# Hybrid Model of Strategic and Contextual Leadership in Pluralistic Organisations (UAE Case)

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Doctor of Business Administration

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# Declaration

I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged.

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**Acknowledgement of editorial and proof-reading services**

I acknowledge that I have received assistance from a third-party proof-reading service.  I confirm that the proofreading did not compromise any authorship of the thesis submitted and the thesis content remains my own.  I hereby acknowledge full responsibility for the work I am submitting and that the third-party services will not be accepted in mitigation of any deficiencies in the thesis submitted.

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Signature

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# Dedication

*This thesis is dedicated to my father and my daughter Lama- their belief in me made it all possible.*

# Abstract

This thesis adopts strategic leadership (Upper Echelons) as the core theory and contextual leadership theory as the research lens. This research asks how the external context impacts strategic leadership effectiveness to achieve the outcomes in pluralistic organisations (PO). The study explores how the context influences the selection of CEOs, top management teams (TMT), and their leadership effectiveness. POs are characterised by the multiple objectives of their top management teams, divergent objectives, multiple strategies, and multiple governing authorities. The research question is explored by means of a qualitative multiple case study focusing on healthcare, real estate, and financial services organisations. The data sources are semi-structured interviews, documents, and direct observations. The data analysis strategy is inductive and deploys thematic analysis and cross-case synthesis.

The findings differentiate between national and international CEOs' delegation of authority and relationship with the Board of Directors. The findings identify the elements of the dynamic context that influence TMT and PO outcomes.

The emergent hybrid strategic and contextual leadership framework shows how the different contextual factors influence strategic direction, PO context, selection of CEOs and TMT, and the outcomes in four pluralistic organisations. The study offers seven theoretical contributions to Upper Echelons, strategic leadership, and contextual leadership research. (1) The integration of two theories revealed how CEO impact on the organisation is complementary to the contextual impact. (2) Conducting this study in the Middle East contributes to strategic leadership, and contextual leadership research. (3) The demonstration of the significant contextual effects on the selection of CEOs. (4 and 5) Two contributions revealed new links between the context, the Board role, internal versus external CEOs, and national versus international CEOs. (6 and 7) This study offered two definitions: what accounts for CEO leadership effectiveness and organisational outcomes. Two methodological contributions were also identified: (1) Previous strategic leadership and Upper Echelons research are mainly quantitative, while this study adopts qualitative multiple case research with face-to-face interviews. (2) The extrication of the CEO from the TMT advanced the data analysis in strategic leadership research. Four contributions are offered to practice: (1) The CEO's leadership effectiveness inside and outside the organisation. (2) Rapid turnover of predecessor CEOs signifies the need for strategic and contextual approach to CEOs' succession. (3) TMT composition and education impact on TMT-CEO and TMT-TMT interface. (4) Multilevel strategic contextual leadership development framework.

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# List of abbreviations

| Abbreviations | Name/Feature |
| --- | --- |
| ACFO | Assistant Chief Financial Officer |
| Board | Board of Directors |
| CEO | Chief Executive Officer |
| CFO | Chief Financial Officer |
| Chairman | Chairman of the Board |
| CHRO | Chief Human Resources Officer |
| CMO | Chief Medical Officer |
| CNO | Chief Nursing Officer |
| COO | Chief Operating Officer |
| DB | Director of the Board |
| Deputy CEO | Deputy Chief Executive Officer |
| GCEO | Group Chief Executive Officer |
| GCFO | Group Financial Officer |
| GFC | Group Financial Controller |
| H1 | Main hospital in the capital |
| H2 | A network of six hospitals in the western district |
| H3 | Oncology hospital in the eastern district |
| H4 | Centre of ambulatory services |
| H5- | Centre of maternity hospital |
| National | UAE national |
| Nationalisations | Emiratisation / UAE Nationalisation |
| PIF | Public Financial and Investment |
| PO | Pluralistic organisation |
| RED | Real Estate Development |
| TM | Top Manager |
| TMT | Top Management Team |
| VHC | Private Healthcare |
| VC | Vice Chairman of the Board |

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Overview

In this study, I emphasize the impact of attributes of the external context on strategic leadership in pluralistic organisations. Pluralistic organisations are often loosely defined due to the multiplicity of regulations, objectives, and values (Sorsa and Vaara, 2020). Pluralistic organisations' structure and strategies are critical to enabling the actors from different disciplines with diffused power and divergent perspectives to cooperate on substantive issues of the pluralistic organisation (Denis, Langley and Rouleau, 2010).

Leadership in this study is concerned with position-based leadership (Grint and Smolovick, 2016). Leadership is the activity undertaken by someone whose position is on a formal hierarchy heading other individuals and managing resources. I investigate how the external context impacts the strategic leadership (CEOs and top management teams) effectiveness in pluralistic organisations by:

- Outlining and defining the salient strategic leaders and their roles in pluralistic organisations from a strategic leadership theory (Upper Echelons) (Hambrick, 2004). The three critical criteria of strategic leaders are determining the strategic direction, efficiency of the top management team, and the strategic leaders' effect on the pluralistic organisational outcomes (Hambrick and Fredrickson, 2001; Finkelstein, Hambrick, and Cannella, 2009; Hambrick, 2007b).
- Framing the elements of the contextual factors that impact the CEO selection and leadership effectiveness (Hambrick and Quigley, 2014; Quigley and Hambrick, 2015), TMT selection, structure, composition, and interactions (Hambrick, 2015), and the outcomes of the pluralistic organisational from a contextual leadership theory (Osborn and Uhl-Bien, 2014).
- Focusing on the individuals in the pluralistic organisation to empirically study how the CEOs and TMT lead pluralistic organisations.
- Outlining and positioning strategic leadership literature in the Middle East.

## 1.2  Pluralistic organisation definition

From the management perspective, the pluralistic organisations were introduced considering the rise of globalisation, the economic changes, and the profound change in organisational theory, which augmented the need to set up a particular organisation definition in the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO, 2019). As a result, a unique working group of 450 experts from 99 countries and more than forty international organisations was set up. The working group defined the pluralistic organisation as an organisation that coordinates various actors having dispersed authority and differing plans (Bres and Raufflet, 2013).

Institutional theorists defined pluralistic organisations with different regulations, a multitude of tasks and several objectives and values.  Educational institutions, healthcare organisations, the press, and arts organisations are categorised typically as pluralistic organisations (Sorsa and Vaara, 2020). This research sheds light on the different management forms, diversified and conflicting goals, and diffused authority (Denis, Lamothe, and Langley, 2001). In addition to healthcare, I considered real estate and financial and investment services as pluralistic organisations in this study.  The real estate and the financial services organisations employ professional and administrative teams and report to multiple regulatory authorities.  The internal structure of the pluralistic organisation is critical due to the multiple regulations within the same organisation (Bres and Raufflet, 2013).  For example, the public healthcare organisations comply with the healthcare regulations and the security and commodities regulations.  Pluralistic organisations actors have conflicting goals, interests, and power centres (Denis, Langly and Rouleau, 2007).  Pluralism is always present in any organisation and increasingly with the rise of technological advancement and globalisation (Mir Rezian and Baker, 2020).

Table 1.1 includes three main characteristics of the pluralistic organisation. First, multiplicity of the actors refers to the different professional and administrative members, such as: in healthcare, medical and corporate (administrative) employees, engineers, developers, and administrative in real estate; and, in financial services the group of qualified financial and administrative members. Second characteristic is the diversity of objectives of the multiple actors, and the third is the multiplicity of the organisational industry and its national and international associations.  The pluralistic organisation framework is discussed in more detail in chapter two, section 2.2.

**Table 1-1 Pluralistic organisation framework**

| Characteristics | Pluralistic organisation description |
|---|---|
| Multiplicity of actors | Informal hierarchy, members positions are dependent on context. |
| The diversity of objectives and visions | Knowledge and outcomes require negotiation over priorities to different actors |
| Multiplicity of logics | Society and industry |

(Bres et al., 2018)

My interest is to find out how the multiplicity of actors, the diversity of objectives and the multiplicity of logics are managed within the same organisation. For example, the Chief Medical Officer's primary definition of effectiveness is in the success rate of the medical procedures. At the same time, the Chief Financial Officer of the same organisation considers cost efficiency as a primary indicator of effectiveness.

## 1.3 UAE Background

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is a relatively small country with a wealthy Arab Muslim culture. The country's population of 8.19 million comprises 16.5% nationals and 83.5% expatriates from 209 nationalities. The UAE was founded in 1971 after the exploration of oil (The Government of Abu Dhabi, 2008). The oil-based economy allowed the rapid growth of organisations in the public and private sectors (Parcero and Ryan, 2017). The volatile oil markets and the global direction towards environmental sustainability drove UAE leaders to develop country strategy to diversify the economy and decrease the dependency on oil as a mainstream of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) (Luciani and Moerenhout, 2021). The prosperous economy attracted international organisations in different domains to set up in the UAE, and this led to enormous development of domestic organisations (De Bel-Air, 2015). The construction of a competitive knowledge economy is among the six pillars of a nationwide plan coherent with the vision 2021. As the UAE diversified its economy, it relied on importing foreign workforce in different levels to manage the rising need for infrastructure development (Toledo, 2013). To meet the demands of the job market, the UAE applied an open-door policy to attract foreign executives (Ryan, 2016b).

In 2017, the ministry of Emiratisation and Human Resources nationalised the jobs for data entry in all construction companies, employing over 1000 workers (United Arab Emirates Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation, 2010). The government called for more nationals to enter the medical profession, nuclear engineering, digital engineering, and other professions. Emiratisation, also known as nationalisation, is linked to the selection and retention of national TMT (Emiratisation, 2018). Emiratisation is a primary performance indicator for organisations operating in the country, as stated in the government economic and social strategy 2021-2030 (The Government of Abu Dhabi, 2008). The new rules imposed on organisations in the private sector imposed a quota system where each company having more than one hundred employees is compelled for recruiting (and retaining on the payroll) the specified number of UAE nationals for ensuring the minimum participation of citizens in the workforce.

The complexity of the country's context is in combination with the imbalanced multicultural workforce, a dominant Arabic Muslim culture, and the government strategy towards the nationalisation of the jobs at the peak of economic change towards a more knowledge-based economy (The Government of Abu Dhabi, 2008). The workforce is distinct in its marginal 15% of national content[1] (United Arab Emirates Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation, 2010). The directions to enforce and accelerate the nationalisations of the jobs resulted in an organisational war to attract national executives (Government.ae, 2018). Attracting and recruiting national talent is an opportunity and a predicament for organisations, CEOs, and TMT to attract talent.

The nationalisation of human resources is a policy to employ the UAE national workforce in government-owned and private sector organisations. The country reported 70 percent increase in organisational changes, privatisation, diversification, mergers, and acquisitions (Emiratisation, 2018). The energy and power sectors reported 78 percent of mergers and acquisition deals, followed by the financial industry with a 14 percent share of the market (Ball and Nugent, 2019). This significant increase required fast infrastructure development resulting in the vast expansion of domestic pluralistic organisations in the healthcare, real estate, and financial sectors.

The UAE economy is a dynamic and highly competitive environment, reflected in the organisations operating in the country (Randeree, 2012). The country context also impacts the diversification of

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[1] Official reports reviewed on the UAE workforce showed different numbers 10% to 15%

the economy, the role of the Chief executive officers (CEOs), the top management teams (TMT), and the pluralistic organisations.   The growing economy attracted international investors in healthcare, real estate, and financial services to establish organisations in the country.  In addition, the growing population increased the need to establish national competitive pluralistic organisations in different industries and amplified the importance of selecting competent and effective CEOs, and TMT.

The motivation was there to research how, in this dynamic context, organisations select effective CEOs and TMTs.  Nationalisation's impact on the selection and recruitment of the CEOs and TMT is an essential issue in the Arab Gulf region, wherein several national citizens are the minority in terms of population. The study aims to empirically explore the contextual impact on the selection of CEOs and TMT, leadership effectiveness, and organisational outcomes in the UAE. Additionally, there exists the motivation to contribute to the regional strategic contextual leadership research in pluralistic organisations in the UAE.

## 1.4  Theoretical and methodological gaps

To examine the existing leadership theories in a non-western context, the author identified four gaps in the literature.

The first theoretical gap is that in most of Upper Echelons and strategic leadership studies, scholars focused on the CEO and TMT cognition, personalities, experiences, behaviour, and relationships (Hambrick and Quigley, 2014). Upper Echelons theorists indicated a necessity to expand the research to study how the strategic leaders lead their teams to produce organisation outcomes (Dinh et al., 2014; Quigley and Hambrick, 2015).

The second gap in the strategic leadership literature scholars highlighted the scarcity of focus on the context in which the embedded strategic leadership takes place (House et al., 2013; Hambrick et al., 2015). Research on pluralistic organisations during the new national economic direction towards the knowledge-based economy is also scarce. The study of the contextual change impact on pluralistic organisations internal context and outcomes are strongly needed to explore how context and leadership impact organisations, CEOs, and TMTs (Yukl, 2008; Yukl, 2012; Yukl, 2013). Most organisations are considered pluralistic, diverse with changing strategies and structures and add to this research's importance (Denis et al., 2007).

The third gap is that strategic and contextual leadership in the Gulf Corporation Council (GCC) and, subsequently, its member countries, including the UAE, are scarce (Suliman, Rao and Elewa, 2019). This study answered two main calls for research in non-Western contexts. First, the GLOBE included the Middle East cluster in their studies of the middle management cross-cultural leadership. However, the latest GLOBE study of strategic leadership across cultures did not have the Middle East cluster. The GLOBE authors concluded that future research must integrate the context in the study of strategic leadership in the countries included in the 2004 and 2007 studies (House et al., 2004; Javidan et al., 2006; House et al., 2013). The core of this study is the Upper Echelons theory, which has been applied mainly in Western contexts (Metcalfe and Mimouni, 2011; House et al., 2013).

The fourth gap is the methodological gap is in the qualitative, multiple case study. The vast volume of leadership research is mainly quantitative (Yazdani, 2010; Al-Jenaib,2011; Metcalfe and Mimouni, 2011; Ewers, 2013). The researchers highlighted the need for qualitative leadership research that captures the richness of the specific context of the CEO, the top team, and the organisation in their context. Face-to-face interviews for future studies involving CEOs and top management teams capture the local leadership arrangements, and generate and support various local constructions (Hosking, 1988; Hosking, 2007).

Region-specific literature is scarce in Middle Eastern countries (Scandura and Dorfman, 2004; House et al., 2004). Moreover, strategic leadership research in the Middle East is rare. Recent studies on transformational leadership in the Gulf Cooperative Council (GCC) region, called for qualitative research in leadership and management, as most of the available studies use online surveys (Suliman et al., 2019).

## 1.5  Research problem

The Gulf Corporate Council (GCC) countries (UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman) have witnessed an increase in the demand for the development of infrastructure healthcare, urban planning and development, education, and other service sectors (Metcalfe and Mimouni, 2011; De Bel-Air, 2015). The increase in the demand for infrastructure organisations was due to several reasons. The population growth was unprecedented during the last ten years (Statistics, 2015) There was a shortage of professionals and an increase in the use of new and advanced technology (Hodgson and Hanson, 2014).

The attraction of professionals with relevant experience in healthcare, education, engineering, and financial services is one of the competitive advantages of the organisations in the UAE (Randeree, 2012). The CEOs are hired to attract, retain, and expand the top management team and quickly deliver outstanding results (Al Mazrouei and Pech, 2015; Haak-Saheem, 2016). The dilemma for these pluralistic organisations is selecting highly experienced international executives and senior professionals with excellent relevant experience from different countries (Bakr Ahmad et al., 2009). For example, the UAE needed to attract an additional 3,100 employees in healthcare by 2020; this number includes CEOs, top management teams and medical professionals (Government.ae, 2016). The unavailability of national professionals in healthcare and other professions, such as engineering and financial services, is a significant problem in the UAE. The shortage of national professionals causes three supplementary issues for employing organisations. The first issue is that the expatriate workforce accounts for more than 80% of the population in the UAE (Abuhejleh et al., 2016). The second issue is that the UAE professionals and executives receive higher salaries than the expatriates, which results in higher human resources costs for organisations. The third problem is that due to the scarcity of UAE professional leaders, pluralistic organisations hire additional numbers of nationals in the administration with high salaries. Moreover, attracting national TMT meets the expectations of the national shareholders and the regulators (Alnaqbi, 2018; Aljanahi, 2017).

The international CEOs of pluralistic organisations are faced with two challenges: meeting the high expectations of the Board and the shareholders to deliver exceptional results in a short period (100 days in practice) and understanding and acknowledging that attracting national executives is a national mandate (Sarros, 2007). Meeting the regulatory target is the expectation of the shareholders and the responsibility of the Board of Directors (Crossland and Hambrick, 2011).

With the rise in the demands on healthcare, real estate, and financial services, the government established Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) with major international operators in healthcare, real-estate development, and financial services (Hodgson, 2014:30). The international CEOs and TMTs are expected to deliver and exceed the expectations and achieve a high return on the investments of recruiting them (Rao and Kareem Abdul, 2015).

The authors of the latest GLOBE results showed a strong relationship between the leader's behaviour and their society's leadership expectations (House et al., 2013). House et al.'s (2013)

study showed that leaders' effectiveness is linked to the society's expectations more than their cultural values. However, research on leadership in pluralistic organisations is not common.

## 1.6  Research purpose

The emphasis of this research is on strategic leadership at the top of pluralistic organisations, focusing on the CEO and TMT from different disciplines in the same organisation, exploring their differing aims, objectives, and skills (Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000; Davies and Davies, 2004; Elenkov, 2005; Crossan, Vera and Nanjad, 2008). Strategic leadership research is concerned with the study of the role and the responsibilities of the strategic leaders, the CEO, and the TMT (House and Aditya, 1997; Sirmon, Hitt and Ireland, 2007; Hitt, Ireland, Sirmon and Trahms, 2011; House et al., 2013). This research includes the organisational structure, status, domain, culture, and people composition as the organisational internal contextual factors that may influence the actions and decisions of strategic leaders (Carpenter and Fredrickson, 2002; Osborn et al., 2002).

Organisational leadership research is a multilevel phenomenon (Yammarino, 2005; Dansereau et al., 2013). This present study explores how the external context influences the selection of the CEOs, shapes the internal organisational context, and impacts the organisation outcome (Yukl, 2008; Lin and Rababah, 2014; Georgakakis, Greve and Ruigrok, 2017).

Hambrick and Mason (1984) asserted that organisations reflect their top leaders. Hambrick reviewed and confirmed that the organisational outcome depends on how the CEO and the TMT select and execute their business strategy (Hambrick, 2007b; Hambrick, 1997). The primary question of the Upper Echelons aims to determine how a leader can influence others to deliver the expected organisational outcomes. This study explores the selection of the CEO, CEO leadership and TMT selection and performance in the context of the UAE, as such research is scant. This study aims to:

- Explore how the UAE country context impacts the strategic leadership effectiveness in pluralistic organisations.
- Focus on the selection of CEOs, nationals and internationals, professionals, and executives in the pluralistic organisations.
- Explore how the external context (UAE) and the internal context of pluralistic organisation impacts the selection, performance, and retention of executives (professional and administrative).
- Search for the contextual elements that impact the pluralistic organisation outcomes.

- Balance nationalisation with the effective selection and development of the national TMT in pluralistic organisations in this non-western context.

## 1.7 Research question

This research aims to explore the relevance or irrelevance of the contextual influences on the strategic leadership of pluralistic organisations (healthcare, real estate, financial services) in the Middle Eastern context.

The context in which the selection of the CEOs and TMT occurs, and their relationships are essential to the study of strategic leadership effectiveness to achieve organisational outcomes. Therefore, a study to explore the context of strategic leadership, its impact on the CEOs, the TMT, and the organisational outcomes is fundamental

The main research question is: How does the external context impact strategic leadership effectiveness to achieve the outcome in pluralistic organisations (PO)?

