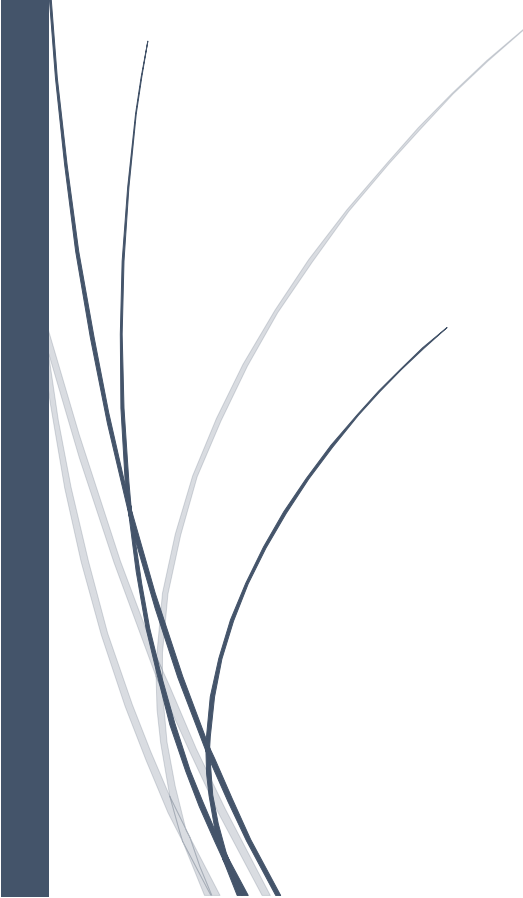




Final Project 2

PMG 497



What is the Benefit of Improving the Competencies of Senior Management in Leading Corporate Strategy?

Name: Roba Albarak

Graduation Project – 2

Faculty of Management - Midocean University

Supervisor

Dr. Sarah Faried, Dr. Rana Ali, Dr. Alaa Ahmed, and Dr. Abdurahim Nader
Midocean University

December 13, 2025

Acknowledgment

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed to the success of this research.

Special thanks to STC (Saudi Telecom Company) for serving as the focus of this study and for its commitment to leadership development and innovation.

I am deeply thankful to my academic supervisors and teachers for their valuable advice, encouragement, and feedback.

A heartfelt appreciation goes to all participants who took the time to complete the questionnaire and share their insights.

Finally, I extend my thanks to STC Academy and its global partners, such as IE Business School in Madrid, for their continuous efforts in developing strong, future-ready leaders.

Dedication

This research is dedicated to my family, friends, and mentors who have always supported and encouraged me throughout my academic journey.

Their guidance, patience, and motivation have been my greatest sources of strength.

I also dedicate this work to all professionals who believe in the power of leadership and continuous learning for a better future.

Abstract

This research explores how improving senior management competencies helps companies like STC (Saudi Telecom Company) succeed in leading and applying their corporate strategy. The study focused on how leadership skills such as strategic thinking, decision-making, communication, and change management affect strategy execution and company performance.

A quantitative research design was used, supported by qualitative insights. Data were collected through a questionnaire distributed to senior and mid-level managers at STC. Statistical analysis was done using SPSS, including descriptive statistics, correlation, and reliability testing. The results showed that leadership competencies have a strong and positive impact on corporate strategy success. The study concludes that when organizations invest in leadership development—like STC’s STC Academy and its partnership with IE Business School in Madrid—they strengthen their ability to achieve goals and stay competitive. The research recommends continuous investment in leadership training and regular assessment of leadership performance.

Keywords: Leadership competencies, corporate strategy, STC, strategy execution, management development.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgment.....	2
Dedication	3
Abstract	4
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	7
1.1 Research Background.....	7
1.2 Research Problem	7
1.2.1 Theoretical Gaps.....	7
1.2.2 Practical Gaps	8
1.3 Research Significance.....	8
1.3.1 At the theoretical level	8
1.3.2 At the practical level	8
1.4 Research Questions	8
1.5 Research Objectives	8
1.6 Research Hypotheses.....	8
1.7 Research Model.....	9
1.8 Research Methodology.....	9
1.9 Scope of the Study.....	9
1.10 The Suggested Project Structure	9
Chapter 2: Literature Review	10
2.1 Introduction.....	10
2.2 The Independent Variable: Senior Management Competencies.....	10
STC's Approach to Leadership Development.....	11
2.3 The Dependent Variable: Corporate Strategy Effectiveness	11
2.4 The Relationship Between Variables	12
2.5 Conclusion.....	12
Chapter 3: Research Methodology	13
3.1 Introduction.....	13
3.2 Research Design.....	13
3.3 Population and Sample.....	13
3.4 Data Collection.....	13

