product Differentiation', 'Competition', 'Marketing', 'Financial Management', 'Low Price' and 'Business Development' and the sub-elements 'Change', 'Purpose' and 'Leadership' using mixed methods research techniques, and to provide an appropriate improvement method for the sustainability of SMEs in KZN by designing a conceptual framework.

As a result of the vast geographical area in KZN, the province was deconstructed into four areas to focus this research survey on North Coast, South Coast, Upper Highway and Central Durban areas (Figure 1.2). Top Management comprising directors and managers were used in this survey to purport information which was used to provide an appropriate and suitable framework for a longer term of growth of the SMEs in KZN.



Figure 1. 4 - Map of KwaZulu-Natal (Freeworldmaps 2021)

1.9.2 Research Structure

This study was conducted in six chapters. These chapters undertook the following structure:

Chapter One provides an overview of the research problem, sub-problems, aim, objectives, research questions and the significance of the study. The problem of the declination in the growth of SMEs in KZN was highlighted. The aim of the research was for the researcher to develop a model for SMEs to

achieve sustainability by addressing the objectives, research questions and sub-questions. This was conducted by formulating a conceptual framework. Lastly, the significance of the study explained that the researcher's intention was to assist SMEs to achieve business sustainability due to the importance that SMEs play in the economic landscape.

Chapter Two involves a review of the literature to provide the researcher's information on the published work, discussions of the elements and the conceptual framework. In this chapter, 'Strategy', 'Change', 'Purpose' and 'Leadership' being the element and sub-elements respectively, were researched and discussed. In addition, there were various associated components to 'Strategy' namely 'Planning', 'Control', 'Cost Management', 'Performance Management', 'Performance Evaluation', 'Product Differentiation', 'Competition', 'Marketing', 'Financial Management', 'Low Price' and 'Business Development' which were discussed in detail. Furthermore, the associated components related to 'Change' namely 'Climate Change', 'Market Orientation Change', 'Product Orientation Change', 'Digitalisation Change' and 'Artificial Intelligence Change' were discussed. In addition, the components of 'Purpose' namely 'Purpose-driven Organisations', 'Personal Purpose at the Workplace', 'Three Dimensions of Purpose', 'Purpose-driven Leadership' and 'Purpose and Strategy' were discussed. Lastly, the components of 'Leadership' namely 'Transformational Leadership', 'Ethical Leadership' and 'Transactional Leadership' were discussed. The literature revealed the relatedness and relevance of all associated components to 'Strategy', 'Change', 'Purpose' and 'Leadership'. Moreover, the importance of the element and sub-elements were shown, in the roles played to achieve business sustainability.

Chapter Three is a continuation of the literature review which discussed the method of evaluation of the elements used in the study. Evaluation models such as formative, summative, theory-based, and non-theory-based were

explained and discussed. The theory-based evaluation model was used in this study to select the elements on the underpinning of previous academic research. Furthermore, amongst the various systems thinking models available such as 'Hard Systems Thinking', 'System Dynamics', 'Organisational Cybernetics', 'Complexity Theory', 'Strategic Assumption Surfacing and Testing', 'Interactive Planning', 'Soft Systems Methodology', 'Critical Systems Heuristics', 'Team Syntegrity' and 'Postmodern Systems Thinking' that were explained 'Organisational Cybernetics' systems thinking model, specifically the Viable System Model (VSM) was used to show the interconnections and interdependencies of the element, sub-elements and associated components relative to the applicability of the study and the subsequential development of a model assisting in the achievement of business sustainability. Lastly, a conceptual framework was formulated using elements, sub-elements, and associated components, to further explore the effectiveness of sustainability of SMEs. The element of 'Strategy' (Independent Variable) and complementing sub-elements of 'Change', 'Purpose' and 'Leadership' (Moderator Variables) were explained theoretically and visually to achieve a 'Sustainable Business Strategy' (Dependent Variable). To conclude, the formulated conceptual framework being the researcher's contribution in this study, is a tool for utilisation by SMEs in daily activities to achieve business sustainability.

Chapter Four provides a critical view of the research methodology used for data collection. This is the plan for addressing the research questions and ethical considerations. This study used the mixed methodology of data collection which entailed a research instrument in the form of a questionnaire used for the quantitative aspect and the researcher conducting of interviews for the qualitative aspect. The mixed methodology was deemed to be best suited for this study as it ensured convergence of the data through triangulation methodology. The geographical area of KZN was covered by the researcher to focus on the designated areas within the province. In particular, the probabilistic sampling

method and specifically the simple random sampling method were employed in this study. The simple random sampling method was used as it ensures representativeness and generalisability. Moreover, the sampling method in discussion offered the sample target an independent and equal chance for selection. In accordance with the sample size, the questionnaire was distributed to a target population of 384 individuals and in conjunction, 20 individuals were randomly selected for participation in the interviews.

Chapter Five provides analyses of the data. It also presents an in-depth discussion and interpretation of the findings. Nvivo™/®/© software was used for the analyses of the qualitative data collected by means of interviews. Themes of the study were generated; files coded, and results interpreted. In addition, a word cloud was created, crosstabulations were performed, mind maps were drawn and finally, a conceptual map was generated which showed the result of the qualitative aspect of this study. Nvivo™/®/© software was used because it is deemed to be more comprehensible than other software programs. In addition, SPSS™/®/© software was used to statistically analyse the data for the quantitative data collected. The data was collected from respondents via a questionnaire. Consequently, the data was analysed, and the results were interpreted. Thereafter the results were presented in descriptive statistical form, central tendency measures and by group differences (Chi-square). The SPSS™/®/© software was used since it was proven to be credible and in use for the last decade. Lastly, the chapter also showed the use of the Vensim™/®/© software which illustrated the relevance and validity of 'Strategy', 'Change' 'Purpose' and 'Leadership' and all associated components when outputted to achieve a Sustainable Business Strategy. The model was claimed to be robust in showing and validating constructs and problem structuring techniques. The findings of this study showed the relevance and importance of 'Strategy', 'Change', 'Purpose' and 'Leadership' when used in formulating a Sustainable Business Strategy.

Chapter Six provides an overall conclusion and recommendations for future research. This chapter provided evidence of the research, in the form of a conceptual framework, which indicated from the initial phase of the research to the final phase of the findings. It was found that 'Strategy' along with the associated components of 'Planning', 'Control', 'Cost Management', 'Performance Management', 'Performance Evaluation', 'Product Differentiation', 'Competition', 'Marketing', 'Financial Management', 'Low Price' and 'Business Development', being the independent variable together with 'Change', 'Purpose' and 'Leadership' being the moderator variables did indeed lead to developing a 'Sustainable Business Strategy' being the independent variable. Further support to 'Change' were the associated components of 'Climate Change', 'Market Orientation Change', 'Product Orientation Change', 'Digitalisation Change' and 'Artificial Intelligence Change'. In addition, the associated components of 'Purpose' being 'Purpose-driven Organisations', 'Personal Purpose at the Workplace', 'Three Dimensions of Purpose', 'Purpose-driven Leadership' and 'Purpose and Strategy' further supported the sub-element. Lastly, the associated components of 'Leadership' being 'Transformational Leadership', 'Ethical Leadership' and 'Transactional Leadership' provided further support to the moderator variable. In conclusion, the research problem was addressed and answered as indicated in the literature and the findings.

1.9.3 Conclusion

This chapter commenced with an introduction of the research, followed by illustrating the background of the research area and provision of justifications for focusing on the research area. Moreover, the challenges that SMEs currently face were discussed. The challenges emanating from academic research were

'Marketing Skills', 'Technology', 'Money', 'Leadership Skills', 'Competition', 'Environment Change', 'Crime' and 'Corruption' which must be contended with in today's contemporary era. In addition, the impact of underperforming SMEs was discussed. Consequently, leading to a myriad of problems such as 'Loss of Revenue', 'Bankruptcy', 'Loss of Employees', 'Loss of Reputation' and 'Insolvency of Owners' being common to most SMEs.

A summary of the research was provided in the context of the study. The problem statement was discussed followed by the sub-problems of the research. The problem being that SMEs in KZN were not sustaining themselves appropriately due to unsatisfactory strategy formulation hence the need for a strategy that achieved sustainability. Thereafter the aim of the research was discussed, and the objectives were specified which intended to address the problem statement. The aim of the research was to formulate a business strategy to achieve SME sustainability in KZN.

Furthermore, the research questions and sub-questions which also intended to address the problem statement were discussed. The significance of the study was explained to allow for SMEs to achieve sustainability, contribute positively towards the GDP, assist with job creation, and grow SMEs into larger corporate organisations. Thereafter an explanation was provided on the delimitations which entailed the discussion of the element 'Strategy', sub-element 'Change', 'Purpose' and 'Leadership' and all associated components. This was followed by the geographical area of the study being deconstructed into four areas namely North Coast, South Coast, Upper Highway and Central Durban in KZN. Lastly, the chapter provided an outline of the study. The next chapter addresses the element 'Strategy', sub-elements 'Change', 'Purpose' and 'Leadership', and their associated components.

CHAPTER TWO: Strategy, Change, Purpose and Leadership in the Business Environment

2.1 Introduction

In today's contemporary era, the world of business is reliant on organisational success (Skripak *et al.* 2016: 94). This reliance is underpinned by business sustainability which is dependent on three capabilities namely: organisational competence, economic competence, and environmental competence (Wong and Ngai 2021: 440).

- 1) “**Organisational Competence**” refers to social well-being and managerial competence.
- 2) “**Economic Competence**” refers to innovation and market-driven competence.
- 3) “**Environmental Competence**” refers to recycling and reuse of products and services.

Although Fortune_500 corporations fall under this bundled competence umbrella (Wong and Ngai 2021: 440), research has profoundly proven that SMEs are also essential contributors towards economic development and growth (Uyar 2019: 1), inferring that the success of SMEs improves the economy.

SMEs are described in an array of ways globally, however, in South Africa, a SME is known to be a small business inclusive of branches and subsidiaries which is distinctly non-governmental, managed and owned by one or more individuals. Interestingly, the contribution of SMEs to the Gross Domestic Product of the country was 39% versus 57% in Europe in 2020; SMEs account for 50% to 60% of the workforce in the country and, represents 98% of businesses countrywide (McKinsey & Company. 2020). However, the growth trajectory of SMEs in South Africa has been delineated (Sitharam and Hoque 2016: 277; Mahohoma and Agbenyegah 2020: 39).

In KZN, it was found that the success rate of SMEs has deteriorated (GEM 2017: 29; SEDA 2019: 33). Despite SMEs in KZN contributing 14% of South Africa's Small Medium and Micro Enterprise (SMME) network's revenue, the province contributes heavily towards the GDP of the country (SEDA 2019: 33). However, 75% of SMEs close operations after three years of operation (Siwangaza et al. 2014: 163) remains one of the main concerns regarding fiscal restimulation and sustainability. Upon investigation, unprofitability was concluded as the primary reason for the declination and closure of SMEs in KZN (GEM 2017: 29).

In essence, the authors analysed the problem of unprofitability and consequently identified poor Strategy Formulation associated with the sub-elements of Change, Purpose and Leadership as the main cause.

Figure 2.1 indicates the element of **Strategy** and the sub-elements of **Change**, **Purpose** and **Leadership**.

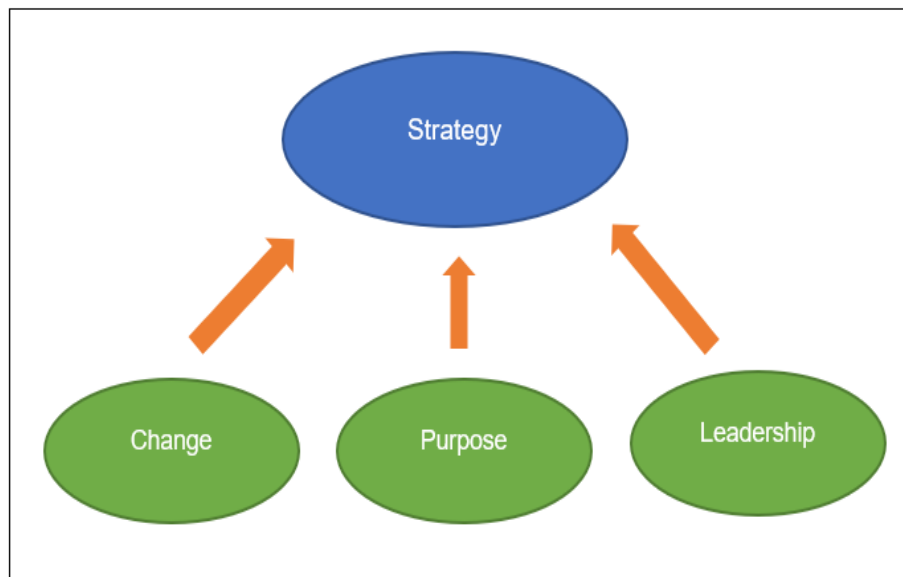


Figure 2. 1 - Strategy with sub-elements (Source: Author)

Whilst there are various elements and techniques involved in strategy formulation, a noticeable technique involved pairing strategy and performance of the business together with the business model remains an important foundation for all businesses (Lanzolla and Markides 2021: 550). Whilst every business should ideally have a business model and performance is expected to be monitored, the focus remains on strategy. As a result of the research conducted thus far, it remains evident that strategy forms the foundation element of this research and is comprised of numerous components which will be explained in the sections that follow. In addition, the sub-elements of 'Change', 'Purpose' and 'Leadership' shown in Figure 2.1, posited to have a moderating effect on Strategy will be discussed further in the literature review.

2.2 Strategy

Strategy is explained as the execution of devised operational and tactical plans of an organisation (Skripak *et al.* 2016: 315). This phenomenon comprises numerous elements which vary amongst organisations. In actual practice, the elements in Table 2.1 are used in the formulation of an organisation's strategy (Uyar 2019: 7).

Table 2. 1 - Strategy elements amongst organisations (Uyar 2019)

Planning	Performance Evaluation	Financial Management
Control	Product Differentiation	Low price
Cost Management	Competition	Business development
Performance Management	Marketing	

According to Uyar (2019: 7) the two main variable elements were management accounting and competition. The author posits that the combination of the elements is key for strategy deliverance. In addition, the business development element is pertinent in ensuring sustainability and growth whereby learning and development strategies are employed to formulate the business strategy (Panda 2014: 267). Regardless of the quantity of elements utilised, Allio (2015: 6) believes that a well-formulated strategy results in good leadership and ultimately ensures sustainability. However, the elements in Table 2.1 are required to build a sustainable business strategy.

2.2.1 Planning

In general, a plan is considered the starting point of a project, whilst planning is referred to as decision-making and subsequently making arrangements in advance (Andres, Jones, Denoon-Stevens and Lorena 2020: 2446). Planning forms a fundamental component in operationalising an organisations strategy. The responsibility of executing the planning function is a core function of a manager. In the context of business, planning was acknowledged as a management approach which enables the manager to enhance organisational effectiveness (George, Walker and Monster 2019: 810). It remains imperative that a manager does not exercise autonomy but rather engages subordinates into the planning stage from the inception of a job. Regular communication and key meetings should occur to achieve the desired output.

From a critical stance, planning was declared to be a failure (Mintzberg 1994: 114; McKay, Murray and Hui 2011: 122). Planning was criticised for constant changes in operational activities that test the demeanour of a manager and the associated subordinates. The criticism indicated the state of competency of a planner whereby the concept possesses the ability to be deemed futile,

without establishing a capable manager to execute the required tasks. Therefore, planning is assumed to be subjective in the view of the authors.

Consequently, research has claimed that planning remains a fundamentally key component in the formulation of a strategy (Uyar 2019: 7; George *et al.* 2019: 818). It can be accepted that planning cannot be used in autonomy for strategy formulation due to other components playing a part to execute the desired output. However, the iteration in the proliferation of academic research of planning indicated that the concept is effective and pertinent in strategy formulation.

2.2.2 Control

A distinct need for the controlling of an organisation is deemed vital to ensure the correct trajectory is followed to achieve the desired outcomes. In particular, controlling entails the monitoring of the business's operational activities to achieve the preset targets; failing which, suitable corrective action should be administered to ensure rectification is realised (Skripak *et al.* 2016: 173). The author further stressed the pertinence of the five-step control process (Figure 2.2), which should be followed to maintain control of an organisation.

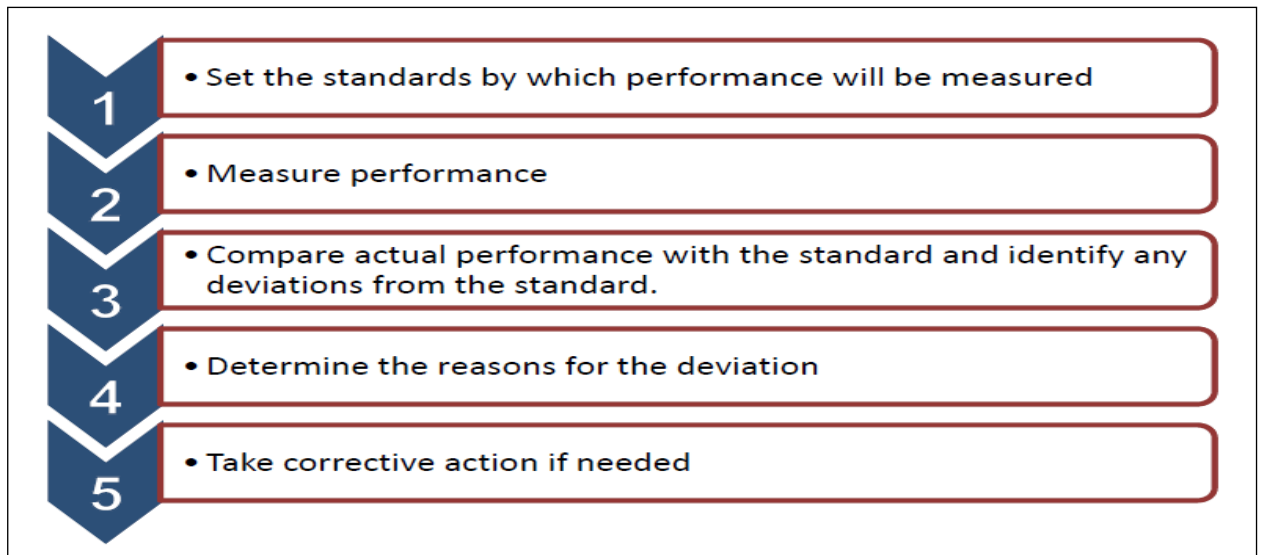


Figure 2. 2 - Five-Step Control Process (Skripak et al. 2016)

The five-step control process (Figure 2.2) is explicit and easy to follow, by commencing with benchmarking and resorting to corrective measures in finality. In a case study conducted by Nyide and Lekhanya (2016: 476) the findings of the research led to proven inconsistencies across businesses in South Africa in relation to the control of fundamental operating and managerial aspects. Ultimately, the case study in discussion related to environmental impacts and subsequent saving of costs by ensuring uniformity in the control measures implemented.

In contrast, the lack of control in corporate organisations such as Enron and Steinhoff was the pinnacle of failure (Healy and Palepu 2003: 5; Naude, Hamilton, Ungerer, Malan and De Klerk 2018: 32). Whilst, in other corporate global organisations such as Apple, Google, and Coca-Cola, control has been key in their successes (Interbrand. 2018). Therefore, this proves the imperativeness and mandatoriness of control in an organisation.

2.2.3 Cost Management

Cost management is defined as the development and utilisation of cost management information, which consists of financial and non-financial information. Thereafter, financial information is broken down into revenues, cash flows and costs, whilst non-financial information comprises productivity, quality of work, customer retention and business development aspects (Blocher, Stout and Cokins 2010: 3). Evidently, cost management is one of the primary tasks of a financial controller and is ultimately the joint responsibility of the Chief Financial Officer and Chief Executive Officer of an organisation (Blocher *et al.* 2010: 3). Moreover, the communication between the financial department and the core of the operations department is essential for the sustainability of a business (Doorasamy and Garbharran 2015: 80). Additionally, as indicated in Figure 2.3, the relation and link amongst the management team explains the dependencies of the element of cost management.

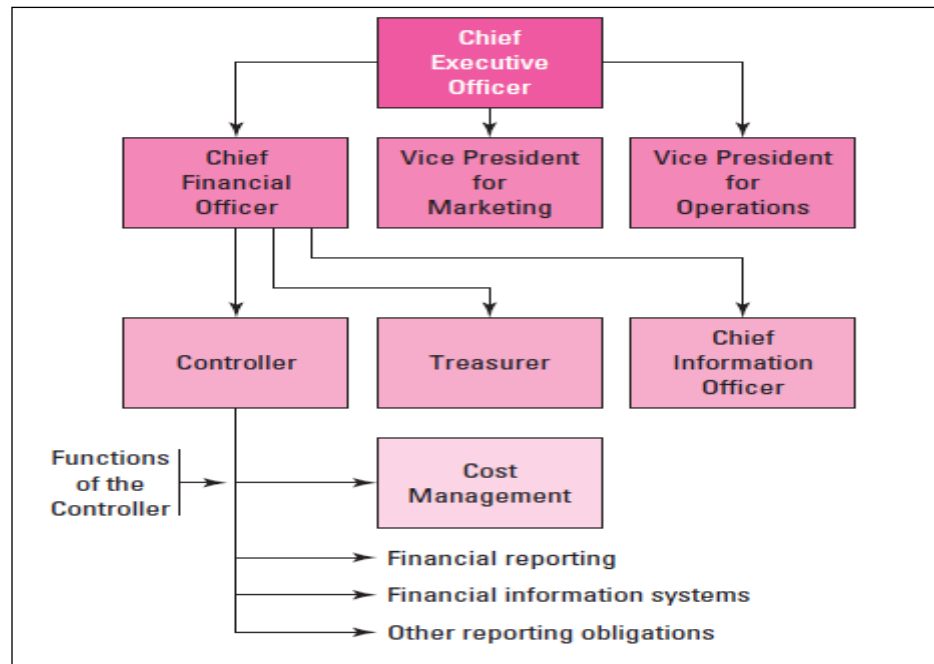


Figure 2. 3 - Organisational Chart (Blocher et al. 2010)

As depicted thus far, cost management remains crucial in the daily management of activities within the business. This phenomenon has additionally confirmed that the inflow and outflow of cash impact on and relates to the sustainability and survival of a business (Mungal and Garbharran 2014: 20). In a quantitative study undertaken by the authors, in the magisterial district of Tongaat, KZN, the concepts of cash management and cost handling, was confirmed to be problematic for small business owners and managers (Mungal and Garbharran 2014: 16). Therefore, it can be concluded that cost management is a pertinent element in strategy formulation.

2.2.4 Performance Management

A vital aspect for a business to achieve targets and goals rests on the available resources; more specifically, being reliant and dependent on the performance of

the personnel. Performance Management refers to the continuous process of identification, measurement and development of the performance of the personnel and subsequent alignment of goals of a business (Aguinis 2014: 2). In addition, performance management is claimed to focus on matters that drive business value instead of concentrating on a myriad of other activities which does not contribute towards achieving the long-term goals of the business (Brauns and Wallis 2014: 166). Accordingly, an accelerated emphasis is placed on the performance management of contemporary organisations to increase the level of performance of employees (Gruman and Saks 2011: 123). Performance Management is claimed to have the following contributions (Aguinis 2014: 7):

- 1) Motivation to perform is increased.
- 2) Self-esteem is increased.
- 3) Managers gain insight into subordinates.
- 4) The definitions of job and criteria are clarified.
- 5) Self-insight and development are enhanced.
- 6) Administrative actions are fairer and more appropriate.
- 7) Organisational goals are made clear.
- 8) Employees become more competent.
- 9) Employee misconduct is minimised.
- 10) There is better protection from lawsuits.
- 11) There is better and timely differentiation between good and poor performers.
- 12) Supervisor's views of performance are communicated more clearly.
- 13) Organisational change is facilitated.
- 14) Motivation, commitment, and intentions to stay in the organisation are enhanced.
- 15) Voice behaviour is encouraged.
- 16) Employee engagement is enhanced.

In comparison, the success of performance management is determined by the pedagogy of managers and consequent influence instilled in employees (Pugna, Duțescu and Stănilă 2019: 22). The authors further claimed that the contemporary concept of Big Data should compulsorily require competent managers and employees to ensure performance management is effective at the workplace. Therefore, the relevance and use of performance management are pertinent and mandatory.

2.2.5 Performance Evaluation

In an organisation, the fundamental component to ensure the business operates seamlessly and successfully is its people. According to Mayo (2016: 1), people are categorised as intangible assets and fall within the Human Capital Management sector of a business. The author further explained that people who are mission-critical and talented were deemed assets whilst others who created negative stakeholder value were deemed liabilities. From a positivist standpoint, Skripak *et al.* (2016: 263) asserted that employees simply want to know what to do, how well they are going about doing it, and how they can improve their performance. Therefore, to ensure differences amongst employees are distinguished, performance evaluation must be conducted. In essence, performance evaluation entails the basic three-step process indicated in Figure 2.4.

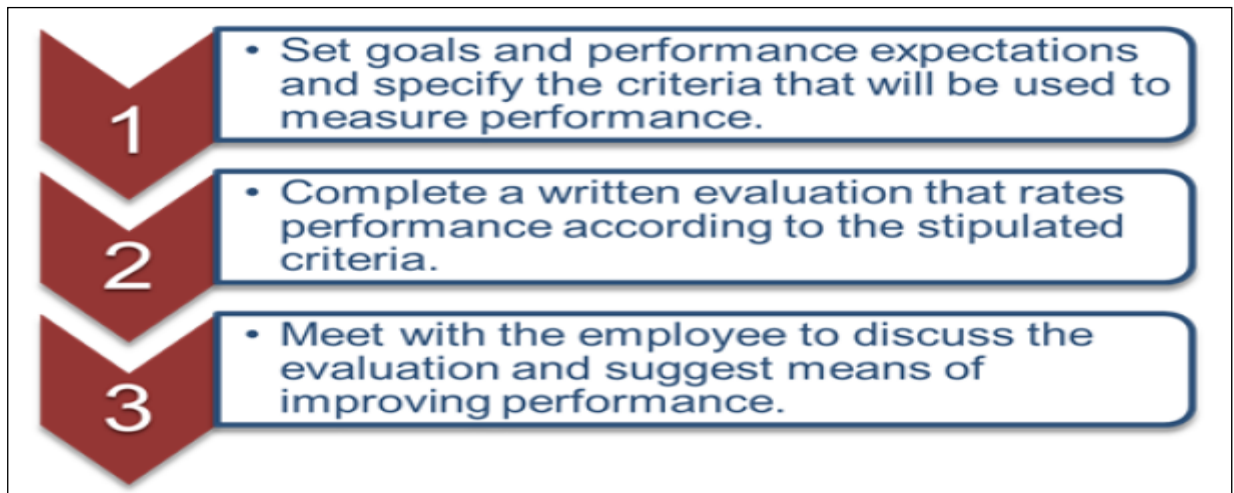


Figure 2. 4 - Basic Three-Step Process (Skripak *et al.* 2016)

More specifically, performance evaluation incorporates monitoring of activities which can become an intricately biased process should the manager favour avoidance of conflict with the subordinate (Skripak *et al.* 2016: 265). However, the author further enunciated that feedback can also emanate from other sources such as co-workers, upward management, other department managers and customers, which is known as the “360-Degree and Upward Feedback”.

In further congruence, leaders of varying departments were encouraged to collaborate in undertaking the performance evaluation of employees with the support of a suitable performance evaluation system (Govender 2016: 33). It was corroborated that a performance evaluation system had a negative effect on institutions relative to research productivity and teaching quality, however, contrarily research quality affected teaching quality positively (Cadez, Dimovski, and Zaman Groff 2017: 1455). Therefore, the positive relationship confirmed the effectiveness of the performance evaluation system within the institution. Thus, it

is proven that performance evaluation is indeed necessary for businesses and institutions; and has further validated itself as a key factor in strategy formulation.

2.2.6 Product Differentiation

The sale of a product is inevitably the primal reason for the functioning and existence of a commercial business (Skripak *et al.* 2016: 27). In this regard, it can be argued that a business's success is fundamentally dependent on brand equity (Salazar-Ordóñez, Rodríguez-Entrena, Cabrera and Henseler 2018: 146). The concept of product differentiation involves quality valuations by the customer and subsequent selection thereof to realise profound satisfaction (Barigozzi and Ma 2018: 403). Evidently, the authors buttressed the experience of product usage by customers influenced their decisions on product selection. Moreover, businesses affiliated with these customers tended to enhance their products to simultaneously achieve higher customer satisfaction and greater revenue growth.

Furthermore, product differentiation was claimed to cause conflict amongst stakeholders namely shareholders, employees, and consumers; however, the concept in the discussion was deemed successful regarding price costing and consequently contributed to the sustainability of the business (Le Pape and Wang 2020: 346). Ironically, it was proven by the authors that product differentiation did not have a robust bearing when customers resorted to bulk purchases (Le Pape and Wang 2020: 346). However, it was discovered that product differentiation was majorly successful for consumers, especially when they distrusted other products; these consumers were willing to pay significantly higher prices for products regardless of high demand-based volumes (Martinez-Ribaya and Areal 2020: 8). In summary, product differentiation is evidentiary and important in strategy formulation.

2.2.7 Competition

In the modern world, the business environment is characterised by the propagation of specialist businesses that are compelled to resort to innovation to sustain themselves (Sipa 2017: 344). This involves the inextricable links between fellow customers with whom they originate, develop, and continuously propagate (Skripak *et al.* 2016: 40; Sipa 2017: 344). In relevance to the aforementioned, the competition was the cardinal factor for the linkage between the customer and the supplier (Skripak *et al.* 2016: 40).

In addition, Skripak *et al.* (2016: 39) explained that economists identified four different types of competition:

- 1) Perfect competition.
- 2) Monopolistic competition.
- 3) Oligopoly.
- 4) Monopoly.

The author summarised that all four forms of competition were realistic in the business world and that affiliation to demand and supply was eminent. Additionally, the competitiveness and sustainability of any business globally were accelerated by an integrated supply chain management (Ongunlela and Lekhanya 2016: 164).

It is accepted that the importance of competitor awareness is a key factor for any business, regardless of its size. As indicated by Maharaj and Balkaran (2014: 277) competitiveness can change by differentiating a product by further ensuring there are clearly defined market segments. This notion was further enunciated and supported by the nature of monopolistic competition (Skripak *et al.* 2016: 43). The issue of short tenures of SMEs in South Africa was claimed to have a propensity to improve vastly on condition that the elements of innovation,

risk-taking and pro-activeness are collectively regarded as the competitive advantage (Neneh and Zan 2017: 166). This is attributed to the form of competition known as perfect competition, as enunciated by Skripak *et al.* (2016: 39). Consequently, in the absence of the constructs, businesses have been proven to close down prematurely in South Africa. Therefore, it can be safely concluded that competition is indeed required for the business environment and subsequently for strategy formulation.

2.2.8 Marketing

In the public domain, people cogitate that marketing entails merely advertising and selling of products, however, marketing was posited to have an abundance of definitions (Stimpson and Smith 2011: 241). To elaborate, in Table 2.2 the authors claimed that the following elements comprised marketing; market research, product design, pricing, advertising, distribution, customer service, and packaging.

Whilst, in Table 2.3 it must additionally be noted that according to Skripak *et al.* (2016: 285), marketing comprises: product design, price, target market, advertising, selling, distribution, and maintaining of relationships with customers after sales. It is apparent that there are similarities in the definitions provided, and can therefore, be deduced that marketing involves all employees' interventions and efforts within an organisation. This leads to the derivation of a marketing strategy.

Table 2. 2 - Marketing (Stimpson and Smith 2011)

Market research	Distribution
Product design	Packaging
Pricing	Customer service
Advertising	

Table 2. 3 - Marketing (Skripak *et al.* 2016)

Target market	Distribution
Product design	Selling
Price	Maintaining of relationships with customers after sales
Advertising	

A marketing strategy remains fundamental for a business to ensure success and sustainability. As claimed by Subhash (2000: 24) strategic marketing specifically assists the varied business units within the organisation to achieve goals and objectives. Evidently, marketing strategies can only be successful if the business employs competent people. To expand on this, a study conducted on SMMEs in KZN on green marketing, proved that the strategy was unsuccessful due to the employees of various participating organisations lacking understanding and knowledge (Lekhanya 2014: 633). Furthermore, in a separate study in South Africa, a lack of knowledge and skills were identified in the failure of executing marketing strategies (Lekhanya 2015: 143). In summary, the commonality of “lack of knowledge” affirms that marketing strategies can indeed be executed easily in SMEs, provided that a competent marketer is employed and

invoked within the business. Thus, marketing is a core element in strategy formulation.

2.2.9 Financial Management

Financial Management entails three main parts which are the ability to make capital investment decisions, how to finance a business, and managing of working capital (Atrill and McLaney 2011: 353). The ability to make investment decisions lies in the abilities of management to understand the nature of those decisions, investment appraisal methods, the accounting rate of return, the payback period, the net present value, internal rate of return, and investment appraisals (Atrill and McLaney 2011: 390).

Whilst, financing a business comprise intensive knowledge and intricate management in the sourcing of loans, the use of retained profits, enforcement of tighter credit controls, reducing inventory levels, delaying payment to trade payables, raising funds from working capital, reliance on borrowings and using bank overdrafts (Atrill and McLaney 2011: 441). In the context of managing working capital, it has been proven that most small and micro business enterprises in Durban, KZN do not understand financial planning and lack the expertise to plan and manage finances (Mutanda, De Beer and Meyers 2014: 153). The authors' research identified that the primary reason for business failure in the infancy stage was hapless financial planning and management.

In a similar study conducted within the eThekweni municipality, KZN, it was found that small businesses did not survive the infancy stage due to the lack of knowledge of funding options, in particular, the concept of bootstrapping was unknown to those businesses (Zwane and Nyide 2016: 441). Basically, as alluded by the authors, management and owners did not possess the knowledge of

seeking alternative ways of funding their businesses apart from obtaining loans from a banking institution.

Therefore, it can be concluded and argued that financial management is key for the operability of the business, but, also essential for the management team to be competent, skilled and aware of the financial phenomena needed to run a business. Hence, the phenomenon of financial management is required in strategy formulation in a business.

2.2.10 Low Price

The “4P’s” of the marketing mix comprises price, product, place, and promotion. These are fundamentally important in any marketing strategy. One of the main factors of the “4P’s” of the marketing mix is price. The setting of the price of a product is pertinent in a business, simply because, it can determine if a good profit can be realised, or it can allow for competition to beat its price (Skripak *et al.* 2016: 315). According to Mason (2015: 124), managers traditionally understand pricing to be merely adding a reasonable return to the base costs. However, it must be noted that there are many strategies related to pricing and ultimately the determination of a price of a specific product, at which it is sold. Skripak *et al.* (2016: 319), explained the numerous pricing strategies in current existence, namely: skimming pricing, penetration pricing, cost-based pricing, demand-based pricing, dynamic pricing, prestige pricing, odd-even pricing, loss leaders, and bundling. In short, it remains vital for the manager to be familiar with the strategies and consequently competent in pricing a product.

On the contrary, a low price of a product does not necessarily mean that sales will be high (Jobber and Shipley 2012: 1662). The authors further argued that the sale of a product will also be determined by the quality of the product (Jobber and Shipley 2012: 1662; Love and Okada 2015: 172). However,

consumer behaviour was known to favour low prices especially when the low price was consistently available; this included stores that also matched low prices (Manzur, Olavarrieta, Hidalgo-Campos, and Farías 2014: 356). Moreover, low price guarantee was favoured by consumers over high price or high quality of products (Saini and Sahay 2014: 48). In addition, the world's most successful retailer, Walmart, prides itself on low prices (Profitworks 2019: 1). Evidently, it can be accepted that low cost is pertinent in strategy formulation.

2.2.11 Business Development

Business Development is a widely known concept and function universally. This was confirmed based on an internet search which indicated 469 million related links to the concept (Yahoo. 2020). In principle, business development should be undertaken by persons with extensive knowledge about the business internally and externally (Torliene 2016: 1). In addition, the business activities involving marketing, process optimisation and market screening were claimed to be integrated into Business Development (Torliene 2016: 10). However, the pertinent elements involving managerial structures, organisational structures, tasks, processes and growth opportunities were claimed to be congruently fundamental in the Business Development function of an organisation (Lorenzi and Sørensen 2014: 58).

In South Africa, businesses of small magnitudes were comparatively claimed to be less supported by the government than larger enterprises (Mbandlwa and Anwana 2020: 15406). This economic outlook is predominantly due to Business Development in SMEs still being in the infancy stages, which was further exacerbated by the injustices of Black Economic Transformation (Mbandlwa and Anwana 2020: 15406). Evidently and according to (Torliene 2016: 2) the skillset of workers who have the propensity to develop businesses

regardless of commercial categorisation remains a contentious matter which needs to be dealt with to ensure the growth of SMEs.

In Indonesia, SME entrepreneurs were claimed to have low or poor levels of education, consequently, a Business Development Model was introduced which strategically focused on developing competitiveness and improving customer relationships amongst other elements such as processes and tasks (Hatta and Harsono 2019: 1). The strategy was deemed successful and widely rolled out in the country. Similarly, to Indonesia, the same approach can be adopted for SMEs in South Africa to achieve growth. Hence, Business Development can be accepted as a fundamental function in strategy formulation to achieve organisational goals coherently and successfully.

2.2.11.1 Business Incubators

The role of business incubators (BIs) in South Africa remains important for the developmental support of SMEs. Since 2014, the number of BIs has increased dramatically to ultimately facilitate business and technical support to SMEs. Most pertinent was the financial burden being fulfilled for startup costs of SMEs which made the early stages cumbersome and challenging (Masutha and Rogerson 2014: 141). However, the disparity between the public and private sector BIs remain an ongoing challenge since the public BIs are funded by the government whereas private sector BIs are self-funded (Masutha and Rogerson 2014: 149). Notwithstanding the deterioration in SMEs sustainability in KZN, the path of strategy formulation and support structures remains fundamentally pertinent for BIs in South Africa.

As postulated by Lose and Tengeh (2015: 14344), BIs confront challenges such as lack of sponsorships, technological facilities, production space and expansion to different areas. These challenges were posited to directly affect

SMEs that remain dependent on BIs for sustainability. Whilst the support for SMEs is needed (Lose and Tenenge 2015: 14346), there is a compelling requirement to steer the business in a different direction towards achieving a positive strategy optimisation. Hence, the complementing elements of Change and Purpose are purported as the main contributors towards achieving sustainability (Becker *et al.* 2017: 30).

2.3 Change

Change has been classified by many researchers in a myriad of ways. The most prominent types were those described by Gersick (1991: 10) as gradual or revolutionary; by Dunphy and Stace (1988: 318) as incremental and transformational; by Levy (1986: 6) as either first or second degree and lastly, by Miller (1984: 1161) as evolutionary or revolutionary.

Change in a business environment is implied by internal policies and external regulations. Businesses feel the change of the macro-economic environment which are beyond control and the micro-economic environment which are controllable. In relation, Diaz-Maroto and Diaz-Maroto (2018: 5) claimed that reforestation in the agricultural sector played a significant part in changing the ecology landscape which reshaped the environment positively.

The concept of reforestation emanated from the government which essentially forced businesses to change their production systems. Similarly, Lipton Tea decided to change its business concept successfully by making tea from environmentally friendly raw materials, however, this change was related to the internal controllable elements within the organisation (Unilever. 2019). This change led the business to a change in strategy, which boosted their brand power as global leaders in the respective industry.

On the contrary, SMEs in South Africa were challenged by macro-economic factors (Sitharam and Hoque 2016: 277). However, making an informed decision to concentrate on the controllable elements by forcing change just as Lipton Tea did (Unilever 2019: 1), lead to a sustainable business strategy. In addition, Lipton Tea embraced the element of purpose as a catalyst to change. In the present era, change is deconstructed into a variety of segments which are discussed further.

2.3.1 Climate Change

Climate change is understood to be a long-term challenge to both society and organisations, which involved discussions in the first conference held in Berlin in 1995, and more specifically the United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Durban in 2011, which confirmed the societal and organisational challenges (Banerjee 2012: 1762). Evidently, the challenges were segmented as follows by (Seles, de Sousa Jabbour, Jabbour, de Camargo Fiorini, Mohd-Yusoff and Thomé 2018: 771):

- 1) Lack of efficiency of governmental or regulatory support.
- 2) Stakeholder pressures.
- 3) Market pressure.
- 4) Inherent characteristics of each organisation.
- 5) Quality and efficiency of low carbons operations management actions and practices.
- 6) Increased costs.

However, the authors also identified the following opportunities namely:

- 1) Improvement of environmental performance.
- 2) Improvement of financial performance.
- 3) Improvement of operational performance.
- 4) Improvement of stakeholder relations.
- 5) New Business opportunities.

Furthermore, the authors posited that the resultant response and output of the organisation would involve:

- 1) Investment in research and development.
- 2) Internal policy development.
- 3) Control and disclosure of costs and benefits of climatic crisis mitigation.
- 4) Voluntary adoption of low-carbon operations management actions.

As concurred and further supported by Dube and Nhamo (2020: 10), climate change will not only damage the environment in the long term but will further be a hindrance to organisations financially. The sequence leading to the expected economic suffering of organisations is related to the amount of carbon emissions in compliance with applicable government regulations.

In South Africa, SMEs were deemed to be aware of the impacts of climate change, however, the associated payable insurances were not affordable (Elum, Modise and Marr 2017: 255). This challenge further exacerbates the chances for growth of the SME in the infancy stage to achieve the triple bottom line comprising people (social), planet (environment), and profit (economics) which listed organisations are obliged to output (Fry and Nisiewicz 2013: 1).

Interestingly, at the time of writing this literature review, 60% of SMEs were predicted to close due to the Covid-19 pandemic (McKinsey & Company. 2020). In this context, the environment aspect tests businesses' agility in sustainability, thereby calling for the urgent need for sustainable business strategies for those businesses in dire straits. However, it remains fundamentally important that SMEs remain cognisant of the impacts of climate change and subsequently incorporate achievable key point indicators as part of strategy formulation.

2.3.2 Market Orientation Change

Market Orientation (MO) is vividly and explicitly renowned for meeting the customers' needs and wants. Canter (2014: 10) opined that MO comprised three basic principles shown in Figure 2.5: consumer orientation, profit orientation, and organisational integration.

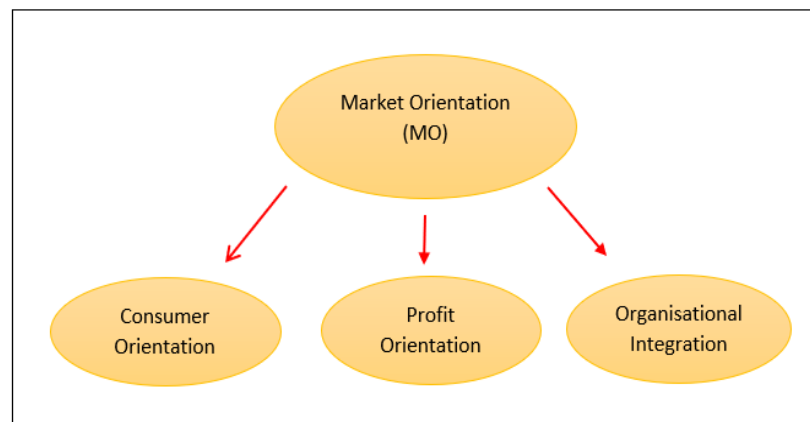


Figure 2. 5 - Market Orientation (Canter 2014)

- Firstly, **Consumer Orientation** was referred to as the customer being the decision-maker, whereby, all functional processes and areas were tailored and geared to meet the wants and needs of the customer.

- Secondly, **Profit Orientation** being relayed as the primary objective of the business by meeting own goals to maximise profit levels and satisfy customer wants and needs simultaneously.
- Lastly, **Organisational Integration** entailed the cohesion of all employees and functional departments in an organisation to meet the satisfaction requirements of the customer. From the information provided thus far, MO can be defined as customer behaviour that is influenced by market culture and market conditions holistically.

Accordingly, Canter (2014: 9) & Blythe and Martin (2019: 17) stress that there was no need for an organisation to possess an aggressive sales and marketing strategy as the customers' needs are the priority in terms of the associated requirements. Whilst Jogaratnam (2017: 211) affirmed that MO was also heavily affected by the evolving culture in the restaurant industry in the United States. The author further explained that customer behaviour was influenced by the factors surrounding their vicinity which therefore changed the needs and wants. Similarly, in South Africa, MO has been influenced by outlying factors namely prevailing conditions and market signals (Nwafor 2020: 1). These resultant changes were posited to ameliorate the customer positioning for numerous organisations in the market sector.

To summarise, an organisation requires extensive understanding of customers, good competence and capabilities to execute the relevant and applicable duties and lastly to be in a commanding position to collaborate and integrate the entire staff complement to output the preset goals and achieve the objectives of the organisation (Wu, Ma and Liu 2019: 524). MO is therefore considered to be pertinent in strategy formulation.

2.3.3 Product Orientation Change

Product Orientation (PO) is described when a product is produced that is innovative, maintains high performance and superior quality (Canter 2014: 7). PO is strategically utilised to produce products that attract customers and ultimately ensure the longevity of the business. According to Mohelska and Sokolova (2016: 4508), businesses that pursue PO as a primary marketing strategy need to maintain and improve the products' value, performance, and innovativeness continuously. Moreover, there remains a compelling need for the managers of the organisation to constantly monitor competitors' activities and simultaneously need to keep abreast of the product changes by invoking themselves in frequent training sessions within the organisation (Mohelska and Sokolova 2016: 4509).

