STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT EDUCATION IN SELECTED SOUTH AFRICAN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS - AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

Dr Rachel Maritz
Department of Business Management,
University of Pretoria,
Private Bag X20, Hatfield 0028
Telephone: 012 420 6312
Fax: 012 362 5198
E-mail: rachel.maritz@up.ac.za

Mr Sean Birmingham
Department of Business Management,
University of Pretoria,
E-mail: u12034241@tuks.co.za

Ms Sing R. Chen
Department of Business Management,
University of Pretoria,
E-mail: rachel.maritz@up.ac.za

ABSTRACT

Research studying how strategic management is taught in South African tertiary education institutions is rare as most research on this topic focuses on American and European curricula. The aim of this study is to investigate how strategic management is taught in a sample of South African tertiary institutions with regard to the approaches, tools and theories used by the instructors within the field. Literature highlights modern trends in teaching strategy and this is also measured against the reality of the investigated curricula. An exploratory study was conducted foussing on seven semi-structured interviews with academic instructors from five accredited tertiary institution. Documentary analyses were done in the form of strategic management study guides from 12 different tertiary institutions throughout South Africa. Strategic management is taught in a multi-faceted approach mostly from an American perspective based on international textbooks. The study also sheds light on what is being taught on graduate and post graduate level.

INTRODUCTION

Albert and Gzerba (2014:1) believe that the future success or failure of a business enterprise is determined by the strategic decisions made by graduates in these businesses today. This highlights the importance of investigating how management students are exposed to the processes and principles of strategic management. Authors such as Ghoshal and Moran (1996), Priem and Rosenstein (2000), and Donaldson (2002) have emphasized the significance of the content of management education since this shape good management practices (Jarzabkowski, Giulietti, Oliveira & Amoo, 2012:15). Consequently, by improving the quality of strategic management education, management practice could benefit (Hough & Neuland, 2014:456; Jarzabkowski *et al.*, 2012:15).

Strategy is regarded as a 'master concept' within contemporary organisations (Carter, Clegg & Kornberger 2008) and recognised in business schools where strategy is essential for the 'rite to passage' in becoming a strategist and understanding the essence of the organisation. Strategy is also recognised as a capstone course taught to students at under and postgraduate level (Bower, 2008:273; Jarzabkowski *et al.*, 2012:3).

The field of strategic management is widely recognised as a critical course to set the foundation for other management disciplines in business schools (Bower, 2008:270-272; Grant, 2008:277; Greiner, Bhambri & Cummings, 2003:402). Modern day strategic management courses differ from the original business policy courses first taught at Harvard Business School in the 1900s (Bower, 2008:272). Influential scholars who contributed to the teaching of the strategy concept include Michael Porter and Henry Mintzberg. Moreover, the establishment of the *Strategic Management Journal* by Dan Schendal and Chuck Hofer has shaped contemporary strategic management courses, as it is known for reflecting the development of the strategic management field and its literature (Molina-Azorin, 2010:2). Modern day courses are generally based on theoretical models, case teachings and encouraging students to engage in experiential learning in order to develop graduates who are able to guide businesses to continued success in the highly competitive business world (Bower, 2008:270-274; Chia & Holt, 2008:471; Elmuti, 2004:448-449; Grant, 2008:403; Greiner *et al.*, 2003:403-404).

According to Molina-Azorin (2010:15), strategic management is a younger sub-discipline that has matured from the management discipline and the field itself has grown rapidly since its inception. However, there is a lack of literature on how strategy is actually taught in a South African context.

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore strategic management education in selected South African tertiary institutions, with particular reference to the content, tools and approaches used by instructors within the field of strategic management. The study provide insights into how strategic management courses are taught at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. Albert and Grzeda (2014:5) emphasized that strategic management education should focus on teaching students about the "how" of strategic management. The following research questions guided the study:

- Why is it important to teach strategic management?
- What are the different approaches to teaching strategic management?
- What does the content of strategic management courses entail?
- How is strategic management taught at undergraduate and postgraduate level?

The paper provides a review of literature on the history and teaching of strategic management, followed by our research methodology. The results of the empirical investigation are then discussed in the findings section. Lastly, the conclusion, managerial implications, limitations and recommendations for future research are discussed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The nature and history of strategic management

The strategy concept has evolved significantly from its development as a theoretical discipline to what we know today as "strategic management". Nag, Hambrick and Chen (2007:935) note that the definition of strategic management lacks consensual meaning in an academic field which appears to be fragmented and creates ambiguity. Ronda-Pupo and Guerras-Martin (2012:163) identified six elements of deficiencies in existing literature based on the concept of strategy: 1) little is understood about the historical development of the definition of the strategy concept in the strategic management field; 2) the strategy concept is vastly diversified, which leads to a lack of consensus on the meaning and terms used; 3) confusion exist in terms of what the strategy concept entails; 4) lack of previous studies regarding the development of consensus related to the concept of strategy; 5) insufficient analysis of the strategic structural development; and 6) insufficient evidence concerning the evolution of the strategy concept as an academic field.

Mintzberg (in Ronda-Pupo & Guerras-Martin, 2012:163) points out that by acknowledging multiple definitions in an attempt to explain the strategy concept, practitioners and scholars are given the choice to alternate between terms. Ronda-Pupo and Guerras-Martin (2012:180) adapted the definition of the strategy concept as: "The dynamics of the firm's relation with its environment for which the

necessary actions are taken to achieve its goals and/or to increase performance by means of the rational use of resources.". For the purposes of this research the definition of Nag *et al.* (2007:944) will be used as being a concensual definition of the field of strategic management. This entails that strategic management is driven by the emergent and intended initiatives of top management, that involve utilising resources to maximise firms' performance in their external environments.

The following journal publications demonstrate a slight improvement in consensus related to the development and change in the definition of strategy, which further encourages new research subfields within it (Ronda-Pupo & Guerras-Martin, 2012:182): *Strategic Management Journal, Academy of Management Review, Academy of Management Journal,* and *Administrative Science Quarterly*. Furrer, Thomas and Goussevkaia (2008:2) found that these journals are recognised as the top business journals among business policy scholars, and are greatly influential in developing theoretical and empirical work by providing a platform for future literature on strategic management. Such journals depict an increasing cooperation between scholars from both the inter-institutional and international perspective whereby they seek to explore the frontiers of knowledge within the field of strategic management and its relatedness to other relevant disciplines (Guerras-Martin, Madhok & Montoro-Sanchez, 2014:70).