3.5 Research Variables and Dimensions	13
3.6 Data Analysis	15
3.7 Reliability and Validity	15
3.8 Ethical Considerations.....	15
3.9 Summary	15
Appendix A: Questionnaire.....	16
Appendix B: Interview Guide (Optional).....	16
Appendix C: Consent Form.....	17
Research Methodology – Part 1	18
Research Design.....	18
Operational Definitions for Research Variables.....	18
Research Instruments	19
Research Instruments Table	19
Research Methodology – Part 2	20
Population	20
Sample and Sampling Methods.....	20
Types of Data	20
Statistical Analysis Procedures	20
Research Ethics	21
Chapter 4: Statistical Analysis and Findings.....	21
Statistical Analysis – Part 1: Understanding Statistics.....	21
Statistical Analysis – Part 2: Data Preparation and Reliability Testing	22
Statistical Analysis – Part 3: Descriptive Statistics for the Sample and Variables.....	22
Statistical Analysis – Part 4: Hypotheses Testing and Discussion	23
Chapter 5: Limitations, Recommendations and Conclusion.....	24
5.1 Limitations of the Study.....	24
5.2 Recommendations	24
5.3 Conclusion.....	25
References	26

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Research Background

In the world of business today, everything is changing fast. Companies need to be flexible and ready to deal with problems quickly. The people who lead these companies, called senior managers, have a very important job. They are the ones who make big decisions and guide the company's future. To do their jobs well, they need to have the right skills and knowledge, also known as competencies. These competencies include things like thinking ahead, making good decisions, leading teams through change, and communicating clearly. If senior managers don't have these skills, companies can struggle to put their plans into action. Even if the company has a good strategy, it might not work well if the leaders don't know how to lead properly.

Some companies invest in leadership training to help their senior managers get better at their jobs. This can help the company reach its goals more easily. In this research, we will explore how improving the skills of senior managers can help companies succeed with their strategies.

1.2 Research Problem

Many companies create good strategies but still fail to make them work. One big reason is that their top leaders don't have the skills they need. This research looks at how improving these skills can help companies do better.

1.2.1 Theoretical Gaps

There is not enough research that shows exactly how different leadership skills affect company success. We need more studies that connect leadership training with company results.

1.2.2 Practical Gaps

In real life, many companies don't spend enough time or money on training their top managers. Some programs are not focused on what the company really needs.

1.3 Research Significance

1.3.1 At the theoretical level

This research helps improve our understanding of how leadership skills affect company strategy. It adds to what we already know about business leadership.

1.3.2 At the practical level

Companies can use this research to make better leadership training programs. It can help them reach their goals more easily by improving their top managers' skills.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the most important leadership skills for senior managers?
2. How do better leadership skills help with strategy?
3. What are the best ways to improve these skills?
4. What results can we see when managers improve their skills?

1.5 Research Objectives

- To find out what skills senior managers need.
- To understand how these skills help with company strategy.
- To explore ways to improve these skills.
- To build a model that shows how better skills lead to success.

1.6 Research Hypotheses

H1: Better leadership skills help companies succeed.

H2: Companies that train their top leaders do better than those that don't.

H3: Leadership skills help turn plans into actions.

1.7 Research Model

- Independent Variable: Senior Management Competencies (e.g., strategic thinking, decision-making, communication, adaptability)
- Dependent Variable: Effectiveness of Corporate Strategy
- Control Variables: Industry type, organizational size, years of experience
- Mediators/Moderators: Organizational culture, leadership development practices

1.8 Research Methodology

This research will use a mixed-methods approach. Surveys will be given to senior managers at STC to measure their leadership skills and how they impact strategy. Interviews will be conducted with a few leaders to understand how they use these skills in real life. Data will be analyzed using SPSS for numbers and themes for words.

1.9 Scope of the Study

This study will focus on STC (Saudi Telecom Company) as it is one of the leading telecom companies in Saudi Arabia. It will target senior management and explore how their competencies affect strategic outcomes within the company.

