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Strategy Implementation: Is role integration necessary for enhancing performance?

A case study of MTN Ghana.

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ABSTRACT:

This study investigates the topic: Strategy Implementation: Is role integration necessary for enhancing performance? To answer this question MTN Ghana is chosen as a case study.

The research intends to address the persistent "strategy-implementation gap," whereby well-formulated strategies often fail to yield desired outcomes because of implementation challenges. Drawing on contingency theory and dynamic capabilities, the study explores how role integration influence strategy implementation to enhance organizational performance.

Qualitative case study approach was deployed, and the research incorporated insights from semi-structured interviews with academic literature and the case company's corporate reports and materials. Key mechanisms such as Cross-Functional Teams (CFTs) are diligently examined to understand their impact on strategy implementation in the empirical stage of the study. Findings reveal that effective role integration reduces silos, is possible to accelerates decision-making, and fosters innovation by aligning individual and departmental roles with overall strategic goals. However, challenges such as communication delays, regulatory conditions, and resistance to change persist, hence highlighting the complexities of implementing integrated roles in a dynamic setting.

The study contributes to strategic management literature by proposing a hybrid "Contingency-Dynamic Matrix" framework, as this combines contingency theory's emphasis on structural adaptability with dynamic capabilities' focus on innovation and resource efficiency. The practical implications for MTN Ghana (case company) include recommendations for enhancing real-time communication, to empower leadership, and fostering a culture of integration/collaboration. The research also identifies and presents limitations, especially as it is single-case design and its low respondent turnout, and it also suggests future directions, including comparative studies with other telecom firms and the exploration of AI-driven collaboration tools, or replicating the study with the same firm with a broader sample/respondents.

In conclusion, it is not farfetched that while role integration is shown to be beneficial for strategy implementation, the success of it depends on contextual alignment, on leadership clarity, and the agility of the organization. The study reinforces the need for tailored approaches to role integration, while it offers valuable insights for both academic scholars and industry players/practitioners seeking to optimize strategy implementation in a complex but everchanging world.

KEYWORDS: Strategy execution, role integration, dynamic capabilities, contingency theory, cross-functional teams, organizational performance.

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1 Introduction

The business world is changing very rapidly, and the ability to implement strategies effectively is necessary for the success of any organization (Hamel, G., & Euchner, J., 2020). Although it is asserted that considerable research and resources have been dedicated to developing strategic plans, the real difficulty does not lie in the formulation or formation of strategy(ies) but rather in how to implement them effectively (Hamel, G., & Euchner, J., 2020). Organizations are often faced with a “strategy-implementation gap,” as carefully crafted strategies fail to achieve their intended outcomes due to the poor implementation of it (Alexander, 1985; Hrebiniak, 2006). This thesis focuses on a key factor influencing successful strategy implementation; the integration of roles across an organization, which is commonly referred to as role integration. Which is understood as the alignment and collaboration of various departments and individuals toward a shared strategic goal (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967; Hrebiniak, 2006), role integration is considered essential in today’s ever-changing yet interconnected business landscape (Vaara & Whittington, 2012). Despite its asserted importance and the fact that it is mentioned often among many scholars, empirical research directly linking role integration to measurable strategic outcomes remains limited (Lampaki & Papadakis, 2018).

The main motivation of this research is to examine whether integrating roles within an organization’s strategy implementation enhances performance, as it draws its insights from Gandrita, D. M. (2023), Hrebiniak (2006), and other sources as cited consequently. It is argued that as organizations/firms grow in complexity and face rapidly shifting market demands, traditional compartmentalized structures may hinder flexibility, communication, and sometimes innovation (Noble, 1999; Mintzberg, 1994; Hamel, G., & Euchner, J., 2020). It is deduced that role integration, foster cross-functional collaboration and, improve coordination, and also revamp operations. Previous studies have demonstrated that cross-functional teams can break down barriers between departments and enable a more agile decision-making and resource allocation (Thompson, 1967; Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1993). However, the specific effects of role integration on the outcomes of strategy implementations remain underexplored (Vaara & Whittington, 2012; Mazhitov, M., et al., 2024). By addressing this research gap, the findings of this study could provide

insights for both academia and industry practitioners, who on many platforms have raised concern for further research to be done on role integration in strategy implementation, more especially as to its enhancement to performance.

Research has consistently given the impression that successful strategy implementation depends on more than a well-designed or formulated plan; that, it requires coordinated effort across organizational levels (Hamel, G., & Euchner, J., 2020). It also is argued in other articles and also voiced out by industry players that challenges often emerge during implementation, in the creating an impression that roles and responsibilities may not be aligning with strategic goals, hence leading to wastage of resources, counterproductivity, and compromise organizational performance (Alexander, 1985; Hrebiniak, 2006; Gandrita, D. M., 2023). To be specific, Hrebiniak (2006) emphasizes that many organizations fail to connect strategic objectives being critical of its hierarchies and the roles of those responsible for implementing them, as a result creating an implementation gap. Among scholars, the focus on strategy has traditionally been on formulation/formation, with less attention paid to the practicalities of effective implementation (Hamel, G., & Euchner, J., 2020), and regarding role integration (Noble, 1999).

Whereas prior studies acknowledge the benefits of role integration for the sake of communication, for coordination, and for teamwork (Lampaki & Papadakis, 2018), few researchers directly link these aspects to improved strategic outcomes, such as shorter implementation timeframes and better resource allocation. Empirical research alludes to the fact that integrating diverse roles across managerial levels do not only enhance the flow of information but also decision-making efficacy – the reason behind this is that shared knowledge is purported to support better alignment of strategic objectives (Thompson, 1967; Mintzberg, 1994; Mazhitov, M., et al., 2024). This study intends to examine the integration of roles across top and middle management, as well as team leads and first-line management with the purpose of determining how alignment affects strategy implementation effectiveness. To investigate this carefully, the thesis poses the research question:

RQ1: How is role integration necessary for enhancing performance in strategy implementation?

This research question will be addressed in this thesis through analysis of various dimensions of strategy and role integration, as it pays attention to strategic decision-making, planning, but more importantly on its implementation. It leans on published data, academic literature, and more importantly interviews to ensure validity and reliability. It also adheres to ethical standards for academic work including acknowledging the consent and secure handling of participants data. The thesis takes into consideration limitations such as restricted access to company-specific information that may arise and how the challenges are managed to ensure comprehensive oversight.

Regarding improvement and contribution, this study intends to advance strategic management theory. To be precise, it investigates the dynamics among top management, middle management, team leaders, and frontliners, as it responds to scholarly calls (e.g., Vaara & Whittington, 2012; Lampaki & Papadakis, 2018 etc.) for research that moves beyond conventional managerial frameworks. From the resource-based view perspective, the research considers how integrating roles can leverage organizational capabilities to create a sustainable market advantage as espoused by the proponents Barney (1991); Mazhitov, M., et al. (2024). This approach is grounded in the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, which examines firm competitiveness through internal resources, leveraging on the claim that unique, integrated skills and resources play a key role in securing a firm's lasting competitive position (Barney, 1991). The insights derived from this study are intended to offer both theoretical contributions and practical frameworks that organizations can employ to optimize strategy implementation and if possible, to achieve improved strategic outcomes.

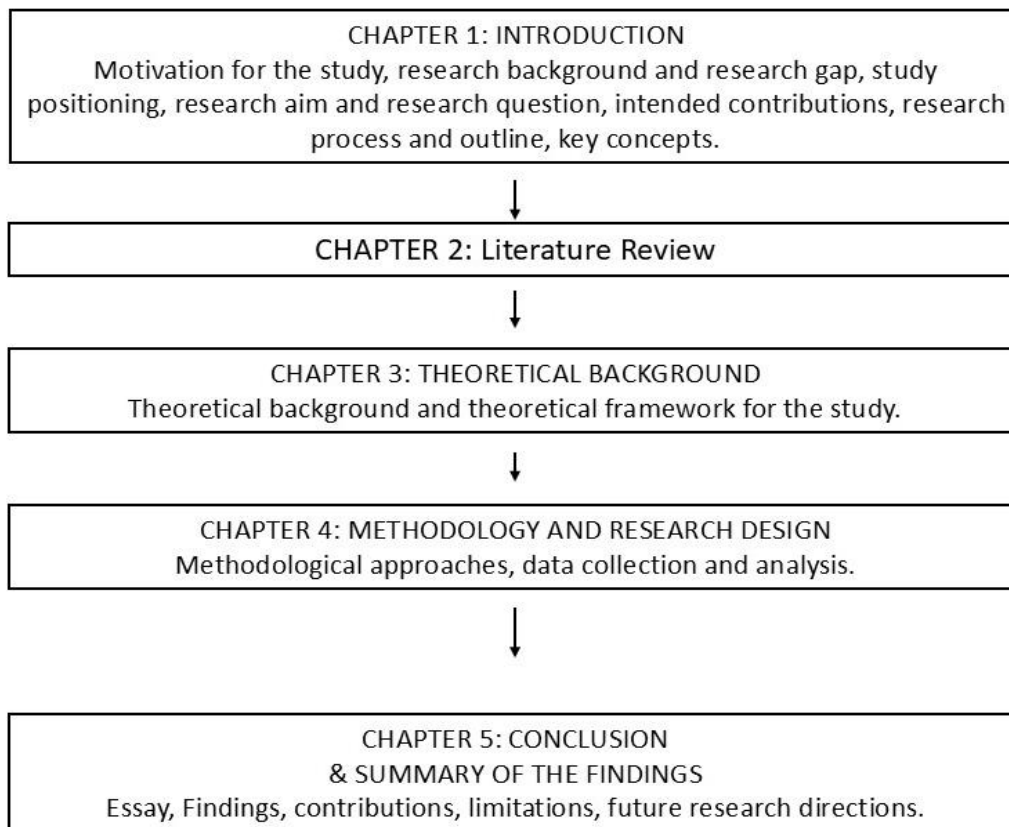


Figure 1: Structure of thesis

This thesis follows a well-structured format, with Figure 1 acting as a visual guide to help readers navigate the research process. The first chapter of the study establishes the groundwork by introducing the research context, its key issues, and the problem statement. It also highlights the objectives of the research, its scope, and the importance of the thesis.

Moving to Chapters Two and Three, the discussion moves to the review of relevant literature and continues with the theoretical framework, to help us explore Contingency Theory, Dynamic Capabilities, and the application of these theories. Additionally, it examines existing research on the topics: role integration and strategy implementation, which are all related to this research.

Chapter Four of the study then outlines the research methodology, this is where explanation is given to the data collection process, including the use of secondary data and its approach for analysis. The same also presents the methodologies and research design used for the thesis while chapter 5 present the findings, offering the reader insights into strategy implementation and the effects of role integration, as pertaining the case study. Finally, Chapter Five serves as the closing chapter and it ties the research results to prior literature, it provides us key takeaways, the discussions, limitations of the research, managerial implications to consider, proposals, and suggestions for future studies.

2 Literature Review

This chapter of the research is where the key themes relevant to the study are explored. This part offers a thorough review of existing literature on publications, the expositions on the topics' dynamic capabilities, and contingency theory, while also explaining their practical applications. It is also important to state that attention is also paid to the theories surrounding the case company's practices and its strategy implementation, as these areas are directly related to this research work. This topic is worth studying since it has attracted considerable interest within the evolving body of research – especially due to the limited work on role integration in strategy implementation and given the vital contribution of the understudied industry to socio-economic growth. In this chapter related topics are examined through the deployment of tables, diagrams, and visuals to give clearer understanding and structure. The chosen literature for the work was carefully reviewed and assessed to ensure that the findings are distinct and do not replicate previous research. The Table 1 outlines the key concepts that buttress the research topic.

Table 1: Main concepts described

Concept	Description
Strategy implementation	"Strategy implementation is referred to as the process through which organizations carry out their strategic plans by means of coordinated actions across different departments (Mazhitov, Uddin, Mahmood, and Ostrovskiy, 2024)."
Role integration	"Role integration is deduced as aligning individual and departmental roles with the broader strategic plan to ensure unified action (Hrebiniak, 2006)."
Contingency Theory	"...there is no universal approach to organizing or leading an organization according to the theory. Instead, the optimal structure or leadership style is determined by how well it aligns with various internal and external factors, including

	the organization's size, strategy, technology, and culture (Donaldson, 2001; Fiedler, 1967)."
Dynamic capabilities	This is referred to as a company's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external resources in order to address rapidly changing environments (Teece, Pisano, and Shuen, 1997; Newbert, 2007).

2.1 Historical Perspectives on Role Integration

The concept of role integration especially as it pertains to strategy implementation has progressed considerably over the years. The concept has been shaped by various historical perspectives and for that reason have influenced both its theoretical basis and real-world application. History makes us understand that in the early 1900s, Frederick Taylor introduced his scientific management theories by stressing the relevance of task specialization and clearly defined roles. This approach sought efficiency through the division of labour, but was often led to fragmented organizational efforts and separated functions (Taylor, 1911).

As organizations grew and became more sophisticated as time passed, the limitations of rigid role structure could not be hidden anymore but became obvious. The Human Relations Movement in the middle of the 20th century, which was driven by Elton Mayo's Hawthorne Studies became famous, though the researchers had diverse views on their findings, their input reinforced the importance of social dynamics and employee well-being so far as achieving organizational goals are concerned (Franke, R. H., 1979). It is recorded that this period in history marked a shift toward coming to terms that teamwork and role integration could enhance both morale and productivity (Franke, R. H., 1979). As time went by and in the latter part of the 20th century surfaced the systems theory and the contingency theory.

These approaches as it may, supported a holistic view that, different organizational components must work together to adapt to changing environments (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1972), admitting to the claim that 'there is no single best way to structure roles'. These

theories promoted more flexible approaches to role integration to the extent that in today's context, globalization and technological advances have increased the need for innovative ways especially integrated roles in strategy implementation further.

The constantly changing nature of modern business environments calls for agility and seamless collaboration across different functions to achieve strategic goals effectively (Porter & Millar, 1985). Hitherto, the evolution of ideas on role integration reflects a move from strict separation toward a more interconnected approach which adjust to our current organizational challenges.

2.1.1 Key Theories and Models of Role Integration

The integration of roles in strategy implementation process is a complicated notion because it sits on top of several core theories and models which argue that organizations can improve their outcomes through coordinated and cooperative efforts. Among these, the Resource-Based View (RBV) stands out, holding the view that when organizational roles are appropriately integrated, an organization can employ its valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable resources and capabilities to obtain and sustain a competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). This theory further asserts that firms aligning organizational roles to strategic objectives would optimize resource allocation to enhance its performance (Barney, 1991).

Another suggested approach which is mentioned to be useful is the McKinsey 7-S Framework, which offers another interesting perspective as it describes how seven elements namely: strategy, structure, systems, shared values, skills, style, and staff are internally related and must align for effective organizational performance and change (Peters & Waterman, 1982). For example, aligning organizational structure with staff roles is believed per this theory to facilitate effective communication channels and streamline workflows. Social Identity Theory on the other hand offers insights into how role integration can affect group dynamics within an organization. According to the proponents Tajfel and Turner (1979), individuals derive part of their identity from their group memberships in the sense that when team members see their roles as critical to the organization's success and feel strongly connected to their team's or department's goals, their

engagement and motivation toward strategic objectives are likely to increase. Contingency Theory, another important tool to consider emphasizes that there is no universal approach to lead an organization but instead success is dependent on style or approach of the leader/organization; what is deduced from this is that roles must be tailored to different organizational contexts, such as size, industry type, or market conditions (Donaldson & Luo, 2014). Drawing on the above-mentioned theories asserts that roles ought to align with organizational goals, that group dynamics are to be considered, and strategies are to be adapted to specific organizational needs.

2.1.2 Factors Influencing Successful Role Integration

It is postulated that the successful integration of roles in the implementation of strategy depends on several key components, each relevant for achieving strategic objectives. Shared values and norms as factors, are believed to guide employee behaviour and coordination, enabling individuals to work together toward the organizational goals (Jones & George, 2011). An undeniable primary factor is corporate culture, which is believed to be an enabler for teamwork among employees/staff, either positively or negatively. Deducing from Jones & George (2011) definition of culture, it is said to be *“a set of values, standards for behaviour and norms that influence how people interact with each other to achieve goals.”* It is further expounded that in an open and cooperative culture, individuals are more likely to embrace their roles and collaborate in support of the common objectives of the organization (Jones & George, 2011).

Leadership is considered as a significant factor, as the assertion is that competent leaders provide clear direction and actively partner with their teams to ensure that individual responsibilities align with strategic goals (Yukl & Gardner, 2021). As leaders cultivate a supportive and trustworthy atmosphere, they can motivate subordinates to go beyond traditional limits and enhance collaboration (Yukl & Gardner, 2021). In addition, effective communication systems within the organization are essential because strong communication channels make it possible for team members to understand their duties well and how their tasks connect to other members of the organization. This transparency reduces the tendency for confusion and encourages a collective spirit (Smith et al., 2020).

Furthermore, it is important to link the effect of incentives with long-term goals, in the sense that when employees recognize how their contributions affect the company's success and are rewarded accordingly, they (employees) become more driven to align their work the more with the overall strategy (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000).

Last on the list as a factor, continuous education and development initiatives prepare employees with the know-how required to adapt to evolving strategic needs. These continuous learning opportunities improve employees' ability to perform in integrated roles, as supportive context like trust encourages them to take prudent risks, to treat failure as a learning opportunity and develop the needed capability for strategy implementation (Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2018).

