

How Strategic Leadership can lead to organisational success: Study into the Steinhoff brand in the Western Cape

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Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree in Strategic Brand Communication

Declaration:

I hereby declare that the Research Report submitted for the Bachelor of Arts Honours in Strategic Brand Communication degree to The Independent Institute of Education is my own work and has not previously been submitted to another University or Higher Education Institution for degree purposes.

Abstract

Due to the challenges of the modern business world, it has become increasingly more important for leaders to utilise strategic leadership skills. Studies have shown however, that most leaders do not implement strategic leadership skills, due to being too focused on meeting short-term goals and deadlines (Forbes, 2017).

Steinhoff is one of the most successful brands in South Africa (Writer, 2017). This study explores how leadership influenced the brand's success and if the leadership is strategic in nature. The researcher focused on defining strategic leadership and organisational success, and explored the relationship between these two concepts.

The research was conducted using mixed methods of quantitative and well as qualitative research. The quantitative component comprised of a close-ended questionnaire that that was sent out to 100 working professionals in the Western Cape. For the qualitative component, an in-depth interview was held with one of the top-level directors at Steinhoff. The research was done in the form of a case study methodology focusing on the Steinhoff brand in the Western Cape.

The study proposes that strategic leadership will positively influence organisational performance. During the research process, it was evident that there is a lack of precedence on the effect of strategic leadership in organisations, or the importance thereof, in the Western Cape. This study reveals the need for further research as well as wider implementation of strategic leadership skills in companies in the Western Cape.

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1. Introduction

How Strategic Leadership can lead to organisational success: Study into the Steinhoff brand in the Western Cape

What leads to organisational success? Research has shown that it is not a question of luck, but influenced by strategic decisions that leaders make (Daft, 2011). According to Forbes, less than 10% of leaders exhibit strategic leadership skills. Strategic leadership, in the context of this study, can be broadly defined as the ability to anticipate and envision the future, think strategically without losing flexibility and initiate changes that will in lead to future competitive advantage for the organisation (Daft, 2011).

1.1 Contextualisation

Due to the demands and challenges of the modern business the need for strategic leadership has increasingly become more important. Modern leaders should make decisions that are in-line with the organisation's strategy, and not just focus on meeting short-term targets and deadlines (Hughes, Beatty and Dinwoodie, 2014).

Organisational success, in the context of this study, does not only refer to the measurement of the organisation's financial success. It is defined as a dynamic, multi-dimensional model, created by Shenhar (2001), which is further explored in the literature review.

Brand, in the context of this study, is seen as a social construct. Brand can be defined as a conscious development of a particular meaning that holds value and connects with people (Enslin, 2011:15). The Steinhoff brand will be examined from this particular perspective.

Steinhoff had their humble beginning in Germany in 1964, when Bruno Steinhoff started importing furniture from communist Europe. He sold this

furniture in Western Europe and merged with the South African based company Gommagomma in 1997 (Steinhoffinternational.com, 2017).

Steinhoff has since then moved from strength to strength, buying furniture companies all over the world. Their head office is based in Stellenbosch, South Africa and the company is listed on the JSE, as well as the Frankfurt stock exchange (Steinhoffinternational.com, 2017). Steinhoff is an extremely successful brand and this study will explore how strategic leadership influenced the success of the organisation.

Strategic leadership is vital if an organisation wants to achieve their vision. Leaders should focus their time and effort into the correct areas if they want to achieve sustainable, organisational success (Elenkov, Judge and Wright, 2005). According to a study by Serfontein and Hough (2011), in South Africa the effect of strategic leadership on an organisation's success has not been properly investigated.

The purpose of this research is to explore how strategic leadership can lead to organisational success, specifically focusing on the Steinhoff brand and how strategic leadership influenced the organisational performance.

1.2 Rationale

It is a key concern for any organisation to perform successfully and leaders should focus on meeting short-term goals, while still positioning the business for success in the future (Forbes.com, 2017). Identifying the key concepts that leaders should utilise to lead an organisation strategically, will equip leaders on all levels to lead more successfully.

This research study will aim to provide organisations with the knowledge of what type of leader will be a positive attribute to the company, leading it to success. The aim is to enhance the understanding of strategic leadership and

the knowledge gained from this research could help companies improve their effectiveness.

This study aims to explore and expand the existing research of the effect of strategic leadership in an organisation's success in the Western Cape, by specifically focusing on the success of the Steinhoff brand. The results of this research document could contribute to the development of strategic leadership and organisational performance in the Western Cape.

The focus is to explore and identify what strategic leadership is and how it can lead to the creation of organisational success, specifically focusing on the Steinhoff brand in the Western Cape.

This study can be justified on the need for further research of the effect strategic leadership can have on companies, specifically in the Western Cape region, and how it can impact on organisational success.

1.3 Problem Statement

In a global economy that is increasingly focusing on sustainability, it is important to ensure that leaders focus their resources and time into the correct areas. If an organisation wants to achieve long term, sustainable success, strategic leadership is vital (Elenkov, Judge and Wright, 2005).

According to statistics, less than 10% of leaders exhibit strategic leadership skills (Forbes, 2017). However, the need for strategic leadership has increasingly become more important due to the demands and challenges of the modern business world. Leaders are more focused on meeting targets and deadlines, than making decisions that are in line with the company's strategic plan (Hughes, Beatty and Dinwoodie, 2014). Leaders are constantly running in many directions and many succeed in meeting short-term demands and solving operational problems. The problem however lies in handling challenges that are more complex and far reaching in the future, and many

leaders may feel unsure and helpless about how to deal with these challenges (Hughes, Beatty and Dinwoodie, 2014).

The effect of strategic leadership on an organisation's success has not been properly investigated and explored in South Africa (Serfontein and Hough, 2011). According to Serfontein an organisation needs to have clear, defined strategy process and a strong efficient leadership team in order to have any hope of success in the modern business world (Serfontein and Hough, 2011). Serfontein placed importance on the need for organisations to set, implement and update their strategy to achieve success. It has been clearly stated that there is a need for further research on strategic leadership, specifically in a South African context. This study focuses on exploring the concept of strategic leadership and to enhance the understanding of the impact it can have on an organisation.

1.4 Purpose Statement

The purpose of this research is to explore how strategic leadership can lead to organisational success, specifically focusing on the Steinhoff brand in the Western Cape, and how strategic leadership influenced the organisational performance.

In South Africa, not a lot of research has been done on the positive effect strategic leadership can have on the success of an organisation. If organisations and leaders can become aware of how strategic leadership can have a positive effect on their business, they can become more successful (Serfontein and Hough, 2011).

Zane (2009) suggests that the field of strategic leadership invite critical scholarly scrutiny, due to the different interpretations of the meaning by different sources. For the purpose of this study, the researcher will focus on gaining insights rather than following statements made by previous scholars. This is similar to the approach used by Zane's (2009) study of strategic

leadership. Previous literature on leadership focused on conceptualising the term as a construct, in terms of the relationship between the leader and the followers. The literature on leadership has typically been constructed in terms of leader style and behaviour as well as the relationship between the leader and followers. Cumulatively findings from this research stream has not analysed strategic leadership, or the effect strategic leadership can have on different levels.

The focus is to explore and identify what strategic leadership is and how it can lead to the creation of organisational success, specifically focusing on the Steinhoff brand in the Western Cape.