A study undertaken in Taiwan indicated the relationship between entrepreneurial and alliance orientation resulting in influencing product development and product orientation significantly (Rivas, Chen and Yang 2020: 8). Whilst in South Africa, in the retail sector, the prominence of brand orientation was stressed to have an overarching effect on product orientation (Schmidt, Mason, Steenkamp and Mugobo 2017: 210). The consensus of the intertwined relationships between the two constructs namely brand orientation and product orientation can invariably be accepted as successful.

Evidently, product orientation is widely known to attract customers along with brand awareness (Schmidt *et al.* 2017: 219). A study carried out in the Umlazi local municipality in KZN, confirmed SMMEs contribute to local economic development by producing their own products and services (Jili, Masuku and Selepe 2017: 1). Moreover, PO strategies relative to SMMEs located in KZN supported their communities by offering innovative local products which provided full customer satisfaction (Jili *et al.* 2017: 9).

Similarly, Canter (2014: 8) and Fatoki (2019: 257) affirm that product-orientated organisations could be summarised as **firstly**, assuming that good quality products will attract repeat sales by default; **secondly**, the improvement of product and quality controls are the organisations core prerogative; and **lastly**, that high-quality products lead to increase in sales thus increased profits for the organisation. Therefore, it can be concluded that PO is pertinent in strategy formulation.

2.3.4 Digitalisation Change

Digital change has affected the enterprise landscape, in the form of innovation, provision of integrated solutions and providing stand-alone products and services. According to Aghimien, Aigbavboa, Oke and Koloko (2018: 1), digitalisation assisted the construction industry in South Africa in the design and feasibility phases. In particular, the areas of construction cost control, cost planning, preliminary cost estimate and building system analysis benefited from digitalisation. The effects of digitalisation have, therefore, affected the construction industry positively thereby ensuring more efficiency in delivering the final product to the customer. Similarly, in the Tool, Die and Mould-making (TDM) industry in South Africa, digitalisation has enhanced the processes within the shop-floor operations (Dewa, Van der Merwe and Matope 2018: 245). However, as further explained by the authors, the change in efficiency in shop-floor operations is attached to a high capital investment which is a drawback for random TDM businesses (Dewa *et al.* 2018: 258).

Evidently, in the education sector of South Africa, Chukwueren (2017: 240) recommends digitalisation in the decolonisation of the current education system, however, this notion was envisaged to take a considerable amount of time and effort to execute, predominantly due to the associated costs of implementation as

alluded by Dewa *et al.* (2018: 258). Hence, it can be concurred that digitalisation change in an organisation is expensive to implement at the outset, however, the benefits of the concept outweigh the cons.

Overall, digitalisation changes have affected the workplace positively from a perspective of job satisfaction however on the contrary, the concept had a negative outlook pertaining to work-life balance and autonomy (Cijan, Jenič, Lamovšek and Stemberger 2019: 3). The study indicated that employees were hyped about the efficiency and productivity changes at the workplace but felt controlled and monitored outside the workplace, since being in constant contact with the workplace digitally after work hours. Randomly, employees felt compelled to work after hours even though no compensation ensued for the extra work performed.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, businesses were forced by government authorities to make their workforce work from home based on business requirements (Kramer and Kramer 2020: 1). The pandemic sparked an increase in digitalisation requirements at macro-economic levels and in the education sector where online learning became the “new normal” environment. Digitalisation changes were forcefully imposed and have consequently changed the lives of many people including business operations worldwide.

Regardless of the effects that digitalisation has on the working environment, the concept has cemented itself robustly into the business and social regimes worldwide (Rademacher and Grant 2019: 41). Therefore, digitalisation can be deemed impactful in most organisations in the long term and remains fundamental in strategy formulation.

2.3.5 Artificial Intelligence Change

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is elementarily explained as machines imitating human intelligence to solve complicated and complex issues (Aarvik 2019: 1). AI remains fundamentally important in the economic world since a proliferation of research indicates the growing need for the concept. Whilst AI is considered vital, there are reservations that the concept does more harm than good (Aarvik 2019: 20; Mbandlwa 2019: 9).

In South Africa, there is a growing concern that the fourth industrial revolution will result in more job losses as a result of using AI to automate work processes instead of physical labour. As the fourth industrial revolution's purpose is to ensure globalisation, South Africans who live in a developing country fear the implementation of AI (Mbandlwa 2019: 2).

Similarly, in the global forefront Aarvik, (2019: 19) argued that AI possessed the need for suitably qualified individuals to work as opposed to having individuals without the knowledge base. Moreover, AI was also labelled as a challenge and infringement of human rights due to its abidance and adherence to preset algorithms (Risse 2019: 1). Basically, the possession of individualistic information in the long term, by means of AI, sparked a reason for concern by human rights communities (Risse 2019: 16).

On the contrary, the need for smart cities remains a matter high on the agenda for the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, South Africa, whereby AI is compulsory to bring the initiative to fruition (Karuri-Sebina and Guya 2020: 26).

The reliance on AI to harness success by the formation of smart cities in the country remains crucial and is fully supported by the central government regarding funding and project management. The notion of the macro-economic support framework is to eradicate the idea of AI being a liability, but rather to

realise the concept as an investment to achieve productivity, success and to join the globalisation movement (Karuri-Sebina and Guya 2020: 27).

In addition, AI is claimed to be a key role player in the determination of the COVID-19 pandemic infection and control trajectory (McCall 2020: 166). Arising from the points reflected by the author, AI is claimed to be able to read a Computed Tomography (CT) scan in 10 seconds as opposed to the traditional means which takes approximately 15 minutes. Undoubtedly the concept of AI has garnered a more favourable effect on government and subsequently, the larger population, hence in businesses, AI should be considered plausible in strategy formulation.

2.4 Purpose

Purpose is noted as a key element and a necessity for the creation of a meaningful organisation in a competitive environment and collectively in periods of uncertainty and inconsistency (Rey, Bastons and Sotok 2019: 4). Interestingly, Henman (2020: 1) advocated that both the organisation and the individuals' purpose must be aligned and synchronised to meet the common objectives. Additionally, Rey *et al.* (2019: 7) buttressed that personal purpose and organisational purpose should march in lockstep precision.

Furthermore, the purpose of an organisation is embedded in the mission statement (Rey *et al.* 2019: 8). As correctly indicated, the mission statement of organisations is intended to be meaningful and an example of this is Google which states "to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful" (Chah 2018: 1). Moreover, Google relies on cascading its mission statement throughout its enterprise worldwide, which has clearly been a successful strategy for the top 100 organisations (Interbrand. 2020). Likewise, Apple shares a similar focus on driving its mission statement within its internal

business model by increasing business revenue growth; the multinational organisation increased growth by 38% in 2020 (Interbrand. 2020). Therefore, the notion of purpose being a positive factor in organisational success is evident.

2.4.1 Purpose-driven Organisations

Purpose-driven organisations such as the Walmart Group have endured success being the world's largest private company (Profitworks. 2019). Consequently, Walmart maintained a sole purpose of maintaining low prices for the public domain and focused on balancing other factors such as operating costs, technology, supply chain management, dealing with manufacturers and employee motivation (Profitworks. 2019). Similarly, in 1967 the government of Botswana applied purpose-driven policies to develop institutions and ensure the sustainability of the country, which is currently one of the most successful countries in Africa (Schroder 2018: 81). This success was a result of purpose and leadership.

Equally successful, in South Africa, AECI - a joint listed organisation in the Johannesburg Stock Exchange and London Stock Exchange is regarded as a purpose-driven organisation in accordance with their business framework model (AECI. 2020). The organisation sets a good example when compared to the conglomerate's category in South Africa, as successfully profitable and sustainable (AECI. 2020). Accordingly, AECI's business framework model was formulated by a question-driven phenomenon comprising of **levers and accelerators**. This methodology entailed questions honing in on **levers** such as well-designed questions, choreographed conversations, and aligned action and **accelerators** such as focus on strength, not deficit, using the three circles of curiosity, geometry of safety, power of diversity, individual alignment, and system alignment (Berghoff and Kelley 2019: 969).

The power of levers and accelerators were proven to ensure assimilated congruence with the employees of the organisation, thus leading to long term success. To this end, the methodology employed to foster an organisation to succeed rests with a primary factor being purpose driven (Berghoff and Kelley 2019: 970). However, the reliance on achieving success cannot solely rest with the drivers of the organisation but also in congruence with the associated employees.

2.4.2 Personal Purpose at the Workplace

A proliferation of studies has indicated that an individual's purpose at the workplace involves motivation, job satisfaction and the desire to succeed by meeting set objectives (Rey and Malbašić 2019: 18). Furthermore, it was proven that entry-level employees such as janitor levels possess a drive for success in their respective duties.

In particular, the janitor responsible for mopping the floors at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) believed that he was not just mopping floors, but he was putting a man on the moon (Carton 2018: 323). This type of cognitive behaviour has clearly proven to be successful for the simple reason that NASA has been successful in fulfilling its missions (Carton 2018: 352). In this instance, motivation is linked with job satisfaction and success as the individual's purpose is bonded with the organisation's purpose.

Rey and Malbašić (2019: 23) claimed that there is a synergy between personal purpose and corporate purpose which is shown in Figure 2.6. The authors explained that purpose synergy is a place of commonality between the individual's purpose and the organisation's purpose where the interests of the organisation combine to enable its best form.

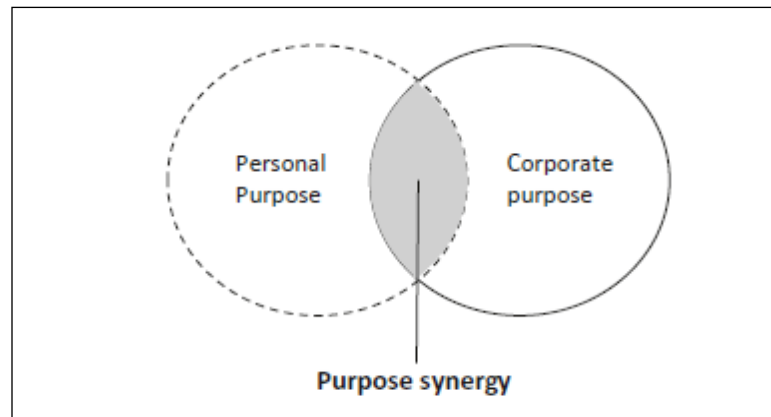


Figure 2. 6 - Purpose Synergy (Rey and Malbašić 2019)

In South Africa, personal purpose at the workplace was posited to be determined on the knowledge capacity levels of employees and entrepreneurs (Meyer and Hamilton 2020: 135). The consensus of the factor alluded to the calibre of the individual at the workplace. Moreover, the notion of individuals having access to abundant information at the workplace was considered a driving force to motivate the individual to succeed (Ditta, Strickland-Hughes, Cheung and Wu 2020: 1).

On the contrary, citizens of South Africa believe that government employees lack purpose and are slothful when carrying out their duties and tasks (Mabai and Hove 2020: 2674). In this situation, the intrinsic factor of possessing abundant information does not bode well, however, the fact that personal purpose is still prevalent in the private sector in its applicability to SMEs, is acceptable to provide the purpose synergy needed for organisational success. Personal purpose can therefore be deemed a pertinent component in a purpose-driven organisation.

2.4.3 Three Dimensions of Purpose

A plethora of research has indicated that three dimensions namely knowledge, action, and motivation constitute purpose (Rey and Bastons 2019: 33; Liu, Eweje, He and Lin 2020: 2909; Courtemanche and Cammalleri 2019: 62).

- Firstly, **knowledge** refers to the individual being fully aligned with the purpose of the organisation and can convey the message accurately without misinterpretation.
- Secondly, **action** is described as the implementation phase of the purpose with the expectation of attainment of success for the organisation.
- Lastly, **motivation** is explained as the cognitive state of the individual due to inherently being in a state of competency and cohesion in association with purpose.

Accordingly, the three dimensions of purpose (Figure 2.7), is referred to as a cyclical process whereby the dimensions are interrelated and harmonious (Rey and Bastons 2019: 33).

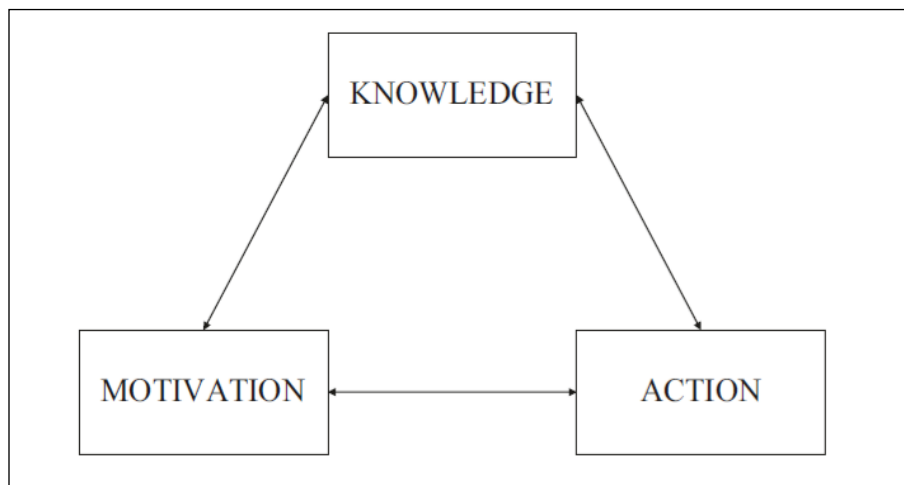


Figure 2. 7 - Three Dimensions of Purpose: Knowledge, Action & Motivation, (Rey and Bastons 2019)

Moving further into the specific mechanics of the process (Figure 2.8), the term **purpose internalisation** refers to the relationship between motivation and knowledge. It is deemed to be the process whereby individuals of the organisation embrace the purpose, learn intensively, and use the attained knowledge to motivate oneself internally such that from self-beliefs (Rey and Bastons 2019: 37). In addition, the relationship between knowledge and action comprises the process of **purpose implementation** which requires explicit knowledge and understanding of the purpose to place the construct into practice (Rey and Bastons 2019: 38). Additionally, the last process involves action and motivation forming **purpose integration**, which is fundamentally the pinnacle step for an individual in showcasing altruism by conclusively implementing purpose holistically within the organisation (Rey and Bastons 2019: 39).

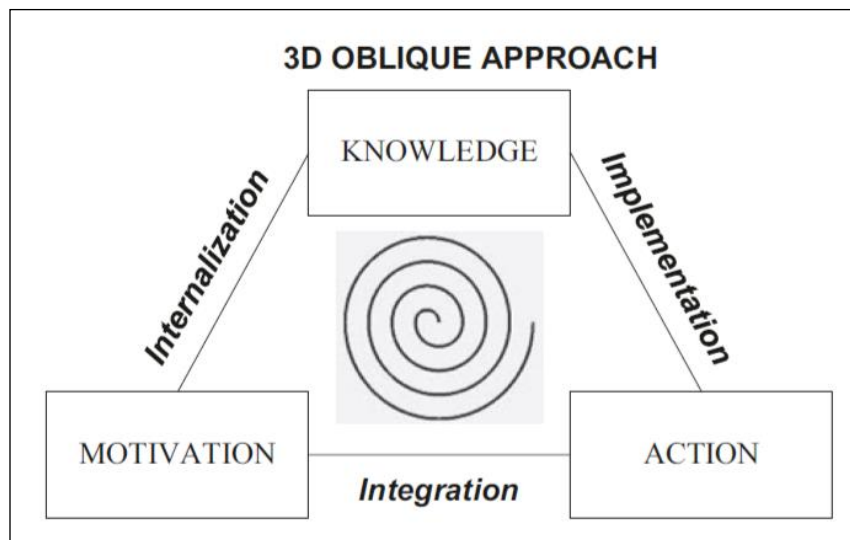


Figure 2. 8 - The Cyclical Process of the Three Dimensions (Rey and Bastons 2019)

In South Africa, the concern about publicly listed companies being misaligned to the three dimensions of purpose is accelerating (Kitsikopoulos, Schwaibold and Taylor 2018: 1295). According to the authors, the misalignment owes to the consensus that publicly listed companies struggle with achieving the triple bottom line. Accordingly, the philosophy of embracing the three dimensions of developing a purpose-driven organisation emanates from the cyclical process indicated by Kitsikopoulos *et al.* (2018: 39). The process is clearly encouraged to practise achieving success in the organisation. Therefore, it can be concluded that South African publicly listed companies should adopt purpose into strategy formulation and implementation.

2.4.4 Purpose-driven Leadership

Purpose-driven Leadership (PDL) was explained as shared leadership, by encouraging subordinates to execute the organisational purpose simultaneously with the leader (Cardona, Rey and Craig 2019: 58). The philosophy entailed the creation of more leaders from existing leaders. The PDL paradigm was further understood to involve the leader by firstly discovering individual purpose, followed by discussing subordinates' purposes and lastly merging the personal purposes with the organisation's purpose (Cardona *et al.* 2019: 63). According to White (2019: 262), PDL does not solely form a coalition amongst leaders and subordinates to achieve success, but in addition, the leadership style in discussion advantageously creates succession planning within the organisation. Technically, an increasing attrition rate does not negatively impact the operability of a PDL organisation.

In Chinese philosophy, PDL was impelled by Taoism which comprised Corporate Social Responsibility, Sustainability and Emerging purpose. In addition, the phenomenon was deconstructed into mindful leadership, authentic

leadership, level 5 leadership with humility, servant leadership, and sustainable leadership (Zu 2019: 1). Ultimately, PDL was explicitly viewed as a leadership style formulated from a combination of the leadership styles. Moreover, an empirical study in the United States of America revealed that PDL was evident in law enforcement which was resultant of the purpose statement of the state department (Njoku and Nwosu 2020: 101). The authors reflected the results indicatively to purport the relevance and robustness of PDL.

According to Roberts (2020: 133), PDL is linked to self-belief, self-understanding, consistently and actively exploring new perspectives, use of courage and engaging across differences amongst people. As explained by Kitsikopoulos *et al.* (2018: 1295) South African publicly listed companies are misaligned in relation to the triple bottom line, hence PDL relative to SMEs development should be focused on. However, AECI being a publicly listed company in South Africa does not fall under the category of misalignment (AECI. 2020). In conclusion, it can therefore be accepted that PDL is a resultant impactful leadership style for strategy formulation.

2.4.5 Purpose and Strategy

Since 1993, Bartlett and Ghoshal (1993: 32) lodged a proposal to progressively move from “Strategy” to “Purpose” by specifically placing the primary focus on purpose. Accordingly, this notion was adopted by numerous of strategists (Bartlett and Ghoshal 1993: 35) however the view of replacing strategy with purpose was not the way forward, as buttressed by Rey and Ricart (2019: 49). In fact, the authors posited that purpose and strategy should not be selected individually but rather encouraged the placement of purpose in the middle of strategy (Rey and Ricart 2019: 49). The technique of linking purpose and strategy was further opined as an indication of their synergies. Therefore, the synergy of

purpose and strategy can be construed as fundamentally inter-dependent for the mere expectation of an organisation making a profit.

Interestingly, the largest investment organisation in the world, BlackRock, led by Larry Fink adopted PDL from the outset of business in conjunction with purpose-driven principles namely blue ocean, lean, and agile (Rey and Ricart 2019: 48; BlackRock. 2020). This reflects the trend in successful organisations worldwide which includes technological businesses such as Apple, Microsoft, Google, Samsung, Intel, and IBM (Interbrand. 2020). In this context, the businesses are multinational including operating actively in South Africa. These purpose-driven businesses have clearly applied their business models without deviation in each operating country, which reflects the solidity of the strategies employed similar to BlackRock. To reiterate, SMEs in KZN were on a continual decline as claimed by Sitharam and Hoque (2016: 277). Hence, SMEs in South Africa and particularly in KZN would require similar business models to ensure sustainability.

To summarise, purpose should be considered a vital element in an organisation's strategy owing to the successes of the top 100 companies highlighted by Interbrand's report (Interbrand. 2020). In South Africa, there are a myriad of lessons on the synergy of purpose and strategy to be cognisant of, owing to the Fortune_500 companies' successes (Ramadani, Memili, Palalić and Chang 2020: 2). Moreover, the multitude of the Fortune_500 companies' successes is relative to the fact that they are family-owned companies (Ramadani *et al.* (2020: 5). The relevance of being family owned and oriented alludes to the provision of adopting ownership by default and possessing the urge and verve to ensure financial sustenance and sustainability. This is idealistically a converging strategy that SMEs require in South Africa to be adopted, in tandem with the correct leadership styles.

2.5 Leadership

Leadership is a management function whereby the leader ensures provision of focus, direction, and motivation to subordinates to achieve organisational goals (Skripak *et al.* 2016: 169). The reality of leadership is that the phenomenon is practised in a myriad of styles in the economic environment, educational sectors, industrial areas, and sports fields (Shao *et al.* 2017: 903). Furthermore, leadership was discovered to boost employee engagement with management, insofar that a positive outcome was realised (Popli and Rizvi 2016: 965). Therefore, leadership can be considered a vital component in the running of an organisation. Technically, operationally driven enterprises require leadership. Allio (2015: 6) buttressed that strong leadership is required, to ensure that elements are used for strategy formulation.

In the current era, it is believed that the type of leadership style adopted by an organisation will impact its purpose and subsequently its strategy formulation and implementation (Abu Sultan, Al Shobaki, Abu-Naser and El Talla 2018: 28). In addition, it was posited that flexibility in practising leadership styles is compulsory especially in times where highly effective leadership is required and when the situation determines the requirement (Nyide 2020: 5). The type of leadership that is required to achieve this goal is further investigated, in this study. Hence leadership styles will be discussed as sub-elements in the formulation of a sustainable strategy, in this study.

2.5.1 Ethical Leadership

The eminence of Ethical Leadership (EL) is fundamental to the government in South Africa; the construct is primarily in existence to ensure that good governance and ethical leaders assure effective public service delivery (Mbandlwa, Dorasamy and Fagbadebo 2020: 24988). The authors indicated that the importance of EL cannot be denied, since the construct contributes to the success of the organisation especially when led bureaucratically. According to Bhana and Suknunan (2020: 405), many leaders lack EL, however, the authors posit that the construct can be built from a perspective of training and development.

Despite the positivity claimed regarding EL relative to training and development, Mbandlwa *et al.* (2020: 24990) enunciated that EL was disregarded by the South African government owing to corruption. In retrospect, Cheteni and Shindika (2017: 2) added that a comparison between South Africa and Botswana in their study indicated that South African government officials were perceived as weaker moral managers, displaying unethical leadership. It can clearly be accepted that regardless of the leadership style practised, the characteristics and demeanours of leaders are paramount in leadership roles.

Overall, EL can be considered an influential tool with profound effects related to mediating relationships with group ethical climate, justice climate and peer justice (Walumbwa, Hartnell and Misati 2017: 14). The authors explained that a dictatorial attitude along with empathy towards employees in a group learning environment conducive to the expected ethical output prevailed. Figure 2.9 indicates the eventual effect that EL has on Group Learning Behaviour which results in a positive outcome.

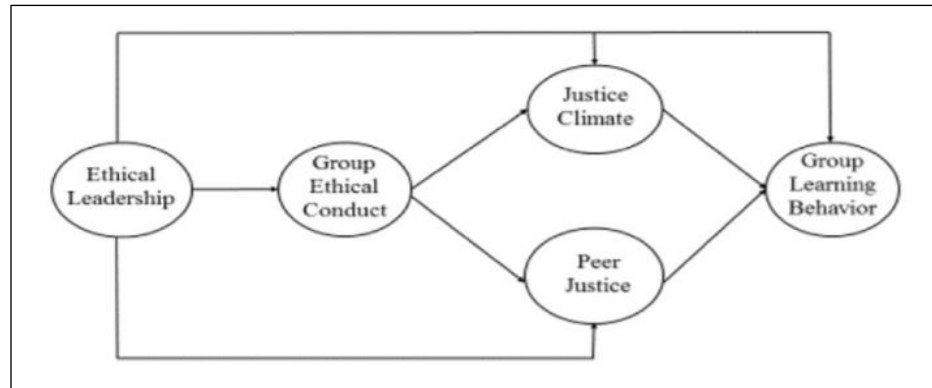


Figure 2. 9 - A process model for group learning - Ethical Leadership (Walumba *et al.* 2017)

In a research study conducted in China, it was discovered that EL had an affirmatory effect when related to customer orientation, organisational performance, and competitive intensity (Feng, Wang, Lawton and Luo 2019: 111). Similarly, EL fostered customer-oriented citizen behaviour; the relation between the two constructs reflected a supportive result (Garba, Babalola and Guo 2018: 1). To summarise, EL can be construed as an important factor to acquire success in an organisation regardless of the sector. Moreover, EL has proven to be primarily mandatory and deemed effective in strategy formulation and implementation.

To conclude, EL is associated with the customary leadership styles known as Transformational Leadership, Transactional Leadership, Autocratic Leadership and Bureaucratic Leadership (Skripak *et al.* 2016: 170). However, Transformational and Transactional leadership styles are frequently and regularly used in the business environment (Liphadzi, Aigbavboa and Thwala 2015: 288). Therefore, both Transformational and Transactional Leadership styles will be discussed further in this study.

2.5.2 Transformational Leadership

Transformational Leadership is a leadership style that entails subordinates and the leader sharing a relation that fosters trust and respect, leading to the subordinate going the extra mile to achieve organisational goals (Bass 1985: 5). Transformational Leadership involves the following four fundamental elements:

- 1) Individual consideration.
- 2) Intellectual stimulation.
- 3) Idealised influence.
- 4) Inspirational motivation.

Figure 2.10 below, indicates the four elements which result in the performance of the leader beyond expectations, as posited by the author. These cohesive elements are explained further.

- Firstly, **Individual Consideration** ensures that the leader provides mentorship, recognises contributions, rewards creativity and showcases empathy.
- Secondly, **Intellectual Stimulation** expects the leader to encourage innovation, improve processes, challenge historical assumptions, create vivid thinking and encourage criticism by viewing the unexpected as a learning curve.
- Thirdly, **Idealised Influence** entails the leader posing as a role model for subordinates to emulate, placement of plans into action, gaining trust and respect and inspiring the team to work independently within the group.
- Lastly, **Inspirational Motivation** involves the formation of a foundation associated with the vision and mission of the organisation whereby subordinates become naturally inclined to work symmetrically with the leader (Alatawi 2017: 23).

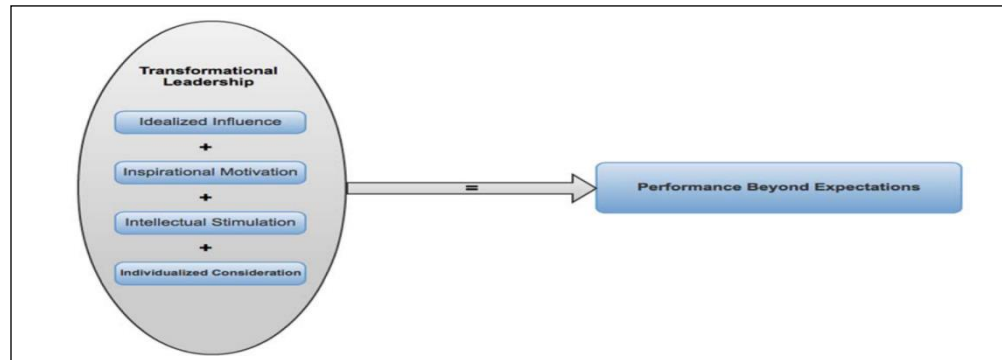


Figure 2. 10 - The additive effect of Transformational Leadership (Alatawi 2017)

According to Boamah, Laschinger, Wong and Clarke (2018: 185), Transformational Leadership affected job satisfaction levels positively in the nursing sector. The authors claimed that nurses felt motivated especially when their supervisors shared duties with them by filling in shifts when colleagues were absent from the workplace. The appreciation for job fulfilment and coverage of shifts resulted in the nurses trusting and respecting the leader unconditionally. The resultant fostered a culture of strength within the workplace.

Similarly, a study conducted on teachers in Indonesia indicated that Transformational Leadership bore positively in the workplace and resulted in motivation to astronomical levels (Andriani, Kesumawati and Kristiawan 2018: 28). The authors stressed that the leadership in the institution was charismatic, adaptive, willing to listen and empathise when the need arose. Gautam and Enslin (2019: 139) added that Transformational Leadership was moderately superior to Transactional Leadership and confirmed that Sales Managers in the South African automotive industry preferred Transformational Leadership over other leadership styles.

However, the authors advised that managers required more training and awareness of Transformational Leadership within the country. In conclusion,

Transformational Leadership can be accepted as an effective leadership style that results in the achievement of organisational success. However, Transformational Leadership should also be used together with Transactional Leadership (Crews, Brouwers and Visagie 2019: 424).

2.5.3 Transactional Leadership

Transactional Leadership entails a relation between the leader and subordinate involving contingent rewards and management by exception (Bass 1985: 7; Ceri-Booms, Curşeu, and Oerlemans 2017: 180). Bass (1985: 7) further claimed that by means of contingent rewards, the leader is able to elicit loyalty, commitment and involvement from subordinates. In theory, Transactional Leaders have high expectations about performance and rewards, however, the elements of trust and organisational commitment was non-existent when the leadership style was practised (Dai, Dai, Chen and Wu 2013: 765).

A study conducted in Indonesia revealed that Transactional Leadership was an effective leadership style in the public health sector, owing to subordinates being self-motivated to work for a reward (Purwanto, Bernarto, Asbari, Wijayanti and Hyun 2020: 311). Whilst Udayanga (2020: 297) mentions that Transactional Leadership did not influence productivity in an organisation, interestingly the leadership style did not have any effect. Additionally, Algahtany and Bardai (2019: 77) stated that Transactional Leadership did not affect product quality positively in organisations in Saudi Arabia.

In today's era, Transactional Leadership is predominantly paired with Transformational Leadership however Mahfouz (2019: 1) elaborated on the effectiveness of Transactional Leadership independently. According to Mahfouz (2019: 8), the relationship between Transactional Leadership and employee

commitment formed a model named Employee-Directed Transactional Leadership Model which has steered the leadership style into a positive trajectory.

Contrarily, in Nigeria, Transactional Leadership was empirically proven to be insignificantly impactful on employee commitment, however, this outcome was owing to the incompetency of leaders practising the leadership style (Abasilim, Gberevbie and Osibanjo 2019: 7). Evidently, it remains paramount and non-debatable that the practising of a leadership style should be done appropriately to evoke the optimum outputs.

In conclusion, Transactional Leadership can be deemed as a widely practised leadership style and is favoured by a plethora of leaders in conjunction with Transformational Leadership (Crews *et al.* 2019: 424; Ugwu and Okore 2020: 870). Moreover, both Transformational Leadership and Transactional Leadership jointly have the proclivity to produce the end results to meet a leader's satisfaction.

2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, the components of Strategy (Uyar: 2019: 7) namely: 'Planning', 'Control', 'Cost Management', 'Performance Management', 'Performance Evaluation', 'Product Differentiation', 'Competition', 'Marketing', 'Financial Management', 'Low Price' and 'Business Development' were discussed and proven necessary. Research has profoundly illustrated a myriad of factors comprising strategies of businesses, however, a few elements such as Business Development were more prominent amongst others (Panda 2014: 267). However, although Allio (2015: 6) posited that the number of elements used in strategy formulation did not matter as long as the strategy was well formulated and implemented accordingly. The main objective being a well-formulated strategy that results in good leadership and ensures sustainability. Ironically, Zondo (2020: 6) postulated that collaboration and cooperation of all stakeholders

were necessary to execute tasks and accomplish goals. In addition, Nonaka and Takeuchi (2021: 1) stressed the need for a reconceptualising strategy on the concept of the inside-out approach to achieve sustainability. This has reiterated the relevance and pertinence of the components of 'Strategy' in this research study.

Furthermore, the sub-elements of 'Change', 'Purpose' and 'Leadership' were also discussed. In particular, the components of 'Change' namely: 'Climate Change', 'Market Orientation Change', 'Product Orientation Change', 'Digitalisation Change' and 'Artificial Intelligence Change' were discussed. Bamberg and Schulte (2018: 312) claimed that 'Change' is a catalyst in achieving sustainability. This was further evident when large corporates like Unilever changed their business strategy, to not only comply with government regulation changes but also to boost their brand power and achieve success and sustainability simultaneously. The literature on 'Change' in this chapter has shown the sub-element's importance and relevance in influencing a positive trajectory in business sustainability.

In addition, the components of 'Purpose' namely: 'Purpose-driven Organisations', 'Personal Purpose at the Workplace', 'Three Dimensions of Purpose', 'Purpose-driven Leadership' and 'Purpose and Strategy' were discussed. To re-iterate, Henman (2020: 1) and Rey *et al.* (2019: 7) stress the need for and importance of the individual and the organisation to be in congruence with 'Purpose', in a business. Similarly, it was stressed that purpose-driven businesses cannot achieve success and sustainability by relying only on the leadership team; the employees remain crucially important in their role-playing of driving the business to sustainable levels.

Lastly, the components of 'Leadership' namely: 'Transformational Leadership', 'Ethical Leadership' and 'Transactional Leadership' were discussed. On the underpinning of previous academic research, it was noted that

'Leadership' was fundamentally important for any business to achieve success regardless of the sector (Shao *et al.* 2017: 903). Moreover, contemporarily beliefs were that the type of leadership styles used in business impacted its purpose, strategy formulation, and strategy implementation (Abu Sultan *et al.* 2018: 28). In summary, it was proven that in conjunction with 'Ethical Leadership' practising, both Transformational and Transactional Leadership styles were of significant pertinence to strengthen a business's strategy to achieve sustainability. Moreover, Transformational and Transactional Leadership were favoured to be used jointly within an organisation to produce effective results (Crews *et al.* 2019: 424).

Therefore, 'Strategy', 'Change', 'Purpose' and 'Leadership' can be deemed necessary and pertinent to achieve a 'Sustainable Business Strategy'. In the next chapter, the evaluation methodology for the selection of the element and sub-elements will be discussed. It remains key to identify the evaluation methodology adopted for the selection of the element and sub-elements. Thereafter the rationale for the selection of a Systems Thinking Model and the formulation of a Conceptual Framework for this research study will be discussed and explained. Amongst the various systems thinking models in existence, only one model was selected for use which will be explained accordingly.

CHAPTER THREE: Systems Thinking and Development of a Conceptual Framework to achieve Business Sustainability

3.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapter, the element of **Strategy** and sub-elements of **Change**, **Purpose** and **Leadership** were discussed. The discussed literature indicated the importance and relevance of the concepts in the current era. Moreover, the assumptions and proven theories clearly indicate the need to formulate Sustainable Business Strategies for SMEs. Furthermore, it remains noteworthy that Leadership and Organisational Culture was accentuated as pertinent strategic determining factors in business sustainability (Ilmi, Robiansyah, Hadjaat, ZA and Darma 2021: 10). To this end, Organisational Culture included the sub-elements of Change and Purpose in the grouping. These phenomena sparked reasons to boost the rate of success of SMEs in KZN; due to their known decreasing rate as claimed by Mahohoma and Agbenyegah (2020: 39).

In this chapter, the element and sub-elements discussed will be mapped to formulate a Conceptual Framework that will indicate how the element and sub-elements support one another, the articulation of respective theories and the establishment of philosophies that are framework-specific (Jabareen 2009: 52). A Conceptual Framework is essential in the advancement of practical and academic knowledge (Lindgreen, Di Benedetto, Brodie and Jaakkola 2020: 1). Moreover, a conceptual framework showcases the concepts of a study, the assumptions behind the concepts, and their relationships (Furculiță 2021: 35). Hence, a Conceptual Framework has been chosen for this study. In addition, and accordance with the objectives, relationships amongst the mentioned elements will be investigated and understood perusing a Systems Thinking Model.

Accordingly, a Systems Thinking Model shows the relationship between elements and the way they feed back into each other (Arnold and Wade 2015:

670). In addition, the Systems Thinking Model will be used in conjunction with the Conceptual Framework to indicate relationships of the elements. Therefore, the Systems Thinking Model will be used to show the interconnections and interdependencies among the elements with the aim of being goal-oriented.

The foundation phase of the Conceptual Framework entails evaluation of the element, Strategy and sub-elements, Change, Purpose, and Leadership; and the type of evaluation perused. Although these elements have been selected and explained in the preceding chapter, it remains fundamental to understand the method of evaluation undertaken for selection thereof. This concept will be discussed in the next section.

3.2 Evaluation

Essentially, evaluation is a way of assessment of criteria, summation of the information gathered and provision of feedback to a wide audience in varied formats such as verbal, visual, reports, graphical representations and so forth (Dalal 2016: 39). As claimed by Mathaba and Dorasamy (2016: 60) evaluation is conducted in a myriad of ways, however, the selection of a specific method depends upon the individual and associated judgements; whilst the holistic outcome is viewed in a diverse view by various stakeholders (Nepal 2002: 113).

For example, in the banking sector, the SERVQUAL Model by Zeithaml, Bitner and Gremler (2006: 219) was used to measure and evaluate service quality in five dimensions (Zungu and Mason 2017: 47). Additionally, in the financial sector, a qualitative evaluation was performed on continuous monitoring of critical financial reporting controls in a parastatal organisation in KZN (Nyide 2018: 805). Whilst, in the electronic engineering sector, specifically in wavelength congestion in networks entailed the use of a tool to perform evaluation (Masimba, Nleya,

Mutsvangwa and Chidzonga 2020: 5). From these analyses, it can be accepted that numerous forms of evaluation exist in the business world.

According to Scriven (1991: 43), the two distinct types of evaluation that was discovered in 1967 was **Formative Evaluation** and **Summative Evaluation**. Ironically, Dalal (2016: 41) also confirmed Formative and Summative Evaluations with the addition of Diagnostic Evaluations. As a result of the commonality of Formative Evaluation and Summative Evaluation, these types shall be discussed further herein the literature.

Formative Evaluation is referred to an activity being performed systematically to strengthen the object (Scriven 1991: 63; Nieveen and Folmer 2013: 158). The authors claimed that the following methods are involved in Formative Evaluation depicted in Figure 3.1 and further discussed below:

Quality criteria	Design stage →	Design proposal	Global design	Partly detailed intervention/ product	Completed intervention/ product
Relevancy		- Screening - Focus group	- Screening - Focus group	- Screening - Focus group	- Screening - Focus group
Consistency		- Screening - Focus group	- Screening - Focus group	- Screening - Focus group	- Screening - Focus group
Practicality	expected	- Screening - Focus group	- Screening - Focus group	- Focus group - Walkthrough	- Focus group - Walkthrough
	actual			- Micro-evaluation	- Micro-evaluation - Try-out
Effectiveness	expected	- Screening - Focus group	- Screening - Focus group	- Focus group	- Focus group
	actual			- Micro-evaluation	- Micro-evaluation - Try-out

Figure 3. 1 - Formative Evaluation Methods (Nieveen and Folmer 2013)

- **Screening:** This involves checking the characteristics of the object by means of a pre-defined checklist.
- **Focus Group:** Identifying which group or individual requires the evaluation and what the needs assessment will entail.

- **Walkthrough:** Involvement of a gathering of information of the process by means of a checklist, visual observations or physical interviews.
- **Micro-evaluation:** conducting an evaluation of a prototype by interviews, observations, questionnaires, tests and reports.
- **Try-out:** Similar to the micro-evaluation, the try-out method involves evaluation by the discussed methods on a larger scale such that more evaluators will be required to eliminate bias and provide a cohesive report.

Summative Evaluation is when the performance of an object or program is judged a long while after the operation is in existence (Scriven 1991: 150; Akuoko-Asibey 1996: 245; Panchal 2020: 18). Whilst summative evaluations vary amongst phenomena, Figure 3.1 indicates the trajectory of steps undertaken to complete the evaluation (Bertrand, Holtgrave and Gregowski 2009: 580).

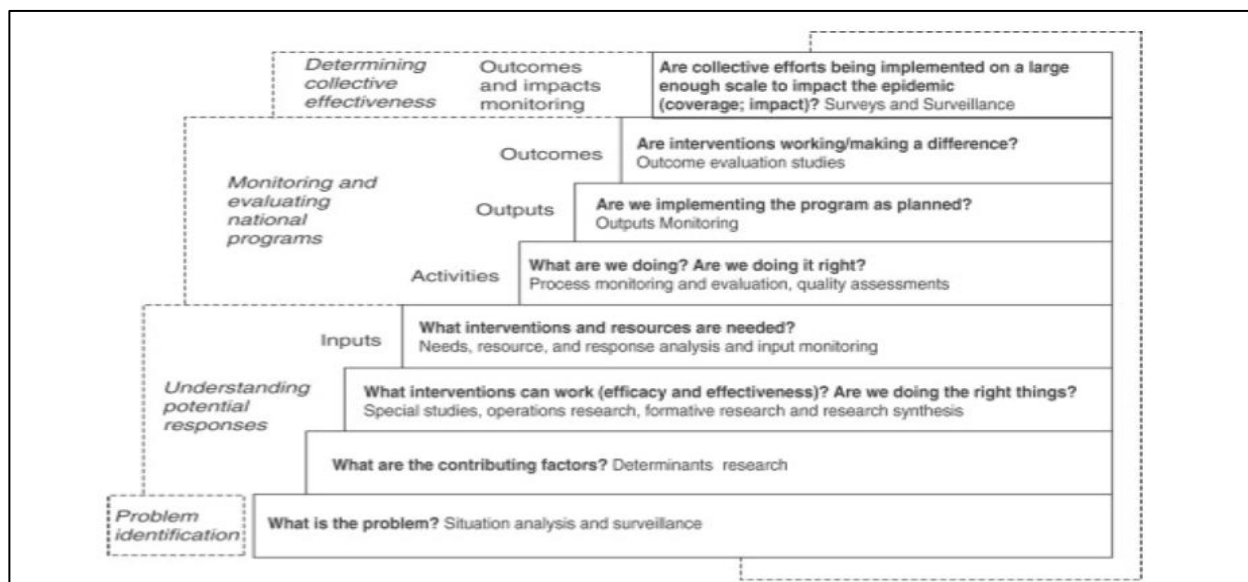


Figure 3. 2 - Summative Evaluation (Bertrand *et al.* 2009)

The following steps should be followed when conducting a Summative Evaluation:

- **Evaluation of outcome:** Were any effects observed as a direct result of the object or program?
- **Evaluation of impact:** Were any accelerated or extended effects noticed as a direct result of the object or program?
- **Cost-benefit evaluation:** Were there any cost-benefits of the program? What is the ratio of cost versus benefit?
- **Tributary analysis:** Utilise new methodology to question prior researched data – a secondary analyses method.
- **Converging analysis:** Consolidation of various studies to converge into one output or conclusion.

The next section delves deeper into the evaluation process by providing the distinguished differences between Non-Theory-Based and Theory-Based Evaluation.

3.2.1 Non-Theory-Based Evaluation

A Non-Theory-Based Evaluation (NTBE) approach involves the use of intuition and tacit knowledge to conduct an evaluation (Morrow, Hogden, Kang, Steinberg, Canfell, Solomon, Kench, Gill, Shaw, Pachter and Parkinson 2019: 6). According to Scriven (1991: 80) and; Bera and Poels (2015: 1), NTBE comprises four evaluation strategies which are management oriented models, experimental models, qualitative models, and participant models. These models are briefly explained below:

- 1) **Management Oriented Models** such as Program Evaluation and Review Technique (PERT) is an evaluator model which concentrates on formally stated goals. Whilst this model is acceptable in producing a result, there is a degree of subjectivity as sub-goals and latent goals are not considered in the compilation and calculation of the results.
- 2) **Experimental Models** are scientific in nature which draw information from scientific, perspectives especially social sciences. This method focuses on an input/output approach of anticipating accuracy, impartiality, objectivity, and validity. However, the aspects of cognition and behaviour of individuals are not considered, hence making the method subjective.
- 3) **Qualitative Models** such as the “Fourth Generation” model is founded on grounded theory and entails observations and inferences made from the information gathered. Whilst observation is an acceptable form of data gathering and grounded research, this model is subjective since comparisons to other forms of subject matter are complicated. Moreover, this model makes generalising other situations difficult.
- 4) **Participant Models** involves the evaluation of participants especially customers of the business. Illuminative evaluation models are categorised as participant oriented models which has the advantage of being customer-centric, however, subjectivity is apparent as the quality of the criteria used for the evaluation may be debatable when comparisons are done from one customer to the other. This notion alludes to customers’ needs differing from each other hence the issue of subjectivity arises and is a fundamental part of decision-making in the evaluation process.

Scriven (1991: 89) and; Bera and Poels (2015: 5) expressed that most businesses claim superiority of each model used individually, however, in reality, the sub-components of each model are used selectively to suit business requirements and scenarios as they arise. This perception bears testament to

experimental (scientific) models being rejected as the models do not provide holistic worldwide representation (Downes 2011: 757; Meya, Drupp and Hanley 2021: 15). Similarly, with PERT – a management-oriented model, the issue of lack of calibrations and distributions persist in the evaluation process (Trietsch and Baker 2012: 490). Likewise, qualitative models such as the “Fourth Generation” model, did not offer effectiveness in its perusal (Sloan and Watson 2001: 348; Engeström and Sannino 2021: 14). In addition, whilst the Illuminative Evaluation model – a type of participant model, was encouraged to be used (Sloan and Watson 2001: 664; Cahapay 2020: 748), the model remains subjective in the comparison of criteria amongst stakeholders (Scriven 1991: 89). In continuation, the Theory-Based Evaluation will be discussed in the next section.

