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THE ROLE OF STRATEGIC PLANING IN THE SUCCESS OF COMPANIES PROJECTS IN SAUDI ARABIA

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In the Name of Allah
the Most Merciful the Most Compassionate

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Abstract

In recent years, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has an increase in the spread of a projects of organizations. Although many studies have been conducted on use of strategic planning in public sector organizations in the Western countries, there is limited research on the impact of strategic planning on public and private organizations performance in the KSA. So, this study investigated the role of strategic planning on project success in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA)'s public and private organizations. The framework explained the factors affecting the adoption of strategic planning and its impact organizational performance in KSA. The study used descriptive analytical method with qualitative and quantitative approaches. 120 self-administered questionnaires are sent to the staff at Saudi Arabia. The results indicated that there is positive between effect relationship between strategic planning processes and project success. The findings implied the significance role of strategic planning in times of crises to improve organizations ability to survive and thrive in a crisis. The study findings provide a better insight of the different factors that shape perceptions of strategic planning and its impact on projects success in the KSA.

شهدت المملكة العربية السعودية في السنوات الأخيرة زيادة في انتشار المشاريع. على الرغم من إجراء العديد من الدراسات حول استخدام التخطيط الاستراتيجي في مؤسسات القطاع العام في الدول الغربية، إلا أن عدد الأبحاث حول تأثير التخطيط الاستراتيجي على أداء المنظمات العامة والخاصة في المملكة العربية السعودية محدود. لذلك تناولت هذه الدراسة دور التخطيط الاستراتيجي في نجاح المشاريع في المؤسسات العامة والخاصة في المملكة العربية السعودية. وأوضح الإطار العوامل المؤثرة في تبني التخطيط الاستراتيجي وأثره على الأداء التنظيمي في المملكة العربية السعودية. ولتحقيق أهداف البحث تم استخدام المنهج الوصفي، مع المنهجين النوعي والكمي. وتم إرسال 120 استبانة إلى الموظفين في المملكة العربية السعودية. أشارت النتائج إلى وجود علاقة تأثير موجبة بين عمليات التخطيط الاستراتيجي ونجاح المشروع. وأشارت أيضاً إلى أهمية دور التخطيط الاستراتيجي في أوقات الأزمات لتحسين قدرة المنظمات على البقاء والازدهار. توفر نتائج الدراسة رؤية تفصيلية للعوامل المختلفة التي تشكل تصورات التخطيط الاستراتيجي وتأثيره على نجاح المشاريع في المملكة العربية السعودية.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Strategic planning is one of the most important factors for the success of any upcoming project. It is the process before the actual process is initiated. It involves the complete planning of the venture along with the problems it might face and the solutions to these problems. Strategic planning also involves resource allocation, without which the planning is of no worth. The economy of Saudi Arabia has seen an upward spike in the last two decades. This has mainly been due to the industrial revolution in the form of oil and its refined products. Many companies in today's era have attempted to conduct projects in the kingdom. The rate of success of these projects has been debatable. This is where strategic planning comes in. A project well planned has a higher rate of success as compared to a project that has not been planned. Every project, whether big or small, is anticipated to succeed. The road to success is filled with obstacles and it's the approach of the project that decides if these obstacles can be surpassed. The approach of the project is the single most important aspect and strategic planning is the base of the approach. It gives a detailed view of what the project is about and what it attempts to achieve. At the same time, it provides the problems the project might face and the solutions to these problems. This is extremely useful as it prepares the people involved in the project for the obstacles and makes them mentally ready for it. Failure to identify problems and find solutions is the biggest factor for the failure of a project, and strategic planning eliminates this.

The impact of strategic planning in project management is significant, as evidenced by various studies. Research indicates that strategic planning plays a crucial role in enhancing the performance of firms ^{1,2}. It is highlighted that strategic planning for human resources positively influences project management performance, aiding in facing external challenges effectively³. Moreover, the application of strategic planning is essential for crisis management, as seen in the Free Zone Authority - Aden, where it impacts learning and decision-making processes⁴. Additionally, strategic planning within the energy industry is crucial for enterprise modernization, with a well-chosen strategy being key to effective functioning in a market economy⁵. Overall, the data underscores the importance of strategic planning in project management across various sectors and its role in enhancing organizational performance and resilience.

Successful organizations now more than ever recognize the importance of strategic planning in achieving desired business results. Companies clearly have a competitive advantage when they can develop an effective strategic plan. As the saying goes, "If you don't know where you are going, any road will take you there."

Most business leaders recognize the importance of strategic planning, but few succeed at translating their strategies into business results. There is an obvious scarcity of research on strategic planning in the Arabian Gulf region, and in Saudi Arabia in particular.

1.1. Research problem

Everyone agrees that strategic planning is important, However not everyone is aware of its complex consequences in Saudi Arabia's unique socioeconomic environment. The main goal of the research is to identify the critical mechanism of strategic planning that either greatly help or hinder the success of.

While the importance of strategic planning is widely acknowledged, there is a gap in understanding its nuanced role in the specific socio-economic landscape of Saudi Arabia. The research problem centres on uncovering the key elements of strategic planning that significantly contribute to or hinder the success of projects in this region.

Certainly. The research problem is rooted in the recognition of the broader importance of strategic planning while highlighting a critical gap in its application within the unique socio-economic fabric of Saudi Arabia. This gap underscores the necessity for a nuanced exploration that goes beyond conventional strategic management theories and delves into the specific contextual factors shaping strategic planning outcomes in the Kingdom

Furthermore, the research problem acknowledges the transformative Vision 2030 initiative in Saudi Arabia and its potential impact on strategic planning dynamics. Exploring how this national agenda aligns with or diverges from organizational strategies becomes integral to comprehending the evolving landscape. This research seeks to uncover actionable insights that can guide organizations in aligning their strategic planning with broader national objectives.

In essence, the research problem is not merely about identifying gaps but about embarking on a comprehensive exploration that considers the intricate interplay of various factors, ultimately contributing to a more tailored and effective strategic planning framework for companies operating in Saudi Arabia.

Moreover, the research problem recognizes the need to explore the role of leadership in strategic planning within Saudi Arabia. Leadership styles and decision-making processes often play a pivotal role in shaping the success or failure of strategic initiatives. By investigating these aspects, the research aspires to contribute insights that go beyond the theoretical, offering practical guidance for organizational leaders navigating the challenges of strategic planning in the Kingdom.

1.2. Study Purposes

This study is crucial as it addresses the imperative need for Saudi Arabian companies to optimize their strategic planning processes for project success. Given the transformative initiatives like Vision 2030, understanding how strategic planning aligns with national goals becomes paramount. This research aims to provide actionable insights for organizations seeking to navigate this complex business environment.

Furthermore, the significance of this research extends to fostering sustainable business development in Saudi Arabia. By unravelling the intricate relationship between strategic planning and project success, the study offers a pathway for organizations to enhance their adaptability and resilience in the face of evolving economic and cultural dynamics.

In a global context, this research contributes to the broader academic discourse on strategic management by providing a case study in a unique business environment. Insights derived from Saudi Arabian companies can serve as valuable benchmarks for international businesses operating in diverse settings, fostering cross-cultural strategic learning.