The term 'strategy' was derived from the Greek word "*strategos*", which was based on the military notion: "general in command of an army" (Ronda-Pupo & Guerras-Martin, 2012:164). Strategy was associated as the science of planning and directing military operations that manoeuvred forces to the most advantageous position in order to conquer the enemy (Muswaba & Worku, 2012:149). Today, the process of strategic management has become an essential building block for organisational planning (Muswaba & Worku, 2012:149).

The first business policy course was founded at the Harvard Business School in 1912 (Greiner *et al.*, 2003:402). This was the start of a pedagogical approach to teaching strategic management. In the mid-1940s to late 1950s, the strategy concept began to materialise as it was greatly influenced by a report written by Gordon and Howell (1959) for the Ford Foundation, who recognised the importance of business education at graduate level. A business policy course was shortly introduced into the curricula of other business schools (Ronda-Pupo & Guerras-Martin, 2012:164). The course attracted much attention among MBA programmes whilst the curriculum continued to be developed. Economists and academic leaders witnessed the transformation of management roles as the course facilitated change in corporations (Bower, 2008:269). Early tools used to teach strategy shifted from analysing a series of live cases to the modern day approach of planning a course of action to tackling specific aspects of general management (Greiner *et al.*, 2003:406).

By the 1960s, the discipline had matured significantly and this was coupled with a number of influencing factors. Guerras-Martin *et al.* (2014:69) identified four factors that contributed toward the progress of strategic management courses. Firstly, the study of "best practices" related to the field of strategic management has been addressed in extensive topics such as the study of internationalisation and corporate social responsibility. Secondly, research methods have become more sophisticated. For example, quantitative techniques have replaced the use of case studies. Lastly, there has been growing levels of interest surrounding the strategic management field of study by both scholars and academic journal publications.

As pointed out by Bower (2008:275), in response to the globalisation of markets and uncertainty in the ever-changing world, the process of evolution of the strategy concept will not come to a standstill unless the market no longer demands it. This places a burden on those who teach strategy to keep up with changing times.

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

Contemporary trends in strategic management education

A vital question posed by Furrer *et al.* (2008:11) is related to the direction in which the strategic management field is likely to move in the near future. It also provides a platform for researchers to develop theories and tools to enrich the discipline (Guerras-Martin *et al.*, 2014:75).

Several sources have reflected the works of the strategy discipline and this is done through case studies, academic papers, books and scholarly journal publications (Albert & Grzeda, 2014:2; Guerras-Martin *et al.*, 2014:70; Jennings, 2000:21; Schneider & Lieb, 2004:181-183). The modernist approach requires students to engage in and explore the frontiers of knowledge that link to the strategy concept (Guerras-Martin *et al.*, 2014:70). Classroom interactions have responded to the evolutionary process by encouraging students to participate in the course of strategic management to stimulate learning. The role of faculty instructors have also changed over time as they are now required to engage students in the process of active learning, and rely less on mere conceptual teachings (Stewart, Houghton & Rogers, 2012:756). Furthermore, Stewart *et al.* (2012:756) found that the use of passive learning modes as a medium of engagement is an inadequate technique of involving students in the learning process. For example, typical PowerPoint slides and formal lectures often lead to a lack of participation and students fail to apply their knowledge to what they have learnt. Ultimately, the modern day strategic management course is more about enhancing self-efficacy and to analyse, synthesize, and integrate information. (Albert & Grzeda, 2014:3; Grant, 2008:276; Jennings, 2000:22; Stewart *et al.*, 2012:756).

The strategic management course is described as a capstone course with the purpose of integrating core business disciplines where students practice decision-making and strategic analysis through problem situations (Albert & Grzeda, 2014:2; Ross & Rosenbloom, 2011:4). If current trends in teaching strategy can be maintained, then the formation of new research subfields will result in rapid dissemination of the theoretical discipline where key terms contribute to the definition of the strategy concept (Molina-Azorin, 2010:4; Ronda-Pupo & Guerras-Martin, 2012:182).

The objective of strategic management education

It is important to understand strategic management as being a piece of the greater puzzle that is management education (Elmuti, 2004:448). The latter is considered to be the transfer of knowledge contained within management subjects to students (Elmuti, 2004:439).

From 1955 to 2005, various concepts and theories, such as Michael Porter's publication of Competitive Strategy and Henry Mintzberg's development of strategic thinking (the Process School), have revolutionised the fundamental content of what was being taught in this "general management" course (Bower, 2008:271; Grant, 2008:277; Liedtka, 1998:121). However, a notable change came about when Schendel and Hofer suggested a new paradigm centred on the concept of strategy in 1979. This led to scholars conducting various studies on the field and further redefining this vast subject, which intersects with many other well-developed fields such as economics, marketing and finance (Nag *et al.*, 2007:936).

Strategic management is considered to have evolved from the business policy course, which in its infancy dealt with general management dilemmas of operating the firm as a whole (Bower, 2008:270; Greiner *et al.*, 2003:402). Case studies were conducted dealing with real life issues presented by local business people. Students were asked to analyse the problem and plan a course of action, so that its implementation in the organisation would lead to corrective measures being taken (Bower, 2008:269; Greiner *et al.*, 2003:402). However, strategic management courses started to change along with the field itself. As instructors of the subject became more involved in scientifically orientated research

and academic excellence, their methodologies of teaching the course thus evolved. This resulted in fewer multidisciplinary issues being discussed and fewer cases that required judgement based on wisdom and experience (Bennis & O'Toole, 2005:6).

During its evolution the business policy course was renamed "strategic management" (Bower, 2008:272). With this name change came a shift in the purpose of the course. As a result, focus shifted to what the organisation as a unit should do rather than just focusing on the general manager as an individual, thus the unit of analysis in case studies was not the manager but was now the firm (Bower, 2008:272).

Grant (2008:276) clearly outlines what he believes to be the goal of teaching strategic management: to enhance the development of students' analysis of highly complex business situations so that effective strategic decision-making skills and abilities are created in order to help guide the firm to long-term development. In other words, the goal of teaching strategic management ultimately leads to allowing students to analyse the core elements of the situation and synthesise how these different elements relate to one another (Grant, 2008:278).

Strategic management instructors

In the beginning, instructors of "strategy" were senior faculty members, many of whom had prior practical and experiential business knowledge (Greiner *et al.*, 2003:403). As the strategic management field evolved with Schendel and Hofer's development of the *Strategic Management Journal*, instructors were provided with an outlet through which research could be published and personal academic careers furthered (Bower, 2008:272).