2.1.3 Case Studies Illustrating Role Integration

There are several case studies that offer important insights into how effective the integration of roles when deployed could enhance performance in strategy implementation. Among the examples is Toyota's lean manufacturing methodology. According to Liker (2004), the company through awareness made it possible for seamless role integration across all levels since every employee was aware of their impact on the broader strategic goals. Quoting Liker (2004) verbatim, *"Think of your organization as a living sociotechnical system rather than simple and direct cause-and-effect relationships. Investing to develop people allows them to locally control complex system dynamics."* The firm's collaborative culture and its continuous improvement strategy (Kaizen) motivate cross-functional teams to work together efficiently. Deducing from Liker (2004), the integrating of roles has been crucial for the minimizing of waste and for boosting efficiency and by default ultimately driving superior outcomes for Toyota (Liker, 2004).

Secondly, Apple Incorporated's case provides another considerable and compelling example for this research, particularly drawing insight from Steve Jobs' tenure. How the company's strategy relied on tightly integrated roles between the design and engineering departments instead of siloed structures. The reason for this, as recorded by Isaacson (2011) was to be nurturing an atmosphere where designers and engineers worked alongside from the start of product development. The following is a quote of Steve Job on the

issue, *“Our method was to develop integrated products, and that meant our process had to be integrated and collaborative.”* Arguably this initiative paid off, and Apple consistently delivered cutting-edge innovations, and this is seen in the creation of the iPhone and iPad. This integrated approach ensured that strategic targets were achieved with creativity and precision (Isaacson, 2011).

Thirdly, as example is Procter & Gamble’s (P&G) Connect + Develop program that captures role integration through collaboration with external entities. It teaches that the most brilliant external network is of no use without well aligned internal roles. By aligning the firm’s internal roles with external contributors such as suppliers and research organizations, enabled them to accelerate innovation while reducing costs. The model of open innovation makes it possible for P&G to effectively utilize outside expertise in harmony with its internal strategic objectives (Huston & Sakkab, 2006). These listed examples highlight the impact that role integration plays in implementing strategies the said companies, even though they do not argue that it alone leads to enhancing performance.

2.2 Role integration in strategy

Role here means a temporary view on an object, a position to be filled by a player (Odell et al. 2005), and in this case the player being the employee of an organization. Role is expressed by extrinsic features that may change during lifetime. (Kristensen et al., 1996) define a role as a “set of properties which are important for an object to be able to behave in a certain way expected by a set of other objects”. Pertaining to role dynamicity, which is relevant in this context, Kristensen et al. (1996) argues that role may be added or removed during an object’s lifetime. Regarding definition and meaning to role integration, though not used verbatim by all researchers except few like Lawrence and Lorsch (1967), there remains various opinions and perspectives. The concept has evolved significantly over the years and below is a table presenting various scholars along with their definitions, perspectives and views on role integration that sets the stage to unravel the concept further:

Table 2: Definitions and perspectives on role integration

Reference	Definitions
Thompson (1967)	"Role integration refers to the coordination and alignment of individual roles across an organization, ensuring that tasks and responsibilities from various departments and units work together in harmony toward achieving organizational goals."
Lawrence and Lorsch (1967)	Roles should not and do not look the same. "By integration we mean the process of achieving unity of effort among the various subsystems in the accomplishment of the organization's tasks."
Fayol (1949)	... it is the process of aligning the duties and activities of different departments to ensure smooth organizational functioning.
Galbraith (1974)	It is an organizational design principle in which roles and responsibilities are arranged to promote effective communication and coordination across different functional areas, especially in environments that require innovation and flexibility. <i>"These roles carry the labels of program managers, product managers, project managers, unit managers, material managers etc. After creating the role, the design problem is to create enough power in the role to influence the decision process."</i>
Mintzberg (1979)	<i>"Reciprocal coupling is of course more interdependent still, since a change in one task affects not only those farther along but also those behind."</i> (pp. 5) Role integration deduced from his research is seen as the process through which an organization aligns the roles of individuals or groups across various levels or functions in order to foster harmony and cooperation.
Nadler and Tushman (1980)	See role integration as the harmonization of tasks and responsibilities both within and across different departments of an organization, aimed at enhancing the effectiveness and productivity of its overall operations.

Hrebiniak (2006)	There is a need for alignment of individual and departmental roles with the overall strategic plan to ensure coherent action.
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Role integration in strategy is therefore defined as the process of aligning and coordinating the various functions and roles within an organization to ensure they work together in harmony to achieve the company's strategic goals. What it requires is breaking down silos and encouraging collaboration among different teams, different departments, and individuals to create an integrated and more connected approach to implement the organization's strategic plan (Mintzberg, 1985). Arguing from Beer & Eisenstat (2000) position, role integration is linked to harmonizing various functional roles and responsibilities to promote collaboration and get rid of rigidity.

Inferring from C. K. Prahalad and Gary Hamel (1990), without being prejudicial to their work, it is evident that role integration is vital for successful strategy execution because it could help prevent disintegrating and ensure that everyone in the organization is working together to accomplish a common purpose.

Deducing from Mintzberg (1985), it is echoed that when roles and functions are thoroughly or well-integrated, it enhances the organization's responsiveness to dynamic conditions and challenges in its environment and enables the same to implement its strategy effectively. Considering Mintzberg's (1985) position on realized and unrealized strategy, it can be further argued that role integration is likely to ensure that individuals in the organization contribute fully to achieving the intended strategy to a significant extent. The idea/concept of role integration within the strategy implementation context is extensively grounded in organizational theory and the literature on strategic management. In terms of frameworks that support the concept, Mintzberg's (1979) framework on organizational structure serves as a foundation. The theory highlights the necessity of coordination and mutual adjustment among various roles so long as the effectiveness of operations is concerned.

While role integration is argued to drive strategic success under certain conditions, its effectiveness as asserted varies widely based on variables like corporate culture, type of industry, and the specific implementation approach (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967; Mintzberg, 1985). Understanding these dynamics is essential for firms with the aim to

leverage role integration in a manner that supports their strategic objectives and operational realities. There are also conflicting findings in prior studies on role integration which has risen from differences in organizational context, methodologies, and interpretations of what constitutes 'effective' role integration. The Table 3 presents the various positions upheld by researchers who have in one way or another addressed the matter.

Table 3: Conflicting findings in prior studies on role integration

Theme	Position	Scholar's assertion/finding
Impact on Strategic Outcomes	Positive Impact	According to Bartlett and Ghoshal (1993), integrated roles encourage cross-functional collaboration, it enhances agility and decision-making, thereby resulting in more effective strategy implementation. Cross-functional teams (forums, boards) serve the dual purpose of facilitating knowledge transfer and acts as legitimate arenas "where managers can negotiate differences and resolve conflicts that are inherent in the matrix structure" (pp. 13,17).
	Mixed or Limited Impact	It is deduced from Hrebiniak (2006) that while role integration may theoretically improve coordination, it can lead to role ambiguity and delays if responsibilities and boundaries are not clear, especially in large organizations with rigid (siloed) structures.
Efficiency vs. Flexibility	Efficiency Gains	...should enhance operational efficiency by aligning various teams under a unified strategy, reducing repetition and optimizing resource use (Mintzberg, 1994).
	Loss of Flexibility	studies by Mintzberg (1994) and Noble (1999) suggests that excessive role integration may limit flexibility, since increased collaboration

		across departments has the tendency to slow down response time. It is further argued that while integration may enhance consistency, it could also reduce the firm's agility when it comes to adapting to dynamic market demands – an essential capability in fast changing environments.
Role Integration and Innovation	Promotes Innovation	Cross-functional team is purported to enhance creativity, since team members contribute and share various expertise to problem-solving, potentially resulting in more innovative strategies (Thompson, 1967).
	Hinders Innovation	Gandrita (2023) and Vaara and Whittington (2012) argues in their work that more integration has the tendency to stifle innovation by promoting conformity and diminishing individual initiative. In environments with high levels of integration, employees stand the possibility of feeling pressured to adhere closely to existing roles and processes which as a result can decrease the potential for creative thinking and experimentation.
Employee Motivation and Satisfaction.	Improved Job Satisfaction	Papadakis (2018) gives the impression that role integration boosts job satisfaction by creating clearer alignment with strategic goals, this as a result gives employees a sense of purpose and ownership. The possibility of this happening is when team members understand how each person's role contributes to broader

		objectives; thus, the tendency that their engagement and motivation increases.
	Increased Stress and Role Conflict	It is deduced from Alexander (1985) that employees whose roles are integrated often face higher demands, which can lead to burnout and decreased satisfaction especially when expectations are not clearly stated or defined. This suggests that role integration may result in increased stress and possibly role conflict, particularly when employees are expected to balance multiple and in some instances conflicting responsibilities.
Applicability Across Organizational Types	Effective in Dynamic Environments	Role integration is especially effective in dynamic, fast-paced industries where the ability to adapt quickly and innovate is of a necessity (Noble, 1999).
	Less Effective in Stable or Hierarchical Organizations	In stable industries or highly hierarchical organizations, role integration may be less effective because traditional structures can be disrupted by the blurred boundaries it introduces. This disruption may lead to conflict or even resistance among employees who are accustomed to clear, well-defined roles (Mazhitov et al., 2024).

2.3 Processes and mechanisms / key features of role integration in strategy

Interdepartmental Collaboration: This is a crucial aspect of role integration, and it is the situation in which individuals from different departments or units come together to

achieve shared strategic objectives. According to Galbraith (1977), effective strategy implementation requires dismantling silos (compartments as others refer to it) and promoting cross-departmental cooperation. This can be achieved through the following methods:

- **Interdepartmental Teams:** This involves forming project-specific teams with members drawn from various distinct departments. It is an approach that encourages diverse perspectives and collective responsibility for achieving strategic outcomes (Wheelwright & Clark, 1992).

Clearly defined and well-aligned roles is an enabler for team members to understand their responsibilities within the strategic plan. When roles are unclear, it can lead to misunderstandings or even confusion, it can result in duplicating efforts, or create gaps in implementation (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967; Ramaswamy & Namakumari, 2018). The applicable methods to make this happen are:

- **Role Mapping:** This technique is about to letting different parts of the organization be different, and then deliberately connect them (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967). It involves identifying distinct roles and aligning them with strategic objectives (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967). It is important in complex organizations specifically places where multiple departments must work together efficiently to accomplish common objectives or goals (Hrebiniak, 2006 p. 9-12).
- **Strategy-aligned job descriptions:** What this implies is that role descriptions should clearly mirror or reflect strategic priorities and explain how each position supports the overall strategic vision of the organization/company (Kaplan & Norton, 2001).

Leadership Engagement and Coordination: Leadership plays central role when it comes to integrating responsibilities (McCauley, C. D., et al., 2015), they do this by making sure that individuals and departments are aligned with the organization's strategic direction and work toward common goals (Hrebiniak, 2006). It is necessary for leaders to coordinate activities across different functions and ensure that teams remain motivated and are properly supported to carry out their roles (duties) effectively. The applicable methods for the realisation are as follows:

- Strategic Leadership Teams: This by establishing leadership groups which are made up of department heads who are accountable to ensuring their teams are aligned with the organization's overall strategy (Hamel & Prahalad, 1989; McCauley, C. D., et al., 2015).
- Regular Strategic Reviews: what this implies is that there should be ongoing/periodic meetings and assessments to monitor progress, to offer feedback, and to refine roles and responsibilities when necessary, so to help preserve alignment and accountability over time (Kotter, 1996; McCauley, C. D., et al., 2015). Considering the words of Kotter (1997, p.7-8) on empowering people to act beyond their current roles, *"Employees are emboldened to try new approaches, to develop new ideas, and to provide leadership. The only constraint is that the actions fit within the broad parameters of the overall vision."*

System of Accountability: Deducing from the well-researched work of Hrebiniak (2006), accountability plays a crucial role in aligning roles during the strategy implementation process in the sense that, when accountability is clearly defined, individuals and departments have a better understanding of their responsibilities, especially when supported by systems that track performance and reinforce commitment to strategic objectives or goals (McCauley, C. D., et al., 2015). The most common methods used for the realisation of this include:

- The Balanced Scorecard (Kaplan & Norton, 1996) as it is commonly known connects the objectives of individuals and teams to the organization's overall strategic direction by offering a clear structure for accountability. Incorporation of performance metrics to the balanced scorecard ensures that there is a system of accountable for tracking employee contributions to the strategy.
- Performance Management Systems: These on the other hand are systems that establish specific, measurable goals for subordinates/employees that are associated to the organization's strategic goals, and regularly assess their performance against the set goals of the organization (Beer & Eisenstat, 2000).

Efficient Communication Avenues: Communication plays a part in bringing together different roles within an organization. As a tool it ensures that all members understand how

their work supports the overall goals (Peng & Litteljohn, 2001). When communication is lacking, broken or information is not shared properly, it can cause misalignment and lower the effectiveness in roles. The methods to deploy for effective communication as suggested are:

- **Communication Strategies:** Here, the thought is that organizations are to create clear communication strategies that share their strategic goals with everyone (its members). This ensures that its strategic agenda is understood by its members (Kotter, 1996).
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** It is argued that for there to be effective role integration, it's important to have a top-down communication approach, the very kind described by Mintzberg (1994). Additionally, there should be means to gather feedback (communication flow from point A to B and vice versa) so employees can share their insights and challenges. The position is that this promotes flexibility in roles.

Resource Coordination and Integration: This process is about allocating both human and physical resources to facilitate implementation. Chandler (1962) posits that “structure follows strategy,” the reason being that organizations must align their resources and structures with strategic objectives. The following approaches support resource coordination and integration:

- **Resource Prioritization Models:** This means developing resource allocation models that prioritize strategic projects over less critical tasks makes it possible that employees receive the necessary resources and support to perform their roles effectively (Kaplan & Norton, 2001).
- **Employee Training and Development Programs:** What this calls for is maintaining a sustained focus in training and development as essential for ensuring that employees acquire the necessary skills and are adequately prepared to accomplish their strategic responsibilities (Hitt et al., 2016). However, due to the inherent uncertainties in business operations and human behaviour, errors are inevitable and may still occur even among highly skilled and well-prepared managers and for this reason, organizations are to emphasize the identification and analysis of

such mistakes for the purpose of promoting organizational learning, rather than relying exclusively on training as a preventive measure (Shimizu, K., Hitt, M. A., & Hofmann, D. A. F., 2011).

Environment of Teamwork and Creativity: Creating an enabling atmosphere that fosters teamwork and provokes innovation is essential for role integration within a strategic context, Schein (2010) is of the opinion that, an organization's culture significantly influences how well its employees collaborate towards its strategic ambitions. This environment can be created when the following are in place:

- Culture Transformation Initiatives or Programs: What this means is that organizations should have in place programs that make adjustment to its culture to align employee values with its strategic plans (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). This may include promoting a culture of transparency, inter-departmental cooperation, and continual refinement.
- Establishing official innovation spaces or incubation centres makes it possible for teams from multiple departments to collaborate on novel initiatives, thereby promoting role integration and interdepartmental teamwork (Hamel & Prahalad, 1989; Hamel, G., & Euchner, J., 2020).

2.4 Strategy Implementation

Table 4: Perspectives on what strategy implementation is

Reference	Definitions
Noble (1999)	"Strategy implementation is the communication, interpretation, adoption, and enactment of strategic plans. It involves turning a planned strategy into actions to achieve organizational goals."
Hrebiniak (2006)	"Strategy implementation refers to the structured process of putting strategic plans into action. It entails converting objectives into concrete steps that fit within the company's framework, processes, and values."
Alharthy et al. (2017)	"It as the process of aligning resources, processes, and capabilities with strategic objectives to ensure that intended strategies are executed successfully."

Yang, Sun, and Eppler (2010)	Strategy implementation involves embracing, understanding, conveying and carrying out strategic goals.
Crittenden and Crittenden (2008)	Strategy implementation constitutes the phase in which plans are operationalized to ensure that strategic objectives are translated into effective actions.
Okumus (2003)	"It is the process that turns formulated strategies into actions to achieve intended results."
Pettigrew (1992)	Strategy implementation does not only involve translating strategies into action but instead also steering the cultural, political, and structural forces that impact the effectiveness of this translation.
Mazhitov, Uddin, Mahmood, and Ostrovskiy (2024)	Strategy implementation is perceived as the process by which organizations implement their strategic plans through coordinated actions across various departments.

The journey begins right from the strategic plan on paper to tangible organizational performance. It is fair to say that the consensus is that strategy implementation happens to be one of the most complicated and critical challenges in management. The understanding of SI is best captured by one statement, "*Strategy implementation is an emergent process of learning and adaptation to a changing environment, undertaken by key individuals and groups in an organization*" (Mintzberg, 1985). This position reflects great leap from seeing strategy implementation as a rigid, or even top-down approach to understanding it as an adaptive, and ongoing process that involves collaboration among various organizational stakeholders. Strategy implementation is believed to have more to do with learning and adjustment; in the sense that, as individuals and groups associate with the strategy, and respond to feedback, and also adjust their actions with the purpose of effectively pursuing organizational goals in a dynamic environment, it gets better (Mintzberg, 1985). This emergent position is that strategy must be flexible and not rigid; in other words, it must be tested and refined in the real world, where unforeseen competitors, changing customer preferences, and other contingencies constantly reshape

the path to success; that there should be consistency in action over time (Mintzberg, 1985).

However, this position occurs within the complex social and political fabric of the organization (Schendel & Hofer, 1979). Studies present that organizational politics can negatively impact strategy implementation (Schendel & Hofer, 1979; Lampaki, 2018). Political behaviour, for instance turf wars, hoarding of resources and the pursuit of personal agendas over organizational goals, can divert even the most brilliantly formulated strategy (Schendel & Hofer, 1979). It is further argued that both employees and managers ought to actively engage in and commit to strategy implementation for it to be fully effective and resilient against unhealthy politics (Schendel & Hofer, 1979; Lampaki, 2018). Commitment is not automatic, instead it is cultivated through transparent communication, through inclusive processes, and a leadership style that bridges individual incentives with strategic objectives.