3.2.2 Theory-Based Evaluation

Theory-Based Evaluation (TBE) dates to the 1970s which involved evaluation causally surfacing assumptions in program theory in detailedness (Chen 1990: 77). The author revealed that TBE elaborated on types of activities, effects of activities, consequent steps of the program, the expected response and so forth. In practice, TBE used in the education sector specifically in program theory was proven successful in the United States of America (Cook, Murphy and Hunt 2000: 595). Similarly, research studies conducted on TBE in program theory reflected robust outcomes which were established on the methodology of inputs and outputs (Birckmayer and Weiss 2000: 429; Mickwitz, Neij, Johansson, Benner and Sandin 2021: 288). The authors explained that the outcome of TBE was based on three steps namely:

- 1) The robustness of the definition of the theory.
- 2) The propensity of the program to bring the assumptions to the surface.
- 3) The cost factors comprising of money and time spent.

The consensus of the three steps detailed above is summed up by the authors claim that TBE is expensive and time-consuming owing to the extensive details involved in program theory (Birckmayer and Weiss 2000: 429). Similarly, according to Van der Knaap (2004: 25) TBE poses challenges related to framing and exercising defensive routines. However, the author stated that TBE augments relevance and identification in its application in the program and organisational theories.

According to the research studies conducted by Francescato (1992: 135) and Pomponi, Fracocchi and Tafuri (2015: 93), TBE in organisational theory is performed using a multi-dimensional approach which entails the use of various models such as the goal model, system resource model, multi-actor model and the culture model. These models which are also presented by Gregory (1996: 298) and Amrina, Hidayatno and Zagloel (2021: 324) are briefly explained below:

- 1) **The Goal Model** entails the formulation of goals and objectives, indicators are identified, targets are defined, activities are monitored and comparisons to the actual models are performed. The effectiveness of this model is defined as the organisation's ability to achieve its goals and objectives.
- 2) **The System Resource Model** involves the selection of an ideal model and conducting a comparison of the organisation to the model. The effectiveness of this model is defined as the organisation's ability to adapt and sustain itself in a continuously evolving environment.
- 3) **The Multi-Actor Model** is defined as the ability to identify interested parties and surface and exhibit interested parties' opinions about the organisation. The effectiveness of this model is defined as the organisation's ability to satisfy the interested parties' needs and maintain influence when conducting its business activities.

- 4) **The Culture Model** entails assessing the development needs, abilities, and strengths of the employees in an organisation, thereafter, engaging with them further to understand the affiliation and interdependency with the organisational needs and finally formulating a plan for change. The effectiveness of this model is to develop the employees or members and create a synergy with the organisation to achieve mutual success.

It remains evident that TBE when used in program theory or organisational theory is a fundamentally powerful tool used in the selection of elements (Scriven 1991: 77). The research literature above has shown that judgements and assumptions are made from realistic phases within the model setup, which are tested for validity and usability. In addition, a multiplicity of models can be used in different segments of the organisation or optionally a single model can be adopted. Regardless of the selection and preference, TBE is a valid tool for perusal in business strategies formulation.

As indicated thus far, both formative evaluation and summative evaluation have the capability to employ any evaluation strategy either collectively or independently. Specifically, TBE was used to select the elemental criteria to first establish the element of **Strategy** (Uyar 2019: 7). As a result, this technique has been employed qualitatively in the preceding chapter, particularly in the selection of sub-elements namely **Change**, **Purpose** and **Leadership** (Figure 3.3), to formulate a **Sustainable Business Strategy** for SMEs.

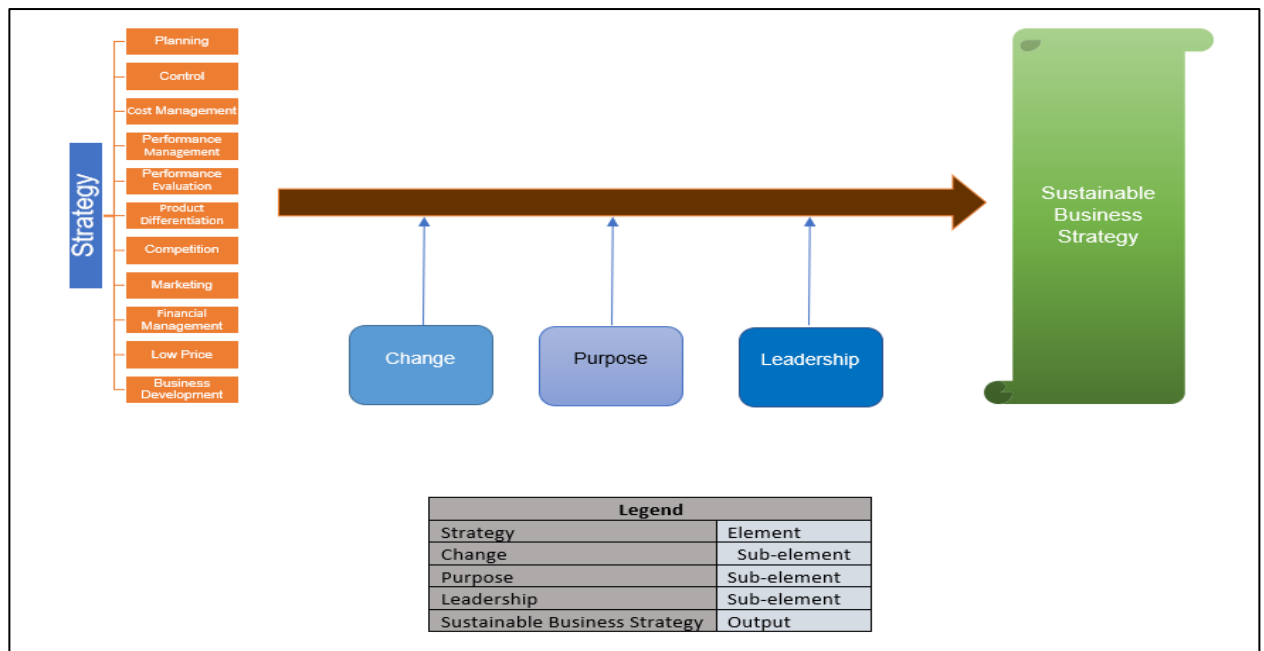


Figure 3. 3 - Element and Sub-elements of the Framework (Source: Author)

The next section discusses Systems Thinking and moves towards the next phase of formulation of the Conceptual Framework.

3.3 Systems Thinking

The history of the development of systems thinking commenced in the 1920s. up until the 1960s, the system thinking concepts were focused on extensively until the 1960s. From the 1970s to the 1990s, numerous tools and methodologies were developed while in the recent era, chaos and complexity is more prevalent (Mingers and White 2010: 1156). Amongst the numerous definitions and interpretations by Barry Richmond, Peter Senge, Sweeney and Sterman, Hopper and Stave, and so forth, systems thinking is simply defined as a goal-oriented system (Arnold and Wade 2015: 2). Three aspects are involved to further define and accomplish systems thinking, namely elements, interconnections, and a goal

or function (Arnold and Wade 2015: 3). Figure 3.4 below explains these aspects and how systems thinking is fully defined from a visual perspective:

- **Firstly**, the elements offer a description of the characteristics of the system to perform a task.
- **Secondly**, the interconnections show the connections and relationships of the elements.
- **Lastly**, the purpose describes the output result which is the goal.

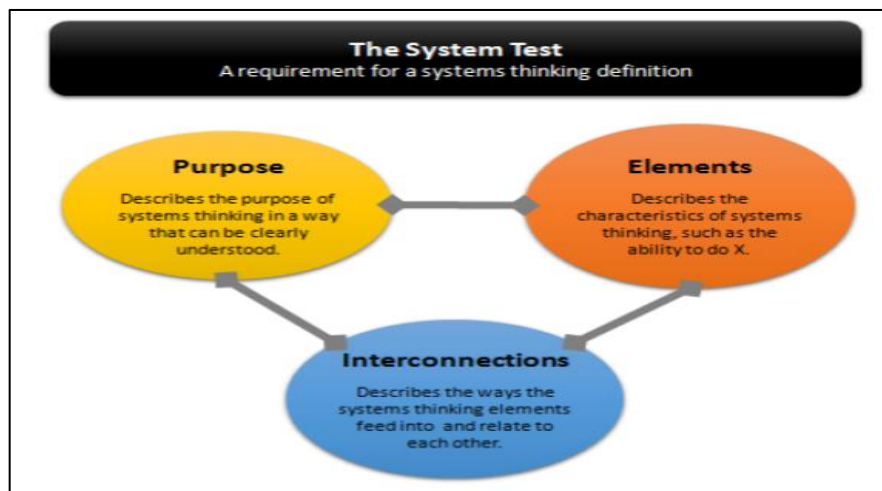


Figure 3. 4 - The Systems Test (Arnold and Wade 2015)

Systems Thinking has proven its effectiveness and value addition in complex issues by causal effects in indicating a broad instead of partial view. Furthermore, systems thinking has shown its value in recurring and exacerbated problems. Additionally, systems thinking's effectiveness and usefulness were shown in areas where the action has affected the natural or competitive environments. Moreover, systems thinking has proven its value in solving problems where solutions are complex and easily noticeable (Aronson 1996: 1).

In support of this theory, Sheffield, Sankaran and Haslett (2012: 126) claimed that systems thinking tamed complexity in project management remarkably, however, the authors' study indicated that managers did not apply the system thinking tools in daily activities. The primary reason being there are different types of systems thinking approaches which managers are not familiar with in its entirety.

According to Jackson (2016: 44) there are ten different systems thinking approaches which are categorised into four types namely goal seeking and viability, exploring purposes, ensuring fairness, and promoting diversity. Table 3.1 below, which is adapted from Jackson (2016: 44) indicates the variety of systems thinking approaches. Under the categories listed, the types of system thinking approaches in Table 3.1 will be discussed briefly in the next section, followed by a more detailed explanation of the related theoretical and philosophical aspects of the chosen model used for the formulation of the conceptual framework in this study.

Table 3. 1 - Types and categories of system thinking approaches (Adapted from Jackson 2016)

Category	Type
Goal seeking and viability	Hard Systems Thinking
	System Dynamics: The Fifth Discipline
	Organisational Cybernetics
	Complexity Theory
Exploring Purposes	Strategic Assumption Surfacing and Testing
	Interactive Planning
	Soft Systems Methodology
Ensuring Fairness	Critical Systems Heuristics
	Team Syntegrity
Promoting Diversity	Postmodern Systems Thinking

3.3.1 Goal Seeking and Viability

Hard Systems Thinking is an approach used to solve real world problems. Accordingly, the name was generically formed by Checkland in 1981, and the approach was developed during and immediately after World War II. This approach is affiliated with systems engineering, operational research, and systems analyses. Consequential variants from hard systems thinking emanated namely policy analysis, cost-benefit analysis, plan-programme-budget systems, and decision science.

The Hard Systems Thinking approach struggles to deal with highly complex problems which managers face. These problems refer to the conduciveness of varying interpretations, therefore, the approach does not bode well in objectivity. Typically, mathematical modelling is needed however the problem of bias remains prevalent which makes the approach difficult to use as the Hard Systems Thinking approach relies on the goal to be established before the actual use thereof (Jackson 2016: 60).

Systems Dynamics is an approach used to solve strategic problems using of a digital computer to unlock complex secrets of non-linear systems. Although, system dynamics can also be used liberally by manually drawing elements that feedback to each other by virtue of causal-to-effect multi loops visualisation. Accordingly, this approach which was developed in 1958 by Forrester called “Industrial Dynamics”, eventually became popularised by Senge in 1990 called “The Fifth Discipline”.

Systems Dynamics models are claimed to be imprecise which hinders the ability to provide accurate predictions of system states. The impreciseness renders decision-making limited hence, does not attract managers to use the

approach. Moreover, the model is understood to be unfavoured especially when initial conditions are not grasped or when variables are not analysed to predetermine the impacts that they have on each other (Jackson 2016: 79).

Organisational Cybernetics is an approach used to solve for viability. This approach was formulated by Stafford Beer in 1974 by using cybernetics in the organisational domain. The Viable System Model (VSM) introduced by Stafford Beer uses the concepts of a black box, variety and negative feedback in organisations delineated by complexity, probability, and internal regulation.

Although there is minor criticism about Organisational Cybernetics, the approach has been considered inopportune as it offers increasing control and consolidation of positions for the user to misuse. However, the matter of control, consolidation, and power can also be considered a matter of advantage as the use of the approach will be dependent on the actual situation. Organisational Cybernetics is a systems thinking approach that extends generality in any type of organisation, system, and in systems of varying hierarchical levels in a business. Through its generality, management scientists and managers are attracted to the approach (Jackson 2016: 107).

Complexity Theory is an approach used to solve complex situations comprising of chaos. Complexity Theory which was developed by Gleick in 1987 was profound in systems thinking in the field of management and subsequently was popularised during that era. The primary focus of the model is on randomness, disorder, and irregularity. The model accepts aspects affiliated with unpredictability, change and instability to provide a solution that was not thought of as available nor even a possibility.

The model is used for short term planning but simply lacks the long term approach that managers need to maintain sustainability. The chaos and complexity theory is believed to require improvement to establish its validity and scope in systems that occur in natural settings. In addition, the cardinal problem with the application of the Complexity Theory to management is that there is a difference between social and natural systems. It is understood that natural systems are easier to determine the arising of strange attractors whilst social systems are affected by probabilistic elements and innumerable variables manifesting themselves. These complications make the approach undesirable for the long term (Jackson 2016: 129).

3.3.2 Exploring Purposes

Strategic Assumption Surfacing and Testing (SAST) solves problems related to planning, policies and decision-making. This approach was concluded by Mason and Mitroff in 1981 to solve “wicked problems” encountered by managers. It was further deemed that the wicked problems featured unstructured factors which lack clarity about environmental uncertainty, societal limitations, conflict, and purpose. SAST’s prerogative is to ensure problem-solving is done in a structured manner.

SAST’s drawback involves the lack of empirical evidence when compared to other conventional methods as claimed by Jackson in 1989 and 2016 respectively. The approach has been criticised for focussing on clarifying purposes and finding sophisticated ways rather than finding the best solution possible for the existing problems. Moreover, SAST is only successful in its execution if the participants are willing to have their assumptions exposed and put forth to the test (Jackson 2016: 151).

Interactive Planning deals with complexity, diversity and change that managers contend with presently. This approach was proposed by Ackoff in 1974 in the world of management sciences. Interactive Planning was asserted to be an overarching cause of social systems and operational research. The approach is used by managers in the systems' age and for those seeking improvement in social systems.

This systems thinking approach is known for its abilities to solve conflicts however, the critics of Ackoff posit that there remain random cases of irresolvable conflicts which deems the approach unfavourable to managers. In general, managers seek models which provide easy solutions for complex problems. Furthermore, Jackson mentioned that critics believed the approach is regulative (Jackson 2016: 175).

Soft Systems Methodology (SSM) aims to solve a complex problem from diverging views of its definition. The approach was founded by Checkland in 1972 and has evolved since, concentrating on soft issues related to the definition of the problem. Soft issues aiming to solve "what should be done" and "how to do it" remains the key focus in SSM.

SSM is deemed to be subjective because the approach ignores restrictions on discussions. SSM is known to operate at idea level by changing people's worldviews; however, the approach is condemned since it ignores organisational, economic, and political structures, which are the primary foundations for worldviews (Jackson 2016: 206).

3.3.3 Ensuring Fairness

Critical Systems Heuristics (CSH) shows and challenges the actual and proposed system designs. The approach was developed by Werner Ulrich in 1983 which is an emancipatory approach that ensures decision-making and planning is performed robustly. This approach also can enable designs from soft and hard system thinking to produce the result desired.

CSH is understood to be a powerful approach however, there is a limitation involving material conditions related to beliefs and values. In relation, political and economic factors determine the beliefs and values which gives rise to contradiction. Another issue identified is the lack of engagement of society and organisation of the approach to engage associated forces within that prevents participative decision-making and rational arguments (Jackson 2016: 227).

Team Syntegrity was designed on the premise of and after Organisational Cybernetics by Stafford Beer in 1990. This approach entailed the provision of a protocol and theory for people working in a group who share common knowledge related to a specific topic. Team Syntegrity supports non-hierarchical and decision-making which is decomposed into effective and participative forms.

Jackson (2016: 248) stated that the approach was unable to guarantee its efficacy in practice in the real world. In addition, Jackson explained that other critics did not believe that the approach was viable simply because of the time taken out of team members daily activities to collaborate and put problem-solving at the forefront of their job duties.

3.3.4 Promoting Diversity

Postmodern Systems Thinking involves the perusal of all systems thinking approaches discussed thus far namely: goal seeking and viability, exploring purposes, and ensuring fairness. However, the difference that distinguishes postmodern systems thinking is the term “postmodernist”. This involves systemic modernism and critical modernism which amongst the discourse where the former is responsible for increasing systems performance and the latter ensures that any consensus or result is done rationally without encountering distortions.

As explained above, the various types of system thinking approaches were discussed. Table 3.2 shows the summarised characteristics of the types of system thinking methodologies namely: functionalist, interpretive, emancipatory, and post-modern (Jackson 2016: 44) under which the system thinking approaches lie.

Table 3. 2 - Methodologies of systems thinking approaches (Adapted from Jackson 2016)

Methodology → Criteria ↓	Functionalist	Interpretive	Emancipatory	Post-Modern
Objective	Improves goal seeking and viability	Exploration of purpose	Ensuring fairness	Promotion of diversity
Characteristics	Objective	Subjective	Conflict, contradiction, and domination	Encourages stakeholder participation for execution of plans
Methods	Hard System Thinking, System Dynamics, Organisational Cybernetics, Complexity Theory	Interactive Planning, Strategic Assumption Surfacing and Testing (SAST), Soft Systems Methodology (SSM)	Critical System Heuristics, Team Syntegrity	Post-modern Systems Thinking
Assumption	Scientific method can be used for system engineering	Understanding of the system by exploration of peoples' perspectives by creation of social realism	All elements are treated the same. Change can be used to free the majority who are deprived	In diversity, problem situations are discussed.
Advantages	Provision of a rigidly accurate model	Acknowledgement of multiple opinions of the people involved in the system	Addresses disadvantages, oppression, and inequalities	Priority is on improvement.
Disadvantages	Suits the researcher but does not consider participants perspectives	Formulation of a robust intervention strategy is difficult	Idealistic social reform. All wrongs are made right simultaneously	Biased by focusing on diversity and conflict

This study ultimately aims to formulate a business strategy to achieve sustainability in SMEs. The consensus for the choice of the appropriate systems thinking approach is explained further. With reference to Table 3.2, the functionalist methodology related to systems thinking was developed by Frederick Taylor in 1914. This methodology is known to operationalise a system by contending with complex and linear mechanisms comprising starting points,

boundaries and finishing points (Porter and Gordoba 2009: 326). Ultimately, being characteristically goal-oriented, the functionalist paradigm in particular **Organisational Cybernetics** is considered the most suited systems thinking methodology for this research study (Jackson 2016: 85). It is therefore imperative to primarily understand Cybernetics, which will then fuse into the concepts of Management Cybernetics and Organisational Cybernetics respectively. The sections that follow explain these concepts further.

3.4 Cybernetics

Cybernetics originates from “*Kybernetes*” which is a Greek word meaning “*the art of steermanship*”. This implies the control of a ship which invariably refers to control of a machine (Jackson 1991: 92; Lepskiy 2017: 252; Leopold 2022: 11). Similar to systems analysis, systems engineering and operational research, cybernetics has an equally long history dating back to 1947 where Wiener first used the method in a field study (Jackson 1991: 91). Cybernetics commenced by adopting physics as its foundation however it does not have any dependency on the laws of physics nor the properties of matters (Ashby 1961: 1; Gorodetsky, Skobelev and Marik 2020: 43). The author asserted that Cybernetics deals with all forms of behaviour which are reproducible, determinate, and regular (Ashby 1961: 1).

According to Geroulanos and Weatherby (2020: 3) cybernetics diffuses studies that intend to provide knowledge and intellectual skills. The authors claimed that cybernetics offered a framework for structured thinking, science and technology, and policy formulation for manufacturing and technology, government decision-making and international relations (Geroulanos and Weatherby 2020: 4). In addition, cybernetics has proven to be successful in explaining organisational failure, which makes the phenomenon robust and instils confidence in its usage

in the business world (Snyder, Olsen and Song 2020: 1). Cybernetics is understood to be a powerful tool often used by managers. This concept leads us to explore what Management Cybernetics entails.

3.5 Management Cybernetics

Management Cybernetics is the process whereby the manager steers the business in accordance with the desired expectations and goals (Gill 1998: 1; Keating and Katina 2019: 692). The authors used two examples of management cybernetics to indicate how a manager executes this process, namely the Black Box, and Ashby's Law of Requisite Variety. Gill (1998: 1) explained the Black Box in Figure 3.5 to be a system of complexity where it was accepted that managers of an organisation, regardless of the size, will not be able to understand and will be unaware of each and every process involved. The author further buttressed that Black Box consisted of inputs and outputs which were controlled by the manager to achieve optimal performance. This was performed through monitoring, providing feedback, and optimisation.

In addition, disturbances involving either internal factors such as management directives or external factors such as industrial action or climate change exacerbated the complexities (Gill 1998: 2). The cardinal advantage of the Black Box is that it can be decomposed into sub-processes and delegated to subordinates to handle. In this cascading way, middle and lower-level managers of the hierarchical chain will manage their respective departments or divisions, which gives the top management level a strong ability to achieve the desired output levels.

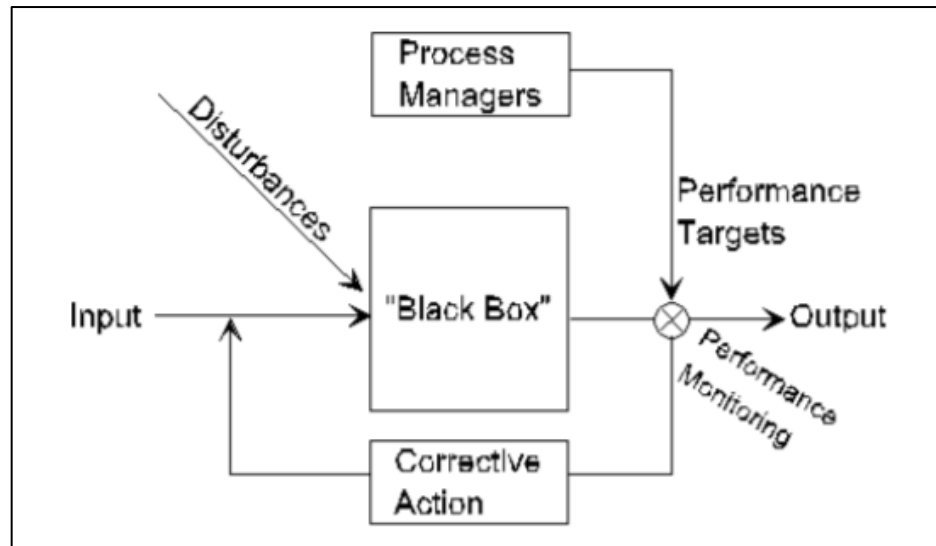


Figure 3. 5 - The Black Box (Gill 1998)

Gill (1998: 2) explained Ashby's Law of Requisite Variety as the process where both the organisation and the manager balances variety. As further explained by the author, variety is the measurement of numerous different states of a system. The balancing of varieties as indicated in Figure 3.6 shows the amplification and attenuation of variables in the system. Quite simply put forth, the three segments namely the marketplace (Environment), organisation, and management; make up the explanation of Ashby's Law of Requisite Variety. The Management-to-Organisation loop is known as the internal controls whilst the Marketplace-to-Organisation loop is regarded as the external controls. Each of these loops works on the methodology of amplification (increase) and attenuation (decrease) to acquire a balance of variety which Ashby has proven.

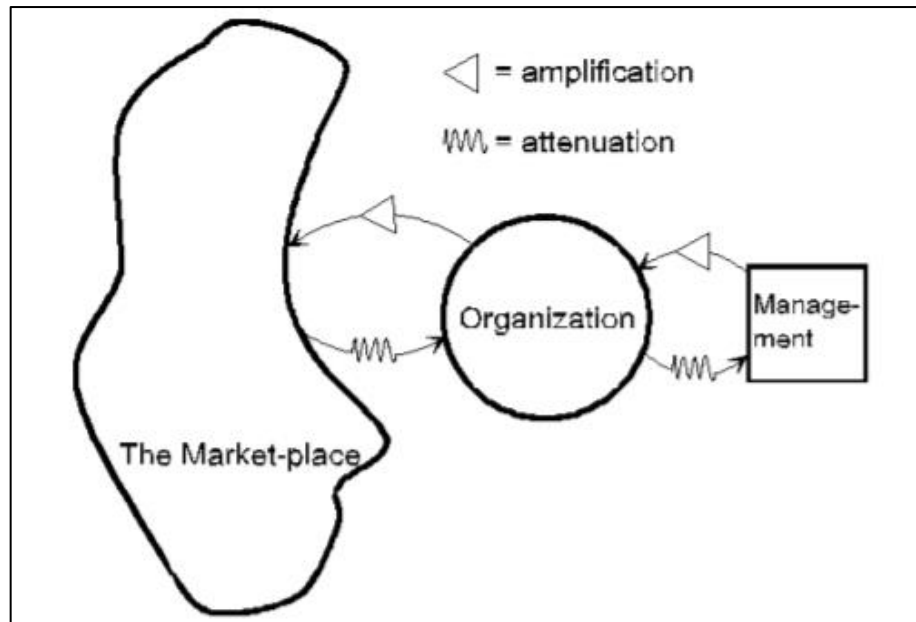


Figure 3. 6 - Ashby's Law of Requisite Variety (Gill 1998)

However, Management Cybernetics was deemed to be constrained by the machine metaphor. The compelling need to break away from traditional management thinking sparked the concept of the VSM of Organisational Cybernetics (Jackson 2016: 85). The VSM is explained in the next section.

3.6 Organisational Cybernetics - The Viable System Model

Organisational Cybernetics stems from the underpinning of Cybernetics (Jackson 2016: 85). Accordingly, Stafford Beer introduced the VSM in the 1950s which is theoretically based on variety, cybernetics, recursive systems, and neural networks (Metaphorum. 2021). Interestingly, Leonard (2009: 229) maintained that the VSM possessed many advantages, which are as follows:

- The method has not been rejected to date.
- There is an increase in its applications.

- Its foundation is aligned to robust mathematical and theoretical frameworks.
- It can be used in any business type, category, and sector including political, private, and public.
- The model provides an all-encompassing view of an organisation's system.
- The model has a simple platform that handles complexity. The model also handles internal and external complexities by using Ashby's law of requisite variety.
- The model facilitates the structure development of an organisation through its conceptual framework offerings.

The VSM shown in Figure 3.7 is based on the functionalities of three components (Jackson 2016: 89; Metaphorum. 2021) namely:

- 1) Operation.
- 2) Management.
- 3) Environment.

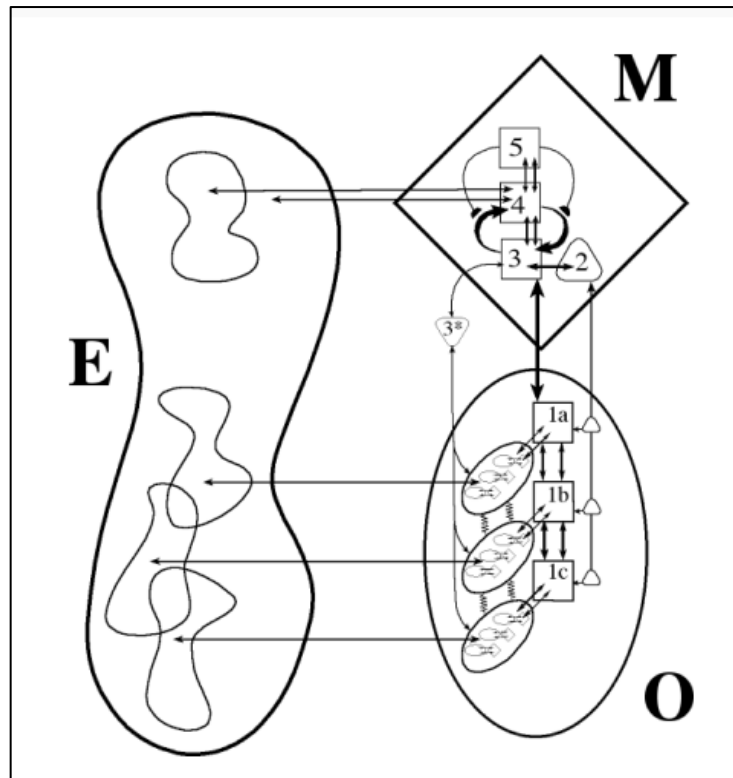


Figure 3. 7 - The Viable System Model (Metaphorum. 2021)

Upon analysing the VSM in detail, it is evident that five systems are found within (Jackson 2016: 93; Metaphorum. 2021) which are as follows:

- **System 1** which is further decomposed into 1a, 1b, and 1c is known as the operational units.
- **System 2** is a management system that deals with problems and conflicts. This system ultimately solves these issues.
- **System 3** is a management system responsible for ensuring synergy which is broken down into symbiosis and collaboration.
- **System 4** is a management system that scans the external environment and ensures that rapid changes can be contended with, and guidance is provided to ensure that normal operations prevail in the midst of multiple mapped out paths.

- **System 5** is a management system that provides closure of the entire system. It governs all systems by developments of policies to be followed. It is known for its bureaucratic methods.

In summary, the methodology of the VSM operates on the operational units namely: system 1a, system 1b, and system 1c being autonomous and the management systems 2, 3, 4 and 5 (the meta-system) ensuring that there is coherence. The VSM is known to be recursive which essentially means that every system will eventually break itself down into smaller systems until a suitable answer is achieved (Vahidi, Aliahmad and Teimouri 2019: 300). Finally, the VSM measurement of performance is defined by three levels of achievement which are shown in Figure 3.8 namely actuality, capability, and potentiality (Jackson 2016: 99). In addition, latency and productivity are factorised within the calculations to determine the performance.

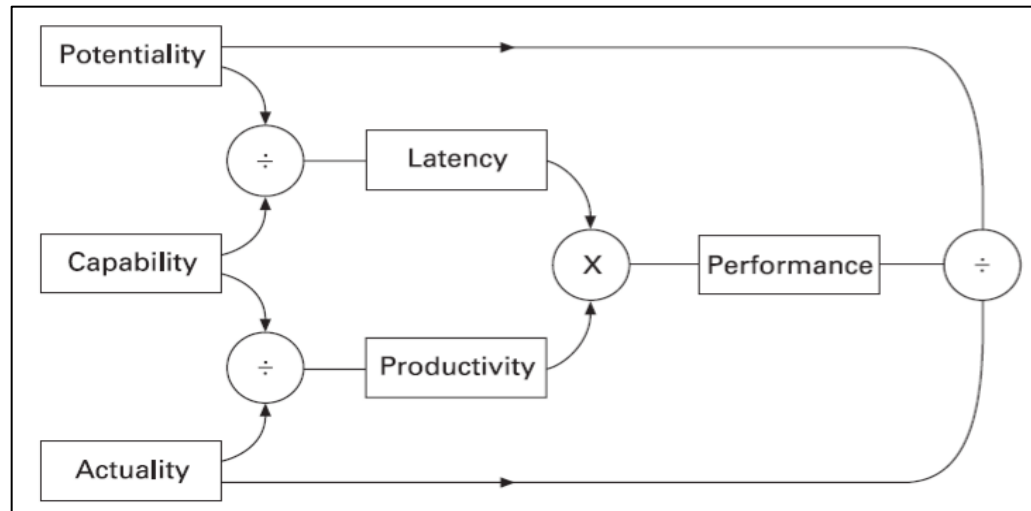


Figure 3. 8 - Measures of Performance (Jackson 2016)

According to Jackson (2016: 99), **actuality** refers to what is happening at the present moment, using existing resources and being susceptible to existing constraints; **capability** refers to what could be achieved under the same resources and constraints; whilst **potentiality** refers to what could be achieved by developing resources and minimising constraints but remaining feasible. This is the fundamental and primary prerogative of the VSM to reflect a viable system.

Apart from the multitude advantages of the VSM claimed by Leonard (2009: 229) the model was favoured over nonviable system models due to its structured ability to determine interrelationships amongst parameters and areas for decision-making to occur within controlled limits (Gallego-García, Reschke, and García-García 2019: 14). In addition, the VSM is posited to additionally possess traits of problem structuring methods that provide an advantage to the user (Harwood 2019: 1198). Structuring a problem provides easy identification and consequently easy solvability by the VSM. Therefore, the VSM has been selected for this study.

In this study, the element of Strategy and sub-elements of Change, Purpose and Leadership will be fed into the VSM to ascertain the results of the qualitative aspect of this empirical research. This will ultimately be done to check for inter-connections and interdependencies of the elements within the system. Moreover, the findings will either confirm the literature study or show any incoherence amongst the elements. Through adaptation, Figure 3.9 indicates the intentions of the element and sub-elements using the VSM and how the researcher envisions the relations through theory to formulate the conceptual framework in the next section.

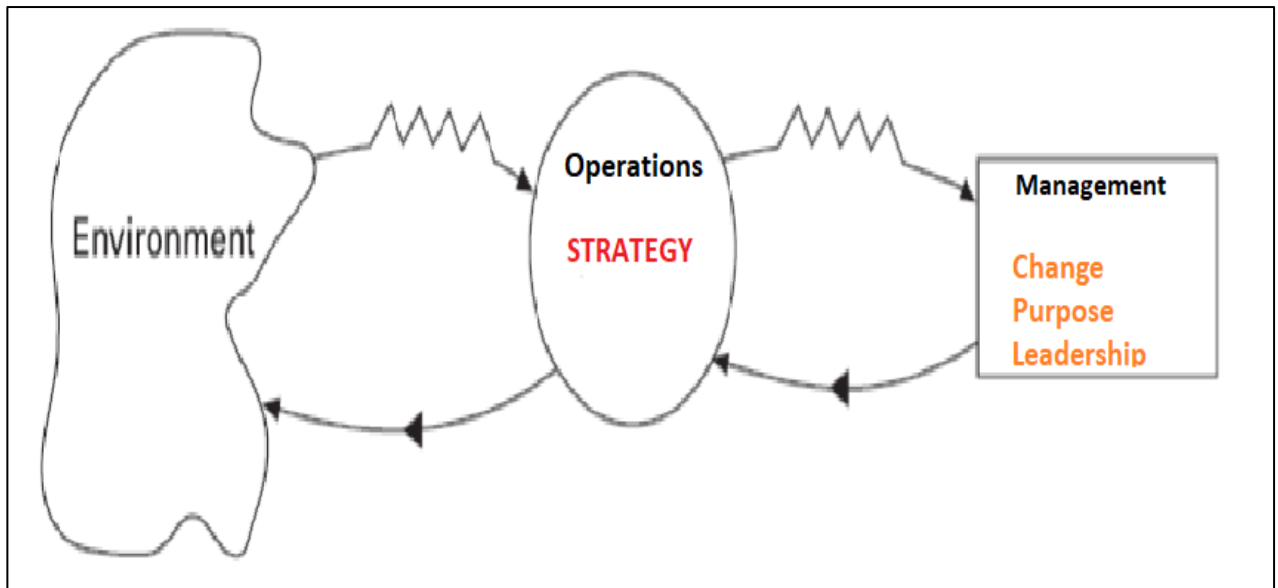


Figure 3. 9 - Viable Systems Model with Elements (Adapted from Jackson 2016)

3.7 The Conceptual Framework of this Research

A Conceptual Framework is claimed to be a structure that is designed by a researcher to explain how the problem statement is explored (Dickson, Emad and Adu-Agyem 2018: 439). According to Miles and Huberman (1994: 18), a Conceptual Framework can be exhibited either in graphical or narrative formats showing the elements (variables) studied and the associated presumed relationships. In addition, Dickson *et al.* (2018: 440) stressed that a Conceptual Framework has causative effects which are as follows:

- 1) *It refers to a specific idea in a study.*
- 2) *It is based on concepts known as main variables within the study.*
- 3) *It is the researchers own model which shows the relationships between variables in the study. It can also be an adaptation of a model from existing theory which the researcher will utilise to adapt a model.*
- 4) *The design is not accepted; however, it is a proposal of the researcher's answer which addresses the researcher's problem statement.*

- 5) *It is a framework that shows the logical sequence of the research undertakings.*
- 6) *It shows the relationships between concepts and indicates the researcher's methodology employed to answer the research problem.*
- 7) *Its aim to encourage theory development for future use within its field by practitioners.*

In this study, a Conceptual Framework has been developed based on the elements and supporting sub-elements discussed herein. The element and sub-elements of Purpose, Change, Leadership, and a variety of sub-elements have been incorporated into the Conceptual Framework. Henceforth the element and sub-elements discussed within the literature will be referred to as variables.

The variables below are considered as main variables according to Jawlik (2016: 393) and explained accordingly:

- **Dependent Variable** – This variable is of primary interest to the researcher since it aims to achieve the research objective.
- **Independent Variable** – This variable affects the dependent variable in either a positive or negative manner. The variance in the dependent variable is constituted within the independent variable.
- **Moderator Variable** – This variable affects the direction and/or strength of relation or connection of the independent and dependent variables.
- **Mediator Variable** – This variable engages into action when the independent variable commences operating to influence the dependent variable and the time the impact is made.

The Conceptual Framework of this study is adapted from Saebi and Foss (2015: 202) in Figure 3.10, on the underpinning of their research model, which indicates

“Open Innovation Strategy” being the independent variable, “Business Model Design” known as the moderator variable and finally “Innovation Performance” as the dependent variable.

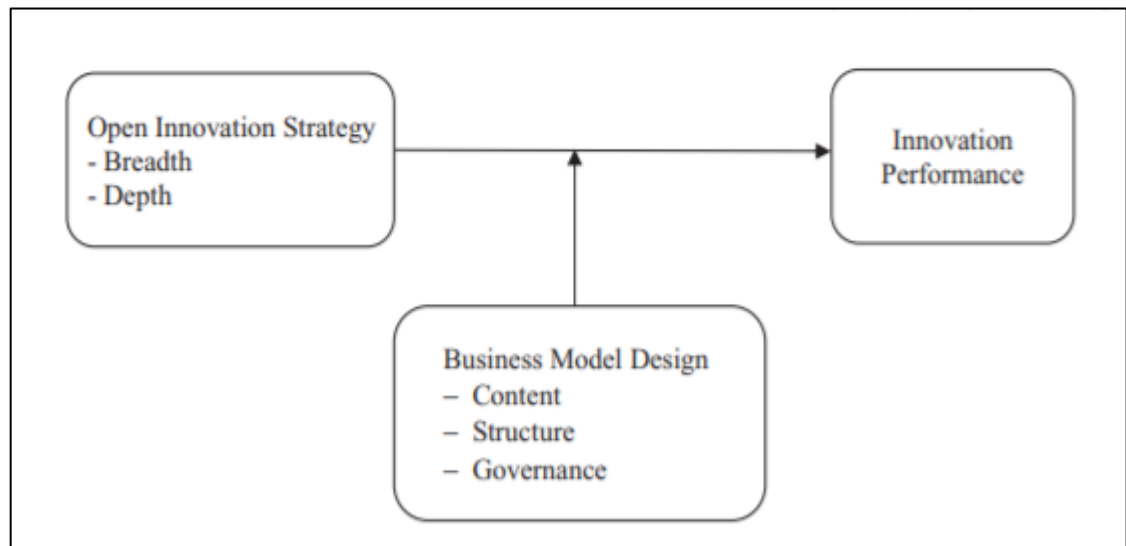


Figure 3. 10 - Research Model (Saebi and Foss 2015)

Figure 3.11 below is the Conceptual Framework of this study which fundamentally used the various operational elements and concepts of the business to form the combined strategy as the independent variable. The notion of the coherence of the following components forms the combinational element of “**Strategy**” is fundamental and compulsory for an SME to possess.

- Planning
- Control
- Cost Management
- Performance Management
- Performance Evaluation
- Product Differentiation

- Competition
- Marketing
- Financial Management
- Low Price
- Business Development

The process follows the sub-elements of “**Change**”, “**Purpose**” and “**Leadership**” existing as Moderator Variables to strengthen the relation with “**Strategy**” to achieve a “**Sustainable Business Strategy**” which is the Dependent Variable.

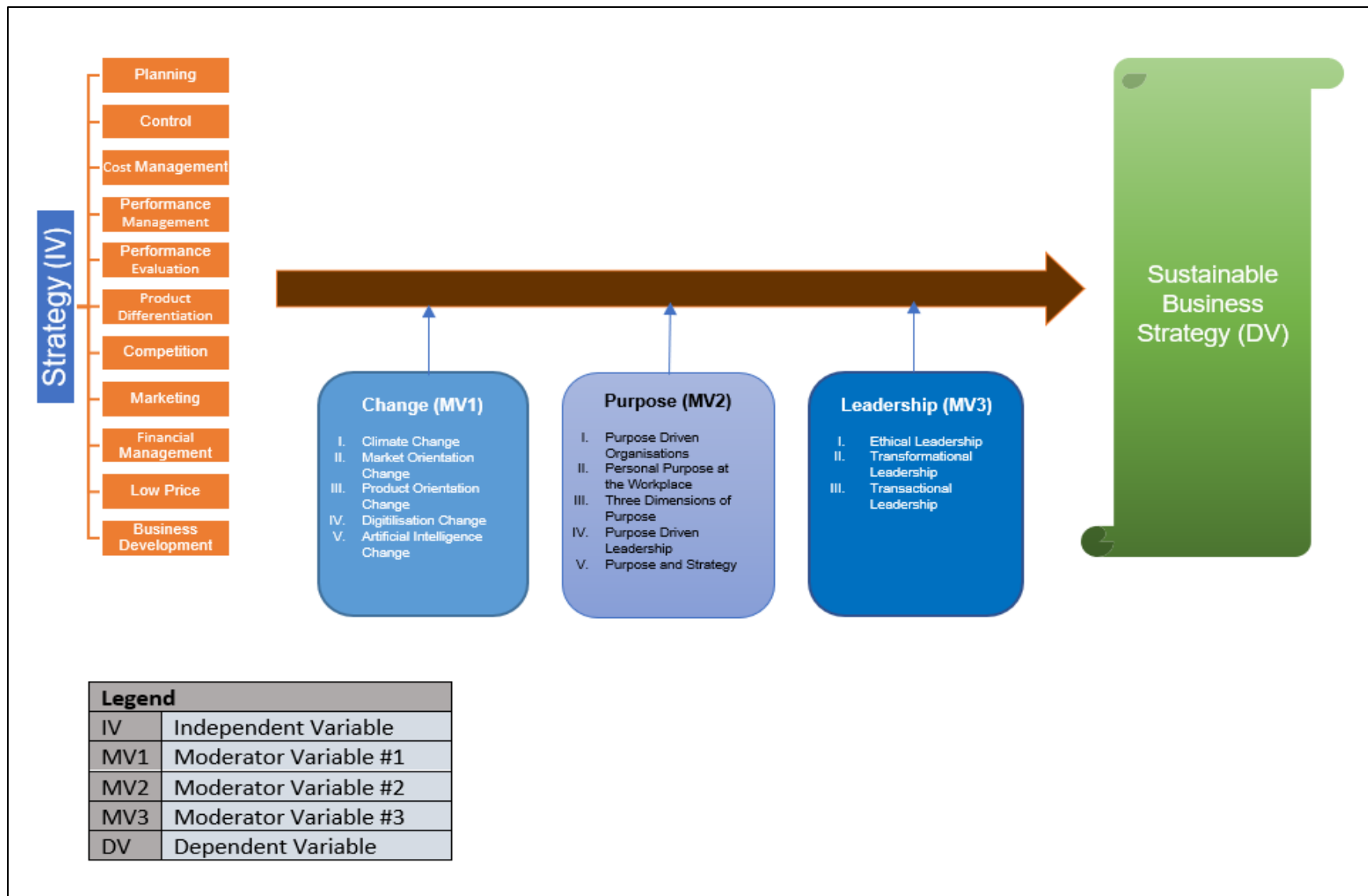


Figure 3. 11 - Conceptual Framework – Development of a Sustainable Business Strategy (Adapted from Saeibi and Foss 2015)

The components illustrated in the Conceptual Framework (Figure 3.11) comprising “**Strategy (IV)**” remains fundamental and key to a business that is seeking sustainability. According to Needle and Burns (2010: 6) the structure of a business enterprise is made up of the following departments namely: marketing, production, finance, and personnel. Particularly in Figure 3.11, “*Planning*”, “*Control*” and “*Competition*” fits into the Production Department; whilst “*Marketing*”, “*Low Price*”, “*Product Differentiation*” and “*Business Development*” lies in the Marketing Department. In addition, “*Cost Management*” and “*Financial Management*” is handled by the Finance Department. Moreover, “*Performance Management*” and “*Performance Evaluation*” falls under the care of the Personnel Department.

Needle and Burns (2010: 7) further contended that some functions within a business enterprise will be shared amongst the various departments, which requires effective communication to execute. Ironically, Wind (1979: 262) argued that the Marketing Department in a business should focus on integration and frequent communication with other departments to ensure synergy and common focus. This alludes to Marketing Departments in businesses being disjointed from other departments hence the need to synergise. In this research, the Conceptual Framework shows the components that make up the element ‘Strategy’ as foundation blocks for the running of a business.

The pertinence of strategy is indeed necessary however, as a single elemental factor for ensuring a sustainable business strategy, the element is considered elusive. Therefore, the researcher added three complementing sub-elements namely: **change (MV1)**, **purpose (MV2)**, and **leadership (MV3)** into the flow to strengthen the desired output. The components of the first sub-element **Change (MV1)** refer to ‘*Climate Change*’, ‘*Market Orientation Change*’, ‘*Product Orientation Change*’, ‘*Digitalisation Change*’ and ‘*Artificial Intelligence Change*’ which forms an integral part of a business. Furthermore, the VSM has shown how important the “Environment” component is in Figure 3.7 wherein Jackson (2016: 89) accentuated its relevance within the functionality of a system. The components of Change fall within the domain of Environment which therefore must be considered in business sustainability.