With formal higher education being the most popular platform for teaching strategic management as a course, this then resulted in two different types of management educators who are employed (Elmuti, 2004:447). The first and most common type is an educator with no practical experience; their promotion through the scholarly ranks has come about through research and publications in academic journals. The second type of educator is one that has gained significant business experience and entered the academic world at a later stage. However, it does not matter what type of educator the instructor is classified as because there are certain general characteristics that make an educator successful. Elmuti (2004:447) mentions six different characteristics that are important to an educator: 1) general knowledge and ability; 2) certification and licensure or degrees obtained; 3) experience; 4) subject-matter knowledge; 5) intensive and focused in-service training; and 6) the alignment between teacher training and standards, in other words how the standards of accreditation is reflected in the curricula.

STRATEGY AT UNDER GRADUATE VERSUS POST GRADUATE LEVEL

Teaching strategic management at undergraduate level

The purpose of a strategy capstone course at undergraduate level is to encourage a basic understanding and to encourage students to apply their knowledge across the diverse field of business courses through critical thinking, analysis and synthesis. Many disciplinary areas offer business knowledge to enable students to practice cognitive skills (Stewart *et al.*, 2012:767). Students are trained to conduct analyses that generate expected values for alternative decisions (Bailey & Ford, 1996:9).

Teaching the strategy course entails a plan of action for how each activity is taught, and what approach is to be used to achieve the aims of the curriculum (Maritz, Poggenpoel & Myburg, 2011:154). Business coaching, including a focus on strategic management, has been a contemporary emerging discipline that is offered at undergraduate level to MBA courses. Business coaching facilitates deep, meaningful critical and reflective thinking through constructivist learning (Maritz *et*

al., 2011:173). Active engagement in coaching gives rise to knowledge expansion where students are able to build onto what they already know (Ladyshewsky, 2006:74).

Findings by Albert and Grzeda (2014:3) suggest that reflective learning improves deep-level learning outcomes for students in business strategy courses. In other words, reflection entails the process where analysis outcomes are transformed into strategic options. Tools such as the SWOT analysis, PESTEL macro environmental analysis, scenario planning and Resource Based View encourage reflective activities which tend to embed knowledge in understanding theories and concepts of a profound nature (Albert & Grzeda, 2014:6).

However, Fixcon and Row (2014) are of the opinion that capstone strategy courses taught at undergraduate level are lacking an integrated instructional design. They suggest that desirable learning outcomes should be achieved by incorporating a variety of teaching activities to stimulate active learning and classroom interaction. Two important aspects of this type of learning is: firstly, the notion of teamwork, and secondly, the purpose in scope, type, choice, and context of a learning project (Fixson & Rao, 2014:50). One way of integrating both these aspects is through group assignments based on simulations. On the other hand, Fink's integrated instructional design model incorporates the element of active learning to teach the basics of financial analysis to students (Stewart *et al.*, 2012:753). This instructional design model consists of six components of learning as identified by Stewart *et al.* (2012:757), namely: application, integration, foundational knowledge, caring, human dimension, and learning how to learn. Undergraduates should be able to demonstrate learning outcomes and apply active learning using Fink's instructional model within the classroom. By doing so, students are able to incorporate the components of learning to the capstone course (Stewart *et al.*, 2012:762-763).

Teaching strategic management at postgraduate level

Jarzabkowski *et al.* (2012:7) found that formal business education at postgraduate level is more likely to adapt to the use of strategic tools compared to an undergraduate level. For example, senior managers in executive positions who have done an MBA employ more tools due to more exposure to management training and experience. This is an indication that managers engage through a reflective learning experience (Jarzabkowski *et al.*, 2012:14).

Accordingly, the teaching approach at postgraduate level incorporates a combination of practical experience and case methods (Jarzabkowski *et al.*, 2012:14). A way of teaching strategy in many leadership programmes as well as in managerial environments is through peer coaching. Peer coaching stimulates real-life situational learning where students are required to think critically and apply their cognitive competencies (Maritz *et al.*, 2011:155). Strategies should be initiated to maintain equilibrium through peer interaction as this allows students to delve deeper into the real-life problems while simultaneously transforming theory to practice (Ladyshewsky, 2006:71).

Jennings (2000:20) identified three learning methods employed in teaching the course to Masters students, namely: consultancy projects, new business venture simulation, and the case method. Results depicted that learning situations drive the design of the strategic management course (Jennings, 2000:24). Furthermore, Greiner *et al.* (2003:407) are of the opinion that a scientific approach at an analytical and conceptual level may be appropriate for teaching strategy to doctoral students as opposed to MBA students who seek corporate-related careers. Doctoral students tend to learn the techniques of teaching strategy indirectly from senior professors and from lecturing to undergraduates. This results in the lack of exposure to experiential knowledge that goes beyond the pedagogical approach of case teaching and lecturing (Greiner *et al.*, 2003:416). Today, strategic management has become a compulsory course in every MBA programme and the course is designed to incorporate the core business disciplines with the process of strategic management, namely analysis and implementation (Albert & Grzeda, 2014:2; Greiner *et al.*, 2003:415). Albert and Grzeda (2014:8) suggest that synthesis of strategic management contructs should be viewed as the key dimension in

the integrated approach to teach strategy formulation and implementation. Together with this, MBA students are engaged in real-life applications where they offer insight and validation into the course curriculum (Meredith, 2012:92).

By adopting the value chain analysis and Porter's five forces model, students are able to nurture their theoretical knowledge and contribute to making effective strategic decisions (Albert & Grzeda, 2014:4). Fixson and Rao (2014:50) noted that the most practical method for students to develop skills in an emergent strategy approach, is by engaging in active learning (also known as experiential learning). Teaching graduates how to integrate emergent strategies and analytical skills will better equip them with knowledge and understanding to succeed in solving corporate problems (Fixson & Rao, 2014:53; Stewart *et al.*, 2012:761). Based on existing literature, it can be deduced that strategy is taught differently at different levels of tertiary education. Thus, the following proposition can be formulated:

P^1: *There is a distinction in teaching strategy at undergraduate and postgraduate level.*

TEACHING METHODOLOGY FOLLOWED FOR STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT COURSES

The importance of case studies

The use of case studies, involving active participation from local businesspeople, conducted in 1912 was a platform allowing students to comprehend and analyse real life management dilemmas (Bower 2008:274). Bower (2008:274) explains two things that great case studies achieve: firstly, they help students learn in the best way possible by providing simulated shared data for participant-based learning and through the process of preparing, listening and problem solving in a group; and secondly, they help the faculty author learn what problems are important and this understanding shapes and informs the direction of future research.