Barney (1991) argues that a company's difference in the market is traced to or is because of its unique dynamic capabilities and/or resources, which differentiate its strategy from competitors doing business in the same industry. These resources, whether tangible like proprietary technology or intangible like an innovational culture or a powerful brand form the foundation upon which a successful strategy is built. Implementation, however, is the process of putting into action and leveraging these unique resources through the daily activities of the organization. This alignment allows the company's unique capabilities are consistently applied to create value in a way that cannot be easily replicated by its competitors (Barney, 1991). The firm must first comprehend its competitive landscape and then determine where and how to deploy its dynamic capabilities (Barney, 1991). Porter's Five Forces framework reinforces this concept in the sense that it helps in analysing a company's internal and external influences within its competitive landscape, helping to define its market standing—a process that naturally integrates operational and business functions (Porter, M. E., 1979). The same argues that industry structure drives competition and profitability, not just individual firm behaviour. By meticulously evaluating the threat of new entrants in the industry, the bargaining power of suppliers and buyers, the threat of substitute products, and the intensity of rivalry among

existing competitors, an organization can identify the key pressures on profitability within its industry (Porter, M. E., 1979). Arguably, a well-implemented strategy is one that positions the firm to defend against these forces and exploit industry structure to its own advantage, to that effect creating a protected and profitable position for itself in the market.

Despite a clear understanding of these principles, an implementation gap remains a common challenge for many organizations. Many face difficulties with effectively implementing their strategies (C. K. Prahalad & Gary Hamel, 1990; Hamel & Euchner, 2020). From the position of Prahalad and Hamel (1990), one important reason for these challenges is the exclusion of relevant stakeholders precisely, middle managers. The way these stakeholders are engaged can significantly influence whether the strategy fails or succeeds (Hrebiniak, 2006). Middle managers/executives are not mere conduits for directives from above, arguably (Hrebiniak, 2006); they are the anchor of implementation as they translate high-level objectives into operational reality for their teams (subordinates). When middle-managers are excluded from the strategy formative stages, they are suffocated of the context and ownership necessary to drive the strategy, which leads to disconnection, misinterpretations, and sometimes passive or even deliberate resistance (Hrebiniak, 2006).

Middle managers/executives in their respective departments might recognize a significant resource necessary for the company's core capabilities and, as a response, choose to either hold onto it for their unit's benefit or freely share it as part of the organization's intellectual assets (Peng & Litteljohn, 2001; Hamel, G., & Euchner, J., 2020). Choosing between siloed protectionism and collaborative sharing is often a direct reflection of how the strategy was communicated/socialized and how the organizational culture and its incentives are structured. A manager who has a stake in the ownership of the broader strategy is more likely to share a key employee, a best practice, or a piece of technology for the greater good (Hrebiniak, 2006). In contrast, a manager who feels the strategy was imposed upon them may hoard resources to optimize their own department's performance metrics even if it is at the expense of the organization's overall well-being (Mintzberg, 1985; Hrebiniak, 2006).

To solve this problem between high-level strategy and ground-level implementation, and to foster the necessary alignment and commitment to strategy, organizations require practical tools. The main strategy can be split into smaller activities and visually represented (mapped), a position held by Mintzberg, (1985), strongly argues that strategies are rarely purely deliberate or purely emergent. This position is that the organization's value proposition connects with each team member and aligns their efforts with the overall vision, objectives, and its goals. Now, a strategy map provides a visual representation (picture) of the cause-and-effect relationships between strategic objectives across different perspectives, such as financial, customer, internal process, and research and development. This creates visibility, bringing together how an individual's work is improving a specific internal process, ultimately contributes to achieving the customer value proposition and goals (Kaplan & Norton, 2001).

Additionally, an activity map, as popularized by Porter, illustrates how a company's strategic activities fit together and complements one another. When implementing the organizational strategy, the activity map can help clarify the roles of everyone involved within the organization. Activity map makes interdependencies visible, it highlights areas where alignment is weak, and it ensures that the organization's unique capabilities, as described by Barney (1991), are consistently activated across all operations. Arguably, successful strategy implementation is not a linear checklist but rather a dynamic human-centric process which requires viewing strategy as an emergent learning process (Mintzberg, 1985; 1994), securing commitment through the inclusion of critical stakeholders like middle managers (Prahalad & Hamel, 1990), and leveraging unique resources (Barney, 1991) within a well-understood competitive environment (Porter, 1979).

2.4.1 Phases in Strategy Implementation

The process of bringing a strategy into action typically unfolds through a coordinated and evolving sequence. These sequences include communicating the strategy, aligning resources, planning actions, carrying out the plan, and continuously monitoring and progress evaluation (Hrebiniak, 2006; Tawse, A., & Tabesh, P., 2021). This phased sequence and methodology provides a roadmap for organizations to translate high-level vision into

concrete action hence bridging the critical gap between ambition and accomplishment. A failure to effectively manage any single variable can jeopardize the entire strategic initiative, making a disciplined approach to implementation not just beneficial but rather essential for long-term organizational resilience and success.

Strategy Communication: For any strategy to be successful, it largely depends on how well the strategy is communicated to its stakeholders (Peng & Litteljohn, 2001). When the strategy is explained clearly, stakeholders/team members are better able to understand the objectives, their specific responsibilities, and what is expected of them during the delivery and transition. Research indicates that breakdowns in communication emerges as a major contributor to failed strategy implementation (Hrebiniak, 2006; Beer & Eisenstat, 2000). It is argued that delivering messages that are clear to understand, consistent, and engaging helps bring stakeholders into alignment and builds commitment across the organization (Peng & Litteljohn, 2001). Leaders are encouraged to prioritize open, two-way communication – hence encouraging input and feedback from employees at all levels of the organizational hierarchy. Beyond mere announcement of information, effective strategy communication is a continuous and multi-channel campaign which starts with leadership articulating a compelling "story" for the change— leadership explains not just what is changing, but why that change is necessary, the compelling opportunities to exploit, and what it means for the stakeholders. This involves utilizing diverse media such as company-wide meetings, its intranet portals, departmental briefings, and interactive workshops to reinforce the message. The goal is to move beyond simple awareness to genuine understanding and inclusion. When employees see how their daily work contributes to the broader strategic objectives, they are more likely to engage proactively (Hrebiniak, 2006; Tawse, A., & Tabesh, P., 2021). Furthermore, by creating forums to provide feedback such as Q&A sessions, surveys, and focus groups, leaders can identify misunderstandings that arise, address concerns on time, and even gather valuable frontline insights that can refine the strategy itself, to transforming a top-down directive into a collaborative venture.

Alignment of Resource: The next sequence pertaining to this is about lining up resources like financial, human, and technology, to support the strategic goals. As Chandler (1962)

put it, "structure follows strategy," meaning that a company's setup, systems, and modus operandi ought to be crafted carefully to implement a strategy. Resources ought to be distributed according to priority and that usually means pulling them from less important tasks (Teece, D. J., 2018). Additionally, management ought to ensure that employees possess the necessary skills, knowledge, and tools to play their roles in the implementation process (Kaplan & Norton, 1996). Resource alignment in this case is where strategic intent is tested against practical reality. Lastly, it requires embedding the strategy into the budgeting process – ensuring that capital is directed toward strategic projects rather than being spread thinly across less impactful initiatives. From a human capital perspective, it may involve restructuring teams to defining new roles, and, to critically investing in targeted training and development programs to close skill gaps. For example, a strategy focused on digital transformation will fail if the workforce lacks proficiency in new software platforms. From the Technological point, alignment means evaluating existing systems for their ability to support new strategic goals; in this instance outdated systems may have to be upgraded or replaced to enable better data analysis/technological experience, customer relationship management, or operational efficiency. This part often involves difficult decisions, such as terminating mundane projects or redeploying personnel – demanding strong leadership to overcome internal passivity and political resistance.

Action Planning: This phase involves bringing together detailed action plans that break the bigger strategic goal into smaller but doable tasks with clear timelines to be implemented. It means spelling out who does what across different parts of the organization; it requires the setting of performance measures and outlining how teams will coordinate and work together (Kaplan & Norton, 2001). Mintzberg (1994) on the other hand argues that strategic plans need to remain responsive to changing conditions and allow for flexibility when put into practice. Notwithstanding, building a feedback loop into the action plan enables real-time adjustments in case of uncertainties which may occur – a robust action plan acts as the project management backbone of the strategy. It translates the vision into specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) objectives for departments, teams, and individuals to utilize. This does not exclude the

creation of detailed project charters and responsibility assignment matrices (e.g., RACI charts) to eliminate ambiguity about who is accountable for each deliverable. For instance, a strategic goal to "increase customer satisfaction by 20%" would be broken down into actions like "redesign the onboarding process by Q3," "implement a new customer feedback system by Q2," and "train all support staff on new protocols by Q1," with clear owners for each. By establishing these granular steps and interim milestones, the organization can maintain momentum and create a sense of tangible progress, making the grand strategy look achievable and real to its stakeholders.

The Implementation Phase: Often called the make-or-break phase of putting a strategy into action, implementation is where the plan gets put into practice (Hrebiniak, 2006). It ties what employees do day-to-day back to the broader strategic ambition of the company. Kotter (1996) argues that a real sense of urgency, strong leadership, and the ability to manage change is critical for successful implementation. Effective leadership is critical to sustain focus and momentum – at this phase to ensuring that operational goals are achieved. Implementation is the collective action of the entire organization moving in a new direction and it is characterized by a shift from planning to doing, and for that reason leadership presence is most critical at this point. Leaders' ought to be more visible, championing the change, removing of obstacles, and empowering their teams to make decisions that align with the strategy. This phase is where the organization's change management capabilities are tested. Implementation is not a monumental event but a continuous process of decision-making and problem-solving where the theory becomes practical – meets the unpredictable nature of the market and internal organizational dynamics.

Monitoring and Control Phase: After strategy implementation, ongoing monitoring is essential to stay aligned with the desired outcomes and not lose anything. Having structured controls like the Balanced Scorecard (Kaplan & Norton, 1996), provides systematic methods for tracking key performance indicators (KPIs). Monitoring makes it possible for organizations to detect early issues or inefficiencies and take the necessary corrective action. Effective monitoring transforms implementation from a "set it and forget it" plan into a dynamic and responsive process. It includes establishing a dashboard of predictive

indicators to provide a real-time view of performance. For example, while a output metrics like quarterly revenue report is important, leading indicators such as website traffic, customer engagement scores, or project milestone completion rates can provide earlier signals of success or trouble. Regular review cycles which can be weekly, monthly, or quarterly are most times established in this phase to discuss these metrics. These meetings are not intended to be punitive but to foster a culture of collective problem-solving. When a KPI is off-track for example, the team investigates the root cause: Was the initial assumption wrong? Was a resource constraint overlooked? This data-driven approach allows for objective discussions and ensures that the organization is responding to actual evidence rather than anecdotes, hence maintaining strategic agility.

Assessment and Modification: The final step or phase, as far as strategy is concerned is evaluating how well the strategy worked and making necessary adjustments should there be any. Once the strategy is put into practice, organizations need to assess whether the strategy has achieved its goals. This review can draw on both numerical and more subjective measures like, financial performance, gains in market share, customer satisfaction levels and employee engagement. If the results however do not meet expectations, it may be time to change either the strategy itself or its implementation. Mintzberg and Waters (1985) noted the value of a flexible approach to strategy, as when plans evolve based on tangible results rather than rigidly following the original plan. The final phase closes the loop and sets the stage for the next strategic cycle. A comprehensive post-implementation review is necessary for a thorough examination of the entire procedure. This goes beyond just asking "Did we achieve our targets?" to asking "What did we learn?" This involves analysing what worked well, what did not work, and why? Perhaps the implementation was impeccable, but the initial market assumption was not correct, hence suggesting a need to pivot the core strategy. Alternatively, the strategy may have been sound but the internal capabilities for implementation were lacking, hence indicating a need for different approach or better resource preparation. This philosophy aligns with Mintzberg's concept of "emergent strategy," where the intended strategy is continuously refined by the lessons learned from the realized strategy. By institutionalizing this learning process an organization cultivates strategic resilience,

becoming adept not only at implementing strategic decisions but also at adapting them intelligently as times and seasons change.

3 Theoretical framework

This chapter presents the theoretical basis for answering the research question. Drawing on insights from existing literature, it builds a framework focused on dynamic capabilities and the integration of roles. This chapter attempts to explain why the phenomenon occurs and how the different variables and concepts explained are related – hence, a hybrid framework as illustrated in Figure 3, was developed to examine the research question. The framework outlines the overarching concepts of dynamic capabilities and contingency theory – explanations of these theories and their relevance to the study are systematically presented.

3.1 Contingency Theory

This theory proposes that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to organizing or managing a company/organization. Per this theory, the most effective structure and leadership style are the ones that align with various internal and external conditions such as the size of the organization, strategic goals, the technologies the organization relies on, and the culture of the organization (Donaldson, 2001; Fiedler, 1967). To bring this idea into practice, leaders and managers are to carefully assess their circumstances and adapt their methods to suit the peculiar challenges they face or/and situations they find themselves (Donaldson, 2001; Fiedler, 1967).

According to Fiedler (1967), and reaffirmed by Donaldson (2001), this theory begins with diagnosing the situation or contingency. In terms of environment this means considering external factors that affect the organization like competition, market conditions, regulations, and technological advances. Part of that diagnosis pertains recognizing that larger organizations often need more formal structures while smaller firms can get by with more flexible arrangements (Donaldson, 2001). Also, the complexity of the technology an organization uses determines whether collaboration or specialization is needed. To illustrate, it is argued that more routine, labour-intensive tasks tend to benefit from mechanistic structures whereas non-routine tasks lean toward organic ones (Woodward, 1965). In terms of leadership style, Fiedler (1967) asserts that the leader's behaviour and

style vary depending on follower characteristics and the demands of the task. Fiedler's contingency model implies that the effectiveness of leadership relies on the compatibility between the style of the leader and the surrounding conditions (Fiedler, 1967). The claim is that leaders who place emphasis on tasks tend to excel in extremely unfavourable or highly favourable conditions whereas leaders who prioritise relationships perform better in moderately favourable conditions. Additionally, it is argued that relationship-oriented leaders can enhance their performance by leveraging strong interpersonal abilities (Fiedler, 1967). The next step in applying Fiedler's (1967) contingency theory borders on matching leadership with organizational structures. When it comes to leadership, the theory suggests that the style should fit the situation. For instance, it is stated that task-oriented leadership tends to work better when tasks are unstructured and relationships unclear (Fiedler, 1967). On the organizational design aspect, the suggestion is that structure should be chosen based on the environment and technological needs (Fiedler, 1967). Once leadership and structure are aligned, what follows next is monitoring and adjusting, which means setting up feedback loops. Fiedler (1967) recommends focusing on how the chosen leadership style or structure performs since circumstances shift over time, hence organizations ought to stay ready to adapt. In terms of adaptation, the organization may need to change its structure or leadership approach if the external environment shifts—like during a technological disruption or an economic crisis. In the telecom environment, what this implies is that a firm should match its technological capabilities with its organizational structure (Smith & Lee, 2020). Smith & Lee (2020) studied the changing strategies of telecom firms by focusing on how strategic adaptability and environmental uncertainty interact. Drawing on the contingency theory, Smith and Lee (2020) demonstrated in their work how organizations operate under different market conditions by adjusting their strategies to fit the situation—whether responding to new technologies, changes in regulations, or competitive pressures. Smith and Lee (2020) assert that companies adopting flexible, technology-focused approaches like fast innovation cycles and digital transformation performed better as compared to companies with rigid strategies. For example, firms adopting 5G technology often reorganize to emphasize on agility and innovation by creating cross-functional teams to speed-up

deployment so they can respond to market needs (Attaran, S., & Attaran, M., 2020). In terms of regulations, Vernikos, E. (2023) explains that companies adjust their practices to meet compliance requirements and to align with government policy. For example, telecom companies in the EU changed their data management practices to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), demonstrating how environmental factors can drive operational changes – this was seen right after the introduction of GDPR in Europe (Vernikos, E., 2023). When it comes to market dynamics and competition, it is commonly accepted that strategies need to fit market conditions. Whilst many companies might theoretically transition between differentiation and cost leadership, the Indian telecom market shows that these changes are often reactions to external shocks rather than planned moves. When Reliance Jio entered the market with both low prices and advanced 4G/fibre infrastructure, its competitors like Airtel and Vodafone-Idea had to respond (Pai, 2021). It is reported that Bharti Airtel, for example, started offering free data for 4G switches, this was not done as a planned strategy but for customer retention. The case notes that *"Market leaders Bharti and Idea saw a reduction of as much as 35% in operating profit and a 10-percentage-points reduction in operating margins as it struggled to match its rival R-Jio's offerings: initially free and later ultra-cheap pricing"* (Pai, 2021, p. 4). And the retaliation is that *"Bharti Airtel decided to face the challenge by offering free data to switch to 4G besides other lucrative and enticing plans in an effort to retain customers"* (Pai, 2021, p. 4). This example is an indication that a company's success depends on how well it adapts to its environment as it considers the uncertainty of the market, technological changes, and the inevitable competition. The research by Attaran, S., & Attaran, M. (2020) establishes the point that adapting to address consumer needs is essential, especially as it is seen that customer preferences for data-focused services and bundled offers change rapidly.

