

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO FACTORS AFFECTING STRATEGY
IMPLEMENTATION AT THE NAMIBIA STUDENTS FINANCIAL
ASSISTANCE FUND**

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates factors affecting strategy implementation at the Namibia Students Financial Assistance Fund. The study used qualitative methods to collect the data. The primary data was gathered through interviews, using a semi-structured interview guide with staff members at different levels. Field research was undertaken with a sample size of 30 people selected using stratified sampling. The researcher used Excel to do the content analysis by analysing responses from interviewees through coded responses and consolidated them into themes. The major outcome of the study concludes that the Fund faces numerous factors affecting strategy implementation. Namely: Leadership directive, Communication, Guidance from human resources management, Process/system and Technology, Organisational Culture, Organisational structure, Organisational resources, Performance management system and Control and monitoring. The same factors affecting strategy implementation have been harnessed under the challenges faced by NSFAF in strategy implementation.

It is recommended that there was a need to improve the executive management that has been perceived as the most important driver for strategy implementation. Therefore, it should manage other factors listed in this study and take a stronghold on the strategy opted for effective strategy implementation. This would help to steer the Fund in the direction set out in attaining organisational goals and objectives.

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Finally, I wish to thank my parents, brothers, sisters and friends for their support, encouragement and love during this study process.

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DECLARATION

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DECLARATION

I, Chris Kamwi Mwiya, student number: 9508252 hereby declare that:

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND /OR ACRONYMS

GoN – Government of Namibia

IT - Information Technology

MHETI - Ministry of Higher Education, Technology and Innovation

NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation

NSFAF – Namibia Students Financial Assistance Fund

SPSS - Statistical Package for Social Science

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Strategy is a model or plan that integrates the company's objectives (Mintzberg & Quinn, 1998).

Strategic management is a set of decisions and actions that lead to the formulation and implementation of a strategy to achieve the organisation's objectives (Robinson, 2011).

Strategy implementation is the total of the activities and choices required to execute the strategic plan. Strategies and policies are put into action by developing programs, budgets and procedures (Hunger & Wheelan, 2012).

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the introduction to the study, a background to the study, a statement of the problem, research objectives, and significance of the study, limitation of the study and delimitation of the study.

1.1 Introduction.

Strategic management has been seen as a comprehensive collection of ongoing activities and processes that organisations systematically coordinate and align resources and actions with the mission, vision and strategy throughout an organisation (Jagero, Dabale & Chakauya, 2014). Also, Narikae & Lewa (2017) considered strategic management as a critical success element for any organisation, irrespective of the sector of involvement. In today's dynamic and competitive environment, strategic management has become an important part of companies (Mišanková, & Kočíšová, 2014). Furthermore, Guzami (2013) states that strategic management is a set of decisions and actions that result in the formulation and implementation of plans that are desired to achieve the organisation's objectives, mission, and vision within the business's environment. Jagero, Dabale & Chakauya (2014) argued that it is applied by leaders to align an organisation's direction with the organisation's aims. Similarly, Hajar (2016) asserted that strategic management has four basic processes: environmental scanning, strategy formulation, strategy implementation, and evaluation and control, which enable organisations to improve performance.

Among these four elements, strategy implementation appears to be an important element. However, several studies have shown that strategy implementation is the most

underestimated process because the notion of strategy implementation represents a formal business process that must be translated into well-thought-out, implementable actions, and properly planned activities. (Hambrick & Cannella, 1989). These properly planned activities enable an organisation to take a strategy and make it work (Mišanková, & Kočišová, 2014). However, without a properly planned approach of activities to implementation, the organisation is unlikely to achieve its goals and objectives (Mišanková, & Kočišová, 2014). Indeed, strategy implementation is one factor that determines whether the company will succeed or not (Ndambiri, 2015). Hence, the company needs to address the 'who', 'where', 'when' and 'how' questions to reach its desired goals and objectives. Therefore, this study sought to fill this gap by investigating factors affecting strategy implementation at the Namibia Students Financial Assistance Fund (henceforth, NSFAF).

1.2 Background of the Study

Strategies are crucial elements in the functioning of organisations. However, whereas most organisations have good strategies, successful strategy implementation remains a major challenge (Ndambiri, 2015). Mintzberg (1994) asserts that more than half of the strategies devised by the organisation are never actually implemented. For the past two decades, strategy formulation has been widely regarded as the most important component of the strategic management process compared to strategy implementation and strategy control (Town & Rotich, 2017).

According to Tanga & Bayeh (2020), previous studies in strategic management have been focused on strategy formulation. Although formulating a consistent strategy is difficult for any management team, implementing it and making it work throughout the

organisation is even more challenging (Hrebiniak, 2006). However, recent research indicates that strategy implementation rather than strategy formulation alone is a key requirement for superior business performance (Kaplan & Norton, 2000). It has, therefore, gained considerable attention from various researchers. This is because several publications' outcomes show a scary percentage of the limited success of strategy implementation in many worldwide business organisations (Hourani, 2017).

Speculand (2009) pointed out that there is a growing recognition considered to be the most important problem in the field of strategic management. Most of these problems are not related to strategy formulation but rather to strategy implementation. Therefore, the high failure rate of organisational initiatives in a dynamic business environment is primarily due to poor implementation of new strategies (Speculand, 2009). Similarly, Gakuo & Rotich (2017) argued that although the implementation is usually considered after the strategy has been formulated, still regarded as a key part of strategic management. In addition, implementation is conditioned by management, employees, and their organisation, transformation through the company's culture and structure (Gakuo & Rotich, 2017).

Furthermore, Mišanková & Kočišová (2014) accentuate that the main task of implementation is to make a strategy part of every day's decision which resulted in effective and efficient translation into action and desired results which leaders apply to achieve the goals and objectives of an organisation. A study done by Kimeli (2008) revealed clear evidence from past empirical studies that only 10% of the formulated strategies are successfully implemented, while 90% of well-formulated strategies fail at the implementation stage. A similar study was done by Chinese (2006) in a White Paper

on Strategy Implementation in China. The study articulated that strategy implementation has become the most significant management challenge which all kinds of corporations face at the moment (Guohui & Eppler, 2008). The White Paper of Strategy Implementation indicates that 83% of the surveyed companies failed to implement their strategy smoothly, and only 17% felt that they had a consistent strategy implementation process (Guohui and Eppler, 2008). In addition, in the Economist survey conducted, Tanga & Bayeh (2020) pointed out that 57% of firms were unsuccessful in executing strategic initiatives over the past three years.

In the Namibian environment, a similar study done by Vries (2014) concluded that strategy implementation is a critical phase of the holistic strategic management process, and there is inter-connectivity between all the strategic management phases regarding strategy implementation at the Namibian Local Authority.

The study discovered in the background that strategy implementation has become the most significant management challenge which all kinds of corporations face at the moment in both developing and developed countries. Therefore from this view, the present study sought to explore whether this applies in the Namibian context by empirically investigating the factors affecting strategy implementation at the Namibia Students Finance Assistance Fund.

1.3 Namibia Students Financial Assistance Fund (NSFAF)

The Namibia Students Financial Assistance Fund (NSFAF) was established through an Act of Parliament, Act 26 of 2000, to provide financial assistance to eligible Namibian students to enable them to access higher education and training; and to recover monies issued as loans (GoN, 2000). The Fund is governed by a board appointed by the Minister of Higher Education, Technology and Innovation. The Fund has 67 permanent employees; however, during peak times, services of temporary employees are solicited. The Fund's main purpose is to contribute to the development of Namibia's Human Capital by providing eligible Namibians with financial assistance to access Vocational and Higher Education and Training. Such financial assistance is provided through loans, grants and scholarships.

Since the Fund's inception in 2013 from the Ministry of Education, NSFAF has developed five (5) Strategic Plans driving the institution strategically to attain its objectives. These plans form part of good corporate governance, intended to improve efficiency as indicated through the State-Owned Enterprise Act (GoN, 2019). In the plan, it is presumed that the documents shall guide the management to the priorities, focus energy and resources, strengthen operations and ensure that employees are working towards the common goals. Despite strategic plans which guide the institution to deliver and achieve the set targeted objectives being in place, in recent years, NSFAF has failed to achieve its set targets (NSFAF, 2020).

1.4 Statement of the problem

Strategic management is a crucial component of any firm's success in the business environment; however, numerous studies acknowledge that strategies frequently fail not because of inadequate strategy formulation, but because of insufficient implementation (Guohui & Eppler 2008). Also, Mutanga (2017) observes that a frequent complaint about the strategic planning process is that it produces a document that is never implemented because the organisation ignores or fails to use the precious information depicted in the strategic planning documents. Moreover, the organisation has spent a lot of money (even hiring consultancy), time, personnel and other resources on strategy analysis and formulation. Still, strategic planning has often failed to produce the desired results for organisations. Similarly, Maotwanyane (2017) revealed that even the best-formulated strategy in the world could fail if it is poorly implemented. Hence, there is a need for strategies to be effectively communicated and adequately resourced. Various studies show that many organisations have developed best-formulated strategies that are rarely implemented according to the planned schedules.

A study done in Kenya by Mwaniki (2017) looked at the factors affecting strategy implementation in the Geospatial Industry. It concluded that the organisation has failed to motivate strategy implementation through employee involvement in the decision-making process. In the Namibian environment, a similar study was conducted by Vries (2014) and concluded that strategy implementation is a critical phase of the holistic strategic management process. The same research also concluded that there is inter-connectivity between all the strategic management phases at the Namibian Local Authority. Therefore,

there is a theoretical gap emanating from the previous studies, and hence the present study investigated factors affecting strategy implementation at the Namibia Students Financial Assistance Fund.

1.5 Research Objectives

The study's primary objective was to investigate the factors affecting strategy implementation at the Namibia Students Financial Assistance Fund.

The study's specific objectives were as follows:

- To establish the main factors affecting strategy implementation at the Namibia Students Financial Assistance Fund.
- To identify the challenges faced by the Namibia Students Financial Assistance Fund in strategy implementation.
- To examine the best strategies that the Namibia Students Financial Assistance Fund could take to improve on challenges faced in strategy implementation.

1.6 Significance of the study

The study should contribute significantly by adding to the existing literature in the area of factors affecting strategy implementation, enabling organisations and various stakeholders to make better decisions on strategy implementation. Also, the current study was significant because it was useful in forming a theoretical and empirical knowledge foundation on the factors affecting strategy implementation at the Fund. Besides, the study should equip academics and researchers with the practical aspects of strategy implementation. Finally, the study should help the Fund and other organisations in

Namibia and globally make informed decisions and develop appropriate outcomes for successful strategy implementation.

1.7 Limitation of the study

The study experienced limitations with regards to the unavailability of targeted respondents due to their busy schedules. But I managed to secure appointments; subsequently, the data were collected. Some participants were hesitant in sharing the company information due to the disclosure of confidential company information despite the researcher explaining the purpose and the nature of the study. Through engagement with participants, they come to release the importance of the study to the betterment of the institution.

1.8 Delimitation of the study

This study engaged Namibia Students Financial Assistance Fund employees in Windhoek as a source of data. The study focused on Executive, Middle Management and Operational Staff at the Fund to provide relevant data required for this study. The study only concentrated on the Namibia Students Financial Fund's head office as there are no branches of NSFAP in the other 13 regions in Namibia.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews relevant literature from researchers and academics who have carried out similar studies in the same field, detailing comprehensive existing research. The chapter is divided into the following sections: First, theoretical literature covering a more in-depth discussion of the concepts of strategy, strategic management, strategy implementation, review the findings on factors that influence strategy implementation, challenges in strategy implementation, and finally, finds ways to guide effective strategy implementation. Second, a discussion on five theoretical frameworks which guide strategy implementation. Third, a discussion on the empirical literature. Fourth, a discussion on the developed conceptual framework.

2.2 Theoretical literature

This section helped the study to establish theories that are already in existence, the relationship between them and to what degree the existing theories have been examined.