1.5 Research Questions

Primary Question:

- How can strategic leadership lead to organisational success in the Western Cape?
- How did strategic leadership influence the success of the Steinhoff brand in the Western Cape?

Secondary Questions:

- What are the key traits that define strategic leadership?
- Is there a need for company leaders to be more strategic in the Western Cape?

1.6 Hypothesis

1. Strategic leadership played a significant role in the organisational success in the case of the Steinhoff brand in the Western Cape.
2. There is direct link between organisational success and leaders implementing strategic leadership principles.
3. There is a need for the implementation of strategic leadership skills in organisations in the Western Cape.

1.7 Conclusion

This concludes chapter 1 of the study, chapter 2 explores the relevant literature on the research subject.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Outline of Paradigm

An interpretive paradigm was chosen for this study, since it aims to understand the research through the subject's responses, in the context of a specific case study. As an interpretive (exploratory) study, the research will aim to identify how strategic leadership can lead to organisational success, specifically looking at the Steinhoff brand in the Western Cape. This case study will examine the success of the Steinhoff brand, and how the leadership influenced this success.

2.2 Theoretical Foundation

What leads to organisational success? Draft showed that it is not a question of luck, but influenced by strategic decisions that leaders make (Draft, 2011).

The literature review will justify the hypotheses of this study, as well as review the literature on this topic. The purpose of this literature review is to define the concept of strategic leadership, while providing the foundation for the study. The literature review will explore the link between strategic leadership and organisational success, conceptualise key traits that strategic leaders exhibit and define the terms organisational success and brand in the context of this study.

This literature review aims to explore a deeper understanding of the relationship between strategic leadership and organisational success.

2.3 Defining Strategic Leadership

Leadership can be defined as the capacity to observe, listen and encourage dialogue in all levels of the decision making process. Furthermore leadership involved establishing transparency and processes to motivate other to achieve visions and display values, without imposing them. According to Pearce (2008), leadership involves identifying problems, and then initiating changes instead of merely managing changes, that leads to improvement.

Strategic leadership evolved from leadership, but has specific and unique traits. According to Rowe (2001), strategic leadership can be defined as the ability to maintain short-term financial success, while influencing other to make decisions that benefit the organisation in the long-term.

Strategic leadership theory has evolved from the original upper echelons theory developed by Hambrick and Mason (1984). The upper echelons theory states organisational leaders and the decisions that they make, influences the organisational success and strategic choices of an organisation to a large extend. This study claimed that organisational leaders interoperate the strategic situations they face on the basis of their own personal experience and values, as well as their interpretation of the situation (Hambrick 2007).

The study only referred to top-level executives, and the effect their decisions have on organisational performance. This study did not however research the effect strategic leadership can have if it is implemented on all levels of the organisations leadership. This theory proves to be fundamental to the research question being investigated, since strategic leadership is a complex term with should be clearly defined before investigated.

Hooijberg and Lane (2015) defined strategic leadership as the ability to influence others to make decisions that will ensure short-term probability, but also create long-term organisational sustainability. Amos (2007) defined strategic leadership similar to Hooijberg and Lane (2015), but focused on the importance of understanding. Strategic leadership involves understanding the organisation, the stakeholders and the bigger environment it operates in and

then making decisions that impact the short-term as well as long-term organisational goals.

Kleiner et al (2013) have a similar view, explaining it as the ability to use a combination of creativity and planning to make decisions that will position the organisation for success in the future. The above named theories set the foundation and framework of further research into this concept.

During the study of literature on the subject of strategic leadership, it became apparent that strategic leadership as a focus point only recently became a topic of interest (Phipps, 2011). Leadership theory, until recently, referred to leaders at all organisational levels, whereas strategic leadership theory only included top-level organisational leaders.

Davis (2004) defines strategic leadership as the ability to successfully translate strategy into practice in an organisation. Strategic leaders are never satisfied with the present and strategically orientated at all times. Strategic leaders can align people and organisations to develop competencies. According to Davies (2004) strategic leaders have the ability to execute adaptive capacity. Adaptive capacity refers to the ability to find new ways of thinking to create effective solutions, while under pressure and in the process of change (Sanders, 1998).

One of the most important parts of strategic leadership is the ability to influence decisions that will better the organisation in the future. Beatty and Quinn (2010) state that strategic leaders improve organisations by aligning all parts of the organisation, with the organisational strategy to ensure consistency. Strategic leaders are able to understand the organisations current situation, while still looking to the future and ultimate vision that the organisation aims to achieve. Daft (2011:350) supports this theory, by defining strategic leadership as the ability to anticipate and envision the future, think

strategically without losing flexibility and initiate changes that will in lead to future competitive advantage for the organisation.

There is a growing interest in the field of strategic leadership and Zane (2009) argued that strategic leadership should be defined as a concept by itself, instead of merely being an extension of generic leadership. It should also be applied throughout all levels of the organisation, not just top level, as research by Hambrick and Mason (1984) suggests.

More recently, strategic leadership is defined as the process of successfully communicating the vision of the organisation, through well planned and executed tactics. Strategic leadership can bring about transformation in an organisation by motivating stakeholders to share and aspire to the same organisational vision (May, 2017).

Forbes (2017) is aligned with the modern definition of strategic leadership, focusing on how it can lead to positioning an organisation positively in the future, whilst still meeting the daily demands. Strategic leadership involves looking at the macro environment and understanding the role and relationship the organisation plays in the big picture.

The study also highlights the difference between leadership in a traditional sense and strategic leadership, again pointing to the notion of influencing others to create organisational success and sustainability (Forbes, 2017).

2.4 Strategic Leadership Traits

Strategic leadership involves influencing others to build commitment to the organisation's strategic plan. It involves giving direction by inviting others into the strategic process, building relationships with internal and external stakeholders, as well as factoring in the macro environment (Forbes.com, 2017).

According to Jooste & Fourie (2009) there are several characteristics that define strategic leadership, these include determining strategic direction, effectively directing and developing human resources as well as creating and sustaining a successful organisational culture. The study also found that strategic leadership involves emphasising ethical practices.

Strategic leadership involves anticipating changes in the micro and macro environment (CMOE, 2017). Forbes (2017) relates to this theory, finding that strategic thinking is grounded in a strong understanding of the complex relationship between the organisation and its environment. It requires taking a broad view, involving the right people, with important information and perspectives, asking probing questions and facilitating conversations.

According to a study by Jessica Leitch (2017), strategic leaders have common leadership traits. These include considering the long term as well as short-term outcomes of their decisions and operating showing respect and humility. These leaders admit when they made incorrect decisions and then investigate why this particular decision occurred and how to find a solution. Strategic leaders could also successfully challenge an opinion if they disagree, but without causing conflict (Leitch, 2017).

In 2015, a PwC study was done at Boston University, analysing 6000 senior management leaders. The study found that strategic leaders were successful in leading organisations to success. This study was developed by David Rooke and William Torbert and concluded that strategic leaders will distribute responsibility, and be transparent and honest about information. Strategic leaders will approach problems differently, by creating and testing ideas and make it safe for team members to fail (PwC, 2017). This study proved that if leaders exhibit strategic leadership skills, it contributes to factors that lead to organisational success.