The sub-questions are:

1- How does the context impact the selection of CEOs, strategic direction, and leadership effectiveness in pluralistic organisations?
2- How does the context impact the TMT selection, performance, and retention in pluralistic organisations?
3- What are the contextual factors that impact the PO outcomes?

## 1.8 Research strategy and design

Schutz's social phenomenology states that the qualitative approach is a philosophical framework and a methodology (Klenke, 2016). I conduct a qualitative study to explore how the explicit elements of the external context impact the selection of the CEOs and TMTs and their leadership effectiveness in the pluralistic organisation in the UAE. This study employs a cautious realist ontology with a constructionist epistemology detailed in chapter three. The research strategy is inductive (data-inspired) (Huberman et al., 2014). The inductive strategy allows the researcher to gain creative insights from the data without re-inventing extensively studied and proven concepts (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006).

A mixture of methods is deployed within the multiple case study to collect and analyse the data. This pluralistic epistemology in the case study design enriched the data collection of the selected cases (Miles, 2015). The multiple case study with an inductive strategy explores the differences

between the cases (Stake, 2013). The research design explores how the contextual variables impact the role of the CEO, the TMT selection, and organisational effectiveness. The multiple case study design aims to produce a detailed description of the strategic contextual leadership within pluralistic organisations.

Through the longitudinal multiple case study design, the researcher deployed semi-structured interviews to collect data. Triangulation and direct observations complemented the on-site interviews. The contextual conditions are considered good sources of evidence in the case study (Yin, 2013). Formal and casual data from the field and the time and place of occurrence are collected (Stake, 2010).

Triangulation of information aims to integrate the data collection sources, the semi-structured interviews, secondary data documentation, site notes, and observation to mitigate the risk of collecting weak data during the interviews (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Triangulation during data collection is ensured by interviewing different respondents on the same topic and by interviewing the same respondent more than once (Pauwels and Matthyssens, 2004).

The data analysis of the qualitative multiple case study with the inductive strategy was constructed on data management, data reduction, and cases database creation (Huberman, Miles and Saldana, 2014). The database maintains the reliability of the multiple case study and tracks and organises the data for each case separately. I followed the bottom-up data analysis approach to define the themes and allow emergent themes (Huberman, Miles and Saldana, 2014). The second analysis cycle revealed the individual case's higher-order themes. The template analysis revision resulted in identifying emergent themes, second order themes, and higher-order themes per case (King, 2004). The within-case analysis allowed building the individual case report before applying the cross-case synthesis (Stake, 2010). The third cycle of data analysis started with arranging the cases for synthesis by aggregating the higher-order themes and second order themes, followed by the cross-case synthesis.

The final phase of the data analysis ensures the ethics, validity, and trustworthiness of the data analysis. The research integrity and quality rest within the thoughtful, careful, and correct data collection. The anonymity of the participants and the confidentiality of the discussions are maintained during the analysis (Stake, 2013).

## 1.9  Primary findings and contribution

The primary findings of this multiple case study included eleven results.  Four emergent themes revealed how the national leadership expectations, the role of the Board, the predecessor CEOs and the organisation's past negative performance created an internal organisational context of uncertainty.  The CEO and TMT's actions and influences are not the main factors determining the organisational effectiveness and outcomes (Osborn and Marion, 2009).  The CEOs and TMT actions represent units in the internal and external contexts.

The multiple case study revealed fourteen findings offering insights into four key areas:

1- The external context impacts the internal pluralistic organisational context.
2- The different facets of the context affect the selection of CEOs and CEO leadership effectiveness.
3- The national leadership expectations to advance the nationalisations and other contextual elements impact TMT selection, structure, composition, and interaction.
4- The specific contextual factors influence the organisational outcomes on two levels: the country and the pluralistic organisation's industry domain.

This study offers seven theoretical contributions:

(1) The integration of two theories, strategic leadership and contextual leadership, produced specific multilevel contextual situations that influence CEOs' and TMTs practices through analytical, sequential and spatial illustration (Miles, 2015; Yukl, 2012; House et al., 2013).

(2) Conducting this research in the Middle East on four pluralistic multinational organisations contributes to Upper Echelons research in a non-Western country.  The original contribution identifies the embedded national leadership expectations in a country not included in the latest GLOBE study (House et al., 2013; House et al., 2004).

(3) This study offers an original contribution to the Upper Echelons research that assumed the CEOs' selection is mainly based on their experience in the specific PO industry, strategic choices, organisational performance, and positive organisational outcomes (Hambrick, 2007; Hambrick, 2014; Quigley et al.2019).  The research demonstrated the significant contextual effects of the Board's role in selecting the CEOs.

(4 & 5) Two theoretical contributions illuminated the specific contextual elements that impact the selection of CEOs. This study's fourth contribution demonstrates the contextual elements that influence the selection of an insider or an outsider CEO (Quigley et al., 2020). The fifth contribution demonstrates when and why national and international CEOs are selected. The distinction between internal or external CEO selection in strategic leadership literature is dominant (Quigley et al., 2019). This study identified the context's hidden impact on the Board's role in CEO selection, CEO-Board relationship, CEO delegation of authority, and TMT alignment and support. Introducing these links reduces the predictions over whom to select, identifying who will perform well and perform poorly in a specific context (Zhu et al., 2020; Quigley et al., 2020). The newly selected CEO is given three months (100 days) to quickly demonstrate his/her efficiency with a directional mandate (Karaevli and Zajac, 2012). In addition, CEOs are expected to have unparalleled knowledge of balancing competent and efficient human capital skills within the organisational context (Denis et al., 2007). The revelation of these links may benefit the newly selected internal or external, national, or international CEOs in meeting the Board's expectations and the national leadership.

(6) The research contributed with a definition of CEO leadership effectiveness in pluralistic organisations. CEOs leading organisations and leading inside the organisations are linked to CEOs' leadership effectiveness (Yukl, 2010; Yuk, 2013). Yukl (2013: 66) affirmed that research design and theorising about leadership effectiveness 'include leadership knowledge, skills, roles, and personality constructs.' This research showed two additional indicators of CEO leadership effectiveness: (1) advancing organisational efficiency with consideration to the nationalisation, and (2) CEO leadership effectiveness impacted by the interactions with the Board and TMT.

(7) The comprehensive revision of the existing theories in strategic leadership, contextual leadership, cross-cultural leadership, and Middle Eastern literature (in Chapter 2) supports the empirical exploration of the multilevel contextual influence on the PO internal structure (Osborn et al., 2014), the individuals (Board, CEO, and TMT) (Hambrick and Quigley, 2014), and PO outcomes. In addition, the theoretical contribution with a definition of the organisation's outcomes can provide information and enable the study's integrity to be maintained by preserving the characteristic nature of this study (Cassel and Symon, 2004).

Researchers reported that approximately 90 per cent of the leadership research is quantitative, using the survey as the data collection method (Latham, 2014). This research provided two methodological contributions. The first methodological contribution is conducting a qualitative

multiple case study in strategic and contextual leadership research. The second methodological contribution is the empirical investigation of the CEOs and TMT as separate sub-units of analysis to capture the CEO actions and impact. Upper Echelons research included the CEO as a member of the TMT (Carpenter, Geletkanycz, and Sanders, 2004; Hambrick et al., 2015). Researchers identified compounding the CEO and TMT in one unit of analysis as a limitation in strategic leadership research (Samimi et al., 2020).

This research offers four contributions to practice.

 (1) Upper Echelons research recognised the need to include the country context and compare the CEOs' practices and backgrounds inside their organisation (Hambrick et al., 2015; House et al., 2013). This study investigated the CEO's leadership effectiveness inside and outside the organisation. CEO effectiveness inside the organisation is expanded beyond organisational efficiency to include the CEO's relationships with the TMT (trust and buy-in), TMT satisfaction and dedication, and TMT support.

The CEO's effectiveness outside the organisations was demonstrated by achieving national leadership satisfaction with the POs' outcomes.

(2) The predecessor CEOs' frequency signifies the need for a contextual strategic approach to CEOs' successions (Shen, 2003; Weirseman and Zhang, 2011). This study disclosed how CEO succession could be linked to the incumbent CEOs' objectives and even leadership effectiveness. The pre-succession Board activities require strategic human capital skills to identify suitable candidates and access to internal leadership development activities to determine any internal successors and monitor and strengthen the Board-CEO interactions during the pre-succession phase (Quigley, Wowak, and Crossland, 2020).

(3) This research contributed to practice by exhibiting how TMT composition and education impact TMT-CEO interaction and TMT- TMT interface. The Upper Echelons' black box linked the CEOs and TMT demographics to their strategic decisions and choices which indirectly affected the organisational performance (Finkelstein, Hambrick, and Cannella, 2009). Strategic leadership studies in the UAE have identified significant relationships between education diversity, TMT background, organisational strategy, TMT effectiveness, and organisational outcomes (Alseiari, 2019; Alkheyi, 2020). This study exhibited how diversity affects TMT interactions and performance effectiveness.

(4) The last contribution to practice is articulating national CEOs' requests for strategic and contextually relevant leadership development programs. Strategic and contextual leadership development programs are particularly needed in critical PO industries such as healthcare, real estate development, and financial services. This contribution to the practitioner is to account for the country's leadership expectations while crafting and implementing the strategic directions and when selecting a national or international TMT.

## 1.10 Thesis structure

Figure 1.1 shows the thesis consists of six chapters. The first chapter is the introduction presenting the research problem, the research purpose, research questions and a summary of the findings. The introduction chapter included the rationale, the motivation to do this research, and explains that the importance of the coherence of the study is the alignment of the research problem, purpose, questions, and the selected qualitative research methodology. The following chapters summarise the flow of this study, including findings, discussion and conclusion, contributions, research evaluation, future research, and reflection notes.

**Figure 1-1 Thesis structure**

**Chapter 1** includes an overview of the research aim, the rationale of the research, how the research is conducted, and the primary findings and contribution.

**Chapter 2** explains the characteristics of the pluralistic organisations. The review positions the extensive literature on the Upper Echelons (strategic leadership), contextual leadership, cross-cultural leadership literature, and Middle Eastern leadership literature. The literature review addresses the predicaments of the three strategic leadership views.

The first view considered the importance of the Upper Echelons (Hambrick, 1996; Finkelstein, 2009), the second view considered the organisational context dominance (Osborn, 2002), and the third view included the context and the strategic leadership to address the problem of studying leadership in a vacuum (Groves, 2005; Rousseau and Fried 2001; Osborn, Uhl-Bien, and Milosevic, 2014).

**Chapter 3** begins with the research methodology outline from the research philosophy to the operationalisation of the research. The chapter discusses a cautious realist ontology and a constructionist epistemology. Next it describes the longitudinal qualitative multiple case design with an inductive strategy of analysis. The chapter explains the sampling strategy, the selection of the four cases, the phases of data collections and data analysis. The chapter details how the integration of the strategic and contextual leadership theories develops the initial themes and builds the individual cases.

**Chapter 4** includes the findings in the first level of analysis, which have four emergent themes. It provides case findings and the cross-case synthesis to aggregate the themes and present the cross-case results and the emergent hybrid strategic contextual leadership framework

**Chapter 5** discusses results given the Upper Echelons and the contextual leadership theories linking the themes to the issues raised by the literature.

**Chapter 6** discusses the research contribution, limitations, and future research.

The research contributed seven theoretical contributions, two methodological contributions, and four contributions to practice.

# 2 Literature review

## 2.1 Overview

The literature review serves three objectives. The first objective is to assess and integrate the literature on the executives (CEOs and TMTs) to explore the rationale of this research. The second objective is to illustrate the empirical question of how context impacts the strategic leadership to deliver the organisation outcomes (Carter and Greer, 2013), focusing on leadership at the top of the pluralistic organisations where individuals contribute in different ways. The emphasis is on the CEO and the TMT and how they execute collaboratively in the dynamic context of the UAE, with diversified teams and divergent objectives of pluralistic organisations (Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000; Davies and Davies, 2004; Elenkov et al., 2005; Crossan et al., 2008). The third objective is to locate the research on strategic and contextual leadership in the Middle East.

Pluralistic organisations include multifaceted domains and require multilevel leadership (Yammarino et al., 2005; Dansereau et al., 2013). This research combines the study of the non-human elements in the organisation, such as structure, strategy, and processes, with consideration given to the human element (CEO, TMT). The impact of the context on the selection of the CEO and TMT and the pluralistic organisation outcomes is explored (Boal and Hooijberg, 2000; Certo, Lester; Dalton, and Dalton, 2006).

The review of the strategic leadership is done to understand Hambrick and Mason's (1984) assertion that organisations are reflections of their leaders. Hambrick (1997 and 2007) established that the strategic organisational performance depends on how leaders (CEOs and TMT) construct strategic choices. Hambrick asserted that the organisation's performance does not rely so much on CEO characteristics, behaviours, and background; rather, it depends on TMT practices, experiences, interactions, cooperation, and how they take advantage of the strengths of pluralistic organisations (Hambrick et al., 2015).

Contextual leadership is the theoretical lens of this study, covering the pluralistic organisation context (structure, size, status, industry, and culture), the individuals, and the contextual elements that influence the actions and decisions of the strategic leaders (Carpenter and Fredrickson, 2001; Osborn et al., 2002).

My strategy of the literature review is to identify the elements of the context that impact the internal pluralistic organisational context, the strategic leaders (CEO and TMTs), and organisational

outcomes. The search criteria included CEO and TMT roles, relationships, and effectiveness. The search required multiple data sources, including strategic leadership books, dissertations, internet resources, journals, and leadership periodicals. The primary sources of information were accessed through Management Academy, Sage, Science Direct, Emerald, JSTOR, and Leadership Quarterly, in addition to the face-to-face interviews to observe the strategic leaders in their context (Rao and Waheed, 2015). The review did not include a time limit to include the historical development from management to administration (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2018). For example, strategic leadership was traced back to organisational theory, which opened the way to strategic management, organisational behaviour, Upper Echelons, and strategic leadership. The contextual leadership literature was traced in the contingency theory, the organisational behaviour theory, management theory, cross-cultural leadership, and the contextual leadership theory.

This chapter is structured as follows:

- Section 2.2 reviews the pluralistic organisation literature definition and structure, as it is relevant to the present study.
- Section 2.3 reviews the pluralistic organisations in the Middle East context.
- Section 2.4 includes a historical review of Upper Echelons literature focusing on the selection of CEOs and CEO delegation of authority (Quigley et al., 2019; Quigley, Wowak and Crossland, 2020). The section reviews Upper Echelons' TMT conceptual elements, composition, structure, and interactions (Finkelstein et al., 2009).
- Section 2.5 is a historical review of the contextual leadership in contingency theory, behavioural theory, strategic management theory and cross-cultural leadership theory.
- Section 2.6 frames the contextual leadership literature focusing on the internal organisational context (structure, size, and culture) (Osborn and Marion, 2009; Osborn et al., 2014).
- Section 2.7 reviews the cross-cultural, strategic leadership and contextual leadership in the Middle East. This review identifies the external contextual elements impacting the organisational context and leadership practices in the Arab world (Al-Darmaki, 2015; Parcero and Ryan, 2017).
- Section 2.8 critically reviews and integrates two bodies of literature to arrive at the hybrid strategic-contextual leadership literature. I define hybrid as the synthesis of the strategic and contextual leadership literature. I position the CEO and TMT within strategic contextual leadership literature (Figure 2.1).

**Figure 2-1– Hybrid strategic contextual leadership**
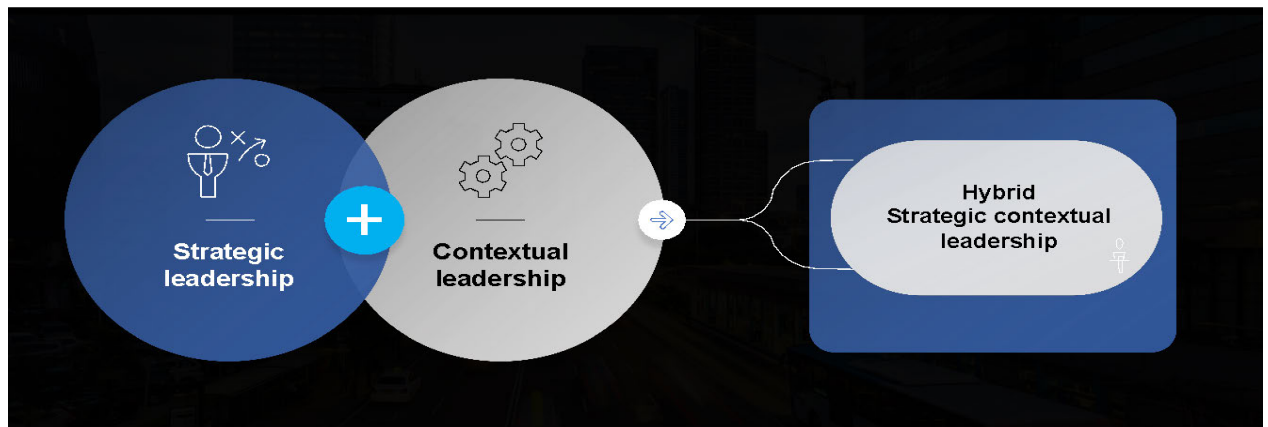


Section 2.8 presents the conclusion that summarises the CEO and TMT positions:

- Strategic leadership scholars stated that strategic leaders determine the faith of their organisations (Hambrick and Mason, 1984, Carpenter et al., 2004; Cannella, 2001). This view considered the CEOs and the TMTs as the primary controllers and determiners of organisational effectiveness and outcomes (Finkelstein et al., 2009).

- The second view considers strategic leadership as a process where the CEO and the TMT are not determinants of organisational effectiveness, and the organisation is an entity of its own (Peterson Smith, Martorana and Owens, 2003; Gavetti et al., 2007).

- The research adopts the third view, recognised as the moderate view. This view considers the CEOs and the TMTs as agents bridging the context and influence the organisational outcome (Osborn and Marion, 2009; Yukl, 2012; Osborn et al., 2014; Quigley and Hambrick, 2015).

## 2.2 Pluralistic organisation definition

Pluralism in organisation and management studies have been mentioned sporadically (Van de Ven, 1995; Jarzabkowski, Matthiesen and Van de Ven, 2009). However, three decades after the rise of the pluralistic definition, it is elusively defined as an organisation that inherently operates with a plurality of actors (Mir et al., 2020). Other researchers described pluralism as a situation

faced by an organisation that works within multiple organisational domains with embedded multiple organised logics (Denis et al., 2007).

The conceptualisation of pluralistic organisations rose with the seminal work of Denis et al. (2001). Denis and colleagues explained the growing significance of pluralistic organisations 'as organisations in many industries enter into various forms of collaborative arrangements as the workforce becomes increasingly diversified, as internal markets, matrices, and networks penetrate organisational structures, and as knowledge workers play an increasingly important economic role' (Denis et al., 2001: 809).

Pluralism is categorised by various objectives, fragmented power amongst the different professionals, and management. These characteristics presented complex challenges to build and renew the analytical bridges between the contextual changes and organisational dynamics leadership (Morrison and Milliken, 2000). Researchers reviewed the literature on pluralism within many industries to identify the relative balances or imbalances in pluralistic organisations (Raffaelli and Glynn, 2014). The pluralistic organisation's structure and context are determined by the divergent objectives, the strategic leadership level of authority, and the organisational processes (Denis, Langley, and Rouleau, 2007).

Bres and Raufflet (2013) identified the fragmented concepts of the pluralistic organisation. The authors listed four ideas that included the study of pluralistic organisations: inter-organisational collaboration, institutional change, deterministic approaches, and the social study of science.