2.2.1 The Concept of strategy

The word 'strategy' has several meanings, and all of them are relevant and useful to those who are charged with setting strategies for their corporations, businesses or organisations (Nickols, 2016). Mintzberg & Quinn (1998) refer to a strategy as a model or plan that integrates the company's objectives. On the other hand, Fiberesima & Rani (2013) outline strategy as a single, comprehensive and integrated plan designed to ensure the achievement of the company's basic objectives. Similarly, Mišanková & Kočišová (2014)

state that strategy as a complex process is seen as activities that need to be undertaken to achieve company objectives. Moreover, Cacciattolo (2014) refers to strategy as a scope of an organisation's activities, the matching of the organisation's activities and resource capability resulting in achieving the long-term direction of an organisation. Similarly, Johnson, Whittington & Scholes (2011) consider strategy as a determination of an enterprise's long-run goals and objectives and the adoption of courses of action and the allocation of resources necessary for carrying out these goals.

On the other hand, Nambwire (2014) defined strategy by using the five Ps: plan, pattern, position, perspective and ploy. The same author further expounded by saying that a manager differentiates strategy and pattern by having a strategy as a retrospective pattern and strategy as a plan that is looking forward. Kerubo (2010) expands the above definitions by linking strategy to various specific aspects, including, among others: firstly, strategy as a statement of intent, where the strategy has deemed a clarification of corporate purpose as may be defined in the company's mission and vision. Secondly, the strategy is a fit between capabilities and opportunities where strategy is seen as a factor that matches the capabilities of an organisational ability to achieve success. Thirdly, the strategy is regarded as a responsibility of leaders, and Kerubo (2010) further eludes to this by mentioning that leaders define strategies that influence the daily operations of an organisation. In one way, a strategy is a large scale, future-oriented plan for interacting with the competitive environment to optimise the achievement of organisational objectives (Pearce & Robinson, 2011).

As many thoughts imply in their description, these authors underscore important but diverse fundamentals and view that strategy relates to how a given end is to be attained. Therefore, strategic change is important in every organisation because it helps an organisation by taking it from point A to point B, where point B is a better place for a transformed business environment. As other researchers have noted, strategic change and successful strategy implementation are important in organisations.

2.2.2 Strategic Management

Strategic management refers to a set of decisions and actions that lead to the formulation of an effective strategy to achieve the organisation's objectives (Jauch & Glueck, 1988). Pearce and Robinson (2011) define strategic management as a set of decisions and actions that lead to the formulation and implementation of a strategy to achieve the organisation's objectives. The above initial definitions underline the importance of decisions and actions to ensure that organisational objectives are achieved. Strategic management is the art and science of formulating, implementing and evaluating cross-functional decisions that enable an organisation to achieve its objectives (David, 2009). Similarly, Hunger and Wheelan (2001) support the above definition of strategic management by considering the four components of strategic management: environmental scanning, strategy formulation, strategy implementation, and evaluation and control.

Wutungwa (2014) expanded on one of the key components of strategic management: environmental scanning, by explaining that strategic management aims to address the company's capacity to focus on its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that

affect it, develop its scope, resources, build competitive advantages and synergy and create organisational flexibility to respond to changes in the environment.

From the above definitions, strategic management is a set of decisions that assist the organisation in achieving its objectives. For a company to prosper in an altered business milieu requires a well interconnected strategic management process. Kerubo (2010) emphasises that each phase of strategic management is important as it contributes to the outcome of the whole process. However, various studies that were done in companies showed that the most important and most underestimated part is strategy implementation.

On the contrary, Mišanková & Kočíšová, 2014 notes that implementation of the strategy is part of strategic management, and its success is conditioned by managers, employees, their organisation, as well as by the transformation of the company's culture. Čater & Pučko (2010) assert that managers mostly rely on planning and organising activities when implementing strategies, while the biggest obstacle to strategy execution is poor leadership. Watungwa (2014) expanded that there is a gap between formulation and implementation, as organisations put a lot of effort into drafting good plans but do not put equal effort into their realisation.

Hajar (2016) observes that strategic management includes four basic elements: Environmental Scanning, Strategy Formulation, Strategy Implementation, and Evaluation and Control. Hajar (2016) further explains the environmental scanning or strengths, weakness, opportunity, and threats analysis in the first stage. Management observes the external environment for opportunities and threats, then observes the internal environment

to see the strengths and weaknesses. In the second stage, the management comes up with a mission statement that plays an important role in determining the company's goals, strategies, and policies. In the third phase, the company implements a strategy through programs, budgets and procedures. The final stage includes performance evaluation and feedback to ensure precise control of the company's activities.

2.2.3 Strategy implementation

Hunger and Wheelan (2012) define strategy implementation as the total activities and choices required to execute the strategic plan by which strategies and policies are put into action through the development of programs, budgets and procedures. The authors suggest that although implementation is usually considered after a strategy has been formulated, implementation is a key part of strategic management. Similarly, Čater and Pučko (2010) define strategy implementation as the total activities and choices required for the execution of the strategic plan and by which strategies and policies are put into action through the development of programs, budgets and procedures.

Kimeli (2008) emphasises that strategy implementation takes place as a series of steps, programs, investments, and moves over an extended period. The same author explains that management implements strategy by converting broad plans into concrete, incremental actions and results of specific units and individuals. Therefore, based on the above explanations, strategy implementation can only be successful if it yields intended results (Kerubo, 2010).

Campbell, Edgar, and Stonehouse (2011) assert that strategy implementation is essentially an internal administrative activity. The same author expanded that strategy

implementation entails working through others, organising, motivating, culture building and creating strong links between strategy and how the organisation operates. Further, converting the formulated strategy into viable operations will yield the organisation's targeted results. Pettigrew (1987), as cited in Chege (2012), draws his explanation of what strategy implementation means by distinguishing the content of strategy, the outer and inner contexts of an organisation and the process in which strategic change is carried out. Similarly, Thompson and Strickland (1998), as cited in Nderi (2013) observes that strategy implementation is all about acting on what must be done internally to put formulated strategies in place and thus ensuring that targeted results are achieved within the targeted time framework.

2.2.4 Factors that affect strategy implementation

Several studies have indicated that successful strategy implementation is key for any organisation's survival (Fulmer, 1990). Previous studies noted that implementation is seen as one of the challenging factors experienced by management in running their day-to-day operations to achieve the organisational objectives (Aaltonen & Ikavalko, 2002). Moreover, Aaltonen & Ikavalko (2002) found out that even the most superior strategy is useless without implementation. Aaltonen & Ikavalko (2012) noted that several studies have emphasised that organisations seem to have difficulties implementing their strategy. According to Nyamwanza (2013), the involvement of implementers could be the missing link in implementing the strategy. The question is: to what extent is the involvement of implementers during the formulation of the strategy so that buy-in becomes easy (Guruwo, Chiguvi, Guruwo, & Bag, 2017).

Beer & Eisenstat (2000) state that several factors affecting strategy implementation, for example, weak management roles in implementation; a lack of communication; lack of commitment to the strategy, lack of awareness or misunderstanding of the strategy. Also misaligned organisational systems and resources, poor coordination and sharing of responsibilities; inadequate capabilities, competing activities and uncontrolled environmental factors. On the same note, Rajasekar (2014) added that factors that affect strategy implementation could be categorised as leadership style, information availability and accuracy, uncertainty, organisational structure, organisational culture, human resources and technology.

Although most authors agree that these factors affect strategy implementation, each factor's impact is at a different level and carries a different force. According to Cater & Pucko (2010), while a well-formulated strategy, strong and effective pool of skills and human capital are extremely important resources for strategy success, poor leadership is one of the main obstacles in successful strategy implementation. On the other hand, Rajasekar (2014) noted that the need for effective leadership outweighs any other factors. Rajasekar (2014) further emphasised that leadership style in a given organisation influences how the chosen strategies will be implemented. These strategies may cover aspects of organisational structure, the delegation of responsibilities, managers' freedom to make decisions, and incentives and reward systems.

Another factor that affects strategy implementation today and the major reason organisations fail is a lack of internal coherence and proper communication systems among various departments (Gondal & Shahbaz, 2012). Further interdepartmental communication can affect strategy implementation. Its breakdown can have a severe

impact on the efficiency of an organisation and increase the stress level among employees, ultimately resulting in poor performance (Gondal & Shahbaz, 2012).

Another factor affecting strategy implementation, according to Lorange (1998), is that of human resources, which are becoming the key strategic resources in strategy implementation. This is supported by Fulmer (1990), adding that human resources management plays an essential role in the effective implementation of the strategic plan. Nguyen & Nguyen (2017) further support the above views, noting that strategy implementation performance is significantly influenced by human resources partaking in the strategy implementation and human resources significantly influence its success.

Despite the fact, Rajasekar (2014) notes that it is important for both organisational departments and employees to be enthusiastic about implementing the strategy. Furthermore, the same author concludes that getting people involved and having a motivation reward system will positively influence the implementation of the strategy. Again, Rajasekar (2014) proposes that adding technological advancement in terms of speed process and procedures and design will also make a positive contribution to the successful implementation of strategies.

Authors and researchers such as Pella, Sumarwan & Daryanto (2013) have put forward major factors that affect strategy implementation as connected to a mission statement, corporate scorecard, key performance indicators, action plan, performance appraisal and compensation lastly control and monitoring. Pella, Sumarwan & Daryanto (2013) found out that the most important activity in implementing the strategy is the institutionalisation of strategy and supporting frontline staff. According to Bourgeois & Brodwin (1984), it

is important to create a clear direction in the mission, vision and strategy statement and socialise it to all employees. After creating the mission statement, a company's board of directors needs to set up a clear corporate scorecard (Pella, Sumarwan & Daryanto, 2013). Problems occur when the company scorecard and corporate objectives are not communicated to, understood and internalised by every employee (Kaplan & Norton, 2008).

Rampersad (2003) notes that after deciding on a corporate scorecard, the next activities in implementing strategies are creating the organisational unit scorecard and personal scorecard. The personal scorecard serves as a management process to ascertain that the strategy is everyone's responsibility (Pella, Sumarwan & Daryanto, 2013). The other factors that affect strategy implementation relate to the lack of clear key performance indicators for each person or position to support the achievement of corporate strategy (Simons, 2000; Kaplan & Norton, 2001). Pella, Sumarwan & Daryanto (2013) noted that companies are also using key performance indicators that do not get excellent results. This is caused by low-performance targets that create the level of business as usual. Hence, low-performance target setting and the unwillingness of employees or leaders to accept stretching targets for performance present another factor affecting strategy implementation (Pella, Sumarwan & Daryanto, 2013). Setting stretching targets is a prerequisite to making a good improvement action plan (Shah, 2005).

Action plans serve to provide details on achieving the goals as stated in a corporate business objective. Shah (2005) stresses ill-defined key implementation tasks and activities as the main factors affecting strategy implementation. Poor strategy implementation may happen if a company is not clear about programs and action plans

that should be made to implement the company's strategy (Noble, 1999; Okumus, 2003; Bower & Gilbert, 2007).

According to Pella, Sumarwan & Daryanto (2013), strategy implementation involves translating strategic goals into annual performance objectives and aligning and motivating employees. The same authors emphasise that the implementation of activities by individuals or organisational units needs performance appraisal and a rewarding-incentives scheme. Also, failure to align strategy implementation of activities by individuals or units affects strategy implementation.

The last factor affecting strategy is building a control and monitoring system (Pella, Sumarwan & Daryanto, 2013). Kazmi (2008) argued that a company needs to do step evaluation and control after functional and operational implementation to ensure the company achieves effectiveness in strategy implementation.

2.2.5 Challenges in strategy implementation

Johnson & Scholes (2004) suggest that implementing appropriate strategies remain one of the most challenging areas of management. According to Pearce & Robinson (2004), challenges may arise from external or internal sources such as poor strategy, poor implementation, failure to link strategy development and implementation. Musyoka (2011) pointed out that strategy implementation will depend on the type of strategy, organisation, and prevailing circumstances. Therefore, it is important to understand and identify the pitfalls and challenges that can occur to improve strategy implementation. Moreover, Musyoka (2011) further explains that many challenges in strategy implementation can be avoided if strategy development is coupled with implementation.