Forbes (2017) reinforces this, positing that strategic acting involves taking decisive action that is consistent with the strategic direction of the organisation despite complexity and chaos. If leaders and employees have

the opportunity to fail, they will be more direct in their approach to making decisions quickly and decisively. Forbes (2017) also concluded that the decisions leaders make on a daily basis ultimately determine the strategy of the organisation, not the strategic plan.

Strategic leaders will also engage with other strategic leaders in the organisation, on all different levels. According to May (2017) strategic leaders will grow and create training opportunities for experience-based training. This is similar to the theory of “practice field” researched by Peter Senge, organisational theorist (Senge, 2007)

Senge’s (2007) research found that if you want a creative, efficient solution to a wicked problem, a focus group with a team of potential strategic leaders would be able to construct such a solution. A wicked problem can be defined as a cultural or social problem that is difficult or impossible to solve due to various reasons. These reasons could include the number of people involved, incomplete knowledge or the nature of the problem itself (Wickedproblems.com, 2017)

Strategic thinkers then identify connections, patterns and key issues. According to Forbes (2017) strategic leaders also focus on creating positive change in the organisation and create opportunities for experience-based learning.

The study also found that strategic leaders take the time to reflect. This relates to the “double-loop learning” theory founder by Chris Argyris and Donald Schön, both organisational theorists (Argyris, 1976). They defined single-loop learning as in depth thinking about a problem and or situation, whereas double-loop learning involves being conscious of your own thinking and then examining it.

When applying the double thinking method, the leader become aware of personal views, assumptions and biases, therefore leading to a more objective solution that's ultimately in the best interest of the organisation.

Forbes.com (2017) found that strategic leaders view leadership development as an ongoing personal, as well as organisational, process. This links with the double loop theory of strategic leaders being conscious of their own improvement and thinking. Harvard Business Review (2017) has similar theories to Forbes.com (2017) and defined strategic leadership into seven traits: anticipate, challenge, participate, interpret, decide, align and learn.

According to theory by Harvard Business Review (2017), the process of becoming a strategic leader involves identifying your weaknesses and strengths, according to the above criteria, and then working on improving accordingly. To effectively influence others, leaders must understand the impact that they have on them. They should also understand the needs, styles and motivations of others (Forbes.com, 2017).

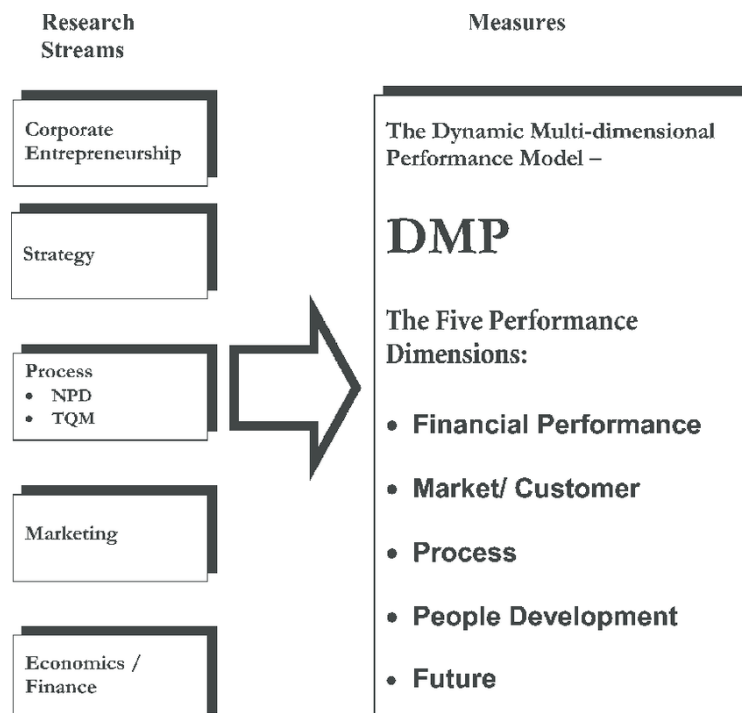
Research found that it is essential for strategic leaders to focus on exhibiting all six of the leadership skills. Being strong in one of the skills does not compensate for the lack of skill in another, and competency in all six skills are required (Harvard Business Review, 2017).

2.5 Defining organisational success

The measurement of organisational success is challenging for both researches and leaders. Traditionally financial measures were used, but recently new frameworks have been developed to measure organisational success from modern, relevant perspectives.

For the purpose of this study a dynamic, multi-dimensional model, developed by Shenhar (2001), is used to determine organisational success. This framework measures organisational success from five different perspectives.

2.5.1 Shenhar (2001) model for organisational success



The first refers to traditional financial measures. This would be measuring the organisations profits, return on investment, sales and other financial statements. The second measurement is the consumer/market measures. This investigates if the organisation meets the needs of its customers, delivers on its promise and invests in a good relationship with its customers by constantly innovating and improving. The next measurement is the process refers to the improvement and efficiency of the organisation. For an organisation to stay relevant, it needs to be constantly innovating, staying up to date with technological and social trends.

The fourth measurement refers to people development measures. Organisations need to recognise the critical role that the different stakeholders play in the success of the organisation, including the internal staff. The employee skills level, employee development and growth, and commitment to improving organisational leadership all determine the organisational success.

Lastly, organisational success can depend on how the organisation is preparing for future. This element is critical for organisational success and

refers to the depth and quality of strategic planning, anticipation of changes in the micro and macro environment, expansion into new markets and future opportunities for growth, expansion and investments. This factor is critical for determining organisational success.

2.6 Defining Brand

During the rise of social media, from 2007 to 2008, the idea of personal branding came more into focus. This led to the change in thinking and brands became more human, not just words and visual entities. This is what led to the thinking of “what we do is our brand” (Pienaar, 2017).

In recent times, consumers have become more educated and demanding of businesses, which led brand building to be more focused on being transparent, emphatic, honest and authentic. Branding is not just seen as a marketing activity to create revenue for a company anymore and it's becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish a brand from the business and vice versa (Pienaar, 2017).

Brand, in the context of this study, is seen as a social construct, as defined by Klopper et al (2011:63). Brand is seen as a conscious development of a particular meaning that holds value and connects with people. For a brand to connect, it needs to hold a unique meaning that holds value. According to Enslin (2011:15) a brand needs to strategically define what it stands for and needs to deliver on its promise in all that it does, to meaningfully connect. The Steinhoff brand will therefore be viewed as a social, instead of a commercial contract, for the purpose of this study.

The Steinhoff brand has achieved massive success in South Africa they and is focused on the long-term sustainability of Steinhoff's business and practices. Steinhoff's is focused on creating a sustainable client base as well as a loyal workforce. They have a zero tolerance policy on social violations and prioritise stakeholder engagement. Steinhoff builds respected and trusted relationships with Stakeholders to ensure delivery of the group's strategic goals (Steinhoffinternational.com, 2017).

Steinhoff places importance of the development and wellness of their employees, and see them as the foundation of the company. They recognise employees as an essential part of maintaining and building a sustainable business (Steinhoffinternational.com, 2017).

Steinhoff has built a positive brand through supporting and incorporating various corporate social investment programmes in the company. They support broad-based black economic empowerment (B-BBEE) efforts and focus on improving childcare and education in Africa.

Steinhoff has an ethics committee that oversees all the business and social practices of the company (Steinhoffinternational.com, 2017).