**Table 2-1 Pluralistic organisation's framework**

| Characteristics | Challenges for organisations | Level of analysis | Pluralistic organisation |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Multiplicity of actors** | Relationships and authority | Coalition intra-organisation | Informal hierarchy, members positions are dependent on context. |
| **Multiplicity of preferences** | Missions and objectives | Formal organisational | Unclear technologies and outcomes require negotiation over significant matters. |
| **Multiplicity of logics (rationalities)** | Relationship to context | Society or industry | Embedded in multiple reasoning requiring interactive relations to negotiate rules. |

(Bres and Raufflet, 2013)

Table 2.1 summarises the researchers' synthesis of the fragmented research on the pluralistic organisation. The first dimension discussed the members of the pluralistic organisation, their

authority, relationships, and coalitions, without any formal hierarchy (Cohen et al., 1972). The second dimension refers to the multiple organisational mission and objectives. Organisation means many things to many people (Howells, Karataş-Özkan, Yavuz, and Atiq, 2014). This can cause the divergence of the members' interests and expectations, incocnsistent organisational missions and goals, and the deviation of the organisational outcome (Denis et al., 2007). The result of this dimension is dealing with substantive issues of problematic preferences (Jarzabkowski et al., 2009). The third dimension relates to an organisation's relationship with the external context: the pluralistic organisations do not adhere to the standards of organisational efficiencies and lack the formal and comprehensive rule book (Bres and Raufflet, 2013). Nevertheless, Bres et al. (2018) reported that attention to the pluralism in organisational and management theories increased since 2000.

**Figure 2-2 Pluralistic organisation**
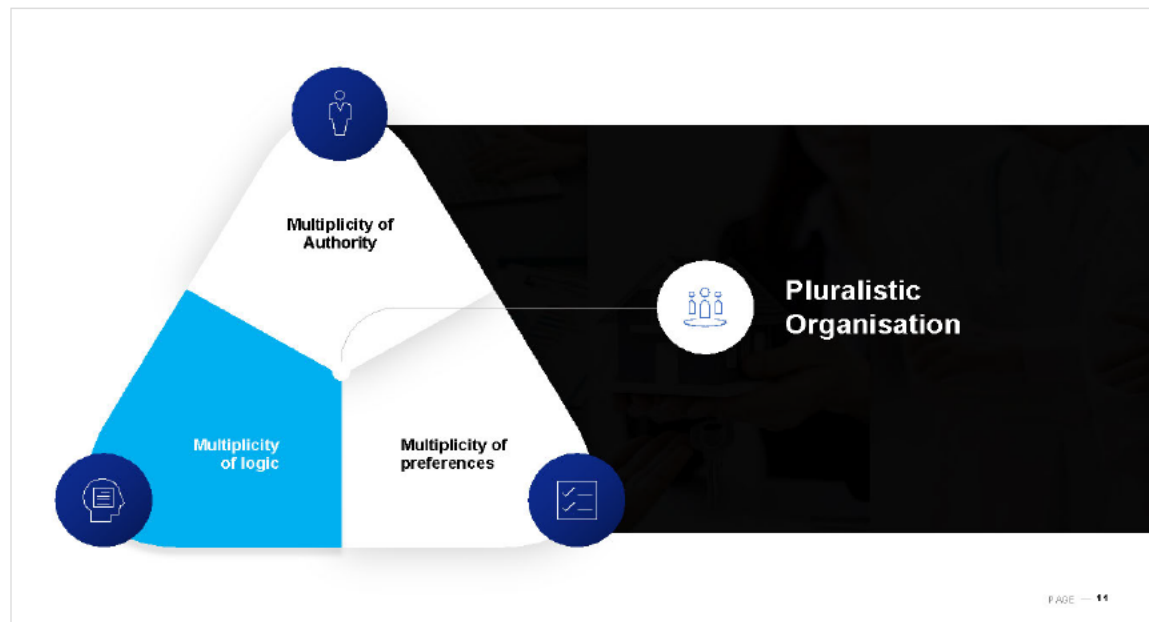


(Bres et al., 2018)

Figure 2.2 summarises Bres et al.'s (2018: 371) review of organisation studies literature. The authors used a Venn diagram to plot organisation pluralism as a multiplicity of preferences, multiplicity of authority and multiplicity of logic. Figure 2.2 summarises the three levels of analysis. The multiplicity of authority refers to the top management team (TMT) relationships within the organisation. The multiplicity of preference refers to the organisation's formal mission and

characteristics. The multiplicity of logic relates to the external context, or the industry level of analysis about competing external (national) contextual elements impacting the organisation.

As pluralism in organisations stems from within the organisation it also stems from the external context. Researchers in management and leadership studied the impact of pluralism within the organisation on internal organisational structure and processes (Bres et al., 2018; Denis et al., 2007; Jarzabkowski et al., 2009). Pluralism within organisations is characterised by a multiplicity of objectives, the diffused power of actors, and the absence of central control (Denis et al., 2010). Adding to the complexity of the pluralistic nature is the need for agreement on the organisation's processes and structure (Denis et al., 2007).

The second approach, external pluralism, is based on the broader external context to explain the dynamics of the internal organisation. Organisations embody a plurality of culture in their institutional logic, including religion, various professions, corporate culture, and family cultures (Friedland, 2013). Pluralism reflects the external context that shapes organisational hierarchies and processes (Jarzabkowski et al., 2009). 'The diversity of actors and groups pursue varying goals…. They are characterised by fragmented power and multiple objectives. Where reconciliation by fiat is not an option, these opposing forces (environment, organisational objectives, and opportunities) are in constant dynamic tension' (Bres et al., 2018: 14).

In this research, the pluralism of the organisations is about the pluralism outside the organisation (the external context) and inside the organisations in several industries (healthcare, real estate development, and financial services). The diversity of the external context creates a collaborative arrangement of circumstances and networks which shape the pluralistic organisational structure. The POs objectives are aligned with knowledge-based industry, hiring specialists, and professional executives to perform essential roles in the economy (Jarzabkowski et al., 2009). The organisational theorists linked the organisational logic to its historical, cultural, economic, and social contexts (Mir et al., 2020; Bres and Rufflet, 2013).

Hardy (1991: 37) studied universities and argued that the conventional unitary model of organisations was 'pathological' because it does not provide an accurate description of how multiple functions operate. Hardy (1991) proposed a new pluralistic perspective indicating that 'Organisation systems are coalition. Goals may conflict, conflict is normal and legitimate; decision-making may be political; collaboration and consensus are possible' (Hardy, 1991: 127) Hardy

attempted to breakdown the complex structure of the pluralistic organisation as input systems, strategy, and people, with conflicts, collaborations, and possible consensus.

Scholars' interest in the pluralistic organisational form increased. However, the studies were fragmented and lacked transferability into other domains (Bres et al., 2018).

This research will follow the pluralistic organisation template developed by Bres et al. (2018) to study the pluralism in healthcare and two non-traditional domains: real estate and financial services organisations. This research frames the pluralistic organisation's relationship with the external context, regulatory authorities, processes, and procedures (Denis et al., 2007). The challenges of the PO are the adherence to performance efficiency standards, the lack of clear professional and administrative formal practices and policies, and the lack of adhering to these policies and procedures during the task's executions (Tracy and Ashcraft, 2001). Cohen et al. (1997) referred to this lack of clear and compelling performance metrics as 'unclear technologies'. The overloaded CEOs with broader important issues that stem from the external context require complex modes of reasoning beyond the usual professional experience and technical competencies. The organisational outputs of these 'unclear technologies' may have consequences that affect an organisation's structure.

The focus is on the power of the members, which is directly connected to the internal context of pluralism: the coalition of powerful actors with conflicting objectives and without sufficient authority. Additionally, pluralistic organisational strategic direction is explored. The challenges to studying pluralistic organisation is in the problematic preferences. In addition, the multiplicity of the external context results in multiple authorities and regulatory systems, competing internal organisational contexts, and multi-level analysis with the formal corporate mission and main characteristics (Sorsa et al., 2020).

## 2.3  Understanding pluralistic organisations in the UAE context

The latest approved activities resulted in the rise of the pluralistic organisation. The Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030 structures the diversification of the emirate's economy into a range of critical sectors such as education, healthcare, industrial and commercial development, specialised financial services, and the growth of the holding companies (The Government of Abu Dhabi, 2008). The Abu Dhabi economic vision 2030 diversified the country's economy in key sectors: education, healthcare, specialised financial services, and industrial and infrastructure

development. The government and the private sector's investment in the education sector grew over the last ten years. The statistics showed that the UAE supports 8,500 students to travel to study overseas every year (Muysken and Nour, 2006). In addition, the government has funded many joint ventures with major private healthcare providers to establish the healthcare infrastructure (Abuhejleh, Dulaimi, and Ellahham, 2016). The professional service's expansion is critical to meet the growing needs of the increasing population and to fulfil the government objective to achieve economic diversification (Khoja, Salama, Qidawai, Rawaf, and Kashmira, 2017). In response to the shortage of national professionals, the government and the private sectors increased their investments to attract leading international medical centres, engineering, urban development, planning organisation, and financial services and investment firms to set up and operate in UAE (Al-Darmaki, 2015). Several semi-government healthcare, real estate, financial services, and other domains were fully and partially funded and managed by the government. These organisations are mainly led by a national CEO and, in some cases, an international CEO and a selected top management team (both nationals and internationals) (Toledo, 2013). The semi-government, publicly listed and private companies follow federal laws and local laws of higher education, health, finance, urban planning, oil, and industry (Ahmed, 2015). The government 2030 vision was successful as the non-oil related industries contribution to the UAE growth of gross domestic product (GDP) from 2008 to 2014 reached 69%.

**Table 2-2 Major Industries contribution to UAE GDP 2008 to 2015**

|  | Sector contribution to UAE Growth 2008-2015 | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Average annual Growth** | **The average contribution to GDP** | **Growth of fixed capital** |
| Government services (Including Healthcare) | -7% | 5% | 15% |
| Real estate and construction | 13% | 22% | 19% |
| Financial services and investment | 4% | 7% | 2 % |

Table 2.2 shows the annual growth of the selected non-oil sector industries contribution to the GDP (Statistics, 2015). Real estate and construction are the highest contributors of the non-oil sectors to the country's GDP with 22 percent contribution, 13 percent annual growth, and 19 percent growth in capital invested (Statistics, 2015). The real estate and construction grew due to the increase in the tourism infrastructure (mall, hotels, leisure, and sports complexes (Ahmed, 2015). The financial services and investment had a 4.4 percent growth rate and contributed 7 percent to the country's GDP.

The growth of the fixed capital indicates the investors' interest in financial and investment services registered the least fixed capital growth of 2%. On the other hand, the real estate and construction sectors fixed capital growth recorded the highest at 19%. Based on estimates for 2019 released by the regulators, human health and social work contributed Dh13.7bn ($3.7bn) to the economy, representing 1.5% of GDP at current prices, up from Dh13.4bn ($3.6) in 2018 (ESCAD, 2019). The healthcare sector has experienced positive and negative growth over the last decade. In real terms, the industry grew by 2.8 percent between 2008 and 2015. In 2017 the healthcare growth was negative, at -0.5 percent while in 2018, the sector expanded by 7.5 percent and in 2019 it grew by 2.2 percent (Hussain, Hammadi, and Adbanjo, 2019). Some of the funding for health care comes from the government. This rise in cost is due to technological advances, people living longer and requiring more complex care, and the longer-term impact of inactive lifestyle issues. Understanding the pluralistic organisation and the UAE context of the pluralistic organisations is followed by the strategic leadership and the contextual leadership literature.

## 2.4  Review of strategic leadership

The Greek origin of the word strategy 'stratos' means the army, and 'ago' means to guide or to lead. Strategy combines the two words (Wang and Torrisi-Steele, 2018). The origin of the word strategy is a military term referring to the art of leading. In the Arabic language, the word leadership is Keyadah. it is also a military rank used in organisational science and research (House et al., 2004). Scholars have used strategic leadership to indicate executive leadership (Cannella, 2001; Hambrick, 2007b). Cannella stated Andrew (1972) definition of strategy as the construction of complex and ambiguous information, reflecting the management team's strength biases, egos, and aptitudes. The definition of 'strategic' in leadership does not import a new form of leadership or examine the strategic elements in the leadership group. Leadership scholars justified strategic leadership because strategies are made by humans who act based on their idiosyncratic experiences, motives, and dispositions (Davies and Davies, 2004; Vera and Crossan, 2004; Finkelstein et al., 2009). Strategic is also defined as the leader's ability to forecast the future and work with others to initiate strategic changes that will create a viable future for the organisation (Ireland and Hitt, 1999). The literature review showed that strategic leadership was traced to the Carnegie theory, strategic management, leadership behaviour, cross-cultural strategic leadership, and Upper Echelons strategic leadership theory.

Table 2.3 traces the rise of the Upper Echelons and strategic leadership theories. Carnegie theory focused on the study of bounded rationality and drew the scholars' attention to focus on the human limits that may constrain the decision-makers strategic choice (Simon, 1947; March and Simon 1958; Cyret and March 1963; Gavetti, Levinthal, and Ocasio, 2007). The behavioural theorist's attention to study the effect of the human limits and construed reality is the study of the psychological characteristics affecting the actions of strategic managers (Mintzberg, Raisinghani, and Theoret, 1976). The strategic management theorists disagreed with the behavioural theorists focus on the soft aspects of the strategic leaders and directed their aim towards the organisation status, structure and boundaries, information, processing, and allocation processes that Cyret and March started.

**Table 2-3 Strategic leadership review**

| Theory | Field of study | Contribution to theory/research | Relevancy to this research | Authors / Year |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Carnegie school** | Management is a shared effort in which a dominant coalition of the executives' shapes organisation outcomes. | Bounded rationality, multiple and conflicting goals, varying aspiration levels and actions or inactions are all driven by beliefs, knowledge, assumptions, and values that decision-makers bring to the organisational setting. | The executives have significant effects and are predictors of the organisational outcome than the CEO. Limited empirical evidence on whether the CEO or the TMT is a better predictor of outcomes supports the conclusion that the entire team has a more significant effect. | (March and Simon, 1958; Cyert and March 1963; Gavetti et al., 2007) |
| **Behavioural** | Managers are typically confronted with numerous fragments of information that demand attention. Managers' decisions about what is essential, what and how they reported and how they define what is critical depends on their interpretation of the situation. | Human limits and biases. Construed reality is an interwoven set of psychological characteristics: Values, cognitive model, and personalities. TMT need for achievement was strongly associated with the organisational structure. TMT demographic characteristics affect their behaviour and organisational outcomes. | The executives' intellectual ability limit or expand their view in a complex world. The direction is always exercised concerning a limited, approximate, and simplified model of the situation. The view is organisation decisions are shaped by the behaviour and actions of the individuals. | (Mintzberg 1973. Gupta and Govindarajan, 1984; Sutton, 1987; Dearborn and Simon, 1958; Kemberly and Evanisko 1981; Bantel and Jackson 1989; Hambrick 1989). |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Strategic management** | Scholars of strategic management demonstrated how the strategic management domain was analytically rigorous, seeking academic legitimacy and considered that the soft and fuzzy nature of TMT is best left behind or set aside for scholars from personal behavioural theories to assess. | A technical-economic framework was conducted, showing the products life cycles, portfolio matrices, industry and competitor analysis, market shares, experience curves and generic strategies. | Strategic management, as an academic field redefining social science. Strategy is the responsibility of the TMT. | (Kotter, 1982; Gupta and Govindarajan, 1984; Shendel and Hofer, 1979; Hambrick and Chen, 2008). |
| **Upper Echelons and Strategic leadership** | The Upper Echelons addressed the 'Black Box'. The study of, interrelationships. Executives' bounded rationality and characteristics partially predict organisational outcomes, strategic choice, and performance levels. The authors concluded that it is doubtful that Upper Echelons research can progress far without more considerable attention to literature in related fields of the leadership context . | Theorising strategic leadership is challenging due to the overlapping theories, and approaches that advance knowledge across multiple discipline. Proposed a model of CEO and TMT characteristics linking TMT executive backgrounds with organisational outcomes. | The Upper Echelons provided three significant benefits to resolve the common black-box problems by studying the fundamental influence of the strategic leadership to:(1) Predict the organisational outcome. (2) Benefit those responsible for TMT selection and development. (3) Strategists who are trying to predict competitors' moves and countermoves. (4) a primary level of analysis is on the CEO and TMT. | (Hambrick and Mason, 1984; Finkelstein and Hambrick, 1990; Carpenter and Fredrickson, 2001; Carpenter and Mason, 2004; Bass, 2007, Certo et al., 2006, Hambrick et al., 2005, Storey, 2005, Carpenter and Fredrickson, 2001). |

## 2.4.1 Carnegie Theory

The Carnegie theory was created to explain organisational behaviour. Researchers need an integrative understanding of how psychology, management, sociology, and political science shape organizational decisions and outcomes (Gavetti et al., 2007). This school viewed organisation as the ultimate object of study in organisation administrative behaviour. (Cyert and March, 1963a; Simons 1995). Simon found the organisational influences on individuals were paramount and manifested through the role of corporate authority, communication, identification, and inducements (Gavetti et al., 2007). The Carnegie theory offered four pillars to advance the study of organisations as systems of coordinated actions among individuals and groups whose preferences, information, interests, or knowledge differ (Powell et al., 2011). Other organisational theories described the delicate conversation of conflict into cooperation, the mobilisation of resources, and the coordination of effort that facilitates the joint survival of an organisation and its members (Cyert and March,1963: 1). The Carnegie theorists described the delicate conversion of conflict into cooperation, the mobilisation of resources, and the coordination of effort that facilitates the joint survival of an organisation and its members (Gavetti et al., 2007).

The theoretical contribution of this school is considered unique with its distinctive perspectives on the organisational academic field. The theoretical pillars are bounded rationality and include decision making (Simons, 1995), conflicting interests, and corporations (Cyert and March, 1963b). These pillars increased the scholars' attention to the study of the top executives and senior management as an integral part of major organisational theories. For example, Finkelstein et al. (2009: 6) reviewed the strategic leadership theory and found that the study of organisations is an integral part of significant strategic management theories of Barnard (1968), Selznick (1957), and Chandler (1962).

Lately, the Carnegie school and the organisational theories have decreased focus on organisations and increased theorising about the environment and the broader context in which the organisation operates the macro-organisational theory (Nelson and Winter, 2002). The rationale of the focus on the environment is that strategic management of the organisations depends on external forces that affect the organisation (Pruett and Thomas, 1996).

## 2.4.2  Behavioural theory

Mintzberg distinguished eight schools of thought on the manager's job: classical, great man, entrepreneurship, decision theory, leadership effectiveness, leader power, leader behaviour, and work activity (Mintzberg et al., 1976). Hambrick and Mason (1984: 193) defined the strategic directions, decisions, and outcomes as reflecting the values and cognitive bases of the influential actors. When faced with a complicated, unprogrammed situation, a leader's behaviour determines how strategically and collaboratively, and is effectively a reflection of the leader's personality in that environment (Bass and Bass, 2009). Scholars have extensively studied the leader's behaviour and how it limits or expands the leader's vision (Money et al., 2012). The interpreted reality is affected by the leader's values, cognitive models, and personality traits (Finkelstein and Hambrick, 1990; Finkelstein et al., 2009). The leaders' cognitive models, values, and personality affect their behaviour (Hambrick et al., 2005). The leaders' appetite for risk, mitigation of risks, and the need to achieve have been linked to the organisational structure (Hambrick and Quigley, 2014). The executives at the top of an organisation make decisions and shape how they hire, organise, and motivate others to make decisions. Executives received ambiguous, contradictory, and diffused facts from multiple sources (Cannella and Holcomb, 2005a). The leaders' behaviour and choice vary according to their values and personalities. These differences in values and personalities cause the leaders to interpret their strategic choices differently and according to their aspiration levels, beliefs, and what and how they are trying to accomplish (Hambrick and Mason, 1984). The behavioural theory of the top management teams extends beyond the interest of the individuals to the external connections. Strategic leadership perspective 'resides at the intersection of cognitive, social and political concepts' (Finkelstein et al., 2009: 5). The variable is human influence on organisation, a central determiner of organisational direction and outcomes (Hackman and Wageman, 2005). According to Upper Echelons theorists, individual experiences, values, cognitive styles, and personality traits are essential components of strategic choices and decisions (Finkelstein,1996; Davies, 2004).