Additionally, the research's emphasis on actionable insights ensures its practical relevance. As organizations in Saudi Arabia grapple with the challenges of aligning their strategies with national aspirations, the outcomes of this study can serve as a guide for effective decision-making, resource allocation, and goal attainment.

Ultimately, the importance of this research lies not only in advancing scholarly understanding but also in directly impacting the strategic capabilities of businesses, aligning them with national visions and fostering sustainable growth in the ever-changing landscape of Saudi Arabian business. Certainly. This research holds paramount importance for Saudi Arabian companies navigating the intricate intersection of strategic planning and project success. Beyond addressing immediate concerns, the study is a strategic compass for organizations seeking long-term viability in a rapidly transforming landscape.

By delving into the implications of Vision 2030, this research provides a forward-looking perspective, enabling companies to proactively align their strategic initiatives with the national agenda. Understanding the synergies and potential conflicts between organizational goals and governmental aspirations becomes not just a theoretical exercise but a practical necessity for sustainability and growth.

In an era where resilience and agility are critical for organizational survival, the research offers a roadmap for Saudi Arabian companies to not only weather uncertainties but also to thrive amidst them. The implications extend beyond individual organizations, contributing to the overall economic resilience and competitiveness of the nation in the global business arena.

1.3. Research hypothesis

The primary research hypothesis of this study is:

1. Hypothesis 1: Strategic Alignment with National Initiatives:

Companies that strategically align their project goals with national initiatives, such as Vision 2030, will experience higher rates of project success in Saudi Arabia.

2. Hypothesis 2: Proactive Risk Mitigation in Strategic Plans:

Companies integrating proactive risk mitigation strategies within their strategic plans will exhibit better project success rates compared to those with reactive risk management approaches.

3. Hypothesis 3: Stakeholder Engagement and Project Success:

Projects with robust stakeholder engagement strategies embedded in their strategic planning processes will achieve higher levels of success in the Saudi Arabian business context.

4. Hypothesis 4: Flexibility and Adaptability in Strategic Plans:

Companies with flexible and adaptable strategic plans will demonstrate better resilience to unforeseen challenges, resulting in increased project success in Saudi Arabia

1.4. Research questions

The research questions according to the Hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Strategic Alignment with National Programs

1. How aware are companies in Saudi Arabia of national programs such as Vision 2030, and to what extent do they perceive them as influential in shaping their project aims?
2. What specific strategies do companies employ to intentionally align their project goals with national programs like Vision 2030?
3. How do organizations measure the success of projects that are strategically aligned with national programs compared to those that are not?
4. What challenges do companies face in aligning their project aims with national programs, and how do they overcome these challenges?

Hypothesis 2: Proactive Risk Mitigation Strategies

1. What are the common proactive risk mitigation strategies implemented by companies in Saudi Arabia and how do they integrate them into their strategic plans?
2. How do organizations in Saudi Arabia identify potential risks and opportunities during the strategic planning phase of projects, and how does this influence project success rates?
3. What role do project managers and team members play in implementing proactive risk mitigation strategies throughout the project lifecycle in Saudi Arabian companies?
4. How do companies measure the effectiveness of proactive risk mitigation strategies in enhancing project success rates compared to reactive approaches?
5. What are the perceived benefits and limitations of incorporating proactive risk mitigation strategies into strategic plans from the perspective of project stakeholders in Saudi Arabia?

Hypothesis 3: Stakeholder Engagement Strategies

1. How do companies in Saudi Arabia currently approach stakeholder engagement in their strategic planning processes for projects?
2. What specific strategies and tactics do organizations employ to ensure strong stakeholder engagement throughout the project lifecycle in the Saudi Arabian business context?
3. What challenges do organizations face in integrating stakeholder engagement strategies into their strategic planning processes, and how do they address these challenges?
4. To what extent do stakeholders perceive their level of engagement and influence in project decision-making processes in Saudi Arabian companies, and how does this impact project success rates?

These study questions can provide valuable insights into the relationship between strategic planning elements and project success in the context of Saudi Arabian businesses.

1.5. Theoretical Model

We primarily examine the relation of strategic planning with project success

Theoretical Model: Strategic Planning and Project Success in Saudi Arabian Companies

1. Independent Variables:

a. Alignment with National Programs

- Level of alignment between project aims and national programs like Vision 2030.

b. Proactive Risk Mitigation Strategies

- Implementation of proactive risk mitigation strategies, such as Failure Mode and Effects Analysis (FMEA), within strategic plans.

c. Stakeholder Engagement Strategies

- Integration of strong stakeholder engagement strategies into strategic planning processes.

2. Dependent Variable:

• Project Success

- Overall success rates of projects, including factors such as meeting objectives, staying within budget, and adhering to timelines.

Achieving Project Success.

Hypothesized Relationships:

- H1: Alignment with National Programs → Project Success
- H2: Proactive Risk Mitigation Strategies → Project Success
- H3: Stakeholder Engagement Strategies → Project Success

This theoretical model outlines the direct and mediated relationships between strategic planning elements, organizational factors, and project success within the Saudi Arabian business context.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the dynamic landscape of project management, strategic planning plays a pivotal role in steering projects towards successful outcomes. This literature review explores the intricate relationship between strategic planning and project management within the context of Saudi Arabia. As the Kingdom continues its ambitious trajectory of economic diversification and development, the effective implementation of strategic planning methodologies becomes imperative for achieving project objectives efficiently and effectively.

Through a comprehensive examination of existing literature, this review aims to shed light on the unique challenges and opportunities inherent in integrating strategic planning principles into project management practices within the Saudi Arabian context. By delving into various scholarly perspectives, theoretical frameworks, and empirical studies, this review seeks to provide insights into the strategies, best practices, and critical success factors essential for harnessing the full potential of strategic planning in project management endeavors across different sectors in Saudi Arabia.

Furthermore, this literature review endeavors to identify gaps in the current body of knowledge, offering avenues for future research and practical implications for project managers, policymakers, and stakeholders involved in shaping the Kingdom's project landscape. As Saudi Arabia continues to embark on ambitious ventures to realize its vision for sustainable development, the synthesis of strategic planning and project management emerges as a crucial catalyst for driving innovation, enhancing organizational performance, and achieving strategic objectives in a rapidly evolving global marketplace.

In summary, this literature review serves as a foundational exploration into the strategic planning role in project management within the Saudi Arabian context, aiming to inform and inspire scholarly discourse, practical applications, and future endeavors in the field of project management and strategic planning in the Kingdom.

2.1. Theoretical information and definitions related to the research

2.1.1. What is planning?

Planning can be defined broadly as an attempt to enhance performance by forecasting changes in the organization and its environment, setting objectives, and developing strategies for the achievement of these objectives (Wildavsky, 1973). To some extent, all organizations engage in planning, even if only loosely and intuitively. By contrast, strategic planning is intended to be explicit, rational, rigorous, and systematic, and it involves the application of scientific methods to policy problems (Gunsteren, 1976). Organizational strategies are based not on incremental drift or leaps in the dark, but on logical techniques and processes (Mintzberg, 1994).

"The process of formulating and implementing decisions about an organization's future direction" is the definition of strategic planning. This process, which can be applied to all management levels

and organizational types, is essential to the survival of any organization because it allows the organization to adapt to its constantly changing environment.

