CRANFIELD UNIVERSITY

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CHALLENGES OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION IN THE SAUDI NON-OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY: A QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATION

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PhD)

Academic Year: 2016 - 2017

Supervisors: Dr Romano Pagliari

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This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Abstract

The expanding pace of economic turbulence and increasing complexity of managing large organisations present challenges for business leaders in both developed and developing countries' economies. This is particularly so for those that have been significantly dependant on oil and gas such as Saudi Arabia (KSA) where there is now a pressing need to diversify due to price volatility and the increased adoption of renewable sources of energy. Given the need for oil-dependent economies to diversify, greater attention needs to be focused on the performance of their non-oil and gas sectors. Using KSA as a case study, this research aims to develop a framework to facilitate effective strategy implementation through an exploration of aspects that improve strategy execution in the non-oil and gas sector

After exploring the process of strategy implementation through use of the grounded theory method, data was collected from semi-structured interviews and focus groups with senior management. The result of strategy formulation and implementation analysis identified 26 factors that affect strategy implementation in the Saudi non-oil and gas industry. The most obvious factors are: effective leadership style, a unified view of benefits realization management, prioritising work activities, employee involvement and ownership (especially talent), efficiency in the allocation of resources, transparency and traceability of monitoring and control, the Saudi macro and micro environment, and the degree of communicational formality and frequency.

This research makes an important contribution through the creation of a new theoretical framework titled 'SIMPLE', which functions as a pre-strategy execution checklist tool to achieve implementation success. Implementation success has a greater chance of being achieved if organisations are considered holistically and that there is sufficient appreciation of the social and human aspects, the need for communication, the environmental and cultural setting, as well as the organisation's readiness for strategy implementation.

Keywords: Strategy implementation, Strategic factors, Social setting of strategy execution.

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Without them, it would not be possible to complete this research study.

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Above all, I would like to thank my wife Dr Olfat and my sons Turky, Badr, Thamer, Jasir and my lovely daughter Mathayil, for supporting me in every step of my research and for giving me the greatest joy of my life. Finally, I would also like to thank all the staff at the Cranfield University for the wonderful times and support they gave me and advice they provided during my research.

Publications

1. At the European Business and Management Conference 2016 (ISSN: 2188-9651), the researcher presented a paper in "A comprehensive literature reviews on the strategy planning, and implementation in large service industry and cultural effects on strategy implementation in Middle East region", Brighton, UK, Thursday, July 7th, 2016.

2. Paper published in International Journal of Business and Social Science (Vol. 8, No. 1; January 2017) and the title is "Identification of Strategy Implementation Influencing Factors and Their Effects on the Performance".

3. At the IAFOR International Conference on Arts & Humanities 2017 (ISSN: 2432-4604), the researcher presented a paper in "The Critical Success Factors of Strategy Implementation in Large Service Industry Organisations", Dubai, UAE, Tuesday, February 28th, 2017.

4. Paper submitted to International Journal of Cultural Studies on "Cultural challenges of strategies implementation in Saudi non-oil and gas industry".

5. Paper under progress to Strategic Organization journal on "Strategy Activation: SIMPLE framework to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Strategy Implementation".

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List of Abbreviations

MBS   Saudi Arabia's crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman

MS   Management Science

BS   Business Strategy

IT   Information Technology

SLR   Systematic Literature Review

GCC   Gulf Cooperation Council

KSA   Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

CEO   Chief Executive Officer

R&D   Research and Development

BSC   Balanced Score Cards

SNOG   Saudi Services Organisations

SSI   Saudi Services Industry

AT&T   American Telephone and Telegraph

GDP   Gross domestic product

CAGR   The compound annual growth rate

FDI   Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

CAR   Capital Adequacy Ratio

SCDSI   Saudi Central Department of Statistics & Information

BoD   Board of Directors

GDP   Gross domestic product

G20   20 major economies are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States

K   Cohen–Kappa method

ESF   Empirical Study Findings

KPI   Key Performance Indicators

UK   United Kingdom

USA	United States of America
IRR	Inter-Rater Reliability
WTO	World Trade Organisation
SAGIA	Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority
SNTP	Saudi National Transformation Program
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
SIMPLE	Strategy Implementation
MENA	Middle East and North Africa region

Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

Strategy dominates the future progress of organisations. Planning and implementation are both an important part of the strategic management area. The successful execution of the strategy is the key to the survival of the organisation. Many organisations could not maintain a competitive advantage, despite the existing process of drafting a strong strategy, due to a lack of treatment in the strategy's implementation. The leader and the top management of any organisation must give more attention to strategy implementation due to the higher failure rates that occur at this stage [1]. For that, successful implementation requires a better understanding of these factors but, unfortunately, the existing literature does not provide a rigorous and structured conceptualisation of these factors, which influence strategy implementation, and the exploration of their influence on strategy implementation. The core of this research study is to establish how strategy implementation contributes to achieving a significant impact on business goals and objectives in the non-oil and gas industry. This chapter will provide the introduction to the research study, research aim, objectives and derived research questions.

1.2 Research background and significance

According to Porter [2], strategies are vital for modern businesses to stay highly competitive. Strategic management comprises the design and implementation of business goals based on the assessment of internal and external resources and the environment in which a firm competes. Furthermore, Porter [2] claims, strategy balances the relations between the organisation and its surrounding environment. More explicitly, it is a mechanism through which activities of diverse functional departments operating in a firm, such as finance, marketing, production, research-

development (R&D) and procurement, are integrated and coordinated [2] [3]. The objective of an organisation's strategy is to undertake the efforts to form and strengthen the organisation's long-term competitive position and financial performance and gain a competitive advantage over rivals, which develops a company's pathway for better profitability [3].

Conversely, the strategic management of any organisation consists of three main continuous processes:

1. Analysis
2. Decisions
3. Actions

Analysis: In strategic management, analysis consists of strategic goals, vision, mission and strategic objectives, also with analysis of the internal and external environment of the organisation.

Decision: In strategic management, decisions involve mainly how to compete and in what industries.

Actions: The action in the strategy usually refers to how to achieve whatever decisions have been made and the objectives set; unless there are actions, no strategy decision will be beneficial [4].

While all three processes are equally important in managing the strategy in the organisation, it is often recognised that strategy implementation amongst the three is a key management challenge [5]. This was evident from the noteworthy statement "great strategy, shame about the implementation" [6]. Similarly, Miller [7] establishes that nearly 70% of new strategic initiatives could not be implemented effectively and this highlights the difficulty of successful strategy implementation in real business circumstances. According Zook and Allento [8], which they analysed strategy data from 1988 to 1998, almost 90 percent of firms failed to implement a successful strategy.

Indeed, given the high importance of strategy implementation, neither academics nor practitioners can overlook strategic implementation. Instead, they need to take suitable actions and be ready to manage strategy implementation effectively [9]. Consequently, the awareness of critical factors that influence strategy implementations is gaining considerable attention from both academics and practitioners [9]. A review of the strategy execution discussion suggests that a researcher has often focused on certain factors, which influence the strategy implementation [10]. In contrast, a number of researchers have suggested adopting a full approach to provide a more comprehensive view of the process [11] [12] [6].

Thus, there is a need for an overarching typology of factors, which influence strategy. The "what" (targeted change) and the "why" (the context within which the strategy is implemented) need to be carefully considered, to explain the "how" implementation is progressing. So, factors and contexts of strategy implementation vary, and accordingly, further work needs to be conducted in uncovering/non-explored areas such as the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region where changes are more frequent and influential.

1.3   Research Problem and Significance

In this section, the research problem is stated with its significance.

1.3.1   Research Problem

The expanding pace of turbulence in the complexity of running a business presents further challenges for managers in both developed, developing or transition countries. Specifically, developing countries face more obstacles than developed countries, which require new approaches to strategy implementation [13]; that is why it is fundamental to extend the research exploration and also add case studies about developing economies [14].

Mainly, the delimited existing strategic management reached in developing economies focuses on China and some countries in Central and Eastern Europe [15]. Less attention has been given to the Middle East in general, and to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) more precisely.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is rich in geo-assets such as oil, gold, uranium, and the like. These rich assets provide solid advantages to enable Saudi Arabia to take a leading position in the world in the field of oil and gas, which has meant that less attention has been paid to the developing of the non-energy sector. This research study focuses on strategy formation and execution in Saudi Arabia.

The research problem is the consistent poor implementation or execution of strategic planning in the Saudi non-oil and gas industry, which leads to many different problems such as poor product/service delivery and less cost-effective, low-quality outcomes [16] [17]. However, mostly in any failure of strategies in Saudi Arabia, there is no comprehension as to what caused the strategy to fail and how this could be avoided in the future. This study will investigate and explore the crucial factors of strategy implementation and which factors dominate and require better management in order to have successful strategy implementation in Saudi non-oil and gas organisations.

1.3.2 Significance of the problem

According to Kaplan and Norton [18], around 80% of organisations face failure in their strategy implementation. These failures can be attributed to the absence of formal procedures for strategy execution. A further estimation by Davis et al. [19], identifies that approximately 30% of strategy executions are successful. Some of the strategy executions were initiated as a token discussion that then evolved into a top priority concern in the organisation [20].

However, there seems to be a gap between strategy planning and execution. It is reported by Childress [21], that only 33% of directors claim to have achieved significant strategic success, whereas, 97% believe in the correctness of their strategic vision. It is also Childress argued [21], that only five or a lesser percentage of management time is given towards strategy execution.

This may well be due to the attention of day-to-day business issues and lack of resources. Furthermore, some overriding factors such as business practices, employee determination, and teamwork also contribute towards strategy implementation failures. There is a definite need to obtain a clearer understanding of the implementation road map.

1.4 Aim and objectives

This research aims to develop a framework to facilitate effective strategy implementation through exploring aspects that improve strategy execution.

The objectives to deliver this aim are:

1) To determine the extent of the problem in strategy implementation in the Saudi non-oil and gas industry.
2) To identify organisational factors which influence strategy implementation in the Saudi non-oil and gas industry by analysis the existing process.
3) To design a SIMPLE framework that portrays the factors that influence strategy implementation processes in the Saudi non-oil and gas industry.

1.5 Research Questions

In Saudi Arabia, most of the strategies are not completed, failed or not implemented successfully. This research study aims to identify and ask the correct questions in order to improve comprehension of strategy

implementation. Following are the research questions for this research study:

1) To what extent does the strategy implementation process explain differences in success rates across a sample of non-oil and gas corporations in Saudi Arabia?

This study attempts to answer the following specific questions, in response to the key research question:

1. What are the factors that influence strategy implementation processes?
2. How do decision makers in Saudi non-oil and gas organisations perceive the factors that influence the process of strategy implementation?
3. To what extent can a comprehensive framework help in understanding the strategy implementation process in Saudi non-oil and gas organisations?

1.6   Structure of the thesis and outlines

This section summarises the chapters that are included in this research.
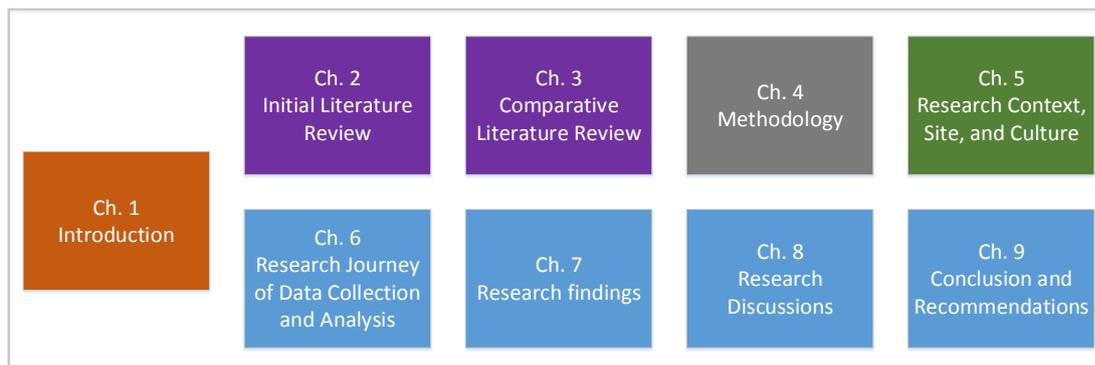
Figure 1: Thesis Structure

Chapter One (Introduction): This chapter introduces the reader to the research background and significance. It also outlines the research motivations, providing justifications for conducting the research in this

particular context, and with this particular focus. Then the research aim, objectives, and questions are listed. Finally, a summary of how this research was conducted and its content are presented.

Chapter Two and Three (Literature Review): These chapters review the relevant research studies of strategic management. Reviewing the literature and writing the chapter were completed over two different periods of time, as the study followed the grounded theory approach. The first stage of reviewing the literature preceded the data collection in order to obtain a general idea about strategic management change and its related issues, which in turn helped in collecting the data and understanding what was going on during the fieldwork. At this time, the literature review was not extensive, in order not to constrain the research or lead it to focus on some issues by ignoring others and to achieve theoretical sensitivity to important data and develop the grounded theory, which means an open mind, not an empty head. The second stage took place during and after analysing the data, and it relied on the findings of the study, so it was extensive and in-depth. This was intended to allow a better understanding of the findings and explain them with theoretical sensitivity. These chapters aim to provide a general understanding of strategic management change and illustrate the issues related to such change. In this sense, the chapters demonstrate the importance of strategic management change by considering the process of change and the factors causing change.

Chapter Four (Research Methodology): This chapter summarises and justifies the research methodology employed in this research. It starts by identifying the philosophical position adopted, then the research approaches, methods, and data collection sources are described. Finally, it exhibits protocols of template analysis and the rationale behind the method of data analysis.

Chapter Five (Research Context, Site, and Culture): An overview of the research context (i.e., the KSA) is presented. This includes a background to the KSA, touching on a number of characteristics (e.g., history, political,

economic, social, technological, environmental, rules and regulations), and outlining some of the recent initiatives introduced that focus on and support the non-oil and gas industry. Thereafter, a further section highlights the social setting of Saudi culture.

Chapter Six (Research Journey of Data Collection, Analysis, and Verification): This chapter presents the empirical work of this research. It provides detailed descriptions and analysis of the data collected. These findings are presented theme by theme, which are capable of completely explaining a phenomenon. The results passed through a reliability verification assessment for coding and analysis accuracy.

Chapter Seven (The Factors affecting of Strategy Implementation in Saudi Non-Oil and Gas Industry from Empirical Study Findings (ESF): This chapter presents the findings of the data analysis. It focuses on the categories that have emerged in the open, axial, and selective coding.

Chapter Eight (Research Findings and Discussions): This chapter encapsulates and discusses the empirical research findings for the fieldwork conducted. At the beginning, it presents a SIMPLE Framework for effective management of strategy implementation, and following that, the relationship between the themes is described. A specific section that further discusses reflections and considerations of the research findings is then provided. This specific section compares the empirical findings with previous research and highlights contributions.

Chapter Nine (Conclusion, Summary, and Recommendations): This chapter concludes the research by reviewing its process, and addressing its main contributions. Finally, the research limitations are discussed, and recommendations for future research are provided.

1.7 Summary

The framework for implementation of strategy is the focus of this thesis as it focuses on Saudi non-oil and gas organisations. There is a need to develop such a framework, as the failure rate for strategy implementation is very high and can lead to loss of productivity and competitiveness. Saudi Arabia is in particular need of such a framework to help its non-oil and gas organisations as the country seeks to diversify from a dependence on the oil industry.

The next chapter provides an overview of the literature on strategy and the implementation of strategy.

Initial Literature Review

This chapter presents a review of previous studies conducted on the topics of strategy, strategic management processes, and strategy implementation/execution. The goal here is to bridge the gap between strategies formulation and implementation to achieve theoretical sensitivity, the researcher must begin with few predetermined ideas to be sensitive to the data as possible to develop the emerging theory which means an open mind not an empty head.
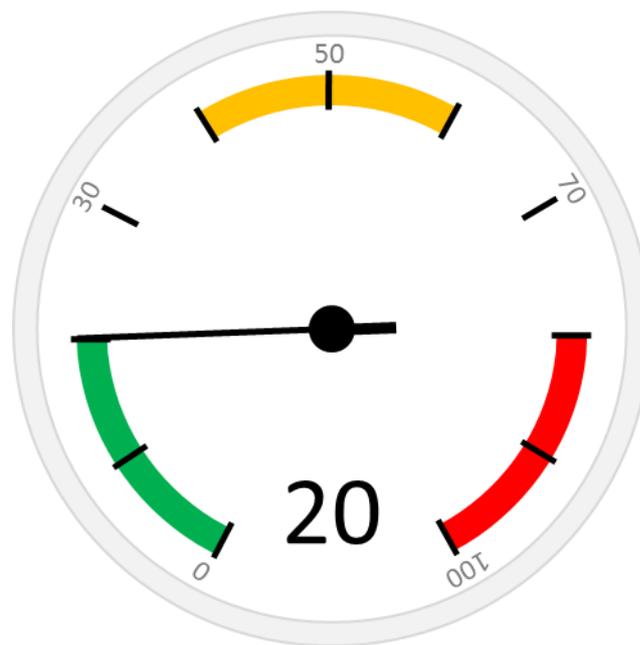
Figure 2: Understanding Existing Knowledge

2.1 The Concept of Strategy

In the world of business, the term 'strategy' appeared in the 1950s, when many executives with military experience from World War II started to apply their knowledge in business [22]. The first authors who developed the meaning of the term in business management were industrial giants, such

as Alfred DuPont Chandler (related to the DuPont Chemicals family) and Chester Barnard (American Telephone and Telegraph - AT&T) among others (ibid).

Strategy involves key issues affecting the long-term future of organisations. The initial aim of this section is to highlight the importance of the strategic concept, which has been explored by business strategists, management scientists, and various other professionals.

2.1.1 Definition

The term 'strategy' has been conceptualised in different ways in different areas of management science. The majority of definitions relate to the part strategy plays in companies. It can also be seen that some researchers' definitions of strategy have changed over the years. For instance, while strategy was initially defined by one researcher as the objectives impacting a company's future performance [23], the same researcher later defined strategy as either economic or non-economic [24]. Thus, the relationship between strategy and financial performance objectives has frequently been highlighted. Strategy has also been defined as the integrative force between a company's key objectives [25] and as a mediator of the changeable relationship between the capabilities of a company and the environment in which it operates ([26], see Figure 3).
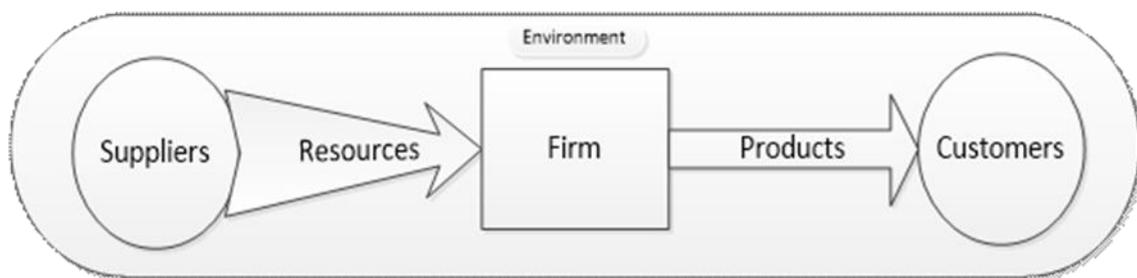
Figure 3: The Production View of the Firm

In the context of the management technology field, strategy has been defined in relation to a number of different factors associated with it. The first of these factors is said to be the company's key strengths and competencies. The second is the environment in which the company operates, the nature of competition within this environment, the ability to predict change and the strategies of competitors [27]. Also Cardullo [27], emphasises the multifaceted nature of strategy and the role it plays while and he highlighting the importance of considering organisational factors when exploring the concept of strategy.

2.1.2 Types of Strategy

Strategy is at the heart of business. All businesses have competition, and their strategy that allows their business to rise above the others and become successful. Moreover, Porter [26] and Wheelen and Hunger [3] note that strategy serves to integrate a company's finance, procurement, research and development, marketing, production and other departments.

Figure 4: Hierarchy of Strategy [3]

2.1.2.1 Corporate Strategy

Dess and Miller [28] suggest that the first type of strategy is the corporate strategy, which determines the orientation of the business based on the approach it takes to product offerings, business management, and growth. Also, Dess and Miller [28], add that corporate strategy incorporates three core sub-strategies: stability, growth, and retrenchment. However, they advise that companies define their corporate strategy before delving deeply into the second level (i.e., business strategy).

2.1.2.2 Strategy Business Unit

After corporate strategy, there is a step down to the second layer (i.e., strategy at the business level). Dess and Miller [28] define it as being designed to enhance the company's product/service positioning and competitiveness. In other words, the strategies outlined at this level are slightly more specific, while those set at the corporate level are normally broad in scope.

2.1.2.3 Strategy functional Unit

Functional strategy is the third strategic layer. In other words, this is the day-to-day strategy that keeps organisations moving in the right direction. This level of strategy is perhaps the most important of all, as, without a daily plan, a company can get stuck while its competition continues to drive forward. Dess and Miller [28], explain that a company's functional strategy refers to the methods used by the company to meet business and corporate goals and use resources effectively. A company's functional strategy is a significant element of the company's overall organisational strategy, designed by the company's functional management team rather than the company's senior management team. This means that this type of strategy is created by those who actively implement the strategy. Functional strategy also strengthens corporate strategy through its facilitation of

business strategy. Thus, as Hofer and Schendel [29] note, the achievement of a company's overall strategy can be realised through the achievement of each individual strategy type.

This need to link the corporate, business and functional levels underline the importance of strategy integration. Each level needs to be aligned with the others. It entails specifying the organisation's mission, vision, and objectives as well as developing policies and plans that allocate resources to drive growth and profitability.

2.1.2.4 Major works in the field

2.1.2.4.1 Henry Mintzberg

Mintzberg contended that the majority of the strategy formation literature was theoretical rather than empirical [30]. It is also important to note that, despite the fact that it has been defined, strategy is a word that is often used in ways that conflict with its definition. Understandings of strategy also develop over time. For example, in 1971, Mintzberg favoured the following definition of strategy: 'a pattern in a stream of decisions'. However, he later changed this to 'a pattern in a stream of actions' [31].

Moreover, Mintzberg argued that strategy could historically be categorised under ten major schools [32]: design, planning, positioning, entrepreneurial, cognitive, learning, power, culture, environmental and configuration (ibid). He also stated that these schools follow either a descriptive approach (i.e., answering questions) or a prescriptive approach (i.e., answering what should be questions) [31] [32].

2.1.2.4.2 Andrew Pettigrew

Pettigrew argued that the roots of strategic management lie in US academia and practice [33]. Therefore, Pettigrew essentially followed Quinn's [34] logical incrementalism ideas on how strategy develops, stating that present strategy is always based on past strategy and experience. He

also suggested that strategy could be influenced by the context. He used to distinguish theoretically between strategy formulation and implementation, but later, he adopted Mintzberg's view of the continuous interplay between the two phases [35].

2.1.2.4.3 Michael Porter

Porter introduced three possible alternative generic strategies to cope and deal with the five competitive forces in order to outperform other firms. These are cost leadership, differentiation, and market segmentation or focus [36].

Porter's five forces and theoretical structure were developed in a 1979 *Harvard Business Review* article trying to determine strategic positioning based on environmental and corporate sector analysis. Later on, in 1980, Porter wrote *Competitive Strategy* as an extension to his thoughts presented in the 1979 article. Then, in 1985, *Competitive Advantage* was written, addressing the micro-economic dimension's gap present in his previous works. Finally, in 1990, he wrote *The Competitive Advantage of Nations* as a generalisation of his theoretical thoughts to national industrial policies and development. It was also argued that, in contrast to all the strategists that preceded him, Porter was a supporter of strategic positioning for businesses in identified industries [37].

2.1.2.4.4 Richard Whittington

Whittington suggested that there are four distinct approaches to strategic management: the classical, processual, evolutionary and systemic approaches [38]. Whittington, along with Scholes and Johnson, identified three key success criteria to evaluate strategic options: suitability, feasibility, and acceptability [39]. As a strategy is something people create, Whittington recently suggested adopting a practice-oriented perspective in strategy research. He argued that current researchers focus on either strategic activity at the intra-organisational level or its consequences at the

extra-organisational level. Therefore, he suggested a new, more integrated, strategy research framework that incorporated both levels (intra and extra) [40].

2.2 Strategic Management

2.2.1 Definition

Strategic management is used for systematic organisational management and influencing the orientation of a company as determined by stakeholder demand and environmental factors [41]. Strategic management helps companies to establish and maintain competitive advantage through the company's activities, decisions, and analysis.
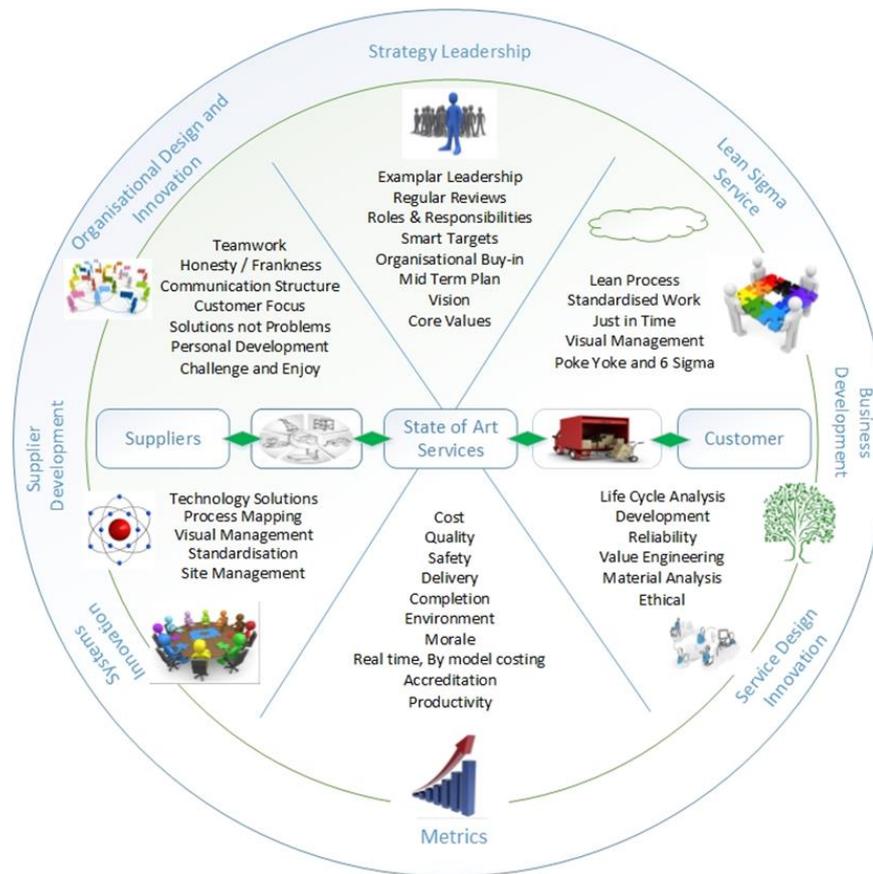
Figure 5: Strategic impact overview in the organisation

According to Amason [4], strategic management can be defined by two characteristics.

Firstly, as noted above, a company's actions, decisions, and analyses are the three key processes embedded within strategic management. In other words, strategic management focuses on the evaluation of the company's strategic objectives, corporate mission and overall vision (e.g., the company's strategic goals) as well as the evaluation of the company's internal and external environment. In terms of strategic decision making, managers must essentially identify which industries to operate in and how to outperform the competition within those industries. When addressing these questions, managers consider the national and international operations of the organisation. Finally, as Amason [4] points out, decision making is relatively pointless until action follows it. Companies, therefore, need to ensure that strategies are implemented through the appropriate actions, meaning that managers must use and distribute resources effectively and shape the organisation to meet the relevant strategic goals. This requires continuous attention and necessitates that the three processes interact to a high degree.

Figure 6: Strategic management process [42]

The second characteristic of strategic management is the exploration of why certain companies perform extremely well compared to competitors, meaning that managers must identify the best sources of sustainable competitive advantage for the company. In order to achieve this, managers must ask which action should be taken in order to achieve competitive advantage. This can include actions such as the provision of inimitable products or services, or, as Boyne and Walker [43] suggest, the adoption of a low-cost position, enabling the company to charge higher prices.

Thus, strategic management involves the creation and execution of senior management's core projects and objectives, as designed in accordance with internal and external environmental factors and resource availability [44].

Furthermore, senior managers must be able to address the points (see Figure 7) outlined above in order to ascertain how the company is beating its competitors [45]. As well as a well-structured execution management approach, it is critical to ensure execution activities are aligned with corporate strategy.
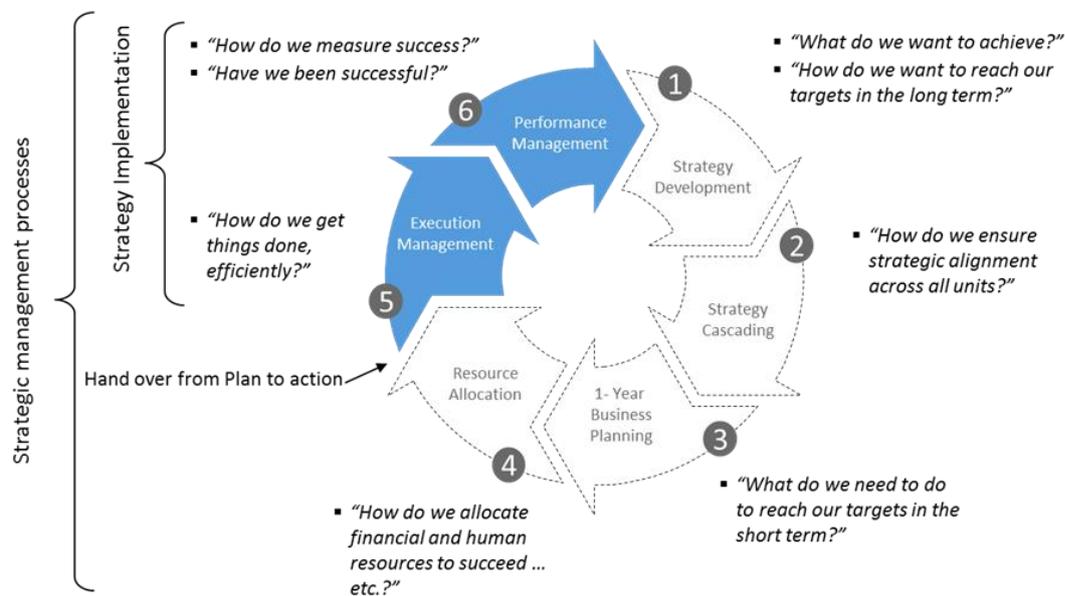
Figure 7: Strategic management processes

Essentially, it can be argued that even the best strategy has no value if it is not implemented in practice [46] and that an excellent strategy that cannot be implemented well is of less use than a reasonable strategy that can be fully implemented. According to the literature review, over half of all strategies are not effectively implemented in reality [44] [47] [48], and when the implementation is not carried out properly, the strategy fails. For this reason, it is important that strategy implementation itself be fully comprehended [47].

It is safe to say that even a great strategy is worth nothing if it cannot be implemented [30]. A better implementation of a second-rate strategy is more beneficial than a first-rate strategy with an ineffective implementation. A detailed literature review shows that less than 50% of formulated strategies are implemented successfully [44] [47] [48], and every failure of implementation is a failure of the strategy. Nevertheless, an understanding of the concept of strategy implementation and execution is mandatory before we can begin this process [49].

2.2.2 Strategic Management Processes

Pearce and Robinson [51] point out that while strategic management reflects a systematic, constant and impartial process of steering the orientation of the business, it should be noted that this is different from the managerial process.
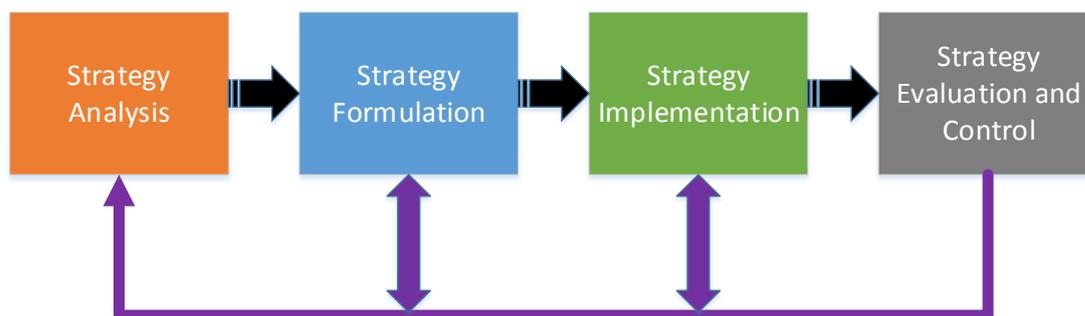
Figure 8: Strategic Management Processes [3] [50]

The managerial process entails the creation, assessment, execution, and management of interactions between the company's environment, strategies, and goals.

2.2.2.1 Strategy analysis

Strategic analysis refers to the initial stage of the strategic management process and entails the extensive tasks that must be carried out if strategies are to be successfully created and executed in practice. Farjoun [52] argues that when managers are too hurried in implementing strategies to take the time to perform a thorough evaluation of the company's overall goals and environmental factors, the chosen strategies are likely to be unsuccessful.

2.2.2.2 Strategy formulation

Companies determine the most effective actions to take to meet their objectives during the strategy formulation process, which completely underpins the performance of the firm by creating a map of actions that will direct the company towards its desired outcomes. According to Hadighi, et al. [53], a strategic plan allows the company to review the resources it owns, engage in effective budgeting and outline the best way forward in order to achieve an optimal ROI. If the purpose, mission, and goals of the company are to be achieved, it is also essential that managers ensure that all staff understand them and are working towards meeting them. Effective strategy formulation encourages the company to examine the environment in which it operates and prompts managers to prepare to respond to any changes.

2.2.2.3 Strategy implementation

The term 'strategy implementation' refers to the conversion of strategy into actions taken by the company in order to realise the organisation's desired outcomes. Strategy implementation also refers to the ways in which the company gains competitive advantage and achieves improved sustainable

performance through the manipulation of organisational culture, systems, and structure. As Wheelen and Hunger [3] point out, while staff members are not sufficiently incentivised by organisational structure alone, organisational structure is essential to achieving competitive advantage through the achievement of high customer satisfaction, product/service quality, and efficiency.

2.2.2.4 Strategy evaluation and control

The evaluation and control of strategy represent the last part of the strategic management process. Since the environment (both internal and external) in which the company operates is always evolving, strategies should always be in a state of potential review. Here, managers decide whether the company's objectives are being met through the current strategy. As Wheelen and Hunger [3] explain, this process includes the assessment of environmental factors related to the chosen strategies, the assessment of company performance and the execution of necessary steps to address any issues.

2.3 Strategy implementation or execution

2.3.1 Do strategy implementation and execution words differ?

These two terms are often used interchangeably in many organisations and business articles and books. However, as many definitions of strategy implementation exist, it is challenging to provide an overarching definition of the concept [54]. Additionally, because researchers use both 'implementation' and 'execution', some argue that the two terms should not be treated as being interchangeable, while others contend that they have the same meaning [55]. The latter perspective is supported by the definitions outlined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* [56], in which 'implement' is defined as the completion of a task, performance of a task or carrying out of a task. While 'execute', is defined as the act of following

through with, or carrying out an action. Essentially, then, 'implementation' and 'execution' can be said to have the same meaning. Therefore, the terms 'execution' and 'implementation' are used interchangeably in this research.

2.3.2 Definition of Strategy Implementation

As noted, there is no clear definition of strategy implementation at present, despite the presence of numerous publications on the topic in the relevant literature. According to MacLennan [47], however, most well-reputed researchers differentiate between strategy formulation and implementation. This being said, MacLennan does not present a solid definition of the term. In other research, Li, Guohui and Eppler [54] propose a three-part definition of strategy implementation: 1) an emphasis on process and the systematic nature of implementation; 2) an emphasis on the performance of certain actions, either in sequence or at the same time, and how these actions translate to organisational behaviour; and 3) a hybrid approach to both process and behaviour. Essentially, researchers define strategy implementation as a multifaceted, changeable, repetitive process in which managers and employees carry out a number of decisions and tasks that are influenced by various organisational and environmental factors and are designed to realise strategic goals [54]. The term 'strategy implementation' is simply used to refer to the actions an organisation takes to meet its strategic goals [54].

2.3.3 Strategy Implementation barriers

Largely, strategy implementation research has revolved around the search for barriers/obstacles obstructing implementation in organisations. This approach usually consists of searching for the obstacles and problems associated with successful strategy implementation and providing possible solutions to overcome the obstacles and problems [57] [58].

Business operations and barrier management that focus on possible obstacles and problems are vital. This makes implementation more challenging, as it is very difficult to foresee and predict the obstacles to your business strategy. This is the main reason behind the lack of insight in strategy implementation and poor strategy performance.

The strategy implementation literature shows the common types of barriers, including behavioural dimensions and structural dimensions. Some researchers have tried to analyse either individual or collections of strategy implementation barriers.

Alexander [59] demonstrates some barriers, such as a) poor communication of strategy, b) unmanaged planned time, c) vague identification of responsibilities and tasks and d) unskilled employees.

Al-Ghamdi [60] mentions all the barriers noted by Alexander but adds more, such as distraction of management from the implementation of strategic decisions, mismanagement of time between strategic planning and implementation, lack of contingency plans for major problems at the implementation stage and lack of information systems for implementation observation. However, Al-Ghamdi presents these barriers only for UK firms.

Similar to Al-Ghamdi and Alexander, Alshloo et al., [61], state that among all the barriers, the most important ones are a lack of precise planning and an unsuitable training system. Furthermore, Alshloo et al. [61] researched the Iranian educational system, and as an outcome, they divided the barriers into four categories: 1) planning consequences and 2) organisational, 3) managerial and 4) individual issues.

Jauch et al. [62] describe the barriers slightly differently, stating that the principal barrier is the small amount of time allocated in strategy implementation to executives' decision making. Olsen et al., [63] state that the lack of research allocation and mismanagement of financial and human

resources are the primary reasons for implementation failure. Eisentat [64] mention that among all the barriers, insufficient leadership from line managers is the main barrier to strategy implementation.

Heide et al., [58] carried out a case study on a Norwegian ferry cruise company to investigate barriers. They found barriers such as organisational culture, organisational structure, learning, and control systems and personnel management.

Shah [57] conducted a survey and analysed the barriers very differently. He revealed that Indian managers recognise that management skills are inadequate. He also found barriers, such as undefined main implementation tasks and issues with employee commitment. However, it is not very clear from Shah's analysis whether his implementation barriers are exclusive to India.

Kaufmann et al., [65] analysed barriers using a Balanced Score Card (BSC) approach in Brazil. The main barriers they found were as follows: absence of pledge and commitment from staff, insufficient alignment of strategy, lack of support from consultants, the absence of higher management support, lack of objectives and structure and deficiency of comprehensiveness [66].