Strategic leadership scholars and researchers focused on the impact of the CEOs and the top management teams' behaviours, values, and decisions on the organisational outcome (Finkelstein, 2009; Davies, 2012; Carter, 2013).

## 2.4.3  Strategic Management

Strategic management is categorised as a social and political activity, a behavioural theory of senior leadership extending beyond the interest in individual executives (Hambrick and Chen,

2008). Strategy connotes the management of an overall organisation. It includes the organisational origin, structure, selection of goals, the direction of products and services to offer, and boundaries (Rumelt, Schendel and Teece, 1991; Boyd, Ireland and Ketchen, 2013). Management scholars considered management as the process of getting things done through and with individuals operating in organised groups (Koontz, 1961). Thus, management is a universal process regardless of an organisation's status, type, or size (Gladwin et al., 1995; Hambrick and Chen, 2008).

The combination of strategy and management in the strategic management new academic field was described as a complex, ambiguous reflection of the strengths, biases, egos, and aptitudes of the management team (Ireland and Hitt, 1999). The strategic management theorists focused on the strategic choice, direction, formulation, and implementation of the organisational (Sirmon et al., 2008). The Harvard model of strategic management examined the substantial effort in developing competitive advantage. The strategic management theorist believed that strategies are a product of the interaction of the individual leaders and the organisations internal and external context. Individuals are the thinking systems, acting and interacting in synergy with others inside and outside the organisation to achieve organisational effectiveness (Bass, 2007; George et al., 2007)**.**

Other strategic management theorists suggested that the resource allocations are made and initiated by the unit management, which is strongly influenced by the organisation structure and control context (Gupta and Govindarajan, 1984). Strategy theorists argued that resources are more valuable, imperative, imperfectly irritable, and irreplaceable (Sirmon et al., 2008). This strategic management school of thought is based on the fundamental processes of organisation, forming, and executing. Nevertheless, they also must include studying those who are considered strategic leaders (Davies and Davies, 2004). The inclusion of the leader's role drew the strategic leadership theorist to look at the executives at the top of the organisation, which oversees the strategy of the whole organisation (Finkelstein et al., 2009)**.**

The rationale for reviewing strategic management in strategic leadership research is that the two fields are interrelated. 'Separating leadership from management is part of the problem. Does anyone want to work for a manager who lacks the quality of leadership….? Well, how about a leader who does not practice management?' (Mintzberg, 1973: 9; Gosling and Mintzberg, 2003)**.**

## 2.4.4 Upper Echelons theory

The Upper Echelons theory (UE) is rooted in Child's (1972) article 'strategic direction,' referring to any determined actions of significance to the organisation structure, goals, technology, and human resources. Child (1972: 16) wrote 'any available contributions to a theory of organisational structure do not incorporate the direct source of variation in formal structural arrangements, namely the strategic decisions of those who have the power of structural initiation… When incorporating strategic direction in a theory of organisation, one is recognising the operation of an essentially political process in which constraints and opportunities are functions of the power exercised by decision-makers'.

Invoking the concept of dominant coalition, Child (1972) argued that the influential people exercise the strategic choice in an organisation at a given time. The leading organisation could be some combination of the Directors of the Board, executives, investors, professional employees, or others (Finkelstein et al., 2009)**.**

Hambrick and Mason (1984: 193) asked organisational theorists, 'Why do organisations act as they do?' The authors argued that the link between executives' prestige and social status impact organisational performance. The Board of Directors, CEO, and the senior management teams hold the highest formal leadership position within an organisation with authority and power to set priorities to develop organisational structures, determine the organisational multiple goals, objectives, and outcomes.

The study of the executives' characteristics explored how they are selected and assembled, how this group impacts the performance and the effectiveness of the organisational strategies and results in a specific context (Hambrick and Mason, 1984). The empirical research on Upper Echelons studied the psychological phenomenon of the unseen mechanism that caused correlation between the observed executives' characteristics and organisational outcomes, the 'Black Box' (Hambrick et al., 1993).

**Figure 2-3 Upper Echelons framework**
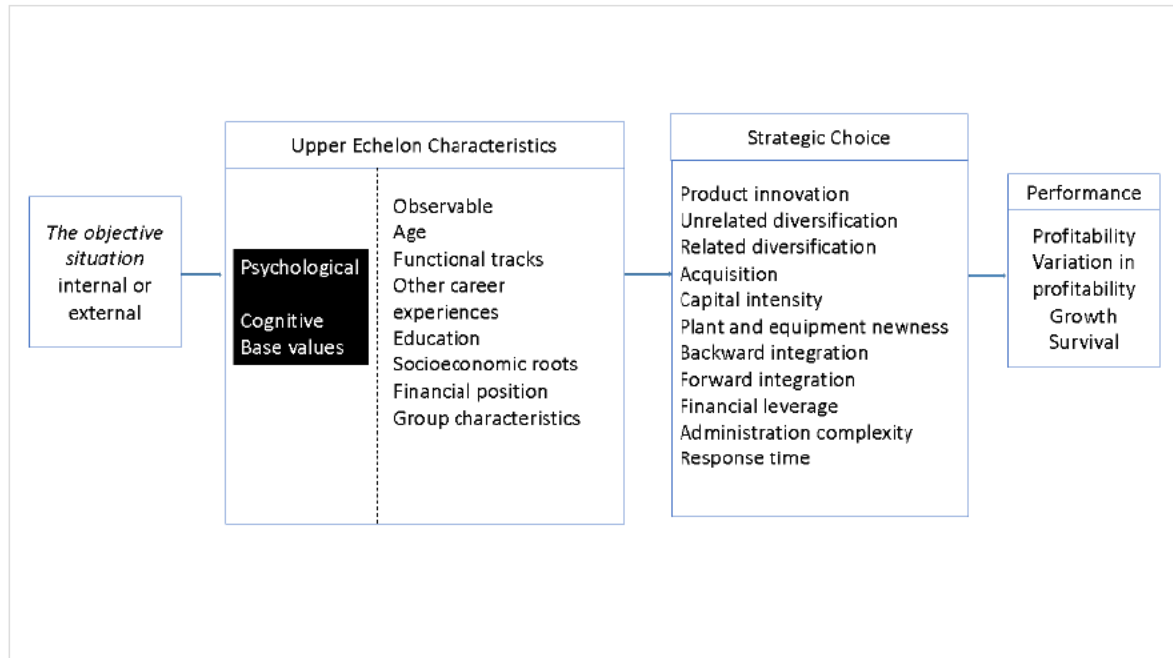


(Hambrick and Mason, 1984: 198)

Figure 2.3 shows Hambrick and Mason's (Hambrick and Mason) perspective on the range of relationships from left to right. The primary relationship is represented by the single horizontal arrows suggesting that upper Echelons' characteristics are a partial reflection of the situation organisations face. The characteristics are the determinants of the strategic choice through organisational performance (Hambrick and Mason, 1984: 197).

The notion is that those top management decisions, directions, and interactions impact the organisational results (Cannella Jr, 2001; Carpenter et al., 2004). Carpenter et al. argued that the Upper Echelons model did not serve the empirical research in top management. The single focus on the strategic choice as the responsibility of the upper Echelons overlooked other essential influences on strategic outcomes (Carpenter et al., 2004: 28). Strategic decisions are complex, and alternative decision processes may exist within the TMT ranks and empirically prove more suitable in a different context (Eisenhardt, 1989; Brown and Eisenhardt, 1997). The authors pointed out a related issue in Hambrick and Mason's (1984) model that overlooked the structural determinant of the TMT behaviours and orientation, such as corporate governance and other organisational processes. The authors linked strategy, performance, and upper Echelons to the feedback cycles to prove theoretical 'recursive' relationships (Carpenter et al., 2004: 761).

Hambrick (2015) invited researchers to reconsider the universality of the top management team (TMT) construct, explore the practical and theoretical meaning of collective TMT at deeper constructs, and include the strategic variables of the context.

The review of Upper Echelons theory and research during the last three decades concluded that:

- In agreement with the work of Hambrick, top executives' matter to organisational performance. The executives' decisions, alignment, and diversity impact organisational effectiveness and brand. However, the authors stated that the executives do so as 'flawed human beings' (Hambrick et al., 2005; Hambrick, 2007)

- Upper Echelons theory is widely popular in Western countries, and it is unfamiliar in non-Western countries (House et al., 2013; Wang and Torrisi-Steele, 2018).

- Other authors differentiated between the study of top executives and leadership (Upper Echelons, leadership, and the strategic leadership). The study of leadership focuses on what is going on inside an organisation, while strategic leadership is about the organisation's leadership (Boal and Hooijberg, 2000). This view of leadership studied how leaders align an organisations' external and internal context in ambiguity, complexity, and information overload context (Carpenter and Fredrickson, 2001; Bass, 2007; Aslan et al., 2011).

## 2.4.5 Strategic leadership

Strategic leadership scholars found that strategic choices, strategic directions, and other main organisational decisions are the responsibilities of the CEO and the executives at the top of the organisations (Finkelstein et al., 1996, Finkelstein et al., 2009) and influence organisational effectiveness (Davies and Davies, 2012). 'If we want to understand strategy, we must understand the strategist' (Finkelstein et al., 2009: 4)**.**  The strategic leadership scholars concluded that understanding the leaders who design and implement the strategies first leads to better understanding of the strategy.

Bass (2007: 43) studied the interaction between executive leadership and strategic leaders. The author concluded with nine practices for effective strategic leadership: (1) focusing the strategic leaders' attention on organisational outcome and processes; (2) improving the workflows and TMT relationships; (3) gaining and leveraging knowledge; (4) developing human capital; (5) identifying the needed strategic resource's; (6) anticipating internal and external contextual changes; (7) meeting and satisfying the interests of the multiple stakeholders; (8) maintaining a macro mindset; and (9) fostering learning and creativity.

Strategic leadership scholars, in response to leadership theorists and researchers concerns with the lack of CEO research, found 'a tendency in top management team research to include the CEO as a member of the group simply… Yet, everyday observation and a wealth of related literature indicate that the top group leader has a disproportionate, sometimes nearly dominant influence on the group's various characteristics and output' (Hambrick, 1997: 180). Unlike Upper Echelons, which focused on the TMTs without a distinction between the CEO and the organisation's leader, strategic leadership focused on the CEO independently.

Quigley and Hambrick (2015) wondered if CEOs are more significant and have more influence on organisations than their counterparts and their context. The scholars' inquiry into the strategic leadership perspective provided three significant benefits:

- Theoretical support about impact of strategic leadership on organisational outcomes.
- The benefits of selecting and hiring the right CEO and TMT.
- The benefits of the strategic leaders are to predict future capabilities such as competitors' moves and countermoves (Cannella Jr, 2001).

Strategic leadership considered the small group of the TMT in addition to other governance bodies, especially the Board of Directors (Finkelstein et al., 2009). The CEO designation in a pluralistic organisation with multiple stakeholders, divergent goals, and knowledge-based work differs from CEO unitary organisations (Nyberg, Cragun, and Schepker, 2021)**.**

### 2.4.5.1  CEO in strategic leadership

During the past decade, scholars focused on studying the effectiveness of the CEO at the top of the organisation and the middle management (Osborn et al., 2002; Yukl, 2006). Guided by Upper Echelons and strategic leadership theories, researchers proved that CEOs could enhance their teams' performance and the organisational outcomes (Quigley and Hambrick, 2015; Quigley and Graffin, 2017).

Crossland and Hambrick (2007: 334) summarised two interconnected parts of Upper Echelons theory: (1) the CEO and TMT actions are based on personalised interpretation of the strategic situation of the organisation; (2) the executive experiences, values, and personalities of the executives. Upper Echelons' perspective does not focus on individual leaders; rather, the theory concentrates on the executive groups to explain the organisational outcome (Hambrick, 2007b).

Strategic leadership scholars linked the CEO effect on the organisation to the CEO authority (Quigley and Hambrick, 2012), the job demands, and the CEO's need to achieve. This may lead to less focus on the strategic direction and more reliance on historical experience (Hambrick et

al., 2005). CEO attributes, accession, and succession have been reported to have significant associations with the CEO effect on organisational performance (Quigley, Wowak, and Crossland, 2020; Guthrie Datta, Jame, and Deepak, 1997). The selection and dismissal of a CEO affects the entire management team, shapes the strategic decisions, and significantly impacts an organisation's performance (Cannella and Holcomb, 2005a; Finkelstein et al.; 1996; Finkelstein et al., 2009; Steinbach et al., 2017).

Scholars debate the impact of CEOs on their organisations: 'Sometimes they matter a great deal, sometimes not at all: usually, their influence falls somewhere in between' (Finkelstein et al., 2009: 40). The strategic leadership authors called for more attention on how and when CEOs and executives matter. The title 'Chief' projects a powerful position where strategies are crafted, executed, and controlled (Davies and Davies, 2012). Mintzberg (1973) studied, minute-by-minute, the activities of five experienced CEOs and reported how CEOs worked in a hectic and unrelenting manner. Mintzberg (1973) noted that CEO activities are characterised by fragmentation, interruption, and interaction (Mintzberg, 1973; Mintzberg et al., 2000) producing a framework that detailed the CEO role in three categories: interpersonal, informational, and decisional.

Leadership and management scholars have studied the influence of the CEO on organisational performance. Wang and Torrisi (2018: 775) considered the roles 'CEOs play in the firm performance'. The authors reconciled their mixed findings to reveal critical relations about the actual correlations between the CEO characteristics and the organisational strategic actions and outcomes. For example, the researchers reported that younger CEOs are more familiar and comfortable with strategic activities with increased risk and product innovation than older CEOs. The CEO profession, formal education, and experience were positively associated with the strategic action.

Given that most CEOs hold a bachelor's degree is positively reflected in their firm strategic actions. Such relationship is attributed to their graduate training and their educational business degrees, where strategy, strategic implementation, and execution is emphasized (Certo et al., 2006; House et al., 2013). Hambrick and Mason (2004) found that international experience and exposure to unfamiliar problems and different cultures equipped CEOs to handle challenges. Leaders in the UAE were less transformational, and employees were less satisfied with their managers than in the USA (Bealer and Bhanugopan, 2014).

'Research has paid limited attention to the CEO and TMT interface to explain the effects of CEOs on firm-level outcomes. TMT traits and characteristics are importantly related to the CEO

leadership style. The top team leader has a disproportionate, sometimes dominating influence on the group's various outputs and characteristics.' (Suliman, Rao and Elewa, 2019: 64)

A study of expatriate CEOs in UAE organisations revealed that they have the authority, opportunity, and duty to change the organisational culture and meet the higher authorities' acceptance and satisfaction (Al Mazrouei and Pech, 2015).

Strategic leadership authors argued that the CEO role varies immensely. For example, the CEO of pluralistic or publicly listed organisations engages in external activities with policymakers and public entities, unlike the CEO of a private organisation (Boyne, 2002). Mintzberg's hypotheses were discussed extensively in strategic leadership literature. The author laid out several contingency factors, including external contextual, organisational, and individual characteristics. However, strategic leadership ignored the context of ambiguity where the CEOs and executives make their decisions (Certo et al., 2006; Finkelstein et al., 2009). Identifying the influence of the CEO's precise decision or action is impossible due to the multiple entangled contextual factors (Schepker et al., 2018).

Other researchers who tested TMT theories reported better results when TMT is used as the unit of analysis. Such studies demonstrated that significant variance in organisation-level outcomes could be explained by examining the attributes of the group of executives and the CEO (Bertrand and Schoar, 2003; Reutzel and Cannella, 2004; Zhang et al., 2015).

In conclusion, the CEO attributes, executive experience, preferences, interpretations, and authority influence what happens in an organisation (Finkelstein et al., 1996; Finkelstein et al., 2009; Carter and Greer, 2013).

In the following sections, I review:

- CEO selection and executive experience (Carpenter and Fredrickson, 2001; Mazutis, 2013; Quigley and Hambrick, 2015).
- CEO authority (Crossland and Hambrick, 2011; Haleblian and Finkelstein, 1993; Quigley and Hambrick, 2009; Quigley and Hambrick, 2012).
- TMT in strategic leadership

### 2.4.5.2  CEO selection

The CEO holds the highest formal leadership position in an organisation. The Upper Echelons positioned the CEO and the executive team as critical to organisational success (Quigley et al., 2019). The framework for selecting the CEO in Hambrick's model (section 2.4.4, Figure 2.3) included the Upper Echelons characteristics that guide the selection of the CEO and the executive

team. The psychological, cognitive-based value and the observable characteristics can be considered as the selection criteria. The additional variable drawn from the upper Echelons theory includes age, tenure, prior CEO experience, education, and socioeconomic background (Magnusson and Boggs, 2006). Information about the CEO values, attitudes, leadership, and previous track record and experience is a combination of observable and non-observable (Hambrick, 2006). The functional experience of the CEO or any executive has been associated with the performance outcomes. The CEO professional qualifications in the organisational industry, especially in the pluralistic organisation, are a selection criterion (Lai, 2014).

Since the global financial crisis, the public and scholarly interest in a CEO's strong performance in previous experiences (Quigley and Hambrick, 2015), competence, and ethical values (Chin et al., 2013) have been central in the academic and research on CEO selection. The new focus for CEOs has moved organisations away from the heroic leaders that dominated CEO hires before the global financial crisis in 2008 (Mazutis, 2013; Morton, 2018; Fisman et al., 2014).
Upper Echelons and strategic leadership theorists amplified the importance of testing the candidate CEO in positions comparable to the CEO job. The simulation testing the CEO qualifications allows the shareholders and the Board of Directors to examine the competency of the candidates (Quigley et al., 2020). Due to the dynamic CEO selection process, the new CEO positively affects the organisational performance and outcomes and empowers the new CEO to undertake strategic changes (Rizzi et al., 2019).

CEO researchers studied the risks associated with CEO selection. They focused on differentiating between internal and external CEOs (Quigley and Hambrick, 2012; Quigley and Graffin, 2017). Quigley and colleagues reaffirmed the complex non-programmable position of the CEO, subject to shifting with the context. The authors distinguished two unobserved but significant consequences of CEO selection. First, the difficulty of predicting how a newly selected CEO will perform. Second, contextual leadership research showed that a newly appointed CEO has a moderate influence over organisational outcomes. In contrast, the impact of contextual factors on organisational outcomes is more significant (Quigley et al., 2020). Hambrick and Quigley (2014) followed the premise that organisations and leaders operate under considerable inertial and administrative constraints, assessing the variance in organisational performance attributed to the contextual factors of the organisation versus the effects of the new CEO. The study, conducted in three countries in different industries, showed that the CEO accounts for one-quarter of the

variance in firm performance (Crossland and Hambrick, 2007; Hambrick and Quigley, 2014; Quigley and Hambrick, 2015).

### 2.4.5.3  CEO authority

CEO authority is described by the latitude of action, depending on CEO authority. CEO authority is the CEO's autonomy to lead others and influence the organisation's strategic direction and performance (Hambrick and Finkelstein, 1987; Finkelstein and Hambrick, 1990). CEO authority depends on three factors: context, the organisation, and individual characteristics (Finkelstein and Boyd, 1998). Authority influences CEO strategic decisions and effectiveness (Quigley and Hambrick, 2009). Empirical evidence confirmed that increased executive authority increases CEO impact on organisational performance and outcomes (Hackman and Wageman, 2007). CEO influence on the strategic choice of the organisation is linked to tenure (Finkelstein and Hambrick, 1990; Li and Tang, 2010). They found that CEO impact on the strategic choice and performance is more substantial when the CEO has high authority.