Strategic planning offers a road map for accomplishing an organization's objectives. When developing a strategic plan, the organization aims to achieve specific goals that will be addressed during the plan's implementation. Comprehending the strategic corporate plan's organizational goals will facilitate the development of effective plans that direct the expansion of the organization (Root, 2014:1). A strategic plan is a written document that outlines the organization's objectives, the steps required to accomplish those goals, and all other important components that were determined during the planning process. However, strategic planning is a task of organizational management that is used to set priorities, focus attention and resources, bolster operations, ensure that employees and other stakeholders are working toward common goals, establish agreement on desired outcomes/results, and assess how well the strategic plan is being executed. Comprehending the strategic corporate plan's organizational goals will facilitate the development of effective plans that direct the expansion of the organization (Root, 2014:1). A strategic plan is a written document that outlines the organization's objectives, the steps required to accomplish those goals, and all other important components that were determined during the planning process. Nonetheless, strategic planning is an organizational management task that is employed to determine objectives, concentrate efforts and resources, fortify operations, guarantee that workers and other stakeholders are pursuing shared objectives, create consensus regarding desired outcomes/results, and evaluate and modify the organization's course in reaction to a changing environment. With an eye toward the future, it is a methodical endeavor that results in fundamental choices and actions that mold and direct an organization's identity, mission, activities, and justifications. Good strategic planning explains not only where an organization wants to go and what needs to be done to get there, but also how it will determine success.

2.1.2. The process of strategic planning

A strategic planning process helps an organization accomplish its goals by providing a methodical, continuous, and outcome-driven roadmap (Grensing-Pophal, 2011:4).

2.1.3. The elements of strategic planning

TABLE 2- 1 contains the definitions of the terms typically used to describe strategic planning elements

Mission	An organization's mission statement outlines the main activities, goals, and beneficiaries of the organization. An organization's mission is not a deadline-driven goal.
Vision	An organization's vision is the ideal it hopes to achieve. By expressing instances of the mission's successful completion, it connects the organization to the future. An organization's vision can extend beyond its current capabilities and serves as a source of inspiration. In actuality, it might outline what can be accomplished in a larger setting if the organization and others are successful in fulfilling their respective missions.
Goals	Objectives are wide, quantifiable targets that help a mission be completed.

Objectives	Specific, measurable, lower-level targets that signify a goal's accomplishment are called objectives.
Guiding Principles	Declarative guidelines that specify the limitations an organization decides to impose on how it accomplishes its objectives are known as guiding principles. Embracing fundamental values, guiding principles mold an organization's approach. Long-term goals are reflected in guiding principles, which are not always permanent.
Enablers	The external circumstances or organizational strengths that make it easier for an organization to achieve its goals and objectives are known as enablers.
Barriers	External circumstances or organizational (internal) flaws can act as barriers, making it more difficult for an organization to achieve its goals and objectives.
Strategy	An organization's strategy is a developed method for accomplishing its mission, goals, and objectives. It upholds the organization's guiding principles, supports the organization's vision, and considers the obstacles and facilitators within the organization.
Strategic Plan	A document produced as a result of strategic planning is called a strategic plan. It explains the organizational strategy in detail and lists the factors that affect it.
Initiative	An initiative is a particular set of steps meant to carry out a plan.
Actions	Actions are precise steps taken to accomplish a purpose or aim. Activities usually have staff members assigned to them and time slots.
Performance Measures	Performance targets that are pertinent to each objective are described by performance measures.

2.1.4. Project/ Project success

Organizations use projects, which are time-bound tasks, to use their resources to accomplish strategic goals (Turner, 2010). But everyone who manages a project wants it to end. projects successfully, but sadly, many of them are postponed or shelved. Furthermore, the idea that a project can be finished successfully is untrue. Sometimes, after the main objectives have been achieved, project managers consider a project to be closed (Atkinson, 1999).

In contrast, in other situations the project is deemed successful if it adheres to the quality, time, and budget constraints (Munns, 1996). However, other academics believe that a project can only be considered successful if it meets the needs of the key players (Shenhar, 2007). In the context of public sector endeavors, a project's success is determined by how much the public benefits from its results (Irfan, 2017). Which of these perceptions about project success is true is still up for debate.

Project success factors have occasionally been the subject of in-depth reviews and empirical testing. Pinto and Slevin (Pinto, 1988), and Muller and Turner (Müller, 2007) provide the most well-liked ones. In a similar vein, a recent study proposed that the success of public sector projects is influenced by sustainable practices in projects (Irfan, 2019). Furthermore, Joslin and Muller (Joslin, 2015) defined project success as a multifaceted construct that includes both typical and unique components of project management success.

Table 1 offers a thorough overview of the project success factors that have been discussed in the literature. The synthesis of the literature shows that the idea of project success has changed over time, moving from being just an efficiency metric to a comprehensive idea with five main dimensions that fall under both common and unique elements.

2.1.5. Project planning

Generally speaking, planning is the process of identifying the tasks, actions, and other resources required to accomplish the goals. Planning, according to Tucker, is the process of keeping an eye on, coordinating, communicating, and working with stakeholders (Laufer, 1987). In contrast, project planning is the process of creating goals and objectives that specify the tasks that must be completed, the project's schedule, and the resources needed to achieve its objectives (Zwikael, 2009). Additionally, projects are the outcome of top-level management-set strategic objectives, and project planning is the process of deciding on the steps, guidelines, and initiatives needed to accomplish those goals.

Another definition of project planning is the formulation of a planned course of action for the anticipated environment (Kerzner, 2009). The Project Management Institute defines the planning process as the process of identifying and enhancing the project's goals as well as choosing the most effective options to reach them.

In addition, the goal of project planning is to create guidelines for the project that are detailed enough to tell the project team of the work packages that must be completed and when. It also serves to monitor the project's overall progress and preserve project documentation for later use. Project planning also serves the purpose of guaranteeing that all project stakeholders have a thorough understanding of all project activities and aspects, including time, quality, and cost constraints (Kloppenborg, 2011).

Moreover, project planning aims to ascertain the feasibility of the plan and incorporate procedures that will transform the "should be done work packages" into achievable tasks (Hamzeh, 2015). A project's planning process starts during the conceptualization stage and lasts until the project is closed.

2.2. Empirical studies information related to the research

2.2.1. Strategic Management and Strategic Planning

The process of developing a strategy is intimately tied to management. From a business standpoint, strategy is an approach to achieving organizational objectives for long-term success (Nötzold, 1994). Developments in the field of strategic planning led to the formation of the discipline of strategic management in the 1980s. Generally speaking, strategic management is thought to be substantial, holistic, long-term (at least three years), focused on future yield potentials, and primarily related to the highest management level, which establishes the enterprise's vision, mission, and culture (Haake, 1987; Voigt, 1992).

The goal of strategic planning is to account for the complexity and dynamics of the environment by planning for every scenario in an abstract manner. This means that alternative future configurations and scenarios must be built. It is possible to plan for the future and/or alternative futures and align the enterprise accordingly, even though it is inherently impossible to predict the future. It is different from strategic management in that it involves projecting current development tendencies

into the future rather than imaginative future concepts. Therefore, rather than offering visions, strategic planning offers policies and plans for achieving particular objectives.