2.4 Summary

Strategy has been researched for decades in academia as well as within industry. This chapter defined strategy and explained the types of strategies organisations use to stay competitive. Then, it described the strategic management process, starting with the four main steps of the process, as these steps provide the foundation for understanding strategic management and the process of strategy implementation. Next, it discussed strategy implementation barriers and the reasons many organisations fail to implement strategies to achieve theoretical sensitivity.

As this study follows a grounded theory approach, this chapter was written before data collection to obtain a general idea of strategy implementation change without aiming to review the extant literature in great depth. This ensured that data was collected without being influenced by, or leading the study to, a specific area while ignoring others.

Chapter 3

Comparative Literature Review

The second part of the literature review took place during and after data collection, and it relied on the findings of the study, so it was extensive, and it reviewed the literature in great depth. This was intended to allow a better understanding of the findings and explain them with theoretical sensitivity. The chapter starts with the systematic literature review (SLR) for strategy implementation and then moves on to perspectives on strategy implementation.

3.1 Systematic Literature Review

The importance of strategy implementation and the daunting challenges associated with it in today's organisations have been shown, but the literature suggests that there are more contributions on strategy formulation than on strategy implementation. Herbiniak [46] argued that while strategic planning is difficult, the most challenging part is strategy implementation. Similarly, Cater and Pucko [67], concluded that although 80% of organisations create appropriate strategies, only 14% succeed in implementing them.

When an implementation engine programme is up and running, it focuses and coordinates teams' efforts on achieving targets. For that, strategy implementation, as an abstract concept, requires developing the tactics of translating the plans and policies into actions. This involves many processes, such as resource allocation and the development of information and decisions, work breakdown structures (WBS), authority matrixes, leadership/staff communication and so on. This study aims to explore the current understanding and future orientations concerning strategy implementation. Consequently, it is sensible to build on the

recommendations from the present literature that call for a better understanding of the concept, and of the success or failure factors that it encompasses, and then extend this line of investigation.

3.1.1 Systematic Literature Review Result

Figure 9 shows the systematic review that was conducted via the current research to analyse the literature on strategy implementation, based on an examination of contemporary studies in the field. A systematic search process was carried out using the following keywords: (Strateg*, implement* and failure*), (Strateg*, execution* and failure*), (Strateg*, implement* and success*) and (Strateg*, execution* and success*). The search covered relevant scholarly databases that included the following: Business Source Complete (EBSCO), Scopus and ABI Inform Complete (ProQuest).

Figure 9: Methodology of the current Systematic Review [51]

- The research was in English, and therefore, research in Spanish, French, German and other languages was excluded.
- An initial scholarly database search of selected keyword combinations revealed a total of 2,611 titles.
- After irrelevant subject areas, such as medicine and arts and humanities, were excluded, 980 titles in the relevant subject area (business management) remained.

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- After removing duplicate records, 450 titles remained.
- The titles and abstracts of the resulting literature were screened to remove irrelevant documents, leaving 161 documents.
- A further comprehensive screening of the documents was conducted, which yielded 47 documents.

Many articles in the literature review were not closely related to the subject area, but they contained the keywords. Therefore, they appeared in the search group. From the 161 documents remaining after the titles and abstracts were screened, only 47 remained after a thorough analysis, as the others were not related to strategy implementation. In this process, they were not completely ignored. They were read and cited where necessary. However, the 47 that have been cited in this study were very closely related to the subject area.

3.1.2 Geographical distribution of relevant research

Figure 10 shows that the majority of research in the strategy implementation field in the English language was conducted in the USA (30%), followed by the UK (28%) and other European countries (10%). The papers from the USA, the UK, and Europe represented around 70% of the analysed pool of papers. The remaining approximately 30% was distributed relatively evenly among different regions, such as Australia, India, Brazil and Latin America. The percentage of research conducted in the Middle East in the strategy implementation field was particularly high at 6%.
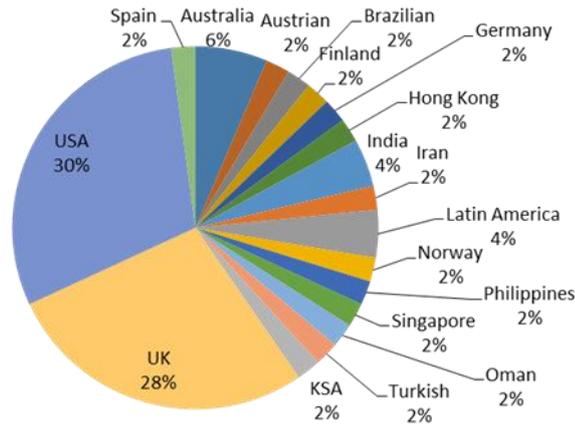
Figure 10: Research on Strategy topic from Geographical point of view

The USA and the UK have dominated the strategy implementation research compared to the rest of the world. In addition, the majority of product/service industries, such as the automotive and aerospace industries, are situated in these countries. These countries also provide strategy solutions around the globe, which in turn provides hands-on experience.

3.1.3 Factors Affecting Strategy Implementation from Systematic Literature Review

Strategy failure is a major challenge for many organisations. The detailed literature review shows that most strategies fail at the implementation stage. Furthermore, the literature review and interviews with experts demonstrate that many factors are usually ignored during the strategy phase. The body of knowledge in this area is rich but mostly with quantitative research. However, the analysis shows that the following factors affect strategy implementation: poor or vague strategy, clear objectives, communication, engagement, sufficient resources, benefits realisation management, accountability, talent management, involvement, buy-in, prioritisation, selection, alignment, project management, risk management, monitoring, performance, leadership, sponsorship, commitment, effective competitor responses to strategy, authority,

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governance, motivation and rewarding [51]. Nevertheless, most authors contend that all factors of strategy implementation have different impacts and carry different forces individually.
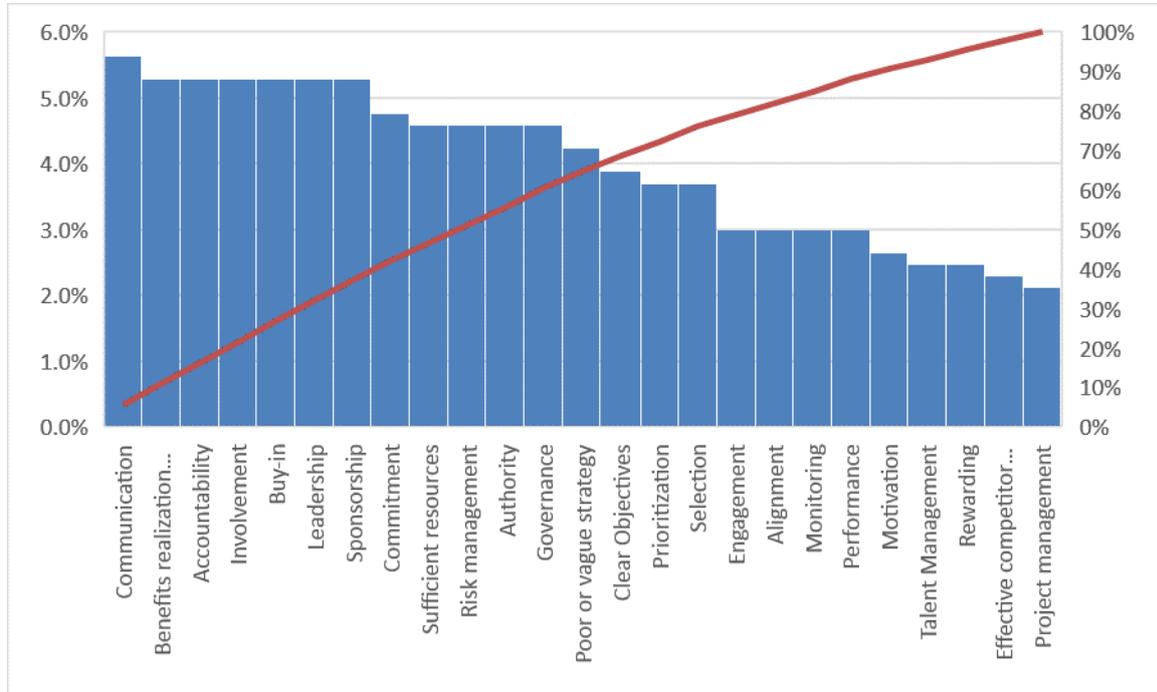
Figure 11: Factors that influence strategy to implement form SLR

As shown in Figure 11, the weight ratio for each factor from the total factors converged between 2% and 6%, and this shows the impact of all factors for successfully implemented strategies. Furthermore, the weight ratio was calculated by analysing the frequency of the factors in the successful strategies, and it was not mentioned in the failed/unsuccessful strategies. In addition, the factors that received the highest ratio representing 35% of the total factors were leadership, commitment, sponsorship, governance, authority, talent management, sufficient resources, and alignment. There was a clear association between these factors, and it was affected by decisions made according to the approved process. This supports Paul Rogers and Marcia Blenko [68], concluded: 'A good decision executed quickly beats a brilliant decision implemented slowly'.

The factors that received the second highest ratio (communication, engagement, involvement, buy-in, accountability, and motivation) represented 26% of the total factors. There was a clear association between these factors, and it was affected by communication and the knowledge of the staff. Several academics have already highlighted the importance of communication for the strategy implementation process [59] [54]. The communication content should clearly explain the new responsibilities, tasks, and duties each staff member needs to achieve. Fundamentally, it should also contain the reasons behind new strategic decisions and actions that need to be taken.

The following factors received a weighting of 20% from the total factors: benefits realisation management, project management, risk management, monitoring, performance and rewarding. The links between all these factors are clear, and these factors are affected by measurement and accuracy at the tactical level. The concept of 'tactics' is not quantifiable and thus is not given a numerical value. A measurement is said to be more accurate when it offers a smaller measurement error in each tactics step. Therefore, anything considered 'tactics' must be measurable and optimisable. This is why clarity is very important in the tactics of any team, as it enables the flawless running of the task. Once the task, responsivities and performance goals are allocated, the team runs autonomously to accomplish the task and deliver the essential results. Things can go wrong along the way and confusion can set in, but this can be helped by having a clear tactics process with defined actions and using the right tools for the key performance indicators for each step.

The factors that received the middle ratio representing 20% of the total factors were found to be as follows: poor or vague strategy, clear objectives, and selection, prioritisation and effective competitor responses to strategy. It is noted that there is a clear correlation between all these factors, and it

is affected by the options and modality of choice, considering that 'modality', in this sense, is the way or mode in which something exists or is completed.

Quality, cost and delivery requirements mean alternative options must be chosen from time to time. These decision-making problems are part of multi-criteria decision making [69]. It is important to compare different possible options that contribute to the meeting of the set goals and the achievement of performance. Every criterion should be measurable and assessable at least in a qualitative manner. Each option's performance must be measurable in comparison to the norm. The difficulties involved here lead to rationalised decision making often with high risk and very limited information [50]. Hence, sometimes there are no 'right' decisions, only different or alternate decisions.

As a result, there is tool management which can be employed to take decisions regarding alternative options that can ensure the adequate implementation of strategies and keep teams engaged and performing by communicating in each stage of the strategy (i.e., formulation and implementation). This can be ensured via clarity of process and the right measurement of implementation state outcomes

Clearly, the basic themes that play an influential role in successful strategy implementation are as follows: (1) management options available to the organisation now and in the future to take decisions, (2) teams of people that internally and externally relate to the organisation and their knowledge of the rest of the team, (3) short-term tactics process that encompasses the organisation's daily operational nature and finally (4) the necessary tools to facilitate the corporate strategy implementation. These four input items are vital to the efficiency and effectiveness of any strategy formulation or implementation process.

3.1.4 Review of SLR Result

As a rule, the strategy defines the plans of any organisation to stay competitive, and strategy planning has been researched for decades in academia as well as within industry. However, it is evident that most strategies fail during the implementation stage, as shown in the detailed literature review. These articles discussed the characteristics of strategy implementation and the attributes that can lead to its failure. They also discussed the link between strategy planning and implementation. Furthermore, the important factors of strategy implementation are a key feature of management studies, as they could turn a failing strategy into a successful one, provided that all of the factors involved have been identified and managed from the very beginning.

The identification, management, and planning of important factors can make the strategy successful but not perfect. As seen in the literature review, positive results have been achieved with a level of strategy implementation success of 60%, and very few have attained levels over 80%. However, no study shows 100% or perfect strategy implementation success. It is also important to note that there are many ways to measure strategy implementation success.

Firstly, the translation of strategy into practice requires the activity-based involvement and coordination of the staff members and processes throughout the organisation. Usually, strategy development, operation planning, forecasting, technology budgeting and talent management are the only factors that are managed, but a number of researchers argue that strategy should not be limited to these factors.

Secondly, a proactive approach in the organisation secures the future of the organisation. However, it is not possible without a clear and detailed strategic plan; this is in line with the work of Sull [70], Higgins [71] and

Hrebiniak [46]. The involvement of management and staff during the strategy planning stage ensures the commitment from the staff during the plan execution. Furthermore, the planning provides clear direction to the decision maker and the progress status of the project/initiative with the time scale.

Thirdly, the strategy should be realistic, specific and precise and set high goals for the organisation to strive to achieve. Additionally, the goals should be measurable and easy to comprehend. Again, this matches up very well with the research done by Kaplan and Norton [25] [53]. The plan should also provide participants with incentives to ensure their loyalty and commitment.

The importance of strategy planning and implementation should not distract the senior management from the focus of project/initiative deliverables and objectives. Senior management has to attend to internal customers, external customers and project/initiative deliverables.

Therefore, they delegate as far down as possible to make sure individuals take responsibility for specific delivery actions and tasks. They play to peoples' strengths and ideally have some responsibility for the eventually implemented action, and they keep individuals involved in each stage of developing the plan.

Organisations should embrace the maturity of policies, capabilities, principles, competencies, culture and business partnerships, as they influence almost every part of the strategy and culture from time to time. Nevertheless, many factors influence strategy implementation, but they vary from country to country. For instance, some of the major factors in Middle Eastern countries are religion, weather, and cultural values. On the other hand, this section also highlights that less attention has been paid to the Middle East, Asia, and Africa, and it discusses the important factors

specific to Middle Eastern countries. Factors like religion, weather and culture influence almost every part of the strategy.

The studies from the present literature review contained no data on strategy implementation that could be further analysed. The literature review mainly focused on strategic planning rather than execution or implementation, and studies on the factors that can improve strategy implementation were scarce.

3.2 Perspectives on strategy implementation

3.2.1 Distinguishing between strategic formulation and implementation

The strategy implementation literature has widely explored the question of whether strategy formulation and strategy implementation can be treated as synonymous or are separate entities. The majority of the research has first considered strategy formulation and then treated strategy implementation as a new stage in the research (i.e. [55] [54] [72]).

Guth and MacMillan [73], highlight that the vast majority of credible research has elected to view strategy formulation and strategy implementation as two separate processes. General management within an organisation is responsible for developing a strategy that is both rational and logical. Following this, an organisation structure is developed. Specific organisational behaviour is subsequently required to implement the organisation structure and strategy, which is elicited by specific management processes [74] [75] [76] [77] [78].

The treatment of formulation and implementation as two separate processes has also received criticism. More specifically, it is believed that a number of strategies have failed due to this separation of formulation and implementation [44] [79] [80] [81]. Some argue that if the two stages are separated, then the thinking process is also detached, which means that thinking and doing are no longer in unison and therefore learning is

inhibited [150]. A second criticism of separating the two stages is that there is a contrast between formulation and implementation, and this can cause management to become elitist and reduce natural competition. Most employees are not interested in the corporate goals of an organisation and are therefore less likely to engage with the work required to increase competition [55] [82].

Typically, unsuccessful strategy implementation is often attributed to the failure of middle- and operating-level managers. If these managers do not support the direction of the strategy or have insufficient knowledge of it, then it is unlikely to be successful [73]. When middle managers are invited to participate in strategy formulation, they are more invested in the strategy and its subsequent implementation [83]. The opposite is true when middle managers are not involved in formulation: they will have little commitment to the implementation and therefore negatively influence it. In addition, it is important to involve middle managers and lower-level employees in formulation, as they will observe flaws at early stages in the strategy that higher managers may not [75].

A third criticism is that strategy formulation affects implementation, and implementation subsequently affects formulation [80]. The various components of a strategy will affect how it is subsequently implemented, and a strategy that is well formulated should be easy to implement [47]. If a strategy is poorly formulated, then the success of its implementation is almost impossible [75] [72]. Therefore, it is important during the formulation stage to consider the implementation process carefully rather than trying to intervene at the failure or near-failure stages. The formulation process can also affect implementation performance, therefore requiring implementation to be carefully considered when generating policies rather than separated [83].

A further criticism is that the execution of strategic change within an organisation should not be stilted or segmented; rather, it should be completed as a continuous process [84]. Pettigrew and Whipp [84], argue that it is inaccurate to perceive strategy formulation as a linear movement. It does not have discrete stages; rather, it is an experimental, iterative process. There is no certainty of the outcome at any stage. In some cases, it may be more appropriate to commence the implementation of certain aspects of the strategy before formulation has completely finished [75]. Thus, this initial stage of implementation may affect the final stages of formulation [77].

Evidently, there are a number of criticisms of separating formulation and implementation into two separate stages. A number of researchers have argued therefore that they should be viewed as one streamlined approach (e.g., Mintzberg, [85]). Therefore, Noble [86] perceives formulation and implementation to be interrelated processes that must be addressed simultaneously to ensure that a firm performs well when seeking to change their strategies [87] [88]. In this section, we analyse criticism towards both analogies. The best approach would be to treat strategy formulation and implementation run somewhat parallel to one another, with action and behaviour being integrated along the way.

3.2.2 Top-Down versus Bottom-Up Strategy Implementation

The top-down approach has been proposed for strategy implementation, whereby a number of control mechanisms are used to aid the implementation (see, e.g. [75] [77] [83] [89] [49]). The top-down approach to implementation entails top management formulating the strategy and then delegating specific aspects of the implementation process for this strategy to individuals in the organisation [90]. The implementation of a strategy is often perceived as centralised, with the CEO or highest managers overseeing developing new strategies and enforcing these on the remaining

members of the organisation [91]. A number of frameworks are available to aid strategy implementations, which present a range of helpful methods (see, e.g. [92] [75] [76] [80] [93]).

These methods referred to as levers, comprise organisation structure, the use of reward systems, the effective use of staff in implementation, the development of a culture in the organisation that accepts change and the use of in formulation and control systems. These can all be used to assist in the implementation of new strategies.

Despite this advantage of the top-down approach, there are still limitations. For example, organisational members should still be involved in the formulation and implementation, and this approach could result in poor employee engagement. In order for a strategy implementation to be successful, it requires the support of many employees and different levels of employees within an organisation [54]. Therefore, it is important to gain the approval and engagement of employees when formulating a new strategy [91] [94] [95] [96]. When employees object to a strategy implementation, they create obstacles and delays that management must then negotiate in order for the new strategy to be successful [73] [97] [98]. Delays in a strategy becoming effective can reduce the competitive advantage an organisation has or upset the general functioning [14]. This criticism has resulted in a number of researchers electing to promote the use of bottom-up approaches to implementation, which encourage greater participation. This approach can be more useful, as organisation members will feel more committed to it and therefore more motivated to ensure its success [99]. As previously mentioned, strategy implementation failure is often due to a lack of commitment or involvement during the initial formulation process [75]. Managers are more successful in implementing a strategy or decision if their employees are cooperative and supportive. If employees are not involved in the development of a strategy, they are less likely to support its implementation. Moreover, when employees and

middle managers are involved in the formulation, it becomes easier for a top manager to align both the goals of employees and the goals of the organisation, as it is these goals that motivate both parties [73]. If the employees' goals do not align with the strategy, they will be less likely to support it, and therefore, the success level of implementation will be low.

Alternatively, Kralewski [100], presents a bottom-up approach to strategy formulation that does not require the involvement of top-level managers. Strategies are often developed in response to knowledge from operation- and middle-level individuals within an organisation. As previously mentioned, it is these members of the organisation that will detect flaws in a strategy designed by higher management. Consequently, their involvement is often crucial [74] [79] [83] [60] [101] [102] [103]. The bottom-up approach also highlights and recognises the importance of lower- and mid-level staff in formulating strategies [55] [54].
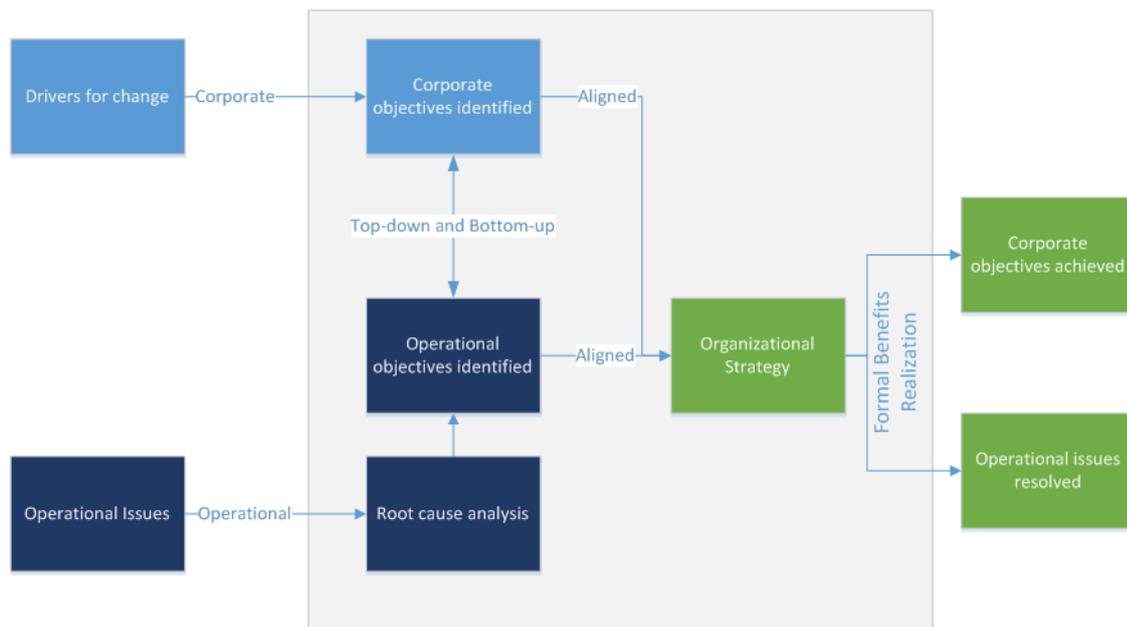
Figure 12: Top-Down and Bottom-Up Approach [47]

There are also likely to be a larger number of flaws in a formulated strategy if employees that know the target area have not been involved in its development [75]. The area that the strategy is designed for should be

considered carefully in the formulation stage, and their expertise should be utilised [99]. Without their expertise, the implementation will likely be unsuccessful [75]. The earlier these individuals are involved during the formulation stage, the more appropriate the formulated strategy is likely to be [47]. Therefore, those that will be affected by the strategy being formulated should be invited to participate in the formulation [104]. This participation should be encouraged throughout the entire process, with all individuals being aware that their contribution is valid and welcome [99].

3.2.3 Continuous improvement of strategy implementation)

The review of the relevant literature highlights another important consideration in strategy implementation: that implementation must be carried out with close adherence to the prescribed strategic framework. Essentially, companies must avoid the tendency to formulate and implement strategy as a one-time action and instead continuously review and enhance their strategies and products/services in order to retain competitive advantage [105].

However, it is this very requirement that poses a challenge for most firms even though many managers understand the need for regular strategic reviews. While this issue can be addressed to a certain extent using a framework that prompts continual review, managers must be willing to commit to the continuous focus and fine-tuning of strategy. Managers must also be aware that improvements take time and will not happen overnight and be willing to adopt a systematic approach [49] to review and improvement. When improvements are made consistently over a long period, companies can achieve a greater symbiosis between their strategy (objectives), tactics (middle-management plans) and operations (employee actions). In this way, continuous improvement aligns all aspects of the company and drives the firm towards success. Many advantages can be

gained when the company's operational, strategic and tactical approaches are in alignment.

In order to ensure that the chosen strategies are being implemented effectively, managers must, therefore, ensure that reviews are carried out frequently as part of the continuous improvement process. This can be achieved to the greatest effect when two-way communication is achieved: managers communicate strategies to employees (top-down approach), and employees then participate in goal setting (bottom-up approach) [96].

Figure 13: Three dimensions of a successful continuous improvement implementation [89]

Since strategy improvement takes time and regular effort, issues must be addressed along the way, and strategies must be replaced or modified wherever and whenever it is found to be necessary to do so. Since no two companies are exactly the same, various improvement frameworks can be adopted as part of the continuous improvement process. Whichever model is used, companies can benefit from their adoption, in that they help managers to identify the impact of procedures and policies on the company's profitability and productivity. If a company can achieve continuous improvement, it will undoubtedly stand in a stronger position in terms of goal achievement [47].

3.2.4 Macro and Micro Environment

The micro-environment is also known as the internal environment of the business, whereas the macro environment is the external environment [54] in the context of strategy, with the terms 'environment' and 'factors' used synonymously. Companies must be able to review their chosen strategies and make the necessary amendments, as influenced by performance-oriented internal and external factors [106]. Internal factors refer to situations that arise in the company or to company characteristics. This can include the company's internal structures, systems, employees, managers, activities and so on. Typically, internal factors can be managed by the company. On the other hand, external factors are not directly within the company's control and can include factors such as the natural environment, relevant laws, suppliers and so on [107].
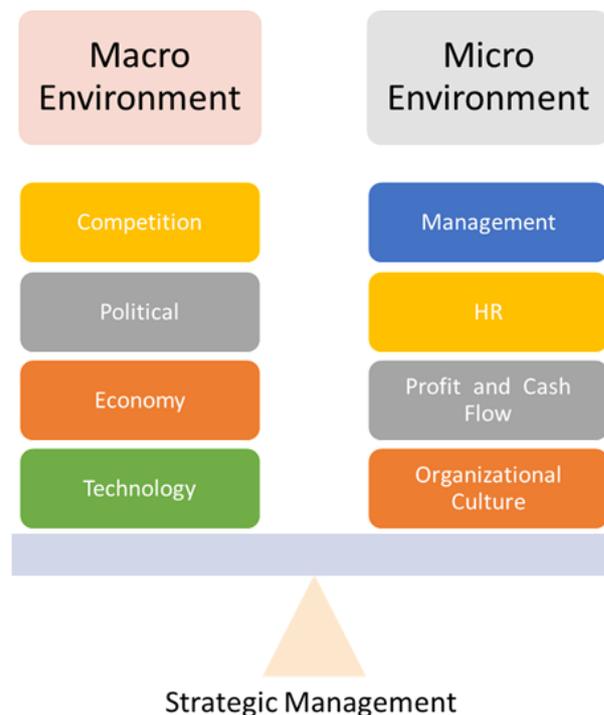
Figure 14: External versus Internal Factors Control

Internal and external environmental factors are outlined from a strategic management perspective in Figure 14. While external factors are not a part

of the organisation itself, nor can they be directly managed by the company, they can have a significant impact on the company's day-to-day functioning and performance, sustainability and growth. Some of the most frequently mentioned external factors include social, governmental, regulatory, political, technological and economic factors as well as market competition and customers [104]. It is well understood that companies that overlook these factors run a great risk of encountering difficulties or even failure. Therefore, managers must consistently be aware of environmental factors and be prepared to respond quickly to changes. However, it is also important that managers take a proactive rather than reactive approach to change by predicting environmental changes before they occur and ensuring that the necessary procedures are in place should these changes arise [86].

3.2.5 Review Perspectives on strategy implementation

Overall, these results indicate that the literature review on strategy implementation shows that a number of points can be raised based on the information extracted from the existing literature, which is as follows:

1. As noted, most authors argue that strategy implementation and formulation are two separate entities, with the former, arising after the latter. This consensus has been called into question over the last few years, however, with many accepting the opposite viewpoint: that strategy formulation and strategy implementation can occur side-by-side and are actually integrated with one another.

2. While most authors argue that strategy implementation is carried out under the top-down approach—wherein managers feed information down to employees—many authors now argue that strategy implementation is only truly effective when

employees can fully participate in the process and demonstrate a strong commitment to the company's strategic objectives.

3. Most authors believe strategy implementation is to be carried out rationally, particularly due to the 'hard' characteristics of strategy implementation (e.g., companies' control mechanisms, information systems, reward structures, organisational structures, etc.). Fewer contributions have been made concerning human or 'soft' characteristics related to strategy implementation, with only a small number of authors discussing the impact of factors such as behavioural change, employee motivation, socialisation, selection, leadership, counselling, and coaching.

3.3 Research Gap

This literature review has revealed three important gaps in the existing research that require further exploration in the context of the Saudi non-oil and gas industry, and they are as follows:

- Less attention has been paid to the Middle East, Asia, and Africa.
- The researchers did not examine how a comprehensive set of factors can, all together, influence strategic formulation and implementation
- The researchers did not examine which factors are more important than others within different social settings

3.4 Conclusion and Summary

The strategy defines the plans of any organisation to stay competitive, and strategy planning has been researched for decades in academia as well as within industry. However, it is evident that most strategies fail during the implementation stage, as shown in the detailed literature review.

Furthermore, the important factors of strategy implementation are a key feature in management studies, as they could turn a failing strategy into a successful one, provided that all the factors involved are identified and managed from the very beginning. Furthermore, it is clear that the authors propose a number of different viewpoints on the topic of strategy implementation.

Overall, however, it can be seen that strategy implementation, and strategy formulation is widely accepted as two distinct processes, with strategy implementation argued to be top-down, non-linear, rational, purposeful and well planned. However, a number of authors and practitioners have argued that it is not necessarily true in practice. Instead, many now believe that strategy implementation and formulation run somewhat parallel to one another, with action and behaviour being integrated along the way.

It is also argued that strategy implementation, in fact, is bottom-up in nature, not necessarily always rational and non-linear in its execution. Thus, perspectives of strategy implementation have shifted from the use of various external controls to the application of internal controls.

The detailed literature also demonstrates that the identification, management, and planning of important factors can make a strategy successful but not perfect. Positive results have been achieved with a level of strategy implementation success of 60% (of expected), and very few have attained levels over 80%. However, no study shows 100% or perfect strategy implementation success. It is also important to note that there are many ways to measure strategy implementation success. It is very clear that human factors have direct or indirect impacts on strategy execution, but the degree of influence differs from factor to factor.

However, these human factors can be placed in sequence based on cultural degree, starting from national, organisational and occupational culture and ending with family and individual culture. Culture also increases human

errors during strategy implementation. The key to reducing human errors is to understand the human factors that can contribute to error under the different culture levels.

The literature review on strategy implementation shows that a number of points can be raised based on the information extracted from the existing literature, which is as follows:

1. As noted, most authors argue that strategy implementation and formulation are two separate entities, with the former, arising after the latter. This consensus has been called into question over the last few years, however, with many accepting the opposite viewpoint: that strategy formulation and strategy implementation can occur side-by-side and are integrated with one another.

2. While most authors argue that strategy implementation is carried out under the top-down approach—wherein managers feed information down to employees—many authors now argue that strategy implementation is only truly effective when employees can fully participate in the process and demonstrate a strong commitment to the company's strategic objectives.

3. Most authors believe strategy implementation is to be carried out rationally, particularly due to the 'hard' characteristics of strategy implementation (e.g., companies' control mechanisms, information systems, reward structures, organisational structures, etc.). Fewer contributions have been made concerning human or 'soft' characteristics related to strategy implementation, with only a small number of authors discussing the impact of factors such as behavioural change, employee motivation, socialisation, selection, leadership, counselling, and coaching.

4. Generally, in the strategy implementation research, insignificant attention is paid to authority and politics. In reality, authority and politics do play a vital role. There are two kinds of power in this

context: the powerful management who makes the decision and the power of politics. Often, these power and political influences are ignored in strategy implementation management.

5. While many authors discuss factors such as reward schemes, employees, organisational culture and organisational structure, many perceive these factors as easily changeable. Therefore, many authors fail to highlight these factors as issues that could impact strategy implementation. Furthermore, very few researchers have explored individual factors or the impact of external environmental factors on strategy implementation.

6. This has also highlighted disparities between operational strategy implementation and the planning process. This gap can lead to overall business failure as a result of poor strategy implementation and a weak product strategy.

7. Finally, this has illustrated that companies must ensure that their strategy, tactics, and operations are in alignment to achieve cohesive action and harmonious efforts within the organisation. When employees and managers work together to meet the same organisational objectives and goals, companies are better able to achieve success in the most efficient way possible because of clear communication and strong leadership. Furthermore, companies must ensure that their daily activities are carried out in line with the company's overall strategic mission.

This chapter provided the detailed literature review with a focus on strategy implementation and its problems. The next chapter discusses the various research methodologies available to this research and justifies the ones applied to answer the research questions so that the ultimate goal of this research can be achieved.

Chapter 4

Methodology

This chapter explains the research method used in this study. Figure 15 the research methodology selection.
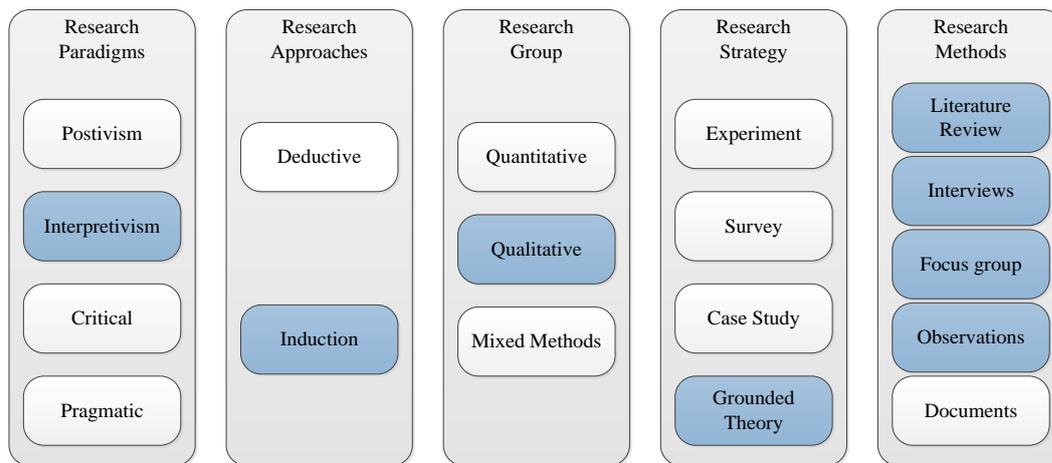
Figure 15: Research Methodology Selection

However, within this chapter, the essential philosophical and theoretical assumptions based on this study will be examined within the strategy implementation discipline. The research design can be categorised into five parts: selecting the research paradigm, selecting a suitable research approach, selecting a suitable research group, building the research strategy and selecting the right research methods [108]. The chapter aims to produce clear assumptions and determine how they affect the methodological design of the research process. Figure **16** below gives an outline of the chapter.

Figure 16: Outline of Chapter [108]

4.1 Research Design

This research was designed to achieve the objective of the research and answer the research questions derived. According to Kuhn [109], a research design is a logical plan that can help one get from the initial questions to be answered to the conclusion.

The main components of the research design include the planning and the execution phases of the research. The design of the research helps the researcher determine the precedence of different research elements, including the philosophical basis, the type of research enquiry and the orientation of research towards the theory [110].

There should be consistency between the research design and the research questions used to meet the research objectives [111]. The design of the research assists in the organisation of the research, facilitating the task of gathering the data relating to the implementation phase in various industries [110].
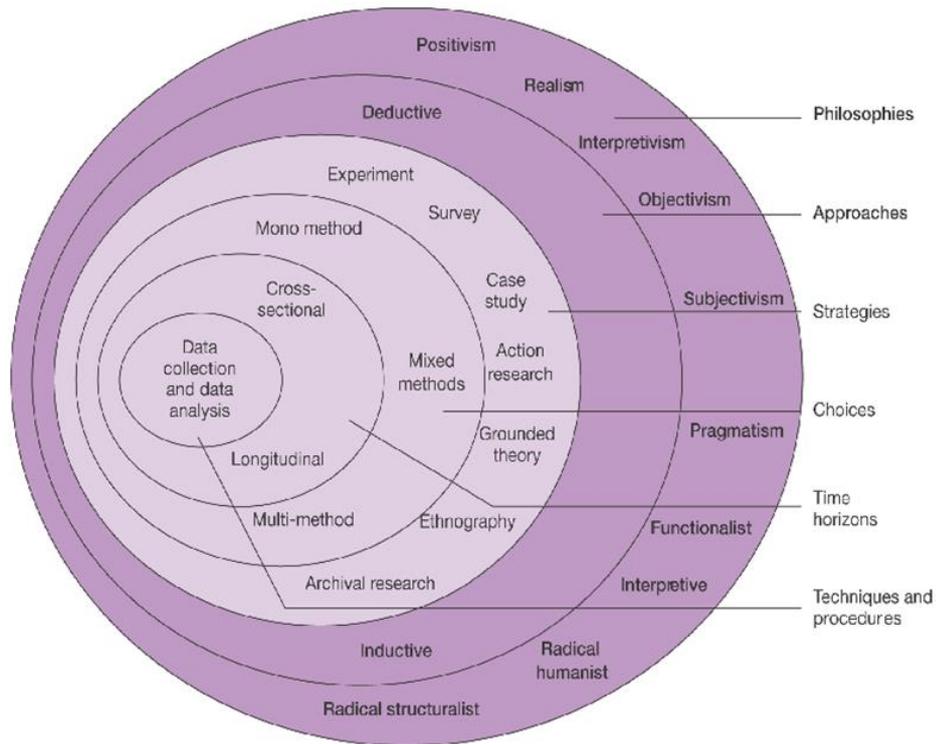
Figure 17: The Research Onion [112]

The research onion illustrated in Figure 17 shows research methods categorised into different layers. Each layer indicates a particular dimension of the research. From the above figure, it is obvious that the philosophical approaches, strategies, techniques of data analysis and collection and time horizon of the project must be specified along with other factors that should be clearly defined before the research is conducted [112].

4.2 Research Paradigm

The researcher should be knowledgeable of the philosophical underpinnings of the research to develop the theory fully. According to Ketchen, Boyd, and Bergh [113], researchers should know how to specify the philosophical basis of the research clearly.