Anchoring on the above stated explanations and findings, the following visual is produced i.e. the Contingency Theory Framework. The Figure 2 gives details of how the external environment, contextual fit, organizational strategy, dynamic capabilities, and organizational performance are interconnected. The arrows in the visuals are to help us understand how these elements, as described, interact with each other, highlighting that

alignment and adaptability are key to enhancing performance.

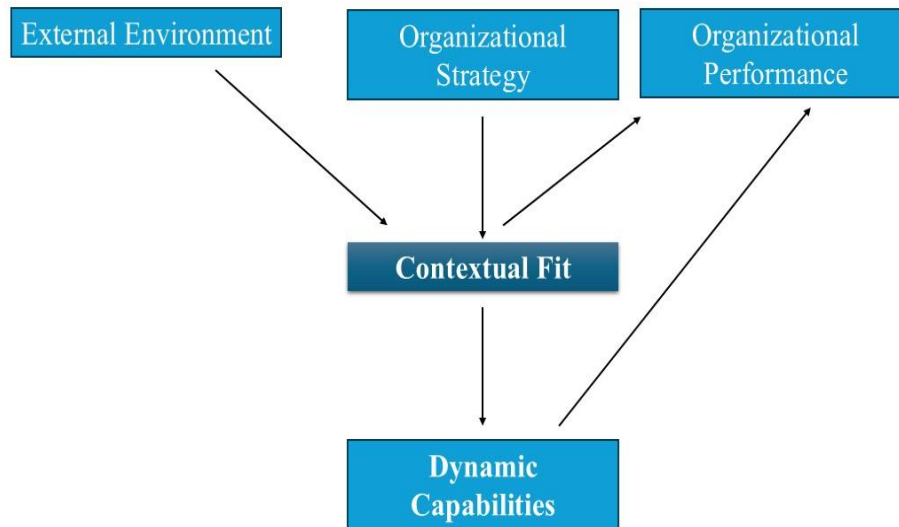


Figure 2: The contingency theory concept

3.2 Dynamic Capabilities

Dynamic capabilities, as it is known in the academic circles is defined as a firm's ability to develop, integrate, and reconfigure internal and external assets or resources to respond to rapidly changing conditions (Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997). This concept has developed over the years to explain how businesses sustain a competitive advantage in unstable environments. Undoubtedly, numerous researchers have contributed to defining and utilizing dynamic capabilities, including the likes of Teece, Pisano, and Shuen (1997), Newbert (2007), and Kozlenkova, Samaha, & Palmatier (2014).

Teece, Pisano, and Shuen (1997), the most cited in the field, pioneered the concept of dynamic capabilities, positing that a firm's success in dynamic settings is anchored on its capacity to recognize opportunities and threats, to seize them, and maintain a competitive advantage through ongoing renewal. Teece, Pisano, and Shuen (1997) also proposed that dynamic capabilities are rooted in three core activities:

- Identifying and influencing opportunities and threats: This is explained as pinpointing future markets and technological shifts that impact a company's competitive standing.
- Taking advantage of opportunities: This activity involves mobilizing resources to capitalize on discovered opportunities, hence involving new product development, changing organizational structures, or forming strategic alliances.
- Adapting and reconfiguring: What this means is that resources and structures are to be adjusted to effectively address new market demands and technological progress.

The notion is that firms excelling in these activities can maintain competitive superiority in rapidly changing environments (Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997).

Newbert (2007) expounded further on the synergy between dynamic capabilities and competitive advantage, particularly through what is called the resource-based view. Newbert (2007) conducted a study by analysing companies' resource frameworks to determine which blends of resources and capabilities most significantly influence or affect performance. Newbert (2007) contended that not all resources possess the same potential to generate competitive advantage; rather, it emerges when valuable, rare, difficult to replicate, and irreplaceable (VRIN) resources are effectively partnered with dynamic capabilities. Newbert (2007) research concluded that leveraging these VRIN resources through dynamic capabilities allows firms to achieve a sustained competitive advantage, and this highlights the necessity of aligning dynamic capabilities with valuable resource configurations.

Kozlenkova, Samaha, and Palmatier (2014) expanded the notion of dynamic capabilities into the realm of marketing strategy, examining the role of dynamic capabilities in relationship marketing and customer management. The work of Kozlenkova et al. (2014) underscored that firms in fiercely competitive settings need dynamic capabilities to react to needs of the customer and adjust marketing approaches to the changing market demands. Kozlenkova et al. (2014) emphasized that marketing-focused dynamic capabilities such as customer relationship management and adaptive data-driven marketing enable firms to generate customer value and strengthen brand loyalty, hence boosting

business performance. Kozlenkova et al. (2014) went on to highlight that marketing dynamic capabilities enable companies acquire and retain customers through adaptation, learning, and innovation in the customer relationship setting.

Dynamic capabilities centres on three interconnected activities: detecting, capturing, and transforming. Detecting is defined as taking notice of or identifying market and technological opportunities and threats relevant to maintaining competitive advantage in the environment (Teece, 2007; Zhou et al., 2010). Firms proficient in detection often invest heavily in research and development to strengthen their ability to spot and adapt to new market trends. Capturing on the other hand focuses on utilizing identified opportunities by efficiently deploying resources to innovate and meet or satisfy demands of the market, whereas transforming is about altering current resources and processes to fit new strategies or setting (Teece, 2018).

Innovations stemming from dynamic capabilities is argued to often lead to improved market performance, consequently highlighting the strategic benefit of fostering adaptive processes (Teece, 2018). However, the success of dynamic capabilities can differ depending on factors like market conditions and industry standing. Moreover, organizational integration resulting from centralized R&D departments is argued to facilitate resource coordination for innovation and reducing internal project management costs across multiple divisions (Argyres & Silverman, 2004).

3.2.1 The Use of Dynamic Capabilities

These following points of view presents a comprehensive understanding of dynamic capabilities:

The first point of view is Strategic Flexibility, what this means is a company's capacity to adapt to external and internal changes to maintain its competitiveness – to utilize dynamic capabilities to maintain competitiveness by adapting to technological innovations and evolving consumer tastes or preference (Teece et al., 1997). In practice, companies deploy strategic flexibility either to enter a market or exit it, or for technological adaptation, for consumer-centric innovations or even for partnership(s) and alliance (Vernikos, E., 2023; Attaran, S., & Attaran, M, 2020; Smith & Lee, 2020). For instance, according to

Smith & Lee (2020), companies in the telecommunications sector are known for continuously innovating to adapt to modern technology for example 5G technology; this however call for the reconfiguration of infrastructure, retraining of their staff, and the development of new products to meet consumer demand – in this case, for faster connectivity and enhanced digital services. This is possible when the businesses invest in research and development to keep the pace in technological breakthroughs (Smith & Lee, 2020; Vernikos, E., 2023) whereas monitoring evolving consumer preferences allows firms to pivot their strategies to align with market trends. Kumar, V., Sunder, S., & Sharma, A., (2015) argues that being strategically flexible allows firms to easily enter emerging markets or exit declining ones. To do this, multinational companies often reassess their global portfolios, by shifting resources to regions/areas with higher growth potential while divesting its resources from stagnant or unprofitable markets. Concerning partnerships and alliances (Kumar, V., Sunder, S., & Sharma, A., 2015; Tyagi, 2020), the argument is that, collaborating with other firms, using methods like mergers or joint ventures can enhance flexibility. For example, the merger between AT&T and Time Warner enabled AT&T to expand its services and compete in the rapidly changing media industry (Tyagi, 2020, p. 3).

Resource Efficiency: Dynamic capabilities help make the best use of VRIN resources, a key to lasting competitive advantage (Barney, 1991; Newbert, 2007). When an organization adjusts its VRIN (valuable, rare, inimitable, non-substitutable) resources to meet new consumer behaviours—for example, bringing artificial intelligence into customer service or automating supply chain logistics, it shows its resource efficiency while at the same time strengthens its market position (Barney, 1991). Research states that companies with strong dynamic capabilities are better at managing resources efficiently when there is change in circumstances – hence boosts both their resilience and their position in the market (Barney, 1991; Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997).

Innovative Customer Focus: As pertaining marketing, dynamic capabilities play a key role in strengthening strategies aimed at keeping customers and building real relationships—creating something essential for lasting success (Kozlenkova et al., 2014). According to Kozlenkova et. al. (2014), companies that are good at identifying customer needs and

coming up with fresh or novel solutions are in a stronger position to establish long-term ties with them. This is crucial especially in industries where competition is fierce and innovation moves fast (like tech and telecoms). In a snapshot, dynamic capabilities are not just about running things more efficiently but rather, they can truly transform how a company stays customer-focused as the marketplace keeps evolving (Kozlenkova et al., 2014).

3.2.2 Theoretical framework: Implementing Strategy with integrated roles

The Figure 3 brings together the main ideas/variables from the chapter into a single conceptual framework. The framework lays the foundation for the subsequent stages of the research, and it helps us to delve deeper into how role integration works in strategy implementation.

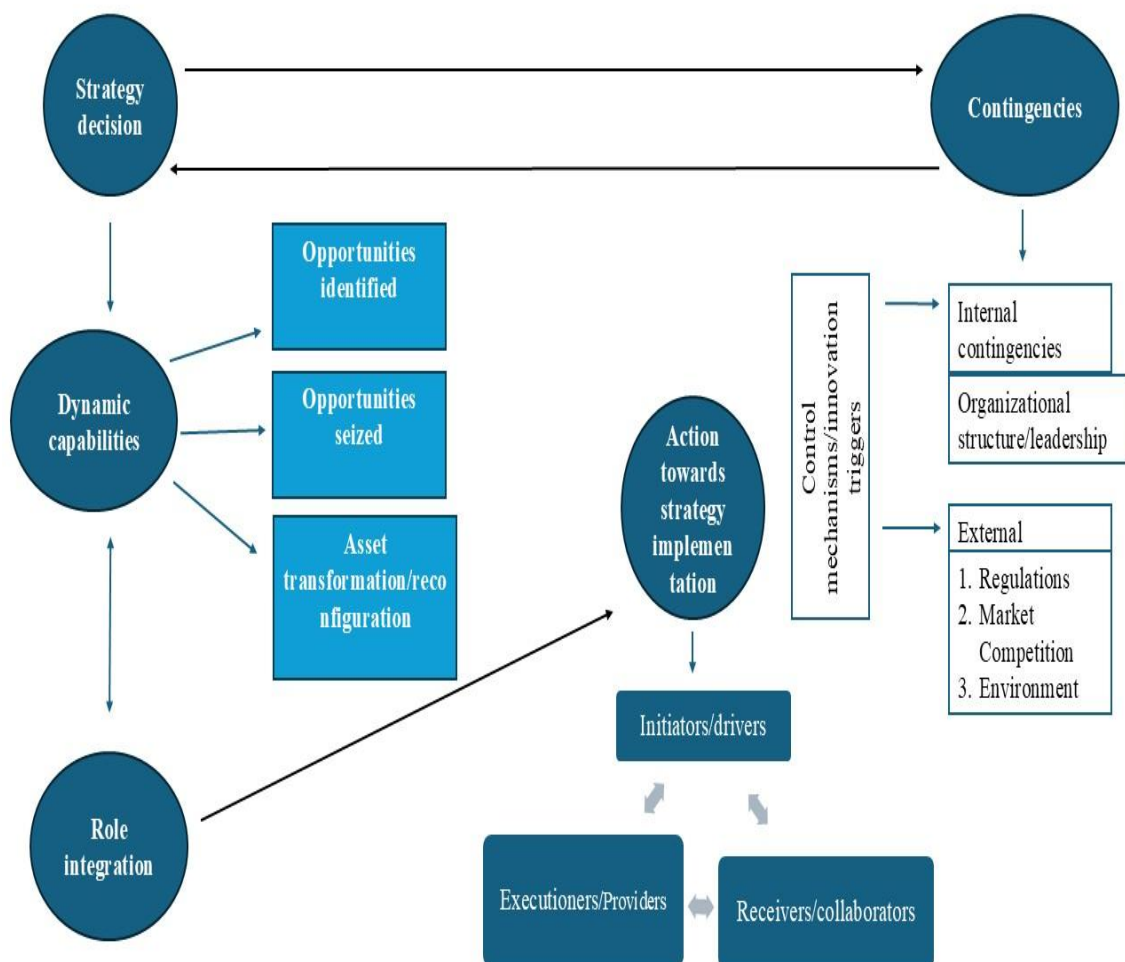


Figure 3: Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework guides us to make sense of bringing strategy into practice through integrated roles based on the chosen theories. It begins with a strategic decision, where in this case that decision comes from the company's vision. The decision is crafted amidst contingencies— i.e. obstacles that come from internal or external environment. The following external contingencies are listed in the framework: state regulations, market competition and environmental factors. Internal contingencies here mean the likes of organizational structure or leadership. According to the framework, these contingencies can either spark innovation or serve as a control mechanism. From the diagram, there are two arrows pointing from the strategic decision to the contingencies and vice versa. What this means is that contingencies shape strategic choices and provide a foundation for innovative solutions. The innovation that emerges to overcome these contingencies both internally and externally informs the strategic decision-making. Having established that the aim of strategy is to the fulfilment of a desired outcome irrespective of the circumstances. For this reason, it is therefore fair to say that understanding the contingencies is critical. Another feature in this framework is the synergy of dynamic capability with role integration. Dynamic capability as seen in the framework means (a.) identifying opportunities, (b) seizing those opportunities, and (c) transforming or reconfiguring assets.

Role integration then directs us toward action in strategy implementation through three components namely: (a) initiators or drivers, (b) receivers or collaborators, and (c) executioners or providers. In this context, initiators or drivers refers to the people or groups who initiates a process, a project, or pioneer an idea. The same push for action and maintains the momentum. Initiators or drivers are known to also set the goals and direction for the team, by often taking a leadership role and, by inspiring and influencing collaborators. Receivers or collaborators as seen in the framework, are those who receive ideas, tasks, or instructions from initiators. Receivers join discussions and offer feedback to help sharpen the concepts. They work alongside others toward shared goals and can act as a bridge between initiators and executioners/implementors. For example, a

marketing team that gets a campaign proposal, gives its input, and adjusts strategies before the implementation fit here. Executioners or providers, according to this framework are the individuals or teams in charge of bringing to life plans or tasks and delivering results based on agreed instructions or guidelines, while at the same time keeping an eye on operational efficiency and real-world application. Executioners/providers usually focus on hands-on work rather than strategy. A typical example in this case would be an IT department that builds and launches software after the requirements have been set by initiators and refined by collaborators.

In this setting, it is essential that these roles communicate effectively to stay aligned, to move smoothly from ideation (initiators) to fine-tuning (collaborators) to implementation (executioners), as they support one another's functions to achieve seamless result.

4 Research Methodology

Empirical studies rely on well-developed theoretical approaches shaped through extensive research. A crucial factor of high-quality research is choosing the right methodology, what the famous Edmondson & McManus (2007) term the "methodological fit." For clarity purpose the study approach is inevitable. And this research it is guided by the research onion framework introduced by Saunders et al. (2019) as seen Figure 4. This framework breaks down the research process into six key layers, guiding researchers step by step through the building of a solid methodology. It begins by defining the core research philosophy, then proceeds to deciding on methodologies, then it is followed by the research strategy, then to time horizon, and, to techniques and finally to the procedures adopted—each helping to shaping the study's design, data collection, and evaluation methods.

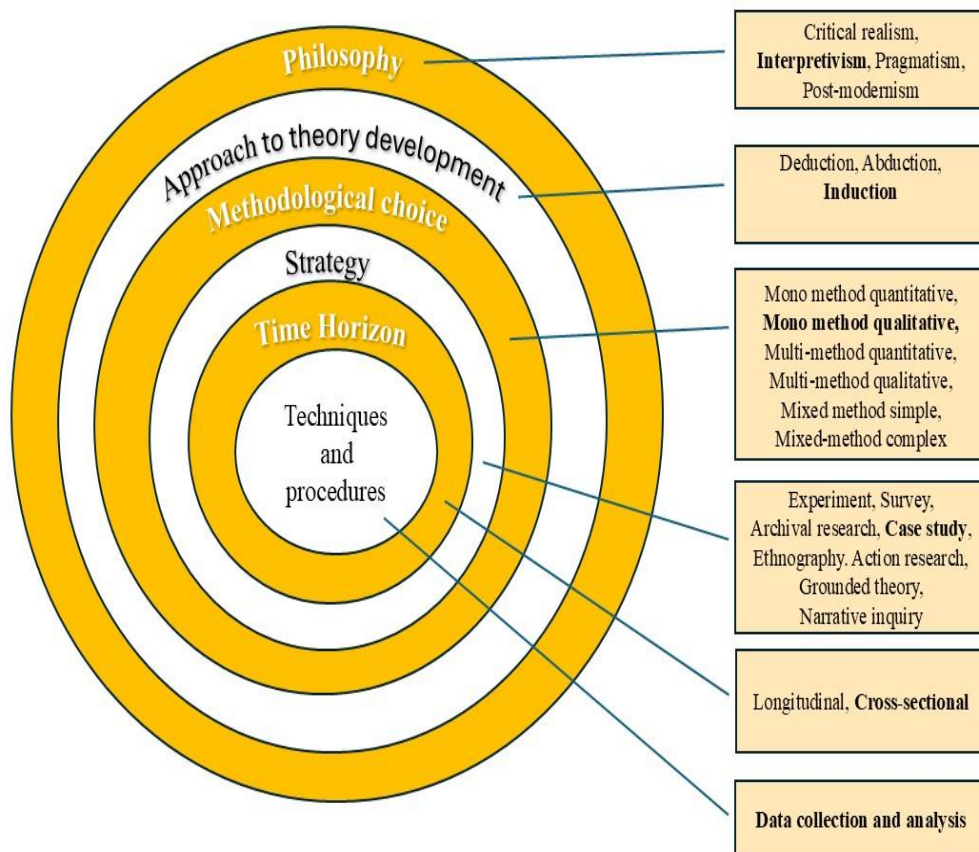


Figure 4: Research onion (Saunders et al., 2019).