Thus, strategic planning serves as a key tool for strategic management, which is in charge of objectives and visions, by outlining the fundamental parameters as well as the extent of upcoming business operations (Kropfberger, 1986). Young, small businesses are particularly interesting to study because, according to Mintzberg (1994), their strategies must be developed in a highly emergent manner to reflect their rapidly changing needs. According to Berry (1998), the stages of planning that follow can be distinguished as follows:

1. straightforward financial plans
2. forecast-based planning
3. externally focused planning (where the entrepreneur starts to think strategically);
4. proactive corporate future planning as opposed to responding to changes in the market
5. Strategic planning as a methodical tool for managing strategy.

2.2.2. Characteristics of Strategy Formulation Processes in SMEs

Strategic management is overly bureaucratic; it makes more sense to use the limited time resources for operational, sales, or R&D activities rather than strategy-formulation processes; and strategic measures and instruments constrain flexibility and the ability for improvisation.

In this sense, the predictability of potential future scenarios and variations serves as the primary application of strategic planning. Simultaneously, the reluctance to plan can be attributed to managers' apprehension about overcommitting to specific goals and consequently turning into a manipulable entity for their staff (Pfohl, 1997). While most of the popular strategy concepts from the 1980s were created for large corporations, which typically show a greater awareness of current issues and devote more resources to this area, some of these concepts and tools also appear to be appropriate for use in small and medium-sized enterprises. However, a customized strategy concept for SMEs must take into consideration their particular circumstances and issues (Wirth, 1995).

2.2.3. Strategic Planning and Organizational Performance

Organizational performance is central to public management research and practice. This topic has been covered in great detail by Walker, Boyne, and Brewer (2010) as well as Andersen, Boesen, and Pederson (2016). The central thesis of this discussion is that an overemphasis on efficacy and efficiency is counterproductive to more democratic outcomes (Radin 2006). However, new conceptualizations of OP in public organizations suggest that it is not a single entity. Diverse sources and types of data are used to measure performance, and different stakeholders—including citizens—evaluate performance in accordance with various performance dimensions (Andersen, Boesen, and Pederson 2016; Walker and Andrews 2015; Walker, Boyne, and Brewer 2010).

Theories of SP have generally concentrated on its contribution to overall OP, even though recent conceptualizations of OP have identified multiple performance dimensions. In particular, the Harvard policy model is consistent with the theoretical reasoning behind this relationship (Andrews 1980), theoretical frameworks for goal-setting (Locke and Latham 2002) and synoptic planning (Dror 1983). According to the Harvard policy model, an organization's ability to succeed depends on how well it fits its surroundings, which can be determined with the help of instruments like SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis (Andrews 1980). Public

management scholars have long argued the significance of organization-environment fit, even though this concept originated in the corporate strategy literature (e.g., Vinzant and Vinzant 1996). As Bryson (2011) notes, the majority of SP approaches pay close attention to and analyze the organization as well as its surroundings, defining measures to guarantee organization-environment fit.

According to synoptic planning theory, making decisions using a methodical, analytical, and logical approach produces better results than using a more gut-instinctive, intuitive one (Dror 1983). Scholars that have written about both public and private organizations have endorsed this framework (e.g., Elbanna 2008; Walker et al. 2010). Such a method for supporting decision-making in the context of defining objectives, targets, and plans is provided by SP. In fact, a methodical approach to decision-making that includes an examination of the organizational environment both inside and outside the company and produces well-informed choices based on strategic issues is fundamental to many SP processes (Bryson 2011). Therefore, SP can be understood as the strategy formulation application of the Harvard policy model and synoptic planning theory.

According to goal-setting theory, companies that have goals outperform those that don't because they make sure that resources and efforts are directed toward solving critical problems and that staff members are aware of the organization's top priorities (Jung and Lee 2013; Locke and Latham 2002). This assertion has been supported by academics who have written about both public and private organizations (e.g., Magnan and St. Onge 2005; Stazyk and Goerdel 2011). To address strategic issues, SP has generally created specific plans, objectives, and strategies (Bryson 2011).

By identifying organizational priorities and how they will be addressed for the organization and its stakeholders, goal-setting theory is applied to the formulation of strategies.

Despite the expectation that SP contributes to OP arising from goal-setting theory, synoptic planning theory, and the Harvard policy model, other theoretical frameworks have suggested the exact opposite. These frameworks maintain that SP is excessively planned, rational, and fixed. They are typically associated with concepts of logical incrementalism (Quinn, 1978). Proponents contend that organizations require more adaptable, continuous methods of strategy formulation that are particularly receptive to emerging strategies, as opposed to planned, deliberate strategies (Mintzberg 1978). Moreover, complexity theory has raised questions about the effectiveness of SP by implying that, although it might function well in routine, simple organizations, it might not function well in complex systems, networks, or organizations (Bovaird, 2008).

2.2.4. Moderators in the Strategic Planning–Organizational Performance Relationship

The contextual reality of public administration and management has not always been considered in scholarship on SP and OP (Bryson, Berry, and Yang 2010; Poister, Pitts, and Edwards 2010). The Harvard policy model, synoptic planning theory, and goal-setting theory offer reasons for why SP might or might not contribute to OP, but they do not always clarify the circumstances in which SP might have a greater or lesser influence on OP. Therefore, three particular conditions (as well as five moderators) that may affect how SP affects OP are evaluated in this article. Two moderators are part of the first condition; they are both involved in the conceptualization of SP and OP and their subsequent operationalization. In the second scenario, SP's efficacy is probably going to be influenced by the environment in which it is used. As a result, we look at how SP is applied in both public and private organizations as well as in settings both domestic and foreign. The third requirement investigates the research methodology used in the publications and

looks at whether one or more data sources were used in the statistical models. These moderators provide more moderate theorizing on SP by assisting in the assessment of the contextual reality of public administration and management (Abner, Kim, and Perry 2017).

2.2.4.1 Formal, Participatory, and Comprehensive Strategic Planning

The formality of the SP process is the main focus of the previously mentioned explanation of SP. Formality is the degree to which organizations define objectives, create plans, carry out internal and external analyses, and follow a methodical approach to strategy formulation (e.g., George, Desmidt, and De Moyer 2016; Poister, Pasha, and Edwards 2013). Beyond its formality, however, there are two other aspects of the SP process that have generally been included in research: the extent of participation during SP and the comprehensiveness of the SP process.

According to the integrative theory of stakeholder participation, involving stakeholders in the decision-making process results in positive outcomes (Hendrick 2003). Scholars from both public and private organizations have suggested this approach (e.g., Poister and Streib 2005; Elbanna 2008). When it comes to SP, it is anticipated that a wider range of stakeholders will benefit from integrative stakeholder participation than just the organization's senior managers and policy makers.

The ability of an organization to use strategic reasoning is demonstrated by the comprehensiveness of SP, which has been recognized as a crucial aspect of SP (e.g., Hendrick 2003; Papke-Shields and Boyer-Wright 2017). It implies that before making a well-informed choice, SP analyzes a wide range of potential options and alternatives. Because of its extensive scope, SP appears to be a methodical process that involves thoughtful reflection and the generation of several options before deciding on a final path. This amplifies the effect of SP on OP. As a result, we look into any variations in the effects of comprehensive SP, participatory SP, and formal SP on OP.