The benefits of understanding the philosophical basis of the research, which has been specified by Easterby-Smith et al. [114], include the following:

a. Clarify the evidence that must be gathered and the data-collection and interpretation methods that are suitable for the research

b. Assist in selecting a research design that is suitable for the social situation.
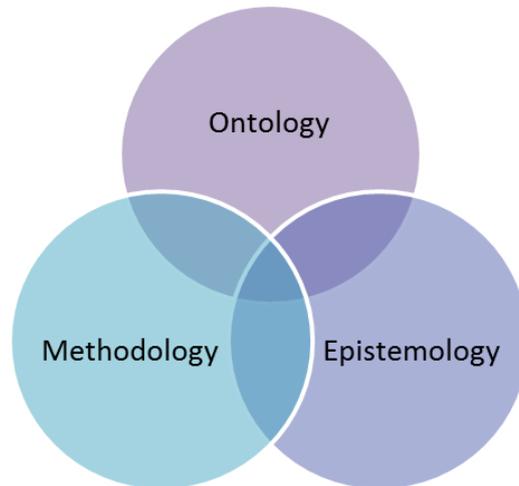
Figure 18: Research Paradigms

A common problem encountered during the research design is choosing a particular research method and paradigm. Researchers can solve this problem by answering the following questions:

1) What is the essence of the social problem being examined?

2) What are the knowledge bases that relate to social reality? How can this knowledge be gained and shared?

3) Is the social problem being researched a subjective or objective phenomenon?

4) What is the relationship between the individual and the social environment? Does the individual have the power to change the environment, or does the environment determine the person's actions?

The above questions can help the researcher decide whether an interpretive, positivist, critical or pragmatic approach will best suit the research methodology.

Every research paradigm has its approaches and research methods. However, a researcher can also apply a research method that combines different research questions.

Table 1: The Major Paradigms [115]

Paradigm	Ontology	Epistemology	Question	Research Group
Positivism	The learning process is governed by hidden rules	Uncover rules by focusing on valid and reliable tools	What is effective and doable?	Quantitative
Interpretivism	Individuals in groups create reality	Uncover the meaning of activities and events	Why are people acting in a particular way?	Qualitative
Critical	The society is generally unjust and biased	Uncover the injustices in a society and empower citizens	How can the situation be changed?	Civil actions, Ideological review
Pragmatic	Things and events are based on practical rather than theoretical considerations	The ideal method is one that helps solves the issue	Can the intervention help enhance the knowledge?	Design based Mixed Methods

The philosophical underpinning of this research is based on the idea put forward by Suddaby [111], in that reality is not objective but subjective and constructed socially. To be more specific, the research will be exploratory,

and thus, the interpretive approach will be suitable. In addition, the research study recognises the fact that strategic actions are based on how a given situation is interpreted and acted upon by the actors. As a result, it is important to understand the perceptions of the strategic actors that are relevant to the strategies employed within firms and how the implementation process can help resolve issues related to the Saudi non-oil and gas industry.

4.3 Research Approaches

The objective of the research is to examine the issues that relate to the Saudi non-oil and gas industry and to achieve an in-depth understanding of the issues, a topic that has not previously been researched. That is why we used the analytic induction method to discover the strategic implementation issues overall in the context of firms in Saudi Arabia. Besides, the approach is considered more effective for examining the implementation of strategy in practice and comparing the results in different firm types than gathering data with a preconceived opinion.

4.4 Research Group

The research group is identified by an orderly and systematic approach to collecting and analysing the data and then interpreting the results [116]. The three most common types of research approaches include quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods. Researchers select a research method by considering the aim and objective of the research. The distinction between qualitative and quantitative data has been explored by different scholars [117] [118] [119] [120], and the major quantitative and qualitative research assumptions are summarised and highlighted in Table 2.

Table 2: Qualitative Approach vs Quantitative Approach

Quantitative	Qualitative
Deductive process with formal language	Inductive method with informal language
Distinct variable concepts	Concepts are in the form of motifs, themes or taxonomies
Relatively slower and more expensive method	Can be cheaper than other methods
Assumption of standard procedures and replication	Analysis of specific procedures with no replication
Analysis achieved by examining charts, tables, and statistics	Analysis achieved by generalising or extracting themes from past data

The qualitative research method is employed in this research because the study aims to determine the complex issues and capture multi-layered and multidimensional subjective phenomena [121] [122]. Figure **19** below presents the steps required for the qualitative research. It can be seen that the qualitative research method is an iterative method that goes back and forth between data interpretation and theoretical and conceptual work. The process is flexible; that is, it can be changed in any direction according to the requirements of the research [123].
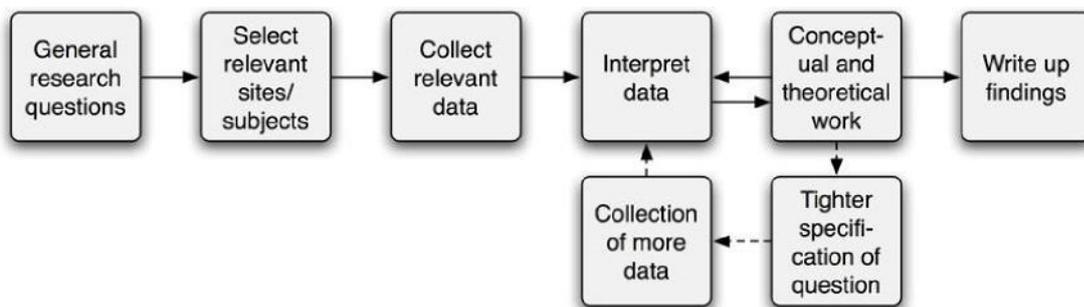
Figure 19: Steps in a Qualitative Research [123]

Qualitative research has been defined by Creswell [120] as a process of enquiry that is based on the traditional methodological enquiry method to explore social issues and problems. The research work builds a holistic and

complex picture and presents detailed views of the problem. According to Creswell [124], there are five main approaches to qualitative data analysis, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Qualitative Method Approaches [124]

Dimension	Biography	Phenomenology	Grounded Theory	Ethnography	Case Study
Focus	Exploring the life of an individual	Understanding the essence of experiences about a phenomenon	Developing a theory grounded in data from the field	Describing and interpreting a cultural and social group	Developing an in-depth analysis of a single case or multiple cases
Discipline origin	-Anthropology -Literature -History -Psychology -Sociology	- Philosophy - Sociology - Psychology	Sociology	Cultural anthropology Sociology	Political science, sociology, evaluation, urban studies, other social sciences
Data collection	Primarily interviews and documents	Long interviews with up to 10 people	Interviews with 20-30 individuals to "saturate" categories and detail a theory	Primarily observations and interviews with additional artifacts during extended time in the field	Multiple sources document, archival records, interviews, observations, physical artifacts
Data analysis	- Stories - Epiphanies - Historical content	-Statements -Meanings -Meaning themes -General description of the experience	- Open coding - Axial coding - Selective coding - Conditional matrix	- Description - Analysis - Interpretation	-Description -Themes -Assertions

4.5 Research Strategy

The strategy of this research is based on the grounded theory method, which generates theory based on data that is collected systematically and

interpreted. The grounded theory method was originally put forward after conducting a field study on dying patients [125]. The method is defined as the discovery of theory from data. Figure 20 presents the development of the grounded theory method since its inception.
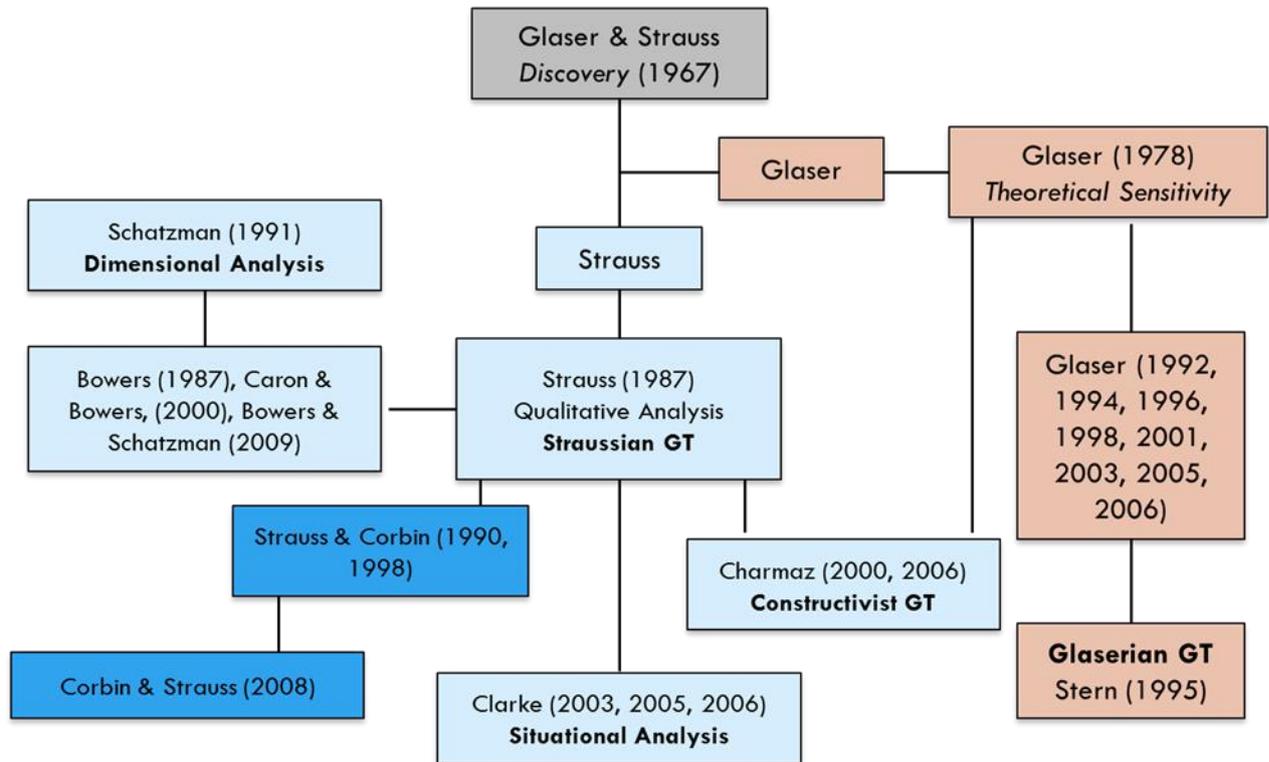
Figure 20: Genealogy of Grounded Theory [126]

According to Locke [127], grounded theory is the most popular qualitative method used in the social sciences, and there are three reasons for this:

1) The method helps in gaining new insights into an old theory and developing an entirely new story.

2) The method helps in generating theories that are interesting and relevant for practitioners.

3) The method helps reveal micro-management processes in situations that are complex and undergoing change.

Grounded theory is considered an inductive method of developing new theory from existing data [128] [129] [130]. One of the founders of grounded

theory, Glaser [125], stated that the theory is suitable where other methods fail to answer key questions, particularly in the fields of business and management and health sciences.

Moreover, the grounded theory approach, according to Goulding [131], focuses on new discoveries. As a result, it is helpful in generating theories in areas about which researchers know little, and it can offer fresh new insights relating to distinct social processes. The method can help in understanding substantial areas that researchers have not extensively explored. Goulding [130] also stated that grounded theory is the best approach when there is no integrated theory regarding a particular social phenomenon.

Researchers have defined grounded theory in other ways as well. For instance, Strauss and Corbin [132] defined the concept of grounded theory as a qualitative method of research that makes use of a systematic set of systems that helps in developing a grounded theory regarding a particular situation, using the inductive method. Moreover, Glaser [133] argued that the approach of grounded theory is, in general, an analytical method that is associated with the collection of data and makes use of the systematic application of methods with the aim of generating an inductive theory regarding a considerable area.

According to Strauss and Corbin [134], in grounded theory, the theory is obtained from data that is collected and analysed systematically. In the method, there is a close relationship between data collection, data analysis, and the derived theory.

Therefore, the general work process related to grounded theory is based on the elements of data collection, analysis, and interpretation and theory development. The grounded theory method does not see data as separate from theory. Instead, the theory is viewed as derived from the data. The data collection/analysis and theory formulation are considered reciprocally

related to each other, and they incorporate processes that help in theory development [135].
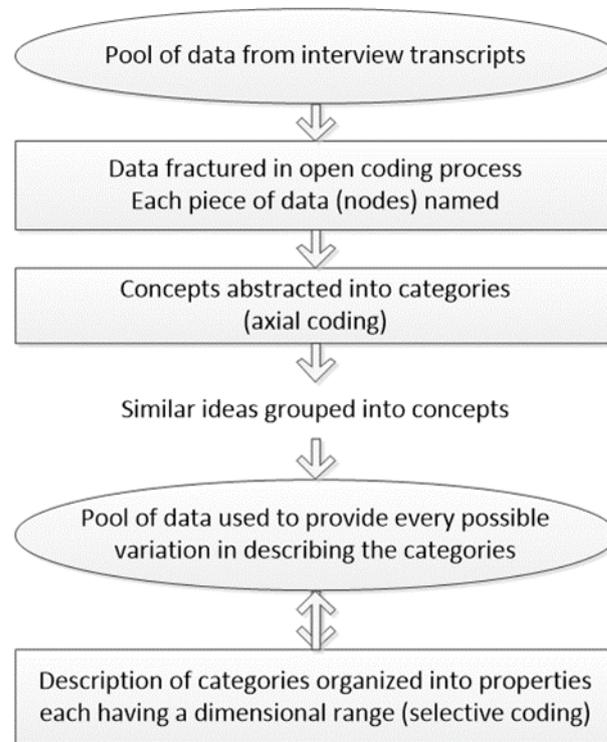
Figure 21: Basic Work Process of Grounded Theory

The analysis of data in the grounded theory method involves three distinct procedures from which the sampling processes are derived, some of which may overlap:

- Open coding (the data is examined to explore relevant categories)
- Axial coding (the categories are improved, refined, related and coded)
- Selective coding (the core category that links all other categories together is identified and related to other categories)

The process related to the collection of data is guided by theoretical sampling, according to Glaser and Strauss [125]. In other words, the sampling is based on theoretically relevant constructs. Therefore, the sampling procedure leads to theoretical saturation and validation of the

work, which ensures that the emerging theory controls the collection of data [135].

This study follows the research methodology based on Straus and Corbin [132] and modified by Charmaz [136], as the social processes and interactions are studied from the perspective of a constructionist.

4.5.1 Application of Grounded theory in Non-Western Contexts

Several scholars have applied the grounded theory method in their studies. However, most of them relate to developed market economies where the 'free-market' method is espoused and where the main goal is to maximise shareholder value. The theoretical development and application of the theory are based on Western contexts where the main characteristics include high competition, efficiency, and effectiveness. The cultural, economic and social elements in the Western market are substantially different from those in the non-Western market.

That being said, there has been an increase in the usage of the grounded theory method in other locations in recent years. Generally, a theory that is developed in the Western context is not always applicable in other locations without being modified, according to the requirements, criteria, and conditions of a particular location. It is imperative to consider the constitution and implication of the theory in a specific location.

When it comes to Saudi Arabia, there is clearly a dearth of information regarding the grounded theory methodology. In fact, no published work has utilised this concept in the context of strategy implementation in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, this research study aims to apply the theory to Saudi Arabia to contribute to the existing literature in a non-Western context.

4.5.2 Purpose of Developing Grounded Theory

According to Bacharach [137], a well-developed theory sheds light on the relationships among concepts with realistic constraints and assumptions.

According to Suddaby [111], the purpose of applying the grounded theory methodology is to identify patterns and gain fresh insights into a theory. While reviewing the existing literature, we found that few scholars have examined all the issues relating to strategy implementation.

In particular, previous studies only focused on a minimal number of specific factors and did not examine how multiple factors can simultaneously influence strategic formulation and implementation. Moreover, most of the literature focused on strategic implementation in Western organisations but not more general settings, such as the Middle East.

4.6   Research Method

Crotty [108] defined research methods as a set of procedures or techniques that are utilised to examine data that relates to a specific question. We evaluated different research methods to meet the aim of the grounded theory method. These methods help shed light on the appropriateness of different techniques for developing a theoretical method relevant to the study.

The research methods that apply to qualitative research include observation, interviews and focus groups. Each of these methods is suitable for a particular type of data [138] [139]. However, the collection of quality data is a time-intensive process [139], and observation and quick interviews are not likely to make it possible to gain deep insight into the topic. For qualitative research, the research time frame should be long enough to enable the researcher to identify patterns and understand the nuances of the situation.

4.6.1   Interviewing

Qualitative interviews are considered an effective research method for gaining an understanding of how people feel, experience and interpret the environment [140]. Three different types of interviews can be used in qualitative research:

1) Structured interviews

2) Semi-structured interviews

3) Unstructured interviews

According to Dawson [141], semi-structured interviews are most commonly used in research work that is qualitative. The researchers establish questions beforehand to gain insights about a particular subject matter and identify problems that were not part of the initial interview. It offers flexibility to a researcher, in that questions can be added or removed from the schedule based on the interview results. Moreover, it was pointed out by Sanders et al. [112] that the investigator is not required to ask questions in a specific order. Instead, the order of the questions can vary depending on the specific cases and, more importantly, the flow of the conversation.

Using semi-structured interviews allows the researcher to delve deeply into the topic and ask questions that help clarify the matter. This is important for those that make use of the phenomenological approach where the main focus is on understanding the meaning that the interviewee ascribes to a specific phenomenon [112].

The interview is influenced by the interviewee's awareness of his/her knowledge as well as the interviewee's emotional state during the interview. As a result, the distortion of data may occur, and this can bias the results [142]. To avoid biased data, the researcher must maintain knowledge of himself and let the guest 'flow' [143].

4.6.2   Focus Group

The focus group approach has become popular relatively recently [144]. According to Williams and Katz [145], in this technique, a small group of individuals having common characteristics or interests is assembled by a moderator to examine group dynamics. This is done to gain insights relating to a particular issue, and this approach is sometimes selected because it saves time compared to interviews.

Some scholars have described them as a 'fast food' form of qualitative research with the main advantage of generating data through the explicit use of group interaction [146] [147]. In addition, they are said to help in examining individual responses that are influenced by group participants [144].

The knowledge gained from the focus group, according to Morgan [144], can offer greater insights than that gained from a group of individual interviews. The reason is that the participants feel the need to question each other and provide elaborate answers that accelerate the natural social processes through which the individuals evaluate each other's opinions. This, in turn, leads to the generation of more data that is relevant to the research study [148].

Another benefit of focus group interviews is that they allow researchers to ask questions related to the response of the group [149]. In addition, Agar and MacDonald [146] concluded that focus groups eased the burden on the interviewees to express themselves and reduced the researcher's tendency to disrupt the flow of thought during the interview.

4.6.3 Direct observation

In direct observation, the researcher observes events by visiting the field with the aim of generating data. The observation is based on a set of questions that must be answered by the researcher [150]. According to Patton [151], there are many benefits of using the direct observation method. It allows the observer to capture and understand the setting within which a group of people interacts, discover things that others have not paid attention to and gain a level of understanding not afforded by the selective perceptions of the people being observed. According to Thomas [150], the perspectives and feelings of those being observed can be obtained through unplanned or natural events.

The limitations of direct observation that have been identified by scholars include distortion of data, the information being limited to observations of the investigator and a focus on external behaviour without considering people's internal perspectives and feelings [150]. The fact is that the interview technique helps researchers to undertake a walkthrough via the direct observation method and offers a source of evidence for data collection. However, each usually performs better under observation due to the attention paid to them (i.e., the 'Hawthorne Effect'). The interviewee should also consider this effect.

4.7 Data Gathering

Qualitative research is a type of research technique used to decode, translate, describe and understand the reason behind a behaviour or way of thinking, which may or may not be apparent in society at large [152]. According to Patton [142], conducting qualitative research is a time-intensive task for both the researchers as well as those who help them conduct the research (i.e., interviewees). In this study, the researchers collect data by going through the previous literature (i.e., similar studies within the same field of interest) [153]. Since it is a qualitative study, it is based on opinions, beliefs, and viewpoints, making room for a great deal of interaction during the data-collection phase [154]. Therefore, the researcher should have very good interaction with informants. The interrogative nature of the study warrants more interaction between the researchers and the interviewees, and the data collected via this interaction helps explain certain social behaviours [155].

Furthermore, the data-collection part of the entire study is a repetitive process, which helps in collecting unique responses by following the procedures repeatedly [156]. This process involves the collection, comparison, and integration of new concepts that add value to the entire study. Therefore, it is recognised that the data-analysis process is far lengthier than the data-collection process.

For this reason, the right research strategy that ensures that the data collected is reliable and valid needs to be implemented. However, employing at least one more data-collection technique to crosscheck the results and ensure that they are correct is recommended. Thus, data collection is explained in more detail in this chapter.

4.8 Data Analysis

According to Gray [157], two approaches can be taken to analyse qualitative data: the content analysis technique and the grounded theory process. The content analysis technique is concerned with identifying criteria for the selection of data and filtering it, based on these criteria. On the other hand, there are no pre-set criteria with the grounded theory method; rather, they have to be prepared later. Only when data is being collected and analysed do the themes and measures start becoming apparent. This essentially means that the content analysis approach is deductive, while that of grounded theory is inductive. According to Strauss and Corbin [132], grounded theory is a theory that 'is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon'.

4.8.1 Constant Comparison

Constant comparison is depicted as being central to grounded theory [158]. According to Strauss and Corbin [132], in constant comparison, the researcher returns to the data constantly to look for similarities and differences for coding and verify the emerging categories. However, in this study, constant comparison is used by comparing incoming data with previous data to ensure that the same code appears and is relevant for the new data and is placed in the correct category that reliably and truly represents the empirical data. Constant comparison focuses on 'the simultaneous conceptualisation and assessment of the similarities and

differences in social interactions' in search of a 'core idea that could explain variability in interactions' [159].

4.8.2 Theoretical Sampling (Coding Data)

The grounded theory process is a simple procedure that starts with data collection, proceeds to its analysis and concludes with the formulation of a theory [156]. The process has three stages [134]:

1) Open coding, the first step of the analysis process, involves reading the participant's interviews and coding sentences or words with similar meanings under the same code [153].

2) Axial coding begins after the open coding step, and the main goal is to make connections between categories of data to develop the theory [154].

3) In selective coding, the final stage in the data coding process, the researcher presents the story of the study under investigation in written form after integrating and refining the theory [153].

This comparison is very important for the analysis of qualitative data. As mentioned by Glazer [160], the process first involves collecting data from the field. After that, the data is sifted through in order to recognise the main problems that the study should address or the variables on which the study should be based. After this, a brief description of the categories is written, and a justification for each relationship formed between the categories is given defining the domain and direction the study will take (see Figure 22)
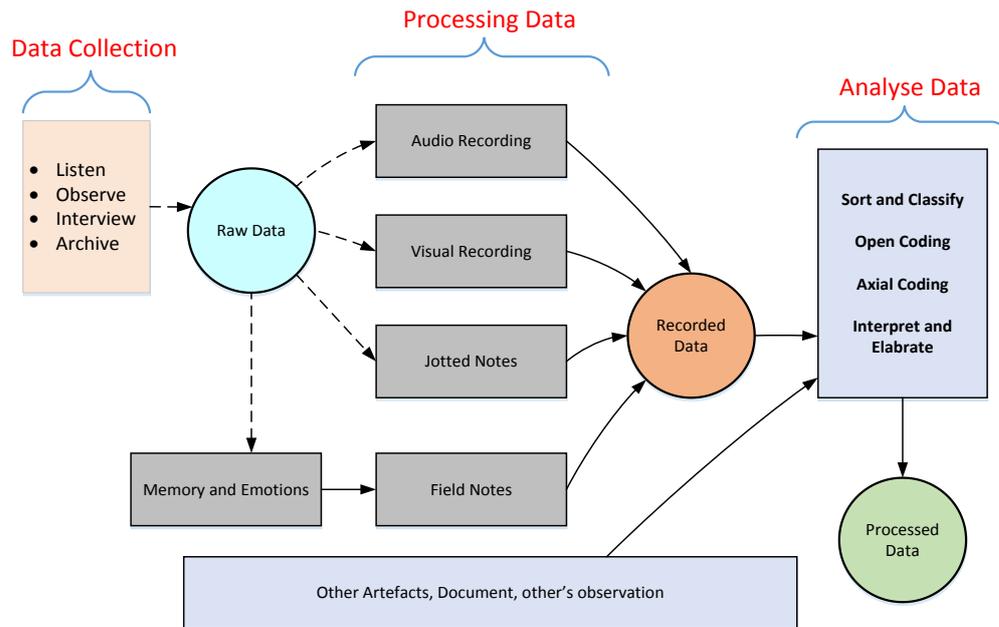
Figure 22: Qualitative Data Process [161]

Glaser [160] proposed an additional significant feature of grounded theory research linked with data analysis. That is, the writing of memos is a main activity during the grounded theory research process: 'Memos are the theorising write-up of ideas about codes and their relationships as they strike the analyst while coding'. This implies that the researcher writes down ideas that arise during the data analysis. For that, the researcher uses memos to record all the activities that will help in the analysis stage. They serve as building blocks whose properties relate to each other, and from them, the new theory is developed.

Finally, there is a point at which the information collected for the study becomes redundant called data saturation or theoretical saturation [125] [134] [162]. Therefore, data saturation must occur to ensure that adequate information has been collected to precisely reflect the perspectives of the study's participants.

4.8.3 Theoretical Sensitivity and Research Reflexivity

The personal qualities of the researcher and his/her motivation for collecting the data contribute to theoretical sensitivity. This allows for the establishment of a grounded theory that is relevant to the research question. This sensitivity deepens with the acquisition of subject area knowledge and advances in professional experience. The concept is described [160] as a process that improves the researcher's abilities in a research setting and contributes to the recognition of relevant data and the formulation of associated theories.

Researcher reflexivity has been viewed [163] as an effort to contain the researcher's impact on the data and its influence on study results via self-awareness. Furthermore, the concept is considered [163] an integral element for the collection of data and the application of the comparison method.

It is also argued [164] that epistemological bias is often evident within field data-collection methods such as interviews. Thus, a non-structured interview theme is recommended to minimise constructivist bias.

4.8.4 Integrating the literature review in the data analysis

In a typical research study, the literature review is conducted by going through similar past research studies and gathering evidence that supports the current research and gives it weight. On the contrary, in this research, the literature review is written in a way that enables it to be used in tandem with the primary data collected to support it with similar findings as highlighted in past research, and then a framework is developed based on this supporting evidence [165].

4.9   Triangulation and trustworthiness of data

4.9.1   Triangulation

According to Decrop [166], the process of triangulation is used to strengthen the research further, which is achieved by eliminating any biases from the research findings to ensure that data can be better applied and attributed to the general population by analysing and gathering data from different angles using different methods. He further stated that 'using multiple methods paves the way for more credible and dependable information'. Moreover, Easterby-Smith et al. [167] explained triangulation as a process in which data is collected multiple times using different methods. Furthermore, Denzin [168] specified four triangulation techniques:

1) Methodological Triangulation: Collecting data using multiple methods

2) Data Triangulation: Using multiple data sources to study data

3) Investigator Triangulation: Assigning more than one researcher to identify and further investigate the problem

4) Theoretical Triangulation: Proceed with conducting the research and keeping different perspectives in mind

In this research study, methodological triangulation was implemented. Data was collected from multiple sources through different methods that included document analysis, semi-structured interviews, and observation. The use of different data-collection methods helped in data triangulation and helped overcome the limitations inherent to every method used [157].

4.9.2   Trustworthiness of data

Within the context of qualitative analysis, trustworthiness is considered a measure of confidence that can determine the value of the research [169]. This concept is also associated with the usage of reliability and validity terms within quantitative research. A further definition refinement [170] relates it to the acquisition of the following research criteria:

1) Credibility: This relates to the authenticity of the results and research participants' acceptance of them.

2) Dependability: This is associated with the researcher's ability to define the relevant research context.

3) Conformability: This is considered the degree of confidence other workers have in the results.

Transferability: This measurement demonstrates the applicability of the research results in terms of generalisation and impact on other research contexts.

4.9.3 Validity

As mentioned by Hammersley [171], 'an account is valid or true if it accurately represents those features of the phenomena that it is intended to describe, explain or theorise'. From this, we can conclude that validity is concerned with two main things: whether the instruments to be used to measure data are accurate and relevant and whether they measure what they are intended to measure [172]. According to Ritchie and Lewis [173], the validity of a research study is determined by how closely the results of the research match the real-life justification of an action and attitude.

Moreover, Winter [172] and Arksy and Knight [174] have pinpointed two dimensions that help define the concept of validity: internal and external validity. Internal validity is concerned with how accurately the researcher investigates what is claimed to be investigated as highlighted in the study, whereas external validity is concerned with how easily the research findings can be generalised and applied to the entire population. Denscombe [175] further elaborated that using multiple methods to test the relationships between the data helps increase its validity and accuracy.

In this research, the multi-method technique was used to test the validity. The problem was analysed from multiple viewpoints, and the findings were given justification from multiple sources. Multiple case studies were also referred to in order to cover every aspect of the research. It was ensured

that all the questions developed were relevant to the problem the research was looking to resolve. A maximum level of accuracy was ensured; for instance, during data collection, help from native English speakers was sought to decipher the unclear parts of the recorded interviews. If the recorded part could still not be deciphered, the interviewee was contacted and asked to clarify what they had said.
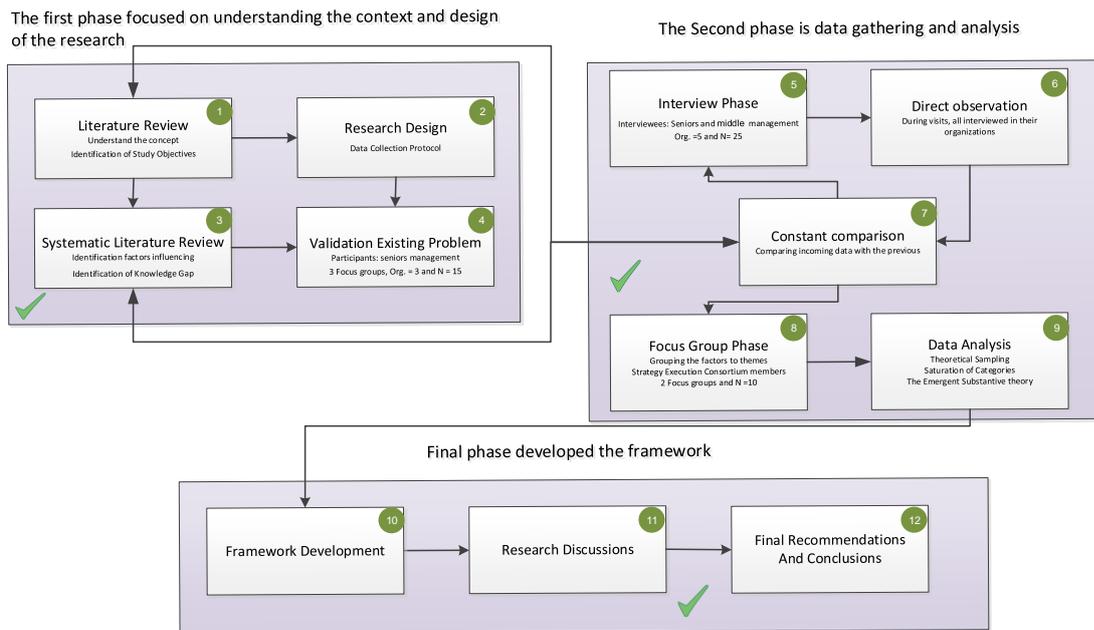
Figure 23: Flow Chart of research methodology

4.9.4 Reliability

Reliability is concerned with the extent to which the research findings of the study can be trusted, and can serve as a basis for other studies using the same research techniques and methods [173]. In short, 'the reliability of the findings depends on the likely recurrence of the original data and the way they are interpreted' [173]. However, according to Marshall and Rossman [138] and Seale [176], it is difficult for recent studies to replicate the results of previous studies due to the existence of a time gap. Since the studies are conducted in different eras, the views of the people and the prevalent conditions of the periods differ, resulting in different results being achieved. Thus, research based on highlighting the reasons for

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specific phenomena may be difficult to replicate in this instance. For this reason, reliability can be ensured through employing the concept of *reflexivity*, which means, 'showing the audience of research studies as much as possible of the procedures that have led to a particular set of conclusions' [176].

According to Gray [157], 'in terms of reliability, it is fairly obvious that taped conversations will tend to present more reliable evidence than hastily written field notes'. Thus, to maintain the reliability of this research, all the interviews that were conducted were also recorded to serve as evidence and to eliminate any notion of bias when writing down the results later. Furthermore, the designed questions were written in easy-to-understand language and were asked in a way that made them easy to interpret. In case the interviewee did not understand the question, it was repeated so that the answer received would be accurate. As the questions were subjective, the people interviewed were given a chance to express their own beliefs freely without being spoken to in a manner that would create bias and change their response.

Despite the fact that the external conditions might be different when constructing a similar study, the methods and procedures adopted remain the same and are clearly mentioned to help others understand the way in which the research was conducted. The research study's aim, objectives, methodology, and motivation have also been mentioned.

4.10 Ethical Considerations

Ethics is an important consideration in any research work, and consent should be obtained from participants at the end of the interview [126]. In addition, Mulvey [177] suggested that non-disclosure agreements should be signed to ensure that the intellectual property rights of the participants are protected. However, the researcher obtained the approval of the Cranfield

University Research Ethics System (CURES), and the reference was
CURES/627/2015.

The researcher must ensure that the names of participants remain
anonymous. In addition, the researcher should not discuss sensitive
personal issues such as faith, politics or financial information. Moreover,
the researcher should not take any action that could jeopardise the position
of the individual in an organisation. Employee details should never be
revealed to managers, and participants should be made aware of their right
to withdraw from the research study.

Lastly, it is vital to make certain that the collected data does not create (or
worsen) mistrust and that the context can be approached and studied by
future researchers [178] [177].

4.11 Summary

Researchers should see the research paradigm that relates to a particular
project and how it influences the questions and the presentation of the
research findings. No research methodology is perfect, and there is a need
for greater awareness of the limitations of each method. This will help in
selecting the most practical methodology and employing it to conduct a
research study.

This chapter outlined the philosophical basis of the research approach that
was taken to design the research plan. The reason for selecting the
interpretive approach was explained, and the limitations and issues were
discussed. Qualitative enquiry is important to ensure that a strong
qualitative method approach encompasses the entire research study. This
allows the test to be repeated to re-explore the idea, thereby strengthening
the validity of the claims made in a research work [179].

The study employed an analytic induction method to determine the issues
relating to the implementation of the research method in Saudi Arabia. The

method is considered more apt for exploring strategy implementation and comparing the strategy implementation of different firms. The study also described how the data were analysed in the research. It is better than examining the issue with preconceived assumptions. The chapter finally looked at the issues of validity, reliability, and triangulation. The next chapter presents the research context, site, and culture.

Chapter 5

Research Context, Site, and Culture

5.1 Introduction

Saudi Arabia's economy is predominantly based on oil (around 90%) [180]. Recently, Saudi Arabia has encountered financial difficulties due to the oil market. The high level of oil production and the low oil prices have adversely affected the Kingdom's finances. Saudi Arabia has recorded its most significant budget deficits over the past two years: $98 billion in 2015 and a projected $87 billion for 2016 [181]. Oil prices fell from $115/barrel in the summer of 2014 to $25/barrel in January 2015, but since then, prices have mostly settled around the $40–48/barrel range [182].

Saudi Arabia decided to diversify its economy, away from petroleum, unveiled the strategy in June 2014. Although this strategy has not materialised [183], the backbone of this strategy was to diversify by increasing the revenues of non-petroleum industries by three times by 2020 and lower the state contributions to energy subsidies [182].

This research intends to explore the strategy implementation practices in non-petroleum industries. This chapter delivers an overview of the country of Saudi Arabia and its history, society, culture, economy, political system and further associated challenges for readers who are unacquainted with Saudi Arabia and its economy. The vision, aims, and goals that the government of Saudi Arabia hopes to reach by the year 2030 are also discussed in this research, as Saudi Arabia is aiming to restructure its economy to diversify away from the petroleum industry as its primary source of revenue.

5.2 Profile of the Research Context

5.2.1 Geographical

Location: Saudi Arabia is located in the Middle East, mainly in the Arabian Peninsula.

Size: It has a land area of 1,960,582 km² (according to U.S. government statistics).

Figure 24: Saudi Arabia Flag

Land Boundaries: The Saudi Arabia occupies 80 percent of the Arabian Peninsula. Saudi Arabia is bounded by seven countries and three bodies of water. To the south by Yemen (1458 km), on the north by Iraq (814km) and Jordan (744km), on north east by Kuwait (222 km), on the east by Oman (676km), the United Arab Emirates (UAE) (457km), Qatar (60km) and the Arabia Gulf coastal border almost (120 km), to the west, Red Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba coastal border almost (1,800 km), as shown in Figure 25. It has a total border area of 4431km [184].

Figure 25: Map of Saudi Arabia and its neighbouring countries

Saudi Arabia is divided into the following four regions [184]:

1. Western Province: it contains the Muslim holy cities Makkah and Medina. It is also adjacent to the Red Sea, which is the main commercial port of Jeddah. The most industrial city, Yanbu, is also in this region.

2. Eastern Province: this area contains the Ras-Tanura oil port and the industrial city of Jubal. The Central Eastern area contains three cities: Al Khobar, Dhahran and Dammam.

3. Central Province: it is situated in the central plateau, which contains the capital city, Riyadh, which contains most of the government ministries.

4. South Western Province: this province, mainly agriculture-based, mostly consists of high mountains, as high as 300m above sea level.

 Climate: Saudi Arabia is among the hottest countries in the world, with a maximum temperature of 55℃ in the summer and a minimum of 14℃ in the winter. However, in terms of weather, the country is divided into two

regions: the coastline area and the interior area. The coastline has a more moderate temperature with the higher rate of humidity, whereas the interior area is mainly dry. The capital, Riyadh, is also in the interior area where the average temperature is approximately 42℃. Temperatures rarely drop below freezing in Saudi Arabia [184].

5.2.2 Religion

Saudi Arabia is the birthplace of Islam, the only religion permitted to be practised in the Kingdom. Each year, millions of pilgrims journey to the holy cities of Makkah and Medina. The Sharia (Islamic law) governs not only matters of religion but all aspects of daily life in the Kingdom. The basis of the Sharia is the Qur'an, the holy book of Islam [184].

5.3 Population and Language

Saudi Arabia has a population of approximately 32.35 million, where the urban population represents 78.8%, and the average age in Saudi Arabia is 28.6 years. The population is growing rapidly, and it is expected to reach over 40 million by 2030. Saudi Arabia's official language is Arabic, and all correspondence with the government is conducted in that language [184].