2.7 The connection between strategic leadership and organisational success

Strategic leadership and the effect it has on business success has increasingly become a field of interest. A study by Heiser (2016) concluded that top performing companies incorporate strategic leadership planning. This study focused specifically on the role leadership can play in effectively driving the corporate social responsibility activities of an organisation. A contextual framework was used to provide a link between strategic corporate social responsibility practices and leadership style. This study argued that strategic leadership was the best mechanism to drive strategic corporate social responsibility activities in the organisation. This is merely one example of how strategic leadership can lead to a form of organisational success.

May (2017) supports this view, reiterating that strategic leadership can lead to a number of different positive outcomes in an organisation. Another example of this outcome is a shared vision by all the organisational stakeholders, working in synergy towards organisational success.

Strategic leaders gain competitive advantage by focusing on enhancing the resources that are available in the organisation, with human resources being a core focus (May, 2017).

During the 1980s a shift occurred where research on leadership shifted more towards strategic leadership as opposed to managerial leadership. An early study by Day (1988) found no relationship between organisational success and strategic leadership.

However, several theories found a link between strategic leadership and organisational success. Serfontein and Hough (2011) found that short-term decisions made by strategic leaders would lead to long-term success in the organisation. This South African study found that strategic leadership is associated with organisational success, both directly and indirectly. It found that strategic leadership could be linked to daily operational excellence, as well as long-term sustainability in the organisation.

In Thailand a study was done on the impact of strategic leadership in the electronics sector (Ussahawanitchakit, 2012). The study found that strategic leadership provides a company with an advantage over the competitors, and that there is a direct link between strategic leadership and organisational success. A study into the effect that strategic leadership has on the success of an organisation was done by Memon (2009), relating to the findings of Ussahawanitchakit (2012). This study found that human capital was influenced positively by strategic leadership, which led to organisational growth. This research proved that if the organisational leadership adopts strategic principles, it would lead to the creation of a distinct advantage over the competitors (Memon, 2009).

2.8 Conclusion

Defining the traits of strategic leadership and how it can influence organisational performance is essential to establishing how it can lead to organisational success.

This literature review examined past and current research and theories relating to the development of strategic leadership themes, including defining strategic leadership, the relationship between strategic leadership and organisational success, as well as defining the traits of strategic leadership.

The body of literature reviewed found that the topic of strategic leadership is relevant and even though leadership has been researched for many years, strategic leadership has become a focus point relatively recently.

The literature review concluded that in the global business world of today, the probability of an organisation achieving competitive advantage without strategic leadership is not very high.

In order to further examine the relationship between strategic leadership and organisational performance, research will be done into Steinhoff brand specifically. Chapter 3 will discuss the chosen methodology and research design used to conduct the study.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Problem

The study explored how strategic leadership influenced the success of the Steinhoff brand in the Western Cape. The study also explored what key traits define strategic leadership and questioned if there is a need for company leaders to be more strategic in the Western Cape.

3.2 Methodology Chosen

According to Myers (2009) research methodology can be defined as a strategy of enquiry. This enquiry moves from the underlying assumptions to research design and data collection. Qualitative and quantitative research methods are the most commonly used for the classification of research methodology.

The aim of quantitative research is to determine the relationship between one independent variable and an outcome variable. This research design can be descriptive or experimental. When using a descriptive study the subjects are usually measured once to establish the relationship between the different variables. Experimental research design involves the subjects being

examined before and after treatments to establish causality (Hopkins, 2000: 1).

Qualitative research can be defined a systematic inquiry the nature of a study by utilising interpretive and naturalistic approaches. Qualitative study involves examining the subjects in their natural environment. Qualitative research takes into account the biased views of the subjects, and aims for the data to be non-manipulated and as objective as possible. Qualitative research is the most appropriate when the researcher wants to gain a deeper understanding of the subject, and describe the findings in great detail (Hammersley, 2008).

Mixed methods research involves making use of quantitative as well as qualitative research approaches. Mixed methods designs can provide the objective, strength of results drawn from quantitative research, as well as the explanatory, descriptive results gained from qualitative analyses (Castro, Kellison, Boyd & Kopak, 2010: 342).

A mixed research approach was used for this study, combining qualitative as well as quantitative methods. The quantitative research design provided objective, factual results that enhanced the credibility of the study, while the qualitative research provided an in-depth, deeper understanding.

3.3 Paradigm

Kuhn (1962) defines a paradigm as a cluster of problems, subjective concepts and variables with corresponding methodological approaches. According to Oslen, Lodwick and Dunlop (1992:16), a paradigm refers to a structure, framework or system of specific academic values, ideas and assumptions.

According to Aikenhead (1999) an interpretive paradigm is defined by observation and interpretation. The purpose it so collect and observe information about the subject, while interpreting the meaning by drawing on inferences between the information and the abstract pattern.

The interpretive paradigm does consist of a correct route or method to knowledge. There are no right and wrong theories, and theories should rather be evaluated on how interesting they are to the researcher and the subjects. The interpretive paradigm focuses on understanding the research through the subjective experiences of the subjects, as well as the need on the need to put analysis in context.

An interpretive paradigm was chosen for this study, since it aims to understand the research through the subject's responses, in the context of a specific case study. This research study does not aim for a right or wrong answer, but rather to explore the concepts, information and data collected. This study is descriptive, instead of experimental, since the relationship between the subjects, data and literature was explored.

As an interpretive (exploratory) study, the research aimed to identify how strategic leadership can lead to organisational success, specifically looking at the Steinhoff brand in the Western Cape. This case study examined the success of the Steinhoff brand, and how the leadership influenced this success. The study also explored what traits and skills define strategic leadership.

A case study aims to understand research in a social context, by focusing on one specific situation. According to Yin (2003), a case study is most appropriate when a situation is studied in context, and the researcher has no control over the events as they unfold.

Given the nature of the research question, and the interpretive (explorative) approach of this study, the case study methodology was considered appropriate. The case study approach provides a systematic way to collect data and understand the results in context of the situation. The case study does not use any particular method of data collection or analysis, which allows for the use of the mixed method approach. The researcher believes that the case study approach is the most appropriate strategy, because of its advantages in collecting focused and detailed findings.

3.4 Research Design

Research design can be defined as the logical plan of how the research study will be conducted. Research design can be defined as the how the plan, structure and execute the research to ensure the validity of the findings. According to Yin (2003) the research design is an action plan to get from the research questions to the findings and answers.

For the qualitative approach, an in-depth interview was held with one of the top-level executive leaders at the Steinhoff company. The outline, purpose and objective of the research were explained and a face-to-face interview was conducted at Steinhoff's head office in Stellenbosch. This interview was recorded by the researcher and later transcribed (Appendix A).

An interview is the gathering of information through a series of questions, mostly pre-planned. Shneiderman (2005) views that one of the benefits of an interview is that the interviewer can investigate specific areas of concern which can lead to clarity and constructive improvement. Specific questions regarding the leadership style in Steinhoff and what lead to their success was asked, aiming to understand how strategic leadership has affected the success of Steinhoff.

According to Du Plooy-Cilliers (2014:191), qualitative data analysis can be defined as identifying themes and systematic classification, through subjective interpretation.

For this study the researcher analysed the qualitative data sourced from the in-depth interview and interpreted and analysed the information in the context of the case study. The knowledge gained from the comprehensive research done in the literature review, provided the researcher with an appropriate framework of reference to analyse the data accordingly.