Greiner *et al.* (2003:404-405) explain what authors have termed to be the "knowing-doing-gap". They noticed that in business schools, the learning has shifted from behavioural skills and action taking towards emphasis on concepts and tools embedded in research. This discovery came about through a study conducted among the "top 20" business schools, surveying the required MBA strategy courses, and revealing almost an exclusive emphasis on analysis and theory. The study also revealed instructors frequently lecturing their preferred models and theories (Bennis & O'Toole, 2005:6).

The original strong connection between learning and doing in the teaching of strategic management is slowly weakening. Greiner *et al.* (2003:404) summarise by stating that: "Analytical expertise without the complementary behavioural skills to involve others in the total process can result in both badly formulated strategies and failed implementation."

Grant (2008:278) further explains that in order for students to develop strategic management capabilities, they must engage in real life business problems through case studies. It is through the diagnosing of case study problems that students gain experience in strategic analysis, acquire skills through learning from peers, take into account new information and ideas to revise preliminary judgements and then finally formulate judgements of their own. Thus, the business policy course assumed that once students were continuously exposed to case-based problems, they would develop their own cognitive frameworks and understandings for conceptualising and analysing strategic situations (Grant, 2008:278). During the 1940s, the case study method of teaching became the dominant pedagogy for all Harvard Business School courses, which in turn later became widely used in other strategy courses at other business schools (Greiner *et al.*, 2003:403). As Greiner *et al.* (2003:403) explain, during the teaching of case studies there were no "correct answers" only "good questions" and "improved answers". Based on the above literature concerning the value of case studies in the education of strategic management, the following proposition has been deduced:

P^2:   The use of case studies is a typical method that instructors use in the education of strategic management.

Practice versus theory approach

"The practice of management is best taught as a craft; rich in lessons derived from experience and orientated toward taking and responding to action." (Bailey & Ford, 1996:9). The evolution of the strategic management story was aided by various scholars' strong beliefs and their ambition to "build" something that reflects their ideas and interests (Bower, 2008:274). The theory versus practical pedagogy of strategic management has long been a debate among scholars that continues to remain unresolved. According to Grant (2008:276) the business policy course developed by Andrews and Christensen and the competitive strategy course introduced and developed by Michael Porter brought about two distinct approaches to the education of strategic management in tertiary institutions. The first is that of the focus on the role of the general manager in directing the firm to continued development and this is primarily practice-based (i.e., based on case studies). The second, which Grant refers to as "strategic analysis", is purely theory based and focuses on the design of business strategies.

The practice-based approach of teaching strategy through case studies drew on the tradition of how people acquired practical knowledge and skills through directly experiencing the phenomenon at hand, whilst emphasising the importance of "doing" in the learning process (Greiner *et al.*, 2003:403). This learning-by-doing perspective has aided students in translating concepts into action. This perspective is particularly important in the educational settings of professional institutions where students, "need to acquire competence and experience in translating complex cognitive knowledge into everyday behaviour and lasting skills" (Greiner *et al.*, 2003:403).

A shift was experienced during the 1980s to the 2000s in which strategic management teaching moved to specialist faculty: instructors possessed doctoral qualifications in economics, strategy or organisation theory and were engaged in academic research in the field of strategy (Grant, 2008:277). As a distinct field of academic research, strategic management was accompanied by an increase in research by higher education-based specialists. Theory-based approaches intend to question the tacit assumptions and beliefs that students approach strategic problems with and drive them to use concepts and frameworks that are based on theories of how the business world operates (Grant, 2008:279). In addition, a critical role of the lecturer is to broaden and develop students' cognitive frameworks while simultaneously identifying and questioning their prior assumptions of preconceived structures when approaching strategic management. With a shift of teaching strategic management, the following proposition can be formulated:

P^3:   The teaching of strategic management is influenced by the research background of the instructor.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

To explore and obtain diverse perspectives on the education of strategic management at undergraduate and postgraduate level, we adopted an exploratory study based on semi-structured face-to-face interviews with participants from different tertiary institutions in the Gauteng area. The Gauteng area was selected due to the geographic accessibility to the researchers. An explorative approach is particularly appropriate, since the aim of our study was to understand the phenomenon surrounding strategic management education from multiple perspectives of instructors within this field (Merriam, 2009:14).

Sampling

The unit of analysis in this study was the approach to and content of selected strategic management courses presented to undergraduates and postgraduates. Data was collected from 12 universities, of which five agreed to participate in semi-structured face-to-face interviews. In this regard 12 universities provided study guides, while lecturers from five universities agreed to interviews. Seven lecturers from five universities were interviewed. We were only able to secure seven interviews due to distances involved, time constraints and the busy schedules of academics. We used maximum variation sampling to ensure that we purposefully selected a diverse range of tertiary institutions and participants that teach strategic management (Plano-Clarke & Creswell, 2015:334). Furthermore, we also used snowball sampling to increase our chances of finding potential participants. The following requirements must have been met in order for an institution to qualify: be accredited tertiary institutions in South Africa; and offer strategic management in their undergraduate or postgraduate curriculums.

The following requirements must have been met in order for a participant to qualify: They must have an academic qualification higher than a master's degree; they must lecture strategic management as a subject to either undergraduates and/or postgraduates. Participants were selected based on their knowledge and experience surrounding the subject matter.

Data Collection

According to Harrell and Bradley (2009:6), interviews can be used to gather information about participants' own practices, beliefs or opinions and their present or past experiences or behaviours. Ali, Al Salti and Hackney (2011:459) further state that for exploratory research, semi-structured interviews are judged to be the most appropriate method. Thus, our primary source of data was seven semi-structured face-to-face interviews collected in September 2015. The interview questions were initially developed based on the extensive literature review. A pilot study was then conducted with one strategic management lecturer in order to check the time required to cover all the questions and their suitability. The feedback was constructive and questions were changed accordingly. It was found that some interview questions were too ambiguous and somewhat leading, thus we asked more open-ended questions that would result in more information rich answers.

Initial contact was made through email, which contained a formal introductory letter stating all relevant details concerning the study and potential participants were invited to participate in our study. Each interview began with general background questions relating to the instructor followed by open-ended questions to elicit their experiences and opinions regarding the education of strategic management. All interviews were audio-recorded except for one. However, field notes were taken by researchers during the interview and supplemented with further information and reflection straight after the interview. The researchers transcribed the data following the 24-hour rule (Eisenhardt, 1989:574).