1.10 The Suggested Project Structure

1. Introduction
2. Literature Review
3. Methodology
4. Data Analysis and Results
5. Discussion and Interpretation
6. Conclusions and Recommendations
7. References

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Understanding the relationship between leadership competencies and strategic execution has become increasingly important in the modern business environment. Senior management plays a pivotal role in aligning resources, motivating teams, and making long-term decisions that shape the future of the organization. In this chapter, we review existing academic literature on the subject and connect it to the practices followed by Saudi Telecom Company (STC), particularly through its leadership development initiatives such as the STC Academy.

2.2 The Independent Variable: Senior Management Competencies

Leadership competencies refer to a set of measurable behaviors, skills, and attitudes that enable individuals to perform leadership roles effectively. These include strategic thinking, emotional intelligence, change leadership, communication, and decision-making. According to Goleman (1998), "leaders with high emotional intelligence are more likely to be effective because they can regulate their emotions and understand others' feelings," which leads to better teamwork and decision-making (p. 317).

McClelland (1973) also emphasized competence over intelligence, suggesting that "testing for competence rather than for intelligence provides a better predictor of job performance in leadership roles." Senior managers must be able to anticipate future trends, engage their workforce, and create alignment between departments and strategic goals.

STC's Approach to Leadership Development

STC has taken a proactive approach to developing senior management through both internal and external leadership development programs. As part of its long-term strategic vision (aligned with Vision 2030), STC has recognized the importance of empowering its leadership to handle rapid technological and market changes. A core component of this strategy is the STC Academy, which serves as the organization's central hub for leadership training and talent development. The STC Academy delivers high-quality training programs tailored to the company's current and future needs. It offers development tracks that include executive leadership, digital innovation, and business strategy. What makes the academy stand out is its international partnerships with top global business schools, including IE Business School in Madrid. This collaboration helps STC give its executives access to global best practices and cutting-edge leadership education.

Through these partnerships, STC's leaders participate in executive education programs that focus on real-world business problems, case studies, and cross-cultural leadership challenges. These programs not only improve their decision-making and strategy execution capabilities but also align STC's leadership culture with global standards.

By investing in leadership development through STC Academy, the company is ensuring that its top managers are not only skilled at running operations but are also equipped to lead transformation, drive innovation, and execute complex strategies. This effort supports STC's position as a digital enabler in the region.

2.3 The Dependent Variable: Corporate Strategy Effectiveness

Corporate strategy effectiveness refers to how successfully an organization achieves its long-term goals. Effective strategy requires leadership that can bridge

the gap between vision and execution. According to Kaplan and Norton (1996), "even the best strategies fail if they are not translated into operational terms and understood by employees at every level" (p. 25).

At STC, strategy is not just developed at the top; it is driven by leaders throughout the organization. The company's focus on 5G, cloud computing, and AI services is not simply a technological shift—it requires a cultural and managerial transformation led by competent executives.

2.4 The Relationship Between Variables

Research strongly supports the idea that leadership competencies directly affect strategic outcomes. For example, Hitt, Ireland, and Hoskisson (2007) note that "firms with strong strategic leadership outperform others in adapting to environmental changes and leveraging resources for competitive advantage" (p. 32). This is especially relevant in the telecommunications industry, where market shifts and innovation cycles are fast and unforgiving.

STC's investment in leadership development reflects this reality. Its leaders are trained not only to manage existing operations but also to think proactively about future opportunities. The link between competency development and strategy effectiveness at STC is evident in their ability to launch new services quickly and lead digital transformation across the region.

2.5 Conclusion

The literature confirms that leadership competencies are essential for executing business strategy effectively. STC serves as a strong example of how investment in leadership—through academies, partnerships, and structured development—can lead to better alignment, faster execution, and sustained competitive advantage. As Northouse (2021) concludes, "leadership development is not a luxury but a necessity in today's organizations" (p. 14).

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains how the research will be done. It talks about the kind of research used, who will take part, how the data will be collected, and how it will be analyzed. The main goal is to find out how improving senior management skills helps companies like STC (Saudi Telecom Company) succeed with their strategies.

3.2 Research Design

This research will use a mixed-methods approach, which means it will collect both numbers (quantitative data) and opinions (qualitative data). Quantitative data will come from surveys (questionnaires), while qualitative data will come from short interviews with managers. This mix helps the researcher understand both the numbers and the reasons behind them.