Strategic leadership scholars reported that CEO effectiveness can be determined by:

- The degree to which context permits diversity and change (Quigley and Hambrick, 2015)
- The degree to which the organisation is responsive to a selection of possible actions and empowers the CEO to formulate and execute those actions (Finkelstein et al., 2009)
- The degree to which the CEO can predict and create alternative courses of action (Quigley and Hambrick, 2012).

**Figure 2-4 CEO authority determinants**



(Finkelstein et al., 2009: 26)

Figure 2.4 shows that the contextual elements affecting CEO authority are the organisation type, size, funding structure, and resource availability. The external industry context differentiates the organisation in terms of product and opportunities for growth. CEO experience and ability to navigate ambiguous situations affect CEO authority.

Hambrick and Abrahamson (1995) examined CEO authority in seventy industries. Crossland and Hambrick (2011) expanded the list to include the organisation's national level in the study of the difference in firm performance credited to the CEO. They reported considerable differences in CEO effect within the same industries in different countries (Crossland and Hambrick, 2011). The cross-country differences warrant the inclusion of the external context to identify the CEO discretion (Hambrick and Quigley, 2014).

The executive authority construct improved the understanding of CEO influence on organisational outcomes (Crossland and Hambrick, 2007), CEO dismissal (Quigley et al., 2019), and executive attributes (Mazutis, 2013). Hambrick and Quigley's updated study examined the discretion of the CEO changes and chances. The authors did not theorise the CEO's attributes related to their ability to influence organisations (Quigley et al., 2019).

## 2.4.6 TMT in strategic leadership

Scholars consolidated the CEO and the TMT as a group member called the dominant coalition (Hambrick and Mason, 1984; Hambrick et al., 1996; Denis et al., 2001). The top management team (TMT) has a critical impact on organisational processes and outcomes (Hambrick and Mason, 1984; Finkelstein and Hambrick, 1996). In this research, the TMT includes the senior executives who hold positions at or above the level of manager (CFO, COO, etc.) and report directly to the CEO. Thus, TMT members play a crucial role in strategically orienting and controlling the firm (Hambrick and Mason, 1984; Carmeli et al., 2011).

In this research, the CEO leads the top management team (TMTs) in the UAE context. Usually, the CEO reports to the Board of Directors and TMT report to the CEO. This research explores the term 'team' in top management team.

**Figure 2-5 TMT hierarchal structure**



TMT and CEOs are not typical teams, and some refer to them as dominant coalitions (Cyert and March 1963; Bourgeois, 1980; Denis et al., 2001) or the inner circles (Thompson, 1967; Finkelstein, 1992), top management groups (Hambrick, 1994) or top management teams (Bourgeious 1980). Hambrick (1995: 40) stated that using the term team to describe the top management groups is a 'misnomer'. 'TMT refers to executives holding functions separately from each other.

Following the strategic leadership theorist for this research, the word 'team' in top management teams (TMT) refers to the executives at the organisation's top. However, Hambrick (1994: 22) explained that the constellation of executives might not necessarily act in a 'team-like' fashion.

Leadership theory is built on the study of individuals. In contemporary organisations, this means chief executive officers (CEOs) and business executives leading other units. In some organisations, the governing bodies such as the Board of Directors are included in the scope of the strategic leadership (Finkelstein et al., 1996; Finkelstein et al., 2009). The authors stated five reasons in support of the academic study of TMT:

- Considering that TMT members head different units, the aggregation of the multiple divergent objectives and multiple interests and preferences at the top of organisations affect how an organisation performs effectively (Simons and Peterson, 2000; Haleblian and Finkelstein, 1993).
- TMTs at the strategic apex of the organisation are responsible for strategic decision making, organisation structure, performance, and outcomes (Carpenter and Fredrickson, 2001; Certo et al. 2006; Cannella, 2001).
- Role differentiation is needed in the TMT, such as the need for the chief financial officer in the publicly listed organisation to certify the accounting statement with the CEO as dictated by regulators (Finkelstein et al., 2009).
- Strategic outcomes require power distribution and interfacing to bridge top managers' fragmentation (Simons and Peterson, 2000; Hambrick, 2015).
- A series of Upper Echelons hypotheses reported evidence that using TMT as a level of analysis provides better predictions of organisational outcomes (Finkelstein et al., 2009; Lear, 2012).

## 2.4.7 TMT conceptual elements

Strategic leadership scholars identified three central conceptual elements in the TMT construct: structure, composition, and process (Figure 2.6).

**Figure 2-6 TMT conceptual elements**
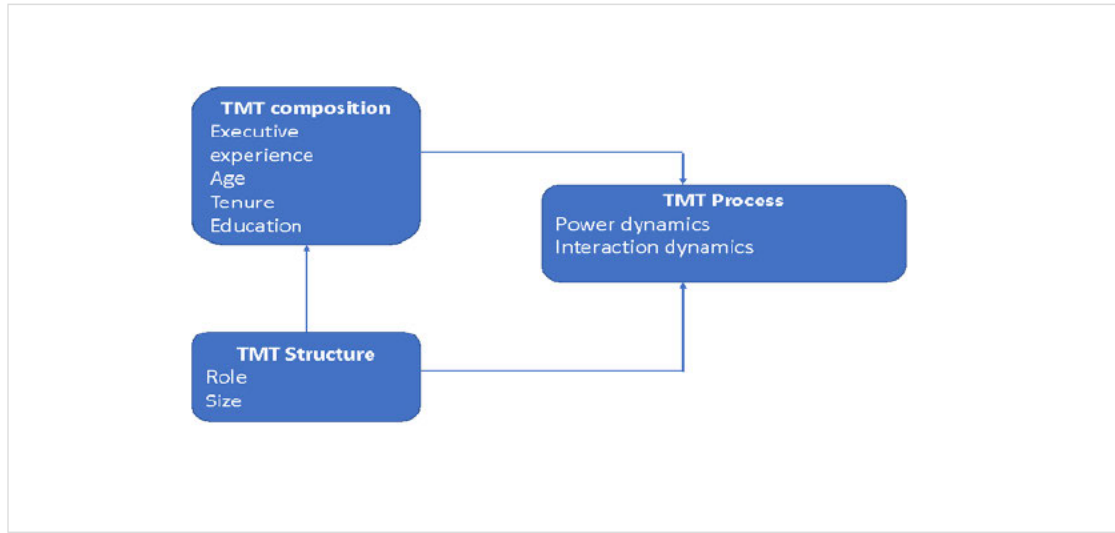


(Finkelstein et al., 2009)

TMT structure is defined by the roles of the top management members and the group size. At the core of the TMT, structures set the effects of the interdependence of the different members of TMT on how strategic decisions are made (Hambrick, 2007b). TMT are mainly heads of departments and functions, and they have more role interferences than the leaders of independent business units. The organisation status and structure are directly linked to the TMT constellation, integration, and alignment (O'Reilly III, Caldwell, and Barnett, 1989; Cannella Jr, 2001a; Jansen et al., 2008). The nature of the executive roles and the team's size constitute a fundamental aspect of the TMT structure.

TMT composition refers to the collective characteristics of top team members, such as their values, cognitive bases, personalities, and experiences (Finkelstein et al., 2009: 123). The composition or design has been extensively studied to conceptualise TMT diversity. In addition, the research will explore the executive experience, including TMT age, tenure, functional background, and education (Eesley, Hsu, and Robert, 2014).

The TMT process is the third central conceptual element of the TMT, which refers to the interaction among top managers in strategic planning or execution (O'Reilly et al., 1989). The TMT processes are distinct from group dynamics at other levels in the organisation (Finkelstein et al., 2009). The uniqueness of the TMT process refers to:

- The degree of TMT engagement in mutual and collaborative actions (Hambrick and Mason; 1984; Carpenter et al., 2004; Lear, 2012)

- The clarity of the TMT roles in the organisation and the constellation with other TMT (Denis et al., 2001; Ma and Seidl, 2018; Boone and Hendriks, 2009)
- The extent to which the TMT are committed and supportive of the strategy's collective execution (Avolio et al., 2004; Carmeli et al., 2011).

The TMT conceptual elements composition, structure, and process are related to the TMT interfacing with each other and with the CEO. TMT researchers agreed that the dynamics of TMT interactions affect the degree of integration and alignment, which have been conceptually and empirically linked to the organisational outcomes (Carpenter et al., 2004; Knight et al., 1999; Hambrick et al., 2015; Barrick et al., 2007; Finkelstein et al., 2009). Finkelstein concluded that TMT processes are not measured but are predicted, or it is assumed that the team demography influences the team processes while the TMT processes facilitate the relationship between TMT demography and organisation outcomes (Simons and Peterson, 2000; Carpenter, 2002; Cannella Jr, 2001b). The TMT composition, structure, and process have been described as the 'black box' in Upper Echelons (Hambrick, 1981; Hambrick et al., 1996; Hambrick, 1997).

### 2.4.7.1  Team versus group

There are no problem-free TMT (Hambrick, 2015). The author concluded that TMT results are inconsistent with their earlier study results in 2005. Hambrick identified the recurring issues facing CEOs with their TMT: inadequate capabilities of an individual TMT or several members, harmful internal rivalries, groupthink, and team fragmentation (Hambrick, 2015, Hambrick et al., 2015). Several strategic leadership scholars highlighted the need to operationalise the multiple definitions of TMTs.  Developing variable operationalisations of TMT in different settings may lead to a greater understanding of TMT influence in particular settings (Carpenter and Sanders, 2002; Nielsen, 2010). TMTs are not constant and may have several central members, but TMT group composition varies depending on the strategic issue under consideration (Cannella, 2001b). Finkelstein et al. (2009: 128) considered an organisational strategy to increase the investment in research and development. They studied TMT groups that included a CFO and VPs of marketing and research and development but excluded the VP of human resources and the general counsel (Finkelstein et al., 2009).

### 2.4.7.2  TMT power dynamics

Executives have the power and authority to plan, implement, and set strategic directions inside their organisations (Finkelstein 1992). Power and authority are broadly defined in strategic leadership. Researchers identified four sources of power: structural (position), prestige (network), ownership, and expertise (Cannella, 2001b; Shen, 2003; Ma and Seidl, 2018).

The authority of the TMT members is unequal, which requires consideration of the difference in the authority levels when studying TMT. The group of individuals with the most significant authority will significantly influence the organisation (Carpenter et al., 2004; Nielsen, 2010). In a study of 102 organisations, researchers asked 444 TMT members, excluding the CEO, to rate their TMT counterparts' influence on a strategic decision (resource allocation, organisation) that they were tackling. The results identified a sizable gap in power between TMT members (Finkelstein et al., 2009: 129).

Researchers established that TMTs are not cooperative teams. They are groups of individuals, each with their own goals and preferences (Eisenhardt, 2000;). The diversity of their strategic objectives is unstructured and ambiguous and requires power (Denis et al., 2001; Denis et al., 1996; Denis et al., 2007; Denis et al., 2010; Carmeli et al., 2011).

Researchers predicted that TMT expertise is power and is the most predictive power among TMT member interactions (Finkelstein, 1990; Carpenter et al., 2001; Certo et al., 2006). However, expertise is difficult to measure and relies on functional backgrounds and strategic contingencies (Bunderson and Van der Vegt, 2018). Pitcher and Smith (2001) studied the changes of a single TMT member power and TMT process over different periods. The first period was during the leadership of a participative CEO who communicated the strategy and held frequent meetings with the TMT. All TMT opinions were sought out. The results of TMT heterogeneity explained average organisational outcomes. The second phase was when the CEO was changed, and the new CEO was one of the TMT from the previous era. The new CEO did not seek input from the TMT members, except for the CFO. The authors reported that even though the team's composition was nearly identical to the first era, the TMT did not affect the organisational outcome.

TMT influence and authority are central to the study of strategic leadership. Considering the TMT as units of analysis in this research serves two aims. First, it differentiates between the CEO and the TMT; second, it explores the impact of TMT interactions and dynamics.

### 2.4.7.3  TMT interaction and dynamics

TMT composition, structure, and process are interconnected and affect TMT interactions. The most studied TMT construct is demographic heterogeneity. The popularity of this construct is due to the accessibility of the information, reliability, and objectivity (Carpenter and Fredrickson, 2001; Priem et al., 1999; Ling et al., 2015). Researchers applied the effects of power of expertise to predict the power of interaction (Waldman et al., 2006). The power of the chief financial officer during strategic financial discussions is predicted to be higher than other TMT. Similar interaction effects can be expected depending on the differentiation among the TMT members and the context (Certo et al., 2006).

Cannella and Holocomb (2005) measured the interaction power of TMT members by adjusting the demographic measures by the power of the TMT position or expertise to establish a consistent and more robust relationship between TMT composition, structure, and process.

Research on the conceptual elements, especially TMT demographics and TMT tenure, was extensively studied due to the popularity of Hambrick and Mason's (Hambrick and Mason) Upper Echelons conceptual framework. The demographics research highlighted the positive features of TMT heterogeneity in strategic choice (Carpenter et al., 2002; Carmeli et al., 2012); organisational change (Denis, 2001; Wiersema, 1992; Denis, 1996; Carpenter, 2001), innovation (Bantel and Jackson, 1989; Eesley et al., 2014) and organisational effectiveness (Colbert et al., 2014).

In this research, the TMT composition, including executive experience, tenure and education, TMT structure, and TMT process, will be explored to understand further the TMT's interrelationships and the contextual conditions that help explain TMT characteristics (Hambrick et al., 2015).

## 2.4.8  Conclusion

A primary gap in the strategic leadership literature is the study of the role and the responsibilities of the strategic leaders, the CEO and the TMT, in a single study (House and Aditya, 1997; Sirmon et al., 2007; Hitt et al., 2011; House et al., 2013).

The Upper Echelons and strategic leadership theorists focused on the CEOs' and executives' (Hambrick, 1995; Hambrick, 1989) characteristics and effects on strategic choices and organisational outcomes (Hambrick, 1981; Hambrick et al., 2005a; Hambrick et al., 2005b; Quigley and Hambrick, 2015; Crossland and Hambrick, 2007; Chatterjee and Hambrick, 2007; Hambrick and Chen, 2008; Finkelstein et al., 2009). The authors downplayed the role of the context since the inception of the Upper Echelon theory. The understanding of how the contextual influences

shape TMT and CEO characteristics and actions is limited due to the descriptive nature of the context elements. Finkelstein et al. (2009: 124) reviewed the Upper Echelons research and concluded that 'strategic decisions are not made in a vacuum'. The interactions originate from the top executives with different social and political drives and the various contextual conditions, which give rise to the importance and the distinctiveness of TMT configurations.

Other scholars argued that leadership unfolds in a different internal organisational context where one or more extreme events are likely to occur. The attention to context in the study of strategic contextual and dynamic leadership gained increased interest (Denis et al., 2001; Osborn et al., 2002; Uhl-Bien, 2009).

The recent strategic leadership research finding emphasised the significant implications of the context on the organisational performance. Quigley and Hambrick (2015) quantified the impact of the CEO selection on the organisational performance as 25%. The focus on the consequences of contextual factors on the organisational performance and contextualisation of the CEO gained the attention of the strategic leadership theorists (Hambrick et al., 1996; Chatterjee and Hambrick, 2007; Crossland and Hambrick, 2007; Hambrick and Chen, 2008; Quigley and Hambrick, 2015).

Contextual leadership researchers established that context is an essential factor (Osborn et al., 2002). In the following section, I review context in leadership research and explore the impact of context on strategic leadership in pluralistic organisations.

## 2.5  Review of contextual leadership

### 2.5.1  Overview

The rationale to include the review of contextual leadership is: First, the study of how context alters the impact of leadership on various aspects of the organisation was avoided by perceptive and renowned leadership scholars (Gardner et al., 2005); second, context changes the effect of leadership on many criteria as situational approaches (Liden and Antonakis, 2009); third, context is a dominant factor that establishes the boundary conditions on the type of leadership displayed and leadership effectiveness (Osborn et al., 2002; Uhl-Bien, 2006). Osborn et al. (2014) reviewed contextual leadership theories and found three approaches of incorporating the context in the study of leadership: (1) leadership is nested in a hierarchy. (2) leadership is universal in social systems. (3) leadership is a combination of (1) and (2). Therefore, it is a hybrid approach to observe and measure what is visible.

This present study aims to incorporate the industry and the organisational external context to advance the understanding of the antecedents and consequences of CEO and TMT leadership effectiveness in pluralistic organisations. The aim is to produce an updated framework that considers the country-level context in which the pluralistic organisations exist (Yukl, 2008; House et al., 2013; Yukl, 2013; Yamak et al., 2014).

Table 2.4 includes a historical summary of the context in leadership and organisation theories. Fiedler was considered one of the first theorists to consider context as a contingency element of leadership (Ayman et al., 1995). Fiedler (1991) claimed that matching the leader's trait and situational factors (task, organisational structure, and so on) enhances group performance and group delivery. Fiedler's (1958) model considered the functions as the context of leadership. The clarity and structure of the task moderates the relationships between the leadership styles and leader effectiveness (Ayman, 1995). Several theoretical models within the contingency theory concluded that the context's task-related, social, and temporal aspects define leadership effectiveness. In contrast, the role of the physical characteristics of the isolated context remained primarily underappreciated.

The path-goal theory House (1997) studied the structure of the tasks in a specific situation. The Leader Preferred Co-worker (LPC) interacts with the situation favourableness and conceptualises

the leader's sense of control over the situation (House et al., 2002). The path-goal theory explored how different leadership styles interact with the followers and situational factors such as the task structure, the leader's formal authority, and the workgroup norms to predict whether each behaviour can motivate the followers or enhance their satisfaction and performance (Oc, 2018).

The role of the leader in strategic management is downplayed in the multi-level strategic perspective. Pettigrew's (2012) process framework is based on multi-level theory construction. (Pettigrew, 2012) referred to context as an antecedent social, political, and economic environment of the country where the organisation's leader operates. Context is the strategy and objective, and the process is the mode of operations, technology, people, products, positioning, and corporate culture (Pettigrew, 2012).