A quantitative research approach was used to determine if there is a need for better implementation of strategic leadership traits in different organisations in

the Western Cape. The research instrument used to determine the above was a closed-ended questionnaire (Appendix B).

3.5 Data Collection

The main data collection techniques used in this research study was the literature review, an in-depth interview and a closed ended questionnaire.

Brynard and Hanekom (1997:39) found that questionnaires are an effective way of soliciting participant's views, since they have the opportunity to consider the questions before responding. The close-ended questionnaire was easy and quick for the respondents to answer. It was also easy for the researcher to analyse the data. A disadvantage of using the closed-ended questionnaire was that the respondent's opinions and ideas were not included.

An advantage of the in-depth interview was that the researcher had the opportunity to collect detailed information. Disadvantages of the interview were that the researcher could be prone to bias.

The use of a close-ended questionnaire, as well as an in-depth interview with an organisational leader in Steinhoff, was valid for the purpose of this study since it provided the researcher with both statistical analysis, as well as more layered, detailed findings. The broader findings of the survey provided an outline of defining the concept of strategic leadership further, whilst the discussion with the Steinhoff leader provided a deeper understanding.

3.6 Population

The population for the study was corporate, working professionals currently based in the Western Cape, for the questionnaire. The study sampled 100 of these subjects, to collect a comprehensive amount of data.

The in-depth interview was conducted with a top-level executive director at the Steinhoff company, to get detailed information regarding the organisational leadership and corporate culture.

3.7 Data analysis

3.7.1 Quantitative Analysis

The questions asked on the questionnaire were measured on a Likert scale, from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. Interval data was collected, which is data that is continuous and has a logical order. Interval data has no natural zero, but a standardised difference between values (Consultants, 2017).

The researcher made use of an online development software system as the platform where the information was stored into a database. This data was digitally collected and then analysed.

Descriptive statistics was used to make sense of the data collected from the questionnaire. Descriptive statistics is a way to analyse data that helps describe, show or summarise the collected data in a meaningful way (Consultants, 2017).

3.7.2 Quantitative Analysis

Qualitative data analysis is defined as a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns (Hsieh & Shannon in Du Plooy-Cilliers et al 2014:191).

The researcher analysed the information obtained from the in-depth interview. The researcher ensured that the questions asked were relevant and comprehensive. This approach enabled an in-depth understanding of specific texts and contexts, revealing themes and patterns. In turn, these assisted the researcher to gain answer the research questions and hypothesis.

The interview was recorded and then transcribed by the researcher. The analysis included written and verbal communication.

3.8 Conclusion

On reflection, it became evident that the use of a close-ended questionnaire, as well as an in-depth interview had its advantages as well as disadvantages. In Chapter 4, the study proceeds towards the findings and analysis of data collected.

4. Findings and Interpretation of Findings

4.1 Implementation of strategic leadership principles questionnaire

The researcher sent out a questionnaire to 100 working professionals in the Western Cape, online through an electronic database. Participation was voluntary and the questionnaires were completed anonymously. The questions were measured on a Likert scale, from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” and interval data was collected. When completed each respondent submitted the questionnaire electronically directly to the researcher.

4.1.1 Descriptive Statistics Table

	median	mode	mean	max	min	sum
Q1	10	10	19.8	44	6	99
Q2	25	10	20	36	6	100
Q3	17	10	20	35	8	100
Q4	24	10	20	29	9	100
Q5	20.5	10	20	39	6	100
Q6	23	10	19.8	31	4	99
Q7	17	10	20	39	5	100
Q8	19	10	20	37	4	100
Q9	22	10	17.5	33	5	100
Q10	27	10	19.8	33	2	99

Table 4.1.1 provides a summary of the descriptive statistics for data collected. The mean is the sum of the observed values in the distribution divided by the number of observations. It measures the average response of respondents. The mean data is indicated for each question with the highest score being 20 and the lowest at 17.5 on a rating scale out of 100. This indicates an extremely low rating by the respondents. The mode indicates that the most frequently occurring value in the rating of the critical criteria.

4.1.2 Percentage Value Table

Implementation of Strategic Leadership Principles		Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
1	Your current organisation's strategies are clearly communicated to you?	10.10%	44.44%	29.29%	10.10%	6.06%
2	Your manager cares about how the work gets done, and not just about the end	14.00%	36.00%	31.00%	13.00%	6.00%
3	Work processes in your organisation are reviewed regularly to establish how well	17.00%	35.00%	28.00%	12.00%	8.00%
4	If something goes wrong in your organisation, the reasons why are	24.00%	29.00%	27.00%	9.00%	11.00%
5	Processes and systems are reviewed to ensure that they contribute to the overall	19.00%	39.00%	22.00%	14.00%	6.00%
6	Employees in your organisation are rewarded when they achieve their team	21.21%	31.31%	25.25%	18.18%	4.04%
7	Your organisation collects information from it's employees about how well processes/	30.00%	39.00%	17.00%	5.00%	9.00%
8	Your organisation's ethical practices are clearly communicated to you, and	19.00%	37.00%	30.00%	10.00%	4.00%
9	Your manager takes accountability when making mistakes, instead of passing blame	30.00%	33.00%	22.00%	10.00%	5.00%
10	Your organisation allows for the opportunity to fail and make mistakes?	27.27%	33.33%	30.30%	7.07%	2.02%

4.1.3 Weighted Average Table

Implementation of Strategic Leadership Principles		Total	Weighted average
1	Your current organisation's strategies are clearly communicated to you?	99	2.58
2	Your manager cares about how the work gets done, and not just about the end	100	2.61
3	Work processes in your organisation are reviewed regularly to establish how well	100	2.59
4	If something goes wrong in your organisation, the reasons why are	100	2.54
5	Processes and systems are reviewed to ensure that they contribute to the overall	100	2.49
6	Employees in your organisation are rewarded when they achieve their team	99	2.53
7	Your organisation collects information from it's employees about how well processes/	100	2.24
8	Your organisation's ethical practices are clearly communicated to you, and	100	2.43
9	Your manager takes accountability when making mistakes, instead of passing blame	100	2.27
10	Your organisation allows for the opportunity to fail and make mistakes?	99	2.23

An examination of the scores of the above tables indicated that the highest scoring question was that “managers care about how the work gets done”, and the lowest scoring “your organisation allows for the opportunity to make mistakes”, closely followed by “your organisation collects information about how well processes/ systems work”.

4.1.4 Questionnaire Findings

The low rating of the weighted average scores indicates that the strategic leadership principles are not yet properly implemented in organisations in the Western Cape. Hypothesis 3 is therefore accepted. This corresponds with the theory of Forbes (2016), that less than 10% of leaders exhibit strategic leadership skills.

The data analysis also made it apparent that strategic leadership, as a focus point, only recently became a topic of interest as Phipps (2011) suggests. This could provide explanation for the low scoring of strategic leadership skills within organisations in the Western Cape. There is therefore a need for further implementation of strategic leadership skills by leaders in companies in the Western Cape.

4.2. Interview with Steinhoff top-level executive director

In June 2017 an in-depth interview was conducted with a top-level corporate executive director from Steinhoff, at the Steinhoff South Africa head office in Stellenbosch.

4.2.1 Interview Overview

The researcher started the interview asking the interviewee what some of the important decisions are that she faces daily as a leader at Steinhoff.