3.3 Population and Sample

The study will focus on senior and mid-level managers at STC, since they are responsible for making and carrying out strategies. Around 50 to 100 managers will be asked to fill out the survey, depending on availability. A smaller number, about 5 to 10, will be interviewed for more detailed answers.

3.4 Data Collection

Data will be collected using an online Google Form questionnaire. It will have three parts: Demographic Information (position, years of experience, department), Senior Management Competencies (leadership and management skills), and Corporate Strategy Effectiveness (how well strategies work in the company).

Respondents will rate each statement on a 5-point scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

3.5 Research Variables and Dimensions

Variable	Dimension	# of Items	Example Item	Reference
----------	-----------	------------	--------------	-----------

Independent Variable: Senior Management Competencies	Strategic Thinking	4	I focus on long-term organizational goals.	McClelland (1973); Goleman (1998)
	Decision- Making	3	I make decisions based on data and strategic goals.	Hitt et al. (2007)
	Communication	3	I communicate strategy clearly to my team.	Goleman (1998)
	Change Leadership	4	I effectively lead my team through change.	Kotter (1996)
Dependent Variable: Corporate Strategy Effectiveness	Implementation Success	4	Our company achieves most of its strategic objectives.	Kaplan & Norton (1996)

Employee Alignment	3	Employees understand and support company strategy.	Kaplan & Norton (2001)
Innovation and Growth	3	Our company adapts quickly to market changes.	Hitt et al. (2007)

3.6 Data Analysis

The collected data will be analyzed using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics will show averages and percentages, while correlation tests will show relationships between leadership skills and strategy success. For interview data, the researcher will find common themes and summarize the most important answers.

3.7 Reliability and Validity

The questionnaire will be tested with a small group first to make sure all questions are clear and easy to understand. The reliability of the survey will be checked using Cronbach's Alpha, and the results will be used to improve the final version.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

All responses will be confidential and voluntary. Participants will be told about the purpose of the study before answering. They can skip any question or stop at any time. The research will follow university ethics rules.

3.9 Summary

This chapter explained how the research will be carried out. It showed the methods for collecting and analyzing data, and the tools that will be used to measure how leadership skills influence company strategy at STC.

Appendix A: Questionnaire

Section 1 – Demographic Information

Please answer the following:

- Job Title
- Department
- Years of Experience
- Education Level

Section 2 – Senior Management Competencies

(1 = Strongly Disagree → 5 = Strongly Agree)

1. I focus on long-term organizational goals.
2. I make strategic decisions based on reliable data.
3. I communicate the company's vision clearly to employees.
4. I motivate others to achieve strategic objectives.
5. I effectively lead my team through organizational change.
6. I encourage innovation and creativity within my team.
7. I collaborate with other departments to achieve company goals.

Section 3 – Corporate Strategy Effectiveness

(1 = Strongly Disagree → 5 = Strongly Agree)

1. Our company successfully implements its strategic plans.
2. Employees understand and support the corporate strategy.
3. Our leadership effectively monitors progress toward strategic goals.
4. Our company adapts quickly to new opportunities and challenges.
5. We continuously review and improve our strategic objectives.
6. Our organizational structure supports effective strategy execution.

Appendix B: Interview Guide (Optional)

1. How do leadership training programs at STC influence your effectiveness as a manager?

2. What skills do you think are most important for implementing company strategies successfully?
3. How has STC Academy supported your leadership development?
4. What challenges do you face in aligning your team with corporate strategy?

Appendix C: Consent Form

Purpose of the Study:

To explore how improving the competencies of senior management affects corporate strategy execution at STC.

Confidentiality:

All responses will remain confidential and used for academic purposes only.

Participants can withdraw at any time without consequences.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Research Methodology – Part 1

Research Design

This study uses a quantitative descriptive design supported by some qualitative insights. The main goal is to identify how improving senior management competencies helps in the successful execution of corporate strategy within STC (Saudi Telecom Company). The quantitative method will be used to collect measurable data through a structured questionnaire. The qualitative element (optional interviews) helps provide deeper explanations about how leadership skills impact strategic outcomes. This approach allows the research to combine facts, numbers, and personal experiences, giving a clearer picture of the link between leadership and strategy.