The research onion framework begins with its outermost layer which gives an explanation about the chosen research philosophies—essentially, it guides us to understand how a researcher sees the world. Historically, two classic approaches have dominated this space namely: positivism and interpretivism. However, pragmatism, critical realism, and postmodernism have been added to the list of research philosophies more recently (Saunders et al., 2019). There are three distinct strategies for developing theory that are outlined by Saunders et al. (2019), namely: deduction, abduction, and induction. The deductive approach to developing theory formulates hypotheses based on existing research and then designs a method to test the hypothesis (Silverman, 2013). An inductive approach or method by contrast, allows the researcher to generate new theories rather than relying on already existing theories (Saunders et al., 2019). Abductive approach or reasoning, on the other hand uses known premises to form and to reach testable conclusions (Saunders et al., 2019). Among these three strategies, inductive approach is chosen as the most suitable for this study, as the research moves from specific observations toward broader generalizations, while drawing on empirical data throughout the process (see Figure 5).

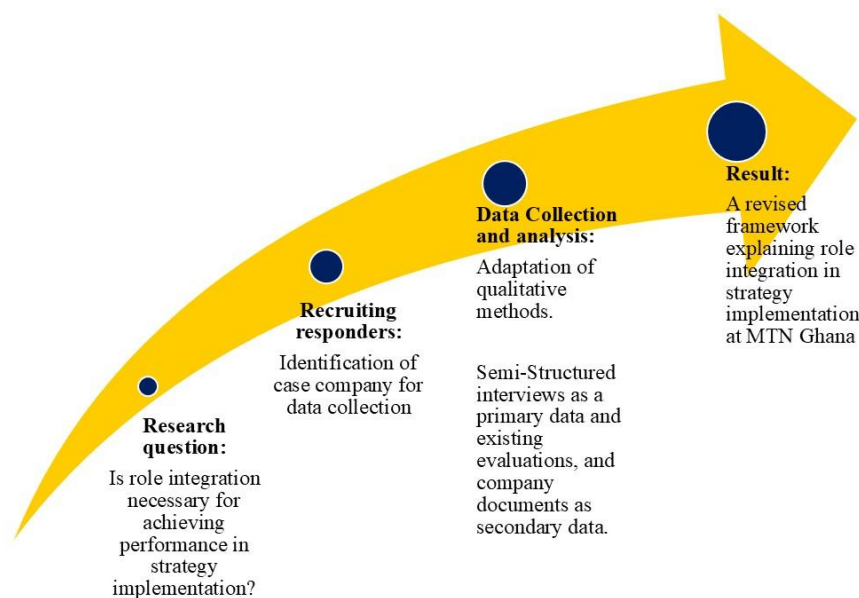


Figure 5: Induction approach for the research (Saunders et al., 2019).

The study deploys a mono-method qualitative design as its methodological approach. What this means is that only one method is used to gather primary data (Saunders et al., 2019). This choice is more practical to the achieving of the objective – and in this case, to understand if role integration is necessary for enhancing performance in strategy implementation. Qualitative methods are known to help us to deeply investigate concepts, opinions, and even experiences especially when there is limited existing knowledge or information on the topic; to collect and analyse non-numeric data (Saunders et al., 2019). This method is chosen because it allows for fresh insights, for real-world causal relationships and for drawing perspectives of peoples lived experiences (Saunders et al., 2019). The research onion outlines different methodological strategies that can be deployed for investigation. And for this research, a single explanatory case study works best because this methodology permits a thorough, detailed analysis – it aligns with the data needs and the research’s goals. It is noted that case studies are often utilized to probe new theories, emerging issues or even management challenges, and as Yin, R. K. (2018) argues, a single case can offer richer, more nuanced insights than multiple cases – typically when the goal is to explore a particular research question thoroughly. On the issue of timing, the research assesses agility at a specific moment, it is categorized as a cross-sectional research design since data is collected at a single point in time (Saunders et al., 2019).

4.1 Research Philosophy

This research is grounded in an interpretivist philosophy, because it tries to understand individual’s subjective meanings and the way they experience things. To take an interpretivist stance means to make certain assumptions on what reality is and how we come to know things—this is referred to as ontology and epistemology according to Saunders et al., (2007; 2019). This philosophical position is justifiable because it fits nicely with the question the research is asking: “is role integration necessary for enhancing performance?” This approach matters in qualitative work, where the intention is to explore

human behaviours, motivations, and interactions as they happen within their natural settings (Saunders et al. 2019). Interpretivists according to Saunders et al. (2019), prioritize empathy, flexibility, and contextual understanding. The interpretivist often employing methods such as interviews, ethnography, or case studies to capture the richness of human experience (Saunders et al. 2019). From this perspective, as Saunders et al. (2019) point out, the goal is not to come up with universal rules but to offer detailed yet grounded insights that do justice to the variety and as it may complexity of social life.

4.2 Research Strategy

A single case study is chosen for this thesis. This research strategy is selected for its unique capacity to provide a rich, contextual, and nuance understanding of a complex phenomenon within its real-life setting (Saunders et al. 2019). It is asserted by Saunders et al. (2016) that case studies allow delving into one or a few specific cases and more often the strategy that usually fits with the principles of qualitative research. Instead of seeking external validity across a broad population, this case study strategy prioritizes depth over breadth, allowing for an intensive yet targeted research of a particular phenomenon, organization etc.

Arguably, this approach works especially well when it's difficult unravel where the phenomenon ends and its context begins. By concentrating on a single case and not many, the researcher can immerse into the details, examine the intricate interplay of variables and the underlying reasons behind observed results (Saunders et al. 2019). The chosen strategy facilitates the use of multiple sources of evidence such as interviews, observations, and document analysis. The sources of evidence can be reinforced to build a robust and credible narrative. Consequently, this chosen strategy is exceptionally well-suited for exploring new or under-researched areas – useful to answer the "how" and "why" questions, and for challenging preconceptions (Saunders et al. 2019). Finally, the single case study is a powerful tool for producing detailed but context-specific insights which may not be accessible through broad-scale research strategies like surveys or experiments. The profound understanding produced can provide a solid foundation for theory and can demystify nuances that might otherwise remain obscured.

4.3 Selecting Case Firm, Rationale

To give answer to the research question, MTN Ghana is chosen as a case study. The high power-distance culture in the country Ghana (Bonna & Awobgo-Moah Amoah, 2020), coupled with its rapidly changing telecom industry and other contingencies offers a compelling context for us to analyse how the case study company has adjusted or have been able to navigate its strategies over time. As already stated, the research examines how role integration has contributed to achieving performance within the telecommunications sector – as far as strategy implementation is concerned. According to Doz and Kosonen (2008), strategic agility is built on three core capabilities namely: strategic sensitivity, leadership unity, and resource fluidity. Exploring how MTN Ghana functions within this environment provides a clearer understanding of its distinct approaches and practices.

4.4 Data Collection Methods

For reliability of data and for a thorough analysis (Yin, 2009; Eisenhardt, 1989), multiple data collection methods were used for this research. Primary data was collected using semi-structured interviews. This helped delving into both structural transformations and underlying cultural dynamics – things that standardized surveys might have fail to address. According to Saunders et al. (2019), the adaptable nature of interviews enables the researcher to delve into new topics as they emerge during the discussions. The data collection process was iterative, meaning that insights from earlier interviews informed the approach and to refinement of the subsequent questions for better insight.

The open-ended interview questions made it possible to gather detailed insights on the topic (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008) and the informal, conversational style deployed helped keep the dialogue natural and not rigid. All the interviews for the thesis were conducted via the Zoom platform between March and April 2025. For the sake of validity, each session was recorded on video upon getting the consent of the respondents (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

Each interview addressed the main topics the thesis intends to address. Though the order of questions changed slightly depending on respondent(s) answer, the objectives were satisfactorily met (see Appendix 1). Since all participants were fluent in English and that the language happens to be the official language of the case company, and for the research report. The initial target was to interview a minimum of 5 and maximum 20 individuals but only two participants were available and allowed themselves to be interviewed. The respondents were selected based on their expertise and direct involvement in the research topic to ensure that the research has credibility and depth. Their professional experience and duration of service within the organization were also key factors considered in the selection of the respondents (Saunders et al. 2019).

The interviewed includes a person with direct and rich experience with MTN Ghana, and another who joined the company not long ago (as compared to when interview was conducted). This diversity made it possible to explore the issue properly and brought to light certain challenges that might have stayed hidden otherwise. A full breakdown of the respondents (interviewees) and how long each interview lasted is attached as Appendix 2. For the sake of confidentiality, respondents' identity is kept anonymous. Any direct quotes used in the write-up were handled carefully so no one could be identified. It was also agreed that any sensitive information shared purely to help with context would not be published. The role of the interviewer in this study was to maintain focus on the main thematic areas while allowing sufficient space for an open and honest discussion (Saunders et al. 2019). Secondary data was used in addition to the primary data for this research. According to Yin (2009), integrating multiple data sources enhances the credibility of a case study and provides a more comprehensive understanding of the subject under investigation. To achieve this, this thesis examined secondary materials, including annual reports, financial records, corporate assessments, strategic plans, and official websites.

4.5 Data Analysis

The research approach in this study is qualitative by design and follows an inductive process – hence allowing for a deep exploration of the topic and helping in answering the research question that is posed. A qualitative approach lets the researcher draw on

participants' own perspectives; it helps to reveal important aspects of their social and cultural environment (Saunders et al. 2019). According to Bogdan and Biklen (1998), qualitative researchers aim to understand the "where," "when," and "how," as well as the circumstances surrounding certain behaviours and traits, which makes this approach particularly suitable for the thesis. In this context, qualitative research is pragmatic, interpretive, and closely tied to individual's lived experiences (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998). As a result of choosing this approach, the researcher gets to tap into and can obtain valuable insights from participants through interviews and observations (Saunders et al., 2007). Due to the close relationship between data gathering and its interpretation, observational details such as nonverbal communication and vocal tone were documented alongside the interviews. Following each session, the analysis phase commenced with transcription of the recorded interviews. The video recordings were carefully converted into written form, as timely evaluation of qualitative data is recommended shortly after initial gathering of data (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). During this process, any observation made during the interviews were processed together with the transcripts. This helped sharpen the understanding of what each respondent (interviewee) was really implying. Eventually, the full set of interview transcripts totalled 12 pages. Organizing and comprehending intricate qualitative data is key to identifying patterns and drawing conclusions (Saunders et al., 2019). To work through the bulk of the empirical material in a structured manner yet not losing its credibility, the raw data was sorted into themes and dimensions using the Gioia method. First-order concepts were established from noticing recurring phrases, specific words, and the kind of language participants used (Gioia et al., 2012).

At the second stage, the first-order concepts were re-examined to identify connections and recurring patterns for the purpose of the construction of second-order themes. The second-order themes surfaced from a combination of theoretical interpretation of the data and the language used by the respondents, hence moving into the realm of theory (Gioia et al., 2012; Charmaz, 2001). The final stage involved consolidating the themes into aggregate dimensions, thereby representing a further increase in the abstraction level of the coding process (Gioia et al., 2012). After this process, the responses to the

research questions were aligned with the initial theoretical framework and examined in parallel.

4.6 Assessment of data quality

This study places significant emphasis on establishing validity and reliability as fundamental pillars for the purpose of ensuring that the research is credible and of quality. As emphasized by Gibbert et al. (2008) and Yin (2009), thorough field research requires careful evaluation across four critical dimensions namely: internal validity, construct validity, external validity, and reliability. These methodological considerations serve as essential benchmarks for assessing the trustworthiness of research findings pertaining to organizational studies. Reliability as asserted by Yin (2009) is the degree of consistency in data collection procedures and it represents a crucial aspect of research methodology. Robson (2002) on the other hand provides a comprehensive framework for understanding potential threats to reliability by identifying four primary challenges that researchers must address. The first challenge being participant error which occurs when external factors or deficient interview conditions compromise the completeness or the accuracy of participant responses. The likelihood for this phenomenon to emerge as when respondents are fatigued, distracted, or operating under limited time (Robson, 2002). The second threat as presented by Robson (2002) is participant bias which manifests when research subjects consciously or unconsciously modify their responses to align with what they believe the researcher expects to hear. This form of response distortion can significantly impact data authenticity, especially in organizational settings where employees may feel pressured to present their company positively. The remaining two threats according to Robson, (2002) originate from the researcher's side of the investigative process. The first being observer error which refers to inconsistencies that arise when different interviewers employ varying questioning techniques or interpret responses differently. This perhaps the most insidious challenge is likely to occur when the researchers' personal beliefs, or theoretical predispositions, or subjective interpretations inadvertently shape their collection and even analysis of data.

Together, these potential threats to reliability underscore the importance of implementing robust methodological measures throughout the research process. This research addresses these concerns through systematic protocols for data collection, standardized interview procedures, and reflexive practices that maintain awareness of the above listed potential biases. These measures align with best practices in qualitative research methodology and contribute to the overall thoroughness of the investigation.

The participants were recruited through LinkedIn and briefed on the thesis topic. They were informed on why the case company was selected but were not presented with the interview questions in advance. Respondents were given the liberty to choose a convenient time for their interviews and were encouraged to answer honestly and that their anonymity will be taken seriously. Each interview was recorded, and consistency in collection of data was maintained by adhering to an interview guide and sticking to the same method of communication. Deploying a semi-structured approach allowed for clarification, to stay on the topic and help to reduce misunderstandings. Furthermore, the methodology section provides a detailed account of the research process as the analysis is supported by theoretical frameworks to ensure transparency and reliability.

Validity is referred to as how well a measure captures the precise behaviour or construct it is designed to assess (Edmondson & McManus, 2007). It reflects the data accuracy, which can be affected by multiple factors. Construct validity which has to do with how well a concept is both defined and measurable is considered in this research work. Regarding that, the study keeps a clear and transparent body of evidence, so readers can track the research from the original question all the way through to its conclusion. Meanwhile Yin (2009) argues that explanatory studies aiming to determine causal relationships face the greatest validity challenge, especially concerning internal validity. To mitigate this challenge, the theoretical foundation was built upon insights from preceding studies (Eisenhardt, 1989).

External validity pertains to the transferability of a case study's findings. As claimed by Yin (2009), single-case studies are frequently questioned for their limited ability to support broad generalizations. Thus, the research follows analytical generalization and not statistical generalization as it links empirical data to theoretical constructs (Gibbert et al.,

2008). For the sake of external validity, the study justifies the case selection criteria and offers thorough background details.

5 Research Findings

Research findings, as Creswell and Creswell (2018) put it, is a result of a systematic process of investigation and analysis, whether in scientific, social, or applied research. Research findings are the final work after gathering data, running experiments, and interpreting what is found. Bryman (2016) asserts that findings can take different shapes or form depending on the chosen method – either quantitative results like statistics and measurements, or qualitative discoveries such as themes, patterns, and stories. Either way, these research findings are published in papers, as reports, or as dissertations, and are founded on real evidence and not assumptions (Bryman, 2016).

The detailed results presented below come straight from respondents of the case firm (MTN Ghana). The findings are drawn from lived experience and are arranged according to the variables in the adopted theoretical framework, thus allowing us to answer the research question and to reach a conclusion.

MTN Ghana, being a top telecommunications provider in the country Ghana, operates as a member of the MTN Group—a global mobile network operator rising from South Africa with a presence across Africa and the Middle East. From when MTN launched in Ghana back as far as 2006, the company has significantly ruled the telecom market by offering mobile voice, data, digital, and financial services. The company in its own words, as its values stays committed to doing business with integrity, honesty, dedication, and professionalism (Scancom PLC., 2022 2024).

As a result, the information as presented in the report below covers the company's market position, the services it offers, its regulatory hurdles, and its corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts in the country it operates. This is supported by the company's own annual reports, the industry annual reports, a dissertation, and peer-reviewed literature. When it comes to position in the market, MTN Ghana has the biggest slice of the country's telecom industry. From the reports of the National Communications Authority (2022), MTN controlled approximately 56.77% of the mobile voice market and 70.6% of mobile data subscriptions as of 2022. The company's growth has been attributed to its aggressive network expansion, competitive pricing, and its innovative mobile financial services especially the flagship product MoMo (MTN Mobile Money). Martei (2022)

asserts that MTN's success in Ghana is as a result to being the first to mover in the market as having a wide network reach and staying focused to customer needs. The company has been investing in 4G to boost digital inclusion and internet access, though slow hesitant when it comes to 5G deployment (Dowuona, S. 2025).

MTN Ghana's Mobile Money (MoMo) service has been a real gamechanger for financial inclusion. It is recorded that as of the year 2023, its MoMo had over 12 million active users and it played a big role in pushing Ghana toward a cashless economy (Bank of Ghana, 2023). Research by Aker & Mbiti (2010) highlighted how mobile money has helped reduce financial exclusion across Sub-Saharan Africa, MTN Ghana standing out as a key player in the industry. Furthermore, a study by Coffie, C. P. K., & Hongjiang, Z. (2023) discovered that the company's ability to work with banks and other fintech platforms because of MoMo has made financial services more accessible, especially for unbanked folks in rural communities.