In continuation, the components of the second sub-element **Purpose (MV2)** refer to '*Purpose-driven Organisations*', '*Personal Purpose at the Workplace*', '*Three Dimensions of Purpose*', '*Purpose-driven Leadership*' and '*Purpose and Strategy*' comprising importance within a business. Rey *et al.* (2019: 4) stressed the relevance and importance of Purpose in a competitive environment. The third sub-element of **Leadership (MV3)** refers to 'Ethical Leadership', 'Transformational Leadership', and 'Transactional Leadership' confirming the domination and preference of the leadership styles practice in a business. Abu Sultan *et al.* (2018: 28) asserted that the type of leadership style impacts the business' purpose, strategy formulation and strategy implementation.

All sub-elements are indicated in Figure 3.11 as moderator variables, which according to Jawlik (2016: 393) will affect the independent and dependent variables' direction and strength. This research study has shown that the direction of the moderator variables moves towards providing support to the independent variable's trajectory thereby strengthening the dependent variable. In summary, the formulated Conceptual Framework serves as the researchers' contribution for SMEs to adopt and utilise, in this era, to achieve business sustainability.

3.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, the method of evaluation of the elements used in this study, which stemmed from the underpinning research study by Uyar (2019: 7) was explained. Formative and summative evaluation models were explained along with Theory-Based and Non-Theory-Based Evaluations. A variety of critiques was provided for the evaluation methodologies and techniques. Consequently, it was found that amongst the variety of evaluation techniques explained, TBE was used to select the elements used in this study. TBE was noted to augment relevance and identification during functioning in organisational and program theories. It was therefore deemed to be the best suited evaluation model for the purposes of this study.

In addition, systems thinking was used to indicate interconnections and interdependencies of the elements discussed. Various systems thinking techniques were explained such as Hard Systems Thinking, System Dynamics, Organisational Cybernetics, Complexity Theory, Strategic Assumption Surfacing and Testing, Interactive Planning, Soft Systems Methodology, Critical Systems Heuristics, Team Syntegrity and Postmodern Systems Thinking, however, amongst these, the method selected for the purposes of this research was Organisational Cybernetics. According to the research conducted, it was noted that Organisational Cybernetics was theoretically based on variety, cybernetics, recursive systems, and neural networks. In relation to Organisational Cybernetics, the VSM was selected for use. In lieu of this method, the VSM being the selected Systems Thinking Model was explained and will be used to ascertain the effectiveness of the elements to produce a sustainable business strategy for SMEs.

Lastly, a conceptual framework was formulated using the discussed element, sub-elements, and associated components, to further explore the effectiveness of sustainability of SMEs. The element of 'Strategy' (Independent Variable) and complementing sub-elements of 'Change', 'Purpose' and 'Leadership' (Moderator Variables) were explained theoretically and visually with the objective of achieving a 'Sustainable Business Strategy' (Dependent Variable). The conceptual framework indicated the need for the element, sub-elements, and associated components to achieve a sustainable business strategy. Ultimately, the formulated conceptual framework serves as a tool for utilisation by SMEs in their daily activities, to achieve business sustainability. Ideally, the conceptual framework should be used by Managers, Directors, Entrepreneurs and Business Leaders to devise a Sustainable Business Strategy. The reason for the selection of a particular category of people such as the Executive Management level, in this case, marks the necessity and importance to ensure competency in the use of the model is exercised and required, to achieve the desired results of a Sustainable Business Strategy.

In general, the underlying importance of proving a theory remains fundamentally critical and pertinent to ensure confidence, reliability, validity and to provide assure to the future end-users, scientists, and academic researchers. This notion necessitates the need for the next chapter to focus on critical analyses of the research approach, research design and methodology to be used. The design of the research instrument will be explained in detail. The use of Nvivo™/®/© for qualitative analyses will work on the premise of collaborating varied types of data, coding of the data and provision of coherent outputs. Furthermore, the SPSS™/®/© for statistical program analyses will provide descriptive statistics, central tendency measures and group difference techniques to purport data gathered from this study. Finally, the VSM will provide visual information, test, and indicate the relationships specifically related to the interconnections and interdependencies of the elements.

CHAPTER FOUR: Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The fundamental prerogative of this chapter is to explain the research approach, research design and the research methodology. Research Methodology is an integral part of research since the concept ensures reliability and validity in a study (Willmott 2020: 4). Whilst the preceding chapters focused on the literature review of Strategy, Change, Purpose and Leadership, this chapter provides a critical view of the research methodology used for data collection and indicates the plan for addressing the research questions and ethical considerations.

Research is defined as the process of discovering new knowledge by going through the work of others (Salkind 2012: 3). In addition, linked to research is the aspect of theory, which is predominantly a tool used to organise the new information coherently, set ideas formally, explain past events, and offer a prediction of future events leading to high-quality research (Salkind 2012: 3). The author further expressed the characteristics of high-quality research which are indicated below:

- Other researchers work is used as the foundation of a new study.
- It can be reproduced with acknowledgement, but not plagiarised.
- The setting can be generalised for others to use.
- It is founded on theory and rationale.
- It is actionable.
- Has the ability to create more questions and is cyclical.
- It increases gradually.
- Does not bear relation to politics and offers improvement for society.

The research was defined simply as searching for knowledge, whereas a more defined description was explained as a search for systematic and scientific information on a particular topic (Nayak and Singh 2021: 1). It must be noted that conducting research varies amongst researchers; some may use different approaches when

compared to others; however, the fundamentals of research approaches remain standardised and are categorised accordingly (Creswell 2014: 31). These research approaches are explained in the next section.

4.2 Research Approach

According to Creswell (2014: 35), the starting point of conducting research involves adopting an approach comprised of qualitative research, quantitative research, or mixed methods research. The author explains these methods as follows:

- **Qualitative Research** is framed using words. It is research that is used to explain complex situations where the variables are not easily visible (Black 1994: 426; Martelli and Greener 2018: 47).
- **Quantitative Research** is framed using numbers. Tools such as equipment or questionnaires are used to collect numerical data (McCusker and Gunaydin 2015: 538).
- **Mixed Methods Research** is framed using both words and numbers. This research involves a mix of qualitative and quantitative research ideas which are synthesised in a study (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner 2007: 113).

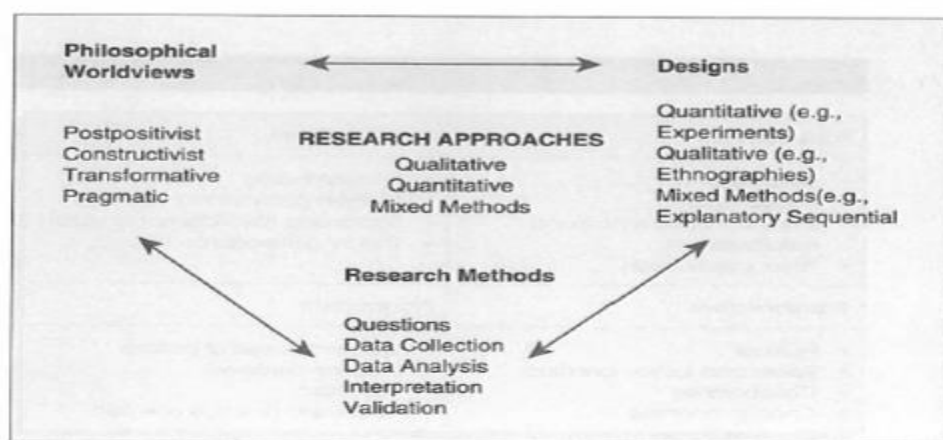


Figure 4. 1 - The Interconnection of Worldviews, Designs and Research Methods (Creswell 2014)

The three components of the research approach indicated in Figure 4.1 involves: philosophical views, research designs, and research methods (Creswell 2014: 36). These components of the research approaches will be discussed in the subsequent sections.

4.2.1 Philosophical Views

Philosophical worldviews are defined as basic beliefs which provide guidance for action (Guba 1990: 17). Interestingly, it was asserted that philosophy is, in fact, a worldview (Vidal 2008: 3). Moreover, it is believed that philosophical foundations provide pillars of support for ontologies, epistemologies, and methodological models (Babbage and Ronan 2000: 405). The authors further explained that these models were referred to as worldviews. Additionally, Creswell (2014: 37) claimed that *worldviews* are the same as *paradigms*, *epistemologies*, *ontologies*, and *research methodologies*. However, the authors explained that researchers' beliefs varied, which sparked different styles of research methods such as qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. According to Creswell (2014: 37) the four worldviews (Figure 4.2) that researchers' output are as follows:

Postpositivism	Constructivism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determination • Reductionism • Empirical observation and measurement • Theory verification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding • Multiple participant meanings • Social and historical construction • Theory generation
Transformative	Pragmatism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political • Power and justice oriented • Collaborative • Change-oriented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consequences of actions • Problem-centered • Pluralistic • Real-world practice oriented

Figure 4. 2 - Four Worldviews (Creswell 2014)

- 1) **The Postpositivist Worldview** – suits postpositivist researchers who conduct traditional research in the quantitative form. This type of research is known as scientific research, empirical science and postpositivism. Postpositivists use causes to determine effects or outcomes; and are reductionists who reduce ideas to small sets called variables which are used to solve research questions and determine hypotheses.
- 2) **The Constructivist Worldview** – constructivism combined with interpretivism is an approach to qualitative research. This research is carried out on the experiences of individuals in the world inhabited and worked in, being somewhat subjective. Leading to social constructivism, a researcher ensures that careful attention is paid to listening to the participants of society, to make assumptions of experiences and compare them against social, cultural, and historical settings.
- 3) **The Transformative Worldview** – the transformative approach culminated from the criticising of postpositivist and constructivist worldviews. This research approach emanated to support individuals and groups who were marginalised. Moreover, this approach includes critical theorists and participatory action researchers amongst other members in the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and similar communities. In summary, this approach provides a potential for participants to obtain the achievement of objectives through the work of the researcher.
- 4) **The Pragmatic Worldview** – the pragmatic approach in terms of worldviews emanates from consequences, actions, and situations. This approach taken by the researcher in social science research ensures full focus on the research problem followed by all types of approaches taken to acquire information about the problem. Pragmatism applies to mixed methods research whereby the researcher draws freely from qualitative and quantitative assumptions during engagement in their research.

Dyer (2020: 3) used a pragmatic approach in research which proved to be successful in answering the research question. Likewise, the pragmatist approach of John Dewey (1859 – 1952) was used in a study that focussed on micro, meso and macro levels in an organisation, which proved to be prosperous (Moosmayer, Waddock, Wang, Hühn, Dierksmeier and Gohl 2019: 921). In summary, amongst the research approaches discussed herein, the pragmatic approach has been proven to be an appropriate approach to undertake for social science research. Therefore, the pragmatic approach using the mixed methods of research was adopted in this study.

4.2.2 Research Design

In accordance with the pragmatic worldview, mixed methods is deemed the best suited research approach. However, alternative research designs such as qualitative and quantitative are also suggested individually, on the underpinning of other worldviews mentioned in the previous section. Figure 4.3 indicates the research designs which are explained below:

Quantitative	Qualitative	Mixed Methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experimental designs • Nonexperimental designs, such as surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative research • Phenomenology • Grounded theory • Ethnographies • Case study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convergent • Explanatory sequential • Exploratory sequential • Transformative, embedded, or multiphase

Figure 4. 3 - Research Designs (Creswell 2014)

Quantitative Research entails conducting experimental research and survey research (Creswell 2014: 41) whilst Sukamolson (2007: 4) defined quantitative research as survey, correlation, experimental and causal-comparative research. In addition, Martelli and Greener (2018: 47) consider quantitative research to be data in the form of numbers collected from a subsequent survey conducted. Lastly, Creswell (2014: 41) explained that quantitative research is when data was collected in the form of numbers and then interpreted through the use of statistics.

Qualitative Research originated from anthropology, humanities, sociology, and evaluation (Creswell 2014: 42). In particular, the author explained that Ethnography emanated from sociology and anthropology whereby the researcher, through interviews and observations, studied patterns of language, actions and behaviours of a group of participants in a natural environment over a defined time period. Furthermore, the Narrative Research emanated from humanities where the researcher studied an individual and requested information from other people about the individual being studied. In addition, Grounded Theory which emanated from sociology involves the acquiring of theory from participants involved in processes, through actions and interactions. Finally, Phenomenological Research comes from psychology and philosophy whereby individuals are studied based on experiences about or with phenomena with robust underpinnings. Interviews are conducted in this regard.

Mixed Methods Research involves both quantitative and qualitative research (Creswell 2014: 43). As per the author, the prerogative of this research design is to ensure the convergence of the data through triangulation methodology. This research design focuses on three primary models in social research. **Firstly**, the convergent parallel mixed methods design involves both quantitative and qualitative data being collected simultaneously which are then integrated and interpreted. **Secondly**, explanatory sequential mixed methods design is carried out by first conducting the quantitative research followed by qualitative research. This model of mixed methods design is frequently used in quantitative orientation fields. **Lastly**, exploratory mixed methods design entails conducting the qualitative research before the quantitative research. This research design is noted to be used to build up an instrument using the qualitative research design, followed by the quantitative research to quantify the data by use of statistics. In addition, Halcomb and Hickman (2015: 8) claimed that mixed methods research entails conducting quantitative and qualitative research by gathering of complementary data to answer the research question.

This study concentrated on the convergent parallel mixed methods approach which consists of a combination of quantitative (closed ended questions) and qualitative (open ended questions) that are used to acquire data. The data was analysed separately and compared against each other to check if there is convergence or divergence (Creswell, 2014: 269). This pragmatic study seeks objective and accurate answers to the formulated research questions.

4.3 Target Population

Population in terms of research is defined as members of a group and a sample is known as a sub-group selected for participation in the study (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson 2012: 80). The selection of a target population in a study was described as pertinent, however, issues of generalisability and transportability should be considered and addressed (Steingrímsson, Gatsonis, and Dahabreh 2021: 14). According to Dahabreh and Hernán (2019: 719), treatment and outcome data from non-randomised individuals in a group cannot be used in a target population which are confounded to gross measurement errors and unmeasured variables. Therefore, this assumption makes the selection of the target population pertinent and should be accounted for in the final selection process.

The research population in this study comprised SMEs in KZN. In line with the mixed methodology approach, this study entails a combination of quantitative methodology by conducting a research survey and qualitative by selecting purposeful sites or participants (Creswell 2014: 239). Interestingly, the Small Business Institute (2018: 4) claimed that there were close to 250 000 formal SMEs in South Africa, whilst there was a difference when compared to the 390 115 formal and informal SMEs in KZN as claimed by the South African, Small Enterprise Development Agency (2019: 19). The latter is supported by the 488 000 SMEs claimed to be in KZN by Statistics South Africa (South Africa, Statistics South Africa Citizen Satisfaction Survey 2018: 19).

The population of SMEs in KZN were confirmed to be categorised by sector which is reflected accordingly in the EDTEA Annual Report 2018/2019 (South Africa, KwaZulu-

Natal Province: Economic, Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs 2021: 7). The report indicated that formal SMEs received recognition of existence by simply being registered, hence, the confirmation of easy categorisation and identification was made possible. Therefore, it can be deduced that the legal registration of SMEs made the target population selection factual. The method of sampling undertaken in this study is discussed in the next section.

4.4 Sampling Method

Sampling in research is broadly classified into Probability Sampling and Non-Probability Sampling (Acharya, Prakash, Saxena and Nigam 2013: 330). The authors explained that Probability Sampling entailed the following specific sampling methods:

- 1) **Simple Random Sampling** - this sampling method provides an equal chance for each participant in the population to be selected. Selection of participants can be done by using a computer to generate a list of random numbers or a random table can be utilised. A sample frame must be used for this method.
- 2) **Systematic Random Sampling** – is conducted by selecting the first participant randomly thereafter periodic selection is undertaken which is done by means of calculation. The participants who fall under the periodic selection are calculated as the *xth* number where *x* entails the number of participants in the sampling frame being divided by the number of the desired sample size.
- 3) **Stratified Random Sampling** – entails separating participants who have the same characteristics in groups called strata. Thereafter random selection of the participants ensues from each stratum.
- 4) **Cluster Sampling** – is more prevalent in epidemiological research and involves the division of the target population in clusters thereafter selection of the clusters

is conducted randomly. This is followed by the selection of all participants in the cluster which usually makes up a large sample size.

- 5) **Multiphase Sampling** – is a convoluted form of cluster sampling which entails a division of the population in clusters, followed by a random selection of the clusters, thereafter a random selection of participants in the selected clusters is done.
- 6) **Multistage Sampling** – similar to multiphase sampling, this sampling method is complex and involves the separation of clusters into small groups until the sampling cluster gets smaller in size. Clusters are chosen randomly from the outset of the sampling process.

Non-Probability Sampling was further categorised and explained by Acharya *et al.* (2013: 332) as follows:

- 1) **Convenience/Purposive Sampling** – is a common sampling method that is prevalent in clinical research. The investigator has the convenience to choose the participants who are commonly found to be in the right place at the right time.
- 2) **Quota Sampling** – ensures that an exact characteristic match is found as per the investigator's preference. This method is similar to stratified sampling, however, it does not require a sampling frame. The population is divided into strata and the participants are selected from each stratum.
- 3) **Snowball Sampling** – this sampling method entails the selection of participants either through probabilistic or non-probabilistic sampling techniques followed by acquiring more participants from the first participant, with the same pattern practised onwards.

Table 4. 1 - Advantages and Disadvantages of Sampling Methods (Adapted from Acharya *et al.* 2013)

	Sampling Method	Advantages	Disadvantages
Probability Sampling	Simple Random Sampling	Minimal knowledge of population is required. Internal and external validity is high and is easy to analyse the data.	Sampling frame required. Sampling errors occur and less precision is prevalent when compared to stratified samples of the same size. High cost.
	Systematic Random Sampling	Has moderate usage. Has moderate cost. Internal and external validity is high. Simple to draw and easy to verify.	Only the first participant is chosen based on probabilistic sampling whilst the subsequent participants are chosen per calculated selection.
	Stratified Random Sampling	Surety is provided whereby all participants in the groups are represented. Estimations and comparisons of each stratum are made easily. Reduction of variability from systematic sampling is realised.	Stratified lists are expensive to prepare. Accurate information on proportions of each stratum is needed.
	Cluster Sampling	Good to use in large surveys. All participants in the cluster are chosen. Useful when participants are scattered.	Not suited for clinical research. Is not preferred for small surveys.
	Multiphase Sampling	Less costly. Less laborious. More purposeful.	Cannot be used in all types of research.
	Multistage Sampling	Useful and involves numerous stages of randomisation. Reduced costs.	Not as robust as true random sampling.
Non-Probability Sampling	Convenience/Purposive Sampling	Commonly used. Less costly. No list of all population's elements required.	Variability and bias cannot be measured or controlled.
	Quota Sampling	Moderate costs. Extensively used and understood.	Variability and bias cannot be measured or controlled.
	Snowball Sampling	Low cost. Useful for obtain specificities in terms of population.	Variability and bias cannot be measured or controlled.

The distinguished differences in advantages and disadvantages are illustrated in Table 4.1, which according to Acharya *et al.* (2013: 333) are important in the selection of the sampling method suited for the researcher. In addition, amongst Probabilistic and Non-Probabilistic Sampling, the authors confirmed that Probabilistic Sampling was the preferred sampling method simply because the method ensures representativeness and generalisability.

In this study, Probabilistic Sampling and in particular simple random sampling surveys were carried out, which included conducting of interviews with some of the selected participants simultaneously. The random sampling method affords the target population an independent and equal chance for selection (Creswell 2014: 204). Accordingly, sample representativeness depends on sample size, response rate, and sampling methodology (Acharya, *et al.* 2013: 330). Whilst Creswell (2014: 206) recommended the sample size can be determined by using three elements which entailed margin of error, confidence level, and estimated response rate.

4.5 Data Sources

In this study, the target population of 488 000 (South Africa, Statistics South Africa Client Satisfaction Survey 2018: 19), a confidence level of 95%, margin of error of 5% and a 50% response rate was used which indicated a sample size of 384 respondents for this study (Taherhoost 2017: 238). Furthermore, the grounded theory was employed on a target of 20 individuals (Creswell 2014: 239), whereby the participants were interviewed to investigate opinions towards strategy development and sustainability in KZN.

SMEs in KZN were chosen as the preferred province however due to its large number of SMEs, the researcher chose to cover the following areas of KZN and has broken down the areas into North Coast, South Coast, Upper Highway, and Central Durban. The research obtained information from SMEs based in these locations. Organisations from the private sector were targeted which comprised of transportation, construction, manufacturing, customer services, banking, motor vehicles, telecommunication, and retail industry. Managers and Directors were chosen for this

research as they were believed to have a clearer insight into the activities of the organisation, therefore providing holistic information.

4.6 Data Collection Instruments

Mixed methodology involves data collection via sampling design method and observations or interviews (Creswell 2014: 264). These are conducted by way of surveys, observations, interviews and through secondary sources (Easterby-Smith *et al.* 2012: 95). Data collection entails collecting a subset of entities whereby evidence is gathered; this is referred to as sampling design (Easterby-Smith *et al.* 2012: 95). Measuring instruments are used by researchers for the assessment and evaluation of participants. Instruments referred to herein were used to collect the data. The instruments used were designed as structured questionnaire for surveys and structured questionnaire for the interviews (Creswell 2014: 206).

4.6.1 Questionnaire

The designed structured questionnaire comprised **four sections** which deals with:

Section A – This section collects General and Personal details of the respondent. The researcher intended to establish the demographic entailing gender, age group, race group, language spoken and education level of the respondents.

Section B – This section collects the Organisation details and factual information. The researcher intended to distinguish between the directors and managers of the company. Additional information about the location of the respondents, nature of the organisation, number of employees, size of the business and length of period of existence were questioned. Moreover, the researcher intended to ascertain the current financial performance of the business as opposed to the most recent preceding year and if the respondent experienced challenges in running an SME in comparison to preceding years. Lastly, the researcher questioned whether competition posed a threat to the respondent.

Section C - In this section the researcher searched for information related to business's possessing a strategy and when confirmed by the respondent a list of elements of strategy were provided to select from. Moreover, the researcher questioned the outcome that deliverables had on the business. Information in lieu of benefits that strategies have on businesses, were sought. In addition, the researcher explores if the businesses require a new strategy for growth and whether strategies have influenced a change in leadership styles.

Section D – This section explores the sub-elements: Change, Purpose and Leadership and their effects on sustainability in a business. In particular, the researcher questioned whether the respondent was in favour of a changing environment and the effects of micro and macro-economic environments. Moreover, the researcher investigated whether the business possessed a purpose statement and whether the employees were aware of the sub-element. Finally, the researcher investigated the leadership style adopted and if there was any bearing on the business.

The instrument also contains continuous and categorical scales to gather information. In support of the above, close ended questions can be formulated in a variety of ways to gain answers which the researcher requires. These questions are formatted in the following ways (Martelli and Greener 2018: 100):

- 1) Category – Only one answer must be selected. This is the same as multiple choice.
- 2) Grid – Provide more than one answer by completing a matrix.
- 3) List – Answers are provided for the selection of the respondent.
- 4) Quantity – Provide an amount or value.
- 5) Ranking – Placing the answers in order.
- 6) Rating – Provide a value for answer options available. The Likert scale is an example of this format.

The structured questionnaire was designed using the question formats shown in Table 4.2 which comprises of a selected number from the formats provided above.

Table 4. 2 - Question Formats (Adapted from Martelli and Greener 2018)

Question Format	Question Number	Reason for Selection
List	1	The researcher aims to establish the gender type of the participants and to further identify the number of males, females and other types participating in this study.
	2	The researcher aims to ascertain the age group of the participants for descriptive analyses and crosstabulations purposes.
	3	The researcher establishes the race groups participating in this study for descriptive analyses purposes.
	4	The researcher aims to understand the number of participants speaking different languages for descriptive analyses purposes.
	5	The participants education levels was requested for descriptive analyses purposes.
	6	Since this study is intended to assist businesses in sustainability and knowing that that is driven by the leadership. The source of information emanating from Directors or Managers is a fundamental aspect to the researcher to distinguish against and gain clarity.
	7	The location of the respondents allows for the researcher to identify the selected areas within the province which may require improvement to achieve business sustainability.
	8	Most common types of businesses were targeted for this research study hence these types were stipulated in the questionnaire to maintain uniformity amongst the respondents. Where the type of business did not match the options provided, the researcher allowed for the respondent to input the type of business owned.
	9	The participant was asked to provide the number of employees in the business for the researcher to determine the size of the business.
	10	Options were provided to participants for the researcher to understand the age of the business as the maturity of the business is needed to identify improvement areas.
Likert scale rating	15	The researcher aims to establish the elements used in the strategies of the business. This question also establishes if the management are aware of these elements and if there is an understanding of the strategies in their entirety.
	24	Investigating styles of leaderships that are used in the business.
	11	The researcher deems the financial trajectory of a business to be a key identifier of its performance, hence, asking a question of this nature allows for the researcher to determine the reason/s associated with the direction that the business moves towards.
	12	The researcher engages with the participant to enquire if the business has endured more challenges when compared to subsequent years.
Dichotomous choice	19	The researcher aims to identify the causal changes linked between change of strategies and leadership styles.
	25	Investigating the effectiveness of leadership on business sustainability.
	13	The researcher establishes whether competition is a threat to the business.
	14	The researcher establishes if the business has a strategy in place or if the business operates by other means.
	16	The aim of this question is to determine the success of strategies within the business on the outputs.
	18	This question intends to explore whether the current strategy of the business is working. If not, the participant will confirm the need of a new strategy to ensure business growth.
	20	This question establishes whether the participant is satisfied with the current business environment or whether a change is favoured to improve the situation and outputs.

Question Format	Question Number	Reason for Selection
Rating	22	Investigating if businesses have a purpose statement.
	23	Investigating whether the purpose statement is cascaded to employees of the business.
	17	The researcher aims to establish which benefits from the list provided are more important to the participant in the business.
	21	The aim of this question is to determine which environment such that internal or external has a more bearing effect on the business.

Finally, the structured questionnaire which was used to conduct the interviews were based on views and opinions of the participants in response to questions posed by the researcher. Secondary data in the form of public or private documentation were requested during the interviews.

4.7 Data Collection and Analysis

4.7.1 Data Collection

A survey in the form of a questionnaire and structured interviews (Creswell 2014: 239) were conducted for the collection of primary data. Information was gathered by the researcher using the questionnaire and structured interviews. The vast geographic location of the participants in KZN and large population size compounded by the nature of this study has resulted in choice of this methodology. Video conferencing tools were used to conduct interviews with respondents located in distant locations from the researcher.

SMEs in the North Coast, South Coast, Upper Highway and Central Durban were requested to participate in the study by presenting the consent letter and questionnaire to the participant by electronic survey method and by hand, where consented by the respondent. The notion behind the hand delivery method was to wait for the participant to fill out the questionnaire immediately, and simultaneously to afford the opportunity for the researcher to conduct the interview with the participant when consented (Creswell 2014: 269).

However, the method of hand delivery could not prevail in its entirety as planned due to the Corona Virus (COVID-19) pandemic limitations, whereby travel restrictions and limited interaction amongst people were imposed by countries worldwide (Devi 2020: 1331). As a result, the collection of the data entailed handing over the completed consent form and questionnaire back to the researcher by the electronic survey method for the quantitative aspect of the research. In addition, the structured interviews occurred by means of teleconference and video calls in some instances and by face-to-face meetings

where permitted, for the qualitative aspect of the research. Secondary data from the participants were collected by the electronic method, in accordance with safety precautions.

4.7.2 Data Analysis

4.7.2.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

Data Analysis is fundamentally key to ensure that data obtained by the researcher should be studied and checked for patterns, similarities, conflicts, causalities, and other relationships (Rabiee 2004: 657). The first phase in this mixed methods study entailed using SPSS™/®/© for analyses of the data that were collected because of the software's proven success in descriptive statistics (Creswell 2014: 209). SPSS™/®/© was discovered to be the preferred statistical software for descriptive statistics when compared to other statistical software tools such as Minitab and Excel (Prvan, Reid and Petocz 2002: 70). The following steps were taken in the analysis of the data for the first phase:

- 1) The information of the number of respondents and non-respondents were reported.
- 2) Response bias was checked by means of contacting some non-respondents to ascertain their differences in responses of the respondents.
- 3) The use of SPSS™/®/© to analyse data of dependent and independent variables in this study. Descriptive Statistics is discussed in the following sub-section.

4.7.2.1.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics involves techniques used to organise, present, and analyse data; thereafter the data is presented numerically and graphically (Fisher and Marshall 2009:

95). In addition, the authors explained that descriptive statistics entailed the three levels of measurement known as: nominal, ordinal, and continuous (See Figure 4.4). Additionally, the measures of central tendency were stipulated and are known as: mean, median, and mode (Refer to Figure 4.4).

Level of measurement	Description	Measure of central tendency	Measure of dispersion
<i>Nominal</i>	Classification	Mode	Frequency distribution
<i>Ordinal</i>	Relative rankings	Median Mode	Frequency distribution Percentile, Maximum and minimum, Range
<i>Continuous</i>	Rank ordering with equal intervals	Mean Median Mode	Frequency distribution Percentile Maximum and minimum, Range, interquartile range, Standard deviation

Figure 4. 4 - Descriptive Statistics for each level of measurement (Fisher and Marshall 2009)

In addition to Fisher and Marshall's (2009: 95) stipulation of measure of central tendencies, Marshall and Jonker (2010: 6) also provided the following definitions for the measure of central tendencies shown below:

- Mode – Numerical value with the highest frequency.
- Median – Mid score of a rank-order set of numbers.
- Mean – Average score of all values.
- Dispersion frequency – The number of cases in accordance with the category distribution.
- Range – The distance between the lowest and the highest values.
- Inter-quartile range – where the middle 50% of the scores fall.
- Standard deviation – The root-mean-square deviation from the mean.
- Variance – The standard deviation squared.

The next sub-section discusses group differences.

4.7.2.1.2 Group Differences (Chi-Square)

The Chi-square is a statistical test that is done to check if there is a correlation amongst categorical data sets (Turhan 2020: 579). According to Subashini and Brajesh (2021: 13) the Chi-square test is carried out to analyse the difference between two proportions. Moreover, the test is used for nominal and ordinal data sets. The authors further advised that there are different variants known as Fisher's exact test, Cochran Mantel Haenszel test and the McNamara test. In this study, the Chi-square test will be conducted to check the correlation amongst the concerned data sets.

4.7.2.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

According to (Creswell 2014: 247-249) the second phase of this mixed methods study entailed the qualitative approach which is as follows:

- 1) Gather the raw data.
- 2) Organise and prepare the data for analysis.
- 3) Read through all the data.
- 4) Code the data.
- 5) Interrelate the themes/descriptions.
- 6) Interpret the meanings of themes/descriptions.

According to Guo (2019: 68) Nvivo™/®/© software has the ability to collaborate different types of data and perform a qualitative analysis that is effective and aesthetically appealing to the reader. Moreover, Al-Kindi and Al-Khanjari (2021: 14) favoured Nvivo™/®/© computer software because the software made qualitative analyses easy by saving time and effort, adding value, and providing quality to the study. Therefore, Nvivo™/®/© software was used for the qualitative data analyses in this research. The methodology of Nvivo™/®/© is discussed in the next sub-section.

4.7.2.2.1 Nvivo™/®/© Software Methodology

Nvivo™/®/© is a software system used for the analysis of data for the qualitative approach. The software is considered to collate different types of data, code the data and provide coherent outputs (Hilal and Alabri 2013: 181). The **first step** entails creating a project for the research study. The **second step** involves capturing or loading of the files (data) in the various formats that were collected. The **third step** involves coding of the data. **Lastly**, software tools are used to analyse the data to derive relationships and themes associated with seeking an understanding of the phenomenon (Hilal and Alabri 2013: 185).

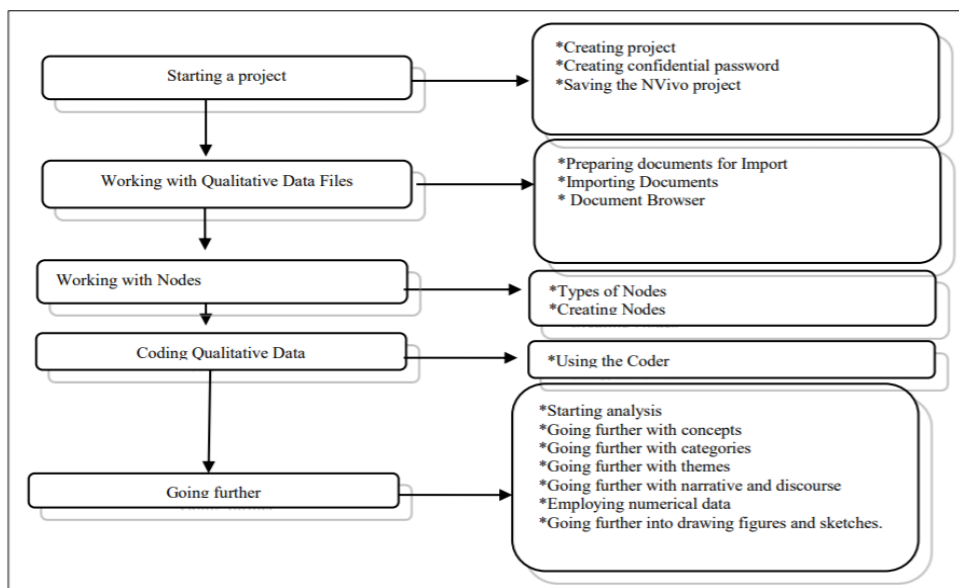


Figure 4. 5 - Nvivo™/®/© Software Process (Hilal and Alabri 2013)

Figure 4.5 provides a visual display of the steps that have been undertaken by the researcher in this study. The next section explains the pretesting conducted.

4.8 Pilot Study

Pretesting is primarily conducted to evaluate feasibility of the data collection instruments which will be carried out on a much larger scale. It is fundamentally important to conduct pretesting within the research process (Leon, Davis and Kraemer 2011: 629). Moreover, pretesting of the questionnaire is primarily important as the researcher only acquires this opportunity once to optimise the research instrument prior to dispatching to participants to achieve the best output (Martelli and Greener 2018: 104). Where possible the results of the pretesting were used to amend the research study to ultimately avoid any negative consequences. In this study a total of 15 participants were selected from the target population. These selected businesses were exempted from the actual sample size of 384.

4.9 Delimitations

By designing a conceptual framework, this study will identify elements of a strategy for sustainable SMES in KZN and provide an appropriate improvement method. As a result of the vast geographical area in KZN, the province was deconstructed to focus this research survey on the North Coast, South Coast, Upper Highway, and Central Durban areas. Top management comprising managers and directors were used in this survey to purport information which could be used to provide an appropriate and suitable framework for a longer term growth of the SMEs in KZN.

4.10 Validity

According to Creswell (2014: 206) validity should be yielded by an instrument which produces accurate results. To ensure validity in this research, each participant received a letter of information that explained the overview of the research. The participants also received the consent letter and questionnaire. Moreover, the participants were required to read the letter of information and complete the consent form and questionnaire. A

period of 30 days was allowed to complete the consent form and questionnaire. Both the consent form and questionnaire were collected electronically. A structured face-to-face or video interview was conducted randomly whereby open ended questions were posed to participants. All completed documents were numbered automatically and placed into separate folders by the researcher to ensure confidentiality. Thereafter, the folders were protected with passwords and stored on an external hard disk drive which was locked in a filing cabinet.

4.11 Reliability

Reliability refers to the test of consistency and stability over numerous repetitive measurements of the measuring tool (Creswell 2014: 208). Pretesting was conducted in this research comprising of a group of 15 participants. They were excluded from the sample size of 384 participants. The purpose of the pretest was to ensure that the participants understand and interpret the questions in the same way. In addition, pretesting is fundamentally necessary for the participant to perform the self-test completion of the questionnaire and confirm that the questions are clear and easily understood (Bolarinwa 2016: 196). Moreover, pretesting allowed the researcher to make corrections and amendments to the questionnaire where required.

4.12 Ethical Issues

Ethical considerations were taken during each phase of this study, particularly for the data collection, data analyses, data report compilation, data storage and backup. In addition, this research ensured that minimal risk to humans, animals and the environment was induced. Permission from the participants were requested and obtained. In addition, the anonymity of the participants was maintained and stipulated in the Letter of Consent (Appendix A). Moreover, this study guaranteed that participants and their associated businesses would not be scathed as a result of the outcome of this research.

According to Fisher and Anushko (2008: 4) four concepts should raise concern for a researcher; conflicts of interest, informed consent, cultural equivalence, and incentive schemes. The concepts are explained below:

- 1) **Conflicts of Interest** – Objectivity must be maintained during all stages of the data collection, data analyses, data interpretation, report compilation, and storage. If there is no objectivity, this can harm participants, the public, institutions, funders of the research and the field of study in its entirety.
- 2) **Informed Consent** – All participants must be informed about the intentions and rationale of the research study. The participants must also be informed that participation in the study is voluntary.
- 3) **Cultural Equivalence** – Researchers must ensure culture equality when engaging with participants. Favouring one ethnic or cultural group over another does not bode well for the research output. The notion of geographical deconstruction entailing coverage of different towns must be considered as a mitigation step to avoid this ethical issue.
- 4) **Incentive Schemes** – Incentives are categorised into due and undue payments. Undue payments made to the participant to lure the research in a trajectory which favours the researcher is unethical. Undue payments may also lead the participant to purchase illicit material in some instances. Due cognisance must be taken of this ethical issue and avoided as best as practicably possible by the researcher.

In this study, the researcher confirmed that ethical requirements of the institution were met, these included conflicts of interest, informed consent, cultural equivalence, and incentive schemes. An ethical clearance number was obtained prior to embarking on the data collection. Moreover, the ethical clearance number was inserted on the “Letter of Consent” to confirm that the data collection was approved and condoned by the institution. In summary, all ethical issues were addressed in this study.

4.13 Conclusion

In this chapter the research approach, research design and research methodology were primarily addressed. The mixed methods research approach was adopted which entailed adopting a pragmatic worldview and further adoption of the mixed methods research design to carry out this empirical research study. The target population of SMEs in KZN was ascertained by published articles and the KZN Province: Economic, Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs database. In addition, the probabilistic sampling method and particularly the simple random sampling method was employed in this study.

In accordance with this mixed methods study, a self-administered survey questionnaire was distributed to the 384 targeted participants of SMEs in the North Coast, South Coast, Upper Highway and Central Durban areas in KZN. The researcher also took the opportunity to interview 20 participants during the deliverance of the questionnaire. Structured interviews were conducted with the perspective of answering the research questions. The questionnaire and interviews covered the element of **Strategy** and the sub-elements of **Change**, **Purpose** and **Leadership** which were related to formulating a Sustainable Business Strategy.

The result of a study was considered crucial as it provides factual information from respondents and it confirms that the experiments or empirical work was indeed conducted (Borgonovo, Caselli, Cillo, Masciandaro, and Rabitti 2021: 6). Upon receipt of the primary and secondary data, the researcher used SPSS™/®/© to analyse the data collected from the research instrument. In addition, Nvivo™/®/© was used to collate, collaborate, and analyse the qualitative data. Lastly, this chapter discussed reliability, validity, limitations, and ethical issues. Upon analysing the data, due cognisance was taken of the notion that researchers can easily be biased by favouring respondents which places the data in favourable light. Furthermore, the researcher was aware of and did not only disclose positive results to achieve personal inclinations. Most importantly, the privacy of the respondents was duly maintained by disassociating names from documentation used in this study. The next chapter explains the analysis and results of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE: Data Analyses and Presentation of Results

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focused on the results, analyses, and interpretations of the survey. In addition, this chapter also provides justification for the tools and techniques used in this study. The result of a study is crucial as it provides factual information from respondents and it confirms that the experiments or empirical work was indeed conducted (Borgonovo, Caselli, Cillo, Masciandaro, and Rabitti 2021: 6). Upon analysing the data, due cognisance was taken of the notion that researchers can easily be biased by favouring respondents which places the data in favourable light.

Furthermore, the researcher was aware of and did not only disclose positive results to achieve personal inclinations. Most importantly, the privacy of the respondents was duly maintained by disassociating names from documentation used in this study. These techniques of analysing data have been duly claimed and supported (Creswell 2014: 138). The last step in this chapter was to interpret the results. According to Creswell (2014: 226) the interpretation of the results must either support or refute the hypotheses or research questions. The interpretation of the results was conducted accordingly.

In this mixed methods study, both the quantitative and qualitative approaches were used. The quantitative results of the survey were presented according to the outputs generated by SPSS™/®/©. In addition, the element 'Strategy' and the sub-elements 'Change', 'Purpose' and 'Leadership' were checked for interconnections and interdependencies using Vensim™/®/© software. Furthermore, the qualitative results of the survey are presented using the generated results by Nvivo™/®/©. The themes of the study were generated by focussing on key words (Dollah, Abduh, and Rosmaladewi 2017: 62). Furthermore, the themes are linked to the objectives and elements of the study in the literature review. The next section illustrates the generated themes of the study.

5.2 Qualitative Analyses

5.2.1 Themes of the study

This study generated four main themes namely strategy, change, leadership, and purpose. Under each theme, there were several sub-themes as shown in Figure 5.1. The sub-themes were coded according to the interviews conducted with the respondents.

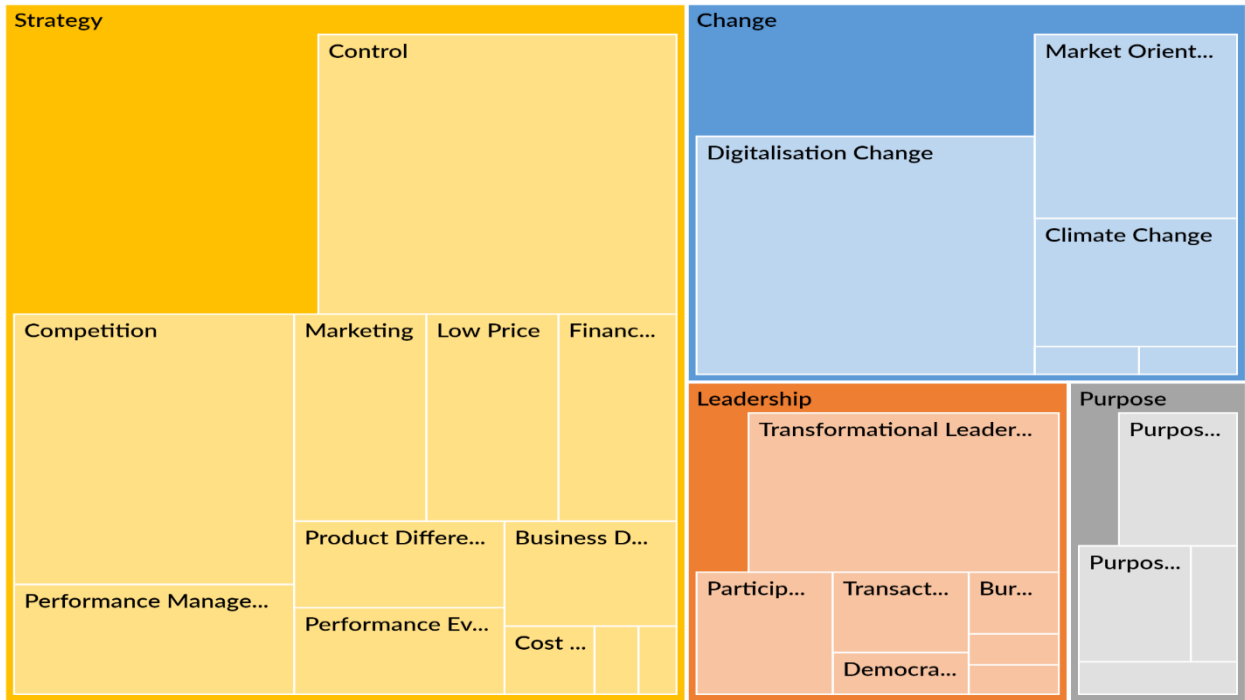


Figure 5. 1 - Themes and Sub-themes (Nvivo™/®/© Version 12)

The themes and sub-themes were classified into cases. The applicable cases are associated with files and references shown in Tables 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4.

5.2.2 Coding, Files and References

Coding of data can be performed using various methods, manually by using A4 sheets of paper, coloured markers, sticky notes and large format display boards, however automatic or digital coding can be achieved using Nvivo™/®/© (Maher, Hadfield,

Hutchings, and de Eyto 2018: 6). In this study, the Nvivo™/®/© software program was used to code the data from the populated interview files. Each theme and sub-theme were coded according to the respondents' answers provided to the interviewer. The associated number under the columns in Tables 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4 refers to the count of files and references.

Table 5. 1 - Change and Sub-themes (Nvivo™/®/© Version 12)

Theme / Sub-Theme	Files	References
Change	11	12
Artificial Intelligence Change	1	1
Climate Change	8	9
Digitalisation Change	17	28
Market Orientation Change	10	13
Product Orientation Change	1	1

Upon coding, the theme 'Change' was associated with 11 files and 12 references. Furthermore, the subsequent sub-themes namely 'Artificial Intelligence Change' was associated with 1 file and 1 reference. Followed by 'Climate Change' which was associated with 8 files and 9 references. Thereafter 'Digitalisation Change' was associated with 17 files and 28 references. Moreover 'Market Orientation Change' was associated with 10 files and 13 references. Lastly, the sub-theme 'Product Orientation Change' was associated with 1 file and 1 reference. Therefore, along with 'Change'; 'Climate Change', 'Digitalisation Change' and 'Market Orientation Change' were selected for the relationship mapping in this study.