Secondary data was also collected in the form of 12 study guides from undergraduate and postgraduate strategic management courses. These documents contained written information about the phenomenon we seek to study and it served as a supplement to our interview-based data, which enabled cross-checking between sources (Ahmed, 2010:3). We specifically focused on the prescribed textbooks, content, and learning outcomes to confirm internal validity from the data we used.

Data Analysis

A thematic analysis was employed to code and analyse the data collected. According to Braun and Clarke (2012:57), thematic analysis is a systematic process of identifying patterns (i.e. themes) that emerge across a data set. We followed the six-phase approach to thematic analysis as adopted by Braun and Clarke (2006:87), including phase 1: familiarising yourself with the data; phase 2:

generating initial codes; phase 3: searching for themes; phase 4: reviewing potential themes; phase 5: defining and naming themes and phase 6: producing the report.

The researchers transcribed each audio-recorded interview independently. Field notes and transcriptions were later exchanged to compare and ensure accuracy of the data. Data analysis followed immediately after each transcription on an excel spreadsheet. Researchers generated codes that provided an overview of how participants perceived strategic management education. From the list of codes, sub-themes which were more relevant in answering our research questions were derived. We then shifted from sub-themes to main themes, where we looked at much broader and descriptive terms that summed up our sub-themes. This process was done by drawing up a thematic map where we illustrated the linkage between the analyses of each sub-theme to the main themes. Finally, main themes were revised and finalised. We selected extracts that best illustrated each sub-theme and reflected our research questions. The Appendix contains the key concepts related to our data analysis process as summarised in Table 1, and the process linking our codes to main themes and sub-themes are illustrated in Table 2.

FINDINGS

In analysing the data, themes listed in the Appendix Table 3 were identified. Each theme together with its sub-theme is discussed below accordingly. Study guides were also analysed to support the findings with particular reference to the learning outcomes, content, and prescribed textbooks.

Learning Foundational Skills And Knowledge Transfer

Learning foundational skills and knowledge transfer can be described as the core objectives concerning undergraduate strategic management modules. Participants stressed the need to equip undergraduates with basic strategic management skills before they could critically analyse more complex pieces of text. It was found that undergraduate content did not require students to think critically about strategic management, but rather to develop and gain knowledge about the basic principles first.

Understanding basic strategic management principles

This sub-theme can be described as the process in which instructors teach undergraduate students basic strategic management concepts, such as generic strategies, competitive advantage, strategy formulation and implementation.

At undergraduate level, participants help introduce strategic management concepts to students by equipping them with the skills necessary to dissect and understand this information.. This observation is illustrated by the following quotes:

> "On third year level it's important for me that they get their theoretical foundation." (P4)

> "… personally on an undergraduate level you want to equip people with skills…" (P7)

These findings are not mentioned outright in literature but Albert and Grzeda (2014:6) state that using tools, such as a SWOT analysis, do help students understand concepts that are more complex.

Traditional Approach: Understanding the basics

The shared approach which most participants follow to teach undergraduate strategic management, is known to be the traditional approach. It was found that all participants who teach undergraduates follow a very similar rational planning process perspective. Students are taught what strategy is,

environmental analysis skills, how to follow the sequential planning approach of formulation followed by implementation. These observations are illustrated by the following quotes:

> "That's the conventional way that we've been taught to think about strategy: the rational planning perspective." (P7)

> "In their third year they learn about planning, organising, leading and control in a strategy environment…" (P4)

Collaborative concept discussion: Rational thinking capability

At postgraduate level, the critical value-added aspect of the strategic management course foster students to demonstrate analytical thinking abilities by asking "what if" and "so what" questions. Strategy concepts are also jointly discussed in classrooms to allow students to develop conceptualised understanding of the building blocks of strategic management.

Thinking critically to foster independent thinking
The idea is to expose students to the complex field of strategy, whereby they apply critical thinking, analysis and synthesis to strategy concepts in work environments. Similarly, participants mentioned that because postgraduates are assumed to have the prior level of knowledge, they are expected to think strategically and critically integrate and evaluate business disciplines. Furthermore, the critical thinking aspect cultivates the students' ability to identify and solve problems, make responsible decisions, and to exercise initiative needed for continuing professional development. This is illustrated in the extract below:

> "… they're more dependent on their own thinking and thoughts, and proving that they understand. So we start off with more theory and then end up with more understanding and application in their own words." (P4)

Our findings are aligned with existing strategic management literature, as instructors aim to create an environment where students are able to exercise their cognitive skills and competencies (Stewart *et al.*, 2012:767).

Case studies facilitate application

Case studies facilitate the application component of the courses, focussing on linking theory with practice. Participants were all in agreement that an effective method to measure student learning is through the use of case studies incorporated into exams and assignments. Case studies are generally taken directly from textbooks, newspapers, business articles, and well-known companies to encourage class participation.

Practice-based teaching: interactive learning

Interactive learning is stimulated by encouraging class discussions and debates. Likewise, postgraduate instructors mentioned that because the class groups are small, students are more participative and likely to challenge the instructors' account. PowerPoint slides are used to the minimum since the purpose is to engage students in active learning and thinking. In addition, interactive learning reflects practice-based teaching as students are exposed to strategic management from a practical point of view. This can be supported by the following view:

> "… on postgraduate level, it's about applying those concepts. So where the one is theory and the other one is application and proving understanding through application, and using those concepts in case environments." (P4)

As Grant (2008:278) explained, interaction with peers allow students to explore and share the frontiers of real life problems. Likewise, students acquire practical skills for the purposes of applying theory to practice, which further bridges the knowing-doing gap as mentioned in literature (Greiner *et al.*, 2003:405).

Dominant western principles

The typical strategic management courses still follow the rational planning process as a point of departure. South African instructors have attempted to challenge this perspective by integrating different principles and critiques to exemplify a multi-faceted view of strategy.

Traditional American perspective: majority American textbooks
Our findings suggest that firstly, most South African strategic management courses use American textbooks and literature. This compels students to be taught about the Western principles of strategy. In a local context, normally additional articles are used to further introduce the different perspectives on strategy. Secondly, we found that students often find it ambiguous when being taught about the traditional and emergent approach to strategy. The following extract below indicate the participants' view on the traditional American perspective:

> "… we're still stuck in the same rut of thinking where strategy is concerned. And that's the Americanized rational planning perspective on strategy… Because we're slaves to American thinking." (P7)

According to Molina-Azorin (2010:2), authors such as Porter and Mintzberg are sole contributors to American literature on strategy. There is a tendency to focus on these approaches in the South African context as well.