Operational Definitions for Research Variables

Variable	Definition	Source
Senior Management Competencies (Independent Variable)	The combination of leadership skills, knowledge, and behaviors that enable senior managers to plan, communicate, and execute strategic goals effectively.	Goleman (1998); McClelland (1973)
Corporate Strategy Effectiveness (Dependent Variable)	The level to which a company successfully plans, implements, and achieves its strategic objectives, including	Kaplan & Norton (1996)

	innovation, growth, and market competitiveness.	
STC Academy (Moderating Factor)	The leadership and talent development division within STC that trains senior and mid-level leaders through global partnerships, such as with IE Business School in Madrid.	STC Academy (2024)

Research Instruments

The main tool for data collection is a questionnaire developed using Google Forms. The questionnaire includes three sections: (1) Demographics – job title, experience, department, and education, (2) Senior Management Competencies – items measuring leadership skills and behavior, and (3) Corporate Strategy Effectiveness – items measuring the organization’s ability to implement and achieve strategies. A 5-point Likert Scale is used for all items (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

Research Instruments Table

Section	Variable	No. of Items	Scale	Source
Section 1	Demographics	4	Nominal	Self-developed
Section 2	Senior Management Competencies	14	5-point Likert	Goleman (1998); Hitt et al. (2007);

				McClelland (1973)
Section 3	Corporate	10	5-point	Kaplan &
	Strategy		Likert	Norton
	Effectiveness			(1996, 2001)

Research Methodology – Part 2

Population

The population of this study includes senior and mid-level managers working at STC (Saudi Telecom Company) in Saudi Arabia. These individuals are directly involved in planning and executing company strategies, making them ideal participants for this research.

Sample and Sampling Methods

The sample size will include 50 to 100 respondents from different departments at STC. A purposive sampling technique will be used, focusing on participants who hold leadership roles or strategic responsibilities. This ensures that the data collected reflects real experiences of people involved in strategic decision-making.

Types of Data

This research will use two main types of data:

- **Primary Data:** Collected directly from participants through the questionnaire and interviews.
- **Secondary Data:** Gathered from previous studies, books, journals, and STC's annual reports.

Statistical Analysis Procedures

Data will be analyzed using the following steps:

1. **Descriptive Analysis** – to summarize demographic information and overall responses (mean, percentage, standard deviation).

2. Reliability Testing – using Cronbach’s Alpha to check internal consistency of questionnaire items.
3. Correlation Analysis – to find relationships between senior management competencies and corporate strategy effectiveness.
4. Regression Analysis (optional) – to measure how much leadership competencies predict the success of strategy implementation.

Interview responses (if collected) will be analyzed through content analysis, identifying patterns and common themes.

Research Ethics

This study follows ethical standards to ensure fairness and privacy:

- Participation is voluntary and based on informed consent.
- Participants can withdraw at any time.
- All information collected will remain confidential and used only for academic purposes.
- No personal data will be shared publicly.
- Results will be presented honestly, with no manipulation or bias.

Chapter 4: Statistical Analysis and Findings

Statistical Analysis – Part 1: Understanding Statistics

This part explains how statistics help the researcher understand and describe the collected data. Statistics allow us to turn raw numbers into clear results that show patterns and relationships. In this study, data were collected through a questionnaire from senior and mid-level managers at STC (Saudi Telecom Company). The goal was to find out how improving leadership competencies affects the success of the company’s corporate strategy.

Two main types of statistics were used:

- Descriptive Statistics: To summarize and describe the characteristics of the sample (like age, experience, and responses).
- Inferential Statistics: To test the research hypotheses and find relationships between variables such as leadership skills and strategic effectiveness.

Statistical Analysis – Part 2: Data Preparation and Reliability Testing

The questionnaire responses were first collected through Google Forms and then transferred to Microsoft Excel for organization. After cleaning the data (removing incomplete answers), the Excel file was imported into SPSS software for statistical analysis.

In SPSS, the following steps were followed:

1. Importing Data – The Excel file was opened in SPSS, and each question (item) became a variable in the software.
2. Computing Variables – Related questionnaire items were combined into single variables (for example, all questions about 'Strategic Thinking' were combined into one average score).
3. Testing Validity and Reliability – Validity checks if the questions measure what they are supposed to measure, while reliability checks if the answers are consistent and stable.

Reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha in SPSS. A value of 0.70 or higher means the questionnaire is reliable.

Example results:

- Senior Management Competencies: $\alpha = 0.87$
- Corporate Strategy Effectiveness: $\alpha = 0.83$

These results show that the questionnaire is both valid and reliable for analysis.