2.2.4.2 Dimensions of Organizational Performance

According to recent research on OP, it is important to note that there are numerous dimensions to this construct rather than it being unidimensional (Andersen, Boesen, and Pedersen 2016; Hubbard 2009; Walker Boyne, and Brewer 2010). Dimensions include both more "governance"-related concepts like societal outcomes and client responsiveness, as well as more "classical" concepts like efficiency, effectiveness, and financial performance. Crucially, More information about which OP dimensions are most impacted by management, organization, and environment variables has been requested by OP scholars (Fisk 2010; Walker and Andrews 2015). Thus, the question of whether SP is equally effective across all OP dimensions arises. We investigate whether the impact of SP on OP varies depending on whether OP is measured as efficiency, effectiveness, responsiveness, outcomes, or financial performance in order to address both this question and the demand for greater multidimensionality in OP research.

2.2.4.3 Public and Private Organizations

Research and practice in public management that is pertinent to the SP–OP relationship has long acknowledged the distinctions between public and private organizations. Numerous research works

have examined the distinctions between public and private entities. Boyne (2002) discovered that managers in the public sector typically have lower levels of organizational commitment and that public organizations are more bureaucratic. This could make it challenging for SP to "work" in public organizations because SP procedures demand a high level of dedication from the company and its staff. An overabundance of guidelines and regulations may also work against this. Similarly, public sector workers may be more difficult to persuade to engage with SP through external stimuli than their private sector counterparts since they lack the same level of extrinsic motivation, according to Buelens and Van den Broeck (2007). On the other hand, Mazzucato (2015) dispelled a lot of the myths that underlie the conventional distinctions between the public and private sectors, suggesting that SP's effect on OP might be the same in both. This problem hasn't been fixed, though. In order to provide some clarity to this important and ongoing debate—indeed, one that has influenced the adoption of SP in public organizations—we therefore include the public-private distinction as a moderator.

2.2.4.4 Common- and Multiple-Source Data

Single cross-sectional surveys have been used extensively in SP research to measure the independent and dependent variables. To quantify OP, several studies have, nevertheless, used data from several sources (e.g., Jimenez 2013; Poister, Pasha, and Edwards 2013).

Research in psychology and management (Podsakoff et al., 2003) as well as recent studies in public management (Jakobsen and Jensen, 2015) have shown that common source bias may occur in studies that measure dependent and independent variables using the same survey-based source, particularly when OP is the dependent variable. In particular, common source bias appears when the variance of the common method across variables measured by the same survey is high enough to inflate the correlations between the variables (George and Pandey 2017). We examine whether the SP–OP relationship changes when data from common or multiple sources are used in order to determine whether common source bias has also affected research on SP and OP.

2.2.5. Strategic Planning and Company Size

Haake (1987) asserts that there is a connection between the use of strategic instruments and company size, regardless of how it is determined by total capital, revenues, or workforce. According to Robinson et al. (1984), the kind and level of formality of planning also depend on the stage of development of the company. According to Matthews and Scott (1995), formalization is the most prevalent aspect of strategic planning. Their findings show that formalization rises as an enterprise grows because larger businesses have greater internal differentiation and resources. According to Robinson and Pearce (1984), smaller businesses will engage in fewer (formalized) planning activities because they have fewer resources, such as employees, time, and knowledge.

In their study of 1,211 real estate agents in the Netherlands, Risseuw and Masurel (1994) validate their hypothesis that planning activities will increase with increasing enterprise growth. Furthermore, they demonstrate that large businesses plan more thoroughly than smaller ones. Nonetheless, the authors stress that in order to secure outside funding, young businesses typically engage in more planning, especially during the startup phase of the business.

2.2.6. Strategic Planning and Success

Berman, Gordon, and Sussmann (1997) provide evidence that businesses with strategic planning achieve superior financial outcomes. This suggests that financial compensation would be provided for expenses associated with the planning process. Multiple empirical confirmations of this hypothesis have been made. For instance, a meta-analysis of 14 studies by Schwenk and Shrader (1993) demonstrated a significant positive correlation between the existence of strategic planning and the (financial) success of the enterprise.

Robinson and Pearce (1984) conducted an earlier meta-analysis, Bracker and Pearson (1986) examined small businesses in the cleaning industry, Sexton and Van Auken (1982) investigated 357 small businesses in Texas, Bracker et al. (1988) looked at 217 managers of small electronics companies, and Orpen (1985) looked at 58 small business managers. All of these studies produced similar findings.

Moreover, Matthews and Scott (1995) firmly believe that planning initiatives can contribute to lowering the degree of uncertainty within the organization. Furthermore, Schwenk and Shrader (1993) conclude that strategic planning encourages long-term thinking,

lessens the emphasis on operational specifics and offers a framework for identifying and assessing strategic options. Robinson, Pearce, Vozikis, and Mescon (1984) demonstrate that basic planning activities can already have a positive impact on the success of small enterprises based on an analysis of 51 small businesses in the United States. Moreover, the act of (formal) planning itself appears to have a beneficial effect in that it results in a wider range of strategic alternatives and a better comprehension of the business (Lyles et al., 1993).

Studies with empirical data also show that young, rapidly expanding businesses can benefit from formal strategic planning, e.g., based on business plans (Castrogiovanni, 1996; Robinson et al., 1984). For instance, SMEs that engage in formal strategic planning have higher survival rates, according to a longitudinal analysis by Sexton and Van Auken (1985).

Ultimately, a more sophisticated and thorough strategic management leads to a more significant corporate growth, according to Lyles et al. (1993). On the other hand, O'Gorman and Doran (1999) provide empirical evidence indicating that the existence of a formal mission or mission statement appears to have no direct impact on small business performance.

3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter discussed the research methodology, which according to Fisher and Buglear (2010), refers to the procedural framework for investigating a phenomenon or phenomena, and explains how data and information is collected and analysed.

Research methodology follows the descriptive method (the theoretical study), to reach the desired objectives of the research and ensure the fulfilment of its hypothesis. Shedding light on the targeted research sample and to obtain information from respondents, by measuring the importance and impact of developing a strategic plan through questionnaires. To know the constraints they face, and that allows their participation in making decisions for the development of the strategic planning, as a general indicator of the importance of bridging the gap in applying strategic planning.

Explained here are the research design employed in this thesis, study population, the sampling frame and method, discussion of the sample size, survey instrument and data analysis.

Among the research obstacles that we faced was the difficulty of counting the number of companies in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to find the correct percentage of their presence.

3.1. Research Design

The primary focus of the research design is to effectively address the research questions and challenges and make sure that the responses are handled. According to (Rahi, 2017) asserts that a study's methodology should always be in line with the questions posed. In light of this, it is crucial that the research design chosen be appropriate for the conditions of the study (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2002). According to (Bryman and Bell, 2007), there are five main categories of research design: case study, longitudinal, comparative, cross-sectional or social survey, and experimental. This study uses a social survey study methodology. as well as case and country selection, are covered in the next section.