5.4 The Political system

The present Saudi Arabia was founded in 1932 by Abdul Aziz ibn Saud after a long movement to join most of the Arabian territory. Abdul Aziz ruled the Kingdom for 22 years. Since then, six kings have ruled Saudi Arabia, but King Fahd's reign was the longest. The present monarch, King Salman, took control of the throne on 23 January 2015, after the death of his brother, the late King Abdullah [185].
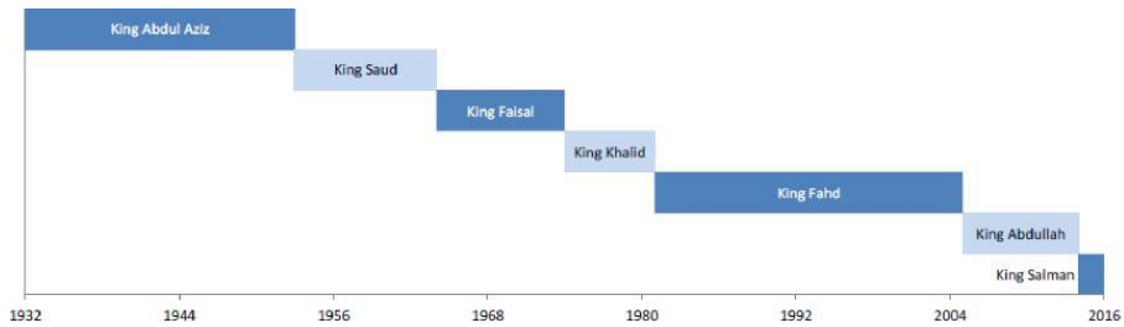
Figure 26: The Royal family of Al-Saud rules Saudi Arabia [185]

Saudi Arabia has a monarchical system of government; her governmental process is based on royal decrees, which are issued by the king on the advice of the Council of Ministers. The central government controls all of the legislative, judicial and executive functions. Local and regional government units normally handle only internal security problems and municipal administration. There are 31 ministries that administer the decisions of the central government.

There are no political parties or unions in Saudi Arabia. However, it should be pointed out that the political system of Saudi Arabia differs from those of most developing countries, particularly in the formative stages, in that it was not developed while the country was under the occupation of any Western colonial power. Saudi Arabia is a founding member of the Congress of the Islamic World, the Arab League, the United Nations, the Gulf Co-operation Council, the International Monetary Fund and many other international organisations. Moreover, Saudi Arabia maintains strong relations with the USA, Western Europe, and Japan.

5.5 Economic

Saudi Arabia's economy is mainly based on oil and natural gas. Saudi Arabia is the largest oil exporter in the entire world. The Saudi oil company (Aramco), the largest oil company in the Kingdom, was fully nationalised in 1988.

At the start of the century, Saudi Arabia's economy was thriving; it quadrupled from just $188 billion (USD) in 2000 to $754 billion (USD) in 2014. The nominal GDP of the economy posted a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 10% over the past 14 years. Nonetheless, the severe regression in oil prices is anticipated to have an impact this year.
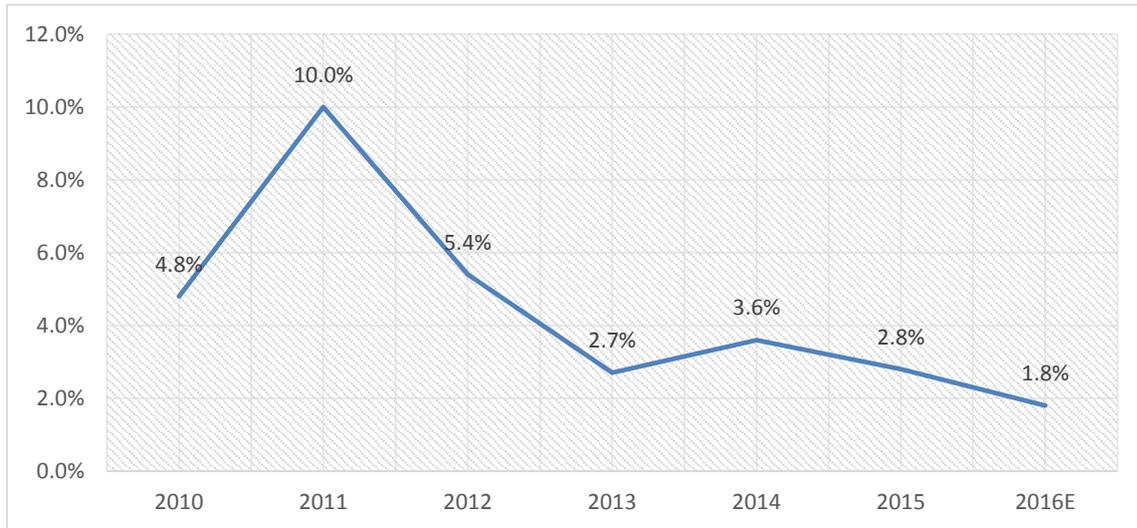
Figure 27: Saudi Arabia real GDP growth (%) [186]

Saudi Arabia could easily get itself placed among the top-10 emerging economies. Based on the estimated nominal GDP for 2015, Saudi Arabia's economy is bigger than those of Taiwan, Poland and Thailand and about 10% bigger than the combined economies of the UAE and Qatar.
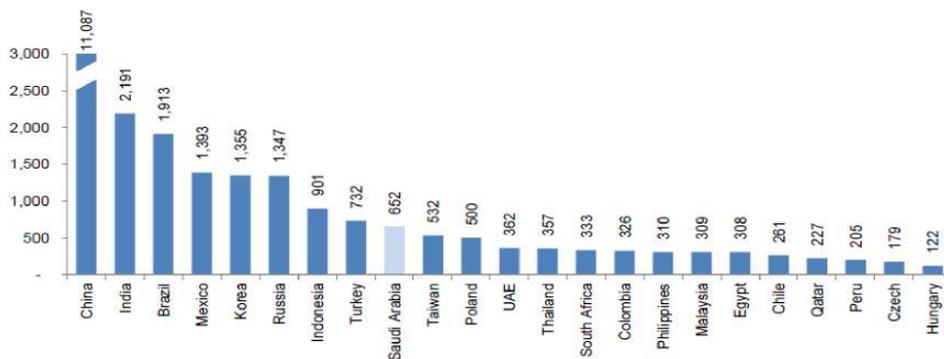
Figure 28: 2015 nominal GDP of emerging market countries (USD BN) [186]

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The global economic slowdown and oil price collapse affected Saudi Arabia, prompting the Saudi Arabian leader to plan for alternative income sources. In Saudi Arabia, government finances are not based on taxes, as there is no personal income tax. This is due to the significant contributions that have historically been derived from duties levied against the abundant revenues generated from the oil and gas industry. The Saudi Arabia Kingdom has announced plans for a non-oil and gas industry-based economy in the future.

The progression of the following industries has the potential to support the country's diversification away from petroleum [187]:

- Banking and financial services: Banking and financial services are experiencing high growth due to favourable demographics, rising per-capita income and an increasing focus on Shariah-compliant products (Islamic banking). The banking sector has observed robust and persistent progress in the last ten years, with aggregate banking assets growing threefold from Saudi Arabia Riyal (SAR) 508 BN [185] to SAR 1,734 BN. One of the main factors determining the quality of banking assets is non-performing loans (NPL), which has been progressively improving. It dropped from 3.4% in 2009 to 1.9% in 2012, which is significantly lower than the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) average of 5.0% [185]. Furthermore, the average risk-weighted exposure of the banking sector in Saudi Arabia (capital adequacy ratio (CAR)) is 18.7% (significantly better than the CAR obligations of 8% according to Basel II and 10.5% according to Basel III) due to traditional norm Saudi Arabian Monetary Authority (SAMA) regulates. It is also the main reason that the Saudi banking sector was not greatly affected by the international monetary crisis of 2009. In 2015, the Islamic Funds Industry stated that Saudi Arabia was the second largest market for Islamic funds. In the third quarter of 2015, overall global Islamic assets under management

(AuM) mounted to 60.2 billion (USD), leading Saudi Arabia to have 18% of the total market share [17].

- Development of capital-intensive sectors: The cement industry in Saudi Arabia has been growing at a very fast pace for the past few years. The continuous increase in cement demand has been promising in Saudi Arabia; thus, the cement industry grew from 16 MT in 2000 to 53 MT in 2012. During 2000–2012, the industry reported a CAGR of 10.6%, significantly higher than the rest of the region, due to the fuel subsidies from Saudi Aramco. Moreover, Saudi Arabia is rich in natural resources (e.g., large deposits of phosphate, bauxite, base metals, precious and rare metals, tin, feldspar, and basalt) [17].

- Tourism sector: the Supreme Commission of Tourism was formed in 2000 to focus on tourism, including the massive potential of religious pilgrimages to the two Holy Mosques, Al-Haramain Makkah, and Madinah. In addition, support for major tourism infrastructure projects (airport expansions, railway projects) has been provided as a part of the diversification strategy. Many other projects that will support the tourism industry of Saudi Arabia (e.g., developing unused islands) are under consideration.

- Development of other non-petroleum sectors: other sectors, such as agriculture (animal production, poultry, and dairy products), horticulture, aviation, real estate, telecommunications, IT, healthcare and education, are key focal points for the government.

- Intensifying private ventures: Supporting foreign direct investment (FDI) by consolidating the services sector and the private sector will also assist the country to reduce its reliance on petroleum resources. The Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority (SAGIA) was also formed in 2000 to support and increase private investment in Saudi Arabia. Mega projects, such as 'knowledge economic cities', are being developed to create 20,000 jobs and 150,000 accommodation units.

Once completed in 2020, it will generate SAR 10 BN. Healthcare, power, and aviation are the other major segments contributing to private ventures. It is also supported by the report from the World Bank indicating that Saudi Arabia was in the twelfth position in the global ranking in terms of Ease of Doing Business in 2012 [17].

- Challenges in diversifying from petroleum [188]:

- One of the biggest challenges for Saudi Arabia is any unforeseen reduction in the petroleum market, as Saudi Arabia relies heavily on it. A substantial portion of the country's revenues comes from the petroleum market. During 2012, it contributed approximately 92% of the government's revenues. Saudi Arabia is redirecting these revenues towards infrastructure development in the country. Therefore, business confidence has some dependency on the petroleum market, and that can hinder economic growth.

- The delay in Saudi Arabia's execution of the announced projects and low business confidence pose high risks to the diversification efforts.

- Saudisation and Nitaqat, aimed to increase the employment of nationals in the private sector, have created an imbalance in the workforce in the private sector, which has generated a gap in the labour market.

- Saudi Arabia has experienced stagnation in foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows, which stood at 12.2 BN (USD) in 2012, and this could hinder the country's diversification efforts. However, Saudi Arabia has attracted 25.8% of FDI inflows from the Middle East, and it continues to be the most appealing destination for foreign investment in the region.

- The political environment of Saudi Arabia is one of the other important factors affecting the outcome of diversification (e.g., regional tension, public confidence, and investor confidence).

5.6 Saudi Vision 2030

The Kingdom is trying to expand the economy for the country and place the country on a prosperous path [189] [190]. The main aim of the Kingdom is to create jobs in the private sector in order to fulfil the fast-growing population of the country. The Kingdom has a vision for the year 2030. The plan is to invest in diverse places at home and abroad to make the country more attractive to private enterprise and agile institutions in order to create a prosperous society [189]. The Saudi government is also eager to create a highly skilled labour force, a better military and pioneering technologies to compete in the fast-changing world [189].

The new vision of the Saudi government also includes the National Transformation Programme (NTP), which aims to achieve efficiency in investments, tax increases, and privatisation and to enforce an effective model of governance to ensure progress [189]. The vision is demonstrated in Figure 29 below.

:
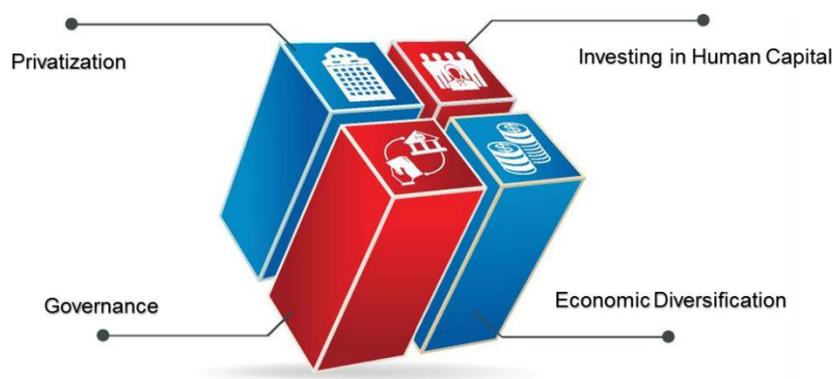
Figure 29: Saudi Arabian Vision [189]

The strategic transformation plans of the Saudi Government are as follows [189]:

- More product/service-based economy and less dependency on oil-based industry

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- Establish strict accountability standards for ministries to eradicate corruption
- Better efficiency
- Increase and improve tourism sector infrastructure (e.g., Hajj, Umrah)
- Better utilisation of resources to support future plans and development projects
- Create opportunities, increase job market for Saudi nationals

The government is trying to create an equilibrium within the Saudi social community as well as remove corruption and introduce better measures for efficiency [189]. The Kingdom also aims to encourage international businesses to invest in the country.

5.7 Saudi Culture

In the Middle East, and especially in Saudi Arabia, culture and religion are the most important aspects of life. Thus, Saudi Arabian society is generally deeply religious, conservative, traditional and family oriented. In Saudi Arabian organisations, culture plays an integral role in shaping the implementations of strategies or programmes, such as one introducing strategic management practices and policies within an organisation.

However, national culture and organisational culture often reflect each other, because the employees of a company are also members of the same nation, and the behaviour commonly demonstrated is the same within and outside of the job [191]. Nevertheless, these two concepts do overlap, since they share the central idea of values in their definitions [192]. Culture at a national level is shared between individuals in society [193], while organisational culture is shared between individuals in the workplace [194].

5.7.1 National Culture

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5.7.2 Organisational Culture

In general, national culture characterises different countries as well as the organisational cultures within them [195]. Kotter and Heskett [196] suggest that organisational culture affects organisational performance, an assertion supported by Siehl and Martin [197], who note the influence it has on the attitudes of individuals and employees who work in the organisation, which in turn affect the overall organisational effectiveness. Indeed, several studies demonstrate the positive correlation between culture and organisational effectiveness [198] [27], and it is seen that certain types of organisational culture bring benefits that positively influence company performance [199].

While various nuanced definitions of organisational culture exist, they share a number of similarities, and they all allude in some way to the framework established by Schein [191], which conceptualises

organisational culture as the existence of 'artefacts, values and beliefs and the behaviours which are commonly shared and accepted by members in the organisation' [200]. Another characterisation of organisational culture is 'the way we do things around here' [201]. Organisational culture is 'the pattern of beliefs, values, and learned ways of coping with experience that have developed during the course of an organisation's history, and which tend to be manifested in its material arrangements and the behaviours of its members' according to Brown [202]. The research on organisational culture can be divided into two main streams: the values and customs of the company and how firmly these are established with the organisation [200]. Sørensen states that both categories of values and customs in conjunction with the degree of strength with which they are complied with by organisational members are important determinants of competitive performance [203].

Maull et al. [204] have identified four themes that combine to produce the organisational culture, as shown in the figure below.

Figure 30: Organisational Culture Themes [204]

The first theme is that culture is a learned entity [201], something that can be conveyed to new organisational members as the correct method to

conduct, consequently driving growth and confirming the survival of the organisation [201]. Secondly, culture is seen as a trust system. Davis explains it as 'the pattern of shared beliefs and values that give members of an institution meaning and provide the rules for behaviour in their organisation' [205]. According to Sun, the beliefs in an organisational culture 'can be divided into guiding beliefs and daily beliefs. Guiding beliefs provide the context in which the practical beliefs of daily life occur' [201]. Thirdly, according to Bate, culture is a strategy [206]. For instance, Bate contends that culture and strategy cannot be divided, proposing that strategy it is a product of culture. This indicates firstly that strategy formulation is a cultural activity and secondly that all cultural deviations reflect strategic change in essence. Sun [201] believes that 'any cultural programme in an organisation is not separate because any change to the cultural programme occurs during formal and informal strategic planning processes'. The fourth opinion identifies culture as mental programming. Hofstede's definition of culture is 'collective programming of the mind, which distinguishes the members of one category of people from another' [207]. Remarkably, the accepted definition of organisational culture and its influence on corporations has been transforming over the years. Prominent researchers Peter and Waterman acknowledged the relationship between organisational culture and company prosperity [32] [208]. While the discussion of robust organisational culture is certainly imperative for company success, it ought to be flexible to attain 'superior performance', as highlighted by Kotter and Heskett [196]. Certainly, the relationship between organisational culture and performance is multidimensional [196]. Truly, the influence of organisational culture is multifaceted, and many areas affect the organisation's competitive performance [196]. There is a relation between specific culture and specific performance, and it is important to create a specific type of culture to yield a specific type of organisational performance [209]. The previous research on how organisational culture influences performance has been highlighted by

several scholars [210] [211] [212] [213] [214]. Considerable dissimilarities can be observed between the corporate structures of America and Japan [215]. The philosophy of Japanese companies is to focus on labour force stability and democracy in process design. Furthermore, the people's respect is the foundation of organisational culture and successful strategy implementation in Japan [216].

5.7.3   Influence of National Culture on Organisational Culture

According to Hofstede et al. [207], culture influences the way in which people behave, and therefore, it is important to understand the culture of an organisation. Podrug [217] suggests that a person's decision-making process is dependent on his/her cultural background, as this prescribes 'the right way'; hence, national culture can be seen at work in promoting certain behaviours in the workplace and thus fostering a certain organisational culture [217]. Francesco and Gold [218] observe that success in today's prevailing economy is heavily reliant upon understanding cultural values, their influence on organisations and the behaviours that occur within them. In Podrug's [217] study, a positive correlation was discovered between national culture and the decision-making styles of leaders in organisations. Moreover, in another study by Shim and Steers [219], it was found that generally, Hyundai competes by accepting environmental doubt and risk as a part of normal daily operations. This flexible approach means that Hyundai can change directions faster than its larger competitors as new opportunities and technologies emerge. For Hyundai, flexibility is a key organisational value. Toyota, on the other hand, competes both managerially and strategically by emphasising work systems and planning to relieve the impact of any disturbance in the external environment. For Toyota, stability is a key organisational value. The evidence from this study by Shim and Steers [219] suggests that the important role played by national culture is significant in differentiating between the two companies and affects the strategic direction.

According to Newman and Nollen [220], the idea of universal human resource practices has been challenged, as policies that work well in one country do not necessarily have the same effect in another. Furthermore, Schneider and De Meyer [221] argue that national culture influences strategic decision-making and the leadership styles adopted. Countries with a high power distance score, according to Hofstede's cultural dimensions, are more likely to accept feedback without disagreement or contesting the ideas from superiors than are those with a lower power distance score [10] [50]. Power distance also has an impact on two-way communication flows within the organisation, as the in-built inequalities in society deter bottom-up communication [222]. It has also been discovered that collectivist cultures favour group-based training as opposed to one-on-one training [222]. Clearly, for companies with overseas subsidiaries to be successful, their policies need to harmonise with the local context [222]. Rashid [223] attempts to understand the local culture by identifying four elements of culture that affect organisations: national culture, organisational culture, occupational culture and family culture.

However, international culture, the fifth element, should be considered because of its effect on historical, political, social, artistic, religious, economic and other intercultural relationships between nations.

Figure 31: The Culture Flower

The culture flower in Figure 31 displays the different effect from person to person varying proportions if they there in same area and nation. These days, the social network revolution has changed the effect of each petal incredibly.

5.7.4 Empirical research finding on Saudi Arabian Culture

Each population group has its own culture and way of life that is defined by the region, country or city in which it lives. In the case of Saudi Arabian culture, it is unique, as it springs from the religion of Islam and is influenced by historical events and traditions that have endured over centuries, producing a culture that is in sharp contrast to many other cultures around the world. Naturally, the national culture has an impact on the business practices Saudi Arabian organisations adopt [56].

Consequently, it is imperative to be aware of cultural differences. In this regard, the Arabic language represents a difference and a clear barrier to communication if non-Arabic speakers are part of the Saudi organisation.

However, there other differences, such as the wealth possessed by many Saudis, the predisposition for hierarchical organisations, favouritism and the cultural need to allow people to retain their dignity. All these cultural traits hinder the successful implementation of change within organisations, and they are depicted in Figure **32**. The challenges presented by these barriers are subsequently discussed.

Figure 32: Cultural Barriers in Saudi Arabian Organisations

5.7.4.1 Language Barriers

A language barrier is a hindrance to the communication process faced by individuals who do not speak a common language or speak it in a way that prevents them from properly understanding what is being communicated [224]. Clearly, the presence of a language barrier can lead to a communication gap between the sender and the receiver. This is perhaps more often found in the Arabic language since there are many issues associated with the language that do not arise in other languages such as English, in which most technology suppliers are fluent. Firstly, a difference in the spoken language, such as between Arabic and English, can be a cause of misinformation and misunderstanding. Not understanding what the other person is trying to say, may result in the build-up of frustration and lead to tension between the parties. Secondly, the inaccurate translation of words from one language to another may also result in misinformation and misunderstanding between the parties.

This is particularly problematic, since Western companies often advise in strategic planning in Saudi Arabia, and the plans are developed in English [225]. For instance, user manuals or instructions required for operating and executing the plans are provided in Arabic, so there is a continuing risk of inaccurate translation. Such tension can be further aggravated by the misinterpretation of technical language present in legal documents and instruction manuals. Moreover, an inaccurate translation effort can convey a completely different idea or emotion, and in the business setting, this can be very detrimental to relationships between stakeholders. Recently, more Saudi students have been studying abroad, which may have a significant impact on the language barrier; however, the actual impact of it should be measured over time [226].

5.7.4.2 Harmful Effect of Wealth

The backbone of the Saudi Arabian economy is the Kingdom's global export of oil, and it is due to the revenue streams from this that the Kingdom has been able to achieve the status of a developed country. Saudi Arabia's economic development can be attributed to the investment of oil revenues as a means of modernising the country. However, the rapid expansion has still not solved the problem of the country's lack of individuals who are experts in their field [227]. This absence of knowledgeable people means that problems are often not even recognised, let alone brought forward for solutions.

It is true that the development of the Saudi Arabian economy is a source of pride for those people who want to be a part of the economic boom by profiting from the business it generates. However, most Saudis want only to occupy a senior position in an organisation. This desire reflects the need for the status that comes with a position of authority; usually, Saudi citizens consider manual jobs embarrassing and damaging to their personal image [228]. Indeed, it is frequently seen that families would rather keep

their adult children at home rather than have them accept manual jobs and thereby bring shame on the family name.

This mind-set focused on status takes precedence, resulting in a dearth of experienced individuals in the country, as people are reluctant to progress from the lower to the higher ranks and thus do not acquire the proper experience. Unfortunately, the partisanship that prevails in most Saudi organisations [227] means that appointments to the higher ranks are made based on grace and favour and not on merit, and the outcome is the placing of unqualified people in managerial positions. Such individuals are ineffective, are not receptive to criticism and do not accept their mistakes. It is quite evident that this sort of behaviour is damaging to organisations.

5.7.4.3 Detrimental Hierarchical Structure

The organisational culture in Saudi Arabia is strict in terms of hierarchical structure, as seen in both local and multinational companies. Thus, employees are not motivated to take action on their own and instead rely on their managers to direct them on work-related matters. Decision-making falls within the domain of a manager's job, and managers are required to pass on the work to their subordinates in the way they see fit, the Western equivalent of micromanagement. It is safe to say that in a typical Saudi Arabian organisation, managers assume the role of leaders, while their subordinates are their followers [229].

Most employees who occupy managerial positions spend a significant amount of time outside their designated offices and hence assign work to their team members via the telephone or by email, requesting them to ask for any clarification they might need in order to complete the task effectively. However, managers in Saudi companies adopt an authoritarian stance, and employees working under them are required to show the utmost respect by not questioning their authority.

This results in the reluctance of subordinates to ask for clarification; indeed, the power differential comes into play, and often, work is not completed appropriately because of the lack of effective communication caused by these cultural predispositions. This 'command and control' approach to leadership also stifles any creative thinking on the part of employees, because when they are constantly told what to do rather than being allowed to suggest solutions to problems, their mental abilities stagnate, which also lowers their confidence. Ultimately, the hierarchical and extremely authoritarian structure within organisations simply adds to the challenges faced by managers who are keen to instil a productive work culture but do not have the right conditions to do so.

When an organisation fails to execute its strategy, the first thing managers often think to do is restructure before understanding the problem and clarifying the root cause of the failure to take the corrective action and maintain the progress of strategy implementation. It is also relevant to note that in addition to the hierarchy evident as a result of position in the organisational structure.

5.7.4.4 Sexism

Sexism is discrimination against people based on their sex or preferring a certain gender to the other without justification, and it has a very harmful impact on self-worth, competence, and actual performance.

In Saudi culture, males exert unquestionable control over females and expect women to carry out instructions mindlessly. Saudi men are thus unwilling to work under female managers, as this would be perceived as an embarrassment. For hardworking and talented women, this attitude in the workplace is demotivating and demoralising. It discourages women from making a full and valuable contribution to economic growth and pushes them to work in all-female environments. Not surprisingly, many

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organisations are unable to take advantage of the knowledge and expertise of intelligent females who wish to work.

5.7.4.5 Favouritism

Favouritism is an ingrained cultural disposition in Saudi Arabia, referred to in Arabic as *wasitah* (وَاسِطة). This refers to an inherent social commitment that individuals have to others, whether friends, family members or members of the same tribe, and via this commitment, people are expected to advance the progress of those to whom they are committed. This can only operate through the open expression of favouritism and nepotism, the outcome being that in organisations, those in authority are able (and expected) to place friends and family (to whom they are socially obligated) in positions that might rightly be better occupied by others. This obvious positive bias exhibited by people in authoritative positions has two main consequences. One is that by granting such favours, the trust and understanding among the individuals in any particular social network are enhanced, while the business values are marginalised [230]. Atiyyah [231] makes the point that blood relations and friendships dominate business values and norms in most Saudi Arabian organisations. Moreover, due to the numerous advantages attached to having such relationships and connections, many Saudis focus on fostering and growing their networks to serve their needs as well as those of their families [65]. Moreover, Saudi business owners prefer to hire people from their own families and social circles, whom they trust. In fact, managers are motivated and known to hire and promote people they know [232]. Furthermore, according to Atiyyah [231], the importance placed on family relations and friendships in Saudi businesses also results in managers favouring members of their teams who maintain good relationships with them. Moreover, it is found that subordinates take the place of their managers if they maintain good relationships with the higher management.

Such behaviour has positive as well as negative effects on organisational culture [233], since it can lead to the development of strong relationships and understanding among the employees working at all hierarchal levels. However, on the negative side, it can result in unproductive employees [234] in two ways. Firstly, people who are appointed and promoted knowingly based on favouritism do not always feel they need to perform well. Secondly, it can set a bad example for employees, shifting the focus away from productivity and performance as a means of being rewarded [235]. Additionally, it could change the mind-set of employees who might begin to believe that they need to develop a better relationship with their manager rather than work hard to earn a promotion. Indeed, favouritism can be demotivating to employees, resulting in a decline in organisational performance and quite possibly in the unravelling of personal grudges among them [233]. Lastly, as mentioned earlier, favouritism most certainly results in the hiring of employees who do not possess the necessary education and skills to perform the job they are appointed to, and this can lead to failure in all aspects of the job.

5.7.4.6 Arrogance at Workplace

It is a characteristic of Saudi culture to worry about the possibility of losing the respect of others. Incidents that boil over into disputes or conflicts may result in the concerned parties being judged on moral grounds because of the behaviours they display. Thus, in Saudi Arabian culture, individuals focus on saving face by remaining calm in such situations. They try to resolve situations by exercising patience and self-control and concentrate on reaching compromises [236].

This characteristic can filter through to business organisations, where protecting one's image is of immense importance. Saving face is a very important business value, even more so than meeting deadlines and maintaining operational productivity. Managers also must be appreciative of the work performed by their subordinates and to provide them with

recognition for their efforts. It is considered disrespectful if managers do not appreciate or recognise the efforts made by their team members.

It has several negative effects, in that individuals are not open to criticism and they do not accept their mistakes. Consequently, if there is no acceptance of the mistake, the mistake cannot be corrected. If an individual cannot accept their mistakes, then it is difficult for him/her to improve upon them. This may prevent that individual from improving in the implementation of a future programme.

5.7.4.7 Conclusion

Several challenges mentioned in this section highlight the difficulties encountered during strategy implementation. All the issues above are related to the problems in Saudi culture that affect organisational culture and individual behaviour.

The Saudi culture has several challenges: *language barriers*, *the harmful effect of wealth*, *the detrimental hierarchical structure*, *sexism*, *favouritism* and *arrogance in the workplace*. These challenges have a harmful impact on strategy execution, and they must be mitigated to ensure successful strategy implementation. Moreover, the challenges above are specific to the national culture and are not based on the religion of Islam. However, the national culture influences the organisational culture, which has a huge impact on strategy implementation.

5.8 Summary

This chapter offered a brief background on Saudi Arabia and its developments and environment, as it forms the context of the study. Compared to other countries, Saudi Arabia has a short history. However, after oil was discovered, its economy developed quickly, making Saudi Arabia a powerful country in the Middle East. This chapter shed light on Saudi Arabia in terms of its government system, business and economic policies, economic development and development planning programme.

This chapter also reviewed several aspects of the Saudi national culture that have implications for the culture of organisations operating in Saudi Arabia. It has been identified that certain cultural traits can be damaging to organisational effectiveness, as they can prevent the implementation of change in any form and they can equip an organisation with personnel who are neither qualified nor motivated to perform their duties.

In the specific context of Saudi Arabia, which can be seen as representative of the Middle Eastern countries, it has been shown that religion and cultural values affect organisations and their management.

The traditional heritage and social customs that make up the national culture have a more significant impact on other cultures, such as international, organisational, occupational and family culture, than the Islamic religion. Nevertheless, the Islamic religion does not negatively affect the cultures. It is clear that not all the obstacles found in Saudi Arabian cultures are based on religion. Favouritism is part of the national culture, but it is against the religion to provide service to one who is undeserving because honesty is the most fundamental part of the religion. Furthermore, cultures evolve for many reasons; generally, when different cultures meet in one place, they affect one another. Technologies also affect culture. The strategies of organisations are significantly affected by culture. Culture and religion are key factors that major organisations should consider in the strategy planning and implementation stages.

Generally, the most damaging aspects of strategies are those that are unforeseen, but if organisations consider the cultural effects in their implementation, it can minimise the damage. The next chapter presents the research journey of data collection, analysis, and verification.

Chapter 6

Research Journey of Data Collection and Verification

6.1 Introduction

The data collection took place from March 2015 until the end of September 2016 and then followed by techniques to validate the reliability of data. The data gathering process had four stages. These are shown in Figure 33 and followed by summaries for each stage:
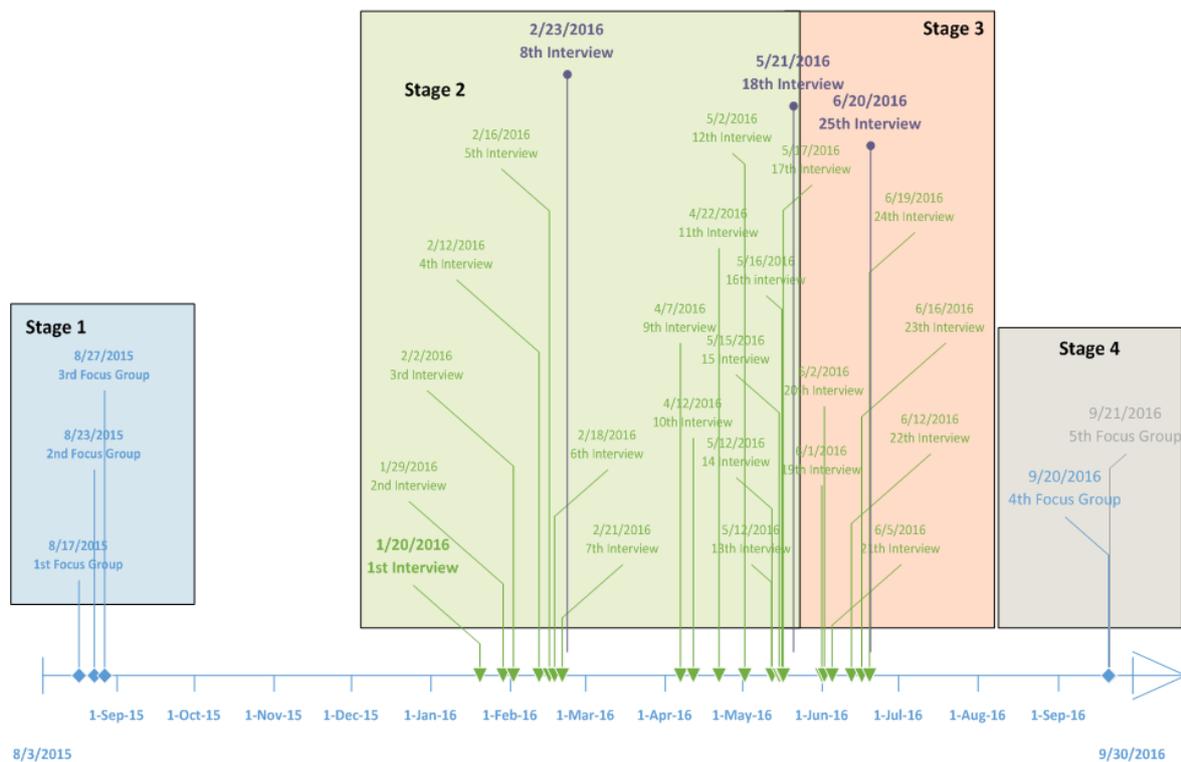
Figure 33: Data Gathering TimeLine

Stage 1: In this stage, there were three focus groups, each of which contained five individuals. The data were collected from Saudi non-oil and

99

gas organisations to validate the research problem and the scale of the problem.

Stage 2: Individual interviews were conducted with 25 participants based on theoretical sampling, which means that the sampling was based on theoretically relevant constructs. The goal of this stage was to investigate the factors influencing strategy implementation in Saudi non-oil and gas organisations. It started with eight interviews as a pilot study in the early stage of the research to frame questions, collect background information on strategy implementation and tailor efficient research instruments. This was then followed by ten intensive interviews to obtain an understanding of the current situation and capture all the factors affecting strategy execution in Saudi non-oil and gas organisations. At the end of the 18th interview, we reached the Point of Saturation.

Stage 3: The goal of this stage was to be sure that data saturation had been reached and that no more factors could be discovered and no new information could be attained.

Stage 4: In this stage, there were two focus groups, each of which contained five individuals. Data collection was done in the UK with strategy implementation experts. The objective of first group is to group the codes into the correct factor (open categories) in order to identify the main categories, then followed by the second group to group the factors into the correct themes in order to identify and rectification process easy, which is capable of completely explaining a phenomenon.

6.2 Research Location and organisations selection

In the research process, it is imperative to choose a reliable study location, appropriate methods for gaining access to good data and the right people and organisations [120]. Generally, successful organisations recognise the

importance of strategic implementation to achieving expected results and performance. The organisations that are in the position to plan and execute effective strategies have clear advantages in the commercial world [237]. Furthermore, most organisations are concerned with strategic execution when they are endeavouring to achieve results, regardless of how successful they might be. In Saudi Arabia, there is a lack of strategic implementation research. However, Saudi Arabian businesses strive to achieve better results in their business and planning strategies [222].

For this reason and because non-oil and gas organisations represent businesses in a highly competitive environment and thus display rapid changes in the practice of strategic implementation activities, five Saudi non-oil and gas organisations were selected for this study. However, the sample represents the five most prominent Saudi non-oil and gas organisations (Saudi Central Department of Statistics & Information) from different sectors.

Table 4: The organisations selecting

No.	Sector	Firm's size	Firm's type
1	Financial	Large	Saudi
2	Information and Communication Technology	Large	Saudi
3	Energy	Large	Saudi
4	Transportation	Large	Saudi
5	Healthcare	Large	Saudi

Furthermore, the individual and focus group interviews were collected from multiple sources across each organisation selected from the non-oil and gas industry and across the hierarchy of organisations until the point of saturation was reached. The selection of each member of the group was

based on the extent to which they were involved in strategy development and implementation in their respective organisations. Therefore, senior management were often chosen, as they were most likely to have formulated the strategy management (formulation and implementation) and had more in-depth knowledge of the factors leading to the success or failure of implementations.

6.3 Focus group

Focus groups are often used as a preliminary method in order to validate specific topics or identify emerging themes for creating hypotheses to be explored further with other methods. The focus group consisted of management science experts who were requested to draw on their personal experience to discuss a specific topic selected by the researcher (here, strategy implementation).

6.3.1 Focus group sample size

The optimal group size has been discussed in the literature, and different researchers propose different sizes. Even though a large group (>15) provides better and richer data, it can be challenging to manage it and to make sure all the participants contribute [238]. Furthermore, when the group size is less than three, it is easier to achieve more diverse and dynamic interaction among participants [144], as the group size is not too large to manage and not too small to restrict the dynamic interaction among participants [239]. The current study participants included five senior managers with combined experience of over 75 years for each group.

6.3.2 Focus Group Participation

Each member of the group was selected based on the relevance of their involvement with strategy implementation. Therefore, executives and senior managers were chosen, as generally, the executives are the ones that formulate the strategies and the senior managers have more in-depth

involvement in the projects affecting the success/failure of the implementation of the strategies.

Table 5: Participation information

Group	Sector	No.	Location	Date
A	ICT	5	Riyadh	17-Aug-15
B	Transportation	5	Jeddah	23-Aug-15
C	Energy	5	Jeddah	27-Aug-15
D	EU Strategy Execution	5	Newcastle	20-Sep-16
E	Association Meeting	5	Newcastle	21-Sep-16

6.3.3 Group Facilitation

Questions were designed to elicit information from the groups on their reaction to strategy implementation and the factors affecting implementation. Participant discussion meetings were scheduled for two hours for each focus group.

Focus group meetings started with the moderator providing a short orientation as to how the discussion would be conducted and then a simplified presentation about strategy implementation. Participants were seated at a round table facing each other with name placards for identification purposes. The focus group sessions were recorded. Then, the participants introduced themselves and provided a brief description of their background. The participants were given enough time to present their knowledge, views, and application of strategy implementation.

6.3.4 Focus Group Questions

Group	Questions
A, B & C	What are the factors (positive and negative) that influence the implementation of the strategic plan?
D & E	What are the connections among the codes?

6.3.5 Focus Group A, B, and C

Interestingly, all the participants, without exception, stated that their organisations suffered from a failure in implementing their strategic plans. Moreover, they stated that many employees were unaware of the company's strategy and the importance of the implementation of the strategy. In addition, they stated that the senior management in the company was responsible for drawing up plans but unaware of the pressures on the staff, the lack of resources allocated to them and their inability to carry out their current business roles. There was, therefore, no indication that plans could be developed based on their current activities. As well as the management's non-compliance with the approved plan, they were subject to external influences from politicians or governing bodies that led them to direct the implementation of actions not in the approved plan. Besides that, the majority of participants preparing the strategic plans were overseas consultants, but they did not know about the culture and community services appropriate to them. Moreover, they claimed that after the Board of Directors (BoD) approved the strategic plan, it was not always guaranteed that there were sufficient resources necessary for the implementation of the plan. Furthermore, they stated that given that the CEO and his staff change every four years, the new team comes up with a new strategy despite the fact that the current strategic plan has not been completed, and any implementation strategies come to a full stop. It was noted that all the groups mentioned the same problems regarding this and mentioned all the factors found in the literature review.