Pertaining regulatory challenges, it is established that despite its dominance, the company has not escaped regulatory hindrances or hurdle. For example, in the year 2020, the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) hit MTN with a \$773 million tax dispute due to unpaid taxes, a claim MTN denied (Daily Graphic, 2021). The dispute created financial uncertainty and affecting some strategic plans of the company (Reuters, 2023). Issues like this as far as business is concerned shift focus from long-term goals and stretch resources thin. Moreover, the National Communications Authority (NCA) labelled MTN as a "Significant Market Power" (SMP) in the year 2020, meaning tighter regulations aimed at encouraging competition (NCA, 2020). Even amid all these hurdles, the company continued its CSR work especially in education, digital literacy, and in healthcare. The MTN Foundation in Ghana has funded projects like building ICT labs in schools (MTN Ghana, 2023), backed maternal healthcare through the "Healthathon" initiative (MTN Ghana, 2023), and offered scholarships for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths) students (MTN Ghana, 2023). These CSR efforts help boost its brand loyalty while also contributing to the country's development (MTN Ghana, 2023).

As pertaining to its strategic goals drawing on academic and industry research, five key strategic objectives stand out for the company namely: (1) boosting digital inclusion and

financial services, (2) upgrading network infrastructure and pushing 4G forward, (3) improving service quality and customer experience, (4) adhering to sustainable CSR and business practices, and (5) expanding rural connectivity and affordable data. These goals line up with its parent company's "Ambition 2025" plan, which zeroes in on financial and digital inclusion, sustainable growth, and operational efficiency (MTN Group, 2023).

On the front of digital inclusion and financial services, as recorded in its annual reports, MTN Ghana wants to grow its mobile financial services, specifically Mobile Money (MoMo) to drive financial inclusion (MTN Group, 2023). According to Asongu & Boateng (2018), Mobile money services go a long way to the reducing of financial exclusion in developing economies as it offers accessible and affordable financial options. The company's MoMo expansion situates well with Ghana's national financial inclusion strategy (Bank of Ghana, 2022).

Research by GSMA (2023) points out that 5G adoption boosts economic productivity and helps smart city projects take shape. For MTN Ghana, investing in 5G and broadband infrastructure is a major strategic goal though hesitant. The company partnered with the government of Ghana to roll out 5G (MTN Group, 2023) to improve connectivity and supporting digital transformation.

When it comes to strengthening customer experience and service quality, MTN Ghana is said to place priority on keeping customers satisfied by offering good service as compared to its rivals (MTN Ghana Annual Report, 2022). The company's investment in customer service centres and digital self-service platforms like the MyMTN App is reported to enhance smoother user experience (MTN Ghana Annual Report, 2022).

As for sustainable business practices and CSR, it is reported that MTN Ghana weaves sustainability into its strategy by focusing on ESG principles namely: environmental, social, and governance. Carroll and Shabana (2010) argue that CSR initiatives boost brand reputation and build trust with stakeholders. As to tracking and consolidating its gains in CSR, MTN Ghana's "21 Days of Y'ello Care" and digital education programs (MTN Ghana Foundation, 2023) demonstrates the company's commitment to making a real difference in its operational society.

The company's rural telephony projects in conjunction with the Ghana Investment Fund for Electronic Communications (GIFEC), as recorded aim to provide affordable data and voice services to under-resourced communities (National Communications Authority, 2023).

Nonetheless, stiff competition from its rivals like Vodafone Ghana and AirtelTigo is recorded to put pressure on MTN Ghana's market dominance, forcing the company to swiftly adjust its pricing and its service offerings (MTN Group, 2023). Digital transformation delays are also among the company's challenges. In matters pertaining to stakeholder resistance to change, research points out that internal pushback from employees and partners slowed down its digital innovation efforts and this is drawn from a study on MTN's organizational culture. It could be argued that handling change effectively is critical for pulling off any strategy (Amponsah-Tawiah et al., 2021).

Among the recorded obstacles is economic volatility, which has to do with the likes of inflation and currency depreciation. Reports from the World Bank (2023) indicated that, Ghana's unstable macroeconomic situation (like the high inflation in 2022–2023) affected MTN's costs and profits, forcing the company to rethink its strategies.

Ghana's macroeconomic environment in 2024 was still marked by ongoing inflationary pressures and a weakening cedi. Average inflation did improve to 22.9%, a drop down from 40.3% in 2023. By December of 2024, inflation rose again to 23.8%, a 2.3 percentage point jump from September's 21.5%, mostly because of renewed food price pressures in the final quarter of the year (Bank of Ghana, 2024; Ghana Statistical Service, 2024).

The cedi's depreciation added more strain as it lost 19.2% of its value against the US dollar over the course of the year (Bank of Ghana, 2024). These conditions made it difficult for businesses as it ate away what consumers could afford.

In the middle these difficulties, the government of Ghana pushed ahead with its key reforms, including public debt restructuring and fiscal policy adjustments (Ministry of Finance, 2024). Those measures helped fuel an economic recovery that turned out better than expected and boosted confidence among both businesses and consumers alike (International Monetary Fund, 2024). Even in tough economic climate, the company stayed

committed to its Ambition 2025 strategy (MTN Group, 2024). It did this by focusing on growing service revenue, managing cost, and creating value for stakeholders. That approach paid off, as service revenue grew 34.5% year-on-year and EBITDA increased 31.3% year-on-year, demonstrating how resilient the company has been and how well it implemented its plans (MTN Group, 2024).

It is reported that the company deploys Cross-Functional Teams (CFT's) comprising members of IT, Finance, Operations and Marketing to drive its strategic initiatives according to MTN Ghana Annual Report (2024). These Cross-function team's according to the report: (a) break down silos between departments, (b) enhance problem solving through diverse expertise and, (c) accelerate decision making process. An example of this collaboration according to MTN Ghana Annual Report (2023), is the successful improvement of 4G and adoption of 5G to be rolled out as far as in 2023. A demonstration of CFT's effectiveness as recorded is where IT handled technical deployment, marketing, developing customer acquisition strategies and ensuring regulatory compliance with the Ghana National Communication Authority guidelines (MTN Ghana Annual Report, 2023). It is documented that, MTN Ghana utilizes the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) to align departmental objectives with its corporate strategy (MTN Ghana Annual Report, 2024). The key features of this according to MTN Ghana Annual Report, (2023) includes: financial, customer, process, and learning perspectives. Its department-specific KPI's are linked to overall targets and the company organises monthly performance review sessions to provide visibility across departments, to enable proactive issue resolution and to foster accountability through transparent metrics. It is reported that the company has deployed real-time performance dashboards (MTN Ghana Annual Report, 2023). It is also documented its significant investments in digital tools to enhance interdepartmental collaboration, such as Microsoft Teams for communication, SharePoint for document management and custom project management software.



Figure 6: MTN Ghana’s current organizational structure.

5.1 Research findings – Interview

Upon a critical compilation and examination of data, the findings are structured in alignment with the theoretical framework's variables namely: strategic decision, external contingencies, internal contingencies, control mechanisms/triggers, initiators of implementation action, collaborators' implementation actions, provider/executioner actions and insights, and a summary of the respondents' perspectives drawn from Gioia analysis.

5.1.1 Strategic Decision

Based on the respondent’s submission, it emerged that the most striking strategic move regards to the company is its commitment to driving digital transformation across board. Respondent 1, who happens to be a Business Analyst in the IT Digital Delivery unit of the company mentioned that recruitment was done deliberately, to help the company shift from manual processes to digital and automated solutions. This strategic direction focuses on automating processes to cut out inefficiencies and waste while improving the customer experience through digital tools that bring together different departments— like legal, commercial, and IT with the aim to work together for smooth implementation, and making sure individual roles align with the company's broader long-term goals or vision.

The respondent pointed out that even though the company's overall strategy remains unchanged, the specific priorities and how they handle things can shift year by year—for example, during its staff durbars leadership lays out what's changing and the company's direction. In the respondent's own words: *"The company hired me because they had the ambition to drive digital company-wise and in Ghana,"* and that pertaining role, her job is *"to ensure that processes are seamless by leveraging new technologies to make work simple."*

The respondent also emphasized the advantage of an in-house team alluding to the fact that it is faster as compared to external vendors, and clarified that annual strategic communication tools, such as the durbar help to refine focus areas without altering the core strategy.

5.1.2 External contingencies

The role of contingencies in shaping strategic decisions was also explored in the interview. While theoretical models propose an expected range of contingencies, empirical findings can either align with or even diverge from these expectations. Consequently, the research sought to identify the specific contingencies considered by MTN Ghana qualitatively. According to the respondents, there are several external contingencies for the company. Vendor dependency was cited as a significant factor, as one of the respondents stated that, *"In telco companies, most of the solutions are done by vendors."* This reliance means that strategy implementation can be directly impacted by vendor performance, including potential delays or to even performing below expectation. Given the vendors' critical role in the ecosystem, their actions or inactions are believed to trigger significant positive or negative effects. It came to light that competitors also depend on the same vendor pool, and the respondent pointed out that developing in-house solutions could be a more sustainable alternative than continued external reliance.

Market segmentation, specifically the division between consumer and the enterprise sectors was another highlighted contingency. The company's structure and strategic approach is expected to adapt to the distinct requirements of each segment, necessitating

tailored strategies. Respondent 1 affirmed that the company is managing this contingency effectively even though the respondent thinks that there is room for improvement. Regulatory and legal challenges also had an influence on the company's decision-making. The respondents indicated that compliance is a constant practice, requiring that every strategic decision aligns with the company's vision while also adhering to its legal frameworks and obligations. This dual requirement is argued to complicate strategy implementation. However, it is recorded that the company leverages its dynamic capabilities to navigate these constraints, to meet its deadlines, and deliver needed results.

Resistance to change from internal stakeholders was identified as another contingency the company deal with. Some shareholders or employees per the findings exhibit scepticism toward new initiatives by often citing past failures. Respondent 1 had observed that change is difficult for many and think it is important to have clear communication to overcome this resistance. Per the findings, it came to light that while the company strives to ensure changes are well understood, preconceived notions based on past experiences remain a considerable challenge it faces.

Communication delays from leadership came up in the interview as a contingency that creates confusion and impedes the integration of roles. The respondent attributed these delays to organizational bureaucracy, which can adversely affect the implementation of strategic decisions. For the sake of company confidentiality, the respondent declined to provide specific examples.

Dependence on Single Points of Contact (SPOCs) presents another challenge. The findings evidenced that if a SPOC lacks the requisite authority or knowledge, cross-departmental collaboration can be stalled. The reason being that SPOCs are designated contacts for specific functions or projects, and their effectiveness is critical for successful strategy implementation.

Finally, knowledge retention risks also emerged as a concern. Whereby over-reliance on specific individuals, such as certified engineers or highly experienced personnel poses a significant risk if knowledge is not transferred and the same leave the company. Although this could be viewed as an internal contingency, the respondent argues that it is external citing competitive pressures and the active poaching of skilled personnel by rivals as the

primary justification for that position. For example, the respondent joined the company and team after leaving a rival company and has seen many colleagues who share with similar experience.

5.1.3 Internal contingencies

Regarding internal contingencies, the respondent's answers revealed several key factors. Firstly, organizational vision and alignment were emphasized as critically important and not disproved. The respondent indicated that the company's vision exerts a 100% influence on respondent's work. Respondent 1 for example believe she was recruited because her role aligns with what the company is trying to achieve. In the respondent's own words, *"The company hired me with the intention to achieve their goals, so basically it has a 100% influence on whatever I do. If I have an idea, the big question is whether it aligns with what we want to do and if it gives us the intended result. If yes, fantastic; if no, we shove it off. So yeah, I am working in line with the vision of the company."*

Leadership is said to push the strategy across through regular staff durbars, which help shift focus areas here and there while still holding unto the long-term vision. Secondly, role integration and cross-functional collaboration are a big deal in the company's digital and IT space; there's really no such thing as a fully independent role according to respondent 1. Job descriptions tend to be somewhat fluid, so employees can step in and fill gaps when needed. Moreover, the agile and scrum methodology encourages some overlap between roles, as purported.

Stakeholder management is also critical, according to the respondents, enthusiasm levels vary from individual to individual, one team to another, whereas some teams being excited and others stay resistant.

Thirdly, it came to light that communication and clarity in role integration are vital since a lack of clear communication creates confusion when roles are merged. According to the respondent, *"When it is not clear when and how the role integration will happen, it makes everyone feel like, 'Why this and why that?'"* This ambiguity demotivates employees, especially when leadership integrates roles without explaining the "why" and "how." Delayed information flow further leads to misalignment before actions are taken.

Fourth, leadership's role in facilitating integration is a concern per the interview. The respondent expressed that leaders should empower employees to take initiative during role overlaps, because employees often wait for leadership decisions rather than acting independently. Leaders are encouraged to assign tasks based on individual strengths to improve efficiency.

Finally, issues such as the "empty shoe" problem explained by the respondent as where two employees can perform a task but neither takes ownership – an occurrence the respondent has noticed often. Resistance from some employees, are always like this, "*We tried this before and failed, why try again?*", and weak Single Points of Contact (SPOCs) with limited decision-making power further complicate collaboration.

The above listed internal contingencies highlight the dynamics affecting strategy implementation at MTN Ghana, particularly in digital transformation and its cross-departmental collaboration efforts.

5.1.4 Control mechanisms/triggers

Pertaining to the triggers and control mechanisms behind the company's strategic decisions. Based on respondent own answers, the discoveries about the factors influencing role integration and strategy implementation were identified and categorized. These mechanisms as stated ensure strategic alignment and effective implementation and are as follows: alignment with the organizational vision, leadership communication and direction, cross-functional collaboration, agile and adaptive role definitions, clear communication and documentation, leadership intervention in role conflicts, knowledge sharing and succession planning, and the measurement of the success of role integration.

From the interview it came to light that alignment with the organizational vision acts as a primary trigger whereas the company's vision directly dictates decision-making. The corresponding control mechanism involves employees assessing whether their initiatives align with the company's strategic goals before even proceeding with implementation. Leadership communication and direction are triggered when leadership shares annual plans via its communication platforms like staff meetings, and refocuses priorities without altering the core strategy.

The need to engage multiple departments for complex initiatives, such as digital transformation is what triggers cross-functional collaboration according to the responses from the interview. This is therefore controlled using a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) per department to streamline communication and it is supplemented by workshops and one-on-one meetings to bring stakeholders into alignment. A dynamic work environment that demands flexibility beyond formal job descriptions is one that triggers agile and adaptive role. It is one that encourages employees to fill operational vacuums as the need arise and promotes role integration within teams.

Misalignment due to a lack of clarity is recorded to trigger the need for clear communication and documentation. According to Respondent 1, this is controlled by the company as it deliberately ensures that teams understand the purpose and methods of their role, supported by proper documentation to prevent miscommunication and to ensure accountability. Leadership intervention in role conflicts is triggered when employees hesitate to act without approval. In practice the respondent stated that *“Sometimes people answer per how they feel, sometimes they may not have the facts but would give you an answer. And you may not be able to tell if they are being honest with you. A lot of documentation is very needed because sometimes people even forget what they might have said. And when the time arises and they are confronted they may want to avoid the fact that it was per their information you acted upon. So yes, a lot of documentation is needed for clarity purpose.”*

The control mechanism in this context involves leaders assigning tasks based on employee capabilities to avoid setbacks, hence empowering teams to take initiative while maintaining oversight, as according to respondent 1.

It also came to light in the submission that the risk of knowledge loss upon the departure of a specialist triggers knowledge sharing and succession planning. This according to Respondent 1 is controlled through the implementation of buddy systems designed to train backups for critical roles. Finally, the need to assess the effectiveness of integrated roles triggers the measurement of role integration success.

5.1.5 Initiators of action towards strategy implementation

According to interview data as regards to the drivers of strategy implementation, it emerged that action is initiated through several key mechanisms. First, role clarity and alignment with the corporate vision are established as employees filter their ideas and tasks through a strategic lens. Job roles are explicitly structured to achieve the goal of company-wide digital transformation, as exemplified by respondent 1, a business analyst spearheading the company's automation initiatives. Respondent 1 confirmed this, stating, *"...my unit is the IT digital delivery, and we are into automation [and] customer experience. For example, we want to move from a typical manual presence to online deliveries; that is what the team is for."*

Cross-functional collaboration is second on the list, and this is fostered through workshops and stakeholder engagement, and extends to include regular engagement with legal, commercial, and technical teams. This was established from the respondents' answer to the question *'if the respondent had played a role in ensuring alignment between different departments.'* The use of a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) model with assigned representatives from each department was said to be useful to streamline decision-making. Furthermore, agile methodology encourages role flexibility according to respondent 1's answer on the same question. Respondent 1 thinks there is a necessity of this collaboration (CFT), explaining that the work requires extensive engagement with other teams because the necessary information and experience needed for action reside with others and the only way to access that information or expertise is when roles align. In the interview, the respondents were asked about how they measure the impact of the integrated roles as pertaining to implementation of strategic decisions and this is how respondent 1 answered: *"I have not measured yet, why I am saying that is because, I have not spent too long with MTN and this is because I have worked independently for a while, I was just assigned to a team recently. I was working independently as a business analyst though I worked simultaneously with an IT data delivery team. It is just recent that I was assigned to a technical team. I haven't measured yet since I was working independently in my role as a business analyst and alone until that became a unit with other business analysts brought onboard."*

Third, theory suggest that leadership-driven role integration occurs when management intervenes to assign tasks based on employee capabilities during periods of ambiguity. And that this empowers teams to take initiative rather than waiting for top-down directives. From the interview a respondent alluded to the fact, explaining that leadership can step in when multiple individuals identify a problem but are hesitant to act, by assigning the task to the employee best suited based on their specific capabilities.