3.2. Population of Study

According to (Bloem et al, 2018), a group of certain objects that have varying characteristics that are of interest to the researcher is known as the target population. In this study it refers to project managers, stakeholders, Supervisors and Front line staff involved in various projects in Saudi Arabia. Who were asked to answer the same survey.

The study involved 120 employees In the public and private corporate sector in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

3.3. Sample Characteristics

The sample characteristics reference the specific qualities and attributes of the participants or elements included in a research study or project. These characteristics are important in determining the representativeness and generalizability of the findings. In this study, the sample includes participants from both public and private sector projects to ensure a diverse representation. For this purpose, it is essential to define the inclusion criteria and exclusion criteria for the sample. This ensures that the participants selected are relevant to the research objectives and will provide valuable insights.

3.4. Sample Size Determination

The sample size determined is based on statistical considerations and the available resources for data collection. Sample size determination is a crucial step in the research process. It involves determining the number of participants or observations that need to be included in a study to ensure the statistical validity and reliability of the findings¹. Sample size determination is indeed based on statistical considerations and available resources for data collection. Researchers need to consider statistical analysis methods, precision levels, study power, confidence levels, and effect sizes when calculating sample sizes². Ultimately, determining the appropriate sample size involves a combination of statistical criteria and practical considerations.

3.5. Data Collection Procedures

In this research, the data collection method used was “Survey” which was created on Google Forms, and the link was distributed using web-based communication methods such as email and social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Twitter, and LinkedIn to reach the desired population for the study. The survey was distributed to statistically calculated and identified 300 desired participants and the response received was from 220 participants which is considered as good response rate 73%.

3.6. Methods of Analysis

Sampling methods provide a many techniques that only consider the data from a subgroup rather than all potential scenarios in order to decrease the amount of data into manageable amounts (Taherdoost, 2016).

Qualitative analysis is a research method that involves examining non-numerical data such as interviews, observations, and open-ended survey responses. On the other hand, quantitative analysis is a research method that involves collecting and analyzing numerical data through statistical techniques. Both methods have their strengths and weaknesses, and by using a combination of the two, a more comprehensive analysis can be achieved.

One of the main advantages of qualitative analysis is its ability to provide a deeper understanding of the underlying factors influencing the success of strategic planning in project implementation. Through interviews and observations, researchers can gather rich and detailed data about the project and its stakeholders. This allows for a better understanding of the project's context, the

stakeholders' perspectives, and the potential challenges that may arise during the implementation phase.

Surveys are an essential tool for researchers to collect data and gather insights about their study subjects. By using survey questionnaires, researchers can gather information from a large number of participants conveniently and cost-effectively. However, the data collected from surveys is only valuable if it is analyzed correctly. In this article, we will discuss the various methods of analyzing survey questionnaires in a research study.

Descriptive Analysis: The most basic method of analyzing survey questionnaires is through descriptive analysis. This method involves summarizing and describing the data collected in the survey. Descriptive analysis helps in understanding the overall trends and patterns in the data and provides a basic understanding of the study's participants.

4. PRACTICAL STUDY

The culmination of any research endeavour lies in its conclusions and recommendations, serving as the linchpin for translating findings into actionable insights.

In this section, we synthesize the key takeaways from our study on the role of strategic planning in the success of company projects in Saudi Arabia. Through an in-depth analysis of surveyed questionnaire data, we have gained valuable insights into the intricate interplay between strategic planning and project outcomes in the Saudi Arabian business landscape.

The conclusions drawn from our study underscore the fundamental importance of strategic planning in driving project success. We highlight the pivotal role of strategic plans in providing a roadmap for project execution, fostering clarity of purpose, enhancing coordination among stakeholders, and enabling proactive decision-making and risk management. Moreover, we explore how strategic planning fosters organizational agility and resilience, allowing companies to adapt to changing market dynamics and maintain a competitive edge. Building upon these conclusions, we offer a set of actionable recommendations aimed at empowering companies to harness the power of strategic planning effectively. These recommendations encompass the development of a comprehensive strategic planning framework tailored to the Saudi Arabian context, the promotion of cross-functional collaboration, investment in capacity building initiatives, embracing technology and data analytics, and establishing mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating progress.

By providing a roadmap for translating research findings into practical strategies, this section serves as a catalyst for organizational transformation and growth. Through the strategic implementation of our recommendations, companies can enhance project performance, foster innovation, and achieve sustainable success in the dynamic and competitive business landscape of Saudi Arabia.

4.1. Research Findings

The results of the survey were analyzed to validate the proposed hypothesis at the beginning of the research.

4.1.1. Demographic Information about Respondents

This section of the chapter analyses the respondents' demographic characteristics in term of gender, age, educational background, position, organizational level, and ministry. In the form of frequency analysis and descriptive statistics, the demographic characteristics were examined and described. This is significant since it aids in determining and comprehending the fundamental traits and organizational attributes of the responders.