The first finding: the views of separations between strategy planning and implementation were clearly defined through the focus group discussion, as shown in Figure 34.

Figure 34: Strategy Implementation Management Cycle

The second finding: two extra factors were mentioned during this discussion with the groups: 'ad hoc work' and 'stakeholder influence'. These two factors can also affect the implementation of the strategy. Group A mentioned the ad hoc work factor, and Group B mentioned the stakeholder influence factor.

6.3.6 Focus Group D and E

The main objective of this stage was to group the factors into themes. This was done in the UK with a strategy implementation expert in order to group the factors (open categories) into the correct main categories to facilitate the rectification process, which is capable of completely explaining a phenomenon.

Figure 35: Group the factors into the correct main category

6.4 Interviewing

The interview is considered the most important source of case study information (Yin, 2009). In this study, the researcher made some notes during the interviews and considered the participants' moods and expressions. Some interviews were rescheduled, as the interviewees were busy or not in the right frame of mind to be interviewed.

6.4.1 Development of main field study guide

Suddaby [156] stated that interviewing key informants to collect data within qualitative research facilitates detailed explorations. However, the chosen method of data collection for this research was the semi-structured

interview rather than the structured or unstructured interview. The semi-structured interview was chosen due to its a) flexibility during the interview process and b) ability to allow the emergence of contextual issues without the imposition of many preconceived ideas on respondents [240]. The semi-structured interview guidelines included the following themes:

1. Information about the interview, such as date, location, starting and finishing times

2. Demographics, including the participant's name, title, gender, age, marital status, education, position, type of organisation, industry, name of organisation, years of experience generally and in last specific position, contacts, email and whether or not recording was permitted

3. General information about the nature of the work and the way in which the business is run

4. Participants' understanding of different terms in the field, such as strategy, formulation, implementation, success, and failure

5. Questions related to the context, including external and internal and organisational and individual levels

6. Questions related to the strategy content, giving information about the strategic initiative described

7. Questions related to the process and roles taken during the process (what went well, what did not and why?)

8. Questions related to the outcome, including the extent to which the goal was achieved, whether it was considered a success and what influenced the outcome precisely from the participant's view

9. The last theme allowed the participant to give his/her own interpretation of what factors influence successful implementation in his/her case

During the interviews, the researcher was committed to keeping the focus of the research on the topic, despite the fact that many interesting topics

arose. This was mainly to maintain reliability and validity, as it has been argued that data quality depends significantly on the researcher's capability stay focused on the research interest [241]. At the end of each interview, the researcher asked the participants whether they would like to add anything, if they had any documents that could support the study, if they could be approached for further queries if any and if they would like a copy of the findings at the end of the study. Interestingly, all participants asked to be provided with a copy of the findings, which again reflected their enthusiasm towards the topic and their belief in its importance.

6.4.2 Interviews Data gathering process

Interviews were conducted using an interview guide with open-ended questions [136], to establish details of implementation processes in the non-oil and gas industry context. In addition, according to Sackmann [242], 'An issue focus enables compression because it introduces a specific context that forces respondents to draw on the same stock of knowledge'.

Furthermore, it is essential to notice that the potential stories of the respondent should reflect the same cultural aspects within the organisation [242]. The interviews aimed to explore the reasons for implementation successes or failures. The interviewees were given a choice to talk either in English or Arabic (Saudi Arabia's national language) based on their comfort level.

The probing questions using retrospective information on the implementation process asked the respondents to talk about how their organisation implemented their strategies. Retrospective data has good potential for grounding theories, and it was used to find details on the implementation processes [243]. However, interviews were designed to describe strategy implementation processes in the Saudi non-oil and gas industry and interviewees' thoughts on them.

The researcher tried to build rapport at the beginning of the interviews to ensure that the respondents were at ease with the interview setting and focus [142]. A brief overview of the research drive was offered. The interviewees were informed of the importance of candid and open discussions in order to enable the improvement of strategy implementation processes.

The issues focus method is used to utilise the views of experts (senior management) in the strategy implementation field and the snowballing[1] method is used to help establish personal trust and open dialogue during data collection. In addition, it is useful for in-depth investigations of sensitive issues like implementation failures in the Saudi non-oil and gas industry. Interviews were audio recorded after receiving explicit respondent consent at the beginning of interviews [154]. The respondents were assured of anonymity for themselves and their organisations to ensure valid responses and data confidentiality [142].

6.4.3 Interview sample size

Samples of qualitative studies are much smaller than those in quantitative studies. However, Creswell [120] suggests sample sizes for grounded theory interviews be between 20 and 30, as does Morse [244]. Another very important factor, saturation, affects the qualitative sample size. That is, after saturation, all relevant data have been collected, and nothing new can be added; otherwise, the data begin to repeat themselves [142]. Due to the nature of this research and in order to address the research objectives and questions, the researcher tried to hear as many perspectives as possible and was prepared to hear different and sometimes quite contrary opinions during the data collection.

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[1] Snowballing is a method that is used to improve the likelihood that subjects in a survey or questionnaire will be open and honest in their discussions with the researcher. This is achieved by ensuring that high levels of trust are established between the researcher and the subject at the beginning of the interaction; for example, informal and casual discussions around background and family. It is understood, though, that this approach may not be suitable for every culture and for every situation [304].

6.4.4 Interview questions

The semi-structured interview is a very useful tool to collect good information, but it requires a specific questioning technique that focuses on the quality of questions. Ensuring not only the right questions but also the right timing is also paramount. Hence, the researcher was very conscious of asking the research questions efficiently and effectively. The question segment started with 'Opening questions' followed by 'Introductory questions'. Then, it proceeded to 'Transition questions', to 'Key questions' and 'Concluding questions'. Nevertheless, the researcher had built in enough flexibility to assess the research focus during the interview so questions could be omitted or interjected as per the scope of the research.

6.4.5 Interviewees

The interviewees were completely informed of the purpose of this academic research. All interviewees were also made aware that there were no correct or incorrect answers and that the main purpose of the research was to obtain their true opinions. The researcher wanted to learn from the participants in order to gain an understanding of the phenomenon. It was further emphasised that the study was for academic purposes only, with a complete guarantee of anonymity and confidentiality for the interviewees.

Distinctive data-collection sources were used for primary and secondary data collection throughout this research, which are shown in Appendix (3).

Eight interviews were conducted in Jeddah with senior management in different sectors as shown below.

No.	Date		Sector	Position	City
1	01/20/16	T1	ICT	Senior management / Enterprise Business	Jeddah
2	01/29/16	E1	Energy	Senior management / Power Plant	Jeddah
3	02/02/16	A1	Transportation	Senior management /Operation Department	Jeddah
4	02/12/16	B1	Financial	Senior management / Key account management	Jeddah
5	02/16/16	H1	Healthcare	Senior management / Healthcare	Jeddah
6	02/18/16	H2	Healthcare	Senior management / Medical services	Jeddah
7	02/21/16	A2	Transportation	Senior management / Sales	Jeddah
8	02/23/16	B2	Financial	Senior management / Relationship banker	Jeddah

Eleven interviews were conducted in Riyadh with senior management in different sectors as shown below.

No.	Date		Sector	Position	City
9	04/07/16	T2	ICT	Senior management / Personal Business	Riyadh
10	04/12/16	E2	Energy	Senior management / Power Transmission Network	Riyadh
11	04/22/16	A3	Transportation	Senior management / Ground services	Riyadh
12	05/02/16	E3	Energy	Senior management / customers services	Riyadh
13	05/12/16	T3	ICT	Senior management / Field Operations	Riyadh
14	05/12/16	T4	ICT	Senior management / Network	Riyadh
15	05/15/16	E4	Energy	Senior management / HR	Riyadh
16	05/16/16	A4	Transportation	Senior management / IT	Riyadh
17	05/17/16	B3	Financial	Senior management / Operation	Riyadh
18	05/21/16	B4	Financial	Senior management / Customers services	Riyadh
19	06/01/16	T5	ICT	Senior management / Finance	Riyadh

Finally, six interviews were conducted in Jeddah with senior management in different sectors as shown below.

No.	Date		Sector	Position	City
20	06/02/16	H3	Healthcare	Senior management / Medical services	Jeddah
21	06/05/16	H4	Healthcare	Senior management / Quality	Jeddah
22	06/12/16	H5	Healthcare	Senior management / Medical Director	Jeddah
23	06/16/16	A5	Transportation	Senior management / Maintenance	Jeddah
24	06/19/16	E5	Energy	Senior management / IT	Jeddah
25	06/20/16	B5	Financial	Senior management / Retail banking branches	Jeddah

The venues for interviews were the parent organisations of the interviewees. The time lasted between 45 and 90 minutes, and they were recorded in electronic and manual forms with the consent of the interviewees. As mentioned, the interviewees were given full assurances of

discretion and the purely academic purpose of the research. Furthermore, all interviewees consented to the publication of the results of this research, and they were supplied with copies of the findings.

6.4.6 Interview saturation

The basic consensus in research is that more data points offer better resolution, hence, 'the more data points, the better'. Saturation of data in a homogeneous group transpires at around 12 participants [245]. Here, the word 'homogeneous' implies a specific position or level in the organisation (e.g., top- and mid-level executives, sales staff, customer service representatives, etc.). The dissipation of major new concepts within interviews means that the data is at saturation; this point occurred at the 18th interview. For validation purposes, the researcher intended to conduct 25 interviews to be sure that additional participants would not provide any additional insights.
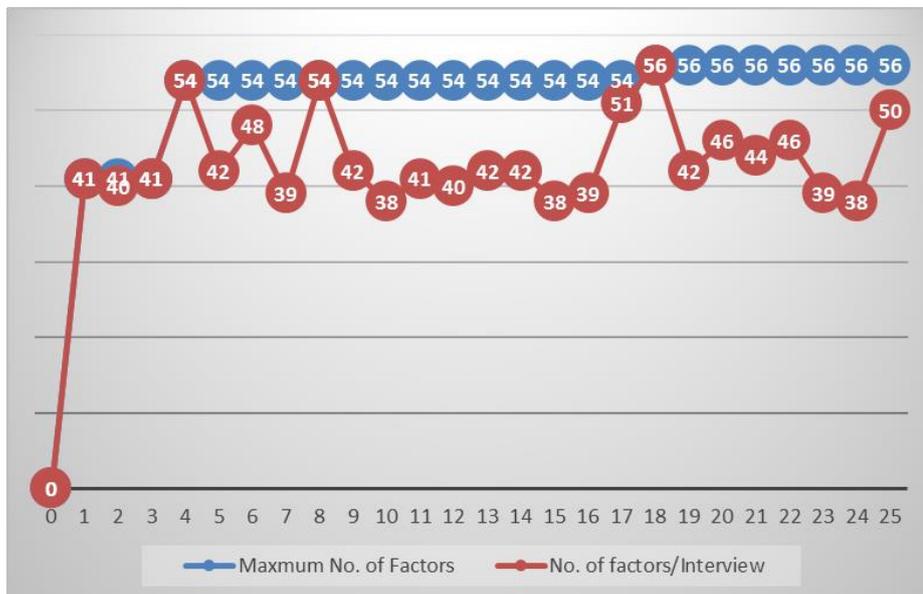
Figure 36: Interview saturation

6.5 Direct observation

Direct observation has become a progressively popular tool for social science-related research. It is difficult to capture all the information that

needs to be acknowledged via interviews, as interviewees sometimes mention information that is not directly related to the subject, such as questions the interviewees find sensitive or challenging. Nevertheless, this was not seen as a threat but an opportunity for participants to 'tell it like it is'.

For example, some interviewees may find the questions quite sensitive or challenging. In this case, according to Glaser [133], 'Observational data is not enough. The researcher should provide interviews along with the observations, so the analyst can get at the meaning of what is observed. Observations do not in and of themselves have the meaning or the perspective in them of the participants' [133]. Nonetheless, observation is a distinctive way of comprehending the genuine outcome of the applied scenario. In reality, the researcher feels that the interview technique assisted in substantiation by serving as a second source of validation in this research. Moreover, it produced advanced explanations for some responses and led to more accurate and unbiased research results. Field notes were updated during the observation according to the challenges reflected.

6.6 Verification of Reliability of Strategy Execution Factors

Many authors have deliberated the theory of techniques of Inter-Rater Reliability (IRR). According to the theory, two or more independent judges categorise as a unit to find the degree, significance and sample stability of their agreement [246]. It is commonly used in social, behavioural and medical sciences to appraise the extent of agreement from two or more raters. Gwet [247] devised a consistency experiment where two raters (A and B) had to categorise N themes into one of two conceivable answer classes (e.g. (1 or 2), (True or False)).

Likewise, Huddleston [248] and Gwet [249] provided thorough formulations and cases for inter-rater consistency for the two commonly used methods, Cohen's Kappa (K) and percentage of agreement (%), described below.

6.6.1 Cohen's Kappa Method

The statistic is employed to evaluate inter-rater consistency when coding qualitative variables. Kappa is considered a superior method to the percentage of agreement to evaluate this type of reliability.

Deciphering Kappa: Kappa has a range from 0 to 1.00 with higher values indicating better consistency. Typically, a Kappa > 0.7 is deemed satisfactory.

		R1		
		1	**0**	Total
R2	**1**	A	B	G1 = A+B
	0	C	D	G2 = C+D
	Total	F1=A+C	F2= B+D	N = F1+F2 = G1+G2

$$Observed\ Agreement\ (OA) = \left[\frac{(A+D)}{N}\right]$$

Equation 1: Observed Agreement

Based on this, the percentage of agreement would be 'OA'. However, this value is an amplified index of agreement, since it does not consider coincidental agreements.

$$Agreement\ of\ Chance\ (AC) = \left(\frac{F1}{N}\right) \times \left(\frac{G1}{N}\right) + \left(\frac{F2}{N}\right) \times \left(\frac{G2}{N}\right)$$

Equation 2: Agreement of Chance

$$Kappa\ (K) = \frac{(OA - AC)}{(1 - AC)}$$

Equation 3: Cohen's Kappa

The several degrees of agreement suggested by the Kappa Value K are given in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Degree of agreement between raters [248] [223]

K Value ranges	Degree of Agreement between raters
0.80 – 1.00	Very good
0.61 - 0.80	Good
0.41 - 0.60	Moderate
0.21 - 0.40	Fair
≤ 0.200	Poor

7.3.2 Percentage of Agreement Method

$$Percentage\ of\ Agreement = \left[\frac{(A + D)}{N}\right] \times 100(\%)$$

Equation 4: Percentage of Agreement

The percentages of agreement suggested by the levels of agreement between raters are given in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Level of agreement between raters [250] [248] [223]

Percentage ranges	Level of Agreement between raters
91 – 100	Very high
81 - 90	High
71 - 80	Moderate
61 - 70	Fair
51 – 60	Slight
≤ 50	Poor

6.6.2 Inter-Rater Reliability Verification

The second impartial, experienced rater, examined the re-coded sample reports to evaluate the above-acquired results. The identical tool was employed for the second rating activities, and then together 'Cohen's Kappa' and 'percentage of agreement' approaches of inter-rater consistency assessment were applied. Details are specified in Table 8. The inter-rater consistency assessment Kappa value fluctuated between 0.71 and 1.00 with an average value of 0.73, correspondingly, percentages of agreement among the raters ranged between 93% and 100.0% with an average of 96%. Both the methods suggest extensive to very high rates [247] [251] [252] of coding and analysis consistency.

Table 8: Inter-rater reliability of the strategy execution factors

No	Interview	Factors Numbers		Disagreement	Inter-rater Reliability	
		Rater 1	Rater 2		Kappa Value	Agreement %
1	Interview No. 7	39	39	0	1.00	100%
2	Interview No. 8	54	50	4	0.74	93%
3	Interview No. 17	51	48	3	0.74	94%
4	Interview No. 18	56	56	0	N/A	100%
5	Interview No. 25	50	46	4	0.71	92%

However, the disagreements between Rater 1 and Rater 2 were not about the factors themselves but about the way they were stated. For example, for the factor 'Discuss the strategy with managers and employees to assess whether it is sound, realistic and feasible' and 'Listen to consultants instead of taking the opinions of their staff', both raters agreed on the first factor, but Rater 2 disagreed on the second factor because, in his opinion, it repeated the first factor. Moreover, for the factor 'Ensure that selected KPIs drive you towards your strategic objectives' and the factor 'Turn missions, visions and values into measurable criteria/goals', they both agreed on the first one, but Rater 2 disagreed on the second one for the same reason. For

this, it was clarified that the disputes were not significant but related to repetition.

6.7 Summary

The overall aim and objectives of the research were reached by using the qualitative approach, as it is distinguished by its capability to provide an advanced understanding of the phenomenon being investigated. For qualitative research, the research time frame should be long enough to identify patterns and understand the nuances of what is happening. This is done by using triangulation, enabling the researcher to explore the phenomenon from different angles, and by using multiple sources of evidence from different perspectives, including, but not limited to, semi-structured interviews, direct observation, and focus groups. Data gathered during the interviews were scrutinised using the constant comparative method that emerged from the grounded theory approach.

The next chapter presents the detailed data analysis procedures followed to achieve the research aim.

Chapter 7

Data Analysis "Factors Affecting Strategy Implementation in Saudi Non-Oil and Gas Industry"

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the data analysis. It focuses on the categories that have emerged from the open, axial and selective coding.
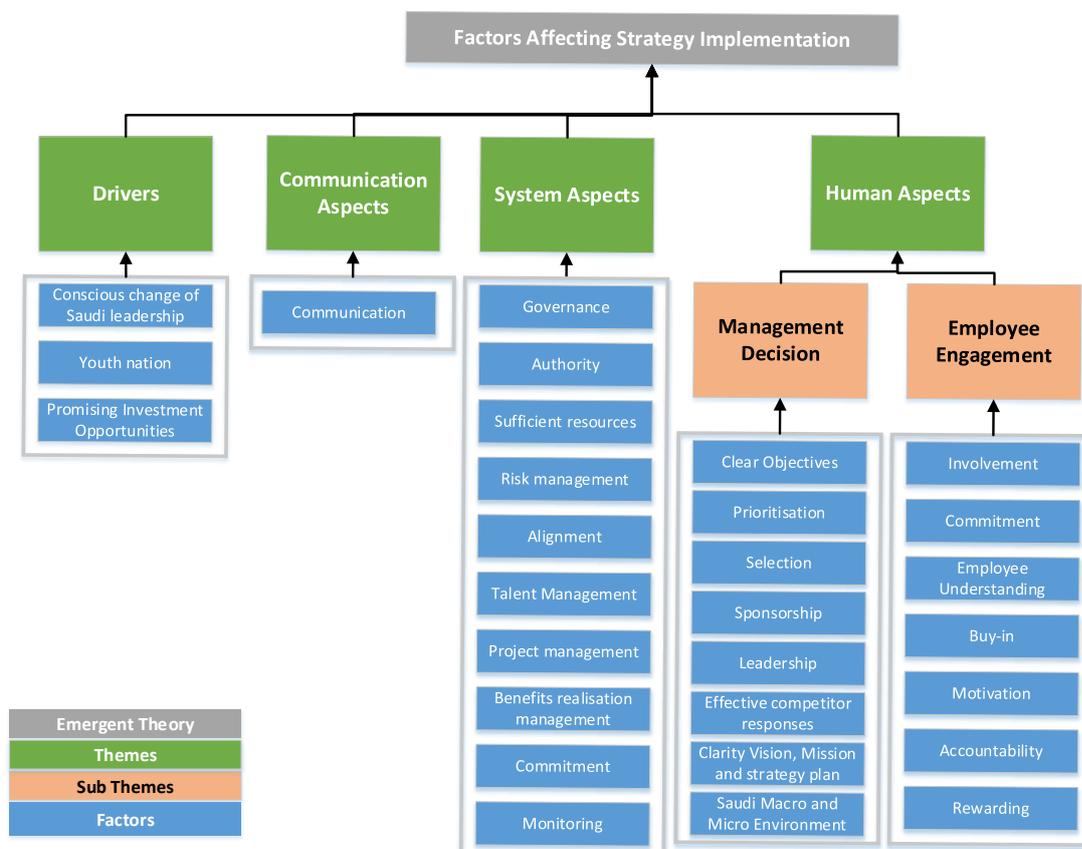
Figure 37: Factors Influencing Strategy Implementation in KSA

The central concepts from the codes derived from the empirical data are encompassed within the framework of factors affecting strategy implementation in Saudi Arabia. The finding focuses on what emerged from the data, which can naturally be separated into factors and drivers. Where

appropriate, any interesting issues regarding emergent concepts are commented on by the author. Moreover, the direct and indirect quotes from different interviewer's transcription were used to support the issues raised by them.

7.2   Data Analysis

7.2.1   Description of the sample of field study

This section provides descriptive statistics relating to the sample of observations used in the field study. Individual interviewees included 40 Saudi males aged between 36 and 53, and their age average was 45.68. The interviews were conducted with them at their headquarters in Riyadh or Jeddah. They played leading roles in their companies in areas related to strategy implementation. Length of service in non-oil and gas organisations ranged between 9 and 30 years. All the interviewees held university degrees in various disciplines, but most of those in the ICT, energy, and transportation sectors were engineers and most of those in the banking and healthcare sectors held MBAs.

7.2.2   Theoretical Sampling

Theoretical sampling in grounded theory research consists of three stages (for details see 4.8.2). First stage is the Open Coding, second stage is the Axial Coding and the third and the final stage is the Selective Coding. Open coding is the process of generating initial concepts from data to identifying categories. *Axial coding* is the process which begins after *open coding*, to develop and linking of concepts into conceptual families. Finally, the *selective coding* process starts to group the factors into the correct themes, to identify and to make rectification process easy. All three stages are used to completely explain a phenomenon. The following sections describe each of these process in more detail.

7.2.2.1 Open concepts and categories

According to Strauss and Corbin [134], open categories are fundamentally a gathering of open ideas from data that help position a specific phenomenon. One can describe an open category by answering the question 'What is going on here?' to provide full information regarding an emergent phenomenon.

Therefore, the goal of this stage was to identify the parts of the data that could be helpful in addressing the research question [253]. The focus was just on describing interesting input from the participant rather than interpreting its possible meaning (ibid).

The first step was reading the transcript and, while reading, highlighting any relevant material that might help in understanding the participant's view, experience, and perception.

The next step involved adding a short comment, indicating what was interesting in that highlighted text. Then, these preliminary comments were used to define descriptive codes.

After identifying the descriptive codes, the researcher reread these codes and identified any overlap where descriptive codes could be merged. Then, the researcher went to the next interview and repeated this until the last one.

If the descriptive comments could be incorporated in an available code, this was used; otherwise, a new one was defined. All codes were grouped together into the open categories [132] listed in Appendix (4). The quotes from different respondents were used to support the issues raised by diverse sources, as discussed in Chapter 7.

For each set of data, the entire document was read first to get a general understanding of the main issues. Then, the entire dataset was reviewed

several times to look for emerging open concepts. They were also rigorously compared to each other to add validity and discover new concepts.

The generated open concepts were then analysed, and those that related to a common theme (in terms of their commonalities and differences) were grouped together to form an open category [132].

The developed open categories were labelled in accordance with the method of Strauss and Corbin [134]: 'The name chosen for a category is usually the one that seems the most logical descriptor for what is going on' in the focus group.

7.2.2.1.1 Effective leadership style

Among the various participants concerned, several leadership styles have been identified, and they have been found to be important to strategy development. When delivering superior organisational performance, strong leadership skills represent a significant aspect when working within the dynamic context characteristic of present-day organisations.[2] Organisational innovation is actively sought out by these leaders who pursue innovation within and outside of their organisation at the organisational, group and individual levels.

'Leadership in an organisation is one of the key factors affecting strategy implementation. It involves offering a clear direction and up-to-date communications, inspiring staff and setting up a culture and values that improve the organisation's performance'.[3]

Leadership provides the development and elevation of the values and aims of the organisation through the effective leadership and management of the organisation, its people, and its processes.

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[2] F536
[3] F536

The aim of good and real leadership is the effective completion and delivery of growth for the firm. Individuals hope that leaders will provide them with meaning and that they can make things that are complicated and difficult to understand easier to digest, providing results so that individuals can find their own significance and value.[4]

'During strategic implementation, leaders had several roles to play, and these could be categorised as follows: commanders (those who tried to create a superlative or optimal strategy), architects (those who tried to determine and find the most efficacious way of delivering a strategy), coordinators (those who tried to incorporate other managerial events into their strategy implementation), coaches (those who tried to incorporate every individual into their endeavour) and premise setters (those who persuaded and motivated other managerial means to present their own solutions and strategies)'.[5]

The leadership management should care about all aspects of the organisation (i.e., present and future development).[6]
'Successful top management understands when a sound corporate strategy is needed, with the appropriate time investment, financial investment, and effort as part of that strategy's development'.[7]

Throughout the whole translational process, leadership remains the common thread. It is what converts strategy into results, and it is essential when ensuring that the minds and hearts of the workers are directed towards strategic realisation.[8] Competitive firms and their leaders who endeavour to increase their firm's performance have a number of issues to face; indeed, often, these can demand seemingly disparate ends. Of these

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[4] T136
[5] A536
[6] H136
[7] H136
[8] E336

issues, one is the need to create a balance between the pressure for instant results and long-term strategic development regarding the corporate environment of the firm.[9]

'It was centralised even in letters! Your sector cannot contact our sector except via VPs! This was a useless way to work'.[10]

'We have a lack of true leadership capabilities. That is why business management must consistently supervise organisation businesses in order to succeed'.[11]

'Unfortunately, there were no qualified mentors or supporters to guide us at all, and hence, our process was harder'.[12]

Finally, 100% of the interviewees agreed that strategy is related to top management decision. Although this was not something they explicitly mentioned during their description of strategy, many of their responses implicitly indicated this.

7.2.2.1.2 Clarifying vision, Mission statement and strategy plans

The efficacious formulation and implementation of strategies commence with a sound and transparent strategy aim, the formulation thereof and the goals of the senior management of the firm. The direction that the firm needs to move in is controlled and guided by the strategic vision, and, if well developed and formalised it comprises one of the main criteria for efficacious organisational design for the future. Otherwise, visions and strategies are not actionable.

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[9] A336
[10] A336
[11] T436
[12] E236

Stakeholders and other members of the organisation, if they have no obvious static vision[13], can be confused as to the future corporate strategy of their firm due to the new strategy and its aims.[14] The aim of the new strategy and its intended goals must be understood by the management and the rest of the firm's workforce. As a result of this, correct and clear formulation and definition are needed. Furthermore, the strategy must be conveyed to all members of the firm in a clear, precise and understandable manner. Customers, shareholders, workers, and management must all understand the strategy through these means[15].

It is often easier to comprehend and enact within the firm if a strategy is simpler. Employee confidence is also increased by an attractive and easy-to-understand strategy, and this boosts the strategic implementation efforts and strategic outcomes.[16] All members of the organisation can be banded together in a joint effort through this strategic vision, and this vision must be not only obvious and well defined, but also viable and practicable. If the strategy is unrealistic, the morale and motivation of the workforce regarding its implementation suffer.

Several underlying issues were revealed through the managerial staff discussions.[17] With poor strategies, there is ambiguity as to how the organisation intends to execute and complete the strategy in question; unclear plans are ineffective. Secondly, if the strategy is vague or ambiguous, concerns regarding the skills needed to implement the strategy are brought into question. Thirdly, managerial staff highlighted that such concerns are detrimental to management's confidence concerning the firm's performance and competitiveness, especially when set against clearer and more obvious strategy utilised by rivals in the sector, who may be more attentive to market conditions and present traits within the market sector.

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[13] T41
[14] E51
[15] A51
[16] T11
[17] A11

A lack of faith in strategy approaches, as well as poor confidence, related skills, and resources, may result in less effective performance, according to the management and other individuals interviewed in this study.

7.2.2.1.3 Active and Visible Executive Sponsorship

Over the last 20 years, sponsorship has been among the highest contributors to managerial change.

'The sponsors were either ineffective or unnoticeable, they did not align themselves with other leaders and were not at the correct level, and they were vague and uncertain regarding their support. Thus, greater resistance was created as a result of this poor commitment, and ineffective sponsorship meant slower progress towards the intended goal'.[18]

According to the statements made by the study participants, sponsors had to take a lead role when maintaining an efficacious coalition of leaders supporting change.[19] Other key business leaders and company shareholders and stakeholders need to mobilise sponsors so that legitimate change can be incorporated into their organisation. Efficacious and healthy sponsorship is of particular importance concerning those changes that concern numerous organisational functions. All change efforts need to incorporate these three roles, which are crucial to success in this regard. However, realistically, many senior leaders and executives fail to complete their roles and duties as required[20]

'Senior leaders and executives were mostly supportive of change, though numerous individuals at these levels failed to understand the repercussions of what they agreed with'.[21]

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[18] F317
[19] T1+A4+F3+H3,17
[20] T217
[21] A117

'We sometimes have multiple types of sponsors (CEO, BoD) for one objective; I tried my best to satisfy them, but I failed'.[22]

Several governance processes may be assigned to a programme, project and initiative sponsor. First, they may be tasked with developing processes to make sure decisions are aligned with the strategy and overall governance framework of the organisation. Second, they may be asked to advise the strategic decision makers and governing body through the knowledge they acquire by conducting sponsorship activities. Third, they may be tasked with setting the standards and methods to be employed in the directing and supporting of the sponsored programmes, projects and initiatives.

'In my organisation, senior managers are assigned as project sponsors, but they do not spend time training and explaining their expected roles and responsibilities to them'.[23]

Effective sponsorship is necessary across every project; indeed, it can make or break a strategy's implementation. Sponsors must be able to translate the reasons for a project into practical and well-articulated remits for project teams to deliver.

7.2.2.1.4 Setting SMART Objectives and Goals

Generally, every strategy needs to have an aim, which can be subdivided into objectives. Aims and objectives are essential to keep the focus and the direction of the strategy. The objectives are often set in the strategy, but they are poorly defined or vague, which could make them open to misinterpretation and difficult to comprehend. Therefore, clear objectives are essential for the strategy.[24] The clear objectives and goals do not just improve clarity in their understanding but also include precise, well-defined action verbs to communicate better.[25] As a result, specific,

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[22] H117
[23] T317
[24] H126
[25] B326

measurable results are referred to within the objectives concerning the general goals and aims of the initiative in question. The organisation's aims outline the scope and nature of the strategy and its implementation.

'There was no place to clear up your issues with vague objectives, no place where you could share, plan or get feedback before you invested. We still have not reached the level of pre-acting or being able to develop support systems, processes, and procedures for our goals. Most of us are still reactors'.[26]

7.2.2.1.5 Selection (Strategy and Tactical Choices)

When describing or outlining a certain choice or plan, the words 'tactical' and 'strategic' are the most appropriate choices. Indeed, the 'what' and the 'why' are more fully included in a strategic plan if a macroscopic perspective is assumed. This means that one is more readily able to see trends and themes, foresee problems, prioritise and determine results and outcomes.[27] The guiding virtues and policies, visions and missions of the strategy can, to some degree, be incorporated into the strategic plans, while tactically, choices are more concerned with attaining the strategy's ultimate aims.[28]

'Tactical planning and strategic planning in hospitals showed that the management's aims and objectives regarding information management were reliant on managerial accountabilities and duties concerning tactical information. Strategic choices are seen to be long-term, while tactical aims are medium-term. However, both decisions can facilitate strategic and tactical informational exchanges. Information of strategic and tactical aims adheres to the same hierarchical organisation and structure as strategic and tactical aims concerning relative significance'.[29]

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[26] E426
[27] F421
[28] F421
[29] F421

The organisational vision of a firm is the idea or image of what the firm in question wants to become. This intention can be realised through its organisational strategy. Adherence to this plan requires the enacting and adherence to organisational tactics.[30] Consequently, reflection and clarification of a certain decision are contained within strategic choices, and progression according to a small number of realistic solutions within the programme itself requires commitment according to the time and context in question. Therefore, the way in which the corporation will compete against rivals within the marketplace is contained within the strategy and its corporate model. The business model employed by the firm is contained within these tactics (i.e., the residual choices available to the firm).

7.2.2.1.6 Prioritising Work Activities

Organisations are aided in their prioritisation by prioritisation matrices, which comprise an aspect of the management and planning tools. Organisations that experience considerable organisational inertia generally benefit the most from prioritisation. Additionally, in conjunction with the aims and objectives of the firm, those individuals responsible for making decisions also need to highlight aspects in which prioritisation could be impacted by different programmes.[31] Nevertheless, assistance and support from the higher elements of the organisation are a motivating aspect when trying to overcome challenges, find solutions and enact and complete strategic initiatives.[32] Additionally, the work that precedes strategic planning, ultimately resulting in exact managerial demands and duties, is completed by leadership and leaders. The main elements that motivate strategic thinking include prioritisation of purpose, identity, and reliance. Comparatively, strategic planning is motivated by attainment of these goals and managing actionable occurrences and duties.[33] The

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[30] T121
[31] T222
[32] A122
[33] F422

management of the most important and urgent aspect of the various demands within a strategy is the concern of prioritisation based on available resources. Prioritisation, when efficaciously completed, ensures that the most critical demands are taken care of first, accounting for financial and resource constraints.

It is untrue that prioritisation is something that results either in a strategic derailment or all individuals being slowed in their work and duties. Rather, it can motivate leaders and keep them on their toes by enacting the required transformations within the firm.

7.2.2.1.7 Effective Competitor Responses to Strategy

Ultimately, obtaining a competitive advantage is the main aim of strategy within the corporate context. This means that the organisation in question secures a superior position to rival firms and can generate more profits than they are. However, a strategy may fail because of a cleverly implemented response by rival firms. The same consumers are sought after by both the original and the competitor firm, who uses the same means if possible. A similar technology or service is sold to the consumer base in the market in question by both firms, who both use the same marketing pathways. If a firm cannot compete with its rivals and acquire consumers from the same consumer base, then the firm will probably fail when competing for peripheral or prospective market consumers too[34], because if the rival firm can outcompete the original firm directly, then their chances of outcompeting them in other areas are also considerably higher. As a result, competitor firms can enact an equivalent strategy but with greater expediency.

'At the competition phase, the goals also changed, and this leads to changes in the way of thinking, more pressure and flexibility in work to achieve the

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[34] F54

company's goals. But our organisation takes a long time to process a response to that'.[35]

'During our implementation process, we could not respond properly to the market needs that kept changing by competitors, because we were overloaded with work, and hence, we were simply putting out fires. We did not have time to innovate or think about the issue and sort it out from its root'. [36]

'To accurately predict how competitors will react to a strategy, companies require competitive intelligence'.[37]

7.2.2.1.8 Saudi Macro and Micro Environment

Certain environmental conditions determine corporate designs and operations in trading firms. Generally, internal and external viewpoints are used to assess a corporate environment. Internally, this concerns aspects of the organisational context the firm in question can control; externally, this concerns elements out of the competitor's control. This is also the case regarding human resources functions as well as marketing, accounting, and other corporate functions within the organisation.

Furthermore, the external environment incorporates external elements that the firm cannot determine.

One of the hallmarks of an efficaciously organised firm is that it can reposition itself within a competitive corporate context. Because of this, organisations are assisted through strategic management so that they can learn from their corporate setting and thus create more efficacious directional strategies with greater and more precise aims (i.e., strategies that meet the demands and expectations of stakeholders).[38] Strategic

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[35] F34
[36] F14
[37] F24
[38] T316

management is, therefore, the accountability of management concerning attaining and maintaining competitiveness and securing a competitive advantage through the best use of corporate resources and means, avoiding external issues and resolving internal ones.[39]

'Comparing the work environment now to the way it was nine years ago, there is a huge difference in the work. This change is obvious and tangible'.[40]

The business environment is made up of the relationships between stakeholders and the environment, and these relationships change in response to the decisions made.

'The external environment is dynamic, which in turn forces the company to be dynamic as well. To be dynamic, you need to make decisions quickly to be aligned with the external environment'.[41]

Performance is determined by firms according to capital (i.e., turnover and profit). Nevertheless, according to some research studies, both non-financial and financial aspects are important to firm efficacy. These non-financial elements include service quality, organisational pragmatism, technology and resource use.

'There is change, but there is resistance to change arising from either the internal or external culture'.[42]

Forces operating within an organisation comprise the internal environment of that organisation, which positively or negatively affects organisational performance, which is influenced by types of decision-making. Therefore, organisational resources include structure, firm size, communication network and overall organisational control systems, which are

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[39] F125
[40] F125
[41] F518
[42] F518

systematically used to make decisions. Strategic planning is used to bring together intra-organisational synergy and strengthen management teams to enforce and ensure the effective use of policies, procedures, and rules.[43]

'An issue that we have to consider during implementation is the long process of organisational actions and transactions because of the bureaucratic system'.[44]

'In our organisation, there is centralisation, which is detrimental. This leads to many commercial businesses and/or transactions that depend on what is called a one-man show'.[45]

Safety in one's job or role within the expatriate community in Saudi Arabia has been reduced and eroded due to the priority afforded to Saudi natives, known as 'Saudisation'. Saudisation was originally enacted as a result of persuasion and pressure from natives having issues with the existing job market and the number of foreign workers there; this is attributable to the large expatriate community in the Kingdom. Unemployment among Saudi nationals has risen accordingly. The policy of Saudisation is implemented, enforced and regulated by several government programmes and policies, and it is reflected in nearly every facet of the public and private sectors. Accordingly, the ever-increasing percentage of native Saudis within the workforce is a future likelihood and demand, especially in those aspects of the workforce where Saudi nationals are few or non-existent, and in those areas protected by Saudi employment law.[46]

'This is a Gulf country culture. There is safety in a job, and no one can lay off any employee from his job. This is still unacceptable in our culture and community. For example, you cannot lay off employees because you want this! But in the US, if you are a VP and you find the number of employees

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[43] T159
[44] E367
[45] A156
[46] F541

is too high, you have the authority to lay them off immediately. This concept is rejected and impossible here'.[47]

'Recently, many wise political decisions have been taken, and there has been pressure from the government to make quick corrections and reforms for the sake of the country'.[48]

Societal influences incorporate the religious, demographical, cultural, ecological and moral and educational elements that affect an organisation regarding its aims when trying to meet consumer and employee demands amid a changing corporate setting.