Content alignment with university intentions

Content determines what a course entails and highlights the critical aspects surrounding the strategic management field. We found that the primary source in which content is derived, comes from textbooks and supplemented by materials such as study guides which outlines learning outcomes, relevant companies to illustrate as examples, and prescribed academic articles.

Where textbooks provide the framework, instructors are able to build around the content by adding additional aspects to it. However, the content differs based on the audience and what the university wants to achieve. For example, the course content for undergraduates are merely introductory compared to those for postgraduate students where they are expected to "fill in the gaps" for understanding. This is supported by the following extract:

> "… it will all depend on the prescribed textbook to support it and what we want to achieve as a university in terms of what people will follow in the outside world." (P3)

Universities are like factories because they focus on producing graduates (the "product") for the market. Therefore, university objectives should be aligned with content in order for the "products" to remain attractive. This confirms to literature as strategic management textbooks merely complements the course, whereas a plan of action for "how" and "to whom" is it taught is taken into account (Maritz *et al.*, 2011:154).

Instructor-dependent

Strategic management modules are heavily influenced and semi-created by its course instructor thus, they can be described as instructor-dependent. Even within the university's learning outcomes, participants play a significant role in courses' characters, especially on a postgraduate level.

All participants employ their own unique teaching approach whilst keeping in mind how best to meet their audiences' needs. Some participants also refine their approach based on graduate's reviews, resulting in courses that are very distinctive based on the instructor's effort. This resulted in approaches that are multi-faceted and individualistic.

All participants' approaches are modernised in terms of using online platforms to disseminate learning material. These observations are illustrated by the following quotes:

> "I'm a big picture person and I believe strategic management is about the bigger picture. So that's how I also pitch it to the students; is seeing the bigger picture and then fill in the gaps for the understanding. We make extensive use of our online platform to publish course content for the students. " (P4)

> "I tweak my course every year on feedback that I received, so we ask them where we can improve, where we need to fill the gap. We require students to search for academic articles online…" (P6)

These findings are somewhat consistent with literature as Bennis and O'Toole (2005:6) found that instructors frequently lecture their preferred models and theories. Stewart *et al.* (2012:756) also found that the use of passive learning modes as a medium of engagement is an inadequate technique of involving students in the learning process.

Relevant content creation

Relevant content creation can be defined as the constant updating of course learning material in relation to changes in the business world and the strategic management field. It was found that participants frequently update their courses' content, especially at postgraduate level and introduce new concepts when necessary. They do this through the use of the latest business case studies, the latest academic articles and even utilising a completely new textbook in some instances. Relevance was identified as a key link to students relating to the content successfully.

Reflection of business world

This sub-theme is described by the use of relevant case studies and learning material to try and best replicate business world situations. Some participants create their own case studies based on relevant global issues to force students to engage with these topics. It is evident that all participants try to expose students to the reality of business through class exercises like case studies. These observations are illustrated by the following quote:

> "We use case studies for various reasons. So firstly it was really relevant to the real contemporary business environment and secondly, it is also employability. For them to develop the skills. They must be able to apply theory to the case studies and undestand how it works in practice…" (P4)

This is consistent with literature as Grant (2008:278) states that engaging in real life business problems through case studies allows students to develop strategic management capabilities. Bower (2008:275) also points out that the continual evolution of the strategy concept will not stop unless the market no longer demands it; and this then puts a burden on lecturers to keep up with it.

Versatile business application

We found that the content taught to students reflect industry expectations. Business environments require individuals to develop qualities and transferable skills in order to learn through reflection in practice and experience. Our findings also revealed that strategy is involved at all levels of an organisation.

The shift in strategic management education has created a new path for strategy within an organisation. Not only is strategy exercised at top management, but everyone now has a role to play. This can be expressed as follows:

> "Strategy is a hat that you put on that comes with a fair amount of responsibility, or managerial skill... So it prepares you for down the line and it helps you to conform to the people that are involved in strategy at the company..." (P3)

Furthermore, strategy is ingrained within the value system of an organisation. This includes incorporating leadership into strategy, ethical principles, and the organisation's corporate social responsibility. Our findings thus confirm literature in terms of equipping students with the necessary knowledge and understanding through incorporating real world expectations into learning materials (Albert & Grzeda, 2014:2).

Continuous academic disruption

According to most participants, the major shift in terms of the strategic management field has been from policy, to process, then finally to practice. Moreover, academic gurus in the field of strategy have had great influence over the contemporary development of strategic management courses. This aspect can be supported by the extract below:

> "Until Porter comes out and says something, everybody rushes off to go buy his book…
> but if you really go and read Porter, he hasn't said anything new since 1985. It's the same stuff. It's just packaged differently..." (P7)

Modern day trends in teaching strategic management urges academics to develop new theories and models to enrich the strategy discipline (Guerras-Martin *et al.*, 2014:75). This is in line with our findings as strategic management instructors are required to facilitate a linkage between the relevancy of strategy concepts and theories with emergent views of strategy for effective teaching and learning.

CONCLUSION

Summary of findings and theoretical implications

Our explorative study sought to investigate how instructors in South African tertiary institutions taught strategic management. To prepare students for the real world of business, they should be equipped with the skills and competencies needed to make corporate decisions.

It was found that strategic management is mainly taught on a tertiary level, as the courses' content and approach differed depending on who the audience was. The core objective of all undergraduate courses is the transfer of basic strategic management theory to develop useable skills. Concepts such as environmental analysis, competitive advantage, strategy planning and implementation were found to be the make-up of the course. Whereas postgraduate strategic management courses focused on the critical thinking aspect and applying theory to practice. Students are more reflective and interactive (i.e. bringing in their own work experiences), thus challenging instructors intellectually. Furthermore, our findings suggested that most South African tertiary institutions focus on the rational planning perspective, which is emphasized in the textbooks and literature that are used. Emphasis is placed on

integrating local industry expectations with university objectives to allow a multi-faceted perspective on strategy from a South African context.