Table 5. 2 - Leadership and Sub-themes (Nvivo™/®/© Version 12)

Theme / Sub-Theme	Files	References
Leadership	2	3
Autocratic Leadership	1	1
Bureaucratic Leadership	2	2
Democratic Leadership	2	2
Ethical Leadership	1	1
Laissez-Faire Leadership	0	0
Participative Leadership	5	6
Transactional Leadership	4	4
Transformational Leadership	15	18

The second theme, 'Leadership' was associated with 2 files and 3 references. Subsequently, the sub-themes namely 'Autocratic Leadership' was associated with 1 file and 1 reference. Followed by 'Bureaucratic Leadership' which was associated with 2 files and 2 references. Thereafter, 'Democratic Leadership' was associated with 2 files and 2 references. Furthermore 'Ethical Leadership' was associated with 1 file and 1 reference. Noticeably, 'Laissez-Faire Leadership' was not coded due to no associations with files. The sub-theme 'Participative Leadership' was associated with 5 files and 6 references. Moreover, 'Transactional Leadership' was associated with 4 files and 4 references. Lastly, the sub-theme 'Transformational Leadership' was associated with 15 files and 18 references. Therefore, along with 'Leadership', 'Participative Leadership', 'Transactional Leadership' and 'Transformational Leadership' were selected for relationship mapping in this study.

Table 5. 3 - Purpose and Sub-themes (Nvivo™/®/© Version 12)

Theme / Sub-Theme	Files	References
Purpose	2	2
Personal Purpose at Workplace	2	2
Purpose and Strategy	5	5
Purpose-driven Leadership	2	2
Purpose-driven Organisations	6	6
Three Dimensions of Purpose	0	0

The third theme of 'Purpose' was coded and consequently associated with 2 files and 2 references. This followed the sub-themes 'Personal Purpose at Workplace' which was associated with 2 files and 2 references. Followed by 'Purpose and Strategy' was associated with 5 files and 5 references. Thereafter, 'Purpose-driven Leadership' which was associated with 2 files and 2 references. Furthermore, 'Purpose-driven Organisations' was associated with 6 files and 6 references. Lastly, the sub-theme 'Three Dimensions of Purpose' was not coded due to no associations with files. Therefore, along with 'Purpose'; 'Purpose and Strategy' and 'Purpose-driven Organisations' were selected for relationship mapping in this study.

Table 5. 4 - Strategy and Sub-themes (Nvivo™/®/© Version 12)

Theme / Sub-Theme	Files	References
Strategy	17	28
Business Development	5	6
Competition	18	25
Control	20	33

Theme / Sub-Theme	Files	References
Cost Management	2	2
Financial Management	5	8
Low Price	8	9
Marketing	5	9
Performance Evaluation	4	6
Performance Management	8	10
Place	1	1
Planning	1	1
Product Differentiation	6	6

The last theme of 'Strategy' was coded and associated with 17 files and 28 references. Subsequently the sub-themes namely 'Business Development' was associated with 5 files and 6 references. Followed by 'Competition' which was associated with 18 files and 25 references. Thereafter 'Control' was associated with 20 files and 33 references. Furthermore, 'Cost Management' being associated with 2 files and 2 references. In addition, 'Financial Management' was associated with 5 files and 8 references. This was followed by 'Low Price' being associated with 8 files and 9 references. Moreover, 'Marketing' was associated with 5 files and 9 references. Followed by 'Performance Evaluation' was associated with 4 files and 6 references. In addition, 'Performance Management' was associated with 8 files and 10 references. Thereafter, 'Place' was associated with 1 file and 1 reference. Penultimately, 'Planning' was associated with 1 file and 1 reference. Lastly, the sub-theme 'Product Differentiation' was associated with 6 files and 6 references.

5.2.3 Theme 1: Strategy

Figure 5.2 illustrates the theme of Strategy and the affiliated Sub-themes.

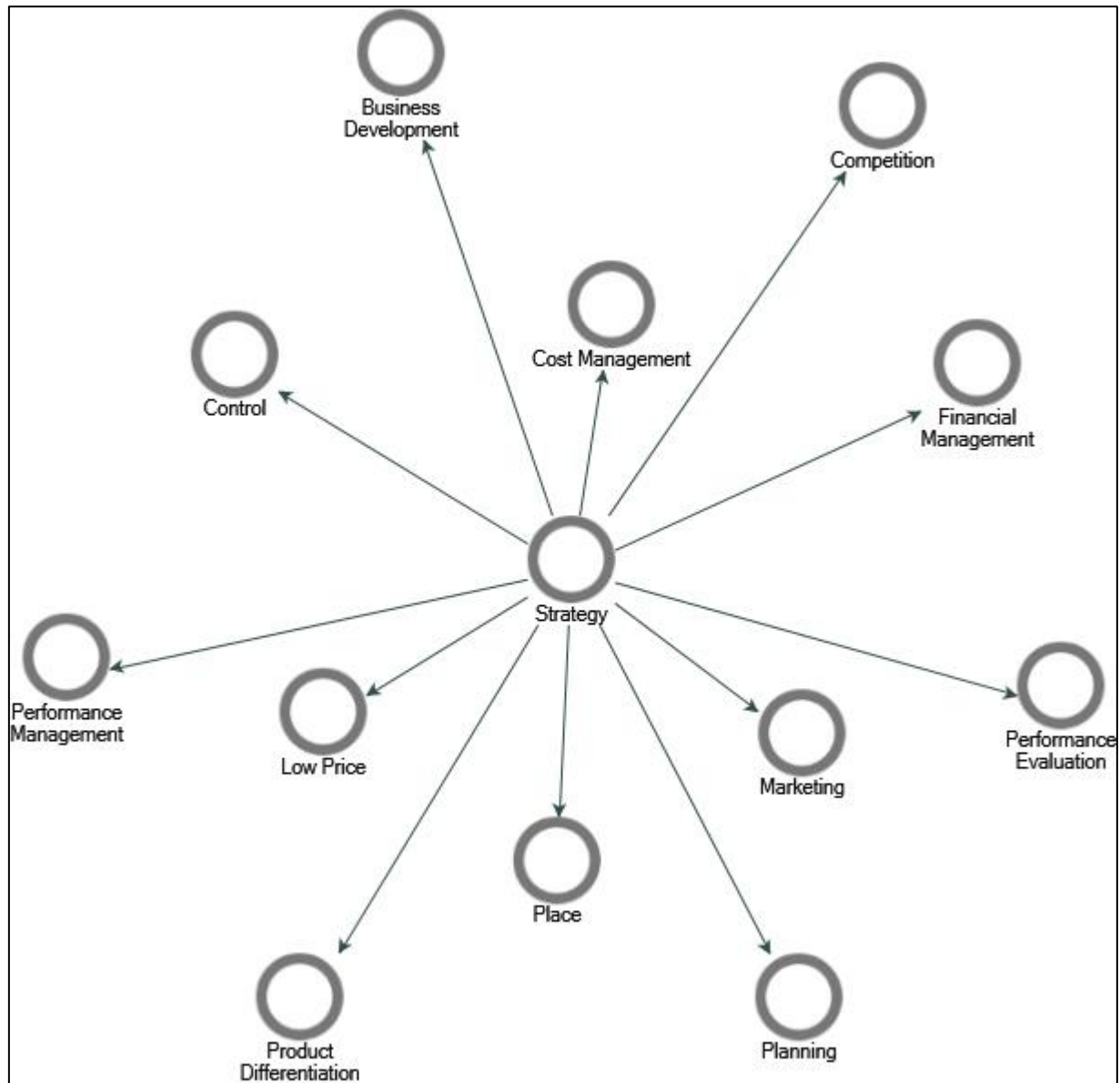


Figure 5. 2 - Strategy and Sub-themes (Nvivo™/®/© Version 12)

Table 5. 5 - Matrix Query - Strategy Sub-themes (Nvivo™/®/© Version 12)

	A : Business Development	B : Competition	C : Control	D : Cost Management	E : Financial Management	F : Low Price	G : Marketing	H : Performance Evaluation	I : Performance Management	J : Place	K : Planning	L : Product Differentiation
1 : Respondent 1	0	0	3	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
2 : Respondent 10	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1
3 : Respondent 11	1	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4 : Respondent 12	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5 : Respondent 13	1	1	1	0	2	1	0	2	0	0	0	0
6 : Respondent 14	0	2	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
7 : Respondent 15	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8 : Respondent 16	2	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
9 : Respondent 17	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
10 : Respondent 18	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
11 : Respondent 19	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1
12 : Respondent 2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
13 : Respondent 20	0	1	2	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	0
14 : Respondent 3	0	1	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
15 : Respondent 4	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
16 : Respondent 5	0	3	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	1
17 : Respondent 6	0	1	2	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
18 : Respondent 7	1	2	2	1	0	0	0	2	3	0	0	0
19 : Respondent 8	0	2	3	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0
20 : Respondent 9	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
	6	25	33	2	8	9	9	6	10	1	1	6

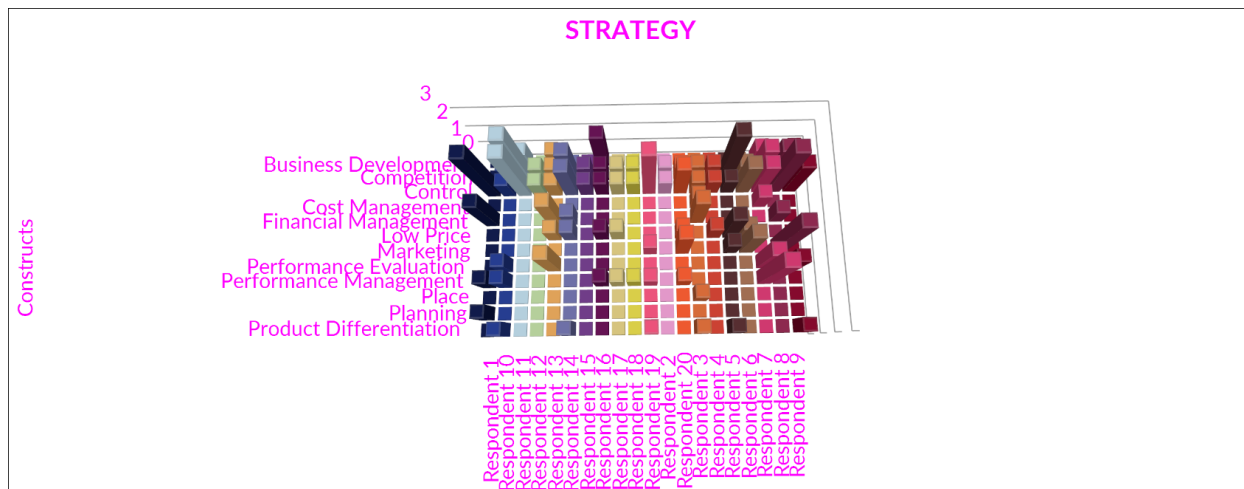


Figure 5. 3 - Strategy and Sub-themes (Nvivo™/®/© Version 12)

As indicated in Table 5.5 and Figure 5.3, ‘Strategy’ was deconstructed into a variety of constructs. The constructs were as follows: ‘Business Development’, ‘Competition’, ‘Control’, ‘Cost Management’, ‘Financial Management’, ‘Low Price’, ‘Marketing’, ‘Performance Evaluation’, ‘Performance Management’, ‘Place’, ‘Planning’, and ‘Product Differentiation’.

Whilst 'Place' only had 1 respondent for the construct, the respondents tended to focus more on the other constructs of 'Strategy'. However, the response of **Respondent 3** was interesting:

"I think, from a geographical perspective. The location of your business is very important because with our type of business, we try to be relatively close to where our customers are, so that we can provide efficient services in real-time."

Similarly, 'Planning' had one response which emanated from **Respondent 1** which was as follows:

"During this COVID crisis, we decided to buy a lot of stock, so one of our strategies was to make sure stock levels are higher than normal so that when businesses do go back online, we'll have the necessary stock. So stock is something that needs to be implemented and adjusted whenever necessary, but it must be planned."

In this study, six respondents contributed to the construct of 'Business Development'. An interesting response was provided by **Respondent 16** as follows:

"We are going into a new Pastel accounting package because of the client base we have. Yes, it's actually a good change that we are doing, and we will be associated with all the insurance companies. But most importantly we are changing our strategies and implementing new ones."

Interestingly the constructs of 'Cost Management', 'Financial Management' and 'Low Price' can be amalgamated because of being coded more than once. These constructs provided a total of 19 respondents combined. **Respondent 13** commented as follows:

"The biggest factor that affects my business negatively is funding. Prior to this it was always a challenge to collect money from debtors, but it's even harder now with this pandemic being around because it has stifled everything."

Moreover, **Respondent 3** commented on 'Cost Management' and 'Financial Management' as follows:

"Secondly, the other one would be obviously a financial strain when it comes to your expenses in your business and salaries and things like that. That could be another major

factor that could affect business so together you got to have a look at your business as a whole and differentiate. Is this business going to suffice? What is required to manage this business?"

Furthermore, **Respondent 13** also commented on 'Low Price' as follows:

"Margins are a thing of the past. It's purely to put food on the table, so profitability is definitely a question right now. If you were making a 20% margin before, you'd probably accept a 10% margin now, because there's so many people that are dabbling in other businesses."

Similarly, 'Performance Evaluation' and 'Performance Management' shows 16 combined responses as the constructs support one another due to being double coded.

Respondent 7 commented on both constructs as follows:

"The current environment, in terms of productivity and productivity measurements or KPI's, we need some sort of management or else business suffers then your bottom line will be affected, or it'll be eroded by expense. So yes, you need to find a balance between productivity and obviously time wasters or procrastination".

In addition, **Respondent 10** commented as follows:

"I think that the amount of the balance needs to be there because at the end of the day, if you want a productive workforce or a productive team or a high performing team. Micromanagement is never going to get you there. You need to build sort of a trust with your team, but at the end of the day, the staff must be evaluated and managed."

It was also discovered that 'Marketing' played a pivotal role in the results exuded. There were 9 responses related to this construct. The following comment was made by **Respondent 19**:

"One time we spent a lot of money in a random month just on advertising, adverts, Google adverts and yes it did pay off".

Moreover, **Respondent 20** also commented on 'Marketing' as follows:

"I think the platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram had a huge effect on the kind of clientele that we get in the kind of business that we're doing".

The construct of 'Product Differentiation' was also highlighted as prominent in this study. There were 6 responses related to the construct. Of the total responses, a very interesting response emanated from **Respondent 14** as follows:

"Let's just say that we are not just general plumbers, we specialise in mechanical work, which 90% of plumbers in Durban do not do such as wash tanks, wash stainless steel piping, washing 200/300mm stainless steel tanks and piping, and so forth".

The construct of 'Competition' featured in this study as the second highest. There was a total of 25 responses which were related to the construct. **Respondent 11** commented on the construct as follows:

"Respect competitors, always respect them".

In addition, **Respondent 18** opinion on 'Competition' was:

"Well, the competitors right now are doing the same things that we are doing, focusing on their core".

Moreover, **Respondent 5** claimed the following:

"Competitors are good and if it's not a very competitive place, you won't be giving it your all to improve. That's what competition is".

Whilst to the contrary, **Respondent 7** posited the following:

"The trouble is that it makes you unsustainable in the long term because competition erodes into those revenue streams, and you would lose it".

The last construct in discussion being 'Control' was coded most frequently. There were 33 responses related to the construct. The following respondents produced interesting comments related to this construct. **Respondent 1** believed the following:

"I think controlling would be something that would have to be done all the time".

Respondent 11 explained as follows:

“Definitely, internal controls are vital. If you have different offices countrywide, so the need to standardise controls are needed”.

Furthermore, **Respondent 12** commented as follows:

“You have to control employees without a shadow of doubt. It might not be good, but you have [to] take control of your employees”.

Lastly, **Respondent 20** claimed the following:

“Internal controls are very important”.

As can be seen from the results achieved, many constructs namely ‘Business Development’, ‘Competition’, ‘Control’, ‘Cost Management’, ‘Financial Management’, ‘Low Price’, ‘Marketing’, ‘Performance Evaluation’, ‘Performance Management’ and ‘Product Differentiation’ featured most frequently in the study of this theme. This essentially means that the constructs are related to and indeed have a moderating effect on ‘Strategy’ which in turn positively affects the sustainability of a business. Moreover, this is supported by Uyar (2019:7) who claimed that the elements are used in formulating an organisations strategy.

5.2.4 Theme 2: Change

Figure 5.4 illustrates the theme of Change and the affiliated Sub-themes.

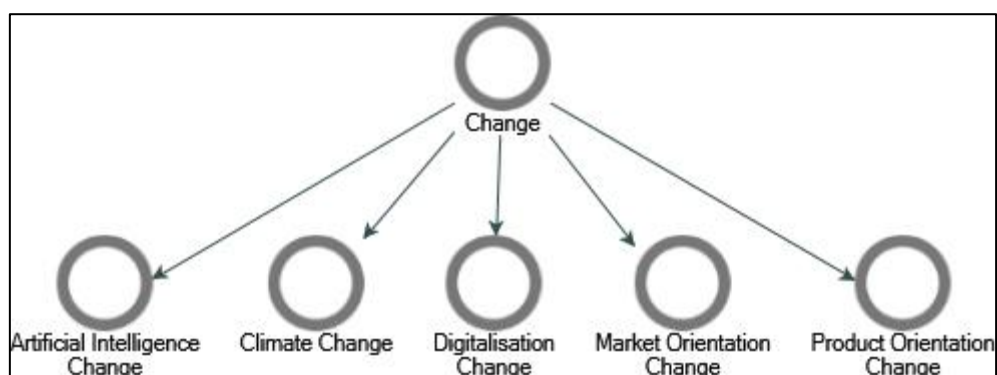


Figure 5. 4 - Change and Sub-themes (Nvivo™/®/© Version 12)

Table 5. 6 - Matrix Query - Change Sub-themes (Nvivo™/®/© Version 12)

	A: Artificial Intelligence Change	B: Climate Change	C: Digitalisation Change	D: Market Orientation Change	E: Product Orientation Change
1: Respondent 1	1	0	0	1	0
2: Respondent 10	0	0	0	0	0
3: Respondent 11	0	0	0	3	0
4: Respondent 12	0	1	4	0	0
5: Respondent 13	0	2	2	1	0
6: Respondent 14	0	1	1	0	0
7: Respondent 15	0	0	2	1	0
8: Respondent 16	0	0	2	0	0
9: Respondent 17	0	0	1	0	0
10: Respondent 18	0	0	1	0	0
11: Respondent 19	0	1	2	1	0
12: Respondent 2	0	0	1	1	1
13: Respondent 20	0	0	1	2	0
14: Respondent 3	0	0	1	0	0
15: Respondent 4	0	1	2	0	0
16: Respondent 5	0	0	1	0	0
17: Respondent 6	0	1	1	1	0
18: Respondent 7	0	1	1	0	0
19: Respondent 8	0	0	4	1	0
20: Respondent 9	0	1	1	1	0
	1	9	28	13	1

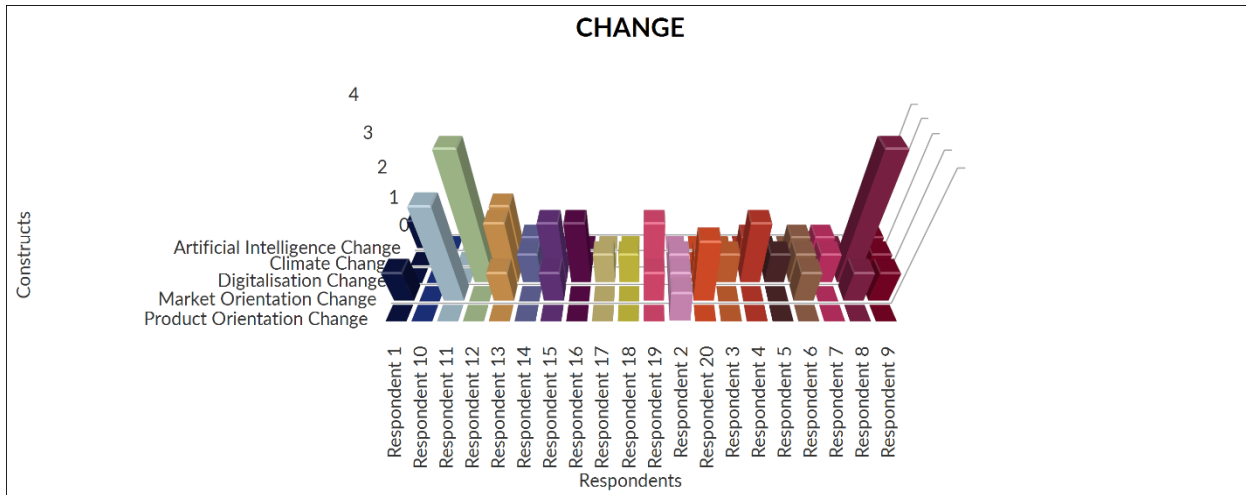


Figure 5. 5 - Change and Sub-themes (Nvivo™/®/© Version 12)

As depicted in Table 5.6 and Figure 5.5, 'Change' has been deconstructed into differing constructs. The results show that only **Respondent 1** mentioned the following on 'Artificial Intelligence':

"Recently we implemented a new software program and look, I think we're living in an information age and if you have the correct info then you can offer better service and give a whole run better customer experience with information".

This shows that majority of the respondents did not find 'Artificial Intelligence' related to business sustainability. Similarly, only **Respondent 2** commented on 'Product Orientation Change' as follows:

"It's the product that we offer, so I'm in the IT environment. So, when it comes to reliability and turn-around time, so that's on the positive side".

Furthermore, the theme of 'Climate Change' had an impact on 'Change' in business as 9 respondents commented on the effects of the element when related to business sustainability. However, 28 of the respondents raised points on 'Digitalisation Change' which was seen to be the most impactful contributors. In particular, **Respondent 8** commented on 'Digitalisation Change' as follows:

“Yes, digitalisation or technology has really, really changed. And that is one of the reasons why we had to get more younger people involved in that aspect. I want to say that we have now got many young people involved in this online marketing and online business venture. The digitalisation and online and web-based business, we can explore those avenues. They are also advertising on their own in terms of LinkedIn, Facebook and whole range of other web platforms that they're using now”.

Moreover, **Respondent 12** commented as follows:

“Technology has changed our business a lot. Even during this COVID pandemic, we don't have to interact with clients outside the office domain”.

Lastly, 13 respondents commented on ‘Market Orientation Change’ which depicted a relation to ‘Change’. **Respondent 11** commented as follows:

“So, you've got to be agile and deal with changing business landscapes”.

The evidence from the respondents indicated that ‘Climate Change’, ‘Digitalisation Change’ and ‘Market Orientation Change’ are the dominant constructs of ‘Change’ which has a moderating effect on ‘Strategy’ to achieve a Sustainable Business Strategy. These results supported the conclusion made that ‘Climate Change’ will damage the environment and be a hindrance to businesses financially (Dube and Nhamo 2020:10). Furthermore, support of the results entailed ‘Market Orientation Change’ being posited as needed to make an organisation sustainable (Wu *et al.* 2019: 524). Finally, these results confirmed that ‘Digitalisation Change’ has cemented itself in business and social regimes worldwide (Rademacher and Grant 2019: 41).

5.2.5 Theme 3: Leadership

Figure 5.6 illustrates the theme of Leadership and the affiliated Sub-themes.

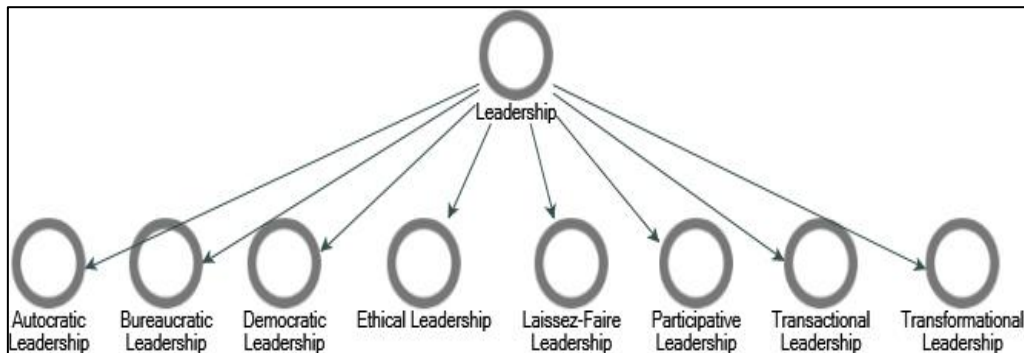


Figure 5. 6 - Leadership and Sub-themes (Nvivo™/®/© Version 12)

Table 5. 7 - Matrix Query - Leadership Sub-themes (Nvivo™/®/© Version 12)

	A: Autocratic Leadership	B: Bureaucratic Leadership	C: Democratic Leadership	D: Ethical Leadership	E: Laissez-Faire Leadership	F: Participative Leadership	G: Transactional Leadership	H: Transformational Leadership
1: Respondent 1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
2: Respondent 10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
3: Respondent 11	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
4: Respondent 12	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
5: Respondent 13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
6: Respondent 14	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
7: Respondent 15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
8: Respondent 16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
9: Respondent 17	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
10: Respondent 18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
11: Respondent 19	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
12: Respondent 2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
13: Respondent 20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
14: Respondent 3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
15: Respondent 4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
16: Respondent 5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
17: Respondent 6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
18: Respondent 7	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1
19: Respondent 8	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
20: Respondent 9	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
	1	2	2	1	0	6	4	18

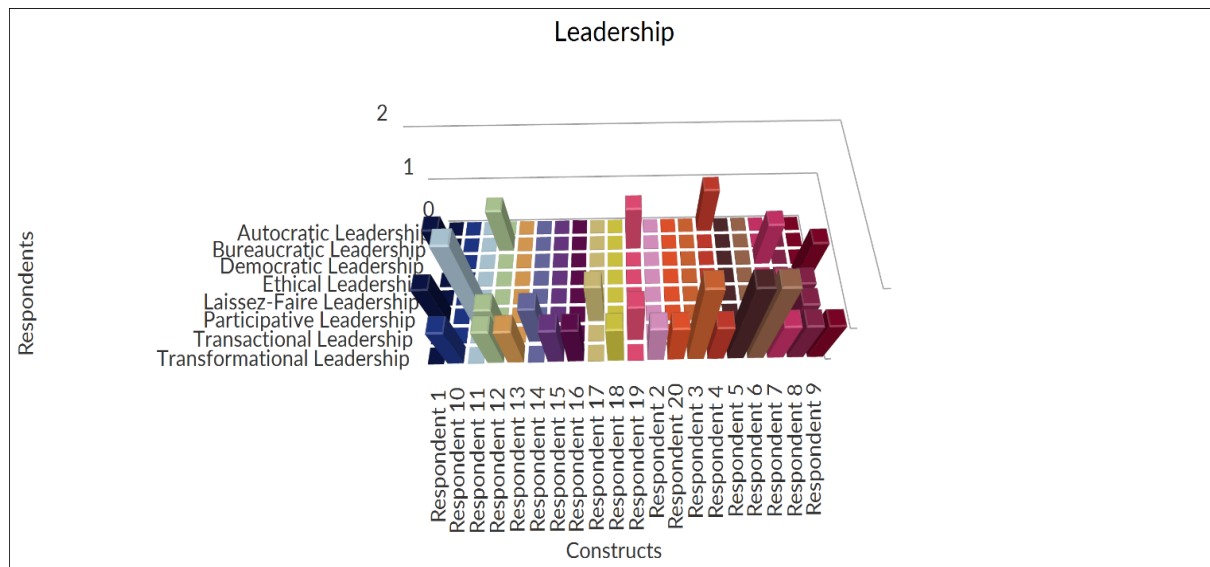


Figure 5. 7 - Leadership and Sub-themes (Nvivo™/©/© Version 12)

As indicated in Table 5.7 and Figure 5.7, ‘Leadership’ was deconstructed into differing constructs. The results show that only 1 respondent commented on ‘Autocratic Leadership’ and ‘Ethical Leadership’. There were no comments on ‘Laissez-Faire Leadership’. Interestingly, there were 2 comments on ‘Bureaucratic Leadership’ and ‘Democratic Leadership’ each. However, the main contributors to the theme of ‘Leadership’ were ‘Transactional Leadership’, ‘Participative Leadership’ and ‘Transformational Leadership’ with 4, 6 and 18 respondents respectively.

It was noted that **Respondent 8** commented on ‘Transactional Leadership’ as follows:

“In order for you to sustain yourself, and if you're a departmental manager, the department itself, so you have a budget that you need to work with, and if you cannot bring up those figures, you're either going to downside, close your department or you're going to go on a short time basis”.

Furthermore, **Respondent 8** also commented on “Participative Leadership’ as follows:

“From my experience, being in business now for 17 years and apart from business, experienced I've collected from working at the university, what I've found to be is a participative approach where people where all role players can be involved. In my view, I prefer a flat platform where everybody is equal. You take away all the titles when it

comes to a project, for example, so that everybody is on a level playing field. And in discussion, you choose a project leader or a team leader for that particular project and everybody, whoever is responsible for that particular project or team, or effort should be adhering to the team leader, to support the team leader, regardless of the job title. The same will apply even if you are a director of a business. And if a so called 'subordinate', meaning somebody who's not a director in the or team leader, one should play that role as a delegate in a business environment".

The most prominently featured construct was 'Transformational Leadership'. **Respondent 10** commented as follows:

"So, leadership starts with a vision and where you would like to drive your team and where would you see your team and how you set a piece of goal and how we work together to achieve a specific goal".

Additionally, **Respondent 12** commented as follows:

"I prefer to be hands-on and work with them instead of sitting in the office and delegating".

Lastly, **Respondent 9** commented as follows:

"I would say people follow me by example. So, that's the type of person I am. I don't dictate, I do work, and I've been followed by that, which works for me. I don't believe in a leader being demanding, you don't get anywhere with that. So, the best way to teach people is by leading by example".

The evidence provided by the respondents on the theme of 'Leadership' indicates a strong advocacy for a combination of 'Transactional Leadership', 'Participative Leadership' and 'Transformational Leadership'. Although 'Transactional Leadership' and 'Participative Leadership' appear quite frequently in the results, it can be conclusively summed up that 'Transformational Leadership' is indeed more favoured than other 'Leadership' constructs in this study. However, all three mentioned constructs are pertinent and relevant in the comprising of 'Leadership' holistically. Moreover, the results support the claims made in the literature review that 'Transactional Leadership' and

‘Transformational Leadership’ styles are used by a plethora of leaders (Crews *et al.* 2019: 424; Ugwu and Okore 2020: 870).

5.2.6 Theme 4: Purpose

Figure 5.8 illustrates the theme of Leadership and the affiliated Sub-themes.

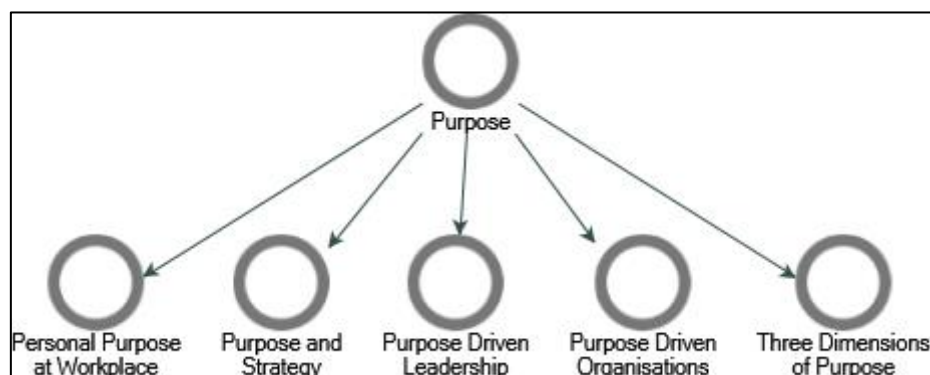


Figure 5. 8 - Purpose and Sub-themes (Nvivo™/®/© Version 12)

Table 5. 8 - Matrix Query - Purpose Sub-themes (Nvivo™/®/© Version 12)

	A: Personal Purpose at Workplace	B: Purpose and Strategy	C: Purpose-driven Leadership	D: Purpose-driven Organisations	E: Three Dimensions of Purpose
1: Respondent 1	0	1	0	0	0
2: Respondent 10	0	0	1	1	0
3: Respondent 11	0	0	0	1	0
4: Respondent 12	0	1	1	0	0
5: Respondent 13	0	1	0	1	0
6: Respondent 14	0	0	0	1	0
7: Respondent 15	1	0	0	0	0
8: Respondent 16	0	0	0	1	0
9: Respondent 17	0	0	0	1	0
10: Respondent 18	0	1	0	0	0
11: Respondent 19	0	1	0	0	0
12: Respondent 2	1	0	0	0	0
13: Respondent 20	0	0	0	0	0
14: Respondent 3	0	0	0	0	0
15: Respondent 4	0	0	0	0	0
16: Respondent 5	0	0	0	0	0
17: Respondent 6	0	0	0	0	0
18: Respondent 7	0	0	0	0	0
19: Respondent 8	0	0	0	0	0
20: Respondent 9	0	0	0	0	0
	2	5	2	6	0

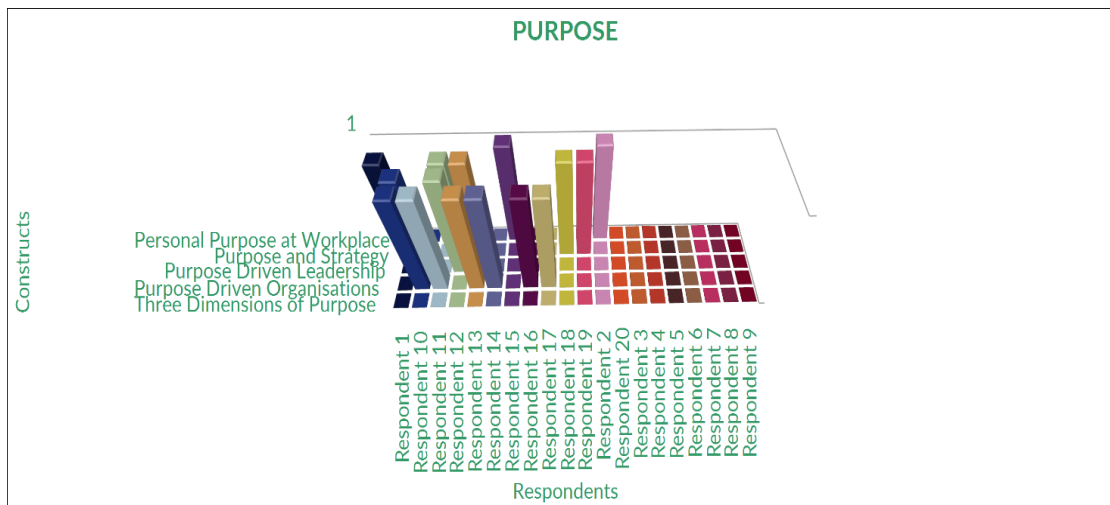


Figure 5. 9 - Purpose and Sub-themes (Nvivo™/© Version 12)

As indicated in Table 5.8 and Figure 5.9, 'Purpose' was deconstructed into differing constructs. Noticeably, no comments were made on 'Three Dimensions of Purpose', however, there were 2 respondents who commented on 'Personal Purpose at Workplace'. The one respondent who stood out was as follows:

Respondent 15 – *"I would follow a purpose statement and if I had one it will be for my benefit"*.

Similarly, there were 2 respondents for 'Purpose-driven Leadership' who commented, and again one which stood out was as follows:

Respondent 10 – *"Yes, I think that yes, we do follow the purpose statement and employees will also follow that as well. Like I said, it should be intertwined into your DNA of your business so if it's displayed on the wall there's no reason why you should not be following it"*.

The construct of 'Purpose and Strategy' was supported by 5 respondents. It was noted that **Respondent 19** commented as follows:

"I am my own competitor, that's it. I compete with myself. I don't compete with the people out there because competing with the people out there doesn't change my focus".

Lastly, 'Purpose-driven Organisations' had the highest number of respondents under this theme. Although all respondents provided noteworthy comments, **Respondent 16** was the highlight of the batch, which was as follows:

"Yes, definitely our Purpose Statement is that we build our business. Our staff are well aware of what we do, and they do exactly what we say to our clients we will do. Our clients provide good feedback on what we do and that keeps us on the alert for any improvements or acknowledging what is working well and striving to deliver on those service levels".

The evidence provided by all respondents for 'Purpose and Strategy' and 'Purpose-driven Organisations' were deemed to be high contributors to the theme of 'Purpose'. Moreover, this added to the relevance of 'Purpose' as a moderator variable to 'Strategy' in achieving a Sustainable Business Strategy. These results supported the statement made that success of organisations are determined by being purpose driven (Berghoff and Kelley 2019: 970). Moreover, further support of these results stemmed from purpose and strategy being in congruence (Ramadani *et al.* 2020: 2).

5.3 Word Cloud

In general, word clouds are meant to add aesthetic appeal to the study, however, words which have striking colours and have more spatial layouts are believed to increase the effect of the output (Hearst, Pedersen, Patil, Lee, Laskowski, and Franconeri 2019: 2748). Figure 5.10 is the word cloud generated from the Nvivo™/®/© software program for this study. As shown below, the key words spoken by the respondents were business, control, change, technology, leader, strategy, sustainability, employees, competitors, and service. It remains noteworthy that these words remain pertinent in this study as the constructs discussed are either directly related or indirectly related within the literature context and subsequent results expressed herein.

5.4.1 Crosstabulation of Sustainability and Age

The following crosstabulation involves 'Sustainability' and 'Age'.

Table 5. 9 - Crosstabulation - Sustainability and Age (Nvivo™/®/© Version 12)

Demographic	Sustainability	Total (unique)
Age = Less than 25 (0)	0	0
Age = Between 26 and 45 (10)	8	8
Age = Between 46 and 65 (10)	10	10
Age = Older than 65 (0)	0	0
Total (20)	18	18

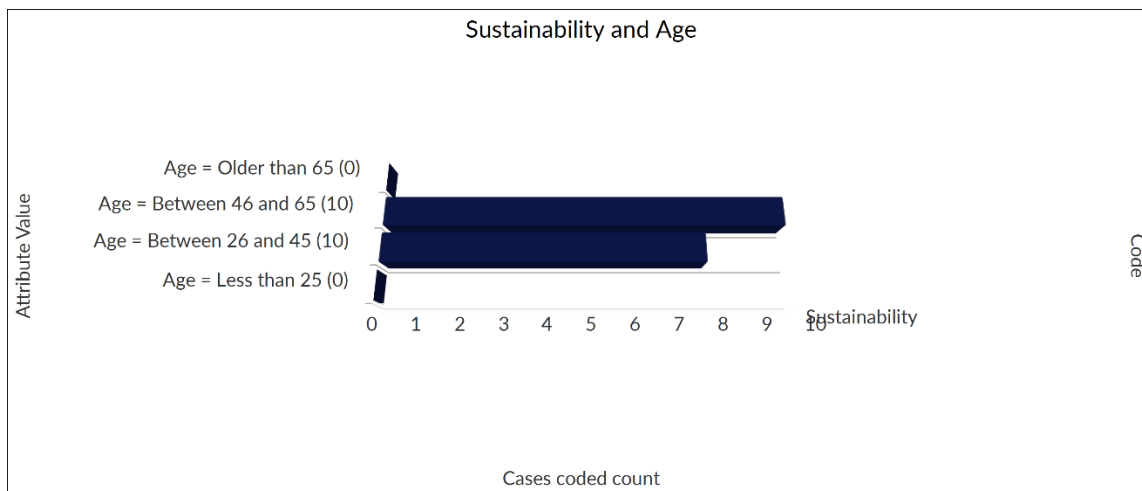


Figure 5. 11 - Crosstabulation - Sustainability and Age (Nvivo™/®/© Version 12)

Table 5.9 and Figure 5.11 indicates that 18 out of the 20 respondents commented on Sustainability. It must further be noted that 8 respondents were categorised in the "Between 26 and 45" age group, whilst the other 10 respondents fell in the 'Between 46 and 65" age group. It can be concluded that 90% of the respondents agreed that sustainability is fundamentally important in business. Moreover, it can also be concluded that the older the generation, the higher the belief in sustainability is noticed. Further to this, sustainability and gender is compared and discussed in the next section.

5.4.2 Crosstabulation of Sustainability and Gender

The following crosstabulation involves 'Sustainability' and 'Gender'.

Table 5. 10 - Crosstabulation - Sustainability and Gender (Nvivo™/®/© Version 12)

Demographic	Sustainability	Total (unique)
Gender = Male (17)	15	15
Gender = Female (3)	3	3
Gender = Other (0)	0	0
Total (20)	18	18

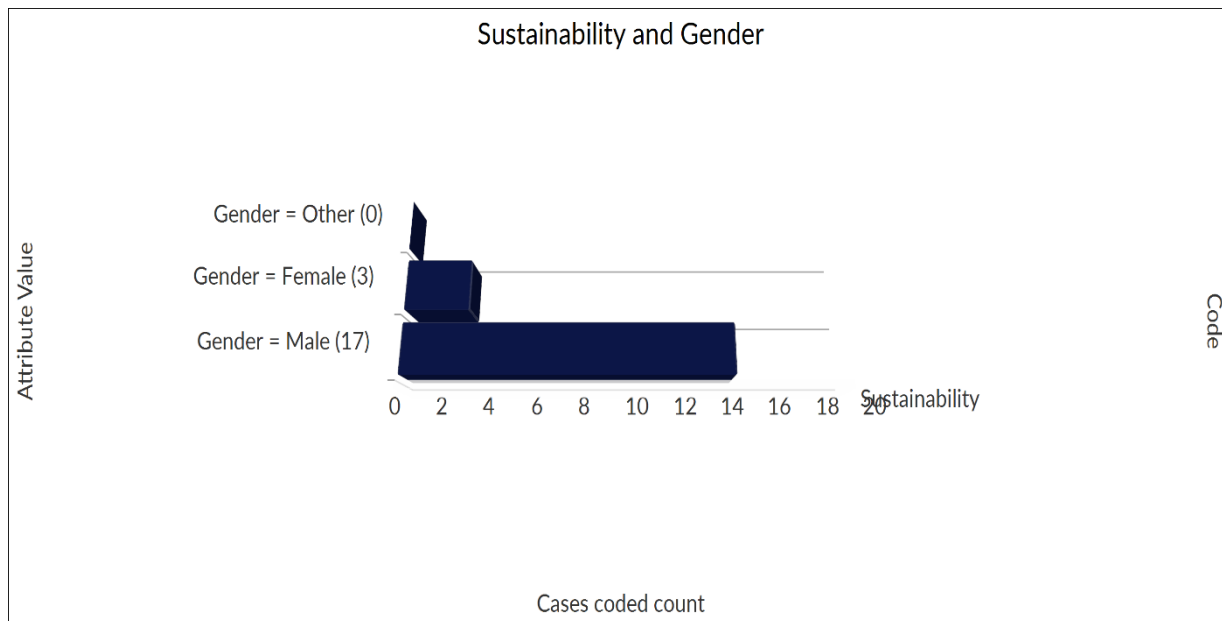


Figure 5. 12 - Crosstabulation - Sustainability and Gender (Nvivo™/®/© Version 12)

Table 5.10 and Figure 5.12 indicates that 18 out of the 20 respondents commented on Sustainability. It must further be noted 15 out of 17 males commented on sustainability. Moreover, 3 out of 3 female respondents believed that sustainability was necessary for businesses. Although, the number of males outweigh the females, the percentage of males who commented on sustainability is 88% whilst females comprise 100%. This indicates that female leaders have a higher tendency of supporting sustainability than males. In the next section, 'Sustainability' is compared to 'Job Designation'.

5.4.3 Crosstabulation of Sustainability and Job Designation

The following crosstabulation involves 'Sustainability' and 'Job Designation'.

Table 5. 11 - Crosstabulation - Sustainability and Job Designation (Nvivo™/®/© Version 12)

Demographic	Sustainability	Total (unique)
Job Designation = Director (14)	13	13
Job Designation = Manager (6)	5	5
Total (20)	18	18

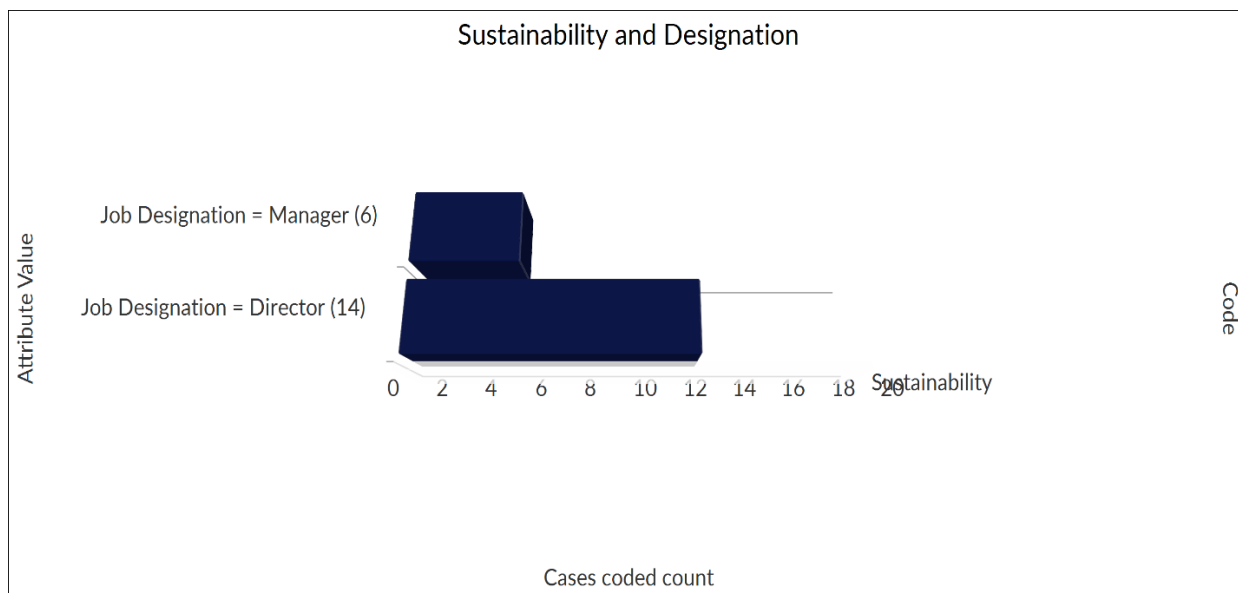


Figure 5. 13- Crosstabulation - Sustainability and Job Designation (Nvivo™/®/© Version 12)

Table 5.11 and Figure 5.13 indicates that 18 out of the 20 respondents commented on Sustainability. It must further be noted that out of the 20 respondents in this study, 6 were Managers and 14 were Directors. Furthermore, 5 out of 6 Managers and 13 out of 14 Directors commented on Sustainability. These results exude a strong advocacy for sustainability from Senior and Executive Management levels. The next section compares the 'Location' within KZN and 'Sustainability'.