This is because a lack of understanding of a strategy and the inability to connect strategy formulation and implementation impact successful implementation. David (2001) emphasised Johnson and Scholes's thoughts by explaining that strategy implementation requires personal discipline, commitment, and sacrifice. Sterling (2003) highlights several impediments to strategy implementation, including unanticipated market changes, effective competitors' responses to strategy, insufficient resources, communication drawbacks, lack of focus and poorly conceived business models.

Whereas Hrebiniak (2005) identifies four broad contextual factors that deserve special attention when discussing obstacles to strategy implementation: the change management context, the organisational culture context, the organisational power structure context, and the leadership context. The same author further noted that the four factors affect and are affected by each other. However, when all four are synchronised, the prognosis for effective strategy implementation should be very positive.

For example, several scholars such as Al-Ghamdi (1998) report that 75% of companies lack the effective coordination of the implementation activities. Similarly, Kaplan & Norton (2005)'s findings in a survey about creating the office of strategy management indicates that an average of 95% of the company's employees are unaware of or do not understand the company's strategy.

Giles (1991) observe three reasons why there is an obstacle to strategy implementation. Firstly, a strategy is not a strategy but a mixture of budgets and management wish lists. Secondly, a strategy is not executable, and thirdly, a strategy is not owned by the executors

because they did not participate in its formulation. Therefore people/employees do not accept it as their own.

Al-Ghamdi (1998) points out additional barriers to strategy implementation: competing activities that distract attention from implementing the decision; changes in responsibilities of key employees not defined. Also, key formulation of the strategic decision not playing an active role in implementation; problems requiring top management involvement not communicated early enough; key implementation tasks and activities not sufficiently defined. They furthermore also point to information systems used to monitor implementation being inadequate, overall goals not adequately understood by employees and uncontrolled factors in the external environment.

Similarly, Beer & Eisenstat (2000) used organisational fitness profiling to identify the following strategy implementation barriers: Firstly, unclear strategy and conflicting priorities; Secondly, ineffective senior management team; Thirdly, top-down or laissez-faire senior management leadership style; Fourthly poor vertical communication; Fifthly poor coordination across functions, business or borders and Sixth, inadequate down-line leadership skills and development.

In addition, Palmatier (2008), as cited in Watunga (2014), also point out additional reasons why organisations fail to execute their strategies: Lack of knowledge of strategy and the strategy process and Failure to hold staff accountable for execution. Also, Lack of commitment to the planned strategy; Formulating strategic plans that staff cannot relate to their work; Failure to measure and reward staff for executing the planned strategy. They furthermore cite: Senior management failing to give strategic plans the necessary

attention; Failure to articulate clear, focused and consistent strategies and Failure to consider reinforcements, such as culture, structure, processes, management systems and human resource systems.

Hill, George & Jones (1999) bring the aspects of organisational politics which present another challenge to strategy implementation. The authors stress that organisational politics are tactics that strategic managers engage in to obtain and use power to influence organisational goals and change strategy and structure to further their interests. At the same time, Bryson (2003) notes that changes do not implement themselves, and it is only people that make them happen. This is supported by Thomson and Strickland (1998), who emphasise that selecting people for the key positions by putting a strong management team with the right personnel chemistry and mix of skills is one of the first steps in strategy implementation.

Contrary, Terborg & Ungson (1985) observe that the success of strategy execution depends on the adoption of a compensation system that motivates managers and employees to achieve company goals. Motivating and rewarding good performance for individuals and units are the key success factors in effective strategy implementation (Mwangi, 2014). As further explained by Mwangi (2014) reward systems should align the actions and objectives of individuals with the objects and needs of the firm's strategy.

2.2.6 Ways to guide effective strategy implementation

Radomska (2014) explains that strategy execution aligns essential organisational functions or factors with the chosen strategy. The same author further explains that executives must align the cross-functional organisation factors, structures, systems and

processes, leadership style; staff resources, and shared values with the new strategy to succeed.

In addition, adding to the information system a guide for effective strategy implementation support makes it easier for companies to run their business processes more efficiently and effectively (Gaol, Rahayu & Matsuo, 2020). A better information system in a company enables value addition through system integration. Also, business process automation enhances strategy implementation.

Another aspect of guiding strategy implementation is human resources management which should be strongly organised as a function in organisations. Still, its practices and policies are spread throughout the organisation to help build strong association and coordination among several departments by imposing inter-functional dependency, resulting in improved and effective outcomes (Gondal & Shahbaz, 2012).

Another aspect of guiding effective strategy implementation is through organisational communication which is seen as a fundamental aspect of the organisation (Bell & Martin, 2008). According to Nguyen & Nguyen (2017), communication in an organisation transfers information of staff duties and responsibilities and clarifies new strategic decisions or position changes within an organisation.

In addition, Gondal & Shahbaz (2012) affirm that communication can make staff members feel that they are well-thought-out and significant at the workplace by enhancing collaborations between staff members, functioning in different departments. It should consequently result in fostering job satisfaction, maintaining the organisation's operation, and achieving an organisation's core aims and objectives. Communication benefits an

organisation by bringing together its employees through both upward and downward flow of communication, and it should be encouraged among individuals for better outcomes (Adler & Elmhurst, 1996).

According to Bossidy & Charan (2002), the process of creating a strategy should end with a clear vision and measurable goals. Furthermore, according to the same authors, the company must determine the point of its progress and how it can reach its targets. Therefore, the vision must align with the present context of the organisation. Any wrong translation of the vision into the targets and tasks causes employees to have difficulties with understanding the strategy and its reference to the present duties (Lynch & Smith, 2006). Pearce & Robinson (2000) pointed out four fundamental elements which must be managed to fit a strategy if the strategy is to be effectively institutionalised. These elements include organisational structure, leadership, culture and reward. These should help in the success of the implementation process.

Mišanková & Kočišová (2014) further suggest basic principles that could help the organisation to implement its strategy effectively: firstly, communication of the strategy through the whole company. Employees are not inclined to organisational changes that accompany the implementation of the strategy, so there is a need for effective communication of strategic goals, their achievement as well as their influence on the daily activities of employees. Secondly, involving employees in the implementation of the strategy; giving the initiative to employees in finding an effective way to achieve the company's strategic goals should help eliminate employees' resistance to changes. Thirdly, assignment of responsibilities for strategy projects: defining responsibilities and the financial involvement of employees has a significant impact on the organisation's

success in achieving strategic goals. Fourthly, an adaptation of the organisational structure: the company should adjust the organisational structure to the company's processes in connection with outputs from employees and control systems. Finally, implementation of effective controls: a proper control mechanism needs to be in place in controlling strategy implementation. If no routine and integrative system exist in the company to control, monitor and review the implementation and achievement of the organisational targets, then the strategy implementation becomes ineffective (Pella, Sumarwan & Daryanto, 2013).

2.3 Theoretical framework

A theoretical framework represents the path of the study beliefs and grounds it firmly in theoretical constructs (Adom, Adu-Gyamfi, Agyekum, Ayarkwa, Dwumah, Abass & Obeng-Denteh, 2016). A theory is defined as a set of interrelated concepts, definitions, and propositions that present a systematic view of events or situations by specifying relations among variables, to explain and predict the events or situations (Glanz, Rimer & Viswanath, 2008). This study reviewed the following frameworks and theories which guided the research related to factors affecting strategy implementation at NSFAF.

2.3.1 McKinsey 7S Framework

According to Ravanfar (2015), the goal of the model was to show how the 7S elements of the company: Structure, Strategy, Skills, Staff, Style, and Shared values can be aligned together to achieve effectiveness in a company. Ndambiri supported these (2015), asserting that Structure, Strategy, Skills, Staff, Style, System, and shared values can be aligned together to achieve effectiveness. Furthermore, Ravanfar (2015) state that the key

point of the model is that all seven areas are interconnected and for it to function effectively, change in one area requires a change in the rest of a firm.

This is in agreement with Ndambiri (2015), who found out that if the linkage of the element is not established or elements are not aligned, they can slow down the successes of an organisation. Mišanková & Kočíšová (2014) observe that the 7S model can be used in a wide variety of situations where an alignment perspective is useful. These include: improving the performance of a company, examining the likely effects of future changes within a company, and aligning departments and processes during a merger or acquisition to determine how best to implement a proposed strategy. Van der Maas (2008) notes that the framework is argued to provide a useful visualisation of the key components managers must consider in successfully implementing a strategy. Van der Maas (2008) further added that in the McKinsey model, the 7S areas of the organisation are divided into the soft and harder areas. The soft areas are considered to be hard to manage and include elements such as skills, staff, shared values and style. Furthermore, they are considered as the foundation of the organisation and more likely to create sustained competitive advantage. The hard areas known as strategy, structure and systems are much easier to identify and managed when compared to soft elements. Therefore, it is clear that aligning these 7s elements is a complex task that can become a hindrance to strategy execution (Ndambiri, 2015).

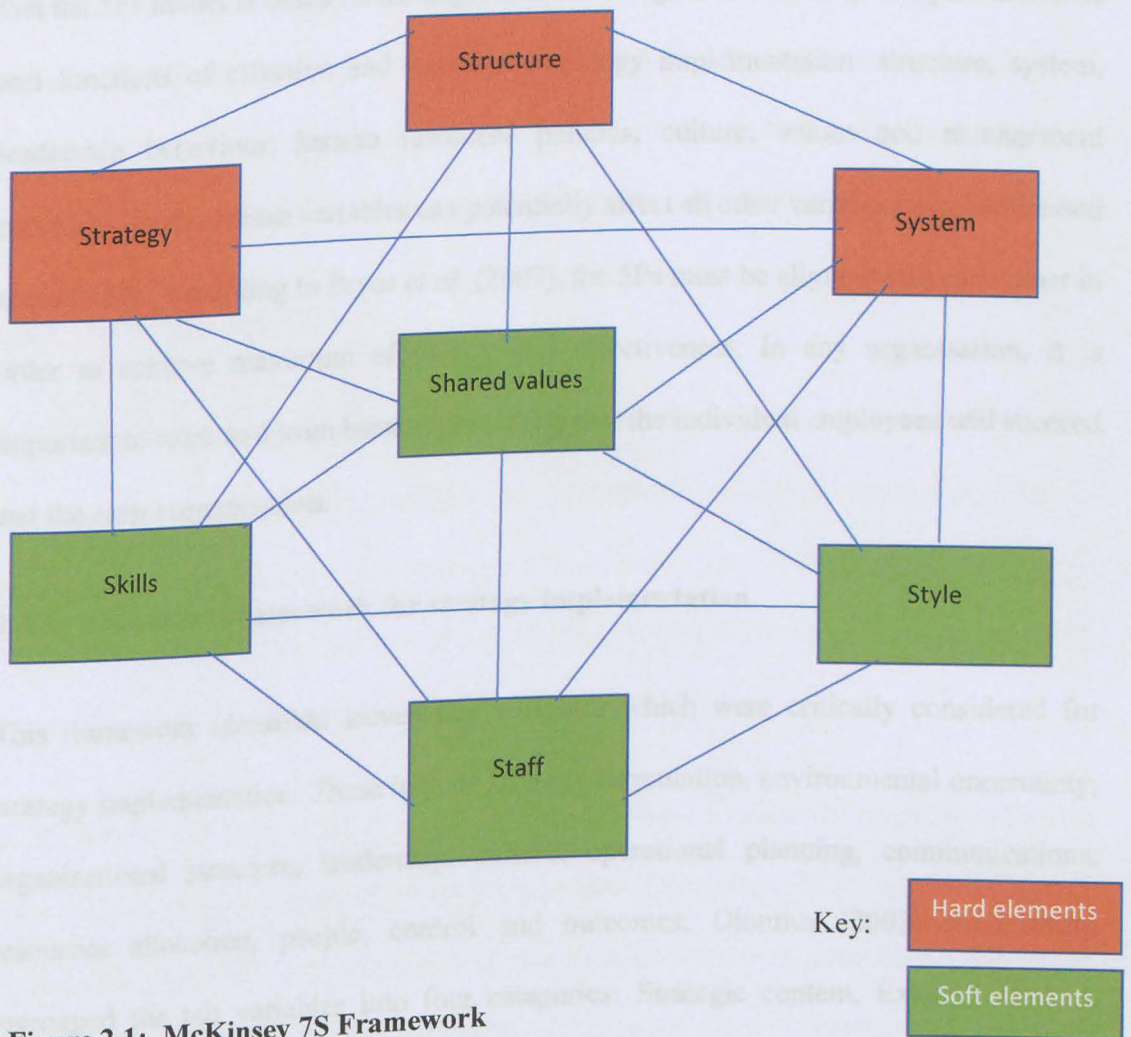


Figure 2.1: McKinsey 7S Framework

Source: Peters & Waterman (1982)

2.3.2 5P's model

According to Pryor, Anderson, Toombs & Humphreys (2007), five variables should be examined when implementing a strategy. Unlike Peter & Waterman (1980), Pryor *et al.* (2007) state that the important variables are Purpose aligned to strategy, Principles aligned to values and culture, Processes aligned to Systems, People aligned to behavioural, and

Performance aligned to measurement and feedback. Pryor *et al.* (2007) further suggested that the 5Ps model is based on the alignment and integration of widely accepted activities and functions of effective and successful strategy implementation: structure, system, leadership behaviour, human resources policies, culture, values and management processes. Each of these variables can potentially affect all other variables if not addressed accordingly. According to Pryor *et al.* (2007), the 5Ps must be aligned with each other in order to achieve maximum efficiency and effectiveness. In any organisation, it is important to work as a team because it is likely that the individual employees will succeed and the entire organisation.