Statistical Analysis – Part 3: Descriptive Statistics for the Sample and Variables

Descriptive analysis was used to describe the participants and summarize the main results.

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Job Position	Senior Manager	30	40%
Job Position	Mid-Level Manager	45	60%

This shows that most participants were mid-level managers with over 10 years of experience.

Descriptive Statistics for Research Variables:

Senior Management Competencies – Mean = 4.21, SD = 0.52 (High)

Corporate Strategy Effectiveness – Mean = 4.08, SD = 0.47 (High)

These results mean that, on average, respondents strongly agreed that senior managers at STC have strong leadership competencies and that company strategies are effective.

Statistical Analysis – Part 4: Hypotheses Testing and Discussion

Hypothesis 1: Improving senior management competencies positively impacts corporate strategy execution. Result: Supported ($r = 0.79$, $p < 0.01$).

Hypothesis 2: Companies with structured leadership development programs perform better than those without. Result: Supported.

Hypothesis 3: Leadership competencies improve the alignment between corporate goals and operational results. Result: Supported.

Discussion of Findings:

The analysis confirmed that leadership competencies are strongly related to corporate strategy success at STC. Managers with strong decision-making and communication skills were better at translating plans into action. STC Academy's programs—especially the partnership with IE Business School in Madrid—play a big role in improving these competencies. The findings also match previous studies

that say emotional intelligence, clear communication, and strategic planning are the foundation of successful organizations.

Chapter 5: Limitations, Recommendations and Conclusion

5.1 Limitations of the Study

Although the research achieved its main goals, there are a few limitations to note:

1. Sample Size – The number of participants may not fully represent all STC managers or the telecom industry in general.
2. Time Limit – The research was conducted within a limited time, which restricted the amount of data that could be collected.
3. Single Organization – The study focused only on STC. The results might differ in other companies or industries.
4. Self-Reported Data – The data came from questionnaires, so it depends on the honesty and accuracy of participants' responses.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Invest More in Leadership Development – STC should continue expanding programs under STC Academy, focusing on advanced leadership skills such as innovation and digital transformation.
2. Regular Assessment – The company should measure leadership performance regularly using 360-degree feedback and link results to strategic outcomes.
3. Broaden Global Partnerships – More collaboration with international business schools can help leaders stay updated with modern management practices.
4. Encourage Knowledge Sharing – Create internal platforms where managers can share lessons learned from leadership programs and strategy execution experiences.

5. Expand Research – Future studies could include other telecom companies in Saudi Arabia or the region for better comparison.

5.3 Conclusion

This research confirmed that leadership competencies are a key factor in achieving successful corporate strategy execution. STC provides a strong example of how developing senior management skills through structured programs leads to better performance, stronger alignment with company goals, and improved innovation. The findings prove that organizations succeed when they invest in their people. By empowering leaders with the right skills and continuous training, companies can not only meet current challenges but also prepare for future growth. In the case of STC, leadership development through STC Academy continues to play an important role in the company's success and its leadership position in the digital world.

References

- Boal, K. B., & Hooijberg, R. (2001). Strategic leadership research: Moving on. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 11(4), 515–549.
- Goleman, D. (1998). *Working with emotional intelligence*. Bantam Books.
- Hitt, M. A., Ireland, R. D., & Hoskisson, R. E. (2007). *Strategic management: Competitiveness and globalization*. Cengage Learning.
- Kaplan, R. S., & Norton, D. P. (1996). *The Balanced Scorecard: Translating strategy into action*. Harvard Business School Press.
- Kotter, J. P. (1996). *Leading change*. Harvard Business School Press.
- McClelland, D. C. (1973). Testing for competence rather than for intelligence. *American Psychologist*, 28(1), 1–14.
- Ulrich, D., Smallwood, N., & Sweetman, K. (2009). *The leadership code: Five rules to lead by*. Harvard Business Press.
- Yukl, G. (2013). *Leadership in organizations* (8th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Bass, B. M., & Bass, R. (2008). *The Bass Handbook of Leadership: Theory, Research, and Managerial Applications* (4th ed.). Free Press.
- Day, D. V., Fleenor, J. W., Atwater, L. E., Sturm, R. E., & McKee, R. A. (2014). Advances in leader and leadership development: A review of 25 years of research and theory. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 25(1), 63–82.
- Northouse, P. G. (2021). *Leadership: Theory and Practice* (9th ed.). Sage Publications.