She responded by saying that it depends, but personally the biggest decisions that's always at the back of her mind is if Steinhoff is resourced enough for the future. That's an over arching decision that leaders struggle with every day and that they try and solve. She mentioned the fact that the world is

changing every day and the new generation will be their customers in 2 to 3 years time. As leaders of the company they question if they are ready for that.

The new generation transacts and shops differently from the current generation, and she questions if the company is ready for that. They don't know how it's going to change the face of retail and it's not a question they can answer, because the world is not there yet. The interviewee named the millennium as an example, where everybody expected something huge to happen, and then nothing did. The difference now is that you can already see the signs. It will change quite dramatically, but no one knows exactly how (Nel, 2017)

Another question and decision she faces daily is if she has enough people for Steinhoff to grow. She questions if she has the right people and if their organisation ready for change? Steinhoff in particular is run in a decentralised way. Things in the company should be able to change very quickly, because they have 130 000 people in various different countries working for Steinhoff. This makes it a big ship to turn if they need to make a change. She believes that the decentralised system works best, because they are able to break decisions into smaller portions of information enabling the decision making process to move faster through the organisation. This results in change happening faster, which is crucial for Steinhoff (Nel, 2017).

The interviewer asked how she maintains her own and her team's daily motivation and inspiration despite obstacles or pushback?

The respondent's immediate answer was first and foremost teamwork. Steinhoff is a very flat organisation and they believe strongly in being a flat organisation, in other words, they are working with their friends and not just their colleagues. She stated that anybody who has ever worked with Steinhoff at the top-level would find it very difficult to know who exactly is the boss (Nel, 2017).

Steinhoff is a very close team, both up and down. They have a very direct culture and employees don't take offence with that. This allows for change and decisions to happen much quicker in the organisation. Team members are allowed to say if they don't agree with decision, without other team members taking offence (Nel, 2017).

According to the interviewee, the Steinhoff team is also very motivated by success. She believes that it's an important quality to bring into a company. Even through failure employees should be motivated through success, because there are a lot of failures in business. She explained that as leader it is crucial to see success through failures and it's important to have a very positive attitude. When Steinhoff employees people, they check their characteristics before they check their skills. It's very difficult to fit into the Steinhoff culture if you're not very positive, and you need to have a can do attitude (Nel, 2017).

She discussed the fact that it is very important for team members to be able to make a plan. The motivation in Steinhoff comes from success, teamwork and the drive to make things work. "No" is not an answer to anybody in the Steinhoff organisation, but rather a discovery of how they can make it work (Nel, 2017).

The researcher questioned how she fosters creative and innovative thinking within the organisation, as well as how ideas are shared and implemented. The interviewee explained that creative and innovative thinking comes by giving employees no boxes. Anybody in Steinhoff can do anything, for example her responsibilities are so diverse, from human resources to investments to accounting. She is also responsible for all of the sponsorships and marketing. In her team for example, everyone would get a chance to come up with a solution for the same problem, and then they'll decide which one would be best (Nel, 2017).

The respondent believes that creating a creative and innovative environment is easy by not boxing people in and giving them free reign. Even uncreative

people become creative when this happens. In Steinhoff they test most suggestions and never say no to new ideas. Even if it's not right for that specific time, they will still test the idea (Nel, 2017).

Steinhoff is creative and innovative, as well as simple and not too complicated. They have a very social culture, which is of the utmost importance, because they work with so many languages, cultures and business around the world. There is one thing that all the people in Steinhoff have in common and that the social aspect. Steinhoff will have a few sessions in the year dedicated to social events. The aim of these events is to get to know your colleagues from around the world, even in broken English. These gatherings open the door for colleagues to phone each other at any time, because they become friends through sharing various experiences together (Nel, 2017).

To share information through this 130 000 people decentralisation is important. That's a choice for any company, most companies are central and Steinhoff is de-central. There are positive and negative aspects regarding decentralisation. One of the biggest positive aspects is the ability to share information on smaller platforms in the language that people would understand. Having a decentralised system works very well for the company. Information gets shared among top leadership to ensure they agree and understand each other (Nel, 2017).

The top leadership in Steinhoff are more friends than colleagues, which the company regard as highly important. They use a decentralised communication system, within all the different decentralised organisations under the bigger Steinhoff umbrella, to make processes work (Nel, 2017).

The next question the researcher posed, was what is most important to their organisation and why? The interviewee stated longevity. The leadership in Steinhoff feels responsible for the 130 000 people that they employee. It's important to Steinhoff to remain standing and striving years from now and to

be able to support all their employees and their families. Steinhoff wants to build something that will last (Nel, 2017).

She explained that it's very easy for the organisation to make short-term profit. Steinhoff owns 80 000 hectare of forests, and if they had to cut all of those trees, they wouldn't have to do any other work to maintain their profit. Then end result however will be that the trees (resources) won't be there anymore. She stated that the leaders at Steinhoff they look at every factor in the macro and micro environment, and then base their decisions on what will be best for the company in the long-term and not on what will generate short term profit.

The company shares the same view with their products and brands. If they discounter too much, they will lose their image. If the company loses their image, the brand is damaged. This sometimes results in the company not making as much profit as the previous year, due to the leadership making a decision that is better for the long -term benefit of the brand. She mentioned that some stakeholders and investors does not understand this, but Steinhoff as a company does. They leadership understands that even with the negative attention that the might face when this happens, they are looking after the future of the company (Nel, 2017).

The interviewer asked how she assists a new employee to understand the culture of Steinhoff. The responded answered that the pillars of the company culture can be seen on all of the company elements. The culture consists of passion, trust, entrepreneurship and family. Steinhoff is a social organisation with many social functions and no corporate hierarchy. Anyone in the organisation is welcome at most of the company staff functions. The Steinhoff culture is very direct, which results in the employees being positive and able to learn quite quickly (Nel, 2017).

Steinhoff assists their employees in various ways depending on what level they enter. Steinhoff has an introduction pack that all new employees receives and then an induction course that usually takes one to two weeks. The

organisation has weekly and monthly meet with the CEO meetings for the younger employees, as well as talent development and progress development programmes (Nel, 2017).

Steinhoff tests their prospective employees on character before they employ them as part of the team, because there is so much importance placed on the corporate culture. Character takes preference over skills, and Steinhoff even prefers in some cases if a prospective employee does not have all the skills yet, so they can teach them Steinhoff's way of doing business. She mentioned that certain types of personalities do not fit in well at Steinhoff. Some companies have a different way of working, they they work from manuals and are not as creative and innovative as Steinhoff. This is not a wrong way it's just a different way. Some people like to wake up in the morning you know exactly what they're going to do, that is very different from the employee Steinhoff needs. They don't tell people what to do, but rather give them the freedom to do things their own way. Once a prospective employee has been tested for their culture, the company introduces them to the social elements and directness of the company, which empowers them to succeed (Nel, 2017).

The researcher asked what advice she would give a new employee going into a leadership position for the first time? The interviewee mentioned that there is a lot of advice that needs to be given to new leaders. Firstly, they should expect a lot of hard work. Hard work is very important. She also mentioned that new leaders should ask for advice and guidance.