2.3.3 Okumus' Framework for strategy implementation

This framework identified eleven key variables which were critically considered for strategy implementation. These include strategy formulation, environmental uncertainty, organisational structure, leadership, culture, operational planning, communications, resources allocation, people, control and outcomes. Okumus (2003) successfully regrouped the ten variables into four categories: Strategic content, External context, Internal context and organisational process. These are explained as follows: Strategic content includes the development of strategy; Strategic context is divided into external and internal and includes environmental uncertainty, and internal context includes organisational structure, culture and leadership; Operational process includes operational planning, resource allocation, people, communication and control; outcome includes results of the implementation process.

According to Pillania & Kazmi (2008), Okumus' strategy implementation is comprehensive as it attempts to consider an array of variables and binds them into a compact model. Okumus (2003) further clarified that the different implementation factors in these four categories should not be evaluated in isolation because a factor in one group can influence the other factors in the same and other groups.

2.3.4 Management Theories

The research also referred to Management Theories. Management theories are concepts surrounding recommended management strategies, including tools that can be implemented in modern organisations. These tools may include frameworks and guidelines, and such theories provide solid frameworks for working successfully with people (Hussain, Haque & Baloch, 2019).

In addition to that, Lawrence & Steck (1991) state that management theories enable the effectiveness of many system processes and motivation aspects of an organisation's structure and functions. Most importantly, the theories orient command leadership for the enormous task of managing organisations in an environment fraught with volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (Lawrence & Steck, 1991). The management theories reflect three of the earliest schools of thought that affirm certain ways of managerial practices and are namely: classical management theory, neo-classical management theory and modern theory (Hussain, Haque & Baloch, 2019). Of these, classical theories heavily emphasise scientific methods such as administrative approach and bureaucratic structures for managerial practices while focusing on task efficiency. On the other hand, the neo-classical school of thought looks at humans' individual needs,

relations at work, behavioural aspects and motivation behind effectiveness. Lastly, the modern management school found no one-fit method for all situations by considering system-contingent approaches. On the other hand, organisational humanism and management science focus on the core concept to operate in a dynamic environment (Hussain, Haque & Baloch, 2019). In addition to that, management theories are central to implementing strategies or plans in any organisation (Abok, 2013).

2.3.5 The underpinning theory is the Systems Theory

The study used the systems theory to underpin the study. According to Weissenberger-Eibl, Almeida and Seus (2019), an organisation is conceived as a system. The Systems theory is further incumbent on the organisation, considering the various parts of the organisation and the interrelations of the parts (Olum, 2004). This means the systems theory significantly affects management science and understanding of organisations (Olum, 2004). Further, the organisational structures and processes need to be adjusted to support the strategy (Sterling, 2003). Thus, the organisation is embedded in a complex environment aligned with business process resources, systems, structure, skills, style, and shared values in implementing a strategy that determines its success (Weissenberger-Eibl, Almeida & Seus, 2019).

Abok (2013) defines a system as a set of objects or entities that interrelate with one another to form a whole. The systems theory is an area of inquiry through which one attempts to understand the wholeness of scientific and social problems (Bridgen, 2017). Further, the systems theory is concerned with problems and relationships, structures, and interdependence, rather than with the constant attributes of the object (Patrick, Moses &

Martin, 2017). In addition, the systems theory views an organisation as a social system consisting of individuals who cooperate within a formal framework, drawing resources, people, finance from their environment and putting back into that environment the products they produce or the services they offer (Abok, 2013). Meaning, the theory is based on the view that managers should focus on the role played by each part of an organisation rather than dealing separately with the parts (Hannagan, 2002).

According to Abok (2013), the systems theory maintains that an organisation does not exist in a vacuum. The same author further emphasises that it depends not only on its environment but also on a larger system such as the society or the economic system to which it belongs. The systems approach is concerned with interpersonal and group behavioural aspects leading to a cooperation system (Koontz, 2001). The systems theory emphasises the unity and integrity of the organisation and focuses on the interaction between its parts and the interactions with the environment (Patrick, Moses & Martin, 2017). Abok (2013) affirm that organisations must be studied as a whole, taking into consideration the interrelationships among their parts and their relationship with the external environment. Finally, a strategy needs to be implemented to do so, again, a systemic perspective of an organisation is needed (Weissenberger-Eibl, Almeida, & Seus, 2019).

2.4 Empirical literature

A study done by Nabwira (2014) investigated factors affecting the strategy implementation process. The research objectives focused on three major hindrances: organisational design and structure, allocation of resources, and environmental factors

related to barriers affecting strategy implementation in Barclays Bank of Kenya. A descriptive research design was used for the study, and a case study of Nairobi branches was used to represent the views of the staff of Barclays Bank of Kenya. Field research was undertaken using a sample size of 69, selected using stratified random sampling. The data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The findings showed that up to 49% of the respondents agreed that resource allocation and information systems were major factors affecting the implementation of the strategy. The findings also reveal that 46% of the respondents agreed that the advocates of strategy left the organisation during the implementation. The study revealed that the organisation includes its stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the strategy. The study further showed that there needs to be the empowerment of the supervisory level of staff to ensure that coordination of activities is sufficiently effective. The systems need to be sufficiently upgraded to suit the competitive environment, ensure suitability with the competitive environment, and ensure sufficient communication of strategy.

Mwangi (2014) carried out a study on factors affecting strategy implementation in a public university in Kenya and revealed that when an organisations' strategy is not implemented successfully, a gap is created that makes it difficult to achieve success. The research design adopted was a cross-sectional survey design. The study used primary data, which was collected through self-administered questionnaires. Data were analysed using the statistical package for social sciences. The study found out that implementation of strategies in the Universities was affected by organisational culture, structure, resources, top management commitment and communication.

Guzami (2013) examined the factors affecting strategy implementation in Seme Sub County. Data was collected from the chairpersons of the Congressional Budget Office

using questionnaires with semi-structured questions designed to get specific responses. It was established that three factors explained the total variance of factors influencing strategy implementation. These include the human resources contribution factor, the information factor, and the culture and resource factor.

Human resource contribution had the variables coordination and implementation of activities, monitoring, planning, coordination and sharing of the responsibilities, provision of leadership and direction provided by the management committee and implementation of the strategy. Also, culture and resource factor because it has two variables talking about culture and adequacy of factors. Information factor talked about communication being done through organised meetings; information is passed through word of mouth and information being passed through memos to all members.

Patrick, Moses, and Martin (2019) examined the factors affecting strategy implementation among non-governmental organisations in Kenya: Survey of NGO in Nairobi County. The study used a cross-sectional survey research design, and the target population of the study was the local NGOs in Nairobi covering the sectors of health, youth, welfare, micro-finance and relief. Data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire, while data analysis was done using frequencies and descriptive statistics.

The results indicated that the most common management style used by NGOs was the democratic style chosen by most respondents, while the bureaucratic style was the least used. The findings also show that the flow of communication in most NGOs followed a top-down approach. However, this is a concern for this study since the lack of a clear multi-directional flow of communication may affect the implementation of strategic plans. The results further indicate that organisational culture influences the implementation of

strategic plans, and all goals in organisational resources had a positive mean showing that they all affected strategy implementation.

2.5 Conceptual framework

Smyth (2004) define the conceptual framework as a set of broad ideas and principles taken from relevant fields of enquiry and used to structure a subsequent presentation. According to Mugenda & Mungenda (2003), a conceptual framework is a hypothesised model identifying the model under study and the relationship between the dependent and independent variables.

For this study, a conceptual framework was developed, which articulated the relationship based on eight Independent variables and one dependent variable influencing the factor affecting strategy implementation at NSFAF, as shown in figure 2.2 below.

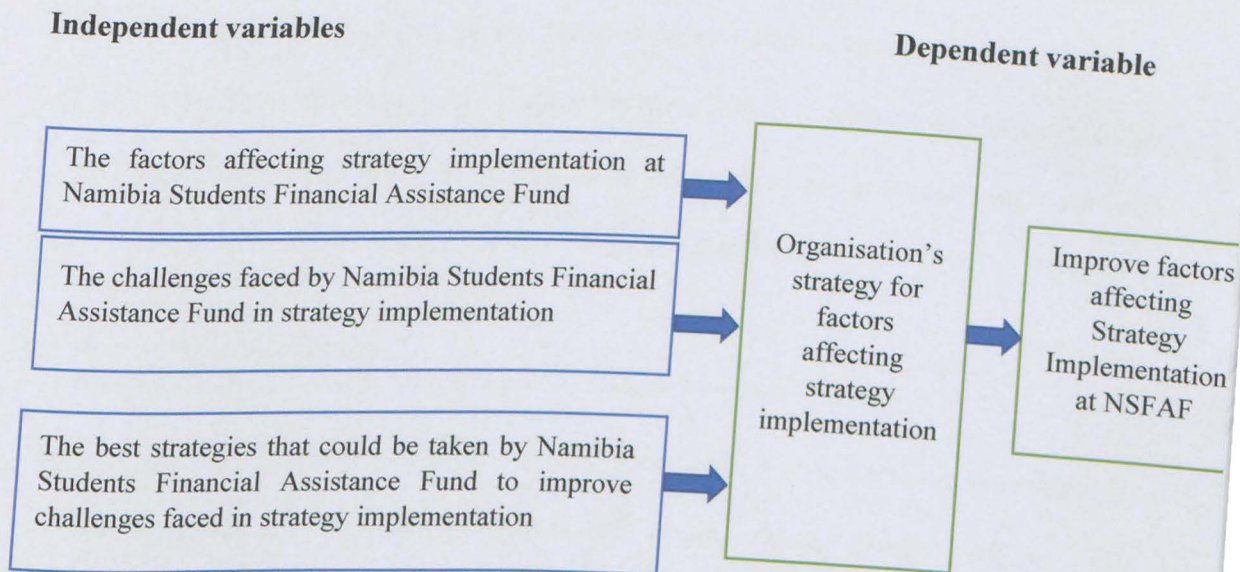


Figure 2.2: Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher's Construct (2019)

2.6 Chapter Summary METHODOLOGY

In summary, this chapter dwelt on a comprehensive observation from numerous researchers revealing diverse views on studies around strategy implementation. This chapter reviewed different existing theoretical literature, theoretical frameworks, empirical literature and a developed conceptual framework that guides the current study. The next chapter covers various tools of research methodology.

2.1 Research Philosophy

The study used the interpretivist philosophy. Interpretivism is a research philosophy associated with qualitative studies, enabling the researcher to understand the phenomenon and its complexity. This is done in its unique context instead of generalising the basic of understanding for the whole population (Ozawa, 2007). Eisenhardt, Pater (2001) stated that interpretivist aims to the approaches emphasizing the meaningful nature of people's behavior and participation in social and cultural life.

