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**Javani, Blessing**

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# Strategic Management Process through Project Management as a Vehicle

**Blessing Javani**
**Student Number: 1501946**

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**Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment**
**School of Mechanical, Industrial and Aeronautical Engineering**
**University of the Witwatersrand**

**Supervisor: Dr B. Emwanu**

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## ABSTRACT

The thesis recognises that strategy implementation failure is high as per literature and considers a way this could be reduced through improving the approach to the strategy management process. A gap is identified in the literature in that strategy formulation and implementation is not undertaken as a continuous process but rather as two distinct stages where formulation hands over to implementation. The thesis argues that this is a disconnect which contributes to the high failure rate and proposes that strategy management process can be enhanced by facilitating continuity using project management approach as a vehicle so that formulation and implementation phases run seamlessly, aligning resources not only with the goal as has been the traditional practice but also, in a novel sense, with existing capability that can enable implementation. This way, only quality strategic plans that can be implemented with available resources and capability are passed. This is a novel approach, which is underlined primarily by systems theory (for integration of two stages) and secondly resource-based view theory (for working within limitations of available resources).

To undertake the study, a conceptual framework is developed and tested using data obtained from the field. A mixed method approach is used whereby a survey is first undertaken within the services industry in South Africa among volunteering companies, then follow up interviews are done with some of the participants to verify information and obtain explanations required. The study thus uses both quantitative and qualitative approach in sequence to strengthen findings, specifically the explanatory sequential mixed method within the pragmatism research philosophy.

The results are encouraging, following expectations, with quantitative results being significant and mostly explained by the qualitative results, but surprisingly the role of leadership is not fitting the model. This requires further investigation and recommendations are made. Other findings, particularly from the qualitative explanations are also revealing, and provide insight into the processes involved. Significant contribution is made by the thesis through advancing the concept, with support of empirical data, that the strategy management process be driven by project management approach as a vehicle leading to enhanced strategy implementation success and ultimately to perceived business success. It is recommended that practitioners (project managers and strategists) embrace the enhanced strategy management process which would then be expected to have far reaching benefits for strategy implementation success and perceived business success.