It was further confirmed that case studies in particular, is an effective method used to test students' understanding of concepts as it facilitates the application part of the work.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings suggest that the education of strategic management in South Africa is extremely varied and multi-faceted. Thus, to enhance the course, instructors should do the following: create a unique approach tailored to their audience that is suitable for their education environment; strategic management courses should contain relevant content that reflects the South African context. This includes using case studies and companies to illustrate as examples. Linking concepts to the reality of businesses aids students in understanding how strategy is integrated. The utilisation of simulations could enhance students' dynamic understanding of complex strategic management concepts by giving students hands-on experience as they comprehend how these concepts play a role in the business. Due to the lack literature written on local principles, more recognition should be given to developing the strategic management course around a South African context.

LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The limitations to our study are threefold. Firstly, our study was limited to data collected from universities. This was due to distances involved, time constraints, and information barriers of certain institutions. We recommend that future research be extended to include insight gathered from higher education institutions throughout South Africa, such as colleges and business schools provided that necessary ethical clearance is permitted. Secondly, interviews were only conducted in Gauteng which resulted in a small sample size. Thus, participants from other provinces were remote as our travel distance and data collection period was confined. It is recommended that researchers obtain research grants or funding from their institution to include a widely dispersed sample size. Lastly, we specifically focused on the perspectives of instructors within the field of strategic management. Future research should include the demographics of a strategic management class, and accommodate views of middle managers in order to gain insight into two different perspectives, namely: strategic management in education versus strategy within the work environment.

REFERENCES

Ahmed, J.U. 2010. Documentary research method: new dimensions. *Indus Journal of Management & Social Science,* 4(1):1-14.

Albert, S. and Grzeda, M., 2015. Reflection in Strategic Management Education. *Journal of Management Education*, *39*(5), pp.650-669.

Ali, M., Al Salti, Z. & Hackney, R. 2011. Factors impacting knowledge transfer success in information systems outsourcing. *Journal of Enterprise Information Management,* 24(5):455-468.

Bailey, J. & Ford, C. 1996. Management as science versus management as practice in postgraduate business education. *Business Strategy Review,* 7(4):7-12.

Bennis, W.G. & O'Toole, J. 2005. How business schools lost their way. *Harvard Business Review,* 83(5):1-10.

Bower, J.L. 2008. The teaching of strategy. *Journal of Management Inquiry,* 17(4):269-275.

Braun, V. & Clarke, V. 2006. Using a thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology,* 3:77-101.

Braun, V. & Clarke, V. 2012. *APA handbook of research methods in psychology.* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Carter, C., Clegg, S.R. & Kornberger, M. 2008. Strategy as practice. *Strategic Organization*, 6(1), 83-99.

Chia, R. & Holt, R. 2008. The nature of knowledge in business schools. *Academy of Management Learning and Education,* 7(4):471-486.

Eisenhardt, K.M. 1989. Making fast strategic decisions in high-velocity environments. *The Academy of Management Journal,* 32(3):543-576.

Elmuti, D. 2004. Can management be taught? If so, what should management education curricula include and how should the process be approached? *Management Decision,* 42(4):439-453.

Fixson, S.K. & Rao, J. 2014. Learning emergent strategies through design thinking. *Design Management Review,* 25(1):46-53.

Furrer, O., Thomas, H. and Goussevskaia, A., 2008. The structure and evolution of the strategic management field: A content analysis of 26 years of strategic management research. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, *10*(1), pp.1-23.

Grant, R.M. 2008. Why strategy teaching should be theory based. *Journal of Management Inquiry,* 17(4):276-281.

Greiner, L.E., Bhambri, A. & Cummings, T.G. 2003. Searching for a strategy to teach strategy. *Academy of Management Learning and Education,* 2(4):402-420.

Guerras-Martin, L.A., Madhok, A. & Montoro-Sanchez, A. 2014. The evolution of strategic management research: recent trends and current directions. *Business Research Quarterly,* 17:69-76.

Harrell, M.C. and Bradley, M.A., 2009. *Data collection methods. Semi-structured interviews and focus groups*. RAND NATIONAL DEFENSE RESEARCH INST SANTA MONICA CA.

Hough, J. & Neuland, E. 2014. Strategic management and the use of information and communication technologies by selected South African and American students. *South African Journal of Higher Education,* 28(2):455-465.

Jarzabkowski, P., Giulietti, M., Oliveira, B. and Amoo, N., 2012. "We Don't Need No Education"—Or Do We? Management Education and Alumni Adoption of Strategy Tools. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, p.1056492612460588.

Jennings, D. 2000. Strategic management: an evaluation of the use of three learning methods. *Developments in Business Simulation & Experiential Learning,* 27:20-25.

Ladyshewsky, R.K. 2006. Peer coaching: a constructivist methodology for enhancing critical thinking in postgraduate business education. *Higher Education Research & Development,* 25(1):67-84.

Liedtka, J.M. 1998. Strategic thinking: can it be taught? *Long Range Planning,* 31(1):120-129.

Maritz, J., Poggenpoel, M. & Myburg, C. 2011. Exploring teaching strategies for training programmes in business coaching. *Acta Academica,* 43(4):152-180.

Meredith, M.J. 2012. Strategic communication and social media: an MBA course from a business communication perspective. *Business Communication Quarterly,* 75(1):89-95.

Merriam, S.B. 2009. *Qualitative research: a guide to design and implementation.* San Francisco: CA: Jossey-Bass.

Molina-Azorin, J.F. 2010. Mixed methods research in strategic management: impact and applications. *Organizational Research Methods*, 1-24.

Muswaba, M.M. & Worku, Z. 2012. Strategic management of public further education and training (FET) colleges in South Africa. *African Journal of Science, Technology, Innovation and Development,* 4(3):147-170.

Nag, R., Hambrick, D.C. & Chen, M.J. 2007. What is strategic management, really? Inductive derivation of a consensus definition of the field. *Strategic Management Journal,* 28 (9): 935-955.

Plano-Clarke, V. & Creswell, J.W. 2015. *Understanding research: a consumer's guide.* 2nd ed. Upper Saddle river, NY: Pearson Education.

Polit, D.F. & Beck, C.T. 2012. *Nursing research: generating and assessing evidence for nursing practice.* 9th ed. Philadelphia, PA: Wolters Kluwer Health.

Ronda-Pupo, G.A. & Guerras-Martin, L.A. 2012. Dynamics of the evolution of the strategy concept 1962-2008: a co-word analysis. *Strategic Management Journal,* 33(2):162-188.

Ross, D.N. and Rosenbloom, A., 2011. Reflections on building and teaching an undergraduate strategic management course in a blended format. *Journal of Management Education*, p.1052562911398979.