2.2 Research Design

The study adopted a case study design. A case study design was used mainly because it enabled the study to explore and understand an individual, group, institution or phenomenon in a single real life context (Morgan & Maguire, 2008). This design is considered appropriate instead of a broader data-driven approach as it allows the researcher to explore the context and the factors affecting strategy implementation at the National

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the particular type of methodology used and adopted to investigate factors affecting strategy implementation. The chapter further discusses the methods and techniques that were used in the study to collect data, the type of data and how the data was analysed. In addition, the chapter further discusses the research philosophy, research design, population and sampling, sample size, instruments, data collection procedure and data analysis.

3.2 Research philosophy

The study used the interpretivism philosophy. Interpretivism is a research philosophy employed in qualitative studies, enabling the researcher to understand the phenomenon and its complexity. This is done in its unique context instead of generalising the base of understanding for the whole population (Creswell, 2007). Furthermore, Elster (2007) states that interpretivism refers to the approaches emphasising the meaningful nature of people's character and participation in social and cultural life.

3.3 Research Design

The study adopted a case study design. A case study design was used mainly because it enabled the study to explore and understand an individual, group, institution or phenomenon in a single unit of analysis (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). This design is considered appropriate instead of a cross-sectional survey because the study involves an in-depth investigation into factors affecting strategy implementation at the Namibia

Students Financial Assistance Fund. Kombo and Tromp (2006) emphasise that a research design can be regarded as an arrangement of conditions for collection to combine relevance with the research purpose. Mwajuma (2013) notes that a research design is a plan and structure of investigation formed to answer the research question. This design has been chosen because it enables the researcher to closely examine the data within a specific context and meaning in true essence, explore and investigate contemporary real-life phenomena through detailed contextual analysis of limited numbers of events or conditions and their relationships (Zainal, 2007).

3.4 Research Strategy

The qualitative research approach was used in the study. The qualitative research approach was employed in this study mainly because it allowed the participants to express their opinions, as they were accorded freedom of response. According to Flick (2014), qualitative research is interested in analysing subjective meaning or the social production of issues, events, or practices by collecting non-standardised data and analysing texts and images rather than numbers and statistics. Rahman (2017) defines qualitative research as an umbrella term covering an array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world.

The qualitative research approach was appropriate for this study as it produces a thick description of participants' feelings, opinions, and experiences and interprets the meanings of their actions (Rahman, 2016). Qualitative research methods were appropriate and included aspects such as participants' observation, unstructured interviews, direct

observation, describing records. These are most commonly used for collecting data focusing on the researcher interacting with participants directly and consequently, leads to data collection as subjective and detailed. The qualitative research approach was used fundamentally because it allows the researcher to interact with the participants directly through the interview when collecting data either individually or in groups.

3.5 Population and sampling

The study targeted all employees at the Namibia Students Financial Assistance Fund (NSFAF) head office based in Windhoek since there are no offices or branches in the other 13 Regions. The study engaged NSFAF staff who consist of executives, middle management, supervisors and operational staff members. The target population was 30, of which 6 were Executive Management, ten middle management and operational staff members from a total population of 67. The study employed stratified purposive sampling. A stratified purposeful sampling approach was used to lend credibility to a research study when enough information is known to identify characteristics that may influence how the phenomenon is manifested (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

3.6 Sample size

The study was qualitative. Therefore, a sample size of 30 participants, including 6 Executive Management, ten middle management, and 14 junior staff members, was used as a sample representation drawn from the study's population. The study is qualitative; hence Dworkin (2012) articulated that a target population of 30 was considered sufficient to be a representative sample size in qualitative studies. The researcher used stratified sampling because it enabled the study to narrow the difference between different types of

individuals through classification, which is conducive to extracting representative samples and reducing the sample size (Shi, 2015). Similarly, Taherdoost (2016) pointed out that stratified sampling is used in a qualitative study to ensure that every stratum is adequately represented.

3.7 Research Instruments

The study interviewed 30 participants from NSFAF using semi-structured interview questions to gather qualitative data. The researcher used semi-structured interview questions because they address participants' perspectives regarding an experience on the research topic and are diversified into different types, each uniquely oriented to assessing, confirming, validating, refuting, or elaborating upon existing knowledge and the discovery of new knowledge (McIntosh & Morse, 2015).

3.8 Data collection procedure

The researcher made an appointment with the Chief Human Capital and Corporate Affairs Officer at NSFAF to get permission to engage the participants. Semi-structured interview questions were used to collect data from thirty (30) staff members, including management. They subsequently formed a rich source of information that would satisfy the objectives of the study. The interviews were noted and recorded using a cell phone. The survey was composed of two sections which included the demographics and non-structured questions based on the research objectives.

3.9 Data analysis

The qualitative data was gathered from 30 sampled staff members at NSFAF and subjected to content analysis using interpretative techniques. The researcher used Excel to do content analysis by analysing interviewees' responses by coding the responses and consolidating them into themes. According to Bless (2005), data analysis entails examining, categorising, and summarising information to establish meaning and maintain evidence.

Interpretive techniques were used to rearrange, categorise and organise qualitative data in a meaningfully categorical data format (Johnson, 2008). The qualitative data was analysed and presented in charts and graphs and allowed for the drawing of conclusions.

3.10 Research ethics

The study sought an ethical clearance letter from the University of Namibia, where the student was studying. This enabled the researcher to engage NSFAF staff to provide relevant data required in the study. Individual informed consent was sought from participants, and confidentiality was ensured. Their responses were only used for research purposes. The data will be stored in a lockable safe for five (5) years and then disposed of by shredding.

3.11 Chapter summary

This chapter explained the methods, techniques and other tools used in the study to collect data, the type of data to be collected, and how the data will be analysed. The selection of the methods and techniques was influenced by the study's main objective, which is an

investigation of factors affecting strategy implementation at NSFAP in Namibia. The next chapter will present the results and their discussion to come up with the research findings.

4.1 Introduction

This chapter reports the results and conclusions with findings based on the discussion of the results from the analysis of the data. The data was collected from the field is based on the following research objectives to establish the main factors affecting strategy implementation at NSFAP, identify the challenges faced by NSFAP in strategy implementation, and recommend the best strategies that the NSFAP could take to address challenges faced in strategy implementation. The findings are presented based on the discussions held with the respondents.

4.2 Presentation of Demographics

The researcher had an opportunity to interview forty (40) NSFAP staff members at different levels, as indicated in table 1 below:

Designation	No. respondents	Response out of the total sample %	Gender				Number of the years worked			
			F	M	1-5	6-10	F	M		
Executive management	3	10%	0	3	0	1	0	2	0	
Middle management	4	13%	1	3	0	1	0	1	3	
Supervisory staff	3	10%	2	1	0	0	1	1	1	
Support staff	20	67%	12	8	5	3	7	5	5	
Total	40	100%	15	25	5	5	9	11	10	

Table 1.1. Demographics and response rate

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter reports the results and comes up with findings based on the discussion of the results from the analysis of the data. The data was collected from the field is based on the following research objectives: to establish the main factors affecting strategy implementation at NSFAF, identify the challenges faced by NSFAF in strategy implementation, and recommend the best strategies that the NSFAF could take to address challenges faced in strategy implementation. The findings are presented based on the discussions held with the respondents.

4.2 Presentation of Demographics

The researcher had an opportunity to interview thirty (30) NSFAF staff members at different levels, as indicated in table 1 below:

Designation	Res pons e	Response out of the total sample %	Gender				Number of the year(s) worked			
			F		M		1-5		6-10	
			F	F%	M	M%	F	M	F	M
Executive management	3	10%	0	0%	3	100%	0	1	0	2
Middle management	4	13%	1	3%	3	70%	0	1	0	3
Supervisory staff	3	10%	2	7%	1	%	0	0	2	1
General staff	20	67%	12	40%	8	27%	5	3	7	5
Total	30	100%	15	50%	15	50%	5	5	9	11

Table 4.1. Demographics and response rate

Table 4.1 above shows that most participants in the interview represented the general staff with an overall 67%. This is followed by middle management with 13%, and executive management and supervisory staff contribute 10% each. The results demonstrate a higher concentration of general staff, emphasizing those at the low level of strategic management. Interestingly, the study shows equal participation between males and females, showing a fair gender representation.

The age group of participants gave an even distribution across different designations and gender. The respondents were slightly dominated by the age category between 30-35 and 40-45. The age distribution also demonstrates that NSFAP is dominated by the youthful staff, leaving the age group above 50 years only with one respondent.

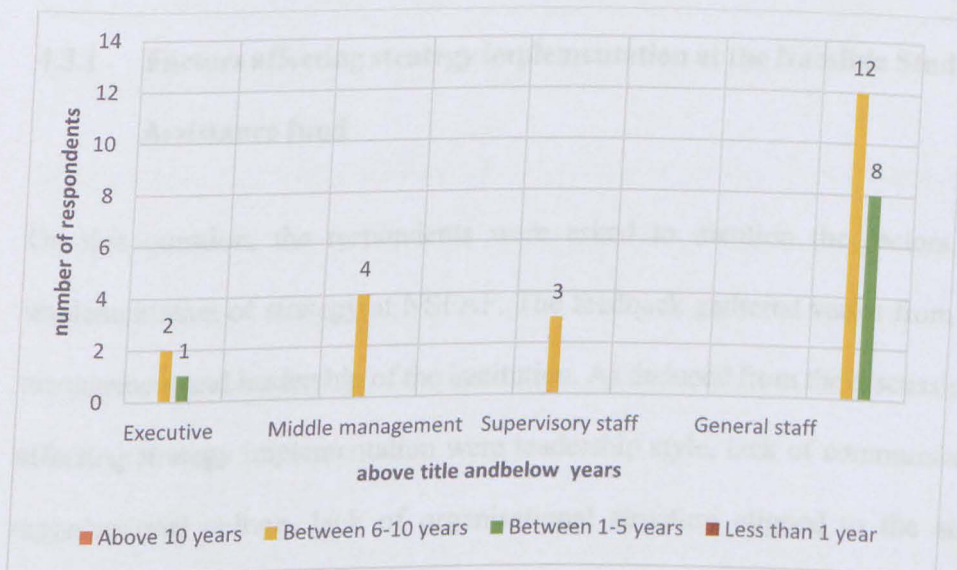


Figure 4.1. Number of the year(s) worked at NSFAP

Figure 4.1 above shows that among the respondents, no one had worked for less than 1 year at NSFAP. Most of the respondents, up to 67%, had worked between 6-10 years at

NSFAF, while 33% had worked between 1-5 years. This data shows that most of the respondents had worked for NSFAF since the institution's inception in 2013 and should have vast knowledge and experience of NSFAF strategy implementation.

4.3 Presentation of structured questions

This section consists of three questions that were administered through a semi-structured interview guide. In line with McIntosh and Morse (2015), a semi-structured interview ascertains participants' perspectives in providing their experience on the research topic. The researcher used non-structured questions through focus group discussions and individual interviews. Content analysis was conducted using an Excel spreadsheet by analysing interviewees' responses by coding the responses and consolidating them into themes.

4.3.1 Factors affecting strategy implementation at the Namibia Students Financial Assistance fund

On this question, the respondents were asked to mention the factors affecting the implementation of strategy at NSFAF. The feedback gathered varies from operations to management and leadership of the institution. As deduced from the discussion, the factors affecting strategy implementation were leadership style, lack of communication, lack of organisational culture, lack of organisational structure aligned to the strategic plan, system/processes and information technology support. Furthermore, lack of organisational resources, lack of human resources management guidance, lack of performance management system implementation and lack of control and monitoring were mentioned. These factors were expressed in statements such as: "executives don't

listen to general staff” (executive) “, there is a vacuum at leadership level” (middle man); “management have failed to control, guide, direct on key functional departments such as recovery, awards, payments and recovery” (middle management); “lack of accountability from leadership and managers” (supervisor); “ineffective decisions made by leadership” (supervisor); “lack of leadership planning and vision” (supervisor); performance indicators not aligned with organisational objectives” (middle man); “poor performance management system” (general staff) “unrealistic targets” (general staff); “easy performance indicator and not aligned to organisational objectives”.