Fourth, the interview brought to light that knowledge sharing and accountability are maintained in the company through practices such as buddy systems, in this case, experts train colleagues on critical systems like for example billing to prevent single points of failure. Respondents emphasized that in practice, thorough documentation is essential to avoid miscommunication and ensure that there is accountability, as individuals may otherwise forget prior agreements unless otherwise documented for reference. The common view by the interviewees is that shared knowledge and clear team responsibilities facilitate collaborative effort and smooth implementation of company strategy. Additionally, staff durbars which the company organises annually provide a forum for leadership to communicate its strategic focus areas without altering its core vision, ensuring teams understand the purpose and benefits of their roles as far as business is concerned. Fifth, the interview brought to light that adaptive role flexibility is encouraged such that employees can step beyond formal job descriptions to fill capability gaps, especially in digital projects. It also came to light that specialists are expected to contribute cross-functionally as necessary, and that the time spent with team members from different units introduces a dynamic that supports strategic actions – hence impacting positively the implementation time.

Finally, it emerged that success is measured through continuity and sustained capability. That which is working is what the company continues doing.

5.1.6 Collaborators' Action Towards Strategy Implementation

As far as the findings are concerned, cross-functional collaboration is well-established among members, units, and management to support the effective implementation of the company's strategic decisions. One respondent reported working closely with

multiple departments simultaneously—including Legal, Commercial, Engineering, and Marketing to implement strategic initiatives. This involves participation in workshops, interviews, and stakeholder meetings to align various units. To streamline its communication, Single Points of Contact (SPOCs) are designated within each department as the report suggests.

Stakeholder engagement and management are also critical to the successful implementation of strategic decisions as theory suggests, in practice this was also the case in the company. From its annual publications and from the responses of the respondents it came to light that the company engages its stakeholders as far as its decisions and implementations are concerned. Challenges have been noted, particularly about its SPOCs especially when SPOCs are unresponsive or lack decision-making authority. Theory suggests that attitudes among stakeholders vary, ranging from enthusiasm to resistance toward change though this research could not verify this claim.

Theory suggest that leadership and decision-making play a vital role in fostering collaboration and clarifying roles during strategy implementation, this claim is supported by the findings in the sense that the respondents stated the involvement of leadership bringing members, units, functions together for a strategic action. From the responses, it's claimed that leadership helps resolve role ambiguities, for example reassigning tasks when employees hesitate. However, delays and lack of motivation do occur when leadership is indecisive. Effective collaboration requires clear communication from leaders to explain role integrations and strategic shifts as the theory suggests, this is somewhat the reality for the case firm. Although opinions vary among interviewees, the overall response confirms that leadership significantly influences collaborative efforts toward strategy implementation.

5.1.7 Actions and insights from providers/executioners

The research findings concerning the actions and insights of providers and executioners in MTN Ghana reveal several key themes regarding their impact in strategy implementation. According to established theory, successful strategy implementation requires the full integration and input of all role players. To assess whether this principle is applied at

MTN Ghana, the discussion was structured to understand each respondent's specific role, actions, and insights as strategy executioners, with a particular focus on the company's goals for automation and digital transformation.

As in automation and digital transformation, the respondents, including a Business Analyst in IT Digital Delivery, emphasize their role in ensuring seamless processes by leveraging new technologies. According to the respondents, the approach aims to eliminate inefficiencies and drive digital adoption across the company. When asked about the unit's role in implementing corporate strategy, respondents consistently highlighted that seamless processes are central to the company's vision especially the fact that the company finds itself in a rapidly changing industry. This claim supports the contingency theory in terms of environmental factors influencing organization's direction. The respondents explained that achieving the vision required the coordinated effort of cross-functional teams. And that, once a consensus is reached, the strategy is implemented through the development of IT products designed to enhance process efficiency for the company. And this is implemented segment by segment for both internal and external stakeholders.

Respondent 1 pointed to the interconnected nature of these efforts, stating, *"Where one person's task ends is where another person's task begins, and for this reason, each individual's input is very important for achieving the desired outcome set for us."* This sentiment underscores the critical importance of each contributor to the overall success of the company.

It also emerged that cross-functional collaboration is integral to role integration as the interviews revealed close cooperation with vendors, to in-house teams, to legal departments, commercial team and upper management. This reaffirms the claim that initiatives are to align with the overall corporate strategy.

5.1.8 Summary of the findings with Gioia analysis

The Gioia analysis produced highlights critical observations regarding how MTN Ghana integrates roles to implements its strategy. At the foundational level of the analysis, first-order concepts highlight how employees experience their roles within the organization.

So, business analysts in IT digital delivery focus on automation and improving customer experience by transitioning processes from manual to online systems. It evidenced that the company's vision strongly influences their work as all ideas are evaluated based on alignment with strategic goals. Strategic decisions of the company are communicated through its annual staff durbars, where leadership outlines focus areas while at also maintaining consistency in the overall vision. It came to light that role integration requires extensive collaboration across departments including legal, commercial, and even upper management. Though employees exhibit varying levels of enthusiasm toward these collaborative efforts, challenges emerge when role shifts are poorly communicated, leading to resistance unless leadership clearly explains the purpose and methods of integration. The findings suggests that leadership is essential in empowering teams to take initiative, as delays occur when employees wait for top-down decisions.

Success is therefore measured through knowledge transfer such as training colleagues on things like billing systems, although formal metrics are still a work in progress. It is reported that employees generally prefer integrated roles over siloed structures, and value flexibility and teamwork for efficiency's sake.

Moving to second-order themes of the analysis, these lived experiences come together into broader patterns. Alignment with the organizational strategy allows that daily work reflects the company's vision, with strategic priorities filtering down through the company's leadership communication as reported. Cross-functional collaboration is key as far as the findings are concerned, which means managing stakeholders avoid pushback but inclusion. Notably, challenges to role integration per the findings often points to unclear communication and not enough guidance from leadership, which as reported can kill motivation. Hence, leadership's impact on implementation is crucial in the sense that when teams feel empowered, they are said to fill gaps more effectively. Yet, on the other hand bureaucratic delays slow down everything when decisions take too long to be made. The balance between role integration and specialization leans toward a hybrid approach, where defined roles and flexibility coexist, backed up by agile methods. The key success factors per the findings include knowledge sharing to avoid over-relying on any one person plus documentation for the purpose of accountability. At the highest level, aggregate

dimensions bring these themes together into core findings. Strategic alignment and implementation show how employees act as an extension and lifeline of the company's vision, with steady communication keeping everything consistent across different initiatives.

It is also reported that integrated roles and a collaborative culture drive digital transformation, though resistance can arise from deficient change management. Lastly, adaptability in how roles are designed comes up as a critical factor in the analysis. A hybrid structure which is one that combines defined responsibilities with flexibility, turns out to be the most effective in the telecom sector as demonstrated in the findings, especially when it's backed by agile practices that encourage iterative learning and quick feedback. Taken all into consideration, these findings demonstrate how MTN Ghana as a company handles the highs and lows of strategy implementation through role integration while also pointing out where communication and decision-making processes could be improved. The figure below presents this analysis, while Tables 6 and 7 offer a systematic comparison of key theories against the findings (the Goiaia analysis) and the main linkage between the Goiaia findings and dynamic capabilities:

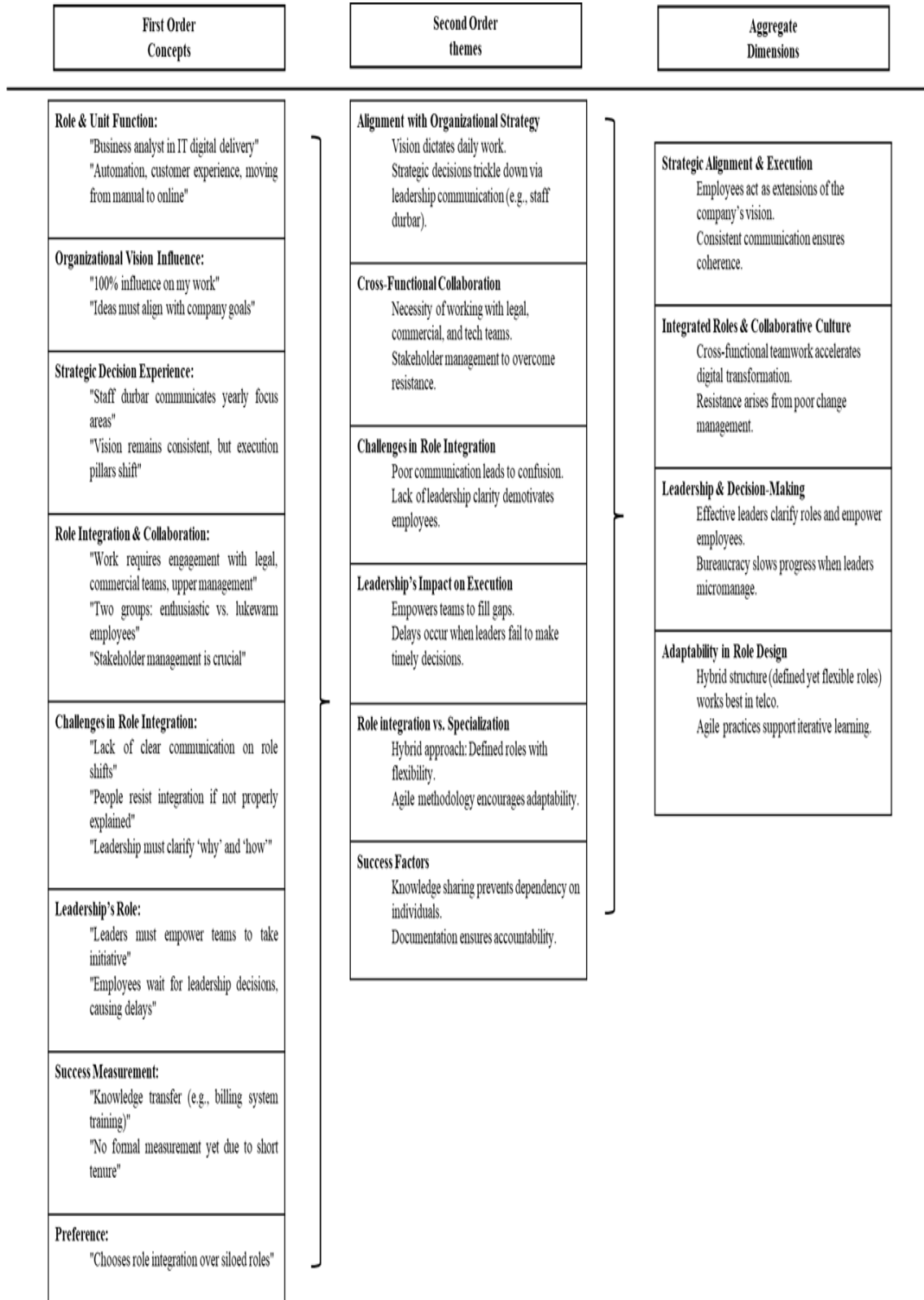


Figure 7: Gioia analysis of the findings

The findings from the Gioia analysis gives a summary of the lived experiences of respondents of MTN Ghana into aggregate dimensions, it provides a resilient empirical foundation and evaluation against the key theoretical lenses of both Contingency Theory and Dynamic Capabilities. This comparison reveals strong alignments, nuanced insights, and the critical function of 'role integration' as a bridging mechanism between grand theory and practical implementation.

Beginning with Strategic Alignment and Implementation, it emerged that employees act as direct extensions of the company's vision as their daily work dictated by strategic priorities flowed through leadership communication; and this resonates well with both theoretical frameworks. From a Contingency Theory point of view, this demonstrates a successful achievement of "fit," where the internal mindset and actions of the organization are carefully aligned with its external strategic demands. Concurrently, through the lens of Dynamic Capabilities, this prevalent strategic awareness constitutes a robust "Sensing" capability, ensuring the members of the organization are perceptive to interpret and respond to its strategic signals.

The dimension of Integrated Roles and Collaborative Culture further solidifies this theoretical alignment. The empirical preference for a hybrid model, thus combining defined roles with necessary flexibility; and the reliance on cross-functional collaboration for digital transformation directly validate the core tenet of Contingency Theory that: "*there is no single best way to organize*". This hybrid structure is revealed as an optimal response to the dynamic telecom industry. This same finding further exemplifies the "Seizing" and "Transforming" capabilities central to the Dynamic Capabilities theory. The collaborative model allows MTN Ghana to rapidly mobilize resources as evidenced in the findings, and reconfigure internal processes to implement strategic initiatives, demonstrating that integrated roles are the operational catalyst of these dynamic capabilities.

Pertaining to Leadership and Decision-Making, the findings offer both confirmation and a critical nuance. The decisive role of leadership in clarifying integrated roles and empowering teams aligns with Fiedler's contingency model, which suggests that leadership effectiveness is situational and must adapt between directive and empowering styles. However, the observed challenges of bureaucratic delays and a reliance on top-down

decisions expose a gap between the theoretical premise of agile leadership and organizational reality. It indicates that while leadership is intended to be a catalyst for Dynamic Capabilities, practical organizational inertia can suppress the sensing and seizing processes it is meant to enable.

Lastly, the dimension of Adaptability in Role Design serves as a cornerstone for both theories (contingency theory and dynamic capabilities). The empirical evidence of flexible yet detailed job descriptions, agile practices, and a conscious avoidance of rigidity is a typical illustration of Contingency Theory's principle of adaptability, that flexible internal designs are necessary to achieve fit in a volatile environment. This dimension is also the very embodiment of the "Transforming" capability of Dynamic Capabilities, as it demonstrates the continuous reconfiguration of human capital and processes to maintain a competitive advantage.

In synthesis, the findings demonstrate that Contingency Theory and Dynamic Capabilities are not competing but rather complementary explanations. Contingency Theory effectively explains the "what" and "why" of the organizational design. It helps to explain why a hybrid, and fluid structure is necessary given its environment. Whereas, Dynamic Capabilities, as operationalized through the mechanism of role integration, explains to us the "how"— that is, how the organization specifically senses opportunities, seizes them through collaboration, and transforms itself through adaptable roles. The challenges as identified, specifically in leadership and communication, highlight the practical friction of the company. It points out where the application of these theories (dynamic capabilities and contingency theory) meets the complexity of organizational life.

Table 5: Comparing of theories against the findings (Goaia analysis)

Gioia Dimension	Aggregate	Key Findings from MTN Ghana (Gioia Analysis)	Contingency Theory Alignment & Implications	Dynamic Capabilities Alignment & Implications
1.Strategic Alignment & Execution		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees act as extensions of the company's vision 	Strong Alignment:	Strong Alignment:

	<p>("Vision dictates daily work").</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic priorities are cascaded via leadership communication (e.g., staff durbars). • Ideas are filtered based on strategic fit. 	<p>Demonstrates the theoretical principle that internal actions ought to be aligned with external strategic demands. The "fit" between the organizational environment and internal structure is achieved through this pervasive strategic alignment.</p>	<p>The pervasive strategic awareness integral to its employees exemplifies strong "Sensing" capabilities. The organization is effectively tuned to interpret strategic signals and ensure its activities contribute to its overall goals.</p>
<p>2. Integrated Roles & Collaborative Culture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-functional collaboration is essential for digital transformation. • A hybrid approach (defined roles with flexibility) is preferred. • Success relies on knowledge sharing and documentation to prevent silos. • Challenge: Resistance arises from inadequate change management. 	<p>Strong Alignment:</p> <p>This supports the theory that there is "no one best way" to organize. The hybrid structure is a direct response to the dynamic, ever-changing telecoms environment, validating the need for an "organic" design.</p>	<p>Strong Alignment:</p> <p>The collaborative, hybrid model is a manifestation of "Seizing" and "Transforming" capabilities. It allows the company to rapidly mobilize cross-functional resources (seizing) and reconfigure internal processes (transforming) to implement strategic initiatives, for example</p>

			from manual to digital and automated solutions.
3. Leadership & Decision-Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership is central in clarifying integrated roles and strengthening teams. • Effective leaders resolve uncertainty and assign tasks based on capability. • Challenge: Bureaucratic delays and waiting for top-down decisions is an obstacle to progress. 	<p>Strong Alignment:</p> <p>Validates Fiedler's contingency model, on the premise that leadership effectiveness is situational. That, successful leadership adapts its style by shifting between directive (clarifying roles) and empowering based on the situation's demands.</p>	<p>Partial Alignment & Gap:</p> <p>Leadership empowerment aligns with enabling dynamic capabilities. Bureaucratic delays reveal a gap between the theory's ideal of agile leadership and the practical reality of organizational inertia (which can suppress the sensing and seizing capabilities leadership ought to enable).</p>
4. Adaptability in Role Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agile practices support iterative learning and adaptability. • Fluid job descriptions allow employees to fill gaps as needed. • The telco environment requires flexibility to 	<p>Strong Alignment:</p> <p>This is a core finding for Contingency Theory. The adaptable but fluid role design is a perfect illustration of structural "flexibility"—where different internal designs (e.g.,</p>	<p>Strong Alignment:</p> <p>This dimension is the essence of Dynamic Capabilities. The "Transforming" capability is explicitly demonstrated through the continuous reconfiguration of human</p>

	address emerging challenges, avoiding factory-style rigidity.	Agile teams, CFTs) can be equally effective in achieving fit within a dynamic external environment.	capital and processes (agile, fluid roles) to maintain competitive advantage in an ever-changing setting.
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Table 6: Key Linkages Between Goiaia Findings and Dynamic Capabilities

Dynamic Capability	Goaia Analysis Findings	Theoretical Alignment
Sensing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vision dictates daily work. - Strategic decisions trickle down through leadership. 	Role integration sharpens environmental scanning by building strategic awareness right into employees' day-to-day activities (work).
Seizing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Cross-functional teamwork accelerates digital transformation." - "Agile practices support adaptability." 	Integrated roles enable faster resource mobilization and distribution (e.g., legal + tech collaboration).