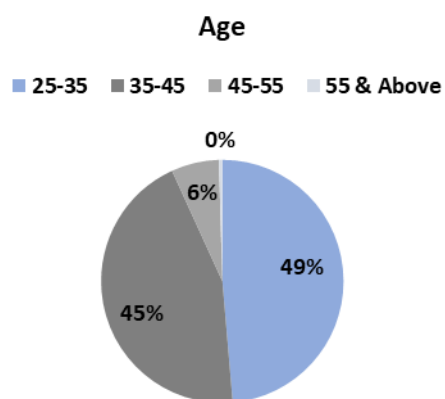


FIGURE 4- 1: Age distribution

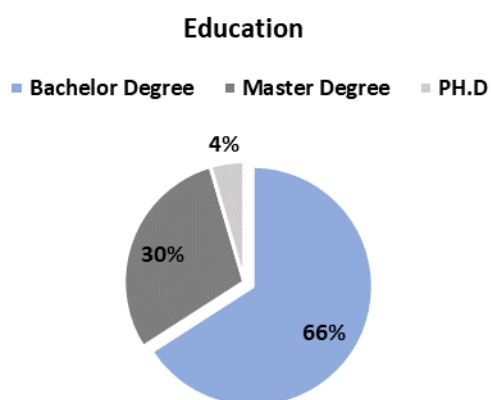


FIGURE 4- 2: Education distribution

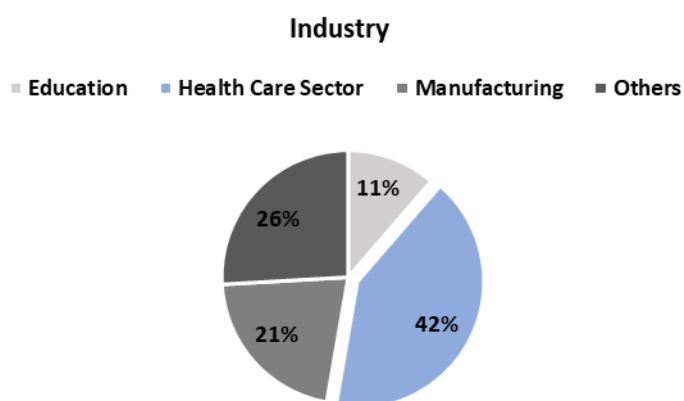


FIGURE 4- 3: Industry distribution

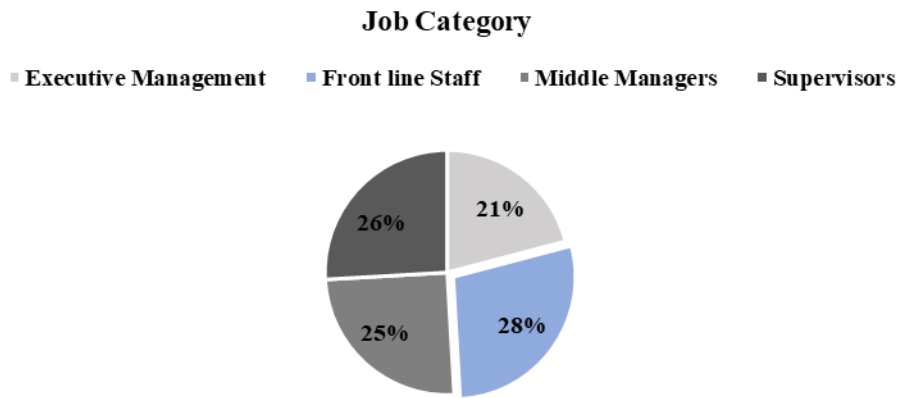


FIGURE 4- 4: Job category

4.1.2. Strategic Planning Usage Level by Employees

This section of the research study presents and analyzes descriptive statistics on the strategic planning utilization levels. The items included to verify usage are in terms of the time spent, how often it happens, level of is used, how different elements are used, and how strategic planning is used for problems like creating a budget, and the organization's performance.

How integral do you believe strategic planning is to the success of company projects in Saudi Arabia?

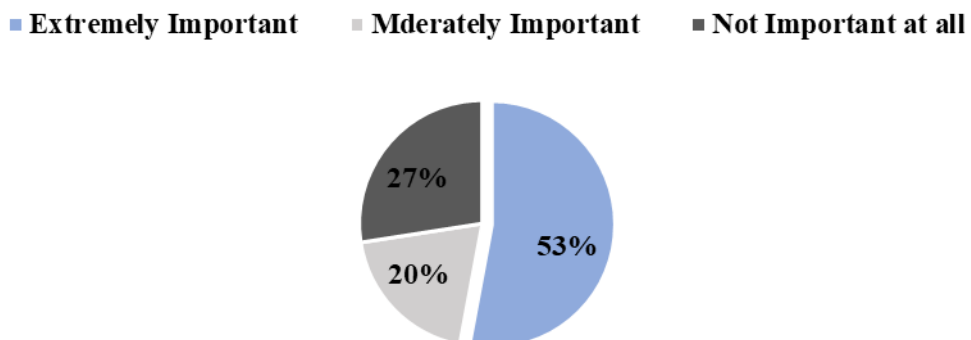


FIGURE 4- 5

When do your organization change or update the strategic plan?

■ Every 3 years ■ Every 5 years ■ More than 5 years ■ When needed

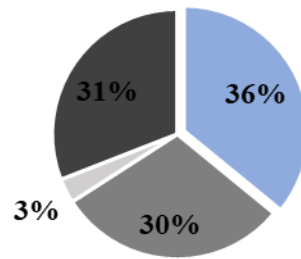


FIGURE 4- 6

4.1.3. Strategic Alignment with National Programs

what extent do you believe your company's current projects are aligned with the goals outlined in national programs such as Vision 2030?

■ All ■ Moderately Aligned ■ Not Aligned at All ■ Very Aligned

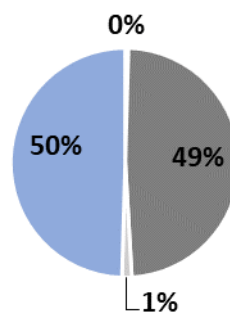


FIGURE 4- 7

How important do you perceive the alignment with national programs to be in achieving project success within the Saudi Arabian business context?

■ Important ■ Moderately Important ■ Not Important ■ Strong leadership

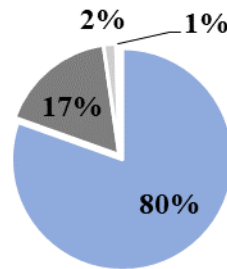


FIGURE 4- 8

4.1.4. Proactive Risk Mitigation in Strategic Plans

How would you describe your organization current approach to risk management in projects?

■ Balanced Mix of Proactive and Reactive ■ Positively ■ Proactive ■ Reactive

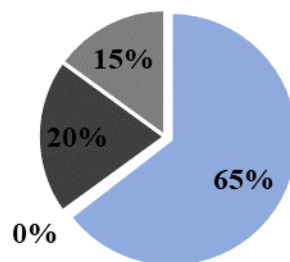


FIGURE 4- 9

How frequently does your organization conduct risk assessments throughout the project lifecycle?

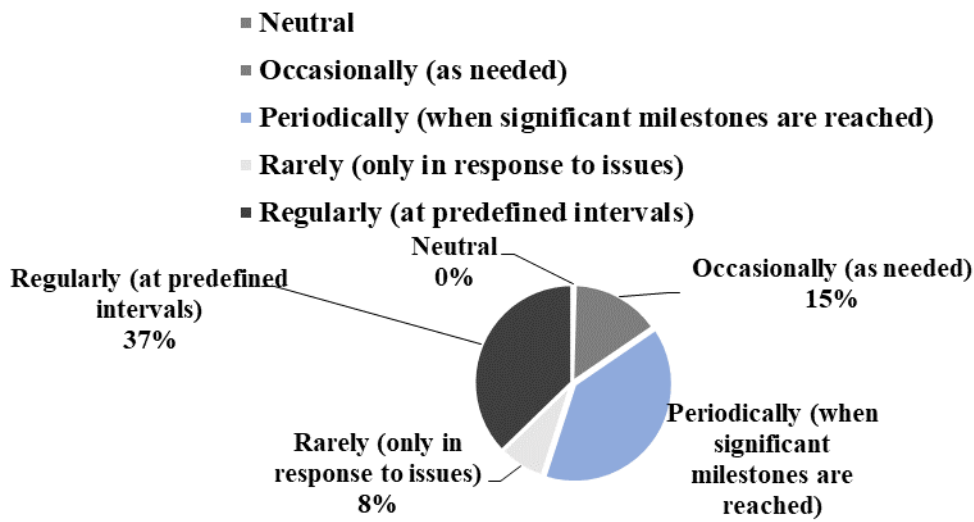


FIGURE 4- 10

Data Analysis of - In your opinion, how does the use of proactive risk mitigation contribute to a more successful project outcome compared to reactive methods?