In Steinhoff new leaders have the ability to ask for help and to get support. An example of a teacher being promoted was discussed. A good teacher gets promoted to divisional head and then he becomes head of school. Being a good teacher and a manager is not the same skill set, and these teachers don't get trained to be a headmaster. The difference in an organisation such as Steinhoff is that more senior leaders surround junior leaders, and they have the opportunity to ask for help and learn. These new leaders also have their peers on the same level as them in the Steinhoff group, in different

countries, with whom they can share their ideas, questions and experiences with (Nel, 2017).

In Steinhoff junior leaders also have the opportunity to ask questions up and down the organisation. This goes back to the previous point of the importance of the social culture and the employee functions. The events empowers employees by them getting to know a lot of people on the same level as them, so they are able to bounce ideas off each other.

This is why these social programmes are created in the company. The international team members of Steinhoff will come to South Africa for a week and work with their South African colleagues on real case scenarios of problems, forcing them to learn to work together. Even though these employees won't necessarily work together in the organisation, it's important for Steinhoff that they collaborate and share ideas. Senior management are mostly too busy to have fresh thoughts and most of the productivity on the creative, innovation level is higher lower down. This is why the leadership in Steinhoff forces collaboration, and it works very well for them (Nel, 2017).

The researcher asked what some of the useful resources are that she would recommend to someone looking to gain a better perspective into becoming a better leader? The answer was that it depends and that some leaders are born and some are made. It's dependent on the organisational culture of the company. She advised that a leader should ensure that the company culture suits them. Not all leaders will like the flexible structure of Steinhoff. Some leaders like structure and knowing what is expected of them every day and want to be able to measure their performance. Leaders like that should ensure that they are in an organisation that provides them with structure, or they will struggle (Nel, 2017).

Just as Steinhoff matches employees to the organisation, employees should do the same, because their path to success will be much easier if they get those two important elements right. She mentioned that a rigid person would not fit into Steinhoff, so they won't become a leader and they won't be any

good. Perhaps the same person will do very well in a company as big as Steinhoff, and as successful as Steinhoff, but with a different culture.

In Steinhoff it's very important to stay humble and to make people want to work with you. That is one of the biggest things for a leader. Leaders need to be seen working, they have to be seen listening as well as being part of the team and not the boss. It's a responsible position and making unpopular calls is sometimes necessary.

The researcher asked how she and the company decides whom the best candidate is for their team or organisation? She responded by saying that they look for the person that people want to work with. It is also very depended on the function. People naturally gravitate towards a leader, and that's the person that they want to work with (Nel, 2017).

The researcher asked what some of the most lacking traits are among leaders today, in her opinion? She explained that the world is changing so fast, and that it's a fact that 50% of the jobs that the current university work force will go into, does not exist yet. That means that 50% of work streams does not exists yet, therefore she thinks that the new generation probably changed the most with the digital revolution and intervention (Nel, 2017).

From a character point of view, the best leaders in her view are leaders with intelligence and emotional intelligence. She believes that emotional intelligence is the most important characteristic of a leader by far. This refers to leaders that understand what others mean before they have said anything and that can feel when somebody is uncomfortable. In today's uncertain world that's changing so fast, emotional intelligence and the ability to adapt are the most important characteristics of a leader. Motivation is also very important and for people to want to work with you. As a leader, people should want for you to succeed, and you can achieve this by wearing the company's banner. Team members will have to see that it is not you that will succeed, but the company (Nel, 2017).

She explained the interesting differences between generations, from Y to the baby boomers and before them. All of these generations had different leadership styles, each with their own problems. She said that the hierarchical “yes/no” of the previous generation is sometimes missed and that she believes that she herself and her peers are too un-hierarchical at certain times.

The researcher asked what some of the pressing challenges are that leaders at Steinhoff are facing today and why? The answer came immediately as “time”. The world is moving much faster than it’s ever been and information moves faster than ever. This makes time critical (Nel, 2017).

International management, in other words managing across borders is another huge challenge. Managing different cultures and cross boarder time is some of the biggest challenges that leaders at Steinhoff face today.

Lastly, the researcher asked what the interviewee what she is doing daily to ensure her growth and development continues as a leader? Reading is a priority for her. She doesn’t just refer a novel or a business book, but everything from a ladies magazine to newspapers to specialist books. She explained that especially for her, who deals with investor relations, it’s important to understand where people’s minds are. That you can get from how people dress, to what they say, to listening to talk radios shows and so forth. She believes that as a leader you should surround yourself with information that’s relevant, but also not overwhelm yourself. That’s also one of the biggest problems today; there is an overflow of information. She advises to read what you as a leader think is relevant, and not what people tell you is relevant.

She believes that her growth and development as a leader happens every day and that it’s very important for her to make time to think. That’s one of the biggest challenges as a top-level executive leader; they are so busy that they don’t have time to think. She stresses the fact and without time to think she won’t achieve the right strategy and she’ll make immediate reactions, instead

of well thought out decision that are best for the organisation in the long term. She compared the exercise to that of buying clothes. If you rush and make a spontaneous decision, you end up buying things that are worthless to you. If you take the time to think about your purchase first, then you'll be better inclined to buy the few items you need. She explained the importance of speaking to people up the stream and below the stream, which is why a social culture so important in Steinhoff (Nel, 2017).

To summarise, Steinhoff would not have been where it is, and would not have had the success it has, or the future that she hope it has, without its culture. According to the interviewee, if you have to put one word that defines why Steinhoff is able to build their business, it is their culture (Nel, 2017).

4.2.2 Interview Findings

The interview with one of the top-level executive directors about Steinhoff's leadership style and organisational culture revealed that strategic leadership traits, as discussed in the literature review, are very strongly present in the Steinhoff organisation.

The analysis of the interview found that the Steinhoff leadership is always looking towards the future and anticipating change (Nel, 2017). This is in-line with the definition of strategic leadership as set out by Harvard Business Review (2017), stating that strategic leadership involves focusing on anticipation of the future and the change it might bring. The leadership at Steinhoff ensures that they are working with and employing the right people (Nel, 2017).

A study examined in the literature review by PWC (2017) concluded that strategic leaders would approach problems differently, by creating and testing ideas, making it safe for team members to fail. The interview found that the leadership in Steinhoff is focused on not acting as "the boss", but rather giving employees the opportunity to give input and make mistakes (Nel, 2017).

The Steinhoff leadership place importance on teamwork and collaboration and focus on building relationships, both up and down the stream. They motivate their employees by leading through example and building a success-driven culture. The leadership is strategic and focused on creating a strong, positive organisational culture. In Steinhoff, the employees get the opportunity to think outside of the box and solve problems in a creative manner (Nel, 2017). Jooste & Fourie (2009) concluded that determining strategic direction, effectively directing and developing human resources, as well as creating and sustaining a successful organisational culture are all important characteristics of strategic leaders.

The analyses of the Steinhoff interview found that the organisational leadership ensures that the company looks after their employees and that decisions are based on what would be best for the organisation in the future, instead of just focusing on creating short-term profit. The Steinhoff leadership is strategic, since they focus on staff development and improvement realising the importance this plays in positioning the company for future (Nel, 2017).

Steinhoff does not have complicated systems, processes or procedures in the company and the leadership views the longevity of the business as the most important goal (Nel, 2017). Hooijberg and Lane (2015) defined strategic leadership as the ability to make decisions that will create long-term organisational sustainability.