'Our community is very cohesive, and we usually intend to be supportive of and care for each other. However, this can sometimes have negative consequences'.[49]

'The climate does have an effect on our productivity. Sometimes, it is due to natural hazards like extreme dust that affects the clarity and purity of our products'.[50]

'There is an uncertain and indirect influence of the external environment'.[51]

'The stability of the country's security has a positive effect on our work'.[52]

'There is an incapacity to effectively alter and transcend resistance to different strategies and changes'.[53]

'Our problem can be summed up in one word, *wasitah*, which roughly translates to 'connections' or 'influence'. A *wasitah* is an individual with many connections who can help others in the world of business. Unfortunately, those who use a *wasitah* to obtain employment are not the

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[47] F541
[48] A448
[49] T230
[50] A430
[51] E330
[52] T530
[53] F132

most qualified candidates. This leads to employees who do not fulfil the job requirements and affects the organisation's goals'.[54]

'Overall, there is a supportive culture, but this support increases significantly through connections and relationships'.[55]

Religion influences the strategy implementation process. This was clearly elaborated on by many participants who demonstrated the effect of religion in their work.

'Being constantly connected to Allah, praying Fajr, and start[ing] early in the morning as our Prophet Mohammed, peace be upon Him (PBUH), recommended, is the recipe for success. The Prophet PBUH said, "O Allah, bless my nation in their early mornings (i.e., what they do early in the morning".'[56]

'Our company slogan is what Allah said in the Hadith Qudsi 19: "I am a third partner unless one of them cheated on the other".'[57]

However, this influence was not all positive. Generally, it is good to say, 'Insha Allah', which means 'Allah willing', when saying one will do things in the future. However, many phrases like 'Insha Allah' get misused and develop bad reputations.[58]

Finally, 78% of the respondents said that the environment had an overall positive impact on the process; this was because it was mainly considered a fertile market with few alternatives.

7.2.2.1.9 Employee Understanding of Organisation Strategy

Competition of strategy is among the main drivers that determine the financial performance of a given firm. Furthermore, the execution of a

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[54] A368
[55] T168
[56] F168
[57] E468
[58] H368

strategy is crucial, and when contrasted, the impact of a strong strategy is half a dozen times greater. Successful strategic implementation is not guaranteed through successful strategic formulation. Indeed, the 'what' of a strategy is as significant to worker understanding and participation in the realisation of the strategy as the 'how' and the 'why', which convey the goal of the strategy and the means of implementing the strategy in equal measure.[59] Empowerment, communication, and involvement are all things that should be given careful and serious consideration; all are essential stages in the road to realising worker potential and attaining higher levels of performance. Simultaneously, it should be understood that empowerment is only useful if one has the necessary workers and skills.

'Our communities in our organisation are not mature enough to recognise the employee contribution to stop fraud in services. This, unfortunately, makes them believe that our services are expensive (i.e., not valuing our quality) and hence requires more effort and time from us'.[60]

7.2.2.1.10   Employee Involvement and Ownership

An organisation is the sum of its people. Any policy or strategy is implemented through and by the people. The involvement process aims at ensuring knowledge and skills from all organisational levels are engaged to achieve the organisation's ultimate goal. Staff involvement should also be at all levels, including during the detailed planning process to increase their commitment and understanding of their role in implementing the plan. Specifically, the involvement of key personnel in the process is also known to create ownership and support by all actors, which is crucial to success during the implementation stage. It is, therefore, logical to assume that every organisation seeks and values employee involvement.

Employees possess the most comprehensive understanding of the procedures and challenges faced while undertaking the tasks.

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[59] F128
[60] H528

Consequently, incorporating them into the strategy and facilitating their engagement is rational. One participant suggested that employees should be able to propose and attain change through appropriate channels to facilitate participation.[61]

My observation from the field showed that proactive implementation is affected directly by top management support, employee involvement, training, teamwork and a motivation or reward system.[62] This reduces the need to manage and mitigate change using a 'top-down' approach alone.[63] This means organisations that follow the mandate model rely on top-down implementation with little bottom-up feedback to accelerate implementation and the achievement of objectives.[64]

'We seek to enhance the institutional procedures in order to avoid additional pressure on the staff through the management structures put in place'.[65]

Therefore, the key is to achieve true integration, not mere overlap, by supporting communication between the management systems and employee involvement. By identifying linkages between these systems and unifying goals and objectives, a customised sustainability management system can be designed.[66]

'This is the biggest barrier to the success of our strategy implementation processes. In my opinion, rules and regulations should be established in close collaboration with those who suffer from their consequences and hence involve all stakeholders. In other words, all those considered stakeholders should collaborate or at least be involved or consulted while developing the rules, regulations or solutions for problems'.[67]

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[61] H513
[62] T413
[63] T413
[64] A413
[65] F213
[66] F313
[67] H113

7.2.2.1.11   Employee Commitment to Championing

At every stage, workers and managers should be engaged and participate in the devising and introduction of effective strategies. Higher managers should regularly communicate with the staff and managers lower in the hierarchy to produce strategies. Ultimately, the strategy is implemented by the workers.[68] Although top management develops the strategy, they must spend a great deal of time discussing it with the organisation's managers and lower level employees. This is because employees are the ones executing the strategy.[69] Businesses, together with competent co-workers, must be united when working towards the objectives, which requires motivation and commitment.

'We discovered that engaging staff in decision-making processes offers various benefits in terms of standard of decisions, effective comprehension of strategies, improved institutional learning, strengthened adherence to organisation and strategy, greater work contentment, reduced opposition to change and stronger strategic flexibility'.[70]

Consequently, through the engagement of the individuals who are introducing the strategy, the dedication of these individuals may be improved. Furthermore, successful introduction relies significantly on the strategic objectives of higher management as well as the dedication of individuals at the level of operations and mid-level managers. Furthermore, the dedication of mid-level managers to introducing strategy is affected by the ability of higher managers to collate the data obtained during decision-making, which flows from the mid-level managers themselves. Consequently, when the strategic development procedure does not include staff and managers from the outset, this is a common reason for an

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[68] T111
[69] T111
[70] A311

ineffective strategic introduction.[71] Nevertheless, major strategic choices made by an institution require employees to be dedicated to them.

'A feeling of participation in strategic decisions among mid-level managers, concerning the ability to give input, can encourage flexibility and a sense of dedication'.[72]

7.2.2.1.12   Employee Buy-in

A major leadership ability is the facilitation of worker buy-in with regard to the production of strategy, which concerns the congruence between an institution's vision and staff position, thus posing the largest distinction between poor and strong performance.[73] Team effectiveness and output depend essentially on staff buy-in to day-to-day activities, innovative tasks, and institutional values. The emphasis during the application of the research process has been on institutional strategic communication, fomenting of the necessary culture, management leadership, and organisational buy-in.[74]

'Buy-in of people is one of the essential factors to secure strategy implementation successes'.[75]

'Top management buy-in and support are crucial to success … The dedication of low-hierarchy employees and the integrity of these strategic developments rest on the ability of higher management to encourage buy-in among employees'.[76]

7.2.2.1.13   Designated Accountability

Public administration and management, psychology, political science, environmental and social accounting, medicine, education and various other fields have adopted accountability as an important dynamic. The

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[71] A411
[72] A411
[73] T212
[74] E512
[75] A412
[76] F312

word accountability differs from responsibility because responsibility can be shared, while accountability cannot.

'Vague introduction decisions and engaging in activity without transparent liability decrease accountability'.[77]

In addition, the participants underlined that issues with accountability often arose when the answers to three basic questions were not provided: '1) who is accountable for the job or task? 2) What are they accountable for? & 3) to whom are they accountable?'[78]

However, accountability has come to be seen by many as something of a 'magic wand' affecting ethical governance, cost-effectiveness and efficient service delivery across any organisation. Then, why has the concept of accountability become so prominent? When an individual's activities are assigned liability during the management regulation procedure, this is called accountability.

General project viability and the supporting of activities and decisions entail accountability. An accountable individual must be able to justify their actions rather than simply explaining them, irrespective of the activities' outcomes.[79]

'Accountability without authority sets us up to fail as a manager. The manager needs to be accountable for ensuring that lower-level employees fulfil their responsibilities'.[80]

7.2.2.1.14   Motivation

According to the means through which motivation is adopted in an organisation, it can, in fact, assist or undermine the institution due to its intricacy. Managers' acknowledgement of workers' achievements is a highly

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[77] A510
[78] A510
[79] E110
[80] T410

beneficial activity.[81] Despite their development by various philosophers, theories only have limited utility in explaining individuals' motivations, given that all individuals vary. Rewards permit managers to more effectively comprehend their staff and build individual relationships with them, despite the fact that managers are likely to have busy schedules and few chances to engage with staff.

Creating the most effective workplace is the task of both workers and managers. Ultimately, internal drive and enthusiasm need to be embraced by the staff; it is not only the requirement of management to ensure staff enthusiasm and contentment.[82]

The workplace should not be a space where only managers acknowledge other employees; that is, there should be mutual acknowledgement among staff. Self-motivation can be facilitated by others, even if giving someone direct drive is something that has been confirmed impossible. Managers should ensure that the workplace is appealing and pleasing, given that they are responsible for staff welfare. Subsequently, the work context and staff effectiveness should be enhanced. Complete enthusiasm within a team should be attained if these proposals are introduced effectively.[83]

7.2.2.1.15 Reward

Undoubtedly, following the completion of an activity or assignment, workers anticipate some type of remuneration. Once activities have been completed to a satisfactory standard, adequate remuneration and earnings should be guaranteed to workers. The two main kinds of rewards are internal and external. More flexible scheduling, job advancement, bonuses, perks and extra income are all forms of reward. Moreover, lower staff turnover and improved work performance should also result from enhancing staff dedication through rewards.[84]

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[81] E362
[82] A162
[83] A162
[84] F314

It is crucial that at particular stages in the work process, various forms of remuneration be introduced to support on-going effectiveness and enhancement as part of the work culture and the sustained rewards structure. The effectiveness of the reward structure is significantly affected by employee characteristics and the stage at which rewards are provided.[85] Essentially, a strong workplace context and the highest productivity possible from workers are achieved through a clear and successful remuneration system.

7.2.2.1.16   Project Management Process

Business activities typically rely on portfolio management as part of the organisational strategy. Particular individuals being accountable for attaining the advantages from each initiative, the ability to select and implement initiatives within the institution's parameters, as well as the ability to ensure that the institution gains value from the managed initiatives, are the fundamental features of portfolio management.[86] Furthermore, incorporating stakeholders in relation to corporate aims, regulating the flow of advantages, organising initiatives according to their relative significance, guaranteeing value creation as well as promoting strategic aims are the significant aspects of portfolio management.

'Strategies were completely changed. They were focused, in the past, on the existing goals at that time, and some of them required steps that had to be completed before we could start to achieve them. In addition, you could not achieve them at the same time, and if you could, they took a long time. In that way, the project method will help to improve the work and achieve the goals'.[87]

'Alternatively, which unfortunately we did not do, we should have invested in leadership development. For example, in my opinion, outsourcing does

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[85] F314
[86] F224
[87] F324

not work without very good project management. So, if we invest in our people by teaching them how to be professional project managers, we could secure better outcomes'.[88]

7.2.2.1.17 Situational Awareness is an Effective Risk Management Strategy

Reporting stipulations, methods, and approaches to regulating risk during an initiative, acceptance, and timing of risk regulation actions, accountability, and the part played, as well as risk management processes, are all aspects of the risk management strategy. A crucial component of risk management approaches is risk awareness. The regulation of risk requires hedging against them and a strong understanding of potential risks. In this sense, the thought processes and means of analysis of an individual, as well as the means through which an individual perceives and responds to risks, concern his/her situational awareness. Therefore, a single structure can be devised based on the risk assessment and cognitive models. This can permit a better comprehension of the weaknesses in risk awareness infrastructures as well as how risk awareness is incorporated into the actual level of organisational risk faced. Additionally, the degree to which corporate strategy, strategic goals, and strategic implementation are shaped by the discovery, analysis, and tackling of risks characterises the process of strategic risk management.[89]

'Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) comprises an essential but often ignored component, which is strategic risk management. The form of risk can have significant implications, despite operational and financial hazards largely being emphasised under ERM'.[90]

Risk results from institutional aims being perceived with a degree of doubt. Identifying possible problems, the possible results of those problems, the

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[88] F524
[89] F220
[90] F120

reasons for such problems and the ways to diminish the possibility of them occurring are the dynamics of risk management.[91]

In the event something does go wrong, which is inevitable from time to time, proactive risk management will minimise the impact.

'They do not put enough thought in [to] rules, so during implementation, many issues and sometimes even damages are discovered, which require numerous reactive corrections that affect our processes'.[92]

7.2.2.1.18   A Unified View of Benefits Realisation Management

A beneficial consequence of change can be characterised as a benefit, despite this being an expansive concept. The regulation of disadvantages is also included in benefits management, given that detrimental consequences can arise from change. The attainment of benefits is anticipated as outweighing the potential losses from organisational change. Therefore, benefits management and a sound overall management strategy are crucial. Stakeholder value is the ultimate objective of a sound corporate strategy. This signifies the organisation's effectiveness in meeting institutional objectives as well as producing revenue over a significant period. Essentially, this is the ability to methodically monitor the tangible benefits attained through changes made via the effective implementation of corporate goals. The attainment of strategic goals correlates with the aims for achieving a prospective value within the corporate strategy. The strategic approach of the organisation should include an array of assignments and projects, focused on bridging the value gap between existing and prospective circumstances, which are quantifiable aims. Nevertheless, benefits are both intangible and tangible. Enhanced business standing and diminished risk are intangible advantages, while job creation and diminished expenditures are tangible benefits.

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[91] F420
[92] F120

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'If you want me to count the services we have, I think there are more than 1,000 services. You may find some employees don't know all the services because they have to be followed up with the market! This has happened because of the dynamic in work and performance. The workloads increased, and the deadlines became shorter! Nobody spends four or five months providing a service anymore'.[93]

However, ensuring that the role benefits play in fulfilling the corporate, organisational and operational strategies also shapes the parameters of every initiative, assignment and investment choice can occur through the adoption of strategic mapping based on the tenets of influence diagrams.

'Before, we just focused on sales. We now need to know the expectations and the targeted segments to identify some offers that return more revenues'.[94]

7.2.2.1.19   Allocate Sufficient Resources

Normally, every strategy requires many things to complete the strategy implementation. Those things, which include staff, tools, software and office location, are called resources.[95] To complete the strategy efficiently, the adequate availability of resources is a vital factor. Resource allocation is a central management activity that permits effective strategy execution. Sufficient resources and strategy execution have a two-way relationship: the strategy affects the resources, and the resources affect the strategy. Thus, the availability of sufficient resources is a vital factor.[96]

'I can say that during the last year, we were restricted by the financial rules and instructions, which means we faced a closed system. This is now also happening this year in my organisation'.[97]

'The old systems were built on government accounting. It was on a cash basis, and we had a limited budget that we could not exceed because it

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[93] F519
[94] F519
[95] F28+A58+T18
[96] H58
[97] T18

covered specific projects. Also, using the budget required obtaining agreement from the high levels in the organisation, which took a long time'.[98]

'A few years ago, we completely eliminated all manual work. At that time, too much money was wasted because of the processes! These processes affected the whole company, including its services, both internally and externally. However, the company has not benefited from the automated environment'.[99]

'We faced two options, either upgrade the current system or change it as a result of the business growth, which in turn caused a strategic change from product-centric to customer-centric, and the strategic change led to many implications for the system.[100]

'Some strategies require information about population intensity, customer segments, etc. To get this information, you need a sophisticated system'.[101]

'There is overlap between departments. Strategies relate to budgets, so if you don't have sophisticated and accurate systems, it will take a long time to achieve strategies'![102]

'There is a lack of appropriate resources, and this has affected our strategy implementation capabilities'.[103]

'Most of the challenges we faced stemmed from the fact that the majority of my staff were not qualified as individuals. They did not have previous experience or knowledge in our field'.[104]

Organisation management should ensure the staff has the relevant skills to deliver the strategy and ensure employees have enough time to dedicate

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[98] A58
[99] T58
[100] F38
[101] T48
[102] E38
[103] A18
[104] E38

to the implementation process. Either these individuals must understand the hierarchical prioritisation of the tasks they have been assigned or they should be liberated from their duties. Sufficient time must be devoted to the implementation process.

7.2.2.1.20   Retaining and Managing Talent Management

The science of utilising human resources and the planning thereof to increase one's corporate value and facilitate the means to attain corporate aims and objectives is referred to as talent management. It is among the most significant elements ensuring that an organisation is successful in its endeavours and able to progress, develop, engage, deploy and retain workers that are of worth to the firm itself.[105] Good talent management can assist a firm to develop its performance efficacy as a workplace environment and boost education and understanding within the firm, diversity management and worth regarding the firm's brand.

This term talent management is among the most misused in the whole of the labour market lexicon. Indeed, it generally suggests that it refers to an individual that is highly skilled and has considerable potential, one that can undertake a new role and repeat his/her duties in a former, similar one. However, this definition is incorrect. Indeed, within the recruitment sector—wherein roles and positions demand skills that are previously untested or unneeded this definition does not account for the numerous means by which employers can utilise their capacities and thereby increase their firm's efficacy by addressing corporate challenges and issues.[106]

Regardless of the abilities and capacities of the individuals concerned, it creates an approach that helps people tackle and perform their role with greater effectiveness. This is realised without considering their previous roles and achievements, and it looks to recruit individuals based on the

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[105] F129
[106] F129

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firm's future rather than the employee's history. In Saudi Arabia, hierarchical organisations depend on favouritism (wasitah or sometimes referred locally to as vitamin W). The outcome is that in organisations, those in authority are able (and expected) to place friends and family (to whom they are socially obligated) in positions that might rightly be better occupied by others based on talent.

'The organisational environment and process are not very attractive for highly skilled people'.[107]

'There was no mentor to help us avoid mistakes during the implementation, and hence, we were learning from our own mistakes as a result of the lack of talents'.[108]

Thus, organisations that possess a culture supportive of the worker are more able to ensure open communication, encouragement, and collaboration with a higher degree of worker employment.

7.2.2.1.21 Adequate Authority and Power to implement

Despite the fact that there is a strong motivating factor regarding performance improvement, workers also need to possess the tools, authority, and responsibility needed to affect the appropriate measures. Otherwise, they may resist or refuse ownership and involvement.

Managers have the right to direct subordinates' activities according to their authority, and this is something that demands accountability.

'Processes would take at least two to three weeks to be done because of the centralisation'.[109]

7.2.2.1.22 Robust Governance Discipline

The planning process needs to include governance planning. In the absence of governance planning, there is the potential for strategic alignment to

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[107] F229
[108] F129
[109] A569

encroach on corporate strategy.[110] Nevertheless, planned goals and aims are necessarily related to a series of metrics that are gauged over time and that assimilate themselves across such advantages to boost the traceability, authenticity and strategic implementation of the firm. Healthy corporate functions ensure that actions are taken to manage and control initiatives if they go astray or fail to meet the required deadlines and goals.[111] Strong governing of the firm means that strategic misalignment not only determines accountability but also results in employee empowerment. Hence, by assigning responsibility and leadership to this committee, the governance process becomes a mechanism for formal strategy oversight.

'The structure of management and finance, the systems of accounting and costs and other systems, which increased the quality and capability of the company, were changed as a result of the forward strategy from 2006 to 2009. Then, due to the poor governance operating model, the company did not gain the benefit of that change'.[112]

'We must endeavour to complete a strategy that can run counter to extant power structures'.[113]

7.2.2.1.23 Strategic Alignment and Fit

Among the most popular modern managerial concepts within corporate research is strategic alignment. In essence, this alludes to the relevance of the aspects concerned and their relationships between and among one another. Hence, 'fitting' becomes a good word to describe the extent to which the competitive scenario, organisational culture, and style of leadership are related to one another.

As a result of this, on-going management, monitoring, assessing and altering of the strategy according to environmental changes are facilitated.

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[110] T315
[111] T315
[112] H115
[113] T515

The strategic 'fit', also referred to as congruence, consistency, and co-alignment among different contingencies results in a notable beneficial impact on firm performance. Consequently, the idea of strategic alignment is essential when ensuring the corporation's continuous and sustainable competitiveness.

'The process of strategic alignment is an on-going one. Ideally, it is realised through the whole team working together and seeing where the firm needs improvement and where the firm is performing well (and for what reasons). This concerns developing new plans of action, those that utilise the strengths of the firm, and turning shortcomings into advantages by altering their interrelationships'.[114]

When strategic alignment is created, the processes and the protocols of the business work in conjunction with one another and add to the longevity of the firm's efficacy. Thus, strategic alignment concerns the synchronisation of ends and means; it harmonises strategic goals with the tactics used to implement plans and the firm's operations. If these elements are discordant and there is a lack of strategic alignment, this may result in low levels of cross-functional success regarding the firm and its various limitations and remits.

'Misalignment of strategies is something that can turn out to be a notable issue. It can result in some capacity in all firms; if the issue spirals out of control, then it may limit the firm's ability to realise its aims and objectives and function more effectively'.[115]

7.2.2.1.24   Transparency and Traceability of Monitoring and Controlling
Control within the firm and monitoring of the firm's strategy also demand multiple feedback tracks and loops. Initially, implementers may be confused by complex strategies, and these require additional resources, including human, temporal and resource-oriented means, so that the firm

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[114] F242
[115] E442

can remain on track.[116] This process is a multifaceted and complicated one, and it should be considered when enacting all corporate strategies. As a result, the process is slower and demands further focus from workers and managers if the information is more complex, and the implementation itself is of a higher volume.[117] A balanced scorecard (BSC) is one of the means used to control and monitor such processes.[118] Here, business actions and activities are aligned with the aims of the organisation, and the performance is measured against the strategic goals.[119] Communication, evaluation, target setting, strategy adjustment and strategy explanation are all incorporated into the BSC instrument.[120] Hence, measurement, monitoring, and control are all evaluated with some degree of efficacy by using this tool.

'In the past, we'd have to wait until the end of the year to close the financial statements and check our results and achievements! Now, there are many types of monitoring reports, and some of them are quarterly, monthly or even weekly, and they can come at any time'.[121]
'Everyone is convinced that automation will eliminate the bureaucracy and errors because the company is huge, and its data is huge as well. So, issuing reports and measuring the company's performance requires robust systems'.[122]

'The strategy of the company attempts to achieve the company's targets. You need a sophisticated system to achieve these targets in good time'.[123]

'One is not able to assess or evaluate it unless one has measures over operations. Naturally, these are significant stages, and we are currently taking steps that may or may not give us accreditation; nevertheless, they

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[116] T17
[117] E37
[118] A27
[119] A27
[120] H17
[121] T37
[122] E47
[123] A17

need to be separated in some capacity into smaller sections to determine the future course'.[124]

7.2.2.1.25   Choose the Right KPIs

For a firm to retain its competitiveness and advantages and keep operating successfully, it needs to be able to increase its performance efficacy on an on-going basis, something that is truer than ever in today's dynamic corporate environment. Superior decision-making and better execution of plans are both necessary components to a modern successful firm.[125] Firstly, measurement of current performance is required for determining and managing corporate performance. Then, the limitations and shortcomings of the firm can be addressed.[126] Strategy planning and execution are both crucial elements of strategic performance management. Consequently, all individuals need to be part of this process and feel accountable.[127] This is aided by measurement, as a more appropriate culture can be manifested by moving away from a corporate culture of assessing worker efficacy and performance and target-based assessments.[128]

'Of the options available regarding measurement systems is the creation of a set of KPIs (Key Performance Indicators). This more clearly and directly measures performance efficacy, though it has weaker links to strategy compared to the performance pyramid or the BSC'.[129]

Generally, KPIs are appropriate for both performance pyramid and BSC systems. This is because each of these incorporates KPIs, which are broadly utilised across numerous sectors emphasising the primary concerns and problems and steering the firm in the correct direction towards a better future. Regarding performance measurement, the precise aspect to be

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[124] F57
[125] F154
[126] F154
[127] T351
[128] H154
[129] E351

measured is the main issue and concern, as not all measurable things should or need to be measured.[130]

'The main elements of the operation concerned can be determined in part by the KPIs, which highlight the main elements and determine and gauge these before assessing the findings and results'.[131]

7.2.2.1.26   Effective Communication Improve Productivity

All interviewees said that communication plays a major role in strategy implementation to become successful. Successful strategy development demands that the individuals throughout the organisation in question understand the means by which the strategy was devised and implemented and the motivations for doing[132]. The behaviours, purposes, and values guiding the implementation process also need to be defined clearly. Communication needs to be open and efficacious, and managers need to guarantee an open, communicative context involving the following: first, top-down communication (from top management to middle managers and staff), second, bottom-up communication (from middle managers and staff to top management) and third, cross-communication (throughout various interorganisational departments). Additionally, explicit steps must be taken to guarantee that all workers feel incorporated into the process and the decisions affecting them. Communication between workers must account for differences in worker needs and opinions, and sometimes, the nuances of communication may be lost amid bustling organisational practices and contexts. Thus, the use of many paths of communication to ensure the message is heard by the intended audience is a good way of increasing communicative efficacy and ensuring all messages are received and comprehended. The implementation process of a given strategy will, therefore, benefit as a result.[133]

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[130] T351
[131] A354
[132] T53
[133] T13

'Our problem is the insufficient or ineffective informational communication between the various individuals or groups accountable for enacting the strategy'.[134]

'Our main problem in the strategy implementation process was that there was no communication with everyone to make the strategy clear and ensure transparency and coordination between departments'.[135]

'Within the organisation, there need to be established feedback systems for monitoring, ones that directly channel input to the relevant strata of the firm in an understandable manner so that they are heard and, subsequently, the relevant responses can be made within the necessary time frame'.[136]

'Numerous members of the senior management team (executive, managerial individuals) were placed in their current roles because they were effective in their roles and not because they were particularly good at conveying ideas. Three-way communication, a necessary responsibility for all executive managers, is vital, and it involves top-down, bottom-up and subsequent communications'.

Of all the necessary communicative aspects, cross-communication is potentially the most challenging, because fewer support structures and more barriers exist. Additionally, practitioners and agents need more precise and sophisticated skills for successful cross-communication. They must also have knowledge of organisational development, counselling skills and systems theory for cross-communication. Communicative abilities and practices are not enough; rather, a comprehensive understanding of the organisational politics is needed.

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[134] A33
[135] F53
[136] H23

Of all the methods by which this goal can be attained, participative management and interpersonal connections, both assisted by leaders, are the most important. Conditions for performance improvement are set through a top-down direction and environment, which then must be complemented by a broad-based, bottom-up improvement of performance so that all individuals therein, regardless of their position, can more effectively meet performance demands. Inter-organisational cross-communication can remove any barriers standing in the way of interdepartmental communication and collaboration and bolster team morale; the best individuals for the role can be utilised as a result. The working relationships needed must be clearly defined, as must the organisation's aims and goals; this will allow individuals to operate as a single unit, though they need to be provided with the required skills, tools and advice to facilitate their collaborative endeavours. By increasing coordination and cooperation among the members, better information flow can be achieved, which enhances trust within the team. These factors are dependent on the communicational formality and frequency.

From the analysis, it has been concluded that tools that offer more human involvement are proven to lead to superior communication outcomes. Just sending emails is ineffective while working as a leader/manager in cross-functional teams. Nevertheless, meeting with team members is better than just sending emails, but the level of authenticity of a statement can be related to written documents circulated in a team, so everyone understands.

Finally, social media communications are new in organisations, but they are attracting the attention of management. It is cheaper and faster than conventional methods of communication. The possibility of communicational gibberish is a potential drawback of social media tools, but the extent to which these communications stay relevant to the course remains to be discovered.

7.2.2.2 Axial Coding

At this stage, the researcher should define codes by going beyond the pure descriptions of the participants and concentrating on understanding their importance [134] [253]. However, Strauss and Corbin [132] mention that the open and axial coding processes are not consecutive investigative procedures despite the fact that their purposes differ. As such, they happen both successively and simultaneously. At the axial coding stage, the connections between various classifications are investigated. The goal is to reassemble information that was broken up at the open coding stage keeping in mind the end goal to set up associations between the categories [134].
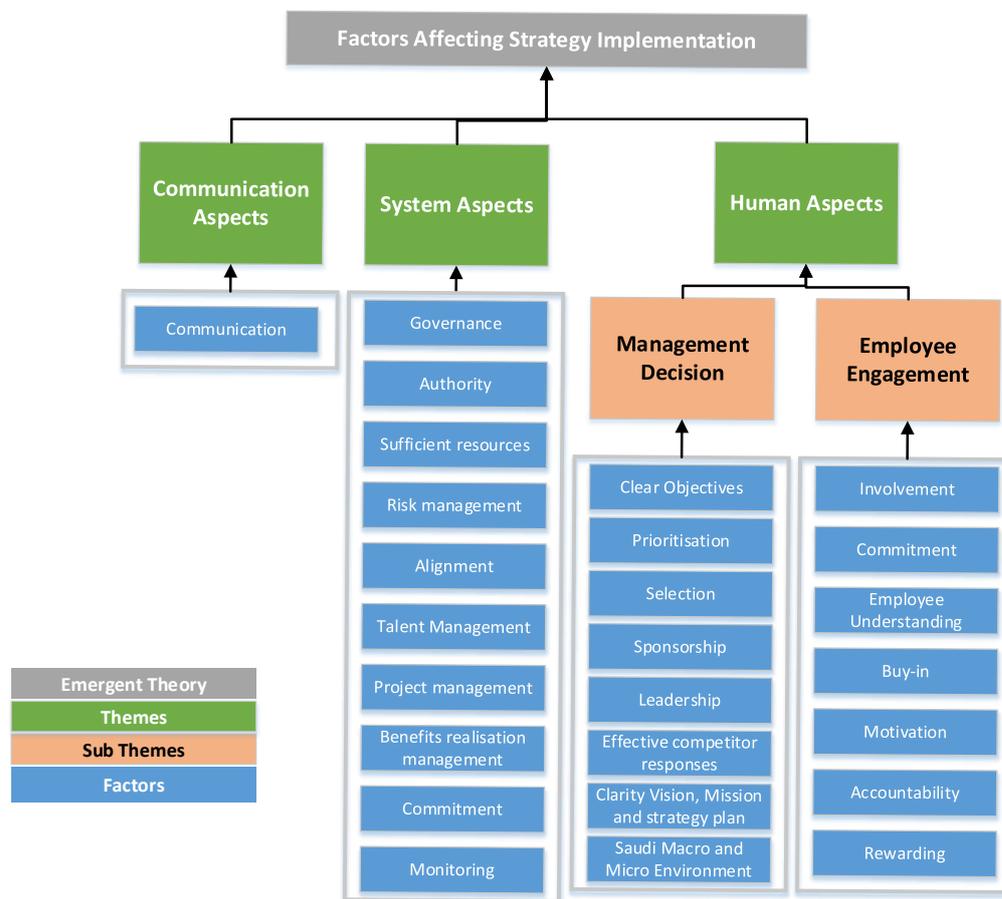
Figure 38: The main categories and related open categories from empirical findings

Figure **38**, also indicates that the themes (main categories) were created from one, seven, eight and ten factors (open categories). The results of the axial coding analytical process are the themes: Human Aspect, Systems Aspects and Communication Aspects.

7.2.2.2.1 Human Aspects

All organisations share a primary concern, namely human impacts form individuals whose roles and duties need to be considered and also when the individual moves from one group to another for specific task, their behaviour changes accordingly to predictability in social relationships. Morover, human influences have various dimensions which are uniquely intertwined with organisational culture and individual perceptions and characteristics. Nevertheless, it is a difficult and complicated task to identify reasoning as well as access and analyse human aspects, because they remain personal and subjective and often are dependent to a considerable degree upon the environment or context of the organisation in question. Several elements are inextricably linked within human aspects and between human aspects and the culture of the organisation concerned; individual viewpoints and characteristics are also obfuscating factors. Individuals working within an organisation can be placed into four categories: customers, management, teams, and individuals. Individuals can potentially transcend their organisational expectations and become uncontrollable forces within the organisation concerned. Indeed, as all individuals carry their personal concerns, skills, understandings, sentiments and behavioural patterns, these aspects are also dependant on their specific organisational role. Thus, their impact regarding effective implementation needs to be understood.

As a result of this, organisations need to tackle individuals and human aspects in a manner that is sensitive to their subjective nature; it is a challenge to quantify every element into a scale for gauging and measuring during strategic implementation. Furthermore, the standards, policies,

codes of conduct and processes are devised so that people can adhere to them. Policies are executed and carried out by individuals, and thus, such programmes are necessarily impacted by human elements during their implementation. Among the main effective success factors concerning strategy implementation, the human factor is one of the most important.

Furthermore, it is clear that influence of decision making in organizational leadership and management activities that impact creativity, growth and effectiveness, success, and goal accomplishments and employee engagement, where engaged employees are the 'backbone of good working environments. The next two sections illustrate all of this more precisely.

7.2.2.2.1.1Management Decision Theme

The most efficacious companies of the present day are those that make the most effective choices and subsequently act upon them. The main factor affecting the choices of the management of any firm is stakeholder interest, and this, above any other factor, determines corporate practice. The bottom line of growing and improved performance and profits determines and serves to measure the efficacy of the firm's managers, entrepreneurs and executives. If the factors affecting management decisions is the maximisation of shareholder value, then the decision outcomes become significant elements by which such choices are to be analysed. However, these factors were: clear objectives, prioritisation, selection, sponsorship, leadership, effective competitor responses, clarity vision, mission and strategy plan and Saudi macro and micro environments.

Efficacious choices are those that align with the organisation's strategic intent and marketing developments, which boost the firm's performance [254]. Further research has stated that efficacious decision-making means being transparent and obvious regarding the nature of the decision made and the subsequent and immediate action taken based on that decision [255]. As the competitiveness of an organisation can be increased according

to the execution and decision-making within the organisation, new research has unveiled some surprising conclusions. For example, about 15% of organisations possess the capacity to implement and make significant decisions with effective and efficacious outcomes [255].

Nevertheless, such decision-making shortcomings are representative of just a small aspect of the general issue because the extant research indicates that most such strategy decisions are likely to fail [255] [256].

Because of further limiting factors, such as time, visibility and cost, rational decision-making is not a practical proposition. Nevertheless, when all aspects needed to make a rational decision are in place, just 45% of managerial staff members follow their instincts when making important choices [256].

7.2.2.2.1.2 Employee Engagement Theme

In recent times, the subject of worker engagement and employee engagement has become a topic for debate and discussion. Organisations can benefit from employee engagement by several factors and the process path started from involvement, understanding, commitment, buy-in, motivation, accountability and ending by rewarding were tied to advantages such as revenue growth, improved corporate performance and increased staff retention rates and consumer satisfaction. Debate continues, however, concerning the managerial impact on employee engagement, among scholars and academics alike. Significant interest concerning worker engagement remains, and this is something that has been linked to a considerable amount of confusion and obfuscation within corporate research and academia. This has been attributed to the lack of a clear definition [257]. That is, the concept of employee engagement has been measured in several different ways.

7.2.2.2.2 Systems Aspects

Systems aspects, including the structure of the organisation, management strategy, and business model, also affect work. There are two levels of viewing an organisation as a system. At the human level, the descriptions of an organisation emphasise the self-reflexive quality of the organisation's image, the capability of creating, taking in and understanding symbols and the intricate representation of time and relationship.

In the theme, descriptions of the organisation emphasise the fact that the organisation consists of individuals in a social arrangement. The needs and motivations of the individual members of the organisation and the groups they form are important factors explaining organisational behaviours and processes. However, the processes needed to cover all aspects of a system's life cycle process from building effective governance frameworks with authority's matrixes for each one, allocate the sufficient resources include retaining and managing talent, a unified view of benefits realisation and linked it with project, risk management and appropriate KPIs that lead to transparency and traceability of monitoring and controlling.

Resultantly, individuals should adhere to the formulated guidelines, principles and policies that comprise an organisational structure or dynamic. Application strategies are crucially affected by the participation of individuals, given that they introduce the procedures. Strategic application's effectiveness or ineffectiveness is significantly shaped by human variables.

7.2.2.2.3 Communication Aspects

All interviewees said that communication plays a major role in strategy implementation to become successful. Communication can be defined as the sharing of information. Essentially, a sender/encoder sends information to a receiver/decoder. Communication in business can be internal (e.g., dealing with individual employees) or external (e.g., conversing with customers,

suppliers, etc.). Moreover, adequate communication within the organisation to convey dialogue between all stakeholders enhances the effectiveness and efficiency of the proposed changes in strategy planning and implementation. Moreover, communication needs to be open and efficacious, and managers need to guarantee an open, communicative context involving the following: first, top-down communication (from top management to middle managers and staff), second, bottom-up communication (from middle managers and staff to top management) and third, cross-communication (throughout various inter organisational departments).

It is essential to value the time frame of communication with all the activities and decision-making authorities undertaken in an organisation set against all the people or roles. The way of communicating is presented the clarity of message and right media and time to get the employees' acceptance of the strategy plan and encourage him to participate in implementation. To achieve a successful strategy implementation communication, play major role. Communication plan must be developed to all levels with the responsibility. Moreover, the plan must be considering the participants target, massage, time frame, type of media, measure the result and response accordingly to the outcomes to provide right information to market the implementation in order to create and maintain acceptance and achieved the organisation goals. The responsibility assignment matrix is also known as the RACI model. The four aspects are parameters used in decision making and is based on the following acronym: R (Responsible), A (Accountable), C (Consulted) and I (Informed). At each intersection of activity and role it is possible to assign someone who is responsible, accountable, consulted or informed for that activity or decision can't happen without communication. Communication is a key requirement for effective strategy implementation and organizational communication

plays an important role in training, knowledge dissemination and learning during the process of strategy implementation.

7.2.2.3 Selective Coding

At this stage, the researcher should derive key overarching themes for the whole dataset. These themes characterise key concepts in the analysis, and the researcher should consider the interpretive themes from the theoretical and/or a practical stance of the research. In other words, overarching themes are derived from the interpretative themes, but at a higher level of abstraction [134] [253]. In addition, King and Horrocks [253] suggest limiting the number of overarching themes, as much as the data allow, and indicate that two to five is the norm. They also state that a diagram might help the reader to understand how different levels of coding are related. Figure 39, completing "Stage gates" is required to ensure the basic success criteria for strategy implementation to ensuring quality and creating transparency.
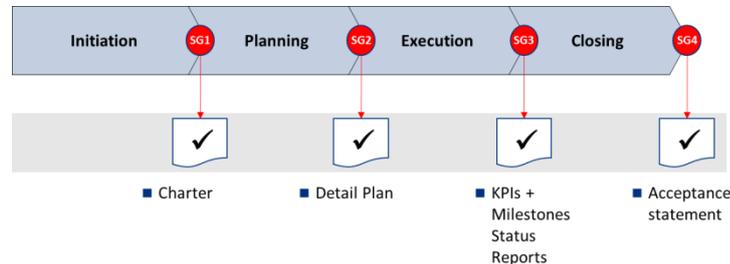
Figure 39: Strategy Execution Management Success Criteria

Consequently, strategy execution management success criteria explain more by six steps necessary for a successful strategy implementation in Table 9.