Responding to the question, respondents also indicated that teamwork, openness and transparency were lacking in the institution. This is found in statements such as: “there is a gap between executives and managers” (supervisor); “teamwork is lacking in the institution” (general staff); “there is lack of trust from stakeholders” (general staff) and “employees don’t live by organisational values” (general staff).

In relation to organisational structure, respondents indicated that the structure was not designed to optimise direct decision-making authority to appropriate persons and staff in strategy implementation. Reference was made that there were delays in providing a decision on strategy implementation due to the structure, creating multiple layers of management before reaching the general staff.

In relation to the lack of human resources management guidance, respondents indicated delays in staff appointments to core positions. Positions on the structure were still vacant since the approval of the structure six years ago. Replacement of staff also took long, creating a gap in the implementation. Reference was made in the statements such as: “poor placement in core functional department such as operations, customer care and recovery”

(middleman); “too much acting role” (supervisor); too much acting role and temporary staff” (general staff); “human resources lack competency” (general staff) and “inadequate human capital” (general staff).

The respondents also expressed concerns about optimal utilisation of the system to support organisational tasks, indicating that the system is not integrated. Statements such as, “system is not aligned to the operations of the institution” (middle management) “system was not synchronised” (middle management); “business processes are not aligned to each other” (general staff); “lack of seamless automated and integrated system support from Information and Technology” (general staff) and “inadequate resources” (supervisor). Reference is given to the process of verification, confirmation and approval of student files that are still carried from one division to another manually, for example, registry, awards, payments, finance and recovery” (general staff).

Most of the respondents also expressed concerns about a lack of control and monitoring towards the set organisational goals and objectives. This is found in the statements such as: “inability to measure and assess the activities, tasks of individuals and organisation towards the set target of organisational objectives and goals of the Fund” (general staff) and “Lack of monitoring and support” (General staff).

4.3.2 What challenges are faced by NSFAF in strategy implementation?

In response to this question, respondents were asked to indicate challenges faced by NSFAF due to the factors identified. During the discussion, the following challenges were identified: lack of strategic direction from the executive management, lack of communication, lack of guidance from human resources, process/system and technology

not streamlined, lack of maintaining organisational culture, performance indicators not aligned to the organisation's objectives, mission and vision, absence of control and monitoring and re-integration of the Fund back to the line Ministry of Higher Education, Technology and Innovation (MHETI).

The references made to these challenges are illustrated in statements as follows: "No one takes responsibility of a task or job lagging behind" (general staff); "Management doesn't listen to employees, and this discourages employees" (general staff) and "Poor communication with employees" (general staff). For example, "the Fund has a newly approved structure that was not communicated to employees according to the respondents, which brings uncertainty" (middle management).

The respondents also expressed challenges of the negative perception of the Fund due to lack of consistency in providing feedback and raising misunderstanding among stakeholders. With regards to lack of maintaining organisational culture, the respondents observed the following challenges: "employees take a long way to adjust to changes" (middle management) and "employees do not work together" (middle management); "unmotivated, unhappy staff" (Supervisor); "low employee morale, employee frustration" (Supervisor) and "lack of trust amongst employees, unfair treatment" (general staff).

Another challenge that the respondents indicated was the process, system and technology. In this challenge, the respondents indicated that "Business processes were not streamlined, certain processes were done manually resulting in the inefficiency of the operations" (middle management). These were found in statements such as "tasks not simplified to eliminate unnecessary steps of adhoc" (middle management). "System not linked within

the operational department (are in silo) and not integrated or automated, still manual based system” (general staff).

Another challenge the respondents made reference was: “the Fund is run in a directive and not sustainable manner; as a result, the recovery function has not been successful resulting in poor implementation” (Middle management). This has further resulted in “unsustainability and bringing uncertainty to employees as the Fund relies on the Government for its funding while the recovery is not taken as a priority to recover from its old beneficiaries” (General staff).

Another challenge that most respondents indicated and expressed concern about was a lack of education and training in strategic management from human resources resulting in not owning the process on strategy implementation. Middle management and below respondents further indicated that there were acting positions taking long to be filled in core functional departments; limiting the respective employee in terms of accountability and ability to be involved in strategic decision-making.

Another challenge indicated by all respondents was the strategic objectives that were not aligned accordingly when cascaded down to departmental and individual levels. Most of the respondents indicated further that the Fund had an Ineffective performance management system that does not serve the intended purpose. Though the respondents indicated that the performance management system policy was available, it lacked a specialist section to drive it, hence posing a challenge to strategy implementation.

Another challenge most of the respondents indicated was the lack of control and monitoring of the performance management system at the institution. Reference was

found in the statements such as: “ineffective management implementation of the strategy” (middle management). Respondents indicated that performance agreements and appraisals were in place but ineffective as it is.

Another challenge from the middle management and the general staff was the re-integration of the Fund back to the line ministry. Reference was made in the statements such as “re-integration creates lack of uncertainty if employees are still going to keep their employment” (middle management). “Re-integration causes uncertainty to employees as jobs are unsecured” (General staff). Respondents further indicated that the discussion of re-integration started three to four years ago and have not yet been finalised. This brought continuous stress among employees and affected productivity.

4.3.3 What changes would you recommend to NSFAF to improve strategy implementation?

In response to this question, respondents were asked to recommend changes to address the challenges experienced in strategy implementation. During the discussion, respondents recommended regular engagements between the management and the general staff. This was expressed in statements such as “executive management must consult and listen to general staff members’ ideas” (Executive management); “executive management to be proactive, not reactive” (middle management); “management should engage employees in decision-making strategies and ideas” (General staff) and “management needs to improve the overall organisational culture of the institution by being more open and franker in all their dealings” (executive management).

With reference to communication, respondents indicated that open discussion of the strategy with all staff members is recommended once the Board has approved it. This should be done with a clear emphasis on how each position fits into the bigger picture and what are the key expectations from each position towards the realisation of the overall strategy. This approach will ensure that the entire institution has a common purpose that is understood by all involved. Furthermore, respondents recommend open communication that is found in the statement such as “Have effective communication which may improve processes and procedures which enhance greater efficiencies, help lessen the chances for misunderstanding and potentially reduce grievances and lawsuits” (middle management). “Provide feedback maintaining transparency through communication both internal and external stakeholders and transformation on communication” (middle management) and “improve on communication and be consistent and transparent” (General staff).

With reference to the lack of guidance from Human Resources management, most respondents indicated that employees should be capacitated through training, induction and awareness on strategic management. Furthermore, respondents also recommended that the Fund applies the Employee Relation policy to reinforce the designed culture. Regarding organisational structure, respondents recommend aligning organisational structure to the strategic plan to create fit for purpose.

With reference to the process/system and technology, respondents indicated a need for a better system to be integrated for the division to work collectively or work together and thus bring efficiency to the organisation and enhance cross-functional relationships among departments and divisions.

With reference to the performance management system, respondents recommended: "Actual execution of strategic objectives to be a policy matter, and to be formulated into workable and realistic key performance indicators that are aligned to organisational goals and objectives" (middle management). Awareness of strategic objectives is also needed among staff members.

Activities formulated should be closely monitored to ensure that activities are kept within the parameters of strategic goals and objectives. Introduce quarterly control measures to monitor and evaluate the set activities of the organisation through timely audits of activities set in relation to the organisation's strategic objectives.

Regarding uncertainty about re-integration of the Fund into the line ministry, respondents recommend the shareholder make a clear decision for the organisation whether the Fund is going to be re-integrated or not as this brings uncertainty among staff members. Open discussion between employees and shareholders is required to pave the way for and restore trust and commitment.

Discussions

This section provides a discussion of the data analysis and inferences associated with the study result. The data collected was discussed in relation to the literature review in chapter 2 of this study. Focusing on factors affecting strategy implementation at NSFAF, challenges faced by NSFAF in strategy implementation and recommendations for the best strategies to improve on challenges faced in strategy implementation at NSFAF.

4.3.3.1 Factors affecting strategy implementation at NSFAF

Various factors were identified to have a negative effect on strategy implementation at NSFAF.

4.3.3.1.1 Leadership directive

Most respondents identified areas pertaining to lack of leadership directives as the main factor affecting strategy implementation. The respondents observed a leadership gap in the organisation due to a lack of guidance on strategy implementation. Employees felt there was no sufficient control and guidance provided to critical functions of the Fund, leading to a lack of accountability and poor performance. The executive management is supposed to drive the organisation towards its vision and mission as set out in the strategy and enable it to achieve its strategic objectives. Beer & Eisenstat (2000) support these unclear strategies and conflicting priorities, ineffective senior management team, top-down or laissez-faire senior management style, poor vertical communication, poor coordination across functions, business or borders, and lastly, inadequate down-line leadership skills and development leads to ineffective strategy implementation. It can be concluded from the respondents that the executive management was not giving the strategies that were put in place the necessary attention for implementation.

4.3.3.1.2 Communication gap within the institution

Another factor affecting strategy implementation revealed in this study was the communication gap. The study reveals that there was a communication gap between different departments and levels of the structure. As lack of communication within the

department resulted in teamwork, consequently hampering strategy implementation and ultimately goals and objectives not achieved as set out. Nguyen & Nguyen (2017) points out that communication is an organisation's act of transferring information on staff duties and responsibilities and clarifying new strategic decisions or positional changes within a company. In addition, Gondal and Shahbaz (2012) affirm that communication can make staff members feel that there are well-thought-out plans at the workplace by enhancing collaborations between themselves, functioning in different departments and consequently fostering job satisfaction, maintaining the operations of the organisation and achieving the organisation's core aims and objectives.

Further reference was made from the general staff "Top-down communication was the most practised way of communication used at the Fund, such as decisions and procedures communicated on an instruction basis.

4.3.3.1.3 Systems integration, processes and IT support

Another factor affecting strategy implementation was the lack of systems integration, Information technology support. This factor affects the process transactions within the department's core functions and inhibits strategy implementation due to manual operations. Although information and technology facilities supporting the operations and processes are available, they are not linked and fully operational. Most of the key functions are still carried out manually. According to Rajasekar (2014), adding technological advancement to the systems, processes and procedures is aimed to advance the operations and improve efficiency, a situation that was overlooked at the Fund and affecting the successful implementation of strategies.

4.3.3.1.4 Guidance from human resources management

Lack of guidance from the human resource department was also identified as a factor affecting strategy implementation. The study noted a lack of trust and unfair treatment that was attributed to low morale among staff members. Capacity development initiatives were also not prioritised to ensure staff members understood the key responsibilities. Lorange (1998) observed that human resources are becoming the key strategic resources in strategy implementation. This was supported by Fulmer (1990), who added that human resources management plays an important role in the effective implementation of strategic plans and investment in employees with knowledge and skills required to implement the strategies at hand becomes crucial.

4.3.3.1.5 Organisational culture

One of the factors affecting strategy implementation was the behaviour of the staff members. The study noted that successful strategy implementation requires the involvement of the entire staff members teamwork. This involves culture such as effective executive management style, middle management, and general staff members' adherence requirements. As indicated by David (2001), strategy implementation requires personal discipline, commitment, and sacrifice.

4.3.3.1.6 Lack of organisational structure aligned to a strategic plan

The organisational structure is essential in contributing to strategy implementation. Although the Fund is operating with an approved structure, it has been a while since it was approved. Therefore, a competitive environment such as systems and processes was

needed as per the approved business strategic plan to suit the business's current context. A company should adjust the organisational structure to the company's systems, processes in connection with outputs from employees and control systems (Mišanková & Kočišová, 2014).

4.3.3.1.7 Performance indicators misalignment to organisational goals and objectives

Performance indicators misalignment to organisational goals and objectives was another factor identified by the study. Although the performance management system was available to guide the Fund, it was not properly executed. The challenge was attributed to performance indicators that were not aligned to the key functions of the division or departments, resulting in misunderstanding and obstructing strategy implementation (Simons, 2000; Kaplan & Norton, 2001).