**Table 2-4 Historical review of contextual leadership**

| Field | Theory | Research aim | Contribution to research | Authors and year |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Contingency theory | Emergent trait contingency, normative contingency, situational and path-goal theories linked different leadership styles to specific contextual demands<br><br>Context plays a central role in leadership: Leadership does not occur in vacuum and leadership is not an individual phenomenon | 1- LPC (Leader Preferred Co-worker interacting with the situational control and influence, leader's sense of control over the situation.<br><br>2- Path-goal- explored the different leadership styles (supportive, participative, goal-oriented) with the characteristics of followers (preference for structure, skills, ability to deliver, locus of control).<br><br>3-Cognitive resource theory- studied whether the situational contingencies moderate the effect of leader intelligence or experience on leader effectiveness conceptualizing the situation and interpersonal, impersonal, temporal context.<br><br>4 –Normative model of leadership- leaders participation model. The leader's decision making is one of four criteria that determine the effectiveness | Each of the theoretical models make the role of context clear, task-related, and social<br><br>Historical aspects of the context define the effective leadership style, while the role of the leadership physical characteristics is discrete context and is largely underappreciated.<br><br>Context is moderating factor for the relationship between leadership styles and leader effectiveness.<br><br>Attempted to resolve the conflicted results by specifying the conditions task orientation, relationship orientation and leadership experience in small groups and its tasks are influenced by the situational control and influence and conceptualized as leaders' sense of control over the situation. | (Vroom and Yetton, 1973; House and Mitchell, 1974; Stodgill, 1974; Fiedler, 1978; Fiedler and Gracia 1987; House et al., 2002; Bennis, 2007; Avolio, 2007; OC, 2018) |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | of the way decisions are made. | | | |
| Strategic Management | External and internal context impact on the strategy, the actions, and the organizational outcome. | The content, context and strategy at the centre of the leaders' actions | Leadership resides in the context the actions and interactions of leaders. | (Pettigrew 1987; Pettigrew 1997; Pawar and Eastman, 1997; Pettigrew, 2007) |
| Behavioural | The generic leadership behaviours that characterize outstanding leadership in various situations and cultures. The impact of specific areas of the individua's and group's behaviour. These areas include motivation, communication, teams, and leadership. | Defined context as situational opportunities and constraints that affect the occurrence and meaning of organizational behaviour. Shed light on the importance of organizational context impact on individual behaviour | Searching for universal traits and behavioural styles. | (Bryman, 2002; House, 1995; Bass, 1997; Gordon, 2002; Groves 2005: Johns, 2006). |
| Cross-cultural leadership | A Combination of implicit leadership theory, the contingency theory, and Hofstede six pillars of culture. | Social and cultural values impact leadership expectations Created a modified theoretical model. | The universal theoretical model showing the impact of cultural values on social phenomenon and leadership expectations | (House et al, 1997; Hofstede, 2003; House et al, 2004; Hofstede, 2006; House et al, 2013). |
| Contextual leadership | Addresses the leadership theory in a macro view replacing the meso/micro theories. Applying the human agency by an interplay of leadership through complexity theory. | Identified contextual factors influencing leadership and its outcome. Examining whether situational of contextual factors decrease or improve the impact of leadership practices | Develop specific hypotheses, details of methods, and holistic view of the context impact. | (Shamir and Howell, 1999; Osborn and Marion, 2001; Osborn, Hunt and Jauch, 2002; Yammarino, Dionne, Chun and Dansereau, 2005; Porter and Mc Laughlin, 2006; |

| | Osborn and Marion, 2009; Hannah et al., 2009) |
|---|---|

The context in behavioural theory is addressed to identify the limitation of leadership. Groves (2005) aimed to drive attention to the follower's role in leadership while assessing the magnitude of the organisational change as the critical contextual variable facilitating leadership.

Context is the moderating factor for the relationship between leadership styles and leader effectiveness. Therefore, scholars in contingency theory attempted to resolve the conflicting results by specifying the conditions under which situational control influences other dimensions or forms of leadership: for example, theorising about the link between the task orientation, relationship orientation, leadership experience and the leaders' sense of control over the situation.

## 2.5.2  The context in contingency theory

Following Fiedler (1978), contingency theorists examined the role of context in leadership during the same period, reflecting increased interest (House and Mitchell, 1974; House and Aditya, 1997). Other contingency models, known as cognitive resource theory, explored whether situational contingencies moderate the effect of leader intelligence or experience on the leader's effectiveness (OC, 2018: 235).

Contingency theorists associated the task, social, and temporal aspects of the context and other situational factors with the effective leadership style. At the same time, the role of the physical characteristics of the discrete context is vastly underappreciated (Johns, 2006). Theoretically, context is still a moderating factor for the relationships between leadership styles and leader effectiveness. However, empirical evidence for the direct effect of context on leadership came later (Lord et al., 2001; House et al., 2002).

The rise of the new leadership theories, transformational, charismatic, value-driven, authentic, and other theories, decreased the importance of contingency theories, giving way to the expansive leadership theories in other areas of management research, organisational behaviour, and contemporary contextual leadership theories (Dinh et al., 2014).

## 2.5.3  The context in behaviour theory

Examining the effect of contextual features on organisational behaviour research means considering the influence of context on organizational behaviours (Johns, 2006). However, even those undertaking comparative study within and across countries regularly inadequately modelled the contextual effects (Rousseau and Fried, 2001). Johns (2006) summed up the problem by stating that the dearth of contextualized research is the absence of a robust taxonomy of situations and a lack of refined systematic language for expressing context. In their review of exemplary

organizational behaviour research, Mowday and Sutton (1993) identified that the most compelling research was focused on organizational phenomena. They pointed out that producing such research was increasingly rare as researchers became more removed from organizations and organizational phenomena.

The depth of understanding of organizational behaviour requires immersion within the organizational context. If organizational behaviour progresses, researchers must focus on organizational phenomena by becoming more immersed in an organizational context (Mowday and Sutton, 1993). Conveying context and contextual influences within the organizational behaviour theory contributed to a deeper appreciation of effects and relationships to understand why and how certain behaviours exist in different corporate settings (Johns, 2001; Johns 2006). A deeper appreciation of context can elicit innovative perspectives and solve questions or issues by offering different interpretations and new insight (Rousseau and Fried, 2001).

The organisational behaviour theorist's perspective argued that the impact of context on organisational behaviour is not sufficiently recognised or appreciated by researchers (Johns, 2006). Johns defined context as the situational opportunities and constraints that affect the existence and the importance of organisational behaviours and functional relationships between the contextual variables. Johns (2006) claimed that his framework is planned to define and describe the leadership context, clarifying how the contextual factors shape the leaders' behaviour and categorisation, and how the effect of such elements can be studied comprehensively and systematically. However, Johns' treatment of the impact of context on organisational behaviour tends to be non-specific and focused on a particular aspect of the context. Johns identified several 'faces' of context. The first context face is situational strength, second is situational prominence, and the third face is a cross-level effect on organisational behaviour. The context in organizational behaviour theory lacked the attention to how the broader organisational context affects individuals and team behaviours and leadership (Porter and McLaughlin, 2006).

Unlike contingency theory, which included the collective context, behaviour theory focused on the impact of the discrete context of leadership. The need for more focus on the context continued to gain the attention of leadership and management theorists and researchers.

## 2.5.4  Context in strategic management theories

Strategic management researchers expanded focus from studying leaders as individuals to examining the process of leadership, which influences actions, interactions, relationships, ideas,

and attitudes in the context of the organisation (Pettigrew, 1987; Hosking, 1988; Denis et al., 2001). The authors downplayed the role of the 'individual' leader, explaining that the leaders' part is deemed necessary, as it is only one of several factors in the leadership process (Denis et al., 2001; Pettigrew, 2012). Pettigrew warned leadership researchers to treat leadership as a continuous process, where context refers to the antecedent conditions of change, the internal culture, and the political context where leadership occurs, as well as full feature of the outer context of the firm from which much of the organisational legitimacy originates (Pettigrew, 1987: 560).

Pawar and Eastman (1997: 81) addressed the limitation of contextual influences and their implications for leadership. Pawar and Eastman identified a set of contextual factors and outlined how they influence organisational receptivity to leadership. Pawar and Eastman (1997) specified how organisational contexts with differing levels of receptivity to a leadership require different transformational leadership processes. Based on Pettigrew's (1987) study of the organisational context (outer and inner context), Pawar and Eastman (1997: 88) suggested considering the internal organisational context. Organisations will be more receptive to leadership when leadership members are aligned more than when the leadership members are competing. Thus, the simple organisational structure and informal forms will be more predisposed to leadership than the systematic and formal organisational structures.

## 2.5.5  Context in cross-cultural leadership

The theory behind the GLOBE program is a combination of the implicit leadership theory, the value belief theory of culture (Hofstede, 2003), and the structural contingency theory of organisational form and effectiveness (House et al., 2013).
Robert House and 170 colleagues from more than 62 nations led the GLOBE project. The study included the Middle East cluster in long-term cross-cultural leadership studies. Data was collected from more than 17,000 managers in nine hundred organisations across three industries (House et al., 2004).

House et al. (2004) created and modified the theoretical model after testing the constructs of the initial research. The GLOBE study was structured around cultural dimensions showing that socio-cultural values and practices predict societal phenomena and leadership expectations. The GLOBE authors tested the relationship between cultural values, societal leaders' expectations

(CLT), and implicit leadership behaviour and effectiveness. The authors conducted their second study in 2007, in which they provided an in-depth country-specific analysis of cultural values and practices. The study results confirmed that leadership expectations are essential to cross-cultural practices (House et al., 2004; Hofstede, 2006; Javidan et al., 2006).

House et al. (2013: 37) adopted the GLOBE definition of leadership as 'the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organisation of which they are members.' House et al. (2013) focused on strategic leadership to empirically assess the effectiveness of CEO leadership in twenty -four countries. Their review of the strategic leadership and Upper Echelons theory underlined the debate about the importance of executive leadership in contrast to the widely held view that executives are fundamental to organisational success or failure. The argument is that executives are critical to organisational success; CEOs have the highest position. They found that legitimacy exerts the greatest influential leadership role (Bass and Stodgill, 1990; Cannella, 2001a). The CEO and the team of executives set the organisational priorities, develop processes, attract talent, and execute the strategy (Hambrick, 1994; Waldman et al., 2001). The authors argued that CEO and TMT decisions are subject to the Board of Directors' approval and other authority levels that supersede CEO and TMT parameters (House et al., 2013).

House et al. (2013) considered CEOs as the bridge between cross-cultural leadership and strategic leadership studies. The study was conducted by seventy researchers who collected data from 1000 CEOs and over 5000 TMT from various industries in 24 countries. The authors concluded that with globalisation, the dominance of Western education and the MBA programs decreased the cultural difference impact on the CEO behaviour and leadership effectiveness.

The study revealed two significant findings, using the pre-defined nine cultural dimensions; the results did not show a meaningful relationship between cultural values and the primary leadership behaviour (House et al., 2013: 322). While it is intuitively appealing to presume that leaders behave according to the values of their society (Hofstede, 2006), the empirical finding pointed to a different direction. The second finding was that societal leadership expectations predicted the CEO leadership behaviour. The results showed a strong relationship between the leader's behaviour and their society's leadership expectations. The GLOBE study included the Middle East cluster and showed a strong correlation between cultural values and societal leadership expectations (House et al., 2004). Hence the new study results confirmed that leader's belief that they are effective in society is driven by societal expectations more than cultural values (House et

al., 2013). Figure 2.7 presents House et al. (2013) study results showing the impact of national culture on national leadership expectations which consequently impacts the leader's behaviour.

**Figure 2-7 Leadership expectations and leader's behaviour**



(House et al., 2013)

The GLOBE studies (2004, 2007 and 2013) advanced the leadership across different societies, differentiating between practices and values, including the Middle Eastern cluster (Egypt, Kuwait, Qatar, Turkey, and Iran). 'Because the extant literature on executive leadership across cultures is scant, we need to rely on the GLOBE integrated theory to study the strategic leadership' (House et al., 2013: 34).

House et al's (2013) findings highlighted implications regarding the study of senior executives and leaders leading employees or working with managers and executives from different parts of the world. This cross-cultural perspective highlighted the importance of regional leadership research and confirmed that Middle Eastern leadership research is scarce.

## 2.6  Framing contextual leadership literature

Johns (2006) maintained that conveying contextual influences within research aims to understand why and how leadership results or behaviours exist in different settings. The consideration of the context can extract advanced perspectives and provide a proper understanding. In addition, the study of context may serve as solutions by offering different explanations and views, diverse

interpretations, and new insights in the study of leadership (Mowday and Sutton, 1993; Rousseau and Fried, 2001).

In his research on context, Johns (2006: 386) speculated thus: 'If a research study aimed to study the impact of variable A on variable B. Still, instead, the researchers discovered that variable B causes variable A'. Johns (2006) imagined another scenario: 'Imagine you are doing a study in which you anticipate that a strong positive relationship between two variables, instead you find a strong negative relationship'. Johns (2006) referred to 'surprising results' as the researchers' failure to consider the contextual influence when conducting the research.

Organisational characteristics represent the context for individuals, and the external environment is the context for the organisation (O'Leary and Almond, 2009). Context is the stimuli and phenomena that surround and exist in the environment external to the individuals at a different level of analysis (Mowday and Suttonn,1993). After repeated requests to consider the contextual factors that influence leadership, contextual leadership emerged in the theoretical and empirical leadership literature. Contextual leadership research is a broad and reasonably new area of leadership research (Osborn et al., 2002; Antonakis et al., 2003; Porter and McLaughlin, 2006).

Due to the fast pace of growth of contextual leadership research, it lacked structure, standards, and agreement regarding the best strategies for developing and implementing the contextual leadership framework (Oc, 2018; Hackman and Wageman, 2007). Johns attempted to address this problem and developed the contextual leadership framework Figure (2.8). The author conceptualised the context that impacts the organisational behaviour on two levels:

- The collection of external factors, such as the environment, may provide the necessary information concerning the elements of a given context.
- The omnibus context is a set of specific conditions or variables that influence and moderate the relationships between the organisation and the behaviours of the members involved. The two levels interface to predict the outcome, omnibus context, and discrete context (Johns, 2006).

**Figure 2-8 John's framework linking context to leadership**
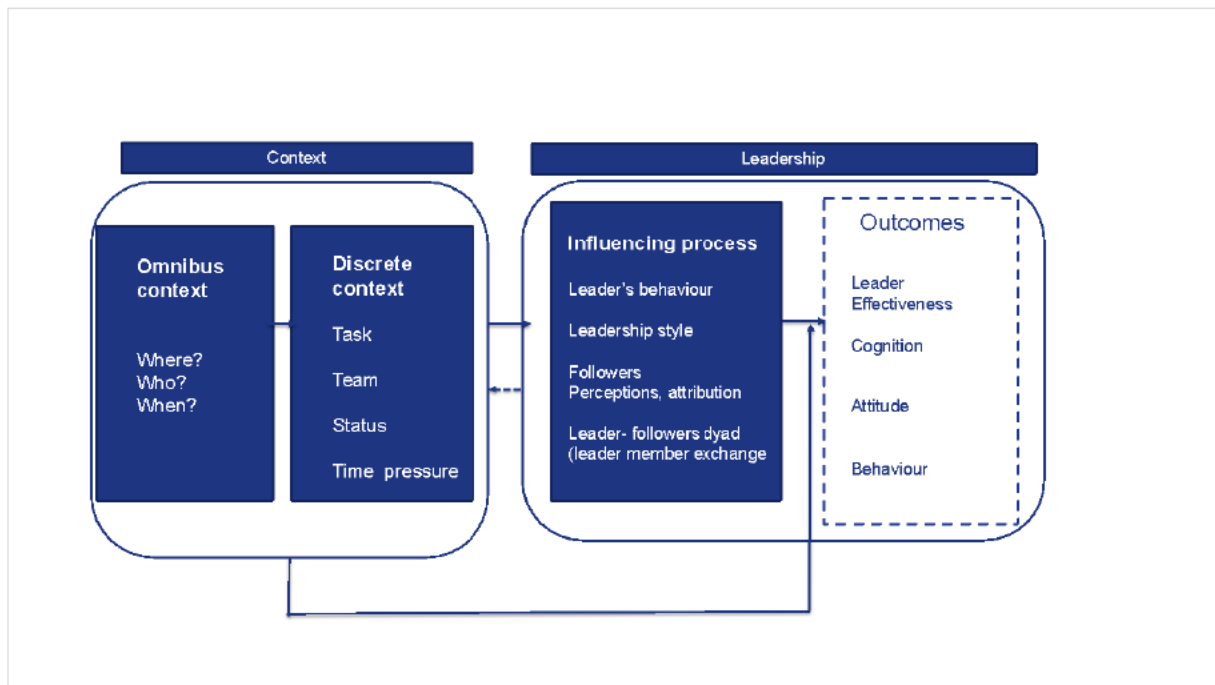


(Johns, 2006)

The framework that Johns (2006) introduced has been adopted and portrayed in most leadership research. Figure 2.8 shows what the author described as omnibus elements of the pluralistic organisation context (place, individuals, time). The distinct context includes the task, team, or time that directly or indirectly influences or moderates the behaviour of leaders (John 2006: 393). The third box is the leader, followers, and the dyadic relations between the CEO and the followers. The fourth dotted box in John's (2006) framework includes leadership outcomes, leader behaviour, cognition, and attitude. John's (2006) example of cognition outcomes is perceived support, and attitude outcome is trust in the leader. Johns' (2006) framework received the attention of researchers and increased the emphasis on contextual leadership research. This attention resulted in decreasing the focus on contingency models of leadership, implicit leadership theories, and new age leadership models (Oc, 2018). However, the framework was critiqued for the ambiguity of the outcome (Nilsen and Bernhardsson, 2019).

Osborn et al.'s (2002) seminal article on contextual leadership considered the commonly ignored areas of leadership research. The authors highlighted the importance of the leadership context using macro-level variables, such as the external environment, the technological development,

and the theoretical perspectives such as complexity theory (Uhl-Bien, 2006; Uhl-Bien et al. 2007; Osborn et al., 2014).

Osborn explained the importance of considering the leadership context at different levels of the organisation. The author's example was an organisation seeking a strategy to advance technological innovation. The strategy is the responsibility of the management teams, they make decisions and anticipate organisational outcomes. Employing complexity theory and the system perspective, Osborn and Marion studied four organisational states: (1) organisational status, (2) hierarchy levels, (3) top team, and (4) leaders' direct and indirect network (Table 2.5). Osborn et al. (2002) discussed how leadership can emerge differently in each of these contexts and how the context influences organisational performance.

**Table 2-5 Elements of internal organisational context**

| Key aspects | Organisational Context |
|---|---|
| Organisational status | Organisations in change mode (competition technology, internal initiatives, or institutional evolution). |
| Hierarchical level | Top of the organization |
| **Top team** | Communication, exchanging of information. |
| **Leader's direct and indirect network** | Direct network related to strategic information |

(Osborn et al., 2002)

Table 2.5 is extracted from Osborn et al. (2002), Osborn and Marion (2009), and Osborn et al. (2014) showing the organisation in the change context. The top management teams oversee the organisational change, which requires strategic choices, communication, and networking inside and outside the organisation, the key aspects of the internal organisation context.

This research is focused on TMTs, where the strategic decisions impact organisational performance and outcomes. Leadership literature found that contextual leadership is one of the most trending topics in leadership research. The literature review focused on the internal pluralistic organisational context: organisational structure, culture, size, category, industry, organisational resources, and processes (Porter and McLaughlin, 2006; Johns, 2006; Denis et al., 2007).

## 2.6.1 Organisational internal context

Contextual leadership theories stated that specific organisational contexts such as military, education, healthcare, and other settings, constrain or ignite organisational leadership practices.

Contextual leadership theories explicitly indicated that contextual variables (the period in an organisation or environmental characteristics) impact the leadership process (Dinh et al., 2014 Meuser; Linden and Hu, 2014).

Porter and McLaughlin (2006) questioned how the organisational context impact on leadership had been researched. Porter and McLaughlin proposed seven components of the organisational context: culture/climate, goals/purpose, people/composition, processes, type/condition, structure, and time (Liden and Antonakis, 2009).

After decades of repeated leadership theorists appeals for more significant consideration of the organisational context, management research (Rousseau and Fried, 2001; John 2006) and leadership research (Osborn et al., 2002; Hanneh, 2009) broadened the way to contextual leadership research. Contextual leadership research examined how each contextual factor influences leadership effectiveness and organisational outcome. The definition of contextual influences was not significantly different from the contingency and management theorists' explanations. However, the contribution of the contextual leadership research showed how the other contextual elements such as the organisational climate/culture, group of organisational compositions, economic environment, and organisational support for diversity moderate the leadership and leaders' development in an organisation (Day et al., 2014).

Porter and McLaughlin (2006: 564) reviewed theoretical and empirical articles from 1990 to 2005 and concluded that more attention is given to the impact of culture and leadership in the conceptual literature where twice as many organizational cultures or climates occur in the empirical research. Theoretical and empirical organisational culture emerged as the most frequently considered types, which was supportive of innovation and change (Hofstede, 2003; Scandura and Dorfman, 2004; House et al., 2004).