Table 9: Steps to Ensure Strategy Execution Results

	Steps		Result
A	Clear objectives	1) Define improvement objective 2) Determine main problem areas 3) Identify improvement levers	• Set improvement objectives for reducing non-conformance costs and increasing customer benefits • Define main problem areas and determine improvement levers by senior management • Initiate top-down improvement strategy with process objectives
B	Concrete measures	4) Define measures 5) Implement measures	• Systematically define and implement measures • Have senior management regularly monitor objective achievement
C	Clear consequences	6) Monitor progress	• Draw consequences

An equally significant aspect of further point to be considered that is the viewpoints of interviewees regard the positive driver's situation of Saudi strategy implementation. The identified drivers have been, as part of the grounded theory analysis, placed in one aspect named national power drivers, and each is discussed in the following sections.

7.2.2.3.1 Conscious change of Saudi leadership

The Saudi leadership wishes to change for the better through its people, content, and process. Support for the leadership vision is very important, as the success or failure is dependent on it. The vision of Saudi Arabia 2030 is to have a strong, thriving and stable country that provides opportunities for all and to make a tolerant country with Islam as its constitution. The vision will welcome and respect qualified individuals from across the globe. It will provide better opportunities for private sectors in terms of a better central position in Arab and Islamic nations, a better business environment, and leading investment capabilities. The Saudi economy will be going through a huge transformation from a commodity-based economy

to a technology-based economy. This means that the country is going to go through a massive change in terms of both cultural as well as economic aspects.

King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud said, 'My first objective is for our country to be a pioneering and successful global model of excellence, on all fronts, and I will work with you to achieve that' [189].

The Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman Al Saud (MBS) said, 'the difference between now and what we aspire for the 2030 Saudi vision is like the difference between these two phones'. Here, he was comparing two mobile phones, a very old mobile phone and a smartphone with full features.

'Saudi leader buy-in and support are crucial for successes'[137]

'We went through many difficulties, and if we had not had the passion and believed in our country, we would not have been able to sustain ourselves'.[138]

In Saudi Arabia, the king, being at the top of the hierarchy, provides the basic motivation for the fulfilment of any strategy.

7.2.2.3.2 Youth Nation

In 2016, the Saudi Arabia population was 70% youth [258]. The youth in Saudi Arabia represents a challenge as well as an opportunity. However, the country has a limited period in which to develop an expanded and younger workforce that can boost economic development and contribute to their society's social development.

These young people represent a huge opportunity. When youth take part in development, the following results occur:

- It strengthens the abilities of youth to meet their own needs;

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[137] T316
[138] E367

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- It avoids and mitigates vulnerabilities to environments that are unstable economically, politically or socially;
- It encourages ownership and intervention sustainability;
- It facilitates entry into target communities and the development of trust and social capital.

Saudi leaders are aware that the youth are assets. They also know that the young nation is a double-edged sword. That is, they can be used to destroy the country through youth-led conflict and crime, or they can take part in important activities and programmes in order to create a healthy economy, attract investors, promote social cohesion and become embedded in their communities. Moreover, young people are adept at finding new and creative solutions. They are vital to advancing the country in various areas and helping communities meet their needs for survival.

'That is why it was one of the main pillars in building Vision 2030, and the Saudi leaders are betting on them to build a brilliant future'.[139]

'We are Muslims, and most of the members of our society are young. We carry a message of peace for all the world, and we have the ambition to build a wonderful future for our country in the presence of an ambitious young leader like the Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman Al Saud'.[140]

Finally, the country needs to provide the basic requirements for youth and make sure that they are happy and motivated to work.

7.2.2.3.3 Country of Promising Investment Opportunities

Saudi Arabia has the greatest industrial output in the MENA region due to its various export-oriented industries. These include agrochemicals, oil and gas and food and beverages. Most of the participants in the economic category stated that the abundant raw materials were a disaster for Saudi Arabia. Additionally, Saudi Arabia is the largest oil producer within the

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[139] F518
[140] A224

Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and the world's second-largest oil producer after Russia. Thus, the oil sector is the main pillar of the Saudi economy. On the other hand, a vast majority (82%) of the respondents agreed that the economic situation of the country did contribute positively to the strategy implementation process.

Due to the current global oil price collapse, the Saudi government has rethought the contribution of its relatively weak non-oil and gas-related industries to the economy[141]. The Kingdom's 'Saudi Vision 2030' has identified these industries as a key area for development to help reduce the dependence of the Kingdom on hydrocarbon revenues and develop opportunities for employment for Saudi nationals in the private sector.

Figure 40: Saudi Vision 2030

The Vision's 2030 governance model established several bodies (e.g., the National Centre for Performance Measurement, the Project Management Office of the Council of Economic and Development Affairs) that will facilitate and assist the introduction, monitoring, and assessment of these programmes and the release of future programmes. Additionally, through the 'National Transformation Programme 2020,' aimed at executing the first phase of Saudi Vision 2030, the country intends to create over 450,000 private sector jobs and concentrate over SAR270 billion of content by 2020. Several other goals to be met by 2020 will only be achieved by developing

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[141] F518

the country's non-oil and gas-related industries. This will be done by increasing the following:

- Annual exports of non-oil commodities (from SAR185 billion to SAR330 billion);

- The contribution of the mining sector to GDP (from SAR64 billion to SAR97 billion);

- The number of private sector investments in less-developed regions with high potential (from zero to SAR28 billion);

- The percentage of local pharmaceutical manufacturing compared to total market value (from 20% to 40%);

- The number of basic manufacturing and transformation products (from 432 to 516);

- The total industrial production in Jubail, Al-Khair, Yanbu, Ras and Jazan (from 252 million tons to 309 million tons);

- The industrial and service value chains' local content and the centralisation of expertise in the atomic and renewable energy sectors; and

- The number of (a) organisations formed to advance local content (from 8 to 17); (b) technology companies developing from universities via the 'Innovative Companies Programme' (to 800); (c) localised and developed technologies in key sectors (to 125); and (d) Saudi-issued patents (from 700 to 5,000).

The programme uses new methods to pinpoint challenges, take advantage of opportunities, embrace useful planning tools, trigger the participation of the private sector, spur execution and assess performance. The programme has also set interim targets for the Vision's strategic objectives to make sure a solid basis for government action is established and guarantee continuous inventive planning, application and follow-up systems at the national level[142].

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[142] T159

However, the continuous privatisation of state-owned assets, such as leading companies, property, and other assets, will enable the Saudi government to earn new and diverse revenues. This will improve the country's economic stability and financial resources, and these will be reinvested to ensure a positive long-term impact. The Saudi Riyal is one of the most stable currencies in the world, and its exchange value has not changed significantly in the last thirty years. The main reasons for investing in Saudi Arabia are as follows:

- Saudi Arabia is one of the 25 largest economies in the world, and it is the largest in the MENA region.

- It is one of the fastest growing countries in the world. Its per-capita income is predicted to rise between 2012 and 2020 from USD 25,000 to USD 33,500.

- Given the low cost of energy and industrial land owing to substantial subsidies and incentives, the country has considerable cost advantages.

- It offers other GCC and MENA economies duty-free access, and it boasts quality transport and infrastructure links. These will be augmented by a national rail system soon.

Thus, those who choose to invest in Saudi Arabia enjoy business clusters and value chains that are continuously developing, which differentiates the country from its neighbours and other emerging economies. According to the World Economic Forum, Saudi Arabia ranks sixth and 24th globally for Local Supplier Quantity and both Value Chain Breadth and Production Process Sophistication, respectively. Saudi Arabia is already one of the 20 major economies in the world, and it is well established, competitive and efficient. However, its domestic industries (e.g., energy, chemicals, transportation) offer industrial projects with excellent cost savings opportunities. Hence, Saudi leaders are open to all levels of investment opportunities in the following areas:

- Oil, gas, and petrochemicals
- Power (nuclear/renewable energy)

- Water and wastewater
- Financial and specialised services
- Education, training and human resources development
- Mass transport infrastructure (new links for rail, metro, and bus)
- Environmental services and technologies
- Information and communication technologies
- Retail and luxury goods
- Security and defence
- Healthcare and life sciences
- Mining

7.3   Emergent research themes

The general goal of this research was to consider practices connected or concerned with the execution of certain strategies, as well as to assess their overall utilisation and implementation in the non-oil and gas sector in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the organisations operating therein.

This was done to develop a new explanatory theory that corroborates the strategies above [125]. This phenomenon was assessed and explored from several participant viewpoints; hence, data collection and analysis, especially in the early stages, was the primary focus regarding such elements relevant to the focus of this study and aspects important to the study participants.

Data collation and analysis reflection and the provision of an overview of all data, both primary and secondary, led to a better and more comprehensive understanding of the problems and points noted by participants. This facilitated a guiding framework concerning the stakeholders and regulation relationships of the non-oil and gas sector. These assisted the researcher with the analysis and collation of relevant subsequent information and data. The current study focused on these emerging themes:

1. Participant viewpoints concerning non-oil and gas sector strategy implementation
2. Management, measurement, and reports concerning performance and execution and viewpoints and opinions thereof
3. KPI, measures and metrics and the extent of their use
4. Strategy implementation, performance management and strategies within the perceptions of those working and affiliated with the non-oil and gas sector
5. Stakeholder and governing groups and their perceptions concerning their influence and role
6. Organisation management need to build and integrate internal and external competencies of dynamic abilities to address rapidly changing environments
7. Further elements and influences on the non-oil and gas sector.

Emerging research themes became increasingly evident and obvious as the analysis progressed from open data towards selective coding and axial coding of grounded theory data. After a time, a substantive theory evolved from these preliminary data.
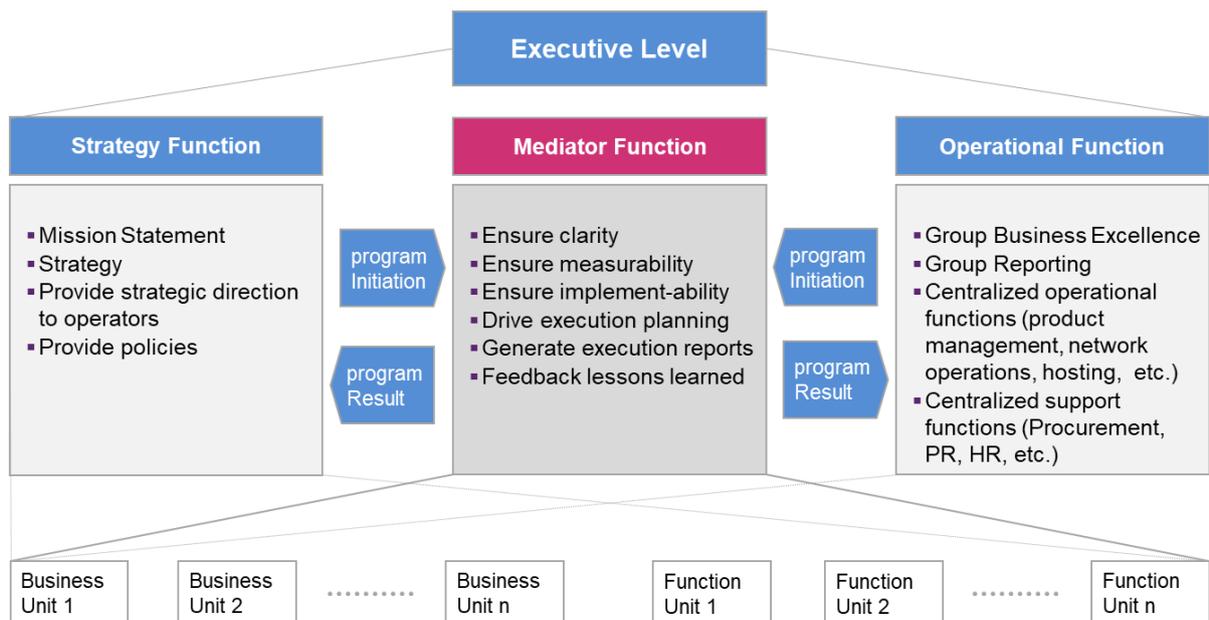
Figure 41: Missing function between Strategy and operation

As a result, it is clear that there is a missing function between the stage of planning and operation, which plays an important role to make sure the ensure clarity of strategic plan and it is feasible. This function provides the top management with a report that enables them to take the right decision in the right time according to the changes that occur in the market and reality, as shown on Figure 41.

The basic goal of any organisation is to produce product or services to customers, this has be done to allow the organisation to make profit. Therefore, any organization that works must be influenced by the environment, the culture of society and the systems in which it operates. In another way, ecological system[143] of human begins affected by their immediate surroundings of environment contexts and hence their links with culture.

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[143] Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory: "Ecological systems theory is an approach to study of human development that consists of the 'scientific study of the progressive, mutual accommodation, throughout the life course, between an active, growing human being, and the changing properties of the immediate settings in which the developing person lives, as this process is affected by the relations between these settings, and by the larger contexts in which the settings are embedded" [305].

7.4 Summary

This chapter has described issues and factors influencing the strategy implementation processes in Saudi non-oil and gas industries, drawing from the different cases explored. These issues were organised and placed into four main categories (themes), management decisions, employee engagement, organisational systems, and communication, over the whole process of strategy implementation from initiation to outcome. It included the codes (i.e., the 26 factors relevant to the core phenomenon) obtained by following the open coding process, examining the interview transcripts, observing participants, and analysing the important documents relevant to the core phenomenon. The next chapter will summarise and discuss the main findings of this research.

Chapter 8

Research Discussions

8.1 Introduction

After introducing the reader to the research, summarising what has already been conducted in the field, presenting the research methodology adopted, and providing a detailed description and analysis for the data collected, this chapter will summarise and discuss the research findings. In other words, the findings of the empirical work conducted in Saudi Arabia are presented. First, the final model of the research, after validation in the Saudi context, is demonstrated. The main contribution of the model is that it is comprehensive. That means, as mentioned before, it covers the whole strategy implementation process from start to finish and includes factors that affect the strategy implementation process. After that, the interactions amongst themes' inputs result in the overall 'strategic footprint' of the organisation. The relationship between the themes that emerged from the analysis illustrates the interaction points to ensure strategy implementation ability by working closely with strategy planning, drive execution planning and performance that expose how a given organisation is doing in terms of its strategic implementation and performance efficiency and effectiveness. Four main reflections and considerations are discussed and form the main issues identified from the study. Firstly, the comparison of strategy implementation factors is highlighted between the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) and Empirical Study Findings (ESF). Secondly, the strategy formulation and implementation dichotomy is discussed. Thirdly, the Saudi cultural issues are highlighted. Lastly, the comparison between the long term ambition and action plan focus are addressed. At the end, a summary of the whole chapter is presented.

8.2 Comparison between Factors of strategy implementation in the Literature reviews and Empirical Study

The detailed SLR and empirical findings results provided very useful information, which could improve Saudi Arabian economic performance in the non-oil and gas sectors. Table 10 demonstrates the comparison between the SLR and ESF.

Table 10: Comparison between weights calculated SLR and ESF

No.	Strategy Factors	SLR	ESF
1	Clarifying strategy plans	4.2%	4.1%
2	Setting SMART objectives	3.9%	5.5%
3	Communication	5.6%	5.7%
4	Employee understanding	4.8%	5.7%
5	Sufficient resources	4.6%	4.1%
6	Benefits realisation management	5.3%	1.1%
7	Accountability	5.3%	3.4%
8	Talent Management	2.5%	0.7%
9	Involvement	5.3%	5.0%
10	Buy-in	5.3%	5.7%
11	Prioritisation	3.7%	5.7%
12	Selection	3.7%	5.7%
13	Alignment	3.0%	4.8%
14	Project management	2.1%	1.4%
15	Risk management	4.6%	0.9%
16	Monitoring	3.0%	5.7%
17	Key Performance Indicators	3.0%	1.8%
18	Leadership	5.3%	3.3%
19	Sponsorship	5.3%	3.7%
20	Commitment	4.8%	4.9%
21	Effective competitor responses to strategy	2.3%	0.9%
22	Authority	4.6%	4.2%
23	Governance	4.6%	3.4%
24	Motivation	2.6%	3.4%
25	Rewarding	2.0%	5.7%
26	Saudi Macro and Micro Environment	-	2.9%
	Total	100%	100%

Table **10** provides a comparison between the factors affecting the strategy implementation identified in the SLR and ESF. It is clear that all the factors present in the SLR appear also in the ESF. However, there is a new factor found to be affecting the strategy implementation, which is the "Macro and Micro Environment".

This factor contains 19 codes, which can be found in Appendix (4); all of these codes are related to the regional environment (in this case the Saudi environment). A few codes, discussed in the next section, have contributed to strategy implementation failure. These codes include Wasitah (favouritism – for details see 5.7.4.5), which is influenced by *Stakeholder influence* bias and *Saudisation* (job security) which in turn are influenced by *Political factors*. *Wasitah* and *Saudisation* are both impacting on *organisation readiness* which limits the organisation to functioning in an ad hoc manner as opposed to working to achieve strategic goals and objectives. Wasitah has a double impact; an individual who is appointed through Wasitah is highly likely to possess a lack of skills and be deficient in the ability to fulfil their role within the organisation. This would mean a lack of knowledge and skills about a business process which then leads to setting unrealistic targets for the organisation's goals. This potentially leads to situations where the manager acts opportunistically to falsify results in order to meet targets in a way that does not benefit the project stakeholder or the intended beneficiary. In the event of an audit, the manager may be inclined to shift blame toward other colleagues in order to avoid potentially adverse and career-limiting consequences.

The main culprit is *Wasitah,* as most of the problems highlighted in the previous section are linked to *Wasitah* directly or indirectly. To tackle this problem head-on and to ensure there is a clear policy on a strategic level on *Wasitah,* one way would be to introduce an independent assessment, created in conjunction with strategic, operational and enabler's management, of a particular role.

Saudisation has been introduced by the Saudi government to tackle unemployment in Saudi Arabia; through this, the government is striving to improve the skills capabilities of Saudi nationals in order to improve their employment opportunities. However, it can be argued that the Saudisation process has been too rapid and that it should be implemented gradually where employees are able to adopt an appropriate training and knowledge transfer process, to improve their capability, skills and abilities, to match the organisation competencies at each level. This should be implemented in a way that is not detrimental to the organisation's goals.

In the comparison of the weight of the factors in SLR and ESF, many observations were identified. The first is that the factors which were considered in SLR did not influence the strategy implementation with the same weight rate as in the ESF because of different social settings and environments. The second observation shows that there are four factors of weight smaller than or equal to one in the ESF, but they are much higher for the SLR. These factors are the *benefits realisation management*, *talent management, risk management* and *effective competitor responses to strategy.* Saudisation also has the effect that many foreign workers are leaving Saudi Arabia, as the government tries to improve employment opportunities for Saudi nationals. However, the Saudi government is also looking into making policies that will attract highly skilled individuals to come to Saudi Arabia in order to boost its technology sector.

One possible reason is that Saudi Arabia is a developing country and controls most large organisations by appointed the BoD and CEO, which leads to serve the stakeholders' goals that sometimes do not align with company objectives and *benefits*. Other reasons could be the *Wasitah* (sometimes referred to locally as vitamin W); the outcome of this is that within organisations, those in authority are able (and expected) to place

friends and family (to whom they are socially obligated) in positions that might rightly be better occupied by others with more skills and talent, which means there is a lack of attention to those factors that affect strategy implementation.

One of the key findings from this research was to combine 25 factors and their weights from the SLR and the experiment conducted in Saudi Arabian companies (ESF), as listed in Table 10. However, to identify generalisation of the findings across Western countries, the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA) and Saudi Arabia, see Table 11.

Table 11: Comparison between the factors in ESF (KSA) to SLR (West Countries)

No.	Strategy Factors	Western Economies	MENA	KSA
1	Clarifying strategy plans	√	√	√
2	Setting SMART objectives	√	√	√
3	Communication	√	√	√
4	Employee understanding	√	√	√
5	Sufficient resources	√	√	√
6	Benefits realisation management	√	√	√
7	Accountability	√	√	√
8	Talent Management	√	√	√
9	Involvement	√	√	√
10	Buy-in	√	√	√
11	Prioritisation	√	√	√
12	Selection	√	√	√
13	Alignment	√	√	√
14	Project management	√	√	√
15	Risk management	√	√	√
16	Monitoring	√	√	√
17	Key Performance Indicators	√	√	√
18	Leadership	√	√	√
19	Sponsorship	√	√	√
20	Commitment	√	√	√
21	Effective competitor responses to strategy	√	√	√
22	Authority	√	√	√
23	Governance	√	√	√
24	Motivation	√	√	√
25	Rewarding	√	√	√
26	Saudi Macro and Micro Environment	≠	≈	=

Table 11 shows that the results of all the interviews were conducted in the context of the KSA, which might make a generalisation of the findings more questionable. However, there is a good probability that these findings will be relevant, in a similar context, such as the GCC region where most countries have more similarities than differences. The findings might also be applicable in other Arab countries in the Middle East, particularly in the MENA region, such as those who have a monarchy type of government, e.g. Jordan, among others. Also, the study provided an excellent overview of the influencing factors on strategy impregnation processes that could support non-oil and gas organisations in many different countries.

8.3 Final Framework

In this section, the final version of the model is demonstrated. The development of an applicable, practical and integrative framework has been used to explore the real empirical situation in the Saudi non-oil and gas industry, which is built on three main pillars:

1) Strategy Definition
    - A clear definition of why the plan is being undertaken.
    - A clear definition of the scope.
    - A clear outline of the approach on how the plan will develop, which phases it will go through, how the organisation will define the plan and how the plan will be managed during its lifecycle.
2) Execution against plan and deviation handling
3) Focus on communication:
    - Commit to baseline
    - Commit to completion and acceptance
    - Interaction through communication with the ecological system (environment, culture and systems) in a positive way

The focus on communication and commitment to baseline, completion, and acceptance refers to ensuring that there are agreements and commitments in place about what is going to happen and when, and there is a consistent update on progress and a pre-defined agreement on what will constitute completion. Moreover, the organisation's external environment of systems, culture and environment has a significant impact on human interactions with the strategic plan when it comes to implementation.

Figure 42 shows the SIMPLE framework indicating that the organisation should know the cluster of factors of work it is engaging in and the social setting of the environment, where it is at any given point in time, and once there are deviations from the plan, they should be flagged early and as often as necessary for corrective action. In addition to these, a SIMPLE framework should be deliverable (result) oriented, which could help in capturing the objectives (initiation stage), developing the targets (planning stage), and delivering the results (execution stage). The relationship between the SIMPLE framework that emerged from the analysis of the data used Urquhart's [259] approach. For example, using terms like: "leads to", "To improve" and "Results in".

The initial and final frameworks have been analysed here in more detail, which will provide vital information regarding the discovered elements. In the SLR the environmental factors were missing, however, which was discovered through the ESF; a full comparison of these factors has been discussed and analysed in Table 10.

Ecosystem "maturity", "education", "young population", "supportive culture", "conservative and religious" have a significant impact on the success of strategies as well as their implementation. Thus, when building strategies, it is important to take these factors into account as well as deal with the variables quickly and professionally through the existence of alternative plans, such as those used in the Middle East region.

Initially the framework was formed via the SLR; however, when the ESF was undertaken, it shows that the environmental, culture and systems elements were found to be very significant elements in the Saudi context. A further analysis is shown in Figure 42, where the link has been expressed visually. This figure also demonstrates the interface between human to environment and culture to systems.
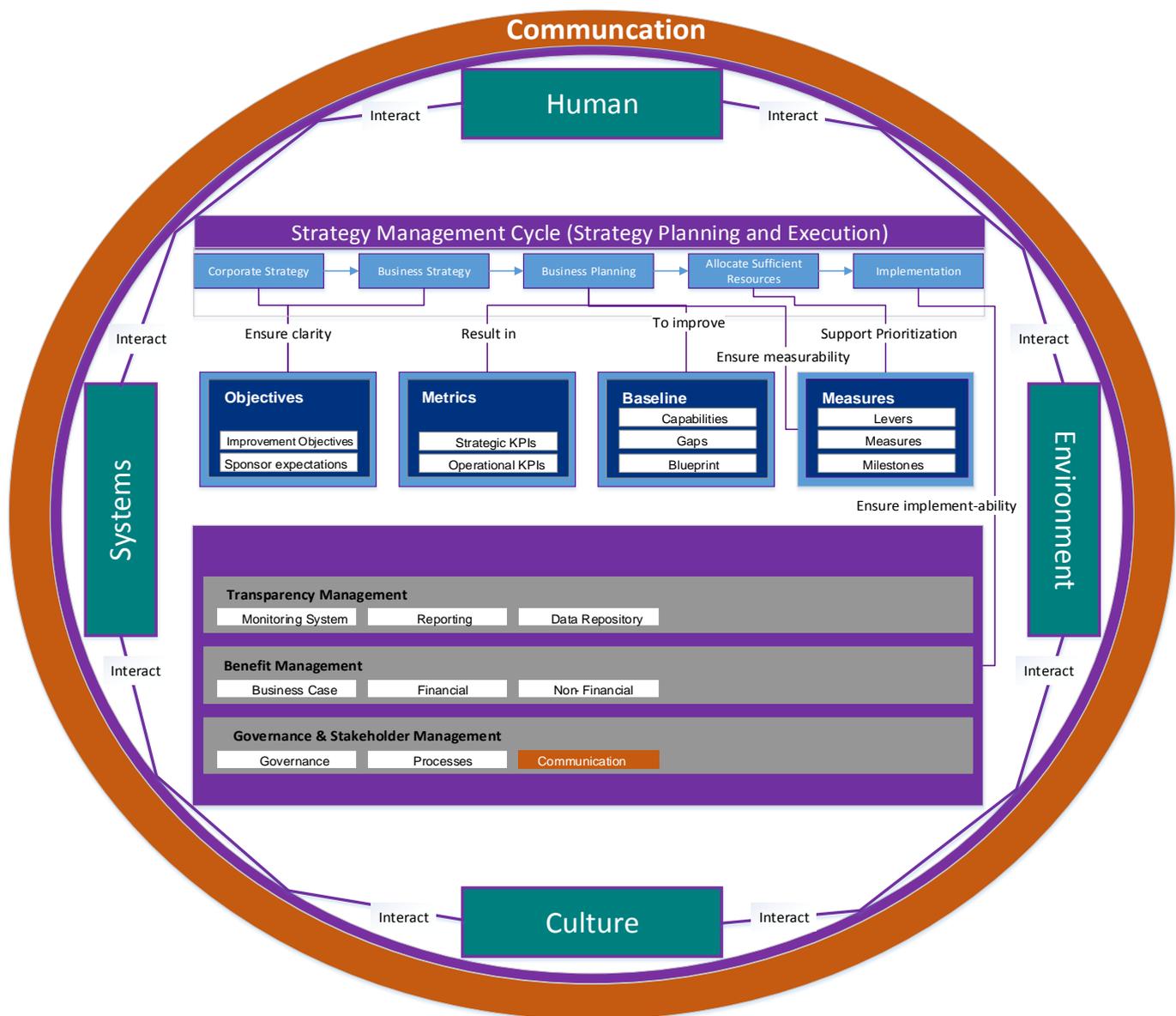
Figure 42: Strategy Implementation Integrative Framework (SIMPLE) process

Furthermore, the SIMPLE framework is a set of tools and processes that play the role of integration between strategy and operational function to ensure execution activities are aligned with objectives and translate a strategy and business plan into reality to avoid the *Greenish status*[144] of business.

8.4 Interactions in SIMPLE Framework

The interactions amongst SIMPLE Framework' inputs will result in the overall 'strategic implementation footprint' of the organisation. The core category or theme is 'the central phenomenon around which all the other categories are integrated' [153]. The integration process here is not dissimilar to that in axial coding, but it is performed at a higher level and therefore leads to a more abstract category than that of axial coding. Strauss and Corbin [153], assert that to develop relationships among categories, the researcher should find this relationship in the actual data he or she collected. They suggest that the researcher keeps asking questions such as: *What phenomena are reflected over and over again in your data? What essential message about this research do you want to pass on to others? What do you consider important about this area? What was mentioned frequently by participants?* These questions may help the researcher to develop the core category.

The SIMPLE framework explains that strategy implementation must be involved in the planning phase to ensure implement-ability. The interaction points ensure strategy implement-ability by working closely with strategy planning and driving execution planning and performance efficiency and effectiveness. Therefore, the level of interaction and integration within the SIMPLE framework leads to the interdependence of all organisational

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[144] Greenish status refers to displaying a positive figure which is not indicative of the real situation of the organisation's performance

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constituents positively or negatively and that interaction can be described through four stages as follows:

1) Proactive (Winner Stage)

Strategy is about the future, i.e. a plan or goals you want to achieve using resources allocation. It is a fact that without a goal you cannot score. It is related to top management's business. These ideas were also consistent with what was found during the research fieldwork conducted in Saudi Arabia. For example, a majority of 76% of interviewees identified strategy as a sort type of future decision made using a set of guidelines or plan. 100% of the respondents agreed that strategy is related to top management. Although this was not something they explicitly mentioned during their description of strategy, many of their responses implicitly indicated this.

It was apparent that, in almost all cases, employees are highly influenced by the performance of the people around them, especially the top management. In many cases, when the leader was ahead of his team, dynamic, self-motivated, proactive and/or funny, this was directly reflected in the whole team. Another important driver was the availability of a monitoring and control system to provide feedback on the process and to take necessary actions. Moreover, to make the feedback provided effective, being innovative, agile, and able to reinvent themselves according to needs, were all considered important drivers. As well, a crucial driver highlighted by most organisations was the importance of making the workplace a comfortable one to work in, ensuring basic employee needs are met and making them happy to be part of the organisation. This had a direct effect on positive employee capabilities, skills, ownership, contribution, and pro-activity towards the business.

The win stage illustrates the successful opportunities that occur when the effective planning by leadership delineates steering and working groups with specific and clear remits, clear lines of governance and accountability,

and effective project management, with efficient strategy implementation processes to accomplish strategic objectives and goals.

2) Suggestive (Pie in the sky Stage)

Successful strategy implementation begins with clear strategy formulation and applicability in reality by top management. A strategy describes the desired future state of the organisation. It is safe to say that even a great strategy is worth nothing if it cannot be implemented [30]. Top management should use their authority to match their words with actions and demonstrate their commitment to the organisation's strategy. Top management control and support are the primary elements that influence strategy implementation activities within the company. The level of support by the management depends on the belief from one executive to another, but if they overload their managers and the rest of the staff, then the results will be less than expected.

Strategic dreams could be a good strategy because it is an imaginary that cannot be achieved in reality due to being viewed in the light of the harsh present tactical opportunities. Moreover, strategies too often fail because more is expected of them than what they can deliver.

3) Reactive (Firefight Stage)

The reaction stage occurs from the operational staff in the absence of a clear and integrated plan and unified system to avoid risk and deal with current situations, which leads to failure to implement the strategy. For the occurrence of reaction, this stage requires having a distinct operating team driving the handling of developments in the current market for the short-term but relying on experience as well as guesswork.

Many participants reflected that the lack of a unified system, integration, and cooperation, was, in fact, a major problem, causing many negative consequences, and having undesirable effects on the whole process of strategy implementation. It has increased the dependence on always having a visible role model at the front to make up for the absence of a

strong system. It affected starting or initiating the process, as many respondents said that when they wanted to start a process, they did not know where to begin. Likewise, it affected the process in terms of arrangement and transparency, which affected quality control and information dissemination. Finally, it also affected the outcome of the process as just mentioned, for example, by participants who highlighted that this issue specifically had sometimes turned a successful case into a failures.

4) Inactive (Loser Stage)

This represents lead management's decision to observe and carefully study all the past, current, and future options, and then to draft out a strategy in terms of overall guiding 'decisions' in the presence of a clear process and engaged staff. In healthy organisations, the workforce 'Teams' should be able to translate the issued guiding strategy into 'Knowledge' that is vital for them to further perform as expected. Workforce teams, if they are having a clear knowledge of the ultimate high-profile targets of the organisation, and being empowered by the necessary sets of processes, should be able to apply day to day performance 'Tools' to achieve the previously set KPIs.

When this occurs, due to an unclear or vague plan and the staff of the organisation being inefficient, the result will be loss and failure of the organisation. This loser stage indicates that the organisation is 'inefficient' in transferring the same higher profile strategic thinking into an applicable set of processes and procedures that teams and people can follow. Strategy content refers to plan and action. Poor or vague strategy and bad execution will lead to failure. The most common causes of failure are poor integration planning and execution.

For instance, the lack of maturity and education and its consequences of lacking competencies, quality, experience, robust process, and arrangement

systems, as well as underdeveloped, not well thought-out, subjective, not comprehensive, and uncoordinated systems, rules, regulations, and uneducated decisions in the organisation, all lead to the failure of strategy implementation. Another important issue, that was frequently raised, and that could be considered a consequence of the absence of a robust, comprehensive and transparent system, rules and regulations, is networking and social relations. The existing literature shows that the absence of such a system or its weakness could cause corruption and bribery, among other unhealthy signs [259]. The interesting part in Wang's study [260], arising from the lack of such a system, was the vitality of networking and social relations and their effect on the entire strategy implementation process. That is, in all these levels, the person with authority is theoretically the one that introduces rules and regulations, and most of the time does so with good intentions. It is then in the execution where things start to go wrong on all three levels.

Strategic Implementation Assessment Matrix:

All the previous four stages can be summarised by noting that there is a strong relationship between strategic planning and implementation that affects both of them in the success and sustainability of the business organisation, as shown in Figure 43.

Figure 43: Strategic implementation assessment matrix

Figure 43, the findings show a direct proportion between strategy planning and implementation; whenever the planning is more feasible and attractive for the implementation members, the more successful it is in achieving the organisation's objectives and vice versa. The organisation should determine what it is engaging in, where it is at any given point in time and cost, and once there are deviations against the plan, they should be flagged early as needing corrective action. In this matrix, it will help the organisation management to assess the current stage of the organisation's situation by using the pre-strategy execution checklist tool from the SIMPLE framework Appendix (7); to improve and achieve optimisation success and even better results.

8.5 Reflections and considerations on research findings

This section provides concluding remarks and reflections on these main issues identified from the fieldwork.

8.5.1 Strategy formulation and implementation

The literature reviewed has discussed different dichotomies of the strategic management field (see Chapter 3 for more details). An interesting aspect was the well-known debate on strategy formulation/implementation relationships. Although the traditional school used to differentiate between the two terms and consider them as two separate phases, the more contemporary school disagrees with that. It was clear that more contemporary process scholars such as Mintzberg and later Pettigrew, adopted the view of the continuous interplay between the two phases [261]. With that said, the literature review indicated that the dominant view in the field is one that still very much differentiates between strategy formulation and implementation [14]. This was expected as the majority of the literature is still influenced heavily by the classic content school. An interesting finding was that most interviews analysed in this research agreed with this idea as well: 85% of the respondents claimed that, in their case, strategy formulation and implementation were two separate phases.

8.5.2 Saudi Cultural Setting

Major issues identified within this theme include a low level of *maturity and education*, a *young population*, *supportive culture*, *conservative* and *religious* (e.g., lower workload during Ramadan, spiritual belief, gender issues, among others). For example, there was a clear issue with people's (i.e., at the individual level) maturity and education level. This might be because of the circumstance that Saudi Arabia is still considered a developing country [262]. In fact, the government is aware of that issue, which is why $373 billion was spent between 2010 and 2014 on social development and infrastructure projects to ensure the advancement of Saudi Arabia's economic development [263]. Another example is the government's increasing investments in education, for instance, 25% of the kingdom budget is currently allocated for education [264]. Another example is the government's increasing investments in education, for instance, 25%

of the Kingdom's budget is currently allocated for education [263]. Another attribute to the relatively low maturity and education level is the nature of the country, which is mostly uninhabited, sandy desert [265]. In the south of the Kingdom, the Rub Al-Khali (which means in English the Empty Quarter), is considered the largest sand desert in the world [266].

This issue of low maturity and education levels has affected almost all other problems identified in the study. Therefore, low maturity and education has an impact on community's acceptance of professional practitioners, which leads to a lack of competencies, quality, and experience. Also, it makes the need for the presence of a role model, who is always at the front, to follow, crucial. On an organisational level, it has an impact on the lack of a robust process and arrangement system. In addition, it affects the preference of top management to depend on systems, rather than people; these were systems in which, most of the time, there was a lack of confidence. Finally, on the country level, the issue that has had a direct effect and is the biggest problem is the process/procedures, rules, and regulations that are underdeveloped, not well thought out, subjective, not comprehensive and uncoordinated.

Another issue or effect that arose as a result of the context was the widespread Bedouin culture in which support and commitment were examples of consequences which were frequently mentioned by participants. Bedouin attitudes to religion can be very conservative. This consequently caused a more conservative view of the way religion was followed. That is why many participants said that religion affected the strategy implementation process regarding belief, partnerships preferences, and even rules and regulations; for example, reducing workloads for all public and private organisations during the entire holy month of Ramadan, and leaving time for worshipping Allah. Another example is the prevalent constraint in the mixing of genders.

8.5.3 Long Term Plan Ambition vs. Action Plan Focus

Most participants reflected their understanding of strategy as a long-term future form of planning; in reality, or practically, this was completely the opposite. This might be in line with the requirements of today's more dynamic and complex world, which requires agility and frequent changes. Hence, organisations, in general, have been forced to shorten their previously long-term strategic plan and vision. However, the truth is that non-oil and gas organisations are more specifically forced to have an even shorter-term vision as they face more change in politics and laws, rules and regulations. In the KSA, there are no political parties or national elections, and it is the King who also takes the role of Prime Minister. As a result, legal rules and regulations are mostly consequences of political stances, i.e., actually, in line with the Machiavellian strategic perspective which states that policy follows power [267]. The majority of participants considered the political force as having overall positive influences on the strategy implementation process, whereas the legal force was considered as having an overall negative influence on the strategy implementation process. Hence, it was clear that there was a gap between these two forces. The main findings indicate that, although the majority of the initial political aims, intention, and even orders, had positive and supportive purposes, their execution and consequences were not up to expectations. As a result, the affiliate legal rules and regulations had an overall negative influence on the strategy implementation process.

Moreover, other issues, like the lack of maturity and education, and clear rules and regulations, forced the time span to be even shorter, e.g., the lack of maturity and education and its consequences of lacking competencies, quality, experience, robust process, and arrangement systems, as well as underdeveloped, not well thought out, subjective, not comprehensive, and uncoordinated systems, rules, regulations, and uneducated decisions. All

these issues might have forced the focus of the organisation to be more short-term and reactive instead of being long-term and proactive.

8.6 Summary

This chapter summarised the main findings of this research. First, based on the findings of the empirical works, the final framework was presented. Second, the relationship is elaborated among themes that influence the strategy implementation processes. Third, there has been further discussion of findings regarding strategy formulation and implementation. The next chapter presents the conclusion of this research.

Chapter 9

Conclusion and Recommendations

9.1 Introduction

After introducing the reader to the research, reviewing relevant literature, presenting the research methodology adopted, providing a detailed description and analysis of the data collected, and summarising and discussing the research findings, this chapter will report the conclusions. This will be done first by reviewing the whole research process, then the research, theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions will be listed. Finally, the research limitations are discussed, and recommendations for future research are provided.