If the key performance indicators for each person or position do not support the achievement of corporate strategy, then the implementation will be affected. This is supported by Pella, Sumarwan & Daryanto (2013), who noted that companies are also using key performance indicators that do not get excellent results. This is caused by low-performance targets that create the level of business as usual and may affect strategy implementation.

Furthermore, the study indicated a lack of objective performance assessment and achievement of individual performance, which was not associated with recognition and compensation. Though there was an existing performance agreement, less consideration on the performance appraisal affects the quality of strategy implementation. This was supported by Terborg & Ungson (1985), who noted that the success of strategy execution

depends on the adoption of a compensation system that motivates managers and employees to achieve company goals. Motivating and rewarding good performance for individuals and units are considered the key success factors in effective strategy implementation (Mwangi, 2014).

4.3.3.1.8 Control and monitoring

The study showed that the control and monitoring system at the Fund was not effective. This is because there was no routine and integrative system in control that monitors and reviews the implementation of business targets. The organisation operates inefficiently and out of compliance with applicable laws, regulations, policies, and business processes without control and monitoring measures.

This is supported by Pella, Sumarwan & Daryanto (2013), who indicated that the lack of building a control and monitoring system affects strategy implementation. This is also emphasised by Kazmi (2008), adding that an organisation needs to do step evaluation and control after functional and operational implementation to make sure the company is achieving effectiveness in strategy implementation. To determine the extent to which the targeted goals and objectives are achieved, the Fund needs to build a control and monitoring system that will be used to measure performance against the set targets.

4.3.3.2 Challenges faced by NSFAF in strategy implementation

4.3.3.2.1 Lack of strategic direction from the executive management

The study revealed a lack of direction from the executive management to drive the institution to the set targets. The institution is driven by a three-year strategic plan with

set objectives. However, the challenge observed was the inability to implement it. This was alluded to by several scholars, such as Al-Ghamdi (1998), who reports that 75% of companies lack the effective coordination of the implementation activities. Similarly, Kaplan & Norton (2005)'s findings in a survey on creating the office of strategy management indicate that an average of 95% of the company's employees are unaware of or do not understand the company's strategy.

The executive management is seen as being comprised of qualified professionals heading departments with an understanding of the institution's core business. However, the approach of providing directing, motivating, guiding, and managing staff members lack synergy. Leadership was lacking in providing strategic direction that leads to a lack of accountability and transparency. The fact that the executive management did not listen to the general staff also impacted facilitating strategy implementation.

4.3.3.2.2 Lack of communication within the institution

The study's outcome indicates a disconnect of communication and lack of coordination within the departments, which inhibit strategy implementation. Al-Ghamdi (1998) pointed out additional barriers to strategy implementation, which include problems requiring top management involvement not communicated early enough, bringing an obstacle of challenges in strategy implementation of an organisation. This was the challenge outlined by this study when the respondents indicated that they have noticed that departments work in silos since staff members don't know what is happening in other departments. Furthermore, providing feedback was also a challenge, and sometimes inconsistency was observed. For example, only some departments held briefing meetings regularly, while

others do not have such a platform. This created a challenge of top-down communication style leaving staff inputs and voices not heard. Tasks and activities were assigned from the executive management through instructional mode. The executive management within some departments was not sharing information on time with the staff, leaving them not aware of the institution's strategic direction.

4.3.3.2.3 Lack of guidance from Human resources management

Lack of guidance from human resources management to employees was also one of the challenges identified. Although human resources management is considered as the most valuable section of the Fund in steering and enabling the institution into the best management practice, little or no help was received.

The Fund's reputation had suffered as employees did not get proper guidance and support required to understand the non-compliance with laws, regulations and other requirements that occurs and at times leads to legal action. As indicated by Palmatier (2008) as cited in Watunga (2014), the reasons why organisations fail to execute their strategies is because of the following: Lack of knowledge of strategy and the strategy process, failure to hold staff accountable for execution, lack of commitment to the planned strategy, formulating strategic plans that staff cannot relate to their work, failure to measure and reward staff for executing the planned strategy, senior management failing to give strategic plans the necessary attention, failure to articulate clear focused and consistent strategies and, failure to consider aspects such as culture, structure, processes, management systems and human resources systems.

4.3.3.2.4 Process/system and technology not streamlined

The business' existing system was not streamlined to the business processes; most processes were done manually, causing inefficiency in the process of strategy execution. Sterling (2003) highlights several impediments to this situation, such as lack of focus and poorly conceived business models and challenges when an organisation brings in new business processes, systems and technology without proper management and training for their employees.

At NSFAP, the technology keeps changing with different systems introduced. The new systems introduced take time for the operation staff to adjust accordingly since training was required and again to adjust to the newly installed systems. Moreover, the said systems were not linked to one another and not fully integrated. This has affected the efficiency in key functions such as awarding students on time, paying students on time, and the effort to recover money offered to students through loans.

4.3.3.2.5 Lack of performance culture

The designed culture was identified as a problem at NSFAP. Employees that have worked long for the Fund took comfort with the status quo of doing work. This had created resistance to change, inhibiting new strategy implementation. Most staff were found to have lost trust due to unfair treatment. Some of them felt unmotivated and had low morale and no focus. As a result, there is a lack of discipline among non-performing employees, which affects the performance of the committed employees in executing tasks and activities. David (2001) emphasised that strategy implementation requires personal

discipline, commitment, and sacrifice to reduce challenges. However, human resource management remains key in driving the performance culture among employees.

4.3.3.2.6 Performance indicators not aligned to the organisation's objectives, mission and vision

Although the Fund had a three-year strategic plan (2019-2022) in place, employees were not involved in the development process. This creates a challenge with the implementation process, especially when developing individual or departmental performance indicators. The strategic objectives were not aligned accordingly when cascaded down to department and individual levels. Therefore, the performance indicators developed were not realistic and did not support the corporate strategy. Furthermore, the performance management system was no longer effective or serving the intended purposes to drive the institution to its desired goals. The assessment done on these indicators was subjective, creating a huge gap between the set targets and the actual activities that took place.

4.3.3.2.7 Absence of control and monitoring

The study outlined a lack of control and monitoring system at NSFAF, which created an inability to track performance against the set targets. Monitoring involves checking the extent to which goals and objectives are being achieved at regular intervals through set targeted activities and tasks. Therefore, the inability to control and monitor poses challenges in evaluating the set targeted objectives and goals (Kazmi, 2008).

4.3.3.3 Recommendation to improve on challenges faced in strategy implementation

4.3.3.3.1 Improve on strategic direction from the executive management

The study recommends that the Fund improve its executive management in the way it leads, guides and directs in custom to enable the Fund to achieve its strategic goals and objectives. The executive management should translate its chosen strategy into an action plan, activities which would steer the organisation in the direction set out in the strategy and be accountable to the Board of directors if the Fund's strategic objectives were not achieved. This is supported by Radomska (2014), emphasising that executives must align the cross-functional organisational factors: structures, systems and processes; leadership style, staff resources and shared values with the new strategy so that the strategy opted can succeed. The executive management should be aligned to competencies capabilities, and core values of the Fund's strategic direction and strategy implementation should be enhanced and guided by executive management and who serve as a change agent.

4.3.3.3.2 Open communication with staff within the institution

The study recommends that the Fund should have open and regular communication. The Fund should have effective communication, which may improve processes and procedures and enhance greater efficiencies and help to lessen the chances for misunderstanding to have a common purpose that all staff members understand. Kočišová (2014) supports this by suggesting basic principles that could help the organisation to effectively implement the strategy: communication of the strategy through the whole company; employees are not inclined to organisational changes that accompany the implementation of the strategy, so there is a need for effective communication of strategic goals, their achievement as well

as their influence on daily activities of employees. Furthermore, the study recommended that the Fund undertake transformation communication and change strategies such as developing strategic communication plans in consultation with all staff members and be driven by the executive management of various departments.

4.3.3.3.3 Organisational structure aligned to the strategic plan

The study recommended that the Fund's structure be designed so that job descriptions are optimal to provide the foundation on which standard operating procedures and routine rests. Adaptation of the organisational structure: a company should adjust the organisational structure to the company's strategic plan that outlines the organisation's goals and objectives (Kočičová, 2014). It is further emphasised by Sterling (2003) that organisational structures and processes need to be adjusted to support the strategy.

4.3.3.3.4 Human resources management to guide the institution

The study recommended that the Fund's human resources management should guide the Fund in developing strategies, approaches, programs and interventions that support staff members, including executive management during and after the strategy implementation. Active participation from executive management, facilitated by human resources management, influences strategy implementation performance. Gondal & Shahbaz (2012) indicated that human resources management should be strongly organised as a function in organisations. Also, its practices and policies are spread throughout the organisation to help build strong association and coordination among several departments by imposing inter-functional dependency, resulting in improved and effective outcomes. By involving employees in the implementation of the strategy; keeping initiative on employees finding

an effective way for achieving strategic goals, a company can eliminate employees' resistance to changes. Also, the assignment of responsibilities for strategic projects, defining responsibilities and financial involvement of employees have a significant impact on the success of strategic goals (Kočišová, 2014).

4.3.3.3.5 Process/system and technology to be streamlined

The study recommends that Information Technology support the Fund to streamline systems and processes simplified. The systems and processes should be integrated within the division and departments working collectively to enhance efficiency in strategy implementation. Gaol, Rahayu & Matsuo (2020) noted that support from the information systems makes it easier for companies to run their business processes more efficiently and effectively

4.3.3.3.6 Maintaining organisational culture

Respondents recommended that the Human resources management, with the support of the executive management, should create an environment that connects employees to the organisation's mission, goals and objectives, and values for the staff members to be comfortable in implementing strategies. They must reinforce the importance of focusing on strategy implementation towards the Fund's value, goals, objectives, and vision and apply policies such as employment relationship and performance management system. This is supported by Kočišová (2014), indicating that organisations should keep on initiating employees to find effective ways to achieve the company's strategic goals to eliminate resistance to change.

4.3.3.3.7 Performance indicators not aligned to the organisation's objectives, mission and vision

The respondents recommended that the Fund formulate workable and realistic strategies aligned to the strategic plan for implementation. Further, performance indicators should be correlated as aligned to the Fund's set goals and objectives and the overall vision. This is supported by Peter and Waterman (1980) Pryor et al. (2007), who assert that with five variables as Purpose aligned to strategy, Principles aligned to values and culture, Processes aligned Systems, People aligned to behavioural, and Performance aligned to measurement and feedback, enhances strategy implementation.

4.3.3.3.8 Establish a routine and integrative system to control, monitor and review the implementation of the Fund's set targets

Respondents recommended that the Fund builds in controls and monitoring to ensure continuous effective action throughout, such as management control systems that monitor and control the strategy and its implementation. Controlling the strategy is done by introducing regular monthly, weekly and quarterly reviews through either progress reports or dashboards for executive management, middle management and general staff. Further, timely audits are needed to track the progress of the strategy's performance and provide feedback for allowing adjustments accordingly. As Pella, Sumarwan & Daryanto (2013) emphasised, if no routine and integrative system exists in the company to control, monitor, and review the implementation and achievement of the organisational targets, the strategy implementation becomes ineffective.

4.3.4 Summary

The study has provided the research findings as per the views expressed and comments from the respondents. Overall, the information from the analysis strongly signifies that leadership directive is the steering wheel of the established factors affecting strategy implementation in this study.

With the Systems Theory, the organisation is embedded in a complex environment aligned as a business process: resources, systems, structure, skills, style and shared values in the implementation of a strategy that determines its success (Weissenberger-Eibl, Almeida & Seus, 2019). This leads to the last chapter, which outlines the research summary, conclusions, and study recommendations.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The chapter summarises primary data that was analysed using Microsoft Excel, which was used to do coding and consolidate the responses into manageable themes. The themes were used to outline the study's main findings with the study's research objectives. The study sought to investigate factors affecting strategy implementation at NSFAP as the main primary objective. Further, the study looked at other objectives aligned to the challenges faced by NSFAP in strategy implementation and examine the best strategies that NSFAP could take to mitigate the challenges experienced. This chapter presents a summary, recommendations and the main conclusions based on the findings of the study.