## 2.6.2 Organisational structure

The organisational structure is one of the most reflective and apparent aspects of an organisation. Theorists identified two types of organisational structures, mechanistic and organic. Organisation structure impacts the leaders' attributions and shapes the leaders' direction of behaviour (Pawar and Eastman, 1997; Marta et al., 2005). For example, transformational leadership theorists proposed that leaders are more likely to inspire and lead transformation in organisations with

simple machine or divisional structures. Howell and Shamir (Howell and Shamir) suggested that charismatic leadership is most likely to arise in organisations with organic structures.

Klein and House (1995) suggested that a leader's interaction with subordinates occurs during the execution of interdependent tasks. The task structure is connected to the organisational structure and the leader's creativity and innovation (Mumford et al., 2002). Some empirical studies identified the elements of the organisation structure as the size of the organisation, the type of business, the hierarchical levels, the time of establishment, the teams' composition, goals, and purposes (Waldman et al., 1998; Carpenter et al., 2004). Other scholars linked the organisation's condition to its accessibility of resources, information, and strategy during turbulence, uncertainty, and challenges (Antonakis et al., 2003; Gardner et al., 2005). In contrast, some researchers linked context to the composition of the teams, team demographic, and skills and capabilities.

**Table 2-6 Components of organisational context**

| Components | Elements | Authors | Contribution |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Culture** | Ethics, adaptability, change, innovation, conservative, multicultural fairness. | (Avolio, 1993; Pawar and Eastman, 1997; House et al., 2004; Hambrick, Finkelstein and Mooney, 2005; Mumford et al., 2005; Porter and McLaughlin, 2006) | **Transformational leadership.** The organisation culture affects the selection of a leader. Leaders develop the desired culture of innovation, transformation, information, and learning. |
| **Structure** | Status and size Hierarchical levels. Team compositions | (Scandura and Lankau, 1996; Carpenter et al., 2004; Mumford et al. 2005; Porter and McLaughlin, 2006). | **Upper Echelons** Diversity of TMT increased creativity and innovation, mainly in TMT, where positive effects of TMT diversity are linked to a positive outcome. |
| | Context of stability, uncertainty and dynamic equilibrium, availability of resources, firm (financial status and reputational) | (Boal and Hoojberg, 2000; Osborn, 2002; Groves, 2005) | **Strategic leadership** context has been exclusively tested at the top levels. |

Table 2.6 includes a summary of the leadership literature where the two elements of the organisational context structure and culture are the focus of the study and the contribution to research. For example, researchers' contextual leadership researchers studied ethics, adaptability,

change, innovation, conservativeness, and multicultural fairness in transformational leadership. The authors' names and year of publication are listed. The contribution of researchers on culture appeared in transformation leadership research, specifically the impact of culture on the selection of leaders, innovation, transformation information, and organisational learning. The Upper Echelons and strategic leadership research addressed the structure and the status of the organisational context. Researchers emphasised the need to study the effects of combining two or more components of the context. Thus, the authors combined the study of two contextual elements, the organisational structure and the TMT design, to the study of the strategic contextual leadership (Rousseau and Fried, 1991; Johns, 2006; Porter and McLaughlin, 2006). The organisational structure reflects the organisational state, spatial distance, and TMT composition. These elements provide a structure for analysing quantifiable and reliable data, allowing for the case comparison and comprehension of the research problem in the pluralistic organisational context (Osborn and Marion, 2009).

The contextual and strategic leadership literature shows the impact of the organisational context on leadership reflected and is under-researched (House et al., 2013). Johns (2006) and Porter and McLaughlin (2006) stated that it is infrequent and rare to find a study that encompassed more than one element of the organisational context, structure, state, time, and TMT composition, which examined the interaction effects among these variables and how it impacts the organisational outcome.

The above perspectives emphasise studying the organisation structure's critical impact, including the state, reputation, hierarchy, TMT composition, and CEO and TMT interaction. House et al. (2013) argued, in a strategic cross-cultural leadership study, that the rise of globalisation and increased access to international education, due to the popularity of the management and business administration (MBA), resulted in decreasing organisation culture's impact on leadership. Researchers concluded that leadership and the organisational context literature did not examine the effects of interfacing of the different components of the organisation structure in a single study. Therefore, this present study aims to explore the pluralistic organisational structure effects on the leadership effectiveness of the CEO and TMT.

## 2.7 Middle Eastern strategic and contextual leadership literature

The Middle East is the context of this research and is known for its complex social relations and economic, political, and international relations (Halliday, 2005; Faris and Parry, 2011). The changes in the Middle East are an opportunity for leadership researchers to examine theories and frameworks. The developments are experiments in real-time with different models of management and leadership (Zahra, 2011). Middle Eastern researchers reported that Arab leadership styles are different from Western leadership styles due to cultural, societal, and religious differences (Zahra, 2011). The tribes, extended families, and religion play a significant role in the leadership styles in the Arab World (Al-Jenaibi, 2011; Bealer and Bhanugopan, 2014; Al Sahi AL Zaabi et al., 2016).

Researchers reported that the Middle East's organisational, leadership, and human resources development research is premised on Western leadership, relationships, and behaviours (Metcalfe and Mimouni, 2011; Syed and Metcalfe, 2017).

The Middle Eastern literature review in the present study objective is to locate strategic leadership literature that is written in English.  Most of the results to find strategic organisational leadership in the Middle East between 2000 and 2020 included non-Arabic countries such as Turkey. I mainly used the Web of Science, Pscyinfo, and Scopus to find the Middle Eastern literature. The result is a few studies in strategic leadership or contextual leadership. I summarized a sample of empirical research to gain insights on the organisational context, the leadership styles practised, and the type of organisations studied.

Research on Middle Eastern pluralistic organisations results were not sufficient. I used multiple search engines to locate relevant studies to leadership and context and the organisation type. The review was broad and did not focus on oil and gas studies as in previous years. The diversification of the economic evidence is reflected in the diversity of the empirical research (mainly sponsored by employers) in a different organisational domain, public and private. The search included innovation in higher education, the iPad initiative (Wilson and Sy, 2021), real estate (Al-Malkawi and Pillai, 2013), development of green buildings (Yas and Jaafer, 2020), strategic management in smart cities (Anwar, 2019), sustainability in manufacturing (ANJAM et al., 2020), and the leadership role in knowledge management (Alkheyi et al., 2020).

The summary of the Middle Eastern and UAE literature review serves the research objectives. (1) Explore the dynamic context of the study in UAE, where the economy was migrating from oil and energy towards knowledge based. This change resulted in the growth of pluralistic organisations in different industries (Al Zarooni and AbdulGanni, 2021). However, the research revealed that strategic leadership and contextual leadership research is limited. (2) Find out if Middle Eastern researchers applied the strategic Upper Echelons theory in non-Western context (Kadam et al., 2019).

The search for strategic leadership and top management teams in the Middle East and the UAE resulted in several dissertations and articles on leadership theory, origin, perspectives, and application (Anadol and Behery, 2020). Scott-Jackson (2010) framework for the Gulf Arab leadership style is the basis of a series of strategic leadership and management development programs and change initiatives to create value and build strategic advantage. Scott-Jackson, Druck, and Kreim (2012) presented a study summarising the findings of Gulf Arab leadership and management styles: trading with respect, leading as a head of the family, recognizing obligation to colleagues and duty to support and nurture team members, building lasting relationships based on their loyalty to their leaders and expecting strong loyalty from their team. Scott-Jackson and colleagues described the Gulf Arab leadership communication as informal as leaders seek to know the personal issues of their people, consults with them to creates a sense of involvement, and have an open-door policy. The authors concluded that Gulf Arab leaders feel a great sense of shared responsibility to the family, tribe, organisation, county, and the world including people, economy, and environment. The Arab Gulf leaders aim for sustained prosperity of their people and have a strong sense of belonging to their communities (Scott-Jackson, Druck and Kreim, 2012).

Other studies reviewed in this section described Arab CEOs as passive, often waiting for problems to escalate before intervening (Al-Jenaibi, 2011; Al Sahi AL Zaabi et al., 2016; Rao and Kareem Abdul, 2015). UAE researchers indicated that UAE national CEOs and Arab national CEOs focus on short-term objectives. Demonstrating transactional leadership, they lead their teams to execute their daily tasks (Kirimi and Barine, 2012; Bealer and Bhanugopan, 2014; Rashid and Halim, 2015; Rao and Kareem Abdul, 2015).

Gharama et al. (2020: 1925) conducted a quantitative strategic leadership study in the UAE, investigating the cultural diversity towards innovation. The authors defined strategic leadership as

the ability of the leaders to 'create and re-create reasons for the continuous existences within the organisation' (Gharama et al., 2020: 1915). Gharama and colleagues' references to strategic leadership definition were based on business continuity, defining business, and strategic planning (references used by the authors). Gharama et al. (2020) stated that their study is considered the first study to investigate strategic leadership impact on organisational change. However, the authors did not refer to strategic leadership or Upper Echelons theories.

El Haddad et al. (2018) studied charismatic leadership and organisational conflicts in action research. The authors studied the hidden conflicts in the Middle East during an economic intervention.  The results revealed hidden disputes around the charismatic leader. Employees were overwhelmed by the charismatic CEO and did not voice their opinions. Top executives monopolised the attention on the leader and reflected his aspirations. Messarra and El-Kassar (2013) reported that the CEO and managers avoided mentioning any conflicts. Their study tested the impact of the organisational structure on the CEOs and managers.  Messarra and El-Kassar research results confirmed that when the organisation structure is not clear to the internal actors, so is the delegation of authority (El Haddad et al., 2018).

Al Sahi AL Zaabi et al. (2016) were the first to investigate the direct relationship among authentic leadership, work engagement, and organisational citizenship behaviours in the Middle East context. Their results suggested that leaders and decision-makers in the UAE should encourage their managers to adopt a more authentic leadership style. It promoted follower trust and contributed to increased work engagement. Interpersonal trust predicted that leadership style mediated employee engagement (Hassan and Ahmed, 2011).

Muna's (2011) research on contextual leadership investigated the effect of context and culture on leadership and the decision-making styles of 76 Lebanese-born executives working in the USA, the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, and Lebanon. The data collected from the semi-structured interviews of the three groups compared new ingredients of success, emotional intelligence leadership styles, and decision-making styles. Muna (2011) found that successful leaders adapt to their unique culture and context. The participants learned from experience and adversity, and they can mask the context to achieve their goals through hard work, determination, and perseverance (Muna, 2011)

An empirical study of men's and women's leadership styles examined the organisational leadership styles and effectiveness in transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership. The sample was small, consisting of 100 participants. The laissez-faire leadership style was strongly noticed in the research. The author concluded that transactional Arab leaders manage by exception (passive); they do not interfere until after the problems occur (active). The author reported that male leaders focused on irregularities, mistakes, exceptions, and deviations from standards. Their research sample showed that 30% of Arab men do not act until problems become severe. They react to situations rather than proactively mitigating the risks. The remaining 70% of Arab men in the study indicated that they focus on dealing with mistakes, complaints, and failures of their employees (Yaseen, 2010).

Other researchers empirically studied transformational leadership in the UAE context (Rao and Kareem Abdul, 2015) and reported that UAE leaders are less transformational than leaders in the USA. UAE leaders are more likely to exhibit passive avoidance than leaders in the USA and Europe. The view in the UAE is that CEOs, as organisational leaders, do not discuss essential beliefs and values and do not articulate their organisation vision (Bealer and Bhanugopan, 2014). Bealer and Bhanugopan concluded that in the UAE, there is a high correlation between factors of transformational leadership and follower satisfaction.

The summary review showed a sample of the strategic diversification of the UAE in line with the 2030 country vision. Therefore, organisational interest in strategic and contextual leadership research in UAE is reflected in the availability of several Ph.D. theses sponsored by public and private organisations.

The study of organisational context in this research includes the external environment and the internal context of the pluralistic organisation, where the diversity of domains, values, different priorities, and experiences are relevant (Morrison and Milliken, 2000).
The following section zooms in on the contextual leadership literature to position the external and internal contexts of the pluralistic organisation in this research.

## 2.8  Integrating strategic- contextual leadership literature

The view of leaders as bridges between the context and the organisation justifies the need to investigate two theoretical sub-fields: strategic leadership research and contextual influences on

leadership to produce synergistic outcomes, that is, contextual leadership research (Gavetti et al., 2007). This leads to the literature review to integrate the two fields of strategic leadership and contextual leadership literature.

**Figure 2-9  Strategic and contextual leadership theories**
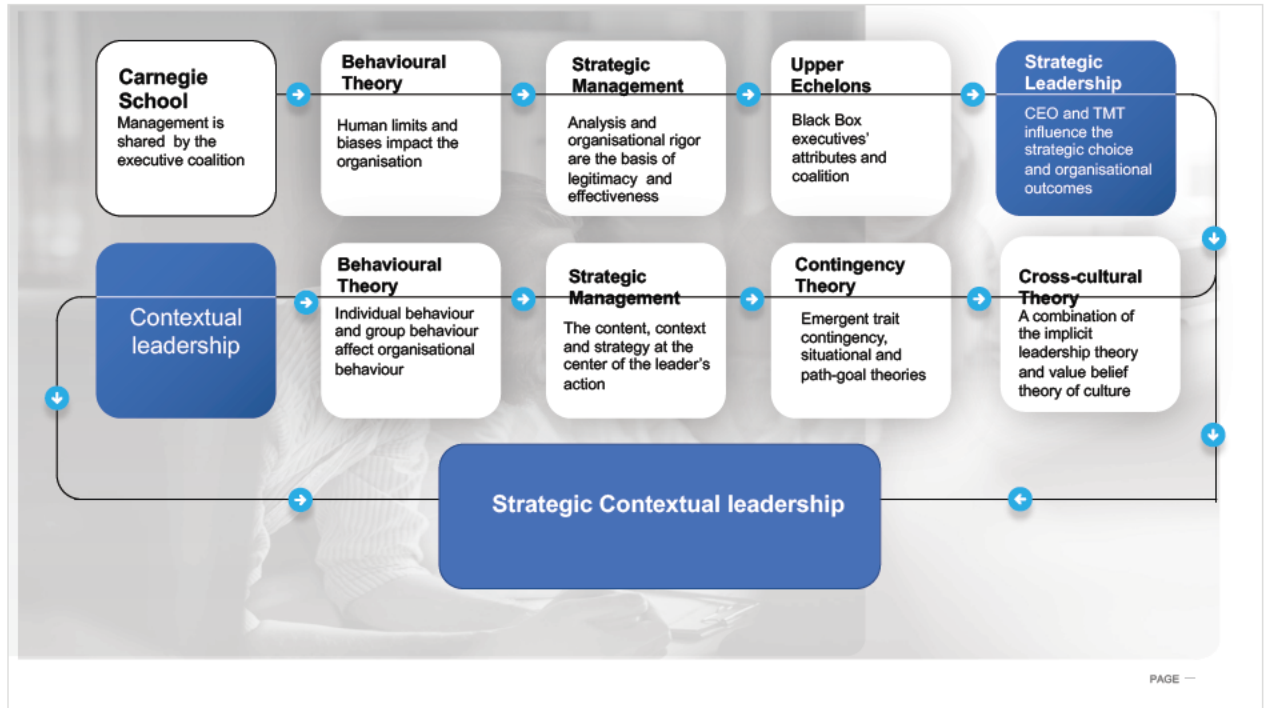


The aim of conducting the strategic contextual leadership study in pluralistic organisations in a non-Western context is to articulate and understand the contextual impact on selecting the CEO and TMT and CEO leadership effectiveness in pluralistic organisations. The research aims to develop an empirical framework to foster strategic and contextual leadership research in pluralistic organisations. The present study serves strategic leadership scholars' recommendations to study a strategic leadership theory grounded in a non-Western context instead of trial and error (Zaccaro and Horn, 2003). Scholars and researchers in Western societies argued that the study of leadership requirements in such dynamic environments demands the integration of many leadership perspectives (Finkelstein et al., 2009; Nielsen and Nielsen, 2013; Osborn et al., 2014). To summarise, strategic leadership theory is the study of the CEO and TMT. This small group of people at the top of the organisation make strategic decisions, represent the organisation, decide

on the strategy of the organisations, are responsible for the resources, empower, and inspire (Finkelstein et al., 2009: 3).

This research argues that strategic leadership is created in the organisation's context, shaped by the external context. The deliberate composition of the TMT is driven by context (Yukl, 2008). Leadership in this context is not only about CEO and TMT impact on the organisation.

This research explores how context impacts the selection of CEOs and leadership effectiveness. TMT selection, composition, and TMT actions can be used individually and collectively to explain differences in organisational outcomes (Denis et al., 1996; Denis et al., 2001b). The theory of leadership in this context validates the study of multi-level leadership in pluralistic organisations that explores the leaders' role, the actions leaders take to move others to deliver effectively.

## 2.8.1  CEOs and TMT bridging the context

The Upper Echelons research indicated that we know more about the leaders' perception and traits than about their leadership effectiveness in transforming organisations and influencing individuals or groups (Avolio et al., 1999). However, researchers are still calling for a better understanding of the mechanisms and the conditions that account for these effects (Finkelstein and Hambrick, 1990; Hambrick, 2007; Buyl et al., 2011; Carmeli et al.; 2011). Meindl et al. (1985) stirred researchers to investigate how executives' successful leadership increased as a causal explanation in cases of extreme organisation success. House et al. (2013) debated if executives matter or not, which surprised non-academic audiences; a scholarly debate is ongoing about the importance of the executive leadership in contrast to the widely held public perception that executives are fundamental to organisational success (House et al. 2013: 83). Yukl and Mahsud (Yukl and Mahsud, 2010) held that executives in high positions have substantial prestige and power, especially in a culture where leaders are idealised as heroes (Yukl and Mahsud, 2010).

The extensive research in strategic leadership literature tended to use the demographic variables, the leaders' personalities, and values to study the relationship between leadership and organisational performance and outcomes. However, the questions raised by the Upper Echelons and strategic leadership theorists are how, why, and when CEOs and TMT lead the way they do (Hambrick, 2015; Hambrick and Quigley, 2014; Finkelstein et al., 2009).

Other leadership and management theorists considered the CEO as an organisational ambassador who adds to the organisational brand. However, the CEO position is not regarded as critical to organisational effectiveness. Burns (1978) held this view, followed by Pettigrew,

Woodman and Cameron (2001: 698), who said, 'the effectiveness of leaders as leaders will be tested by the achievement of purpose in the form of real and intended social change'. Other scholars considered the CEO role essential and critical to the organisation's effectiveness and outcomes (Pawar and Eastman, 1987; Howell and Shamir, 2005).

TMT structure and composition, collective knowledge (Denis et al., 2001a), expertise (Finkelstein et al., 2009), strategy (Bass et al., 1987) and systems (Denis et al., 2010) are essential factors to the effectiveness of the CEO and TMT, but not isolated from contextual influences.

## 2.8.2 Conclusion

The literature review followed the recent leadership calls to expand the study of strategic leadership beyond traditional focus on demographics and backgrounds of the CEO and TMT. The review explored how top executives influence organisational performance while spanning the external context (Boal and Hooijberg, 2000; Yukl, 2008; Lin and Rababah, 2014; Georgakakis et al., 2017). The review's conclusion follows:

- Strategic and contextual leadership research is examined to crystalise the role of a leader in creating organisation vision, values, innovation, and TMT collective commitment and interests (Burns, 1978; Hambrick and Mason, 1984; Dionne et al., 2004; Antonakis and House, 2013).
- Strategic leadership scholars highlighted the implication of the internal versus outside new CEOs (Quigley et al. 2019). The authors predicted the CEO selection has a significant effect on organisational outcomes. Rizzi et al. (2019) based their prediction on two theoretical perspectives: human capital and the irregularity of the information. The review highlighted the importance of CEO effectiveness in managing human capital and other resources, which was not included previously in strategic leadership constructs (Hitt and Duane, 2002; Finkelstein et al., 2009).
- Strategic leadership researchers expanded focus from studying leaders as individuals to examining leadership actions, interactions, relationships, ideas, and attitudes (Pettigrew, 1987; Hosking, 1988; Denis et al., 2001). The authors downplayed the role of the 'individual' leader, explaining that the leader is deemed necessary, as it is only one of several factors in the strategic leadership in a pluralistic organisation (Denis et al., 2001; Pettigrew, 2012).