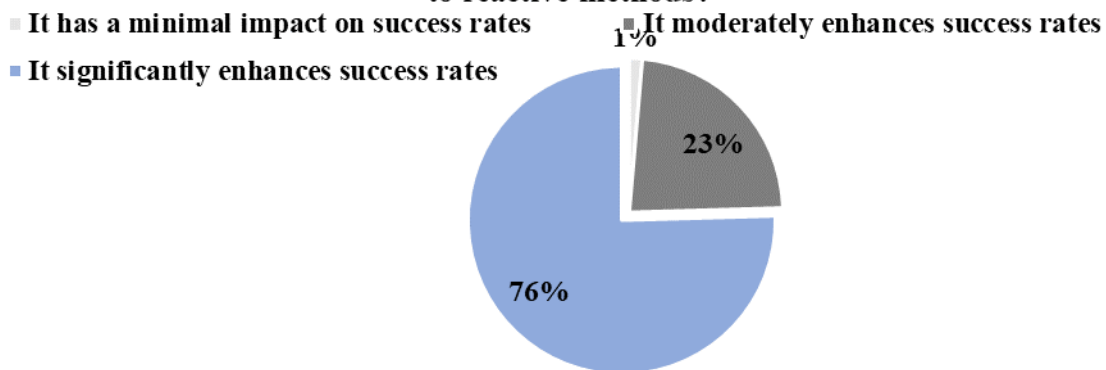


FIGURE 4- 11

4.1.5. Stakeholder Engagement and Project Success

Count of To what extent are key stakeholders involved in the initial stages of project planning and goal-setting in your organization?

■ Actively Involved ■ Moderately Involved ■ Not Involved at All

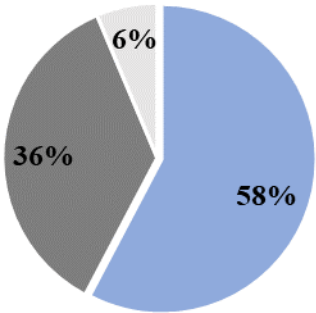


FIGURE 4- 12

In your experience, how has the active involvement of stakeholders positively influenced project success?

■ Moderately ■ No Positive Influence ■ Significant role

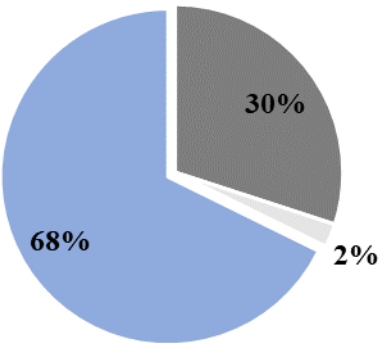


FIGURE 4- 13

4.2. Conclusions and Recommendations

4.2.1. Conclusions

1. Strategic planning plays a pivotal role in the success of company projects in Saudi Arabia. Through the analysis of various parameters analysed above, it became evident that companies that strategically plan their projects are better equipped to navigate the complexities of the Saudi Arabian business environment.
2. A well-defined strategic plan provides a roadmap for project execution, enabling companies to align their goals, resources, and activities effectively. This alignment fosters clarity of purpose, enhances coordination among project stakeholders, and minimizes the risk of deviation from project objectives.
3. Strategic planning facilitates proactive decision-making and risk management. Companies that engage in strategic planning are better positioned to anticipate potential challenges, identify opportunities for growth, and adapt to changing market dynamics, thereby mitigating risks and maximizing project success.
4. Moreover, strategic planning fosters organizational agility and resilience. By fostering a culture of continuous improvement and innovation, companies can respond swiftly to market changes, capitalize on emerging trends, and maintain a competitive edge in the Saudi Arabian business landscape.
5. However, the successful implementation of strategic planning requires commitment, leadership, and organizational alignment. Companies must ensure buy-in from key stakeholders, allocate adequate resources, and foster a culture that values strategic thinking and collaboration across departments.

4.2.2. Recommendations

1. **Develop a Comprehensive Strategic Planning Framework:** Companies should develop a comprehensive strategic planning framework that encompasses the identification of long-term objectives, analysis of internal and external environments, formulation of strategies, and implementation plans tailored to the Saudi Arabian context.
2. **Foster Cross-Functional Collaboration:** Encourage cross-functional collaboration and communication to ensure alignment between strategic objectives and project goals. By fostering synergy among departments and promoting a shared vision, companies can enhance project outcomes and drive organizational success.
3. **Invest in Capacity Building:** Invest in capacity building initiatives to equip employees with the skills, knowledge, and tools necessary to execute strategic plans effectively. Offer training programs, workshops, and mentorship opportunities to empower employees and cultivate a culture of strategic thinking and execution.
4. **Embrace Technology and Data Analytics:** Leverage technology and data analytics to inform strategic decision-making, monitor project performance, and identify areas for improvement. By harnessing the power of data-driven insights, companies can optimize resource allocation, mitigate risks, and drive project success.
5. **Monitor and Evaluate Progress:** Establish mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating progress against strategic objectives. Regularly review key performance indicators, assess project outcomes, and solicit feedback from stakeholders to ensure alignment with strategic goals and drive continuous improvement.

In conclusion, strategic planning plays a fundamental role in the success of company projects in Saudi Arabia. By embracing strategic planning principles and implementing the aforementioned recommendations, companies can enhance project performance, foster organizational resilience, and achieve sustainable growth in the dynamic Saudi Arabian business landscape.

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|APPENDIX SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

|

Title: The role of strategic planning in the success of companies projects in Saudi Arabia.

Demographics: (please tick the appropriate choice)

1. What is your gender?

a. Male

b. Female

2. Which is your age group?

a. 25 - 35

b. 35 – 45

c. 45 - 55

d. 55 & Above

3. What is your highest level of education/qualification?

a. Bachelor degree

b. Master degree

c. PH.D

4. What best describes your position?

a. Executive management

b. Middle management

c. Supervisors

d. Front Staff

5. Which organization do you work in?

a. Education

b. Health care

c. Manufacturing

d. Others

Usage Level:

1.How integral do you believe strategic planning is to the success of company projects in Saudi Arabia?

- a. Extremely important b. Moderately important c. Not important at all

2.When do your organization change or update the strategic plan?

- a. Every 3 years b. Every 5 years c. More than 5 years d. When needed

Alignment with national program:

1.what extent do you believe your company's current projects are aligned with the goals outlined in national programs such as Vision 2030?

- a. All b. Very Aligned c. Moderately Aligned d. Not Aligned at all

2.How important do you perceive the alignment with national programs to be in achieving project success within the Saudi Arabian business context?

- a. Strong Leader ship b. Important c. Moderately Important d. Not Important

Proactive Risk Mitigation:

1.How would you describe your organization current approach to risk management in projects?

- a. Proactive b. Positively c. Reactive d. Balanced Mix of Proactive and

3.How frequently does your organization conduct risk assessments throughout the project lifecycle?

- a. Periodically (when significant milestones are reached)
- b. Regularly(at predefined intervals)
- c. Rarely(only in response to issues)
- d. Occasionally (as needed)

4.Data Analysis of - In your opinion, how does the use of proactive risk mitigation contribute to a more successful project outcome compared to reactive methods?

- a. It significantly enhances success rates
- b. It moderately enhances success rates
- c. It has a minimal impact on success rates,

Stakeholder Engagement and Project Success

1. Count of To what extent are key stakeholders involved in the initial stages of project planning and goal-setting in your organization?

- a. Actively Involved
- b. Moderately Involved
- c. Not Involved at All

2. In your experience, how has the active involvement of stakeholders positively influenced project success?

- a. Significant role
- b. Moderately
- c. No Positive Influence