After diligently analysing the theoretical framework compared to the findings, a revised framework is developed. Another layer is incorporated to ensure a unified and more practical approach, and this is illustrated in Figure 8. The progression of the dimensions begins with external contingencies, followed by internal contingencies, and then to opportunity identification, which ultimately leads to a strategy decision. It is at this phase, the firm considers its dynamic capabilities—specifically its asset transformation (in the case of MTN, this includes process re-engineering, its renewal of knowledge and skill, technology integration, and redeployment of resources).

The next dimension is role integration, followed immediately by opportunity seizure – this is the phase where resources are transformed into actionable strategies. After this phase follows actions toward strategy implementation, which are carried out by

executioners/providers and as well as receivers/collaborators—typically what then is commonly referred to as cross-functional teams. The dimension that follows immediately is the control mechanism/innovation triggers, and this encompasses the systems, processes, and metrics used to monitor, to evaluate, and steer strategy implementation, along with the catalysts, signals, or otherwise, the conditions that stimulate and mandate innovation within the organization.

Next in line are the indicators/drivers (KPIs and outcomes), which leads to the final stage, that is adaptation/re-evaluation. This phase forms the closing feedback loop in the dynamic strategy framework, hence transforming implementation outcomes and environmental feedback into organizational learning and for strategy renewal. It is in this phase the organization decides whether to persist, or to pivot, or reconfigure its strategy based on the collected evidence.

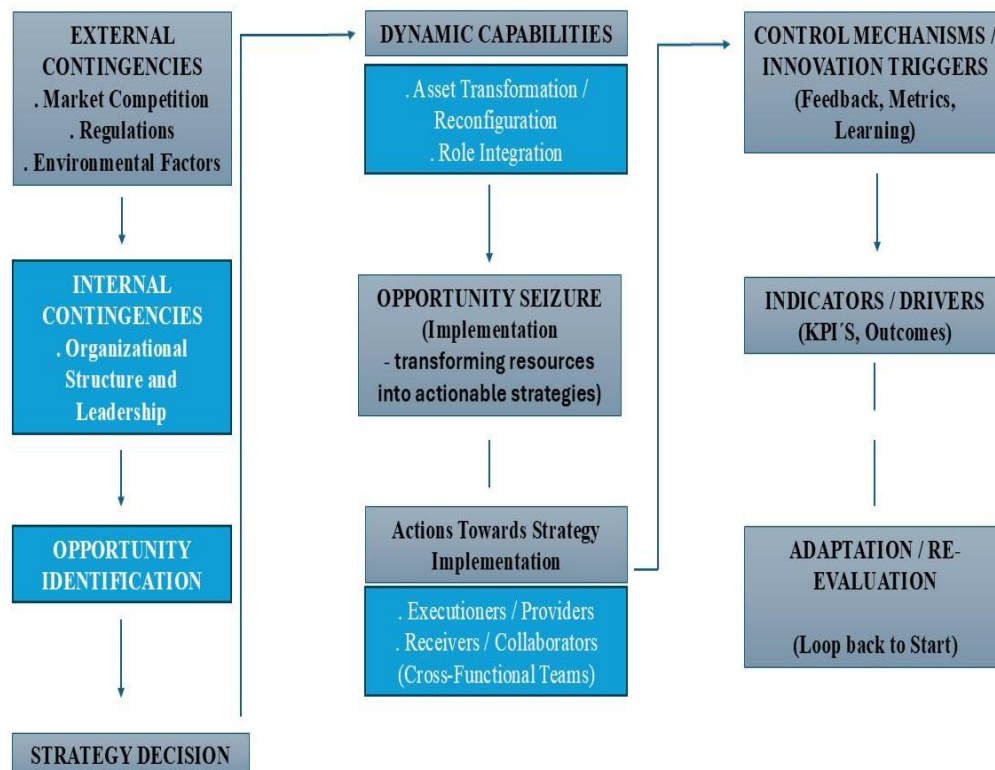


Figure 8: Revised theoretical framework

5.2 Discussion

This section of the thesis synthesizes findings from MTN Ghana's strategy implementation as practiced within the theoretical frameworks of contingency theory and dynamic capabilities. It deals with the research question by analysing how role integration bridges the strategy-implementation gap, while at the same time acknowledging and highlighting the limitations, and proposing actionable solutions.

5.2.1 Alignment with Theoretical Frameworks

Contingency Theory in Practice: considering the findings, MTN Ghana's adaptive structures specifically its cross-functional teams for 4G improvement and seamless technology, supports the position of Donaldson's (2001) contingency theory, which argues on how an organization ought to be designed to fit external pressures (in the case of this research, Ghana's telecom regulations). It also supports Donaldson's (2001) argument that contingency causes the firm structure which then causes its performance. And that when the structure fits the contingency, performance is high, but when it does not then performance is low. Considering the NCA's "Significant Market Power" designation, for example, this situation forced the company to spread decision-making out the more, hence backing up Fiedler's (1967) point about the necessity of leadership to be flexible. But we cannot overlook the contradiction that despite what the theory would suggest, rigid single-point-of-contact (SPOC) roles slowed down responses, thereby pointing to a mismatch with Burns & Stalker's (1961) idea of an "organic" structure—as it is asserted to work effectively in rapidly changing industries.

Dynamic Capabilities as Enablers: Sensing opportunities can be claimed here in the sense that the company's investment in Mobile Money (MoMo) which of course is because of the work of CFTs is a clear example of Teece's "sensing" capability, hence the company ability to tapping into Ghana's unbanked population (Aker & Mbiti, 2010).

Seizing and reconfiguring is claimed in the sense that agile teams helped speed up 4G deployment by shifting IT and marketing resources around, affirming Kozlenkova et al. (2014) argument that sustained competitive advantage comes from having superior resources. Considering what the respondents said, there is a correlation with Newbert's (2007) claim that dynamic capabilities can facilitate an organization to become more adaptable, but only if DC are strategically aligned with the firm's settings, are configured effectively, and are deployed with purpose.

5.2.2 The implications, practical

The success factors that came out of the findings are listed as follows:

Cross-Functional Teams (CFTs): This approach cut down on silos between IT and Marketing during the digital transformation, hence backing up what Kaplan & Norton (2008) argue about strategic agility.

Balanced Scorecard (BSC): It helped line up departmental KPIs (key performance indicators) with the company's broader goals, thus reducing confusion around roles and responsibilities hence reinforcing Kaplan & Norton (2008) and Hrebiniak (2006).

As pertaining to challenges, the following were highlighted in the findings:

Communication Delays: Leadership's slow delay in communicating strategic decisions for the deployment of strategy created misalignment, hence echoing what Beer & Eisenstat (2000) termed as the "silent killers" of implementation.

Moreover, vendor dependency, a heavy reliance on outside vendors for IT solutions, risked eroding the company's internal capabilities and gains, hence going against Barney's (1991) VRIN principles on what makes resources truly valuable.

Recommendation for MTN Ghana is that it should bring in real-time digital dashboards as asserted by (Davenport, 2018) to make role integration more transparent. It should also take notice of the concerns of the interviewees of this research work, continue with what works and learn from what did not work.

Recommendation for Policymakers, is that they need to streamline (reconsider) telecom regulations to cut down on delays caused by compliance issues especially now that the world is competing fiercely, especially the telecom sector.

5.3 Proposed contribution to theory

Research always encourages contribution to knowledge or even discovery (Saunders et. al., 2019), since the aim of research is to investigate, fill a gap, offer a novel or critiquing of existing ideas. After careful deliberation, a hybrid framework is proposed. The proposed framework brings together contingency theory – it focuses on the adaptation to external factors and dynamic capabilities (which as it is understood is about internal innovation). That which is proposed is called a "Contingency-Dynamic Matrix" (see Figure 9).

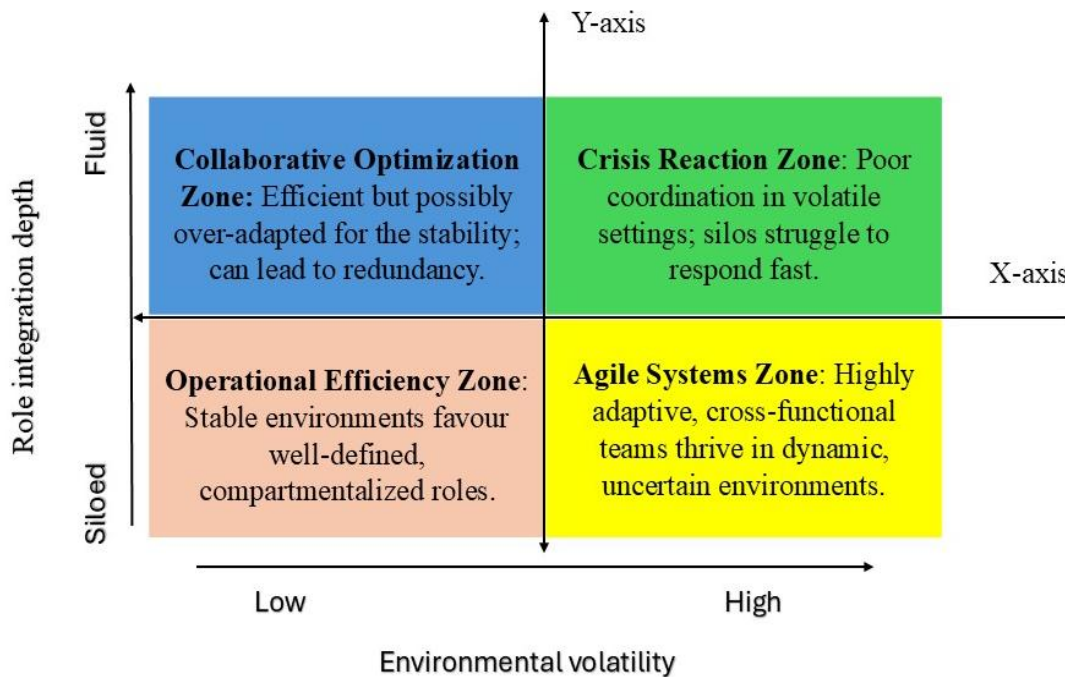


Figure 9: Contingency-Dynamic Matrix

The Matrix Axes are explained as follows: On the X-axis is environmental volatility (measured from low to high), whereas on the Y-axis is Role integration depth (siloed to fluid). Environmental volatility meaning unpredictable shifts in external conditions or factors.

The implication of this research as indicated on Figure 9 is that MTN Ghana operates in a "High Volatility/Moderate Integration" quadrant. What this means is that the company needs agile cross-functional teams together with structured single points of contact (SPOCs). Based on the above, this is what is being proposed to make it work. Firstly, it (company) should set up agile CFTs that can respond quickly to market changes, whether that's regulatory shifts or competitive pressure, or evolving customer needs. These teams should be given the freedom to experiment, to refine, and make quick decisions. Especially in areas like digital innovation, or pricing, and customer experience. Agile methods like Scrum can help the teams adapt quickly while keeping their eyes on key business goals. Corresponding to that, it needs to keep structured SPOCs in critical functions like regulatory compliance, network operations, and finance etc. So that these SPOCs will ensure that while CFTs are efficient, they do not drift away from broader business objectives, industry standards and government rules and regulations. SPOCs should serve as the bridge between its CFTs and central leadership, especially for sorting out conflicts, easing approvals, and preventing the formation of silos or factions.

Governance should run at two speeds: Should put in place fast-track decision-making for volatile, customer-centric initiatives, and have more deliberate processes for tightly integrated areas like infrastructure investments or legal documentation. Moreover, regular evaluation between CFTs and SPOCs will help keep everyone on the same page without impeding implementation of strategic decisions.

Technology plays a major role and for that reason the proposal is that MTN should invest in real-time data analytics to track market trends and customer behaviour so that both CFTs and SPOCs can make informed decisions on time. A unified data platform is suggested to ensure all teams can work from the same information pool/insights – hence, cuts down on discrepancy.

Lastly, getting the organizational culture right is critical and the proposal is that leadership should encourage agility yet should not downplay on the company's values and holding individuals accountable when necessary. Training programs should continue because it is already established that it is helping employees to get comfortable with both agile and even structured ways of working.

Network expansion plans could be adjusted in real time by CFTs based on demand while SPOCs keep an eye on long-term infrastructure alignment.

By combining agility with structure, the company can thrive in its high-volatility/moderately integrated market—thereby, moving fast where it needs to while at the same time stabilizing conditions in critical areas. When it comes to reconciling conflicting literature, here's what came out of trying to harmonize the opposing views in the literature: Role Integration versus Flexibility: While Mintzberg (1994) warns that too much integration can choke innovation, MTN's agile/CFT's managed to pull off both to an extent—let's take MoMo interoperability, for instance which suggests that outcome really depends on the context. Or even the case of moving from manual to seamless automation. It is evidenced that though they acted on the contrary to the argument, they were able to chalk favourable result in the industry and in their operation area (Ghana).

Role Integration as a Meta-Capability: This extends the work of Doz and Kosonen (2008) by identifying role integration as the bridge between strategic sensitivity and resource fluidity.

5.4 Limitations and Future Research

The following limitations were highlighted in this thesis:

Single-case design is a limitation because it limits how much one can generalize the findings (Yin, 2018)—what this means is that the results might not represent the wider population and for this reason future studies could compare these findings by replicating it with Vodafone Ghana (a rival company).

Time Horizon is another limitation in the sense that the data is cross-sectional and for that reason could not measure the change but could only present a snapshot, which might miss the long-term effects of role integration. Having a longer or broader view might have helped to see how things play out over time.

Low respondent turnout is a limitation because it also raises the possibility of bias. Since the sample might not fully capture the diversity or the complexity of the population being researched. For that reason, future research should aim for a broader range of respondents/interviewees.

Recruitment was a real challenge, and as a result this slowed down the research process. Getting volunteers to answer the research questions turned out to be very difficult and this affected the response rate – hence ended up being lower than initially hoped for. The target group was relatively small to begin with and difficult to reach due to time constraints and low engagement.

Despite the limited number of respondents, the data collected still offers valuable insights and reflects a diverse range of perspectives within the sample. The study prioritizes depth of analysis and contextual understanding over breadth, especially as its exploratory in nature. Further studies involving bigger and more varied sample is recommended to validate and expand on these findings. In terms of future directions for research, the following are suggested:

AI-Driven Collaboration: It's worth exploring how AI tools might be used to close communication gap, for example like flagging delays in information flow in real-time or/and automatically keeping teams aligned, as asserted by Davenport (2018).

Power-distance, which basically means how much people accept hierarchical structures and authority in a society, is argued to have an impact on leadership styles. From how engaged employees are, and in this case even how decisions are made in telecom companies across Africa. The focus of the study limited to research into this area and therefore doing a comparative analysis of power-distance across different African telecom markets could reveal how cultural expectations shape strategy implementation, operational efficiency, and whether it will help us to understand if new ideas get adopted easily. To truly understand how organizations work in African telecommunications industry, it is important to investigate on cultural dimensions like power-distance, a concept explored by Bonna & Awobgo-Moah (2020) which was not the case of this research.

MTN Ghana's practices back up some theories and validates what the theoretical models predict but also expose gaps that are specific to the industry, for example is vendor dependency. The proposed matrix in this study, as above is a tool for companies to figure out where they stand when it comes to strategy implementation in the environment they find themselves.

5.5 Conclusion

The results support the claim that role integration helps to implement strategy, especially when it comes to encouraging alignment, collaboration, and adaptability. Due to the limitations mentioned above, the research could not fully answer whether integration is necessary for enhancing performance but attempted to answer the research question significantly. What is missing is concrete performance data (highly sensitive), case company validation, and a comparative framework to measure against.

As per recommendation on the way forward to fully answering the research question, the suggestion is to supplement the study with a comparison of integrated vs. non-integrated roles in similar contexts.

The key takeaway from this research is that role integration is necessary but not enough on its own for successful implementation of strategy, however, getting the contingency alignment right and having strong dynamic capabilities are just as crucial.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Semi-Structured interview questions.

Area of service/unit:

1. What is your role in the company, and how long have you worked with MTN Ghana?
2. What does your service area/unit do?
3. How does the organizational vision affect you?
4. How did you experience MTN Ghana's strategic decisions over the years?

Role integration

1. Describe your experience in implementing strategic decisions, particularly those related to Ambition 2025.
2. Have you worked with other members or units in MTN Ghana to implement strategic decisions? Please describe the experience.
3. Can you share examples where role integration positively impacted strategy execution within MTN Ghana?
4. Do you believe having clearly defined, independent roles or more integrated, cross-functional roles leads to better strategic results? Why?

Challenges

5. What challenges have you encountered integrating roles across different departments during strategic projects?
6. What have you done differently to overcome external contingencies?

Efforts made

7. Have you played a role in ensuring alignment between different departments (e.g., engineering, marketing, operations) to support seamless strategy execution? If yes, can you describe it?

8. What role does leadership play in facilitating role integration for effective strategy implementation?
9. In your capacity, how do you measure the success of integrated roles in implementing your company's strategy?
10. In your experience, does role integration help accelerate the achievement of strategic goals, or does it create complexities?
11. How do you balance the need for specialization in roles with the necessity for role integration when executing strategy?
12. Can you provide an example of a strategic initiative where role integration failed, and what were the lessons learned?

Appendix 2. Respondents' Summary

Interviewee/Respondent	Unit/Service Area	Duration in Organization (yy)	Zoom interview duration (hh:ss)
1	IT, Quality Control	1	57:00
2	Business analyst, IT Digital Delivery	1	34:50