5.2 Summary of major findings

From the results presented, the researcher found out that the Fund faced numerous factors affecting strategy implementation. These were presented as Leadership directive, Communication, Human Resource Management, Process/System and Technology, organisational Culture, organisation structure, Performance management system, and Control and Monitoring.

The study revealed leadership directives as the key factor affecting strategy implementation. This factor had a significant influence on managing, coordinating and driving any strategy into actionable activities. Hence it is an overarching factor for all factors identified in this study and, further in steering the fund in the direction set to achieve its strategic goal and objectives.

Further, the study's findings show that there was a lack of coordination among programs, leading to derailment of focus. Furthermore, the general staff members felt excluded from strategic decision-making, resulting in a constituent gap between executive management and general staff members—this reduced collective efforts among the team towards achieving strategy implementation.

Communication was also found to have a significant influence on strategy implementation at the Fund. Communication was not adequately used to amalgamate the layers of designation, inter-departments and between staff members. Further, inconsistency was observed in providing feedback within the Fund. Feedback from executive management to general staff members was often delayed and usually provided through instruction mode.

Human Resources Management was also identified to affect strategy implementation. This was attributed to the inability to execute organisational policies, including human resources policies that facilitate the initiation of developmental programs and training to enhance employee's competence in implementing strategy. Resistance to changes was a challenge at NSFAF, and this was coupled with a lack of personal accountability and ownership among the staff in implementing strategies. Moreover, low morale among the staff members was also observed and attributed to a lack of support from the executive management.

The systems, processes and technology available at the Fund were found not seamlessly integrated within the division and the department to support strategy implementation. Reference was provided from the study that processes and systems were done in silos

within the departments. Networking the processes or systems with other divisions and departments were done manually, affecting the efficiency and effectiveness of strategy implementation.

The study revealed that organisational structure had a significant influence on strategy implementation. Reference was provided from the study that organisational structure was non-responsive to the current strategic business plan. The structure was found misaligned, leading to ineffective strategy implementation.

The study showed that the performance management system was poorly designed at the Fund. Reference was made that although the Fund has a performance management system, the policy was not made clear to staff members, hence not applied effectively. Further, misalignment with the organisation's core values, goals and objectives with the performance indicators were done in segregation. Key performance indicators for each staff member and that of the department were not clear to support the organisation's strategy. The study also revealed that due to a lack of guidance from the executive team, the key indicators were usually not understood by everyone, including management, which inhibits strategy implementation. Capabilities of effective feedback and coaching were found lacking, leading to ineffective strategy implementation.

The results also indicated that building a control and monitoring mechanism was not prioritised at the fund. Although the Fund had the performance agreements and appraisals, it lacks a strategy to control and monitoring mechanisms such as quarterly review, meeting regularly to discuss outcomes and results and holding staff accountable for not achieving

objectives. Ineffective control and monitoring lead to poor strategy implementation within the Fund.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings presented, the study recommends:

- ✦ The executive management has been perceived as the most important driver for strategy implementation and, therefore, should manage other factors listed in this study and take a stronghold on the strategy opted for effective strategy implementation as suggested by Radomska (2014). Further, the executive management should translate its chosen strategy into an action plan, activities that would steer the organisation in the direction set out in the strategy and be accountable to the Fund's Board of Directors.
- ✦ the study recommends the Fund to employ basic principles as suggested by Kočišová (2014), such as establishing transformation communication and change strategies such as developing a strategic communication plan in consultation with all staff members and be driven by the executive management of various departments.
- ✦ The study recommends that after approval of the strategic plan, the organisational structure should be realigned to the organisational goals and objectives with clear and achievable key performance indicators drawn up in relation to the employees' job descriptions. They should also have clear and simplified standard operating procedures.

- ✦ The study also recommends that the human resources management guide the Fund in developing strategies, approaches, programs and interventions that support staff members, including executive management during and after strategy implementation.
- ✦ The business system and processes should be integrated within the divisions and departments working collectively and supported by information technology to enhance efficiency in strategy implementation.
- ✦ The study also recommends that to improve organisational culture, the human resources management, with the support of the executive management, should create an environment that connects employees to the organisation's mission, goals and objectives, and values for the staff members to be comfortable in implementing strategies. They must reinforce the importance of focusing on strategy implementation towards the Fund's value, goals, objectives, and vision and apply policies such as employment relationship and performance management system.
- ✦ Further, the study recommends that the Fund formulate workable and realistic strategies aligned to the strategic plan for implementation. In addition, performance indicators should be correlated as aligned with the Fund's set goals and objectives and the overall vision.
- ✦ Finally, the study recommends a need for effective controls and monitoring to ensure continuous effective action throughout, such as management control systems that monitor and control the strategy and its implementation. Controlling the strategy is done by introducing regular reviews, i.e., monthly, weekly, and quarterly reviews through either progress reports or dashboards for executive

management, middle management, and general staff. Further, timely audits are needed to track the progress of the strategy's performance and provide feedback for allowing adjustments accordingly. Lastly, a special team should be established as part of the structure to oversee and monitor the implementation of the strategy.

5.4 Limitation of the present study

The study adopted a case study design. A case study design was used mainly because it enabled the study to explore and understand the individual, group, institution, or phenomenon in a single unit of analysis (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Secondly, with a total number of 67 members of staff at NSF AF, the sample size of 30 may be regarded as small to conduct a robust qualitative study, but from the sample interviewed, a lot of data could be collected. Dworkin (2012) articulated that a target sample of 30 was considered sufficient to be a representative sample size in qualitative studies.

5.5 Areas for further research

Following the findings of this study, the scope was limited to an investigation into factors affecting strategy implementation at the Namibia Students Financial Assistance Fund (NSFAF). It is recommended that further research be done on this study to have a closer look at differences and comparisons with other public organisations such as State-Owned Enterprises and private organisations, and comprehensive identification with other organisations for effective strategy implementation.

Even though the factors affecting strategy implementation and challenges identified may not be all cross-examined, the recommendations brought forward may assist the Fund and

other organisations in the same sphere of operation and other organisations for effective strategy implementation.

5.6 Summary

This chapter presented the summary, discussion and conclusion of the study. The study covered major factors affecting strategy implementation at NSFAF. It further looked at identifying the challenges faced by NSFAF in strategy implementation and lastly recommending the best strategies that NSFAF could take to improve on challenges faced in strategy implementation as guided by the structure of the study. The limitations and areas for further research were finally presented.

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7. APPENDICES

Appendix I: Interview Guide

My name is Chris Mwiya, a Master of Business Administration (Management Strategy) student at the University of Namibia (UNAM) through Namibia Business School (NBS). This Semi-structured interview seeks to “Investigate factors affecting strategy implementation at Namibia Students Financial Assistance Fund”. The study is in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Business Administration (Management Strategy).

Kindly note, this study is for academic purposes and shall not be used for any other purpose without the consent of the participants and the company concerned. Therefore, the information provided will be treated with utmost confidentiality as it will be based on the summation of all the responses from the participants. Therefore, your responses are appreciated and will be useful in the study. You are fortified to try and respond to the questions with your ultimate knowledge of your ability and understanding. During the interview processes, where you don't understand, feel free to ask for clarification.

Section A: Demographic information

1. Gender?
2. Age?
3. Job Designation at NSFAF?
4. Number of years worked at the NSFAF?

Section B: Structured questions:

5. What are the factors affecting strategy implementation at the Namibia Students Financial Assistance Fund?
6. What challenges are facing NSFAF as a result of these factors?
7. What changes would you recommend to NSFAF to improve strategy implementation?
8. Any further information you may wish to provide?

Thank you for your time.

Appendix 2: Language Editing Certificate

Dr.GM

The Rev. Dr. Greenfield Mwakipesile

ThD, MBA, HBS | mwakipg@outlook.com

CONTACT

PO Box 99539,
UNAM,
Namibia

LANGUAGE & COPY-EDITING CERTIFICATE

19th July 2021

RE: LANGUAGE, COPYEDITING AND PROOFREADING OF CHRIS MWIYA'S THESIS FOR THE MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION DEGREE OF THE NAMIBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

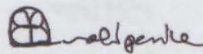
This certificate serves to confirm that I copyedited and proofread **CHRIS MWIYA's** Thesis for the **MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION DEGREE** entitled: **AN INVESTIGATION INTO FACTORS AFFECTING STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION AT THE NAMIBIA STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FUND**

I declare that I professionally copyedited and proofread the thesis and removed mistakes and errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation. In some cases, I improved sentence construction without changing the content provided by the student. I also removed some typographical errors from the thesis and formatted the thesis so that it complies with the University of Namibia's guidelines.

I am a trained language and copy editor and have edited many Postgraduate Diploma, Masters' Thesis, Dissertations and Doctoral Dissertations for students studying with universities in Namibia, Zimbabwe, Eswatini, South Africa and abroad. I have also copy-edited company documents for companies in the region and abroad.

Please feel free to contact me should the need arise.

Yours Sincerely,



The Rev. Dr. Greenfield Mwakipesile



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Dr. Greenfield
Mwakipesile

28 February 2020

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

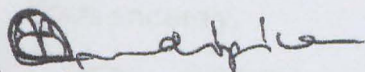
Re: MBA Management, Student – Mr Chris Mwiya Student Number-9508252

As part of our Masters Programme, students are expected to submit a research report after completion of their course-work. They need to explore in detail, some concepts and issues pertaining management strategies. To do that effectively, they need to conduct interviews and obtain practical examples.

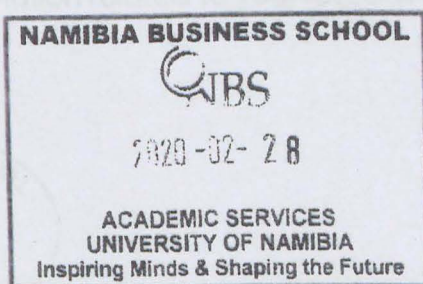
Mr. Mwiya has chosen your organization to approach for information. It is against this background that I wish to kindly request you to assist Mr. Mwiya with the information he requires. Accept our assurance that the data will be used for academic purposes only. A copy of the completed document will be available at the Namibia Business School for perusal. His research synopsis indicates that his topic touches on "An investigation into factors affecting strategy implementation at the Namibian Student Financial Assistance Funds".

Your kind assistance is highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely



Greenfield Mwakipesile, Dr
Senior Research Co-Ordinator
Namibia Business School
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NSFAF

Namibia Students Financial Assistance Fund



Tel: +264 61 434 6000
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Enquiries: Petrus Elago

PO Box 23053
WINDHOEK
Namibia

21 October 2020

Mr. Chris Mwiya
Postgraduate Student
University of Namibia
NAMIBIA

Dear Mr. Mwiya,

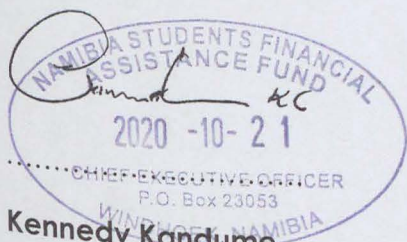
RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT NSFAF

We would like to inform you that permission has been granted for you to conduct your research project titled: **AN INVESTIGATION INTO FACTORS AFFECTING STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION AT THE NAMIBIA STUDENTS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FUNDS.**

Please be informed that all information which will be gathered and collected through your research must be solely used for study purposes and must be treated confidential. Upon completion of your research you are urged to provide us with the recommendations which might benefit NSFAF.

It is against this background that permission has been granted to you to access NSFAF premises to gather information related to your research project.

Yours sincerely,



Kennedy Kandume
ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Board Members: Mr. Klemens /Awarab (Chairperson), Mr. Stephen U. Tjiuro (Member), Dr. Isak Neema (Member), Ms. Adda K. Angula (Member), Dr. Ndeulipula Hamutumwa (Member), Ms. Tulimeke Munyika (Additional Member).

Acting Chief Executive Officer: Mr. Kennedy Kandume
Company Secretary: Mr. Fillemon Wise Immanuel