9.2 Research overview

In today's dynamic world, developing a strategic plan to maintain or increase an organisation's competency is important. However, this could not be achieved if an organisation is unable to understand the entire strategy implementation process and what could affect it positively or negatively. Despite the increasing amount of research stressing the criticality of the topic, this area of research is still considered complicated, underdeveloped, with complications and influences coming from a wide variety of disciplines.

This research aimed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the strategy implementation process, to develop a more holistic approach framework and to use that framework to explore the process of strategy implementation in an under-researched context (i.e., the Saudi non-oil and gas industry). To achieve this aim, the research therefore focused on answering the following questions:

1. What are the factors that influence strategy implementation processes?
2. How do decision makers in Saudi non-oil and gas organisations perceive the factors that influence the process of strategy implementation?
3. To what extent can a comprehensive framework help in understanding the strategy implementation process in Saudi non-oil and gas organisations?

In Chapter one, the introduction, the research background and significance were identified. The fragmented nature of research in the area was identified; there is no comprehension as to what caused the strategy to fail and how this could be avoided in the future. This study will investigate and explore the crucial factors of strategy implementation and which factors dominate and require better management in order to have a successful strategy implementation in the Saudi non-oil and gas organisations. Therefore, a clear need to explore different types of social settings and in a new, unexplored context, was then highlighted. The research aims, objectives, and questions were then listed.

In Chapter two, the Literature Review showed that strategy has been researched for decades in academia as well as within industry. This chapter started with an overview and explained the strategic definition and types for any organisation to stay competitive. It then described strategic management and process, starting with the four main steps of the process; these steps provided the foundation for understanding strategic management and the process of strategy implementation. Thereby, strategy implementation barriers, problems, obstacles and the reasons why many organisations fail to implement the strategy, in order to achieve theoretical sensitivity.

As this study follows a grounded theory approach, this chapter was written before collecting the data to obtain a general idea of strategy implementation change without aiming to review the extant literature in great depth. This ensured that data were collected without being influenced by or leading the study to a specific area, while ignoring others.

Chapter three, the Second Stage of the Literature Review, took place during and after analysing the data, and it relied on the findings of the study, so it was extensive and in-depth. This was intended to allow a better understanding of the findings and explain them with theoretical sensitivity. This chapter aimed to provide a general understanding of strategy implementation and illustrated the issues related to execution failure. In this sense, the chapter demonstrated the importance of strategy implementation by considering the process of execution and the factors causing failures. The chapter started with an SLR for strategy implementation and then went through the perspectives of strategy implementation.

Chapter four, Research Methodology, is comprised of four main parts. The first part presented a brief overview of the philosophical paradigms within the field of strategy implementation, then several research approaches, methods, and different types of data collection were summarised. The second section provided a brief description of the methodology selected for this study, along with justifications for its choice. It provided justifications for the selection of an interpretative philosophical paradigm, over positivist and critical philosophical paradigms. It then justified the selection of a qualitative approach, instead of a quantitative one, and also clarified the reasons for picking case studies instead of other alternative qualitative methods. At the conclusion, the motives behind the data collected through semi-structured interviews, documents and field notes were discussed. The third section provided a more detailed description of the different types of

data collected. Finally, the last part described the sequence and details of how the data were analysed.

Chapter five, Research Context, Site, and Culture, presented an overview of the research context (i.e., the KSA). This included a background to the KSA, touching on a number of characteristics (e.g., history, political, economic, social, technological, environmental, rules and regulations), and outlining some of the recent initiatives introduced that focus on and support the non-oil and gas industry. Following that, a specific section highlighted the importance of focusing on the social settings of Saudi culture.

Chapter six was the research journey of Data Collection and Verification. The data collection started with three focus groups, each comprising five individuals. At that stage, the data collected were for validating both the research problem and the scale of the problem. This was followed by 25 individual interviews to investigate the influencing factors of the strategy implementation in Saudi non-oil and gas organisations. It began with eight interviews as a pilot study vehicle for acquisition in the early stages of the research, to frame questions and collect background information on strategy implementation and tailor an efficient research instrument. It was followed by ten intensive interviews to obtain an understanding of the current situation and capture all the factors that are affecting strategy execution at Saudi non-oil and gas organisations. At the end of this 18th interview, the point of saturation was reached, but just to be sure the interviews went further, with 25 participants, proving that data saturation had been reached, and no more factors were discovered, or any additional new information had been attained. Finally, the data collection ended with two focus groups with UK experts in the strategy implantation field, to group the factors (open categories) into the correct main category in respect of the identification and rectification processes, which are capable of completely explaining a phenomenon.

Chapter seven, Research Findings from the empirical findings and discussion, provided a detailed description and analysis of the collected data. Influenced by the literature review and the issues that evolved during the collection of data, this research used the previously identified conceptual lens to explore and organise the influencing factors of the strategy implementation process in the Saudi non-oil and gas industry. The findings were organised into three main themes: management decision, employee engagement, and organisational systems.

Chapter eight, Research Discussions, encapsulates and discusses the empirical research findings for the fieldwork conducted. In the beginning, a SIMPLE Integrative Framework for effective management of strategy implementation was discussed; next, the relationship between the themes was described. Then a specific section that further discussed reflections and considerations of the research findings was provided. This specific section compared the empirical findings with previous research and highlighted contributions.

9.3   Research Key Findings

1) An Integrative Framework for Strategy Implementation (SIMPLE):

A new framework called SIMPLE is proposed, which provides a set of tools and processes that can integrate strategy and operational function to ensure execution activities are aligned with objectives that can help translate a strategy and business plan into reality. These integrative frameworks enable an organisation to define what it is engaging in, where it is at any given point in time, and once there are deviations against the plan, they should be flagged early and as often as necessary for corrective action. In addition to these, a SIMPLE framework should be deliverable (result) oriented, which could help in capturing the objectives (initial stage), developing the targets (planning stage), and delivering the results (execution stage). The interaction points ensure strategy implement-ability

by working closely with strategy planning, which drives execution planning and performance efficiency and effectiveness. Moreover, a pre-strategy execution checklist tool from the SIMPLE framework should be able to inform management in order to enable them to assess their current situation. Consequently, they can be maintaining strengths and transforming weaknesses into opportunities for improved strategy implementation in order to achieve optimisation success and even better results.

2) The Dominance of Human Aspect:

The human factor is one of the most essential determinants of effective strategy implementation. At the human level, the descriptions of an organisation emphasise the self-reflexive quality of the organisation's image, the capability of creating, taking in and understanding symbols, and the intricate representation of time and relationships. Human behaviour and operation can vary depending on their position within organisational hierarchy. However, their position can also dominate their expectations, which could lead them to becoming an uncontrollable force within the organisation. Indeed, as all individuals carry their personal concerns, skills, competences, understandings, sentiments and behavioural patterns, these aspects are also dependent on their specific organisational role.

3) The Uniqueness of Communication Aspect:

All interviewees commented that communication plays a major role in strategy implementation success. Communication needs to be open and effective and offer more human involvement. These conditions can also lead to superior communication outcomes. Moreover, many paths of communication may be needed to ensure that messages are received by the intended audience. This is an effective way of increasing communicative efficacy and ensuring all messages are received and comprehended. This research also defines three communicative contexts: top-down (from top management to middle managers and staff), bottom-up (from middle managers and staff to top management) and cross-communication

(throughout various interorganisational departments). The working relationships needed must be clearly defined, as must the organisation's aims and goals; this will allow individuals to operate as a single unit, though they need to be provided with the required skills, tools and advice to facilitate their collaborative endeavours. Furthermore, this research also demonstrates that by increasing coordination and cooperation among employees, better information flows can be achieved, which enhances trust within the team. These aspects are dependent on the degree of communicational formality and frequency.

4) Consensus regarding environment settings:

The business environment considers relationships between the human and the environment; these relationships change between different social settings. This can include the company's internal structures, systems, employees, managers, activities etc. Typically, the internal environment, to a large extent can be managed by the company. On the other hand, the external environment is not directly within the company's control and can include the social, governmental, regulatory, political, technological, economic, supply chain and legal dimensions. Managers must consistently be aware of the environmental factors and be prepared to respond quickly to changes. Furthermore, this research also maintains that it is important for managers to take a proactive rather than reactive approach to change by predicting environmental changes before they occur and ensuring that the necessary procedures are in place should these changes arise.

5) Readiness of organizational aspects for strategy implementation:

In this research, the organisational aspects (e.g., the structure of the organisation, management strategy, business model and process) is one of the essential parts to address the other aspects that influence the work of strategy implementation. Therefore, the more the organisational language is compatible with the strategic plan, the easier it is to translate it into an operational reality supported by resources, tools and processes to achieve the strategic objectives. Organisational readiness becomes the cornerstone

for organisational change during strategy planning and implementation. The greater the degree of interdependence in change processes, the greater the utility of outcomes to anticipate the benefits from execution. On the other hand, individuals should adhere to the formulated guidelines, principles and policies that comprise an organisation's structure or organisational dynamic.

Finally, the issue of strategy execution forces us to reconsider the way we look at organisations from a holistic view on the situation and explore which detail is pivotal for change to integrate with all processes in order to achieve the organisation objectives.

9.4   Research Contributions

This research suggests the following theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions.

9.4.1   Theoretical contributions

In this section, the critical theoretical contributions that this research added to the strategy implementation literature are presented.

The first theoretical contribution extends the current strategy implementation literature by presenting a more comprehensive record of the factors that influence the process of strategy implementation at different stages in the Middle East and North African regions. While current literature has presented some discussions of the strategy implementation process, it still lacks a comprehensive list that covers the whole process and addresses the three different levels (i.e., human aspect, organisation aspect and communication aspect). That is why Mazzola and Kellermanns [268], recently suggested that future strategy implementation research should indicate explicitly at which level their discussion of strategy implementation is located.

The second contribution is to explore human dynamics on strategy implementation, as well as from the organisational and the communication perspectives. And in so doing, the research extends the strategy implementation process literature, at the human level, as an epistemological tool, to consider the dynamic nature of the Saudi non-oil and gas industry, and the impact that non-controllable events place on their daily lives, from an ontological perspective. This has rarely been considered before, although it has received more support recently, especially for large organisations where the human (management, team, and individual) level plays a more important role.

The third contribution of the research is that it focused on Saudi non-oil and gas organisations, which differs from mainstream research in the domain, and is considered to be a type of organisation that is still relatively unexplored. That is why Mazzola and Kellermanns [268], recommended considering the different types of organisation, such as Saudi non-oil and gas organisations in different social settings, as this provides an interesting avenue for future research to explore similarities and differences. This focus has contributed to the work of process scholars by identifying the different strategic orientations required for Saudi non-oil and gas organisations, such as flexibility, speed and including other human influences.

The final contribution of this research is that it provides a comprehensive process to build a SIMPLE framework which holds the key influencing factors that influence the strategy implementation process of Saudi non-oil and gas organisations in a relatively under-researched context (i.e., Saudi Arabia). Consequently, the framework assists in increasing the understanding of what, in fact, affects these processes, and decreases the current misunderstanding available. The key features of that framework also demonstrate the important interdependence between those influencing factors.

9.4.2 Methodological contributions

At the methodological level, evidence from multiple cases, in different Saudi sectors in same industry (non-oil and gas industry), has been provided to reflect this developing context, rather than the dominant Western views [269] [14]. This section identifies the methodological contributions of this research.

This research provides methodological recommendations that could help researchers in developing countries or the MENA region in general, and GCC region and KSA more particularly, in contexts with similar conditions, such as monarchical countries; for instance, the recommendations of separating the questions related to politics and the rules and regulations. In other words, to ensure that issues about the system, the process or the rules themselves, are separated from the person who introduces them. This is because it is very likely that this will affect participants' comfort and encourage them to talk more openly, as there is a high probability that the person introducing that rule would be the same person who has the highest authority.

Moreover, this research presents highly rigorous case study research. More recently, Mazzola and Kellermanns [268], after reviewing the literature in the most widely used databases for the last 20 years, showed that the majority of the research in the field did not explain in detail the research methods and methodology adopted. This relatively poor discussion of methods and methodology adopted in previous research provided an incentive for this research to be more detailed and rigorous. In other words, the whole process and the procedures adopted for this research, including the data collection and analysis, were all explained in detail.

Lastly, this research is different from previous works in the strategic management field, regarding the methods undertaken, methodology adopted, and the research context explored. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, this work is one of the preliminary efforts in the field to utilise a multi-case study approach, besides thematic analysis, to explore factors that could

influence large organisations in non-oil and industry strategy implementation processes, in different industries in the KSA.

9.4.3   Practical contributions

This research also makes some practical contributions to policy makers, decision makers and even researchers in the same area.

This research could be considered as a step forward towards a better understanding of strategy implementation processes and a stronger body of literature which can be relied on. Also, the research contributes to the literature as most of the work in this area is conceptually built and not empirically tested. This kept the strategy implementation process in a black box, limiting its empirical use by researchers, limiting the knowledge of strategy implementation processes and nature, and contributing to the high failure rate that presently exists in many organisations (mentioned previously in Chapters 1, 2 and 3). This research empirically developed a conceptual framework within the context of a developing yet under-researched context, such as the KSA. In other words, this thesis has contributed towards the limited empirical studies available in the field, which also lends support to the idea that the emergent school would be more appropriate than the planning school, as the process of implementation is a more interactive and incremental activity.

Finally, at the end of every case, the researcher asked the interviewee whether they would like to be presented with an executive summary of the findings of this research. All the participants showed a great interest in receiving a copy of the findings, attributing their interest to their belief that it will be able to provide them with a stronger understanding of the strategy implementation process and what factors influence it more comprehensively.

The work also faced some limitations and difficulties, and these are discussed in the following section.

9.5 Research limitations

The major challenges, difficulties, and limitations faced by the researcher are discussed in this section.

The first limitation the researcher faced was as a consequence of the strategy implementation research area being a complex research field with numerous contributions coming from a wide variety of disciplines [86] [267]. This made the research more challenging as the researcher was required to make extra efforts to cover any additional, related areas.

Other limitations were related to data collection and analysis. As mentioned before, there were many issues related to accessibility; for instance, the first two participants who agreed to take part in the study changed their minds after the researcher arrived in KSA. The researcher was then forced to deal with this last minute issue through relations and relationships.

A counter limitation to that particular issue might have been that the researcher is male, which gave an extra advantage to the research methodology at the level of data collection by facilitating access and increasing the volume of the details conveyed. This is knowing that the research context (i.e., the KSA) is considered relatively conservative, religious, and somehow more gender sensitive.

Also, as most of the interviews were in top management organisations, getting the right contact details of such participants was, in itself, challenging. Further, convincing these participants of the benefit of taking part in the study required additional effort, although this did reduce gradually. Moreover, arranging a specific time to sit with those participants and complete the entire work in one interview was also a challenge, as those categories of participants are usually the most overworked in this type of organisation. That is why, in many cases, the researcher had to terminate

the interview and arrange a new date and time. In one case, the researcher required more than six meetings to finalise just one interview. Most of the time the researcher was required to work through his network of relatives and social relationships to overcome these issues and facilitate those meetings.

Moreover, some interviewees preferred to be interviewed speaking in the Arabic language. This required additional time, which was already limited and extra effort from the researcher, as it was necessary to then translate the interview questions from English into Arabic, note the responses and translate them back into English. Sometimes, certain Arabic expressions were used by the interviewee, which took a substantial amount of research to ensure they were translated into English correctly. The researcher spent a good deal of time engaging with the data collected by ensuring he listened to the 25 recorded interviews again, translated them, described the codes and interpreted them himself.

The interviewing process mainly involved the senior manager of the organisation as this research was mainly focused on strategy implementation. However, interviewing senior management also has its limitations; of which one of the most important is that they mainly observe strategy at a particular level within the organisation and usually over a longer period of time. Whereas, junior managers' spheres of influence and responsibilities are such that they may have an entirely different attitude or understanding of their organisation's strategy compared to their colleagues in more senior management positions. Furthermore, senior managers will often struggle to appreciate the very different sets of problems and challenges that junior managers face on a daily basis. It is possible, therefore, that including junior managers as subjects in the research would have probably produced a slightly different perspective on strategy implementation.

One more challenge that the researcher faced was in dealing with the vast volume of data collected, as it was qualitative research, and many interviews were over two hours long. This consequently caused the analysis process to be lengthy. In the beginning, over 200 codes were initially identified, which required revisions and refinements throughout the analysis process, until the researcher was able, at the end, to produce 69 codes (see, Appendix (4)). Then, interpretive coding was applied, followed by deriving key overarching themes and categorisation into a much higher level and more general themes.

Finally, it was hard to include all semi-structured interview findings in this work because of space and time limitations. That is why the researcher has tried to include the most important and relevant information that could complete the research aims, objectives, and provide satisfactory responses to the research questions. Other findings will hopefully follow in the researcher's forthcoming works.

9.6   Future Works

Future work could be performed in many different ways. This research has already identified many aspects where the outcome could be improved. Due to the limited time and resources, this research could not have performed the improvements on all the critiques and shortcomings which were suggested. There are many aspects where future work could be carried out to improve the performance of this search, such as in Factor Analysis, Data collection, and SIMPLE Framework,

9.6.1   Factor Analysis

Factors have been discovered in many different ways, such as from the literature review, expert interviews and data collections; one of the major future works, which could be undertaken in factor analysis, is to identify all factors from many different regions besides the Saudi Arabia region, which has been the focus of this research study. The benefit of this will be if the all-region

factors are discovered, then the strategy implementation framework could be developed for a wider audience.

9.6.2 Data Collection

The data collection part is a long process, especially when collecting the data for strategy implementation. Generally, strategies last a few years, therefore, to collect the data for strategy implementation is critical and a lengthy process; in this research study, time was very limited, and the research could not have spent many years collecting the data for strategy implementation. If the strategy implementation data are collected, then the weight of the factors would be more precisely calculated. Furthermore, additional analyses could be performed in the strategic planning and implementation to discover vital information in this regard.

9.6.3 SIMPLE Framework

There are a few aspects which affect the performance of this framework. Firstly, the framework was built solely from multiple cases investigated in the KSA, and it would be interesting to explore different contexts. For instance, it would be motivating to check all other GCC countries, which are anticipated to have high similarities and look for the differences and resemblances. Also, it would be fascinating to check other Middle Eastern countries, or even in the wider MENA region, with both similar types of government and diverse ones, and compare and contrast the findings. Moreover, a good suggestion to move forward would be to check the developing countries and investigate how they differ from other, already developed economies or Western countries in a wider sense.

Secondly, further beneficial future work could be to study in more detail what effect the current uprising movements in the MENA region (referred to as the Arab Spring), have on the process of strategy implementation and how these affect the KSA and other GCC and Middle Eastern countries.

Finally, this study revealed an increased use of social media, especially in the large and still growing youth community in the KSA. In addition, it was also found that the effect and impact social media is having on the country is significantly growing. Hence, a remarkable expansion of this study would be to further investigate this area in detail.

9.6.4 Summary

This chapter concludes this research. It started by revisiting the whole research process by describing briefly each chapter's content, followed by procedure, and the key results. After that, the main theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions of the thesis were illustrated and then the significant research limitations were highlighted. Finally, future research opportunities and interesting routes were offered.

Appendix

Appendix (1) Participant Information Sheet

My name is Abdullah Alharthy, and I am currently undertaking a PhD at Cranfield University. I would like to ask you to take part in my research study, but before you decide, you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

What is the purpose of the research?

The purpose of my study is to explore aspects of organisational culture that improve the strategy implementation in large Saudi non-oil and gas industry organisations.

What is involved in taking part?

I am interested in finding out about your work as senior management, particularly in relation to what you think about and implement, evaluation strategies. I would like to spend time observing you at work and invite you to take part in interviews. This will be negotiable, and if at a particular time you do not wish to be observed, you will be able to refuse. Observing you at work will inevitably include watching you with clients. Permission will be sought from the client beforehand, with the assurance that the study is not concerned with any personal information relating to the client and that confidentiality will be maintained.

You will also be invited to attend an individual interview with the researcher. This interview will last approximately 1-2 hours and will be organised at your convenience. Interviews will be recorded on audio tape. While it is anticipated that you will only be asked to attend one interview, I may also wish to conduct a follow up interview with you at a later time. Again, this will be arranged at your convenience.

Do I have to take part?

You do not have to take part. After reading this information sheet, it is up to you to decide whether you agree to participate in observation, interviews or both. You will be asked to sign a consent form if you do decide to take part. You may withdraw from the study at any time, and will not have to provide a reason for doing so. If you do withdraw from the study, all identifiable data relating to yourself will be destroyed. However, data which is not identifiable may be retained and incorporated into the study.

How will confidentiality be maintained?

This study has been approved by the governing ethical body and by Cranfield University. Ethical and legal practice will be followed to ensure all information about you will be handled in confidence. Interview transcripts and observational field notes will not contain any of your personal details and will be accessed only by the researcher and academic supervisor. Data will be stored securely in a locked cabinet in a restricted access office. Electronic data will also be stored securely on a password protected university computer. All information will be treated confidentially and sensitively under the Data Protection Act (1998) and in accordance with the Code of Conduct outlined by the researcher's professional governing body, the College of Occupational Therapists.

Following completion of the study, none of your personal details will be retained. In accordance with university regulations, however, anonymised data will be retained securely for a period of up to 5 years before being destroyed. No identifiable data relating to you personally will feature in the final thesis, or in any subsequent publications or presentations.

What will happen to the results of the study?

The results of this study will be presented as a PhD thesis at Cranfield University. Each service will also be given a summary of the research findings, and you will be able to access my thesis on request. Findings from the study may be presented at relevant conferences and within scientific journals. You will not be identified within any presentation of results.

What now?

If you have read and understood this information, sheet and you would like to participate in the study, please now see the enclosed consent form.

Contact for further information

If you have any queries or require further information before deciding whether to take part, please do not hesitate to contact me at the details below.

Contact details of researcher:	You may also contact my academic supervisor:
Abdullah Alharthy. PhD Student	Dr Hamad Rashid
Cranfield University	Cranfield University
Martell House, University Way	Martell House, University Way
Cranfield, Bedfordshire MK43 0TR, UK	Cranfield, Bedfordshire MK43 0TR, UK
Telephone: +966 5555 16662	Telephone: +44 1234 754250
Email: Ahharthy@cranfield.ac.uk	Email: h.s.rashid@cranfield.ac.uk
Website: www.cranfield.ac.uk	Website: www.cranfield.ac.uk

Appendix (2) Ethical Approval Application Form

Please tick:

- o   I have read and understood the information sheet (version2). I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.
- o   I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in this study, and am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.
- o   I agree to participate in this study, and consent to being:
  - o   Interviewed
  - o   Observed

Name of participant: ………………………….

Signature of participant: ………………………

Date: /   /2016

Signature of researcher: ……………………....

Date: /   /2016

Contact details of researcher:	You may also contact my academic supervisor:
Abdullah Alharthy. PhD Student	Dr Hamad Rashid
Cranfield University	Cranfield University
Martell House, University Way	Martell House, University Way
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Telephone: +966 5555 16662	Telephone: +44 1234 754250
Email: Ahharthy@cranfield.ac.uk	Email: h.s.rashid@cranfield.ac.uk
Website: www.cranfield.ac.uk	Website: www.cranfield.ac.uk

Appendix (3) List of Interviewees

No	Sector	Age (yrs.)	Length of Service at organisation	Length of Service in Current Position
1	ICT	50	15	4
2	ICT	40	10	2
3	ICT	45	20	3
4	ICT	45	13	5
5	ICT	49	9	4
6	Energy	48	22	12
7	Energy	39	18	10
8	Energy	47	20	14
9	Energy	46	20	7
10	Energy	49	24	8
11	Transportation	50	30	15
12	Transportation	52	28	13
13	Transportation	50	21	11
14	Transportation	45	14	7
15	Transportation	53	26	16
16	Financial	36	5	5
17	Financial	42	7	4
18	Financial	40	15	5
19	Financial	39	6	6
20	Financial	52	3	3
21	Healthcare	48	6	6
22	Healthcare	44	9	7
23	Healthcare	46	4	4
24	Healthcare	43	8	3
25	Healthcare	44	17	12

Appendix (4) Link codes to open categories

No	Codes	Open categories (Factors)
1	Lack of focus	Poor or vague strategy
2	Poor or vague strategy	
3	The strategy needs to be easy to understand	Clear Objectives
4	Simplifying	
5	Clear Objectives	
6	Better social relations	Communication
7	Communication	
8	Engagement	Engagement
9	Executors (Right People)	Sufficient Resources
10	Human resources development	
11	sufficient resources	
12	Benefits Management	Benefits realisation management
13	Clarifying responsibilities and accountability	Accountability
14	Talent Management	Talent Management
15	Involvement	Involvement
16	Listening to consultants instead of taking opinion of their staff	
17	Win-win situation	
18	Buy-in	Buy-in
19	Prioritisation	Prioritisation
20	Selection	Selection
21	Avoid Misaligned operations	Alignment
22	Misaligned Organisation	
23	Synchronisation	
24	Teamwork	
25	Deep diving to thoroughly resolve the issue	Project management
26	Use project management techniques	
27	Risk management	Risk management
28	Monitoring	Monitoring
29	Right KPIs	Performance
30	KPIs selection	
31	Not ensure that selected KPIs to drive toward your strategic objectives	
32	The linkage of strategic KPIs and operational KPIs is necessary	
33	Bureaucracy and too much paperwork	Leadership
34	Decision pattern	
35	Execution decisions take too long to make	
36	leadership (Good Example)	
37	Management Lobby	
38	Lack of senior management support	
39	Sponsorship	Sponsorship
40	Commitment	Commitment
41	Top Management Commitment	
42	Effective competitor responses to strategy	Effective competitor responses to strategy
43	Centralisation management decision	Authority
44	Authority	

| No	Codes	Open categories (Factors)
45	Enablers driven	Governance
46	Governance	
47	Structure	
48	Motivation	Motivation
49	Consequence	Rewarding
50	Rewarding	
51	Ad hoc work	Saudi Macro and Micro Environment
52	Misalignment continuous improvement with strategic objectives	
53	Wasitah	
54	Saudisation (Job security)	
55	Cultural divergence	
56	Distinguishing between strategic and implementation	
57	Distinguishing between strategic and operation	
58	Lack of dynamic environments	
59	Impatience for results (Fast results) – Setting unrealistic targets	
60	Doubtful implementation tactics	
61	Integrate implementation and strategy formulation	
62	Lack of integrity	
63	Not ensure the data for KPIs are valid	
64	Political factors (Arab Spring)	
65	Lack of positive working environment	
66	Stakeholder influence bias	
67	The lack of readiness of the organisation	
68	The lack of readiness of the staff	
69	Lack of transparency	

Appendix (5) Definition for each open category

After this, the researcher asked them to provide a specific definition for each open category to illustrate the mechanism by which they were built to clarify the verification of the implementation factors of the strategy based on the reliability of the analysis.

No.	Open categories	Description
1	Clarifying strategic plans	A poor or vague strategy makes it nearly impossible to successfully execute a strategy, which makes it a killer of strategy implementation.
2	Setting SMART objectives	Business suffers when you try to implement a plan without clarity and forethought. While you certainly may not be able to predict the outcome of the project, you can define the scope of the technical and organisational components of the project/how many resources you're willing to allocate to the entire project, establish clear deadlines and set expected results.
3	Communication (H2H, S2H, S2S, and M2C)	The reasons the new strategic decision was made were presented. New responsibilities, tasks, and duties to be performed by the affected employees were explained clearly, and their feedback was heard.
4	Employee understanding	The emotional connection an employee feels towards his or her employment organisation tends to influence his or her behaviours and level of effort in work-related activity.
5	Sufficient resources	HR, time and money, etc. are wasted because of inefficiency in the execution process.
6	Benefits realisation management	Benefits management is the identification, definition, planning, tracking, and realisation of business benefits. Moreover, delivering benefits is the primary reason organisations undertake change. A benefit is a positive and measurable impact of change. However, in some cases, there may be unavoidable negative impacts of change that are acceptable in the context of greater benefits.
7	Accountability	Accountability across these structures becomes a real challenge when each has its own budget and priorities.
8	Talent management	The goal is to create a high-performance, sustainable organisation that meets its strategic and operational goals and objectives.
9	Involvement	All the key people must be involved in the formulation of the strategy so that, at the implementation stage, they are well informed and willing to work effectively.
10	Buy-In	The inability to generate 'buy-in' or agreement on critical execution steps or actions is detrimental.
11	Prioritisation	It means doing 'first things first' or organising or dealing with things according to their priority.

No.	Open categories	Description
12	Selection	Selection is the process of carefully choosing someone or something as being the best or most suitable.
13	Alignment	Strategic alignment is the ability to create a fit or synergy between the position of the organisation within the environment (business) and the design of the appropriate business processes, resources and capabilities (IT) to support the execution.
14	Project management	Project management is the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities to meet the project requirements that have a defined beginning and end in time by using sufficient resources.
15	Risk management	Risk management is the process of identifying, quantifying and managing the risks that an organisation faces. As the outcomes of business activities are uncertain, they are said to have some element of risk.
16	Monitoring	Monitoring is used to observe and check the progress or quality of short- and long-term objectives and goals over a period; keep under systematic review.
17	Key Performance Indicators	The key performance indicators are used to measure the achievement of the organisation's objectives.
18	Leadership	When leaders practice moral virtues, such as fairness, integrity, honesty, loyalty, determination, courage and responsibility, it increases the willingness of followers in following the leaders.
19	Sponsorship	Sponsorship comes from committed leaders who have enough influence in the organisation.
20	Commitment	All the workers should be committed to doing the work.
21	Effective competitor responses to strategy	It is important to predict the competitor's response to the company strategy, so the sound strategy has enough room to give a response to the competitor's response to stay market-competitive.
22	Authorities	Authorities can approve or make changes to strategy according to governance and responsibility.
23	Governance	This is the control structure designed to facilitate and supervise the decision-making process.
24	Motivation	It gives the reasons for staff actions, desires, and needs.
25	Rewards	Rewards are incentives that support execution objectives.
26	Saudi Macro and Micro Environment	Micro and macro environments have a significant impact on the success of strategy campaigns, and therefore, the factors of these environments should be considered in-depth during the strategic decision-making process.

It is important to note that this process could be endless, but King and Horrocks [246] suggest that if it is taking a long time to make just minor changes, that might be an indication that the codes are good enough and that you can move to the next stage.

Appendix (6) Link open categories (factors) to themes

Factors Affecting Strategy Implementation

Communication Aspects

System Aspects

Human Aspects

Communication

Governance

Authority

Sufficient resources

Risk management

Alignment

Talent Management

Project management

Benefits realisation management

Commitment

Monitoring

Management Decision

Employee Engagement

Clear Objectives

Prioritisation

Selection

Sponsorship

Leadership

Effective competitor responses

Clarity Vision, Mission and strategy plan

Saudi Macro and Micro Environment

Involvement

Commitment

Employee Understanding

Buy-in

Motivation

Accountability

Rewarding

Emergent Theory
Themes
Sub Themes
Factors

Appendix (7) Pre-Strategy Execution Checklist

Area 1: Objectives

Improvement Objectives and Sponsor Expectations

- ☐ Are the improvement objectives <u>clear</u> to all involved parties? (Sponsor, Steering Committee, Project,…)
- ☐ Do all parties <u>agree</u> (unanimously) on the improvement objectives? (Sponsor, Steering Committee, Project,…)
- ☐ Is a prioritised "Program Expectation Matrix" available?
- ☐ Has a formal "<u>Charter</u>" been signed by all key stakeholders for every key/major strategy or program?

Acceptance Criteria

- ☐ Have <u>success</u> criteria ("When is the execution successful?") been established for the complete program?
- ☐ Have success criteria ("When is the execution successful?") been established for all key execution deliverables?
- ☐ Have <u>acceptance</u> criteria been established for all program deliverables?
- ☐ Is the <u>effort</u> needed to demonstrate achievement of criteria covered in the Program Plan?
- ☐ What does acceptance mean to the management /beneficiary/customer?
- ☐ Is acceptance <u>progressive</u>, or does it take place at the end?
- ☐ Have management /beneficiary/customer acceptance <u>timeframes</u> been determined?
- ☐ Has a timeframe for <u>resolving</u> acceptance discrepancies been determined?

Area 2: Metrics

Strategic KPIs

- ☐ Are clearly defined <u>metrics objectives</u> available to identify why metrics are important to the program/project, the scope of the metrics effort, and the stakeholders, implementers, and users of the metrics?
- ☐ Are clearly defined <u>metrics</u> available?

- ☐ Is defined data analysis completed in order ensure that KPIs are founded on useful information? *This could include trend analysis, statistical analysis, root cause analysis, or historical data to be used for comparison.*
- ☐ Are all defined metrics <u>SMART</u>?
- ☐ Have <u>target</u> values (incl. target date) been defined for each metric?
- ☐ Have all metrics been formally <u>agreed</u> upon by key stakeholders?
- ☐ Are all required metrics available (defined) to define the required standard reports that will be developed and distributed to key stakeholders? Are all areas covered by metrics, or do "<u>white spots</u>" exist?
- ☐ Is a defined metrics database method available to capture and <u>maintain</u> the metric data?
- ☐ Are defined <u>implementation requirements</u> available to understand the total scope and impact of the metrics implementation before moving forward? *This includes identifying training and communication needs, tools to support the automatic collection, and reporting of metrics data, pilot approach, and database requirements.*

Operational KPIs

Note: Checkpoints for strategic and operational KPIs are similar in nature.

- ☐ Are clearly defined <u>metrics objectives</u> available to identify why metrics are important to the program/project, the scope of the metrics effort, and the stakeholders, implementers, and users of the metrics?
- ☐ Are clearly defined <u>metrics</u> available?
- ☐ Is defined data analysis completed in order ensure that KPIs are founded on useful information?
- ☐ Are all defined metrics <u>SMART</u>?
- ☐ Have <u>target</u> values (incl. target date) been defined for each metric?
- ☐ Have all metrics been formally <u>agreed</u> upon by key stakeholders?
- ☐ Are all required metrics available (defined) to define the required standard reports that will be developed and distributed to key stakeholders? Are all areas covered by metrics, or do "<u>white spots</u>" exist?
- ☐ Is a defined metrics database method available to capture and <u>maintain</u> the metric data?

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- [ ] Are defined <u>implementation requirements</u> available to understand the total scope and impact of the metrics implementation before moving forward?

Area 3: Baseline

Capabilities Baseline and Baseline Metrics

- [ ] Have current <u>capabilities</u> been identified for each program focus area (strategy, program, or key initiative)?
- [ ] Have baseline <u>metrics</u> been defined?
- [ ] Has a <u>current values</u> baseline been documented before implementation starts?
    - Qualitative dimension (description)
    - Quantitative dimension (numbers)
- [ ] Has the capabilities baseline been <u>published</u> for later reference?

Gaps and Blueprint

- [ ] Have <u>key gaps</u> between current status and target status been identified and documented?
- [ ] Has a formal <u>collection</u> been made of gap closure solutions with cost estimates and timing considerations?
- [ ] Have <u>dependencies</u> between solution components in relation to each other, and each business capability been developed and documented?
- [ ] Have <u>enabling</u> capabilities been identified where not already known?
- [ ] Has a gap <u>closure</u> approach been defined and agreed upon?
- [ ] Has a "<u>Business Owner</u>" been defined for every gap?

Area 4: Measures

Levers

- [ ] Have <u>root causes</u> to (the sponsoring organisation's) problems and hypothetical solutions been identified for every identified gap?
- [ ] Does an understanding and <u>agreement</u> of the most efficient way to conduct research and analysis efforts exist for every identified gap?

- Have performance improvement <u>opportunities</u> focused on addressing the sponsoring organisation's goals and expectations been identified?
- Is there a thorough understanding of <u>risks</u> and constraints?

Measures

- Have clear and <u>concrete measures</u> been defined for every identified gap?
- Have all measures been defined with clear <u>milestones, timelines,</u> and <u>accountabilities</u>?
- Are <u>detailed</u> activities with descriptions available for each measure (strategy, program, or key initiative)?
- Are concrete <u>sub-measures</u> available for each key measure (strategy, program, or key initiative)?

Timeline and Milestones

- Have <u>timelines</u> and key <u>milestones</u> been developed for every key measure (strategy, program, or key initiative)?
- Does every milestone have a <u>clear date, deliverable and accountability</u>?
- Is the deliverbale of every milestone <u>measurable</u>? Key dimensions:
  - Deliverables available and agreed (Yes/No)?
  - Impact achieved (value achieved)?

Area 5: Transparency Management

- Has a <u>reporting methodology</u> been defined comprising status/progress reporting, risk reporting, target tracking reporting, and budget burn reporting?
- Do reports address all potential program <u>problem</u> areas?
  - Change in objectives
  - Behind schedule
  - Over/under budget
  - Rework/corrections/wrong output
  - Delays/dependencies
  - Project staffing
  - Documentation
  - Contract omissions

- o Project planning
- o Handover to operations
- Have <u>types</u> of reports been defined (e.g., vendor progress report, project team report, acceptance test report, dashboard report, weekly report,…)?
- Has a <u>data repository</u> been identified for monitoring and reporting?

Area 6: Benefit Management

- Are <u>business cases</u> or <u>value realisation plans</u> available for all key measures?
- Are <u>financial benefits</u> clear for every major measure (strategy, program, or key initiative)?
- Are <u>non-financial benefits</u> clear for every major measure (strategy, program, or key initiative)?
- Has a benefits management <u>reporting method</u> been agreed upon?

Area 7: Governance & Stakeholder Management

Governance

- Have all relevant project <u>stakeholders</u> been identified?
- Have all stakeholder roles & responsibilities been <u>defined</u>?
  - o Program sponsor (PS)
  - o Program owner
- Have <u>decision taking</u> boards & bodies been defined?
  - o Steering committee (SC)
  - o Other boards?
- Have Project/program <u>leadership</u> and <u>teams</u> been identified and defined?
  - o Project/ Program management (PM)
  - o Project/ Program office (PO)
  - o Project team lead (PL)*
  - o Line organisation (incl. support. vendors, consultants,…)
  - o External (vendor, consultant)
  - o Single Point of Contact (SPoC) in BUs/FUs

Processes

- ☐ Have <u>decision</u> procedures been defined
- ☐ Have <u>issue</u> management, <u>escalation</u> rules and process been defined?
- ☐ Have <u>change</u> processes been defined?
- ☐ Have <u>risk</u> management processes been defined?
- ☐ Has a "How to do define risk response measures" guideline been defined?

Communication

- ☐ Have regular communication <u>addressees</u> been identified?
- ☐ Are communication <u>responsibilities</u> clear? (RACI)
- ☐ Is a high level communication <u>plan</u> available spanning setup (initiation, planning) phase, execution phase, and closure phase?
- ☐ Has a formal <u>kickoff</u> event been planned for?

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