Schneider, M. & Lieb, P. 2004. The challenges of teaching strategic management: working toward successful inclusion of the resource-based view. *Journal of Management Education,* 28(2):170-187.

Shenton, A.K. 2004. Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information,* 22:63-75.

Stewart, A.C., Houghton, S.M. & Rogers, P.R. 2012. Instructional design, active learning, and student performance: using a trading room to teach strategy. *Journal of Management Studies,* 36(6):753-776.

APPENDIX

Table 1: **Key terms used in discussion of data analysis**

Data analysis terminology	Definition
Codes	Labels used to describe a segment of text or an image.
Coding	The process to make sense out of text data, to label segments with codes, and to collapse these codes into broad themes.
Sub-theme	A unifying phrase or word that summarises the codes.
Theme	Similar to codes, but aggregated together to form a major idea from a set of data.

Source: Creswell (2012:243-245).

Table 2: **The link between the codes, sub-themes and main themes identified in this study**

Raw extracts	Codes	Sub-themes	Main themes
"On third year level it's important for me that they get their theoretical foundation." (P4) "… personally on an undergraduate level you want to equip people with skills…" (P7)	UG: theoretical concept and understanding UG: passive learning UG: knowledge transfer UG: equip skills UG: focus on foundation of strategy	Understanding basic strategic management principles	Learning foundational skills and knowledge transfer
"That's the conventional way that we've been taught to think about strategy: the rational planning perspective." (P7) "In their third year they learn about planning, organising, leading and control in a strategy environment…" (P4)	UG: basic knowledge transfer UG: traditional views being taught		Traditional approach: understanding the basics

Raw extracts	Codes	Sub-themes	Main themes
"… they're more dependent on their own thinking and thoughts, and proving that they understand. So we start off with more theory and then end up with more understanding and application in their own words." (P4)	PG: use critical thinking to apply skills PG: assume prior knowledge PG: encourages independent thinking	Thinking critically to foster independent thinking	Collaborative concept discussion: rational thinking ability
"... on postgraduate level, it's about applying those concepts. So where the one is theory and the other one is application and proving understanding through application, and using those concepts in case environments." (P4)	PG: apply theory to practice PG: reflective learning and participative Learning by doing Practical approach of teaching content	Practice-based teaching: interactive learning	Case studies facilitate application
"… we're still stuck in the same… in the rut of thinking where strategy is concerned. And that's the Americanized rational planning perspective on strategy… Because we're slaves to American thinking." (P7)	Americanized viewpoint South African vs. American context is confusing	Traditional American perspective: Majority American textbooks	Dominant Western principles
"… it will all depend on the prescribed textbook to support it and what we want to achieve as a university in terms of what people will follow in the outside world." (P3)	Content derived from textbook Textbooks selected based on audience and university objectives		Content alignment with university intentions
"I'm a big picture person and I believe strategic management is about the bigger picture. So that's how I also pitch it to the students; is seeing the bigger picture and then fill in the gaps for the understanding. We make extensive use of our online platform to publish course content for the students. " (P4) "I tweak my course every year on feedback that I received, so we ask them where we can improve, where we need to fill the gap. We require students to search for academic articles online…" (P6)	Technology as a teaching aid Predetermined learning outcomes Strategy is multi-faceted		Instructor-dependent

Raw extracts	Codes	Sub-themes	Main themes
"We use case studies for various reasons. So firstly it was really relevant to the real contemporary business environment and secondly, it is also employability. For them to develop the skills. They must be able to apply theory to the case studies and undestand how it works in practice…" (P4)	Relevant case studies Relevant content and theories Relevant learning material Based on relevant business examples	Reflection of business world	Relevant content creation
"Strategy is a hat that you put on that comes with a fair amount of responsibility, or managerial skill… So it prepares you for down the line and it helps you to conform to the people that are involved in strategy at the company..." (P3)	Strategy is part of company fibre Strategy involved in all businesses		Versatile business application
"Until Porter comes out and says something, everybody rushes off to go buy his book… but if you really go and read Porter, he hasn't said anything new since 1985. It's the same stuff. It's just… it's just packaged differently... " (P7)	Strategy is complex Strategy is evolving		Continuous academic disruption

Table 3:   Identified themes and sub-themes linking to study guides

Themes	Sub-themes	Tertiary institution (Code)	Study guide analysis
Learning foundational skills and knowledge transfer	Understanding basic strategic management principles	A, B, C	Understand what a strategy is and identify the difference between business-level and corporate-level strategy; Define generic strategies and explain how they relate to a firm's strategic position; Evaluate the quality of a firm's strategy.
Traditional approach: understanding the basics		A, B, C, I	Understand why we study strategic management; Understand the relationship between strategy formulation and implementation; Skills to identify appropriate business strategies and threats, and opportunities that will contribute to a financial sound business venture.
Collaborative concept discussion: rational thinking capability	Thinking critically to foster independent thinking	A, B, C, D E, G, I, J	Demonstrate skills of critical thinking, problem solving, collection and analysis of data, and effective written communication; Effective self-management and the ability to continue learning.
Case studies facilitates application	Practice-based teaching: interactive learning	A, F, H, I, L	Apply theoretical knowledge coupled with work experiences to the solution of corporate problems; Apply contextualised strategic business theories, methods, techniques and appropriate models in order to solve complex strategic problems, and formulate opinions, arguments and recommendations within the context of a company.
Dominant western principles	Traditional American perspective: Majority American textbooks	A, C, E, F, G	Main textbook publishers: Pearson and McGraw Hill
Content alignment: University intentions		A, B, C ,I	To develop appropriate business policies and strategies within a changing environment to meet stakeholder interest; Effectively, innovatively and responsibly apply the pervasive qualities and skills required in management, including ethics and professionalism, personal attributes and professional skills.

Themes	Sub-themes	Tertiary institution (Code)	Study guide analysis
Instructor-dependent		A – L	Prescribed articles and suggested readings; Online platforms; Assessment methods (class exercises, debates, presentations, examinations).
Relevant content creation	Reflection of business world	B, G, L	Articulate the key developments in strategic thinking over the past decades and approaches to and philosophies about strategy; View the business as a system consisting of interrelated functions; Explain how strategic management fits into the contemporary business environment.
Versatile business application		A, J, L	Explain the effect of organisational change and development on an organisation's strategy; Promote an understanding of changing, unpredictable and diverse international business environments, and to enable students to think in an integrated way.
Continuous academic disruption		A, F, I	Reflecting on and exploring a variety of strategies to learn more effectively; Independently conduct further research in field of strategic management.