5.4.4 Crosstabulation of Sustainability and Location

The following crosstabulation involves 'Sustainability' and 'Location'.

Table 5. 12 - Crosstabulation - Sustainability and Location (Nvivo™/®/© Version 12)

Demographic	Sustainability	Total (unique)
Location = North Coast (9)	8	8
Location = South Coast (1)	0	0
Location = Central Durban (7)	7	7
Location = Upper Highway (3)	3	3
Total (20)	18	18

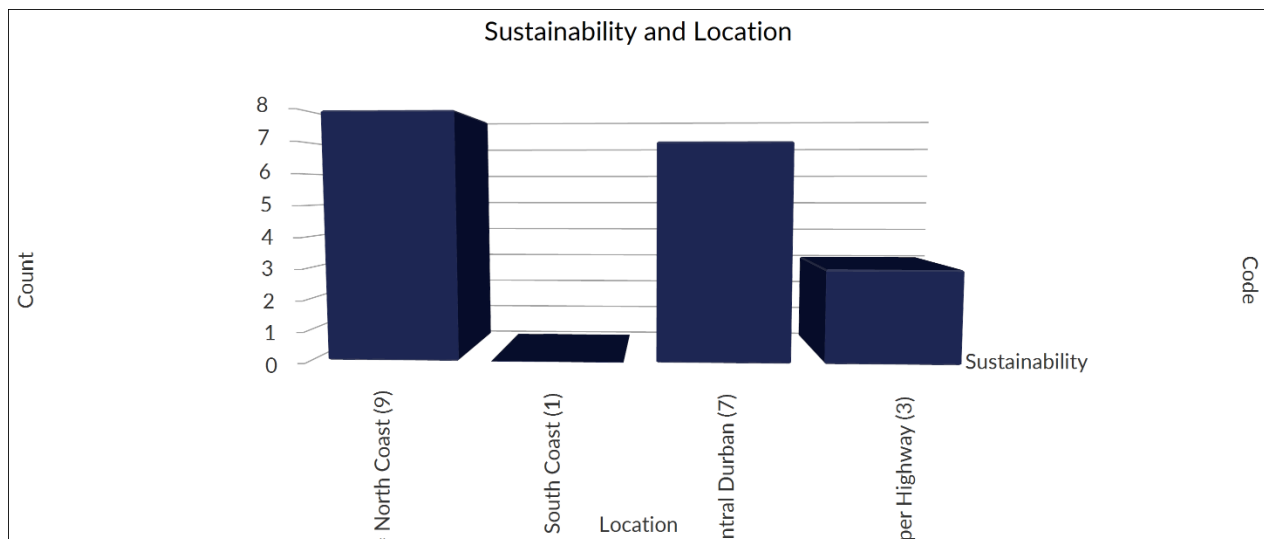


Figure 5. 14- Crosstabulation - Sustainability and Location (Nvivo™/®/© Version 12)

Table 5.12 and Figure 5.14 indicates that 18 out of the 20 respondents commented on Sustainability. It must further be noted that out of the 4 main locations namely North Coast, South Coast, Central Durban, and upper highway, noticeably all locations were supported by either Managers or Directors who advocated for sustainability. The next section discusses 'Sustainability and Experience'.

5.4.5 Crosstabulation of Sustainability and Experience

The following crosstabulation involves 'Sustainability' and 'Experience'.

Table 5. 13 - Crosstabulation - Sustainability and Experience (Nvivo™/®/© Version 12)

Demographic	Sustainability	Total (unique)
Years of Experience = Less than 5 years (0)	0	0
Years of Experience = From 6 to 10 years (2)	1	1
Years of Experience = From 11 to 15 years (4)	4	4
Years of Experience = From 16 to 20 years (1)	1	1
Years of Experience = Greater than 20 years (13)	12	12
Total (20)	18	18

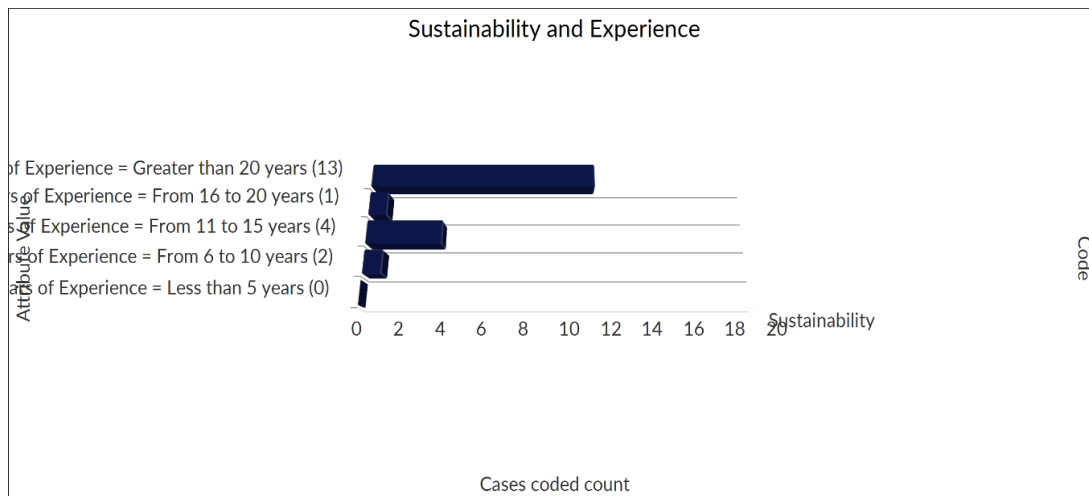


Figure 5. 15 - Crosstabulation - Sustainability and Experience (Nvivo™/®/© Version 12)

Table 5.13 and Figure 5.15 indicates that 18 out of the 20 respondents commented on Sustainability. It must further be noted that 12 out of 13 respondents who commented on sustainability have 'Greater than 20 years of experience', whilst 1 respondent has 'From 16 to 20 years of experience', 4 respondents have 'From 11 to 15 years of experience' and 2 respondents have 'From 6 to 10 years of experience'. Furthermore, none of the respondents had 'Less than 5 years of experience'. This concludes that the respondents were adequately experienced in their respective business fields.

5.5 Comparison Maps

Maps form an integral part in providing evidence in a study. It must be noted that evidence maps are a systematic approach used to identify and report topics (Saran and White 2018: 8). In Figure 5.16 below, the theme, 'Change' was compared to the dependent variable, 'Sustainability'. As depicted in the figure, many respondents share the link between the two topics in discussion. Respondents 3, 8, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19. The count equates to 10 out of 20 respondents which calculates to 50% of the respondent population in this study who share commonalities with both elements.

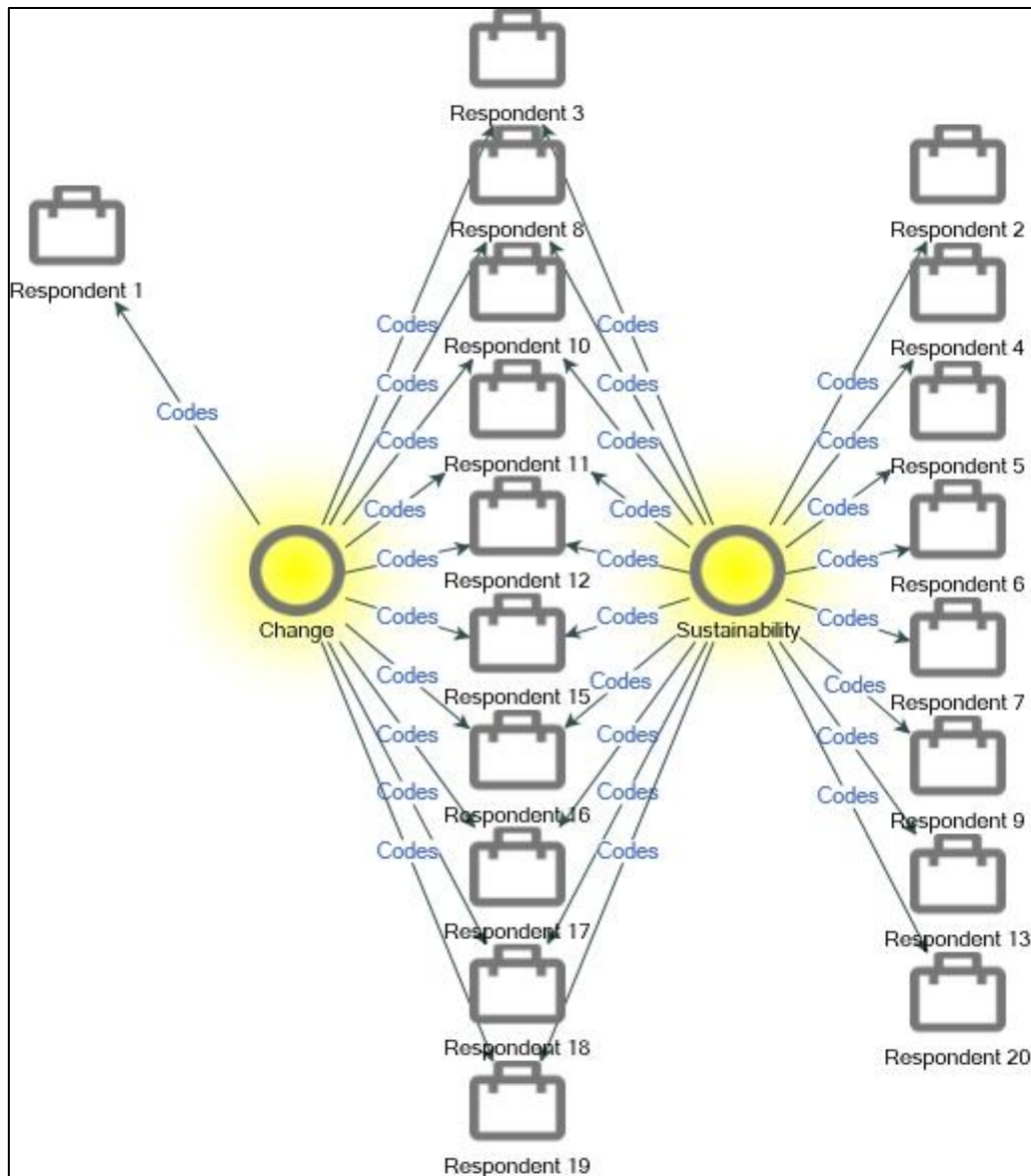


Figure 5. 16 - Comparison - Change and Sustainability (Nvivo™/© Version 12)

The theme, 'Strategy' was compared to the dependent variable, 'Sustainability' in Figure 5.17 below. As depicted in the figure, many respondents share the link between the two topics in discussion. Respondents 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 17, 18, 19 and 20. The count equates to 16 out of 20 respondents which calculates to 80% of the respondent population in this study who share commonalities with both elements.

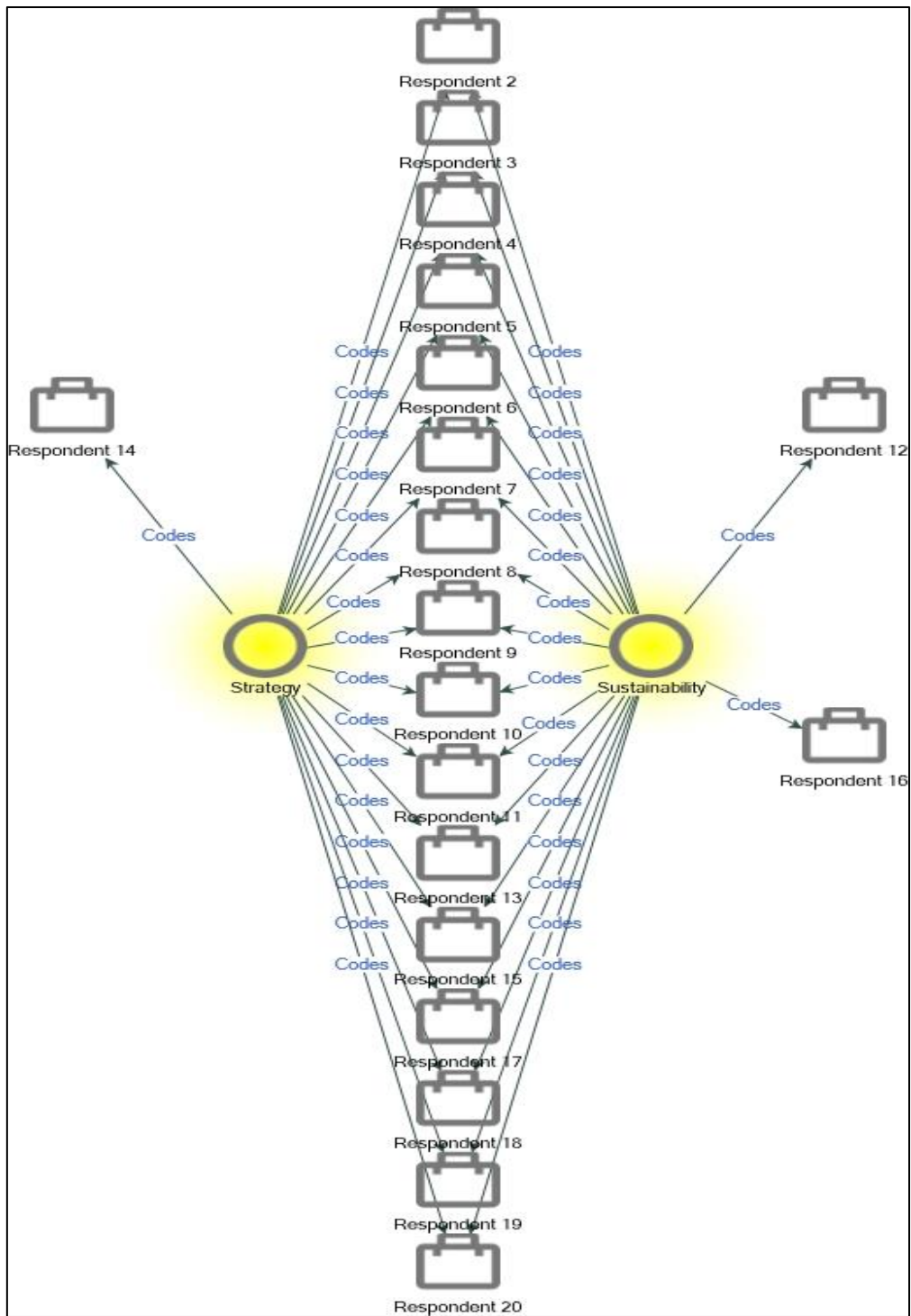


Figure 5. 17 - Comparison - Strategy and Sustainability (Nvivo™/®/© Version 12)

5.6 Conceptual Map

The results are illustrated in Figure 5.18 below which show a multitude of relationships. Under the theme of 'Change', the sub-themes 'Market Orientation Change', 'Climate Change' and 'Digitalisation Change' are bidirectional, whilst all these sub-themes relate unidirectionally to 'Change'. Thereafter 'Change' is directly related to 'Strategy'.

Similarly, the sub-themes namely 'Purpose-driven Organisations' and 'Purpose and Strategy' are bidirectional with the theme 'Purpose'. This follows the direct and unidirectional relationship that 'Purpose' has with 'Strategy'.

Moreover, the sub-themes namely 'Participative Leadership', 'Transactional Leadership' and 'Transformational Leadership' are bidirectional. These sub-themes consequently relate unidirectionally to the theme 'Leadership'. Thereafter it remains evident of the direct and unidirectional relationship that 'Leadership' has with 'Strategy'.

Interestingly, the sub-themes namely 'Cost Management', 'Financial Management', 'Product Differentiation', 'Low Price', 'Competition', 'Marketing', 'Performance Evaluation', 'Control' and 'Performance' relate directly and unidirectionally to the theme 'Strategy'. Finally, the figure illustrates 'Strategy' relating directly and unidirectionally to 'Sustainable Business Strategy'.

The qualitative part of this study has indicated that, the themes of 'Strategy', 'Change', 'Purpose' and 'Leadership' are fundamental to achieve sustainability in a business. Moreover, the sub-themes in Figure 5.18 constitute and strengthen the themes, which remain an integral part in the contribution to the study.

To summarise, these results supported the elements of 'Strategy' (Uyar 2019: 7), the claim that 'Change' is a catalyst in achieving sustainability (Bamberg and Schulte 2018: 312), furthermore the need for and importance of an individual and the organisation to be in congruence related to 'Purpose' (Henman 2020: 1; Rey *et al.* 2019: 7) and, the effectiveness of using 'Transactional Leadership' and 'Transformational Leadership' collectively to obtain best results (Crews *et al.* 2019: 424).

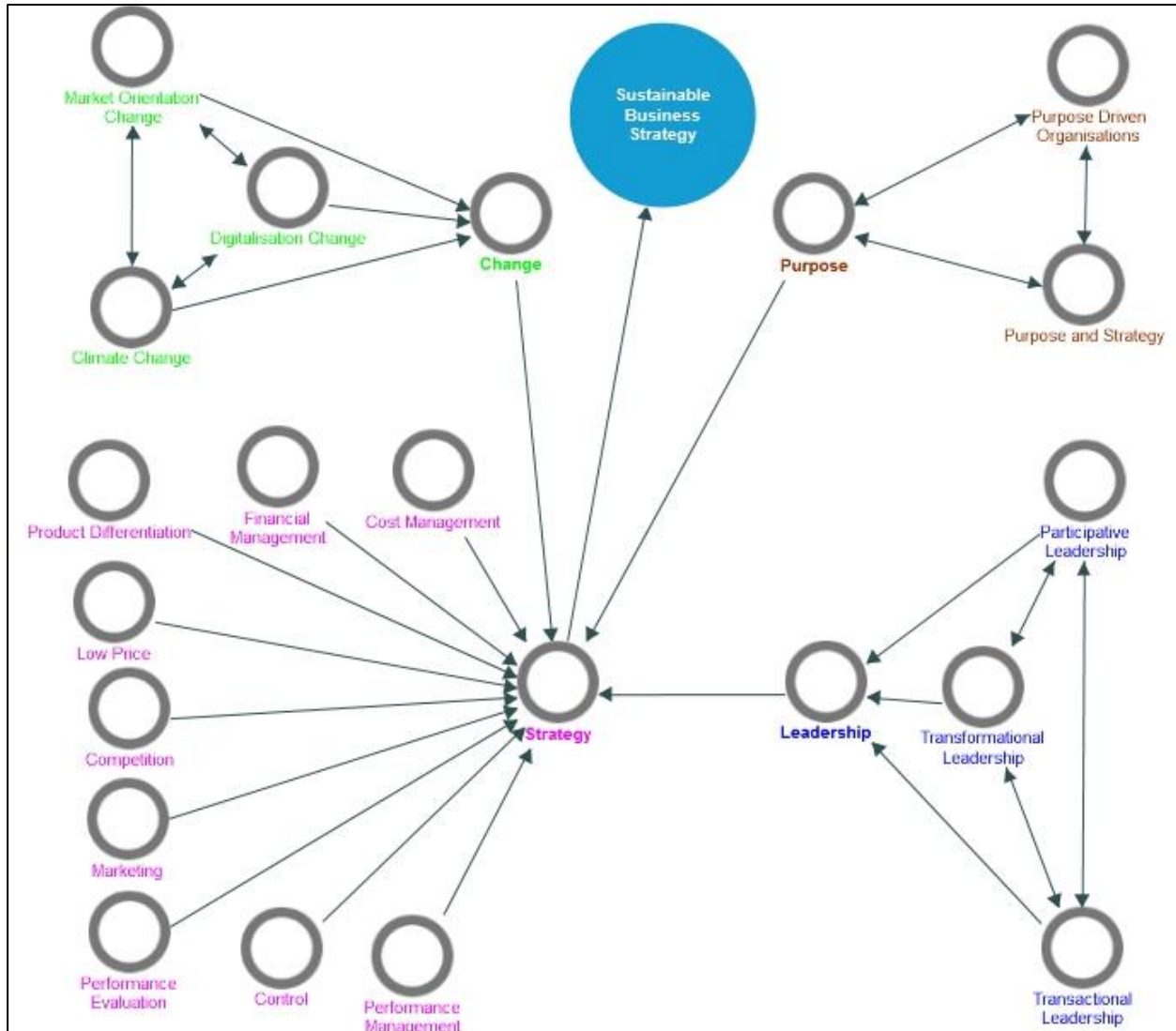


Figure 5. 18 - Conceptual Map (Nvivo™/®/© Version 12)

5.7 Quantitative Analyses

The objectives of this study were addressed by using Crosstabulation or Group Difference techniques. Furthermore, to make conclusions on this study, the researcher used Descriptive Statistics, Central Tendencies and Group Difference techniques. To execute these activities, SPSS™/®/© Version 27 was used to logically analyse the data. The next section covers Descriptive Statistics.

5.7.1 Descriptive Statistics

5.7.1.1 Demographic Information

The profile of the respondents is presented in this section. In this study Frequency tables are used to ascertain the demography profile of the respondents. The demographic details that are discussed in this section include Gender, Age, Race, Language and Highest Level of Education. The sample of this study constituted 200 respondents. The results are presented below.

Table 5. 14 - Gender (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

	Frequency	Percentage
Male	131	65,5
Female	69	34,5
Total	200	100

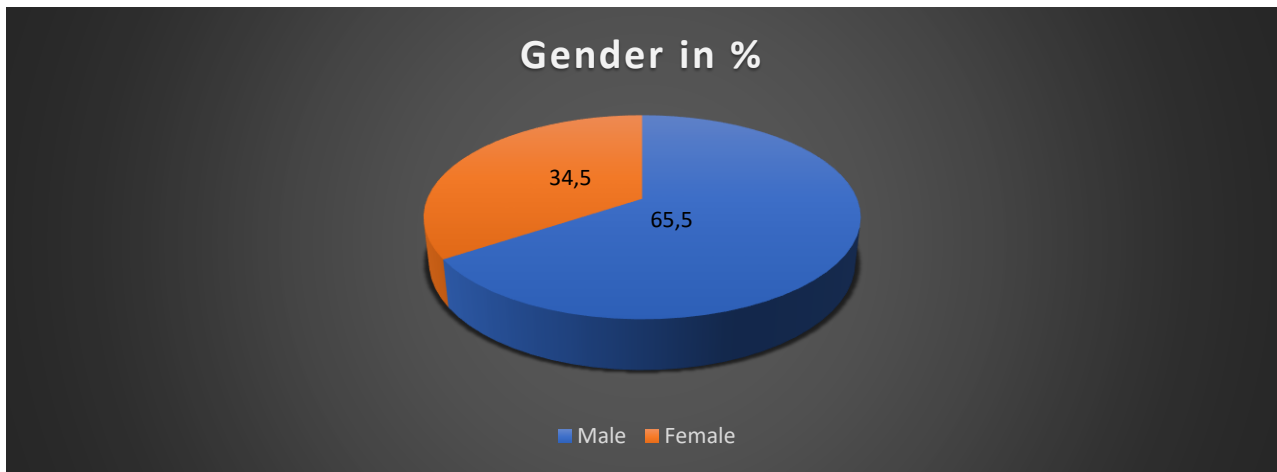


Figure 5. 19 - Gender (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

The results in Table 5.14 and Figure 5.19 indicate that 65.5% of the respondents were male and females were 34.5%.

Table 5. 15 - Age (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

	Frequency	Percentage
=< 25 years	3	1,5
26 - 45 years	107	53,5
46 - 65 years	80	40
66+ years	10	5
Total	200	100

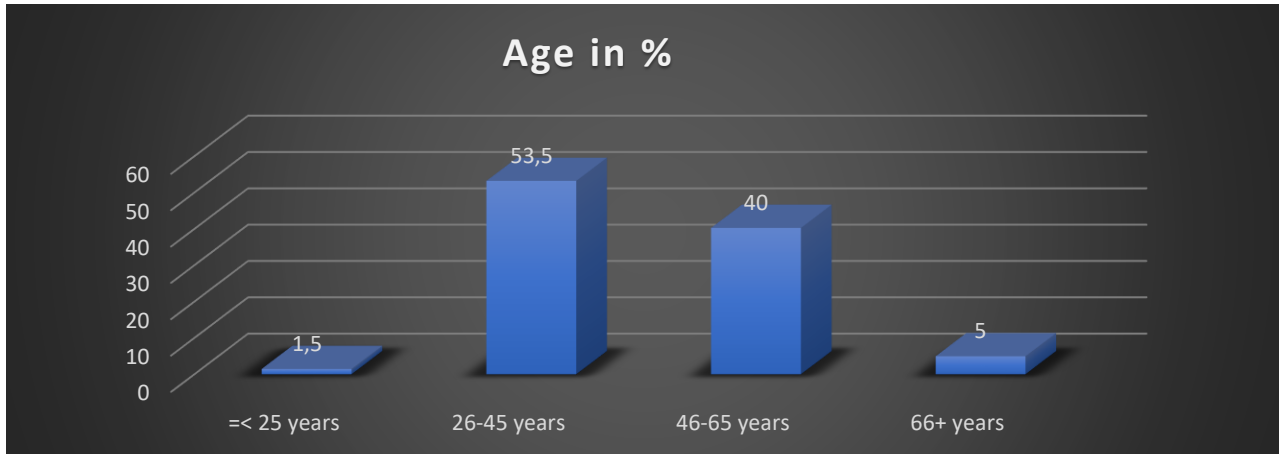


Figure 5. 20 - Age (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

As illustrated in Table 5.15 and Figure 5.20, majority of the respondents (53,5%) were between the 26 to 45 age category and only 1.5% of the respondents were either 25 years old or younger.

Table 5. 16 - Race (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

	Frequency	Percentage
Black	12	6
White	29	14,5
Asian	146	73
Mixed Race	3	1,5
Other	10	5
Total	200	100

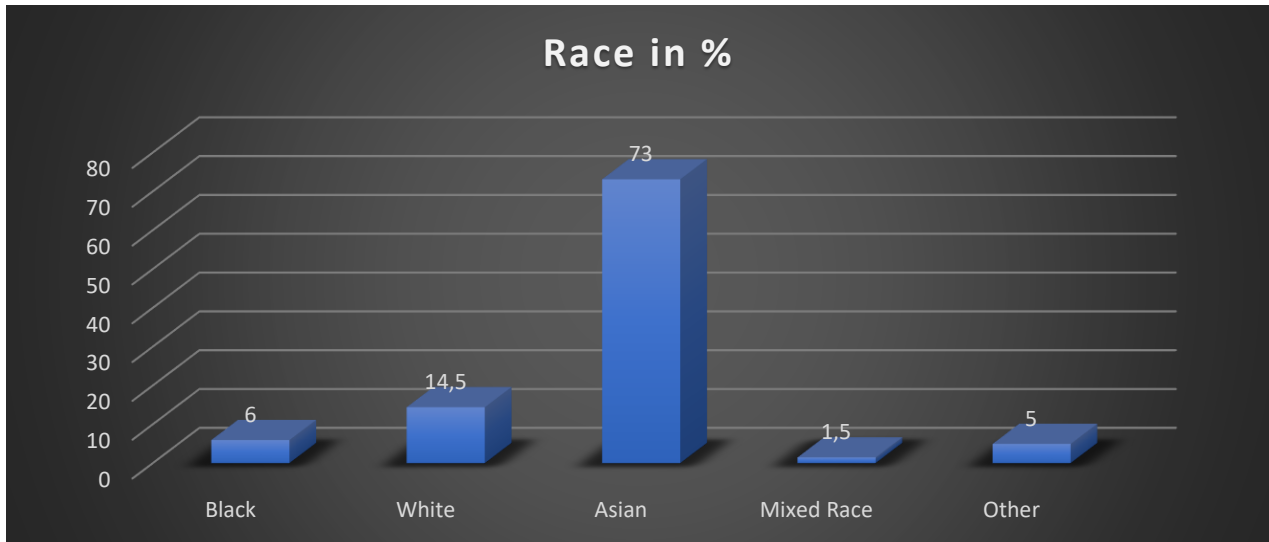


Figure 5. 21 - Race (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

As illustrated in Table 5.16 and Figure 5.21, majority of the respondents were Asian (73%), followed by White (14.5%) and Black (6%).

Table 5. 17 - Language (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

	Frequency	Percentage
English	181	90,5
Zulu	10	5
Afrikaans	8	4
Other	1	0,5
Total	200	100

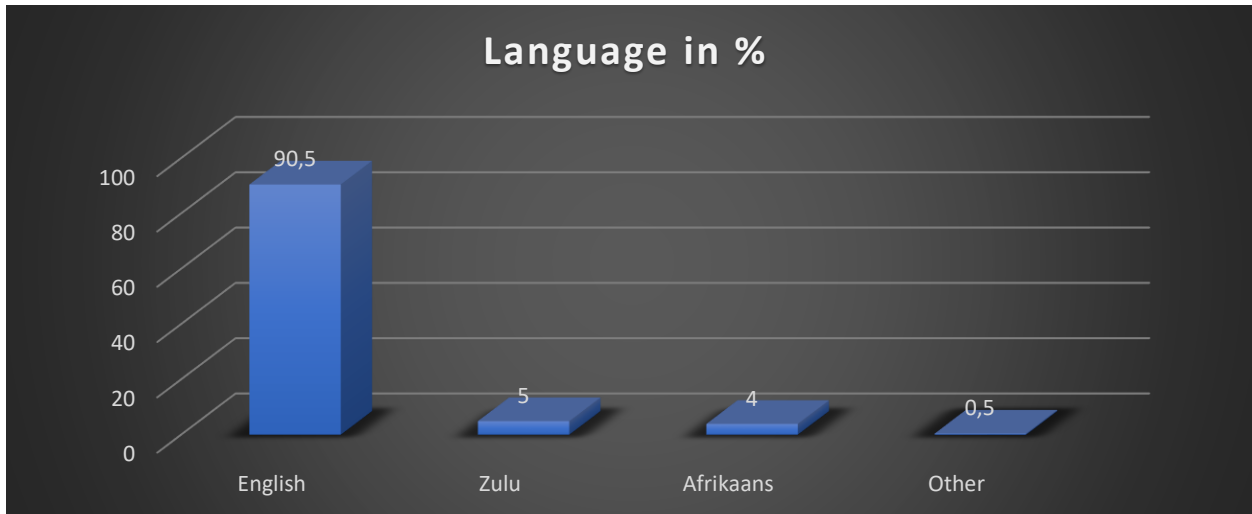


Figure 5. 22 - Language (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

The results in Table 5.17 and Figure 5.22 illustrate that majority of the respondents speak English (90.5%), Zulu (5%), Afrikaans (4%) and Other languages (0.5%).

Table 5. 18 - Level of Education (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

	Frequency	Percentage
Lower than Grade 12 (Matric)	13	6,5
Matric	44	22
Matric + Certificate/Diploma	79	39,5
Undergraduate Degree	25	12,5
Postgraduate Degree	37	18,5
Other	2	1
Total	200	100

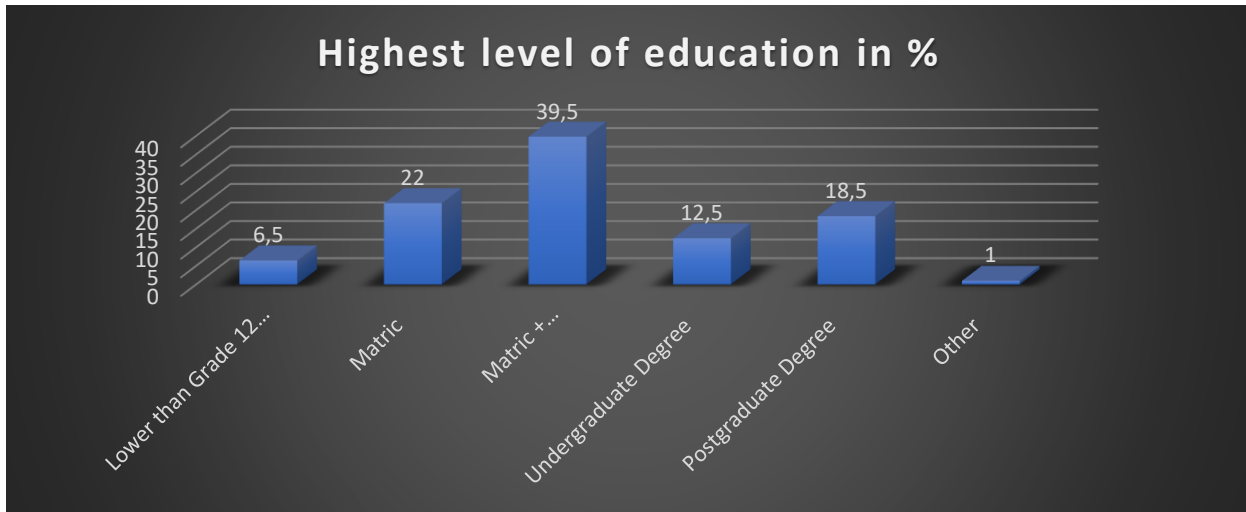


Figure 5. 23 - Level of Education (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

The results in Table 5.18 and Figure 5.23 illustrate that most respondents have completed Matric and have a Certificate/Diploma (39.5%), followed by respondents that only have Matric (22%). Furthermore, respondents that have a Postgraduate Degree constitute 18.5%, followed by Undergraduate Degree holders at 12.5%. Lastly 6.5% of the respondents fell in the category of 'Lower than Grade 12', whilst 1% lied in the category of 'Other'.

Table 5. 19 - Job Title (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

	Frequency	Percentage
Director	78	39
Manager	74	37
Other	48	24
Total	200	100

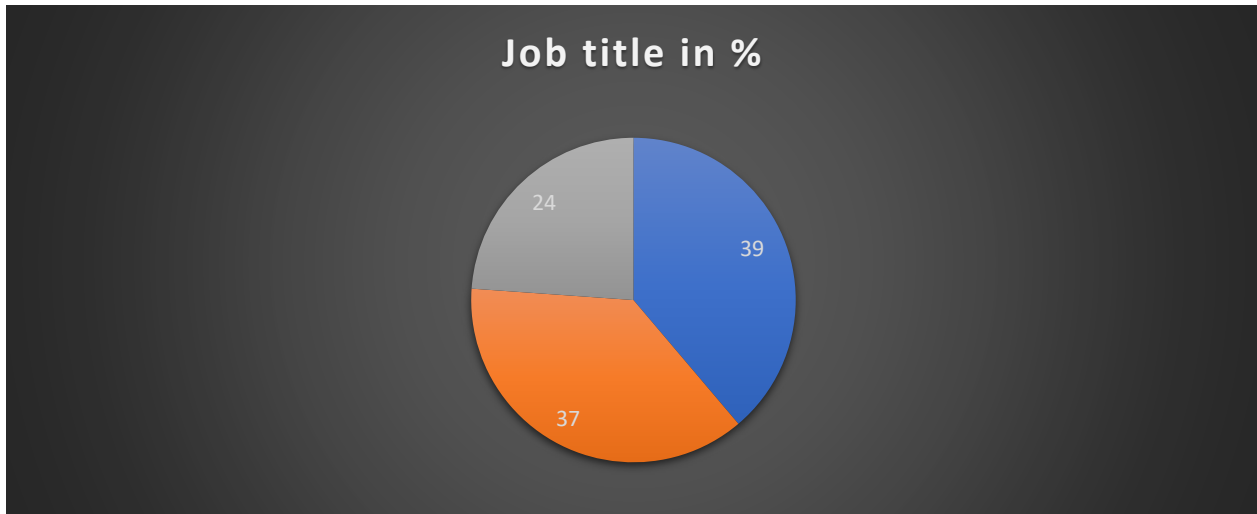


Figure 5. 24 - Job Title (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

The results in Table 5.19 and Figure 5.24 illustrate that 39% of the respondents were Directors and 37% were Managers, whilst 24% comprised of a variety of supervision, leadership, and administrative roles. The combined percentage values of 76% such that directors and managers comprises majority of the respondents which is relevant to this study since the target population was Senior Management of SMEs.

Table 5. 20 - Location of Organisation (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

	Frequency	Percentage
North Coast	69	34,5
South Coast	24	12
Upper Highway	25	12,5
Central Durban	82	41
Total	200	100

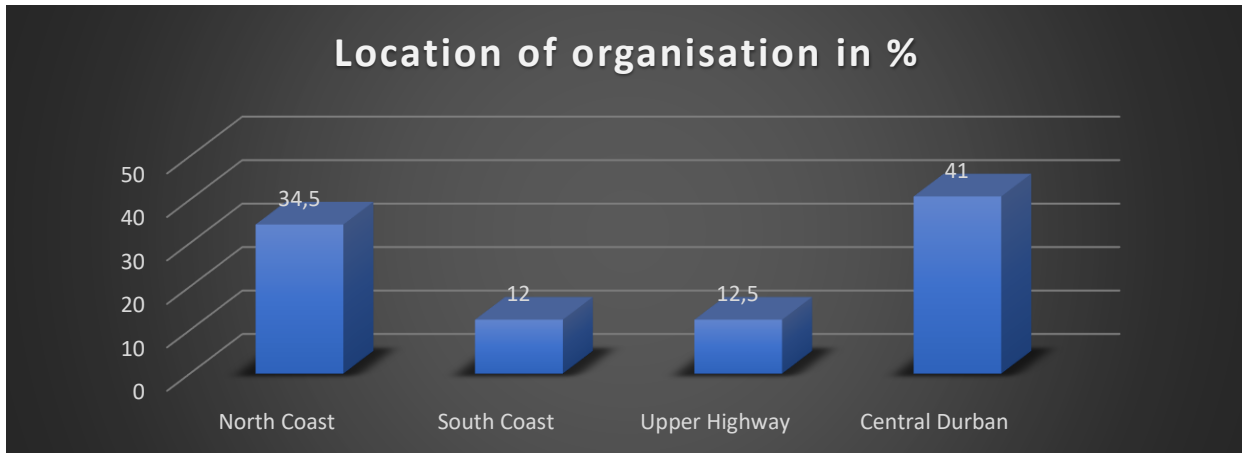


Figure 5. 25 - Location of Organisation (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

The results in Table 5.20 and Figure 5.25 illustrate that 41% of the respondents were located in Central Durban. This is followed by 34.5% located in North Coast, 12.5% of the respondents' organisations located in Upper Highway and 12% located in South Coast.

Table 5. 21 - Nature of Organisation (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

	Frequency	Percentage
Retail	33	16,5
Telecommunication	8	4
Motor Vehicles	6	3
Banking	2	1
Customer Services	11	5,5
Manufacturing	20	10
Construction and Mining	21	10,5
Transportation	18	9
Health	8	4
Beauty	6	3
Law	6	3
Consulting	11	5,5
Other	50	25
Total	200	100

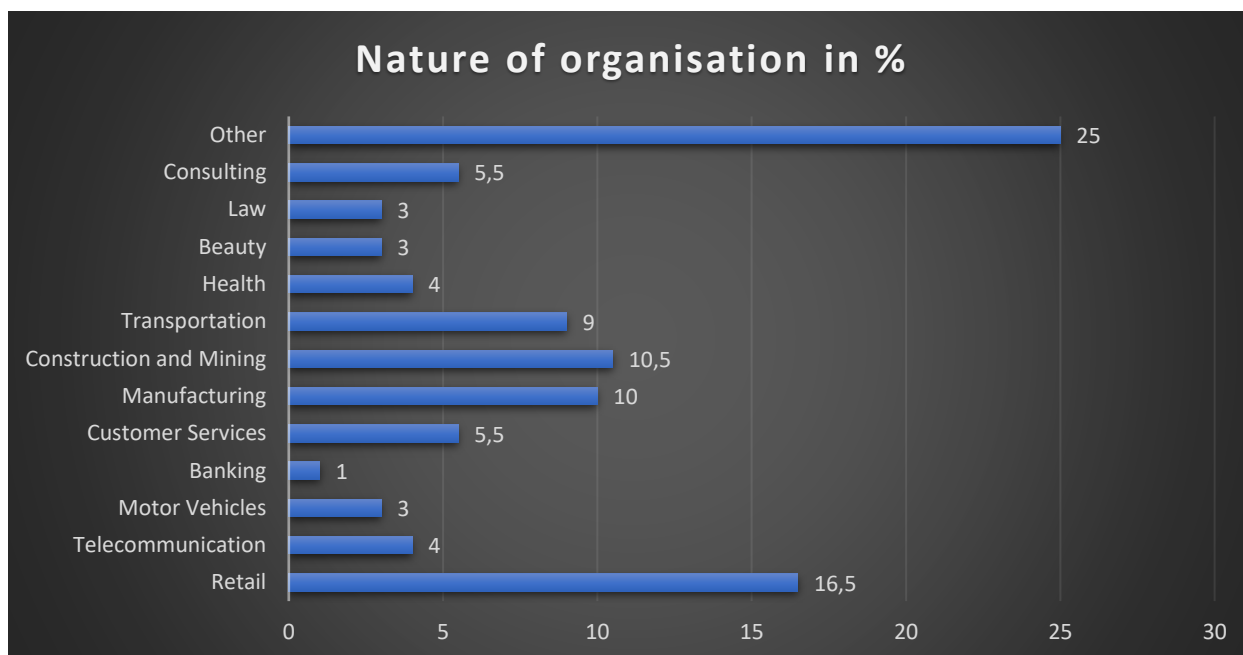


Figure 5. 26 - Nature of Organisation (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

The results in Table 5.21 and Figure 5.26 illustrate that 25% of the respondents belong to Other types of organisations. The retail sector accounts for 16.5% of the respondents, followed by Construction & Mining (10.5%), Manufacturing (10%), Transportation (9%), Consulting (5.5%), Customer Services (5.5%), Health (4%), Telecommunication (4%), Law (3%), Beauty (3%), Motor Vehicles industry (3%) and the Banking sector (1%).