Important leadership traits, according to Steinhoff, is being hard working and staying humble. They empower their employees by giving them the opportunity to ask questions up and down the organisational stream. The company also employs people first on based on their character, finding it more important than technical skills (Nel, 2017). Jessica Leitch (2017) concluded in her study into strategic leadership, that strategic leaders show respect and humility, and encourage their employees to ask questions. This corresponds with the actions of the Steinhoff leadership.

Lastly, the Steinhoff leadership is strategic by placing high importance on emotional intelligence. This is paramount to them as well as for the people they chose to employ in the company. The leadership in Steinhoff takes time to think and reflect before making decisions, ensuring that it is align with the company's vision for the future. Forbes (2017) reinforced the fact that strategic leaders take time to think about the different impact their decisions will have on all the stakeholders in the micro and macro environment.

The findings from the interview corresponded with the definition and traits of strategic leadership as concluded in the literature review.

4.3 Validity and Reliability

4.3.1 Validity

Research principles are based on the fact that validity is a matter of the trustworthiness and dependability that the researcher and the subjects place into it (Merriam, 1998). The researcher should attempt to build validity throughout every stage of the research process. Validity is concerned with whether the data and research is true, believable and evaluating what it is supposed to evaluate.

Internal validity refers to the agreement of the research findings with reality. It also refers to the extent to which the researcher observes and measures what is supposed to be measured. For this study, the researcher used the method of "researcher's bias" to improve the internal validity of the research data. This method involves the researcher being aware of her own biased views and being as impartial and non-judgemental as possible throughout every phase of the research process. The researcher remained non-judgemental and reported on the findings as accurately and honestly as possible.

4.3.2 Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency and dependability of the data and/or results obtained from the research (Nunan,1999). The researcher will find it straightforward to collect similar results for the questionnaire conducted, since

the data is analysed in numerical form. Proving the reliability of the interview conducted proved to be more challenging, due to the subjective views of the interviewee. To increase the reliability of the study, the researcher explained the research processes and phases in detail. The researcher also elaborated on all the different aspects of the study, such as the purpose, research design and subjects.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter explored the relationship between strategic leadership skills and organisational success, through a quantitative questionnaire and a qualitative interview, in the context of a case study. The analysis of the data collected from the questionnaire concluded that there is a need for further implementation of strategic leadership skills in companies in the Western Cape. The analysis of the literature review in chapter 2, as well as the interview conducted, concluded that strategic leadership skills are very strongly present in the Steinhoff company and contributed to the success of the brand, confirming the hypothesis.

5. Conclusion

This chapter concludes the research and findings of the study. Section 5.1 will provide a discussion of how the research questions were answered and whether or not the hypothesis was reached. The next sections will reflect on the implication of the findings for future practices, the ethical considerations and limitations of the study. A summary of the study as a whole will be discussed as well as recommendations for further research.

5.1.1 Company leaders in the Western Cape need to better implement strategic leadership skills

The analyses of the questionnaire data revealed a very low average score for the implementation of strategic leadership traits in organisations in the Western Cape. This proves the hypothesis that there is a need for a better understanding and implementation of these leadership skills, specifically in the Western Cape.

5.1.2 Strategic leadership influenced the organisational success of the Steinhoff brand in the Western Cape

The study into the Steinhoff brand revealed that the organisation achieved great success in South Africa. The interview with one of the top-level executive directors about Steinhoff's leadership style and organisational culture revealed that strategic leadership traits, as discussed in the literature review, are very strongly present in the Steinhoff. This concludes that strategic leadership played a vital role in the success of the Steinhoff brand, both directly and indirectly.

This proves the hypothesis that strategic leadership played a significant role in the organisational success in the case of the Steinhoff brand in the Western Cape, as true. This also outlines that there is direct link between organisational success and leaders implementing strategic leadership principles.

5.1.3 Sustaining an effective organisational culture through strategic leadership

The researcher found through analyses of the interview and literature review, that one of the most important elements in the Steinhoff company is the corporate culture. Corporate culture refers to the core values shared by the employees and consists of shared values and ideologies. This corporate culture influences and dictates how the company conducts its business (Nel, 2017).

The researcher found that strategic leaders should develop and grow a corporate culture appropriate to the organisation. Importance should be placed on staff development and the sharing of ideas and resources among employees and teams. This will foster innovation and creativity, and ultimately play an important part in creating organisational success. The high value placed by the Steinhoff leadership in sustaining an effective corporate culture, played a significant role in the success of the brand.

5.2 Implications off findings for future practices

It is key concern for any organisation to perform successfully and leaders should focus on meeting short-term goals, while still positioning the business for success in the future (Forbes, 2017).

Identifying the key concepts that leaders should utilise to lead an organisation strategically, will equip leaders on all levels to lead more successfully.

This study aimed to provide organisations with the knowledge of what type of leader will be a positive attribute to the company, leading it to success. The study aimed to enhance the understanding of strategic leadership and the knowledge gained from this research could help companies improve their effectiveness.

The study explored and expanded the existing research of the effect of strategic leadership in an organisation's success in the Western Cape, by specifically focusing on the success of the Steinhoff brand. The results of this research document could contribute to the development of strategic leadership and organisational performance in the Western Cape.

The study concluded that there is a need for further research on the effect strategic leadership can have on South African companies, and how it can impact on organisational success.

5.3 Ethical Considerations

According to Neuman (2000:90) ethics in research refers to what is right and not when conducting a research study, through out the entire process of the study. The research should be done in the framework of the study and analysed objectively.

During a research study that involves human beings, such as this study, ethics is a main concern. Research and knowledge should never be obtained at the expense of the human subjects being studied (Neuman, 2000: 92). Neuman (2000) stresses that the aim of the research should always be clearly communicated to the research subjects. Information provided by participants

should be treated as confidential at all times and participation in the study should be voluntary.

In this research study, the respondents of the questionnaire were kept anonymous to ensure they answer the questions honestly. The respondents submitted the completed questionnaire directly to the researcher through an online system.

Permission had been granted to the researcher to do an interview with one of the executive directors and main leaders of the Steinhoff Company, and to report on the findings.

The researcher adhered to the following ethical principles. Firstly, the interview and findings were reported in an honest way, by not falsifying or fabricating the data and/or results. The researcher strived to be objective in the study, while not adhering to any personal bias views and judgements. The researcher was careful, by keeping a clear, detailed record of references and data collected, while aiming to not make any unnecessary mistakes. Lastly, the researcher is open to criticism, constructive feedback and questions regarding the research project (Niehs.nih.gov, 2017).

5.4 Limitations

This study is specifically focused on the Steinhoff brand in the Western Cape, and was investigated in this specific context and framework. The findings of this study can therefore not be deemed as true for organisations in other parts of South Africa, and should be viewed in the context of a case study only.

5.5 Summary and closing remarks

The role of strategic leadership in the creation of organisational success has not yet been properly investigated in South Africa. The research aims to explore how strategic leadership can lead to organisational success, specifically focusing on the Steinhoff brand in the Western Cape. The research also aims to answer the question if there is a need for leaders in companies in the Western Cape to be more strategic.

Chapter 2 discusses the literature on defining strategic leadership and the link between strategic leadership and organisational success comprehensively. Chapter 3 involves a detailed discussion of the mixed research methods used and identifies the methodology appropriate to this study. Chapter 4 presents the research findings and analysis, while chapter 5 concludes the study with a discussion of how the research questions have been answered, the ethical practices the researcher adhered to and the validity and reliability of the research.

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