Table 5. 22 - Other Natures of the Organisation (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

	Responses	Percent of Cases
Agriculture	1	2%
Distribution and Wholesale	6	11,8%
Security	7	13,7%
Clearing and Forwarding	1	2%
Collateral Management	1	2%
Education	2	3,9%
Engineering	3	5,9%
Technology	5	9,8%
Inspection	2	3,9%
Hospitality	1	2%
Human Resources	1	2%

	Responses	Percent of Cases
Petroleum	3	5,9%
Politics	1	2%
Sports	1	2%
Shipping	2	3,9%
Tourism	1	2%
Trade	1	2%
Travel	1	2%
Manufacturing	2	3,9%
Safety	1	2%
Training	1	2%
Project Management	1	2%
Marine	4	7,8%
Laboratory	4	7,8%

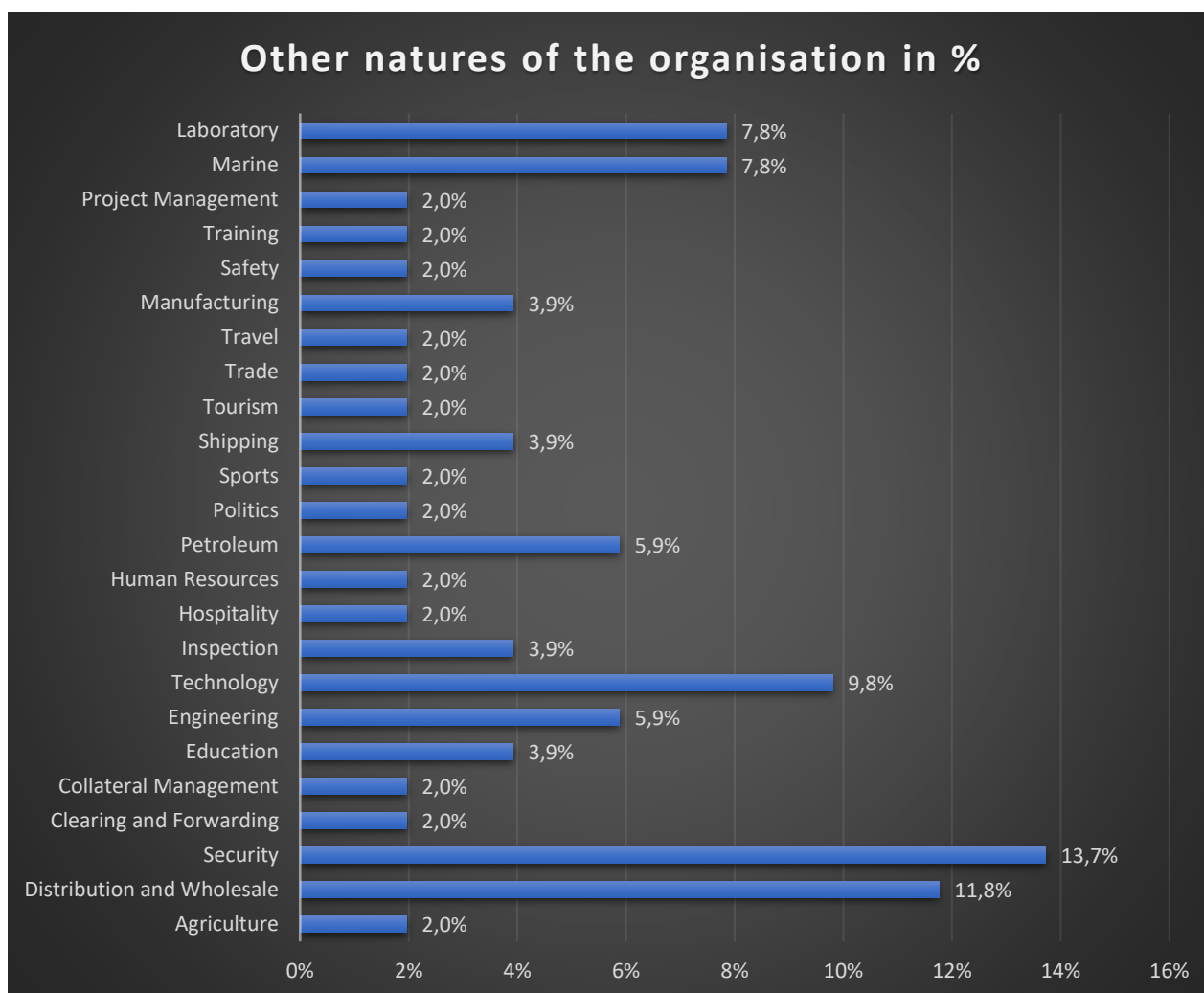


Figure 5. 27 - Other Natures of the Organisation (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

The results in Table 5.22 and Figure 5.27 illustrate that 13.7% of the respondents were employed in the Security sector, followed by 11.8% in the Distribution and Wholesale sector, 9.8% in Technology, 7.8% in Laboratory activities, 7.8% in the Marine business line, 5.9% in the Petroleum sector, 5.9% in the Engineering industry, 3.9% in the Manufacturing sector, 3.9% in the Shipping industry, 3.9% in the Inspection business, 3.9% in the Education sector, 2% in Project Management, 2% in Training services, 2% in Safety supplies, 2% in Travel services, 2% in Trade activities, 2% in the Tourism business, 2% in Sports consultancies, 2% in Politics advisory, 2% in Human Resources outsourcing, 2% in Hospitality services, 2% in Collateral Management consultancies, 2%

in the Clearing & Forwarding sector and lastly 2% in the Agriculture sector. It has been shown that numerous SMEs from varied sectors and industries participated in this study.

Table 5. 23 - Number of employees in organisation (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 5	51	25,5
5 to 20	68	34
21 to 50	32	16
51 to 100	18	9
101 to 200	31	15,5
Total	200	100

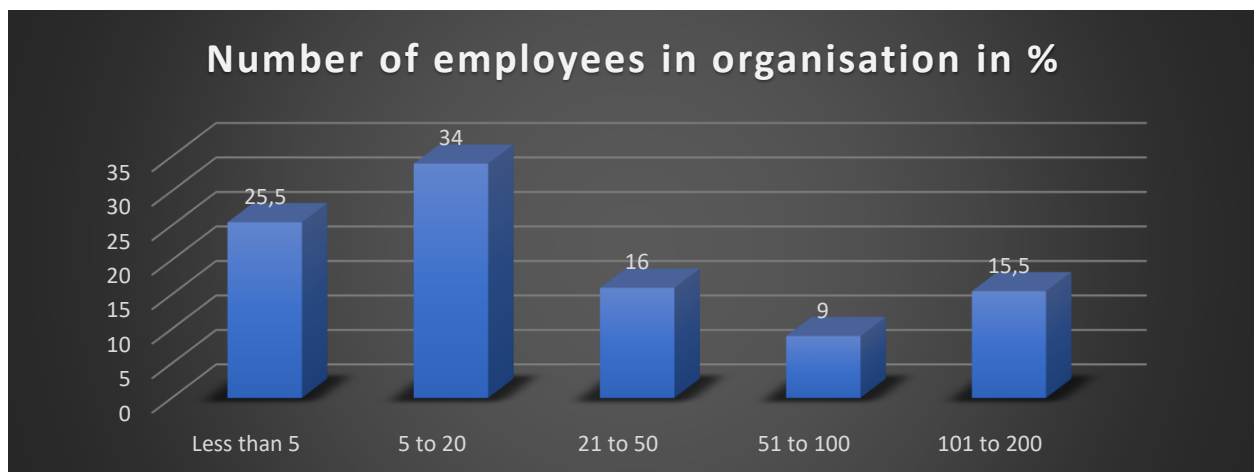


Figure 5. 28 - Number of employees in organisation (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

The results in Table 5.23 and Figure 5.28 illustrate that the majority of the respondents (34%) had between 5 to 25 employees in their organisations. This was followed by 25.5% of the respondents who had less than 5 employees in their organisations. Furthermore, 16% of the respondents had between 21 and 50 employees in their organisations, followed by 15.5% of the respondents having between 101 and 200 employees. Lastly, only 9% of the respondents had between 51 and 100 employees in their organisations.

Table 5. 24 - Operational Years of the Organisation (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 3 years	17	8,5
3 to 5 years	21	10,5
6 to 10 years	25	12,5
Greater than 10 years	137	68,5
Total	200	100



Figure 5. 29 - Operational years of the Organisation (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

The results in Table 5.24 and Figure 5.29 illustrate that the majority (68.5%) of organisations have been operational for greater than 10 years. Followed by 12.5% of the respondents' organisations that have been in existence between 6 and 10 years. Whilst 10.5% of the respondents' organisations have been operational between 3 and 5 years. However, it must be noted that only 8.5% of the respondents' organisations have been operating for less than three (3) years.

Table 5. 25 - Threat of Competition (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	150	75
No	50	25
Total	200	100

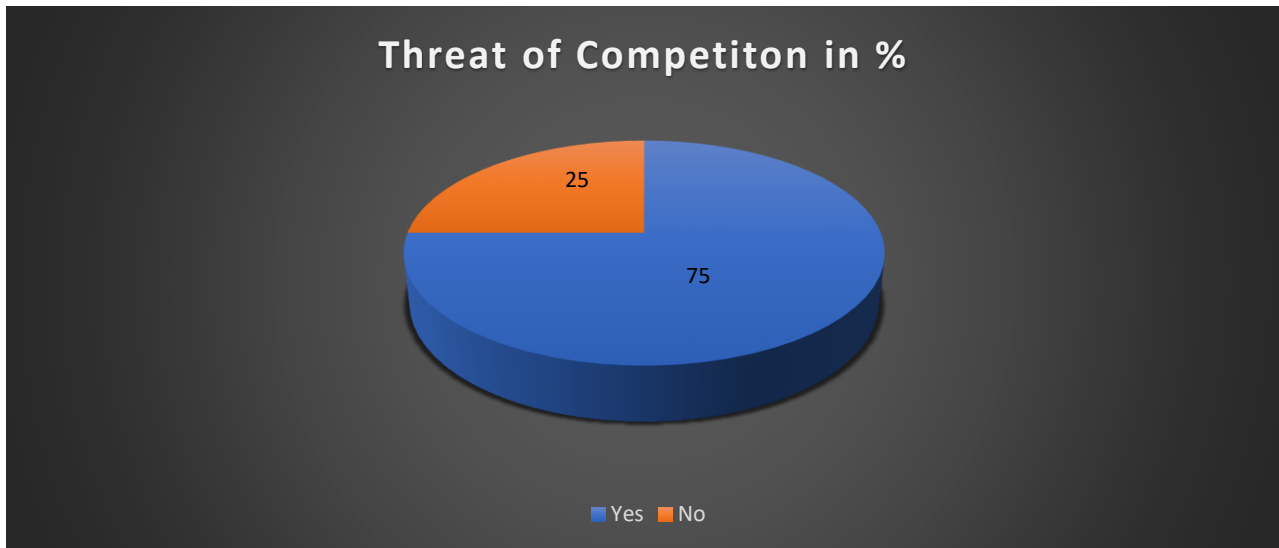


Figure 5. 30 - Threat of Competition (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

The results in Table 5.25 and Figure 5.30 reveal that the majority of respondents (75%) believe that competition is a threat to their organisations, whilst 25% of the respondents do not share the same belief.

Table 5. 26 - Organisational Strategy in Place (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	172	86
No	28	14
Total	201	100



Figure 5. 31 - Organisational Strategy in Place (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

The results in Table 5.26 and Figure 5.31 reveal that the majority (86%) of the respondents have organisational strategies in place, however 14% of the respondents do not.

Table 5. 27 - Elements used in strategies (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

	Responses	Percent of Cases
Planning	125	62,5%
Control	105	52,5%
Cost Savings	136	68%
Performance Management	103	51,5%
Differentiation	82	41,0%
Competition	85	42,5%
Financial Management	77	38,5%
Marketing	109	54,5%
Digitalisation	85	42,5%
Competency	79	39,5%
Benchmarking	1	0,5%
Diversification	1	0,5%
Flexibility and Adaption	1	0,5%
No strategy	5	2,5%
Not sure	6	3,0%

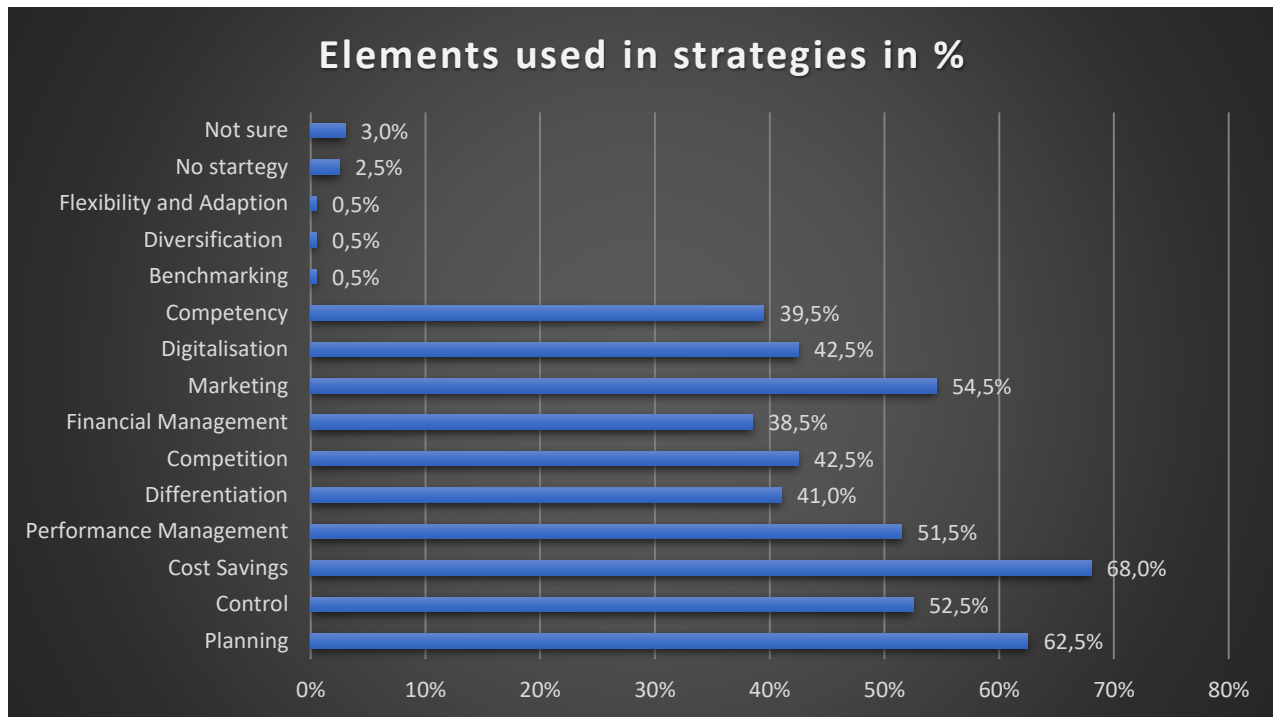


Figure 5. 32 - Elements used in strategies (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

The results in Table 5.27 and Figure 5.32 illustrate that 68% of the respondents implement Cost Savings in their organisations, 62.5% use Planning, 54.5% use Marketing, 52.5% use Control, 51.5% use Performance Management, 42.5% use Digitalisation, 42.5% use Competition, 41% use Differentiation, 39.5% use Competency, and 38.5% use Financial Management. Whilst 3% of the respondents were unsure of what elements they used in their strategies, followed by 2.5% who did not have a strategy. Furthermore, 0.5% of the respondents used Flexibility and Adaption as an element of their strategy, 0.5% used Diversification and 0.5% used Benchmarking as their elements of strategy implementation.

Table 5. 28 - Effects of Strategies on Deliverables (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

	Frequency	Percentage
Positive	185	92,5
Negative	4	2
No strategy	11	5,5
Total	200	100



Figure 5. 33 - Effects of Strategies on Deliverables (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

The results in Table 5.28 and Figure 5.33 illustrate that majority (92.5%) of the respondents in this study, stated that the effects of strategies on deliverables in their organisations are positive. Accordingly, this result coincides with strategies having positive effects on deliverables such as operational performance (Tarigan and Siagian 2021: 363). Of the entire response, only 5.5% of the respondents indicated that they do not have a strategy. Lastly, a mere 2% of the respondents believed that strategies had a negative effect on deliverables in their organisations.

Table 5. 29 - Requirement of New Growth Strategy

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	126	63
No	74	37
Total	200	100

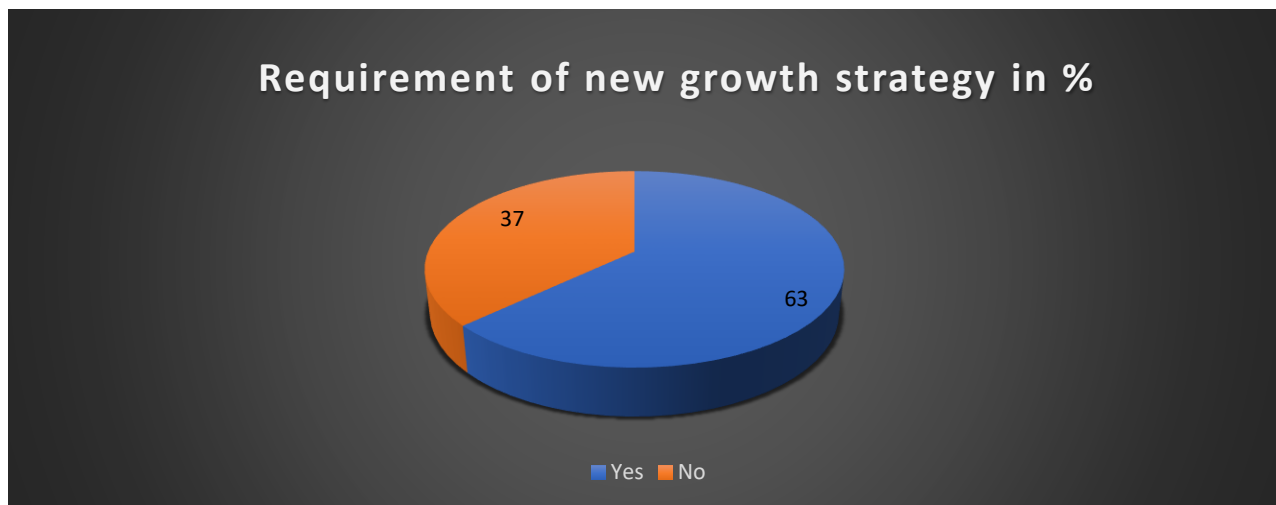


Figure 5. 34 - Requirement of New Growth Strategy (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

The results in Table 5.29 and Figure 5.34 illustrate that the majority (63%) of the respondents in this study, believed that they require new strategies for growth in their organisations. It is posited that new strategies for growth are indeed required by the majority of organisations, especially by tactfully integrating complexity theory with the demands and supplies of the business (Lanzolla and Markides 2021: 540). Whilst the balance of 37% of the respondents do not believe that new growth strategies are needed in their organisations.

Table 5. 30 - Favouring a changing business environment (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	169	84,5
No	31	15,5
Total	200	100

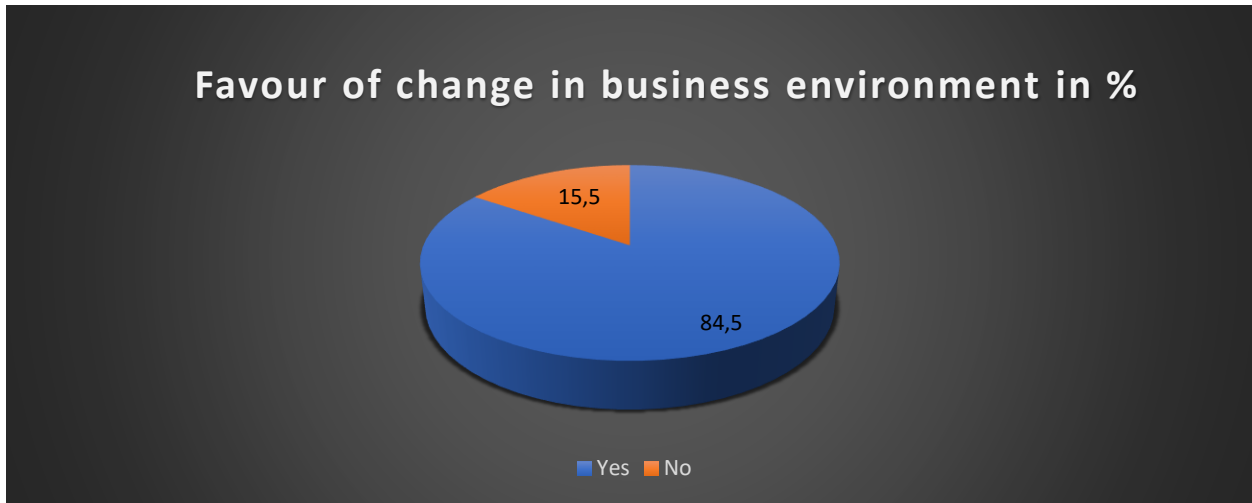


Figure 5. 35 - Favours a changing business environment (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

The results in Table 5.30 and Figure 5.35 illustrate that majority (84.5%) of the respondents were in favour of a changing business environment. Similarly, an empirical study indicated and supported the result by favouring a changing business environment (Diaz-Maroto and Diaz-Maroto 2018: 5). Whilst 15.5% of the respondents were not in favour of the aforesaid.

Table 5. 31 - Whether the organisation has a purpose statement or not (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	141	70,5
No	59	29,5
Total	200	100

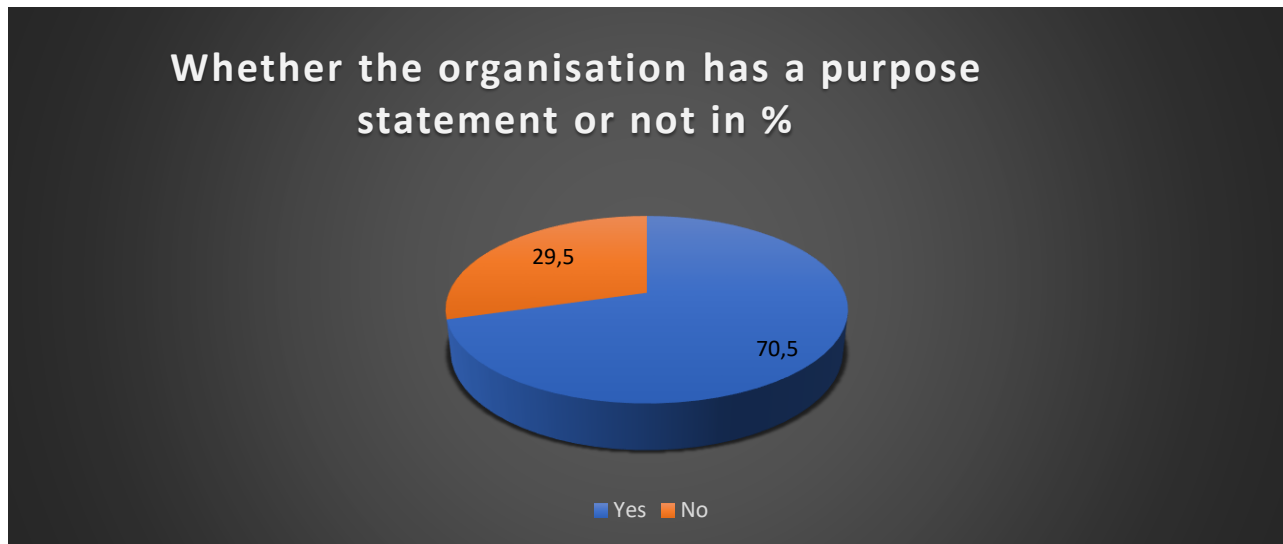


Figure 5. 36 - Whether the organisation has a purpose statement or not (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

According to Table 5.31 and Figure 5.36, majority (70.5%) of the respondents claimed that their organisations have a purpose statement. Interestingly, this result was supported by majority of organisations possessing purpose statements (Henman 2020: 4). Whilst the balance of 29.5% of the respondents attested that their organisations did not have a purpose statement.

Table 5. 32 - Employee awareness of Purpose Statement (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	124	62
No	24	12
N/A	52	26
Total	200	100

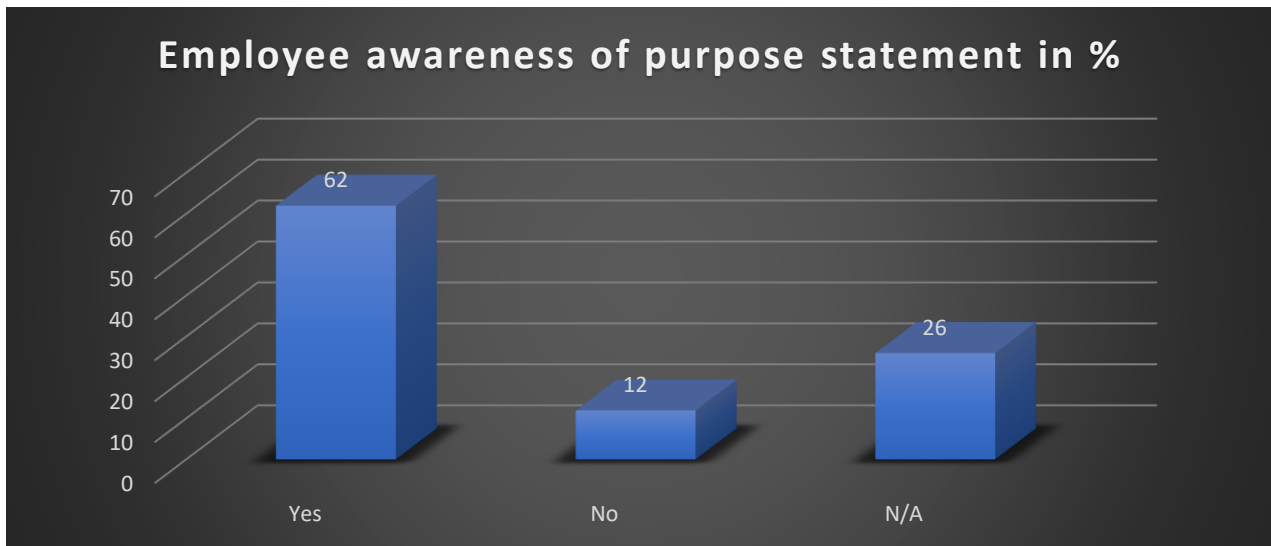


Figure 5. 37 - Employee awareness of Purpose Statement (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

The results in Table 5.32 and Figure 5.37 illustrate that 62% of the respondents claim that they are aware of the purpose statement within their organisations. Accordingly, 26% of the respondents chose the 'Not Applicable' option thereby indicating that their company did not have a purpose statement in place. Lastly, 12% of the respondents were not aware of the purpose statement within their organisations.

Table 5. 33 - Type of Leadership Styles in the organisation (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

	Frequency	Percentage
Transformational Leadership	67	33,5
Transactional Leadership	76	38
Autocratic Leadership	11	5,5
Bureaucratic Leadership	44	22
Good Service and Job satisfaction	1	0,5
A mix of leadership styles	1	0,5
Total	200	100



Figure 5. 38 - Type of Leadership Styles in the organisation (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

The results in Table 5.33 and Figure 5.38 illustrate that 38% of the respondents adopted the Transactional Leadership style within their organisations. Whilst 33.5% of the respondents practised the Transformational Leadership style. It remains prevalent in this study that Transactional Leadership was a widely practised leadership style and was favoured by a plethora of leaders in conjunction with Transformational Leadership (Crews *et al.* 2019: 424; Ugwu and Okore 2020: 870). Furthermore, 22% of the respondents adopted the Bureaucratic Leadership style. The Autocratic Leadership style was practised by 5.5% of the respondents. It was further noted that 0.5% of the respondents practised a Mix of Leadership Styles. Lastly, one respondent corresponding to 0.5% claimed to ensure 'Good service and job satisfaction'.

5.7.2 Central Tendency Measures

In this study, Central Tendency Measures were used to conduct the overall analyses of each concept. A five-point Likert scale where the value 1 corresponds to 'Strongly Disagree', the value 2 corresponds to 'Disagree', the value 3 corresponds to 'Neutral', the value 4 corresponds to 'Agree' and the value 5 corresponds to 'Strongly Agree' were used to measure the following concepts: 1) Improvement of Financial Performance, 2) Challenge of running an SME, 3) Leadership Style change due to Organisational Strategies and 4) Leadership as a driving element.

It remains noteworthy that the mean point of the five-point Likert scale is 2.5. Any mean scores which are below 2.5 provide a clear indication that the respondents tend to remain neutral with the statements. Whilst mean scores between 2.5 and 3.4 indicates that respondents were neutral about the statements. Scores equal to or above 3.5 suggest that most respondents either agree or strongly agree with the statements made.

5.7.2.1 Improvement of Financial Performance

Table 5. 34 - Improvement of Financial Performance (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Std. Dev
Strongly Disagree	42	21	2,71	1,218
Disagree	44	22		
Neutral	59	29,5		
Agree	40	20		
Strongly Agree	15	7,5		
Total	200	100		

The results in Table 5.34 illustrate that 29.5% of the respondents were neutral on the statement made in lieu of whether there was an improvement of the financial performance of their organisations in the last year when compared to preceding years. It was noted that 22% of the respondents disagreed with the statement. Furthermore, 21% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement. On the contrary 20% of the respondents agreed and a further 7.5% strongly agreed with the statement presented.

5.7.2.2 Challenge of Running a SME

Table 5. 35 - Challenge of Running an SME (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Std. Dev
Strongly Disagree	5	2,5	4,1	0,868
Disagree	4	2		
Neutral	24	12		
Agree	100	50		
Strongly Agree	67	33,5		
Total	200	100		

Table 5.35 refers to the respondents' views on the Challenge of Running an SME in the last year when compared to previous years. The results therein illustrated that 50% of the respondents agreed that an SME is challenging to run and a further 33.5% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement. These results were supported by many SMEs worldwide facing the challenge of sustainability (Chen, Huang, Su, Štreimikienė and Baležentis 2021:10). Interestingly, only 12% of the respondents remained neutral with the statement. Whilst 2.5% strongly disagreed and 2% also disagreed with the statement.

5.7.2.3 Benefits of Strategies in an Organisation

The four-point Likert scale was used in this section, where the value 1 corresponds to 'Least Important', the value 2 corresponds to 'A Bit Important', the value 3 corresponds to 'Important' and the value 4 corresponds to 'Most Important'. Any mean score below 2.5 indicated that the respondents found the statement to be a bit important of the least important. However, any mean score either equal to or higher than 2.5 indicated that the respondents found the statement to be important or most important.

Table 5. 36 - Benefits of Strategies in an Organisation (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

Business Sustainability				
	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Std.
Least important	2	1	3,64	0,643
A bit important	12	6		
Important	43	21,5		
Most important	143	71,5		
Total	200	100		
Leadership				
Least important	10	5	3,48	0,839
A bit important	15	7,5		
Important	44	22		
Most important	131	65,5		
Total	200	100		
Customer Satisfaction				
Least important	1	0,5	3,84	0,434
A bit important	2	1		
Important	26	13		
Most important	171	85,5		
Total	200	100		
Brand Recognition				
Least important	10	5	3,42	0,84
A bit important	16	8		
Important	55	27,5		
Most important	119	59,5		
Total	200	100		
Mean= 3.59				
Std. Dev.= 0.491				

The results in Table 5.36 indicate an overall mean score of 3.59 which essentially means that the respondents believed that all benefits of strategies were 'Most Important'. Accordingly, 85% of the respondents found 'Customer Satisfaction' to be the most important strategy. Furthermore, 71.5% of the respondents found 'Business Sustainability' to be the most important strategy. Additionally, 65.5% of the respondents believed that 'Leadership' is the most important strategy. Finally, 59.5% of the respondents found 'Brand Recognition' to be the most important strategy. All of these constructs were considered important, based on the mean score results. However, to

achieve 'Customer Satisfaction', 'Leadership' is a pre-requisite (Wang, Wang, Liu, Ma, Xiang, Yang, and Li 2021: 10).

5.7.2.4 Leadership Style Change due to Organisational Strategies

Table 5. 37 - Leadership Style Changes due to Organisational Strategies (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Std.
Strongly Disagree	3	1,5	3,82	0,819
Disagree	6	3		
Neutral	52	26		
Agree	102	51		
Strongly Agree	37	18,5		
Total	200	100		

Table 5.37 illustrates that majority (51%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that their leadership styles changed according to their organisation's strategies. Additionally, 18.5% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement. Whilst 26% of the respondents remained neutral. On the contrary, a mere 3% of the respondents disagreed with the statement and finally 1.5% strongly disagreed.

5.7.2.5 Leadership as a Driving Element

Table 5. 38 - Leadership as a Driving Element (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Std. Dev
Strongly Disagree	7	3,5	4,31	0,91
Disagree	1	0,5		
Neutral	16	8		
Agree	75	37,5		
Strongly Agree	101	50,5		
Total	200	100		

Table 5.38 illustrates that the majority of the respondents (50.5%) ‘Strongly Agree’ that leadership is a driving element which ensures sustainability. Similarly, 37.5% of the respondents ‘Agree’, whilst 8% were ‘Neutral’, 3.5% ‘Strongly Disagreed’ and 0.5% ‘Disagreed’. It must be noted that a collective of ‘Strongly Agree’ and ‘Agree’ options equals 88% of the respondents. This result is supported by the claim made that Leadership is indeed a driving element which ensures sustainability, and that action leadership has further proven this to be true and accurate (Batulan, Tan, and Chan 2021: 4783).

5.7.3 Group Difference (Chi-Square)

The Chi-Square test was conducted in this study to check for any observed differences between categorical data sets. The relationship between ‘Organisational Strategy’ and ‘Elements used in Strategies’ were assessed.

5.7.3.1 Relationship between Organisational Strategy and Elements used in Strategies

Table 5. 39 - Organisational Strategy and Elements used in Strategies (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

		14. Does your organisation have a Strategy in place?	
		Yes	No
		Count	Count
15. What element/s are you using in your strategies?	Planning	120	5
	Control	97	8
	Cost Savings	126	10
	Performance Management	96	7
	Differentiation	75	7
	Competition	79	6
	Financial Management	73	4
	Marketing	101	8
	Digitalisation	77	8
	Competency	74	5
	No strategy	0	5
	Not sure	2	4
	Benchmarking	1	0
	Diversification	1	0
	Flexibility and Adaption	0	1
Pearson Chi-Square Tests			
Chi-square		147.381	
Df		15	
Sig.		0.000	

According to Table 5.39, majority of the respondents (Count=126) who indicated that they have a strategy in place, reported that they used 'Cost Saving' as an element in their strategies in their organisations. The Chi-square test shows a significant relationship between these respondents ($P\text{-value}=0.000<0.05$). This indicates that the respondents' views on Organisational Strategies and on various strategy elements mentioned in Table 5.37 are different.

5.7.3.2 Relationship between requirement of a new growth strategy and change in business environment.

Table 5. 40 - New Growth Strategy and Change in Business Environment (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

			20. Are you in favour of a Changing Business Environment?		Total
			Yes	No	
18. Do you think that your organisation requires a New Strategy for growth?	Yes	Count	111	15	126
		% Within 18. Do you think that your organisation requires a New Strategy for growth?	88,1%	11,9%	100%
		% Within 20. Are you in favour of a Changing Business Environment?	65,7%	48,4%	63%
		% Of Total	55,5%	7,5%	63%
	No	Count	58	16	74
		% Within 18. Do you think that your organisation requires a New Strategy for growth?	78,4%	21,6%	100%
		% Within 20. Are you in favour of a Changing Business Environment?	34,3%	51,6%	37%
		% Of Total	29%	8%	37%
Total	Count	169	31	200	
	% Within 18. Do you think that your organisation requires a New Strategy for growth?	84,5%	15,5%	100%	
	% Within 20. Are you in favour of a Changing Business Environment?	100%	100%	100%	
	% Of Total	84,5%	15,5%	100%	
Pearson Chi-Square Tests					
Pearson Chi-Square				3.361	
Df				1	
Sig				.067	

According to Table 5.40, the majority (88.1%) of the respondents that need a 'New Growth Strategy' reported that they are in favour of a changing business environment. As a result of the Chi-square test, there is a non-significant relationship between respondents who require a 'New Growth Strategy' and those who are in favour of a changing business

environment ($\Phi=0.130$, $P\text{-value}= 0.067>0.05$). This indicates that the respondents' views on a "New Growth Strategy" and on 'Changing Business Environment' were similar.

5.7.3.3 Relationship between Job Title and Leadership Style

Table 5. 41 - Job Title and Leadership Style (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

			6. Please specify your current job title:			Total
			Director	Manager	Other	
24. Which Leadership Style do you think suits your organisation?	Transformational Leadership	Count	19	22	26	67
		% Within 24. Which Leadership Style do you think suits your organisation?	28,4%	32,8%	38,8%	100%
		% Within 6. Please specify your current job title:	24,4%	29,7%	54,2%	33,5%
		% Of Total	9,5%	11%	13%	33,5%
	Transactional Leadership	Count	34	30	12	76
		% Within 24. Which Leadership Style do you think suits your organisation?	44,7%	39,5%	15,8%	100%
		% Within 6. Please specify your current job title:	43,6%	41%	25%	38%
		% Of Total	17%	15%	6%	38%
	Autocratic Leadership	Count	3	7	1	11
		% Within 24. Which Leadership Style do you think suits your organisation?	27,3%	63,6%	9,1%	100%
		% Within 6. Please specify your current job title:	3,8%	9,5%	2,1%	5,5%
		% Of Total	1,5%	3,5%	0,5%	5,5%
	Bureaucratic Leadership	Count	20	15	9	44

		% Within 24. Which Leadership Style do you think suits your organisation?	45,5%	34,1%	20,5%	100%
		% Within 6. Please specify your current job title:	25,6%	20,3%	18,8%	22%
		% Of Total	10%	7,5%	4,5%	22%
	Good Service and Job satisfaction	Count	1	0	0	1
		% Within 24. Which Leadership Style do you think suits your organisation?	100%	0%	0%	100,0%
		% Within 6. Please specify your current job title:	1,3%	0%	0%	0,5%
		% Of Total	1%	0%	0%	0,5%
	A mix of leadership styles	Count	1	0	0	1
		% Within 24. Which Leadership Style do you think suits your organisation?	100%	0%	0%	100%
		% Within 6. Please specify your current job title:	1,3%	0%	0%	0,5%
		% Of Total	0,5%	0%	0%	0,5%
	Total	Count	78	74	48	200
% Within 24. Which Leadership Style do you think suits your organisation?		39%	37%	24%	100%	
% Within 6. Please specify your current job title:		100%	100%	100%	100%	
% Of Total		39%	37%	24%	100%	
Pearson Chi-Square Tests						
Pearson Chi-Square			18.726			
Df			10			
Sig			.044			

Table 5.41 indicates that most respondents (Count=76) indicated that 'Transactional Leadership' suits their organisation the most. This was followed by 'Transformational

Leadership' (Count=67), 'Bureaucratic Leadership' (Count=44), and 'Autocratic Leadership' (Count=11). The Chi-square test showed a significant relationship between 'Job Title' and 'Leadership Styles' ($\Phi=0.306$, $P\text{-value}=0.044<0.05$). This indicates that 'Directors', 'Managers', and 'Others' viewed leadership styles differently.

5.8 Validity of the Study

In this study the exploratory factor analysis was carried out to test the constructs 'Elements of Strategies' and 'Benefits of Strategies'. Furthermore, this action permitted the researcher to empirically assess the validity of the scales that were used. The cardinal purpose of conducting the exploratory factor analysis was to reduce the size of the data which ultimately enables the researcher to assess the variables' structure according to the theory.

Table 5. 42 - KMO and Bartlett's Test (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0,784
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	763,857
	Df	171
	Sig.	0,000

According to Table 5.42, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was conducted to ensure that the sample was adequate for carrying out the exploratory factor analysis. It must be noted that the KMO value was 0.784 thereby indicating that the suitability of the data is indeed supported since the result is above the threshold of 0.6 (Pallant 2010:199). Moreover, the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity being 0.000 is deemed significant (Pallant 2010:199).

Table 5. 43 - Total Variance Explained (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

Total Variance Explained									
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4,220	22,209	22,209	4,220	22,209	22,209	2,636	13,874	13,874
2	2,002	10,538	32,746	2,002	10,538	32,746	2,436	12,821	26,695
3	1,342	7,061	39,807	1,342	7,061	39,807	1,982	10,432	37,127
4	1,184	6,231	46,038	1,184	6,231	46,038	1,532	8,064	45,192
5	1,082	5,697	51,735	1,082	5,697	51,735	1,208	6,360	51,552
6	1,051	5,530	57,265	1,051	5,530	57,265	1,085	5,713	57,265

Further to the above, the extraction method used was Varimax – principal component with orthogonal rotation. This method was chosen because it is effective in capturing components with high eigenvalues and organises them according to their levels of importance. Table 5.43 stipulates the details for each factor in relation to the total variance.

The principal component analysis presents six components, all of which with eigenvalues exceeding 1. Component number 1 can be seen with the highest eigenvalue (4.220) which corresponds to 22.209% of the total variance whilst component number 6 has an eigenvalue of 1.051 which represents 5.530% of the total variance.

Table 5. 44 - Rotated Component Matrix (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

Rotated Component Matrix^a				
	Component			
	1	2	3	4
STRAT1	0,457			
STRAT2	0,768			
STRAT3	0,578			
STRAT4	0,794			
STRAT5		0,580		
STRAT6		0,636		
STRAT7		0,577		
STRAT8		0,757		
STRAT9		0,578		
STRAT10	0,530			
STRAT11				0,715
STRAT12				0,649
STRAT13				
BEN1			0,427	
BEN2			0,785	
BEN3			0,636	
BEN4			0,812	
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.				
a. Rotation converged in 8 iterations.				

Table 5.44 provides details on the items which are associated with each component. On the underpinning of the factor loadings and number of items, the number of factors per component were concluded. Pallant (2010: 194) suggests two elements of importance to consider when concluding on factors: 1) Factor loading of above 0.3 should be noted as a good factor and 2) A component which is associated with more than three items. The results show that both elements namely, ‘Elements of Strategies’ and ‘Benefits of Strategies’ are supported.

5.9 Reliability of the Study

Reliability of the study is deconstructed into two resultants namely 1) Stability and 2) Consistency. Taherdoost (2016: 33) concurred that reliability is the extent to which the measurement of a phenomenon provides consistent and stable results. In this study, the reliability analysis was conducted on ‘Elements of Strategies’ and ‘Benefits of Strategies’

which also included their associated items to measure internal consistency. Accordingly, the cut-off value of the Cronbach's alpha is 0.70 (Hair, Hult, Ringle, and Sarstedt 2017: 137) although 0.6 is acceptable (Malhotra, Daniel and David 2017: 398).

This study involved running the Kudar-Richardson 20 (KR-20) to establish reliability. The KR-20 formula creates an output of raw reliability coefficient for survey items using these response sets. Interestingly KR-20 cannot be used for response sets containing three or more levels. It must be noted that KR-20 is run and interpreted in the same manner as Cronbach Alpha in SPSS™/®/©. KR-20 scores range from 0 to 1, where 0 indicates zero reliability and 1 indicates perfect reliability. Naturally the score that is closer to 1 indicates a higher reliability. The type of test constitutes the acceptability of the reliability. Generally, any score from 0.5 and above is considered reasonable. In summary, when a survey instrument contains items using dichotomous response sets, the KR-20 is needed to calculate and establish reliability.

Table 5. 45 - Alpha Coefficients and Cronbach's Alpha (SPSS™/®/© Version 27)

Constructs	Items	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Cronbach's alpha	Final number of items and (initials)
ELEMENTS OF STRATEGIES	STRAT1	0,510	0,782	13(15)
	STRAT2	0,535		
	STRAT3	0,475		
	STRAT4	0,530		
	STRAT5	0,515		
	STRAT6	0,518		
	STRAT7	0,579		
	STRAT8	0,342		
	STRAT9	0,469		
	STRAT10	0,537		
	STRAT11	-0,232		
	STRAT12	-0,269		
	STRAT13	0,120		
BENEFITS OF STRATEGIES	BEN1	0,510	0,637	4(4)
	BEN2	0,535		
	BEN3	0,475		
	BEN4	0,530		

The results in Table 5.45 show that all constructs are consistent internally concerning their measurements. This is due to the Alpha's coefficient values of 'Elements of Strategies' being 0.782 which is above the 0.7 threshold. Additionally, the Cronbach's Alpha value of 'Benefits of Strategies' being 0.637 which is deemed acceptable (Above 0.6). The next section discusses organisational cybernetics.

5.10 Organisational Cybernetics

Organisational Cybernetics VSM software – Vensim™/®/© PLE Version 8.2.0 was utilised to check for inter-connections and interdependencies of the elements within the system. The findings confirmed the literature study and showed coherence amongst the elements and sub-elements. The findings ratified the qualitative aspect of the study.

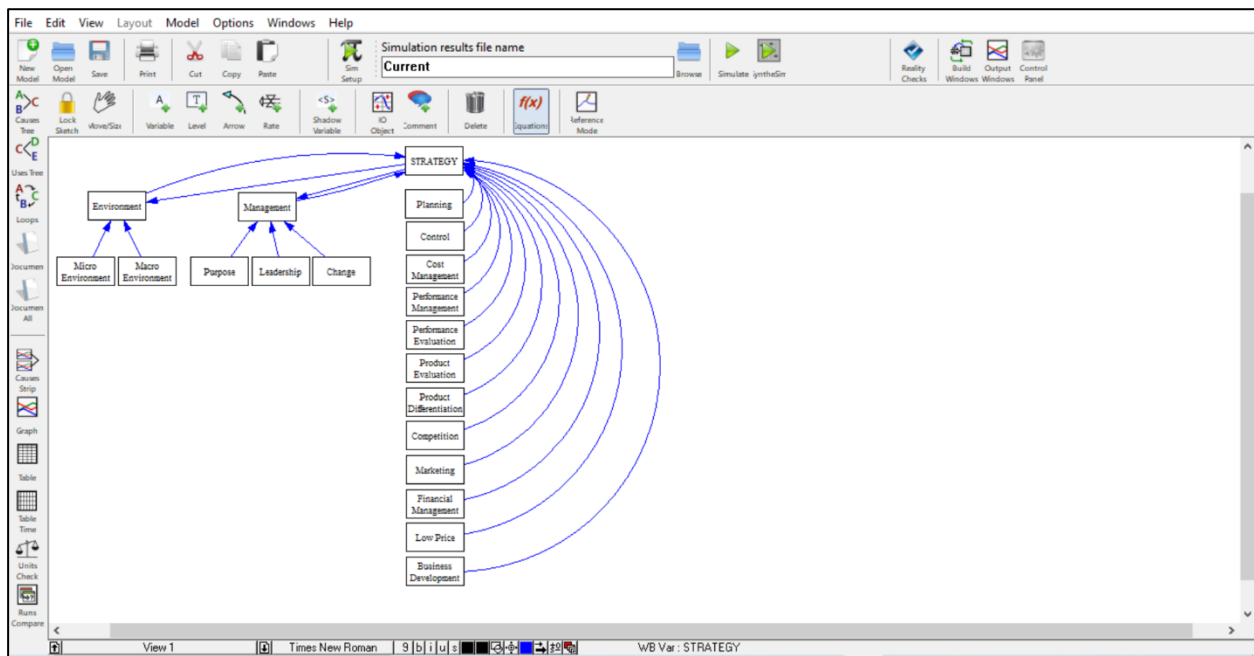


Figure 5. 39 - The Strategy, Change, Purpose & Leadership Model (Vensim™/®/© Version 8.2.0)

Figure 5.39 indicates the element 'Strategy' and its components namely 'Planning', 'Control', 'Cost Management', 'Performance Management', 'Performance Evaluation', 'Product Differentiation', 'Competition', 'Marketing', 'Financial Management', 'Low Price', and 'Business Development' were inputted into the software along with the sub-elements 'Change', 'Purpose' and 'Leadership'.

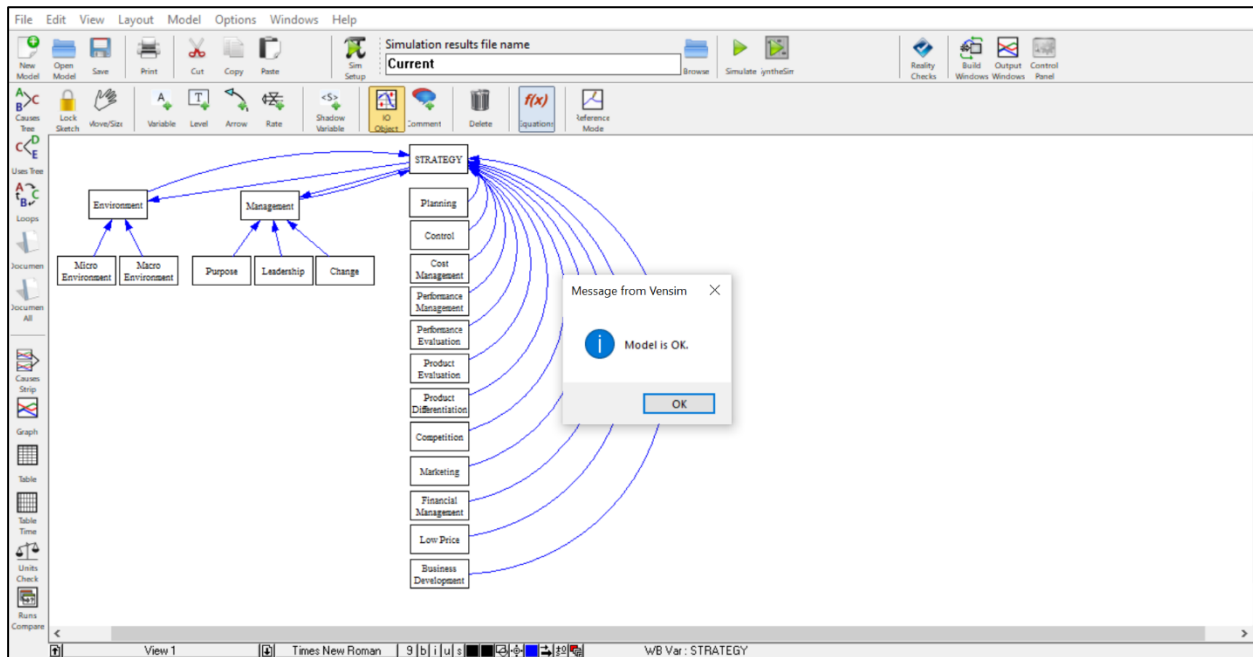


Figure 5. 40 - The Strategy, Change, Purpose & Leadership Model - Run Successfully (Vensim™/®/© Version 8.2.0)

To determine the appropriate execution of the model, the software must indicate an “on screen” notification to confirm the aforementioned. Consequently, Figure 5.40 indicated that the model was indeed run successfully and that the elements and sub-elements showed relationships. The next figure shows these interconnections and inter-dependencies.

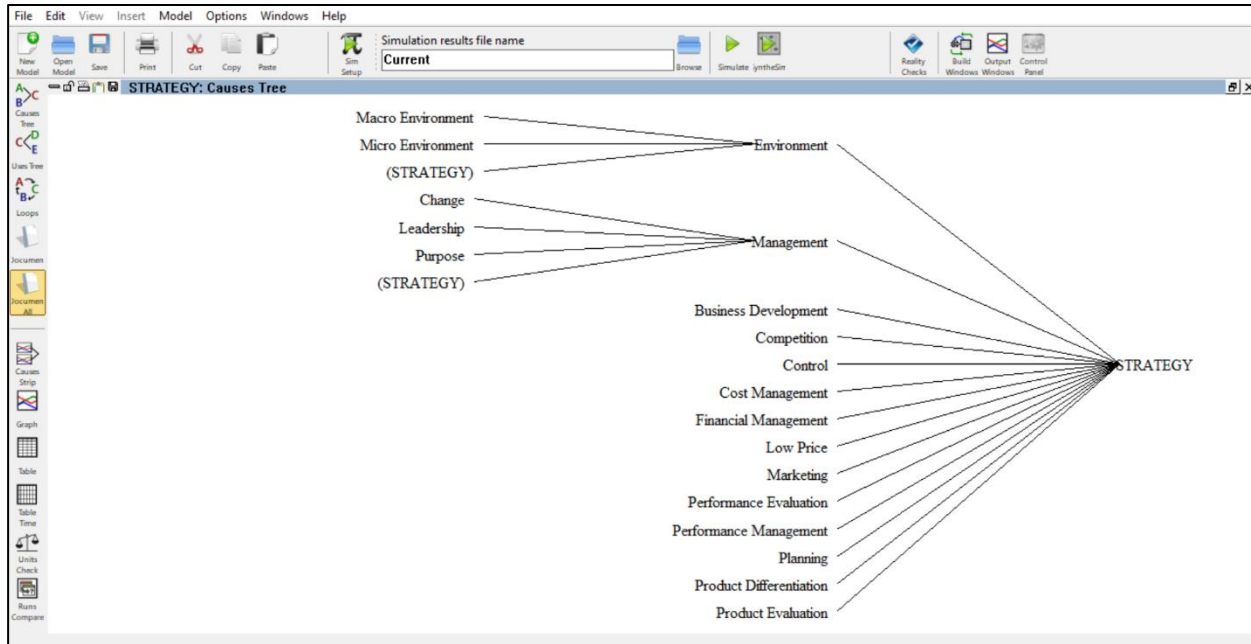


Figure 5. 41 - Causal Tree - Relationships of the elements and sub-elements (Vensim™/®/© Version 8.2.0)

The overall result of the Vensim™/®/© software (Figure 5.41) indicated that the element 'Strategy' was related unidirectionally to its associated components. This relationship is defined as a one-way causal effect and a collective comprisal of the element. Whilst the sub-elements 'Change', 'Purpose' and 'Leadership' were related bidirectionally to 'Strategy'. This relationship is defined as a two way reliance and dependency on the element and sub-elements to ascertain its cyclical recurrence to produce a continuous systematic output (Jackson 2016: 93; Metaphorum. 2021).

5.11 Conclusion

This chapter presented the results obtained from the mixed methodologies employed in this study. All objectives, research questions and sub-questions were achieved, addressed, and answered accordingly. It was proven empirically that the use of Nvivo™/®/© makes the research more comprehensible when compared to other data analysing software tools (Ramos 2021: 200). Therefore, the Nvivo™/®/© software

(Version 12) was used to analyse the data obtained from the respondents via interviews. The themes of the study were generated, files were coded, and results were interpreted. In addition, a word cloud was created, crosstabulations were performed, mind maps were drawn and finally, a conceptual map was generated which showed the result of the qualitative aspect of this study. Accordingly, it remains prevalent in this study that 'Strategy', 'Change', 'Purpose' and 'Leadership' are fundamentally important elements and sub-elements in the formulation of a Sustainable Business Strategy.

The findings in this study, generated by the Nvivo™/®/© software was proven to be successful by meeting the aim and objectives of this research. To further elaborate on this, the first objective of this research study entailed investigating strategies currently used and establishing areas of improvement. In conjunction with the various findings in this chapter, this objective was specifically confirmed in the respondents' texts related to Table 5.5 whereby a multitude of responses was provided. The second objective was to evaluate the effectiveness of the elements that are related to strategies. In similarity to the preceding objective, this objective was also achieved through thematic analyses referenced in the respondents' texts related to Table 5.5. The third objective was to establish managers' knowledge of strategy formulation. This objective was also achieved in section 5.4 wherein crosstabulations were conducted which confirmed the abilities of managers to formulate strategies. Finally, the last objective was to develop a conceptual framework to assist SMEs to ensure sustainability. This objective was achieved in duplicate such that, through the collection of the data, a conceptual map (Figure 5.18) was developed which was directly related to the developed conceptual framework (Figure 3.11) within the literature work of this study. To summarise, all objectives were achieved in the qualitative aspect of this study.

Research has shown that SPSS™/®/© is the most popular statistical analyses software used in the last decade from 2010 to 2020 (Okagbue, Oguntunde, Obasi and Akhmetshin 2021: 6). Selectively, the SPSS™/®/© software (Version 27) was used to conduct the quantitative aspect of this mixed methods study. The data was collected from respondents via a questionnaire. Consequently, the data was analysed, and the results were interpreted. Thereafter the results were presented in descriptive statistical

form, central tendency measures and by group differences (Chi-square). In this study, all the results achieved by SPSS™/®/©, which were related to the objectives, research questions and sub-questions were supported. Hereto, 'Strategy' being the element and 'Change', 'Purpose' and 'Leadership' being the sub-elements of the study showed pertinence and relevance in formulating a Sustainable Business Strategy.

The answering of the research questions and related sub-questions were successfully accomplished by SPSS™/®/©. Further elaboration entailed delving into the specifics wherefore the first research question being: *"What elements are used to form strategies by SMEs? To identify common elements which are used in strategy development and their effects on the organisations"*. It must be noted that the elements highlighted in the literature review in Table 2.1 were confirmed in Table 5.27 whereby responses ranging from 77 to 136 common elements out of a grand total of 200 were indeed received.

In continuation, the second research question was: *"Are SMEs in favour of a changing business environment? To identify and confirm if managers embrace and communicate change at the workplace"*. Table 5.30 indicated that 84.5% of the total respondents favoured a changing business environment. In addition, Table 5.40 indicated that 65.7% of the respondents were in favour of a new growth strategy and a changing business environment. This research question was confirmed to be answered.

Furthermore, the third research question was: *"Do SMEs have statements of purpose in their organisations? To identify and measure the quantity of purpose-driven organisations"*. Table 5.31 indicated that 70.5% of the respondents confirmed that their organisations have purpose statements in place, whilst the balance of 29.5% did not. Moreover, Table 5.32 confirmed that more than 60% of the respondents confirmed that their employees were aware of the purpose statement, however, the balance were either unaware or the business did not possess a purpose statement altogether. It must be noted that this research question was indeed answered.

Lastly, the fourth research question was: *"Do managers follow a specific leadership style in their business? To identify leadership styles and determine the effectiveness of their usage"*. Although there were responses from all the respondents adopting differing

leadership styles, Table 5.33 confirmed that 'Transactional Leadership' and 'Transformational Leadership' were the most used Leadership Styles. Moreover, the Chi-square group difference output in Table 5.41 also confirmed that both "Transactional Leadership' and 'Transformational Leadership' styles were practised more than other leadership styles. These results confirmed the claims made within the literature review by Crews *et al.* (2019: 424) that both 'Transactional Leadership' and 'Transformational Leadership' styles should be used jointly in an organisation to produce effective results. This research question was answered accordingly.

Further validations and in accordance with the literature review, led to a Systems Thinking Model namely the Vensim™/®/© software (Version 8.2.0) being used to check the inter-connections and interdependencies of the elements in this study. The model is claimed to be robust in showing and validating constructs and problem structuring techniques (Harwood 2019: 1198). In this study, the VSM model worked successfully thereby confirming the coherence of the element 'Strategy' and the sub-elements 'Change', 'Purpose' and 'Leadership'. The model comprised of the Operations, Management and Environment components which reflected the attributed elements. Thereafter the model was run to check for errors. This ultimately confirmed no errors and the relevance and validity of the element and sub-elements used to formulate a Sustainable Business Strategy.

The next chapter focuses on the summary and conclusion of this study, provision of recommendations, addressing the study limitations and the need to conduct further research.

CHAPTER SIX: Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction and Overview of the Chapters

This chapter focuses on the holistic summary of the research conducted in this study. It is fundamental to re-iterate the problem statement, stipulated in **Chapter One** as follows:

SMEs in KZN are not sustaining themselves appropriately due to unsatisfactory strategy formulation hence the need for a strategy to achieve sustainability (Sitharam and Hoque, 2016: 286).

The problem statement noted unsatisfactory strategy formulation as the reason the sustainability of SMEs was on the decline in KZN (Siwangaza *et al.* 2014: 163; Sitharam and Hoque, 2016: 277; GEM, 2017: 29). In order to solve the main research problem, the researcher decided to formulate a business strategy by developing a conceptual framework to achieve sustainability for SMEs. In addition, the core element of strategy and relationships with the sub-elements of purpose, change and leadership were investigated. This entailed the use of the Systems Thinking Model to indicate the interdependencies to purport the goal of achieving sustainability. In conjunction with the aforementioned, objectives were derived, and several research questions and sub-questions were formulated to investigate the research problem. The objectives were as follows:

Objective 1 - To investigate strategies currently being used and establish areas of improvement. The researcher conducted a mixed methods study which entailed using a questionnaire and conducting interviews to gather the data required for analyses. Through academic research, it was discovered that several components were related to existing strategies performed. Those components were 'Business Development', 'Competition', 'Control', 'Cost Management', 'Financial Management', 'Low Price', 'Marketing', 'Performance Evaluation', 'Performance Management', 'Price', 'Planning' and 'Product Differentiation'. It was further discovered that respondents selected these components in the questionnaire and discussed these topics in the interviews. The

outcome of the results showed and confirmed that the mentioned components related to 'Strategy' formulation were used commonly amongst the majority of the respondents.

Objective 2 - To evaluate the effectiveness of the elements that are related to strategies. The components related to strategy formulation being 'Business Development', 'Competition', 'Control', 'Cost Management', 'Financial Management', 'Low Price', 'Marketing', 'Performance Evaluation', 'Performance Management', 'Price', 'Planning' and 'Product Differentiation' were quantified using both Nvivo™/®/© and SPSS™/®/©. Moreover, 'Change', 'Purpose' and 'Leadership' being the sub-elements were confirmed as moderator variables, ultimately achieving a 'Sustainable Business Strategy' being the dependent variable. Both of the software programs namely Nvivo™/®/© and SPSS™/®/© confirmed adequate numerical percentage values showing frequent usage by the respondents, thereby concluding on their effectiveness when applied empirically. Moreover, these words were noticed to be commonly used and were indicated in the word cloud.

Objective 3 - To establish managers' knowledge of strategy formulation. The qualitative method of this mixed methods study indicated that most managers were indeed able to formulate strategies. However, the remaining respondents required assistance and experience to formulate strategies. This was proven by conducting crosstabulations using the Nvivo™/®/© software program. Interestingly, managers displayed evidence through interviews about their knowledge of strategy formulation, however, this cannot be generalised on the underpinning of the results achieved. This essentially means that although most managers can formulate a strategy, there is potential to enhance the pedagogical aspects of strategy formulation.

Objective 4 - To develop a conceptual framework to assist SMEs to ensure sustainability. The researcher's contribution in this study involved developing a conceptual framework which was carried out accordingly using the several components of 'Strategy', as well as 'Change', 'Purpose' and 'Leadership'. The Conceptual Framework indicated 'Strategy' as the independent variable, 'Change', 'Purpose' and 'Leadership' as moderator variables and 'Sustainable Business Strategy' as the dependent variable. Moreover, the conceptual map developed by the Nvivo™/®/© software program is related directly to the Conceptual Framework. The aim of the research also involved answering research questions which were as follows:

Research Question 1 - What elements are used to form strategies by SMEs? To identify common elements which are used in strategy development and their effects on the organisations. Emanating from recent and historical academic research, the elements, sub-elements and associated components were inputted into the research instrument to gather data from the respondents. It was discovered that 'Business Development', 'Competition', 'Control', 'Cost Management', 'Financial Management', 'Low Price', 'Marketing', 'Performance Evaluation', 'Performance Management', 'Price', 'Planning' and 'Product Differentiation' being the associated components of 'Strategy' were found to be common elements used in strategy development. Furthermore, the associated components of 'Change' being 'Climate Change', 'Market Orientation Change', and 'Digitalisation Change' were also discovered to be common elements used in strategy development. Similarly, the components of 'Purpose' namely 'Purpose-driven Organisations' and 'Purpose and Strategy' were discovered as common elements used in strategy formulation. Moreover, 'Transactional Leadership', 'Transformational Leadership' and 'Participative Leadership' were discovered to be the most common elements of 'Leadership' leading to strategy development. Finally, the qualitative and quantitative data acquired further confirmed the elements, sub-elements, and associated components effectiveness of use in business.

Research Question 2 - Are SMEs in favour of a changing business environment?

To identify and confirm if managers embrace and communicate change at the workplace.

Whilst the literature review revealed that 'Change' is an important factor in strategy formulation and business sustainability, the results achieved from the qualitative and quantitative data gathered, revealed, and confirmed its pertinence, necessity, and relevance. As confirmed in the results, a significant portion (84.5%) of respondents favoured a changing business environment. Moreover, close to 70% of the respondents were in favour of new growth strategies and a changing business environment simultaneously. However, this study confirmed that only 50% of the respondents related 'Change' to 'Sustainability', thereby indicating conclusively that Business Managers need to consider communicating 'Change' more effectively at the workplace. In collaboration with the element, sub-elements and associated components, 'Change', if communicated well, will indeed assist in achieving business sustainability.

Research Question 3 - Do SMEs have statements of purpose in their organisations?

To identify and measure the quantity of purpose-driven organisations.

The research literature has indicated that 'Purpose' is vital for strategy formulation and development. Furthermore, empirical evidence provided in this study proved that 'Purpose' being a sub-element to acquire business sustainability, cannot be argued. Additionally, the results of the qualitative and quantitative survey have shown that the majority (70.5%) of the businesses have purpose statements whilst 29.5% did not. This has proven that there is room for improvement for the 29.5% of businesses that do not possess purpose statements. Moreover, the literature and the results of this study have shown that employees who are made aware of the purpose statement and display competency of the aforementioned, contribute explicitly and greatly towards achieving a more sustainable business.

Research Question 4 - Do managers follow a specific leadership style in their business? To identify leadership styles and determine the effectiveness of their usage.

Research has shown that there are various leadership styles, traits and approaches that are practised. As seen in the literature and the real world, a business cannot function and sustain itself without having good leadership techniques. Further exacerbated by circumstantial changes and factors that affect the spectrum. It is, therefore, necessary for leaders to not only be cognisant of these changes but to learn and possess the skillset to lead individuals and teams at the workplace. The results of this study have shown by qualitative and quantitative research techniques that 'Transactional Leadership' and 'Transformational Leadership' have been the dominant leadership styles amongst the other leadership styles discussed herein. Similarly, stemming from the literature, both leadership styles have been empirically proven to be more widely used around the globe. Interestingly, this is no different to what the results of this study have revealed in SMEs in KZN.

Chapter Two being the first literature review of this study, furnished academic research and associated references for the components of 'Strategy' (Uyar: 2019: 7) namely: 'Planning', 'Control', 'Cost Management', 'Performance Management', 'Performance Evaluation', 'Product Differentiation', 'Competition', 'Marketing', 'Financial Management', 'Low Price' and 'Business Development' were discussed and proven necessary. Ironically, Zondo (2020: 6) postulated that collaboration and cooperation of all stakeholders were necessary to execute tasks and accomplish goals. In addition, Nonaka and Takeuchi (2021: 1) stressed the need for reconceptualising strategy on the concept of the inside-out approach to achieve sustainability. This has reiterated the relevance and pertinence of the components of Strategy in this research study. Furthermore, the sub-elements of 'Change', 'Purpose' and 'Leadership' were also discussed. In particular, the components of 'Change' namely: 'Climate Change', 'Market Orientation Change', 'Product Orientation Change', 'Digitalisation Change' and 'Artificial Intelligence Change' were discussed. Bamberg and Schulte (2018: 312) claimed that 'Change' is a catalyst in achieving sustainability. The literature on 'Change' in this chapter has shown the sub-element's importance and relevance in influencing a positive trajectory in business sustainability.

In addition, the components of 'Purpose' namely: 'Purpose-driven Organisations', 'Personal Purpose at the Workplace', 'Three Dimensions of Purpose', 'Purpose-driven Leadership' and 'Purpose and Strategy' were discussed. To re-iterate, Henman (2020: 1) and Rey *et al.* (2019: 7) stressed the need for and importance of the individual and the organisation to be in congruence with 'Purpose', in a business. Lastly, the components of 'Leadership' namely: 'Transformational Leadership', 'Ethical Leadership' and 'Transactional Leadership' were discussed. In summary, it was proven that in conjunction with 'Ethical Leadership' practising, both 'Transformational and Transactional Leadership' styles were of significant pertinence to strengthen a business's strategy to achieve sustainability. Moreover, 'Transformational and Transactional Leadership' were favoured to be used jointly within an organisation to produce effective results (Crews *et al.* 2019: 424). Therefore, 'Strategy', 'Change', 'Purpose' and 'Leadership' can be deemed necessary and pertinent to achieve a 'Sustainable Business Strategy'.

Chapter Three, being the second literature review chapter provided evidence from academic research showing the relevance of the element, sub-elements and all associated components to achieving Business sustainability. In this chapter, the method of evaluation of the elements used in this study, which stemmed from the underpinning research study by Uyar (2019: 7) was explained. Formative and summative evaluation models were explained along with Theory-Based and Non-Theory-Based Evaluations. A variety of critiques was provided for the evaluation methodologies and techniques. Consequently, it was found that amongst the variety of evaluation techniques explained, TBE was used to select the elements used in this study.

In addition, systems thinking was used to indicate interconnections and interdependencies of the elements discussed. Various systems thinking techniques were explained such as Hard Systems Thinking, System Dynamics, Organisational Cybernetics, Complexity Theory, Strategic Assumption Surfacing and Testing, Interactive Planning, Soft Systems Methodology, Critical Systems Heuristics, Team Syntegrity and Postmodern Systems Thinking, however, amongst these, the method selected for this research was Organisational Cybernetics. In lieu of this method, the VSM being the selected Systems Thinking Model was explained and used to ascertain the effectiveness

of the elements to produce a sustainable business strategy for SMEs. Lastly, a conceptual framework was formulated using the discussed elements, to further explore the effectiveness of sustainability of SMEs. The element of Strategy (Independent Variable) and complementing sub-elements of Change, Purpose and Leadership (Moderator Variables) were explained theoretically and visually to achieving a Sustainable Business Strategy (Dependent Variable). Ultimately, the formulated conceptual framework serves as a tool for utilisation by SMEs in daily activities to achieve business sustainability.

Chapter Four entailed the research approach, research design and research methodology which were explained. The result of a study is crucial as it provides factual information from respondents and it confirms that the experiments or empirical work were indeed conducted (Borgonovo, Caselli, Cillo, Masciandaro, and Rabitti 2021: 6). Upon analysing the data, due cognisance was taken of the notion that researchers can easily be biased by favouring respondents which places the data in a favourable light. Furthermore, the researcher was aware of and did not only disclose positive results to achieve personal inclinations. Most importantly, the privacy of the respondents was duly maintained by disassociating names from documentation used in this study. These techniques of analysing data have been duly claimed and supported (Creswell 2014: 138). The last step in this chapter was to interpret the results. According to Creswell (2014: 226), the interpretation of the results must either support or refute the hypotheses or research questions. The interpretation of the results was conducted accordingly.

The research approach which was chosen was mixed methods research (Creswell 2014: 35). The aforementioned was explained to be both qualitative and quantitative research synthesised in the study (Johnson *et al.* 2007: 113). In particular, the pragmatic worldview approach was selected for usage in this study, which entailed drawing assumptions from consequences, actions, and situations (Creswell 2014: 37). The geographical area of KZN was selected as the target area and specifically, the North Coast, Upper Highway, Central Durban, and South Coast areas were planned to be surveyed. The sampling method selected, being the probabilistic sampling method, was explained and specifically the simple random method was planned to be utilised. Finally,

the data collection was planned to be conducted in the form of a self-administered questionnaire for the quantitative aspect and conducting of interviews on randomly selected respondents for the qualitative aspect of this study.

Chapter Five illustrated the results, conducted analyses, and interpretations were done. The qualitative aspect of this mixed methods study was conducted with Nvivo™/®/© Version 12 software. Themes of the study were generated, a word cloud formed, crosstabulations were conducted, mind maps drawn and lastly, a conceptual map was generated. All objectives of this research study were addressed, achieved, and discussed. It must be noted that the conceptual map and the conceptual framework developed in Chapter Two are directly related to one another. This being the researcher's main contribution to this study.

Moreover, for the quantitative aspect of this mixed methods study, SPSS™/®/© Version 27 software was used. The data was cleaned and analysed, and the results were presented in a descriptive format, central tendency measures and by group difference techniques. The SPSS™/®/© addressed all of the research questions and sub-questions linked to the problem statement. Lastly, the Vensim™/®/© software (Version 8.2.0) was used to check for inter-connections and interdependencies of the element, associated components, and sub-elements of the study. The software comprised of three key aspects which accommodated the element, associated components, and sub-elements to be run and checked for errors. The result of the run was deemed successful thereby indicating that 'Strategy' and its associated components; and 'Change', 'Purpose' and 'Leadership' were acceptable and valid for the purposes of this study.

6.2 Limitations of the Study

Although this study has provided contributions for SMEs to formulate a sustainable business strategy to mitigate against the decline in growth, there are a few limitations to be considered.

On the underpinning of the mixed methods approach, this study focused on 384 respondents of the estimated 488 000 SMEs that are in KZN. Simultaneously, 20 participants included in the sample size of 384 were interviewed parallel to the quantitative phase. Hence, being the first limitation, it has been concluded that this study cannot be generalised due to the large population size (Creswell 2014: 187).

Furthermore, it must be noted that the formal SME sector comprised 21.8% of the total number of SMEs in KZN, whilst the informal sector was 74.4% and other forms of businesses equating to 3.8% (SEDA 2020:23). Therefore, this study only covered the formal sector of SMEs in KZN, being the second limitation.

The third limitation was the geographical coverage comprised KZN as the second largest province (SME wise) in South Africa, which excluded other provinces from the survey. The comprisal of SMEs in KZN was 18%, whilst other provinces namely Mpumalanga (9%), Limpopo (10%), Western Cape (11%), Eastern Cape (10%), Northern Cape (1%), Free State (5%), North West (3%) and Gauteng (33%) constituted the balance of the SMEs in South Africa (SEDA 2020:22).

The fourth limitation was that some questionnaires were excluded from the assessment due to untimely submission (Creswell 2014: 206). This impacted the number of responses achieved in the survey thereby affecting the statistical and numerical output values.

Another limitation is that respondents were likely to be biased if they provided untruthful information (Easterby-Smith *et al.* 2012: 235). Respondents, most likely employees, have the tendency to not shed the full truth about the business, hence, it remains possible to obtain bias results.

Lastly, the hand delivery of questionnaires was not possible due to the travel and hygiene restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The verification needed to ensure that the respondent was indeed the Director or Manager of the business could not prevail as a result.

6.3 Recommendations

Whilst it remains conclusive that this study successfully contributed towards achieving Business Sustainability, and in particular, via a conceptual framework and a conceptual map for a Sustainable Business Strategy, consequential opportunities may be considered for further research as follows:

6.3.1 Recommendations of the study

- 1) It remains evident from this research that leadership styles are important in the formulation of a sustainable business strategy. Although transactional and transformational leadership have featured prominently, the other leadership styles namely bureaucratic and autocratic leadership should be investigated to gauge the reasons for infrequent usage in the business environment.
- 2) This study has illustrated that digitalisation plays a pivotal part in the contemporary world and featured quite prominently from the respondents. As such more research can be conducted on the effects of digitalisation on SMEs.
- 3) Although this study researched SMEs in a myriad of industries in KZN, there is always an opportunity to choose a specific sector to specialise in and focus on, thereby spotlighting businesses and investigating their practices related to strategies and sustainability.
- 4) Some respondents complained that cash flow and more capital were required to ensure a more efficient running of their businesses. Although funding emanates from several sources, more research should be conducted on business incubators and other alternatives for funding.
- 5) In addition, some respondents used stock management and bulk stockpiling to maintain a competitive advantage during times of constraints and climate uncertainty. This was related to the scales of supply vs demand wherefore utter capitalisation was engulfed. This strategy seemed to work well for a few businesses, however, it is worth investigating and researching if other sectors can adopt a similar approach.

- 6) Similar research studies related to Sustainable Business Strategies can be conducted on larger sized businesses in KZN and other provinces of South Africa. Thereafter a comparison of the data can be conducted using quantitative and qualitative techniques using suitable computer software programs.
- 7) A few respondents commented on how their businesses started and the necessity to follow the business plan regardless of the hindrances and hurdles that may protrude. Following this concept of using a business plan, further research can be done to investigate the number of SMEs which have a business plan in place, the advantages of its use and if there are any drawbacks of business plans not being followed in the current era.
- 8) Some respondents commented on the COVID-19 pandemic being an exacerbating factor affecting their business negatively. This is affiliated to change of the business environment which is a sub-element in this study. Although this subject has been discussed, more investigations can be conducted on the risks of running SMEs and businesses from a general perspective.
- 9) The opinion of respondents on competition emerged prominently in this study and the majority embraced competition in the business environment as a need to manifest and render an improved service or product. Another area of future research rests with competition amongst SMEs in the formal and informal sectors in South Africa. Does the majority of SMEs in the country favour or loathe competition?
- 10) Change is an important factor related to any business. In particular, climate change has been addressed in this study, however, new sources of energy are emanating in the form of Green Energy. Another area that can be explored through further research is what effects will Green Energy have on SMEs and their sustainability.

6.3.2 Recommendations for further research

- 1) Inferences can be made on the respondents' characteristics and cognitive aspects in various sectors of SMEs in other provinces, apart from KZN, to determine differences by comparison. Thereafter deriving conclusions using valid and reliable acquired data.
- 2) There is often a contentious debate between leadership and management. Since this research addressed leadership, future research can focus on the type of management traits that may be best suited for managers of SMEs to achieve longevity.
- 3) Further research can be conducted on determining Business Sustainability Strategies of SMEs in the informal sector in KZN, which is comparatively larger than the formal sector.
- 4) Further research can be conducted in the form of a longitudinal case study of an SME in a specific industry which may be contributing to the decline in business growth in KZN.
- 5) Further research can be done on whether SMEs require standardised management systems such as the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) management system to run more effectively and efficiently to achieve sustainability more easily.

6.4 Concluding Remarks

The overarching aim of this research study was to assist SMEs in strategy formulation to achieve a Sustainable Business Strategy. In order to fulfil this task, through academic and empirical research, the researcher formulated a conceptual framework and a conceptual map to ultimately achieve sustainability for SMEs in KZN. This was conducted and achieved by indicating how the element, 'Strategy' and its various associated components 'Planning', 'Control', 'Cost Management', 'Performance Management', 'Performance Evaluation', 'Product Differentiation', 'Competition', 'Marketing', 'Financial

Management', 'Low Price' and 'Business Development', being further moderated by sub-elements, 'Change', 'Purpose' and 'Leadership' and their respective associated components of 'Climate Change', 'Market Orientation Change', 'Product Orientation Change', 'Digitalisation Change', 'Artificial Intelligence Change', 'Purpose-driven Organisations', 'Personal Purpose at the Workplace', 'Three Dimensions of Purpose', 'Purpose-driven Leadership', 'Purpose and Strategy', 'Ethical Leadership', 'Transformational Leadership' and 'Transactional Leadership' resulted in achieving a 'Sustainable Business Strategy'.

This study was proven with the use of academic research from various data sources. The data was analysed using expert qualitative and quantitative software programs after being collected from participants in KZN predominantly comprising directors and managers (Executive Management Level). The results and findings were presented accordingly. The outcome of this study was the development of a Conceptual Framework and Conceptual Map deemed as the models contributed by the researcher to achieve a 'Sustainable Business Strategy'. Moreover, the study revealed the effectiveness of how 'Strategy', 'Change', 'Purpose' and 'Leadership' can be used cohesively for the achievement of a 'Sustainable Business Strategy'. Finally, existing managers, entrepreneurs and business leaders can utilise the model to achieve business sustainability.

In conclusion, this research has highlighted the important role that SMEs play in our economy and the need for their sustainability. It is known that the province of KZN, being a part of South Africa, has contributed immensely towards the GDP, job creation, economic growth, and other pertinent facets historically, however, it cannot be ignored that SMEs additionally play a vital role in society and towards the environment. The trajectories of SMEs remain significantly important to ensure sustainability and to keep the continuum of the economy cyclically. It is for these reasons that SMEs should not only sustain themselves but also be afforded the opportunities to grow into larger size businesses, multinationals, and perhaps even conglomerates. To achieve this, the SME must have a strategy in place that ensures sustainability. Although there are numerous methodologies to create strategies, the fundamentals of formulation and implementation

should be done tactfully and competently to ensure sustainability. It is noteworthy to acknowledge the work conducted in this study, whereby the formulated conceptual framework and conceptual map ensures that Managers, Directors, Entrepreneurs and Business Leaders can use these tools to develop a strategy that achieves business sustainability.

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ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE A: Covering Letter



Dear Participant

I am studying towards a Doctor of Philosophy Degree at the Durban University of Technology. The title of my research is “Sustainable Business Strategy for small and medium enterprises in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa”.

Please complete the survey to enable me in gathering data for my research. The information you provide will be strictly confidential. Only my research supervisor and I will have access to the completed surveys. Please be assured that you will remain anonymous throughout the research process and in any reporting or write up related to my research.

Please read and agree to the consent form, before completing the survey.

Thank you.

Vinay Bugwandin

Mobile :

Email :

ANNEXURE B: Ethical Clearance



MANAGEMENT SCIENCES: FACULTY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (FREC)

30 July 2020

Student Name: Mr V Bugwandin

Student No: 21959785

Dear Mr V Bugwandin

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN MANAGEMENT SCIENCES: BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

TITLE: Sustainable Business Strategy for Small and Medium Enterprises in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Please be advised that the FREC Committee has reviewed your proposal and the following decision was made: **Approved – Ethics Level 2**

Date of FRC Approval: 30 July 2020

Approval has been granted for a period of two years from the above FRC date, after which you are required to apply for safety monitoring and annual recertification. Please use the form located at the Faculty. This form must be submitted to the FREC at least 3 months before the ethics approval for the study expires.

Any adverse events [serious or minor] which occur in connection with this study and/or which may alter its ethical consideration must be reported to the FREC according to the FREC SOP's. Please note that ANY amendments in the approved proposal require the approval of the FREC as outlined in the FREC SOP's.

Yours sincerely

Prof JP Govender

Chairperson: Faculty Research Ethics Committee

ANNEXURE C: Informed Consent Form



CONSENT

Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, Mr Vinay Bugwandin, about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study.
- I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including my personal details will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerised system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and declare myself prepared to participate in the study voluntarily.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

I, Vinay Bugwandin, herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

ANNEXURE D: Letter of Information



LETTER OF INFORMATION

Title of Research Study: Sustainable Business Strategy for Small to Medium Enterprises in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Researcher: Mr Vinay Bugwandin (Masters Degree in Business Administration)

Supervisor: Prof. Mohamed Bayat (Doctor of Philosophy, PhD.)

Introduction and Purpose of Study:

In KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), the state of sustainability of small and medium enterprises were on the decline and 75% of small and medium enterprises failed after operating for a period of three years (Siwangaza, Smit, Bruwer and Ukpere, 2014: 163; Fatoki, 2014: 3). Moreover, GEM (2017: 29) confirmed that small and medium enterprises in KZN do not sustain themselves for long term periods and indicated that the underlying problem was strategy leading to unsustainability.

The aim of this study is to formulate a business strategy by developing a conceptual framework to achieve sustainability for SMEs in KZN. In addition, the core element of strategy and relationships with the sub-elements of purpose, change and leadership will be investigated. This will further entail the use of the Systems Thinking Model to indicate the interdependencies to purport the goal of achieving sustainability. The convergent parallel mixed methodology approach will be used in this empirical study.

Procedures

The collection of my information requires you to complete the researchers' questionnaire to the best of your ability. Completion of the questionnaire will take approximately 10-15 minutes. The questionnaire should be completed within 30 days of your receipt. An interview may also be requested which will be conducted either by face-to-face meeting or by suitable video conferencing. Please follow all the instructions herein and complete the questionnaire.

Risk or discomfort:

Participating in this research is unlikely related to any physical, psychological or social risks. You may withdraw at any time should you experience any discomfort.

Benefits:

The results of this study could be of benefit to students, your organisation and both academic and business communities.

Alternatives:

You have the right to withdraw from participating in this research study at any point in time, without notice. Failure to return this questionnaire before the required date will render your participation invalid.

Financial Information and Remuneration:

Participation in this research study is voluntary. There are no costs incurred based on your participation. You will not receive any remuneration for your participation.

Confidentiality:

Your participation in this study is confidential. You will not be identified in any way whatsoever. All information will be kept safe and secure in accordance with Durban University of Technology's requirements.

Persons to Contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries:

Please feel free to contact the researcher, Vinay Bugwandin or Supervisor, Professor Mohamed Bayat (083 786 1326) or the Institutional Research Ethics Administrator on 031 373 2375. Complaints can be reported to the DVC: Research Innovation and Engagement Prof. S Moyo on 031 373 2577 or moyos@dut.ac.za.

ANNEXURE E: Questionnaire



QUESTIONNAIRE

Title: Sustainable Business Strategy for small and medium enterprises in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

This questionnaire is divided into four sections and comprises of 25 questions:

1. **Section A** deals with general and personal details (Questions 1 to 5).
2. **Section B** deals with your organisational details (Questions 6 to 13).
3. **Section C** deals with questions on the core element of strategy (Questions 14 to 19).
4. **Section D** deals with questions on the sub-elements of change, purpose and leadership (Questions 20 to 25).

Kindly complete all 25 questions.

Section A: General and Personal Details (Questions 1 – 5)

1. What is your gender?
 - ☐ Male
 - ☐ Female
2. What is your age group?
 - ☐ ≤ 25 years

- ☐ 26 – 45 years
- ☐ 46 – 65 years
- ☐ 66 + years

3. What is your race group?

- ☐ Black
- ☐ White
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Mixed Race
- ☐ Other

4. What is your primary spoken language?

- ☐ English
- ☐ Zulu
- ☐ Afrikaans
- ☐ Ndebele
- ☐ Pedi
- ☐ Sotho
- ☐ Swati
- ☐ Tsonga
- ☐ Tswana
- ☐ Venda
- ☐ Xhosa
- ☐ Other

5. What is the highest level of your education?

- ☐ Lower than Grade 12 (Matric)
- ☐ Matric
- ☐ Matric + Certificate/Diploma

- ☐ Undergraduate Degree
- ☐ Postgraduate Degree
- ☐ Other

Section B: Organisation Details (Questions 6 – 13)

6. Please specify your current job title:

- ☐ Director
- ☐ Manager
- ☐ Other

7. Please state the location of your organisation:

- ☐ North Coast
- ☐ South Coast
- ☐ Upper Highway
- ☐ Central Durban

8. Please indicate the nature of your organisation:

- ☐ Retail
- ☐ Telecommunication
- ☐ Motor Vehicles
- ☐ Banking
- ☐ Customer Services
- ☐ Manufacturing
- ☐ Construction
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Health
- ☐ Beauty
- ☐ Law
- ☐ Consulting
- ☐ Other (Please specify) _____

9. State the number of employees in your organisation?

- ☐ Less than 5
- ☐ 5 to 20
- ☐ 21 to 50
- ☐ 51 to 100
- ☐ 101 to 200

10. How long has your organisation been in operation?

- ☐ Less than 3 years
- ☐ 3 to 5 years
- ☐ 6 to 10 years
- ☐ Greater than 10 years

11. The financial performance of your organisation **has improved** in the last year when compared to previous years.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. Running an SME **has become more challenging** in the last year when compared to previous years.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13. Is **Competition** a threat to your organisation?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Section C: Strategy (Questions 14 - 19)

14. Does your organisation have a strategy in place?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

15. What element/s are you using in your strategies?

- ☐ Planning – Setting of regular objectives.
- ☐ Control – Adhering to policies and procedures.
- ☐ Cost savings – Making this a priority to save on expenses by acquiring more than one quotation to compare against.
- ☐ Performance management – Ensuring that employees' progress are monitored.
- ☐ Differentiation – Product / Service is unique and adds value when compared to competitor products.
- ☐ Competition – Monitoring of activities – new products / services offered.
- ☐ Financial management – Using unique pricing strategies.
- ☐ Marketing – Promoting your product / service.
- ☐ Digitalisation – Using technology to enhance your product / service.
- ☐ Competency – Continuous training of employees.
- ☐ Other (Please specify) _____
- ☐ No strategy
- ☐ Not sure

16. What effects does **Strategies** have on deliverables in your organisation?

- ☐ Positive
- ☐ Negative
- ☐ No Strategy

17. Rank the following **Benefits of Strategies** according to their importance.
(Note: Ranking from 1 being Least Important to 4 being Most Important).

	1	2	3	4
Business Sustainability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Customer Satisfaction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Brand Recognition	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

18. Do you think that your organisation requires a **new strategy** for growth?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

19. **Strategies** have changed your Leadership Style.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Section D: Sub-Elements – Change, Purpose and Leadership (Questions 20 - 25)

20. Are you in favour of a Changing Business Environment?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

21. Which of the following environments **affects** you the most?

(Note: Ranking from 1 being Least Important to 4 being Most Important).

	1	2	3	4
Micro-economic environment (Controllable)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Macro-economic environment (Uncontrollable)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

22. Does your organisation have a Purpose Statement?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

23. Are your employees **aware** of the Purpose Statement?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ N/A - No Purpose Statement available

24. Which Leadership Style do you think suits your organisation?

- ☐ **Transformational Leadership:** is defined as a leadership approach that causes change in individuals and social systems.
- ☐ **Transactional Leadership:** focuses on supervision, organisation, and performance. It is a leadership style in which leaders promote compliance by followers through both rewards and punishments.
- ☐ **Autocratic Leadership:** makes decisions without getting input from subordinates. They exercise authority and demand subordinates to take responsibility.
- ☐ **Bureaucratic Leadership:** acquire input from their subordinates but still maintain the authority to make final decisions. Governed by rules and policies to make final decisions. Do not allow for deviation and maintains a zero tolerance when it comes to violations.
- ☐ Other (Please Specify)_____

25. Leadership is the **driving element** in an organisation which ensures sustainability.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Thank you for participating in my research study.

ANNEXURE F: Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

Interview Questions – Open ended

1. What type of leader are you? Why?
2. What are your thoughts on a changing business environment?
3. In general, what are your thoughts about competitors?
4. Do you think that your business needs a new strategy? Why?
5. Do you think controlling employees at the workplace is good or bad? Why?
6. Are internal controls important in your business? Why?
7. What factor/s affects your business either positively or negatively?
8. What is your view on sustainability?
9. Does the leadership style affect the performance of an employee?
10. What are your thoughts on strategy formulation?
11. Has digitalisation/technology changed your business?
12. What are your thoughts on the purpose statement? Are you following it? Are your employees following it? Why don't you think it is necessary?
13. What type of leader do you think your employees want to be led by? Do you think you are satisfying their needs?

ANNEXURE G: Turn-it-in Report



Digital Receipt

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Assignment title: Chapters (1-7)
Submission title: Vinay Bugwandin Thesis - Final - 27 Nov 2021
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File size: 7.38M
Page count: 213
Word count: 44,298
Character count: 253,485
Submission date: 27-Nov-2021 08:01AM (UTC+0200)
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CHAPTER ONE: Introduction and Context of the Study

1.1 Introduction

Businesses are in existence due to possessing primary prerogatives which constitute the provision of financial stimulus to the economy, provision of employment to people, contribution towards the well-being of local communities and enhancement of the environmental landscape of an area and associated country. In essence, the concept of business sustainability is all about considering and involving the economic, social, and environmental aspects related to the business, known as the triple bottom line (Muhagen and Bhow 2018: 8). Furthermore, it was recognised that two conformational objectives of business sustainability comprise economic, environment and social spectrums (Odehinde and Odehinde 2000: 1504).

It must be noted that in the European market, the consensus of business sustainability was to reduce costs, thereby increasing profitability. It was further posited, through a case study, that the entire supply and demand chain should form an all-encompassing domain to obtain business sustainability, as opposed to solely concentrating on the designated operations of a business (Hagedoorn and Svensson 2012: 148). Whilst, in South Africa, an empirical study on small to medium enterprises (SMEs) revealed that the reason for poor business sustainability was a result of a lack of operational skills (Urban and Naidoo 2012: 150). Although the specified reasons between Europe and South Africa were found to be unrelated, the prevalent factor was business sustainability. It remains fundamentally pertinent to accept that any size business that is in existence in today's era, regardless of location, should ideally consider the achievement of business sustainability as an accomplished goal and indisputable success.

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ANNEXURE H: Gate Keepers Letter



30 March 2020

To: _____

Request for Permission to Conduct Research

Dear Sir / Madam,

My name is Vinay Bugwandin, a Doctor of Philosophy (Business Administration) student at the Durban University of Technology. The research I wish to conduct for my Doctoral thesis involves Sustainable Business Strategy of Small and Medium Enterprises in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), South Africa.

In KZN, the state of sustainability of Small and Medium Enterprises were on the decline and 75% of Small and Medium Enterprises failed after operating for a period of three years (Siwangaza, Smit, Bruwer and Ukpere, 2014: 163; Fatoki, 2014: 3). Moreover, GEM (2017: 29) confirmed that Small and Medium Enterprises in KZN do not sustain themselves for long term periods and indicated that the underlying problem was strategy leading to unsustainability.

The aim of this study is to formulate a business strategy by developing a conceptual framework to achieve sustainability for SMEs in KZN. In addition, the core element of strategy and relationships with the sub elements of purpose, change and leadership will be investigated. This will further entail the use of the Systems Thinking Model to indicate the interdependencies to purport the goal of achieving sustainability. The convergent parallel mixed methodology approach will be used in this empirical study.

I am hereby seeking your consent to allow me to conduct this research.

In addition, I have provided you with a copy of my proposal which includes copies of the data collection tools and consent and/or assent forms to be used in the research process, as well as a copy of the approval letter which I received from the Institutional Research Ethics Committee (IREC).

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on +966 56 911 7791, 083 739 8976 or vbugwandin@yahoo.com. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

V Bugwandin

Durban University of Technology