- Contextual leadership theorists concluded that as leadership shifts, the concept of context and its underlying mechanisms shift as well. Leadership and context are intertwined; to study leadership is to study the context of leadership (Osborn et al., 2002O; Osborn and Marion, 2009; Osborn et al., 2014). Management and leadership theories were reviewed to explore strategic leadership in the pluralistic organisation context.

- Strategic leadership theory contends that organisations are reflections of the CEO and the top management teams. CEO and TMT cognition, knowledge, experience, values, and preferences influence their field of vision and their interpretation of information (Wiersema and Bantel, 1992; Hambrick, 2007). Hence, their assessment of the external environment influences the directions they make about organisational strategy (Bass, 2007; Yukl, 2008) and the effect of the context on the pluralistic organisation internal processes (Denis et al., 2001; Bolden, 2004). Thus, the context shapes the pluralistic organisational structure, the importance and efficiency of the human capital (Yukl, 2008), defines the organisational culture (House et al., 2004; Waldman et al., 2006), and subsequently, the organisational outcome (Denis et al., 1996; Denis et al., 2001b).

The synthesis of the strategic and contextual leadership explains the intricacy of the context, the pluralistic organisation, and the composition of the individuals (CEOs and TMT). The research explores the leadership of the individuals and the organisation by incorporating the organisational external and internal contexts, CEO and TMT, and the strategic direction to address the research question: How does the external context impact strategic leadership effectiveness to achieve the outcome in pluralistic organisations (PO)?

The sub-questions:

1- How does the context impact the selection of CEOs, strategic direction, and leadership effectiveness in pluralistic organisations?
2- How does the context impact the TMT selection, performance, and retention in pluralistic organisations?
3- What are the contextual factors that impact the PO outcomes?

The main research question directs the attention to the external context. This present study focuses on the knowledge-based economy, the PO industry, and national culture. Figure 2.10 includes the initial elements of the external context in which the organisation is embedded: the

knowledge-based economy, the industry, and the national culture are the main elements of the external context (Figure 2.10). The internal context elements are as follows:

- The organisation's structure reflects the level of formal relationships between individuals, the degree of centralisation, the hierarchical levels of positions, and the spatial distances between leaders and their teams. The organisational structure can be organic or mechanistic. The organic structure is defined with the network relationships and a reduced formal reporting and hierarchy. The structure is organic and flexible to achieve performance effectiveness. The CEO is distant from the team members. The mechanistic structure is when the CEO is at the top of the pyramid and heads of departments report directly to the CEO (Osborn et al., 2002; Denis et al., 2007).

- Organisational size refers to the number of employees in an organisation. Organisational size is a foundational aspect of the organisation. The organisation's size impacts its structure in three ways: specialisation (professionals within the PO industry), divisions and departments, the standardisation of functions (Porter and McLaughlin, 2006). The size of an organisation impacts the extent members of the organisation are governed by laws and regulations. For example, in large-sized organisations, a long chain of command leads to high formality between the leader and the followers (White, 2016). In small size organisation the leader and followers interact directly in informal reporting (Burns and Stalker, 2005).

- Organisational status describes the ownership of the organisation, regulatory requirements, and stakeholders' interactions (Carmeli et al., 2010).

- Organisational culture shapes how organisations deliver outcomes. Hofstede's (2003) popular definition of organisational culture is, 'Culture is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the member of one group of people from others' (Hofstede, 2011: 3). Hofstede concluded that national culture constitutes social patterns impacted by the external economic context (Hofstede, 2003).

- The framework shows the potential influence of the interdependence between strategies and country-level industry context. The industry sets the regulatory structure, strategic direction, and influences the organisational outcome. Then, the country-level industry shapes the PO strategy, public, professional services, and regulated industries (Jarzabkowski et al., 2009).

- Time and organisational age capture the evolution, revolution, and growth of the industry. Time shows how corporate strategies maintain or change practices and deal with managerial problems and methods since inception (Ismail, 2010).

- Strategic leadership, the core theory of this study, considers the CEO and TMT as the main actors. Thus, CEOs and TMT are the units of analysis to reveal the context of the actor's selection, leadership effectiveness, and their influence on PO outcomes.

- Organisational outcomes are either proximal (stakeholders' satisfaction, employees' dedication, alignment, and retention) or distal (growth, performance excellence, financial performance, and organisational reputation) (Guest, 2011). Other researchers considered the impact of strategic leadership on three levels of outcomes: financial, social, and environmental (Carter et al., 2013). The framework (Figure 2.10) and contextual leadership shows organisational outcomes are linked to the external and internal context and the strategic leaders. The components of the organisational outcomes are performance excellence, positive financial results, growth, and organisational reputation.

**Figure 2-10 Initial conceptual framework**



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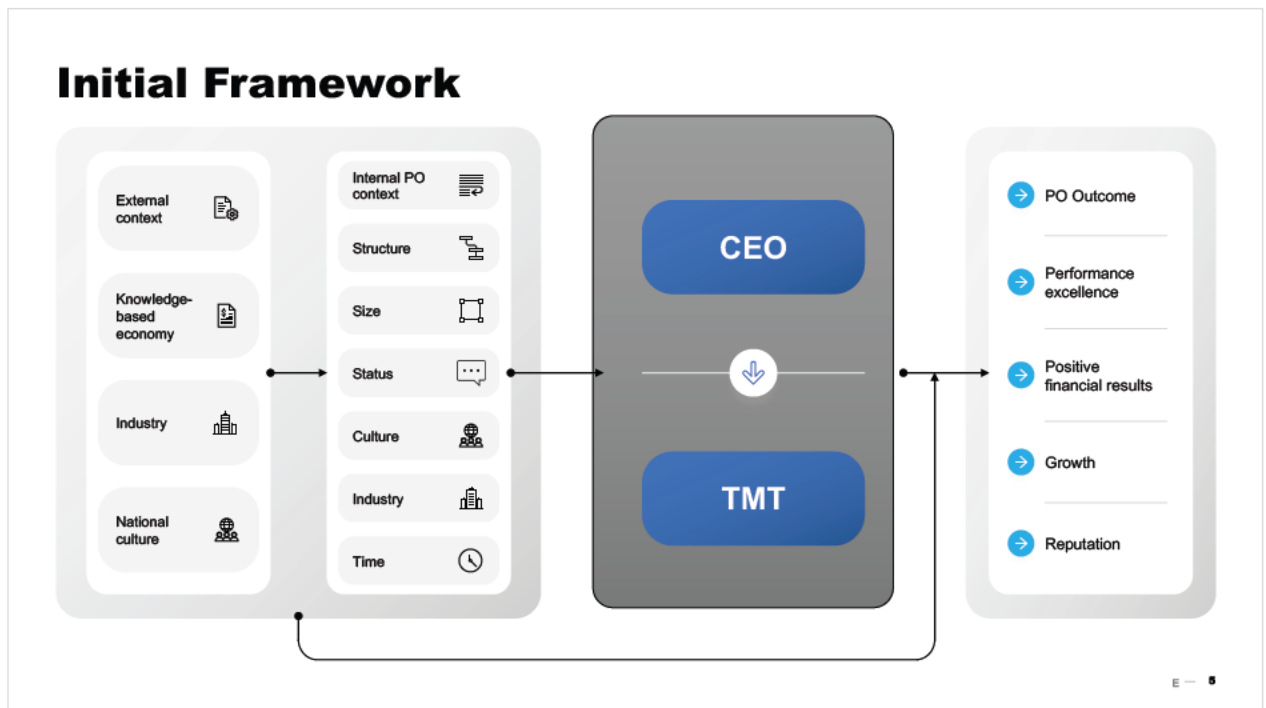
A recent article about the challenges of strategic leadership research stated there remains room for more context-specific research in national studies in all international contexts to contribute to the global management and organisation knowledge (O'Shannassy, 2021). The revision of the core theories, Upper Echelons, strategic leadership, and contextual leadership, followed by integrating the strategic and contextual leadership served the research purpose. In addition, the review of qualitative strategic and contextual leadership literature in the cross-culture and the Middle East provided additional empirical support for the research question.

# 3   Research methodology

## 3.1   Overview

> 'Scientists try to find what is true; professional people try to find out what is true about individuals. The qualitative inquiry is interpretive, experiential, situational, and personalistic.'
>
> (Stake, 2010: 17)

The present study aims to explore and understand the contextual aspects that impact CEO and TMT leadership effectiveness within pluralistic organisational outcomes. Generalisation and particularisation are the two territories of science and professional work (Stake, 2010). This research is based on the empirical data of the participants. It falls into the qualitative paradigm to contextually explore and understand strategic leadership. The qualitative research findings are drawn primarily from professionals to find out what is right about the individuals' roles and experiences in their context.

In this chapter, I present the research methodology starting with the philosophical stance of the operation of the research. In sections 3.2 to 3.4, I present the constructionist epistemology, the research strategy, and the multiple case study as the research design. In sub-sections 3.4.3.1 to 3.4.7, I explain the strategy of selecting the sample, the semi-structured interviews as the primary method for data collection, coupled with triangulation and direct observations, reflection meetings, and data management.

In sub-section 3.4.4, I present the strategy of data analysis, an inductive strategy with a pluralistic analysis procedure. I present the inductive analysis with the bottom-up thematic analysis for each case followed by the case write-up. Next, I present the thematic synthesis for each case and the final themes for each case. The final step in the data analysis is the cross-case synthesis of the four cases. In section 3.4.5, I discuss the evaluation of the trustworthiness of the data analysis and the cross-case synthesis.  At the end of the chapter, I consider the methodological strengths and limitations. Table 3.1 summarises the researcher position in the research design, time horizon, data collection, strategy of analysis, and reflection.

**Table 3-1 Research methodology summary**

| Research Methodology | |
|---|---|
| Ontology | Cautious realist |
| Epistemology | Constructionist |
| Strategy | Inductive |
| Design | Multiple case study |
| Time Horizon | Longitudinal |
| Data Collection | Semi-structured interviews<br>Triangulation<br>Observations |
| Data Analysis | Inductive within-case analysis<br>Template analysis<br>Cross-case synthesis |
| Reflection | Observations and reflection |

## 3.2  Research philosophy

The term 'qualitative' is derived from the Latin word 'qualitas,' which refers to the features of the entities studied. The name seeks to discover and describe the narratives and identify meanings and actions (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018: 36). The researcher's preference towards the quantitative approach was investigated during the pilot study to address the research purpose. The qualitative stance fits well with this study to (1) develop the understanding of context; (2) interact with the participants; (3) interpret the participants' experiences; and (4) keep a flexible design.

### 3.2.1  The cautious realist

This present study aims to establish descriptions of the characteristics and the context that impacts strategic leadership by collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data of those characteristics, producing descriptions, and relating these findings to the research question. The realist stance requires the right methodology to describe the context characteristics as 'things exist and act independently of our descriptions, but we can only know them under particular descriptions' (Bhaskar, 2013: 250). Organisation researchers using the realist philosophy must determine the

methodology that fits with the realist domains, empirical, actual domain, and the underlying influences (McAvoy and Butler, 2018). The relations, events, and experiences are the components of the real domain. The structure and relations, such as individual behaviour and events, take place in the actual open domain (McAvoy and Butler, 2018). This empirical domain is where knowledgeable actions occur independently of the event (Bhaskar, 2013). This research operates in this open realm. Exploring and gaining knowledge is bounded by the time and place of the research (Archer et al., 2013). The cautious realist stance is an intermediate position that discards the need to explain observable in terms of unobservable, confining the realist beliefs and perceptions. Therefore, realism can be situated within the organisational research framework (Modell, 2009). The cautious realist considers reality as an independent existence (Frisch, 2005). The cautious realist examines the underlying issues within organisational context associated with powers and irregularities that the researcher may not be aware of, yet these irregularities influence the production of the organisational reality (McAvoy and Butler, 2018). The cautious realist, because of imperfections in human sense and the fact that the act of observing is an interpretive process, cannot be perceived directly or precisely, hence precipitating the adoption of the cautious attitude (Blaikie, 2010: 93)**.**

Strategic leaders produce knowledge by making sense of what they know and their encounters with the physical world and other people. They reinterpret this knowledge into technical language. The researcher's observations of the external world are inspired by concepts, theories, backgrounds, knowledge, and past experiences of the participants. The realist advocates the importance of structures and instruments, resulting in two research paradigms: structuralist and constructionist (Blaikie, 2007; Blaikie, 2010).

### 3.2.2  Constructionist epistemology

This research required a cautious realist stance to understand the organisational context of the participants from their perspectives. The constructionist paradigm is built by a researcher rather than an external constituent (Stake, 2010). The constructionist reveals hidden meanings through reflection. A constructionist focuses on trustworthiness and authenticity in qualitative research and ensures the study's validity (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Methodologically, the researcher engages in an inquiry process that creates knowledge through interpreted constructions. 'These have been dialectically transacted aiming for more informed and sophisticated consensus constructions to provide a constructive understanding of a phenomenon' (Annells, 1996: 384). The constructionist

approach is based on the pre-theoretical method (Blaikie, 2007). The meanings used by individuals in a particular context are equivalent positions to the realisation of the direct experience in the positivist approach (Cohen et al., 2002). Other researchers claimed that constructionism fails to acknowledge the role of institutional structures, particularly the division of interest and the relations of power (Walsham, 1995). The attention to the language and discourse can influence or endorse the context. Researchers following the constructionist paradigm impose meanings by the more powerful onto the less powerful (Cohen et al., 1972)**.**

The constructionist approach enables the researcher to get close to the participants, enter their realities, and interpret their views, as appropriate (Cohen et al., 1972). This explanation is achieved by generating thick and rich descriptions of the events in the CEO's and TMT's real-life contexts to uncover and preserve the meanings of CEO and TMT experiences (Leitch et al., 2010). Given the complexity of this study of strategic contextual leadership, the constructionist is not detached, and the studied phenomenon cannot be studied as a detached independent truth (Leitch et al., 2010). The research question is an exploration built on the researcher's experience, knowledge of the phenomenon, and the context (Blaikie, 2010: 105). Qualitative research should contribute to the readers' experience, knowledge, and reality (Stake, 2010). Merriam (1998: 22) maintained that the main philosophical assumption upon which all types of qualitative research are based is the view that reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social world. Reality is not an objective entity; rather there are multiple interpretations of reality'. The researcher reveals the meaning of the knowledge constructed by people, the way they make sense of their context, and experiences making the research more of a multilevel constructed knowledge. The readers' interpretations of constructionist research depend on how the researcher constructs the contexts, interacts with people, and interprets and filters views about the studied phenomena (Yazan, 2015)**.**

## 3.3  Research strategy

Blaikie and Norman (2010:105) explained that answering the 'how' question requires a different description built on previous answers to what and why questions. These questions are complex and require robust knowledge of the context of the situation. The authors said that the four research strategies, inductive, deductive, abductive, and reproductive, answer 'how'. However, scholars disagree about which strategy is the most effective (Blaikie and Norman, 2010). In addition to the research question, authors linked ontology and epistemology to the research

strategy (Blaikie, 2007). Thus, the author linked the inductive strategy to the cautious realist ontology. The research question is a 'how' question; hence the four research strategies would answer the question (Blaikie and Norman, 2010). The natural science philosopher Carl Hempel explained the inductive strategy as a statistical explanation (Hempel, 1968). The philosopher claimed that if a theory has not been falsified, its acceptance relies on the data that lend inductive support. Thus, the deductive strategy starts with the question or a problem that needs explaining. While the inductive explanation is not specific and is based on observation, it is more suitable to demonstrate the data-driven knowledge that surrounds this strategic contextual leadership argument (Ullah and Harib, 2006).

The rationale for using the inductive strategy is to allow the theory to emerge from data. The strength in this inductive strategy in building theory is the frequent overlap of data analysis with data collection, going back and forth (Eisenhardt, 1989). Overlapping takes advantage of flexible data collection, capturing impressions, and participants' observations. The inductive analysis controls the bias of the interview data interpretation (Houghton et al., 2015). The robustness of the inductive research is in the researcher's ability to link the research problem to the broader literature by the end of the case study (Brown and Eisenhardt, 1997; Yin, 2013)**.**

The strategic and contextual leadership literature showed that many researchers applied inductive strategy (Brown and Eisenhardt, 1997; Denis et al., 2001b; Cha and Edmondson, 2006; Al Mazrouei and Pech, 2015), or deductive strategy (Cha and Edmondson, 2006). Other researchers applied the combination of inductive and deductive strategies (Denis et al., 2001). Denis et al.'s (2001) rationale for using the inductive strategy was to allow the theory to emerge from data in their multiple case study.

## 3.4  Research design

### 3.4.1  Overview

In leadership, the case study is particularly suited, as it helps to illustrate differences in performance and contextual control variables for CEOs (Hambrick and Quigley, 2014). The strength of the case study in building theory is the frequent overlap of data analysis with data collection. The selected research design is a multiple case study. It serves the research aims, capturing across-context leadership effectiveness in the pluralistic organisation.

The case study is an intensive and in-depth empirical holistic and contextual study (Yin, 2013). The case study design is evaluated in terms of the competence of the theoretical conclusions that is generated. The aim is not to deduce findings from the sample but to stimulate theoretical importance patterns and linkages (Buchanan and Bryman, 2007; Bryman, 2011).

The two basic case study types are the single case study or the multiple case study (Yin, 2009). The single holistic case study with one main unit of analysis was deployed in the pilot study. The multiple case study with embedded units of analysis is deployed in the present study to capture and reflect the multilevel leadership, the diversity of the leaders, and the TMTs professions. The research design of the pilot inquiry supported the decision to follow the multiple case study design.

## 3.4.2  The Pilot study – A holistic single case study

The pilot study was conducted to assess the research design and to confirm the research case selection criteria. The research question was, 'How does the context impact CEOs leading their TMT to achieve organisational outcomes?' The 'how' question explored the distinctive cultural context's impacts on the CEO and TMT members. The study was conducted at an industrial real-estate development organisation (ICD). The pilot design was a single holistic case study. The case study highlighted the impact of the external context on the organisation context, the individuals, and the organisational outcomes. The emergent framework showed the impact of the contexts (external and internal) on the individuals at the top layer of the organisation, CEO, and TMT (Hambrick et al., 2005; Osborn, 2002). First, it considers strategic leadership where different individuals' actions contribute to organisation outcomes. Second, this process allowed the researcher to focus on the actions of participants, not their demographics. Third, strategic leadership was the core theory and contextual leadership was the lens that guided the study of the roles and effectiveness of the CEO and TMTs in their context over time.

The research question is 'how' CEO and TMT interact in the specific organisation context (Yin, 2013). The case study design was initially selected to highlight the external context impacts on the organisational internal context and on the strategic leaders. The selection of the design was confirmed after the implementation of the pilot study.

Further information about the pilot study data collection, analysis, findings, practical and methodological limitations, and conclusion are presented in Appendix A -4.

### 3.4.3 Multiple case study

Yin (2013: 16) defines the multiple case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates many cases in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the 'boundaries between phenomenon and context may be clear evidence'. Stake stated that it is impossible to define the case study (single or multiple) precisely. Any precise definition will not be aligned with the user's definition of the case study in social research or organisational research (Stake, 2010). Merriam defines the case study as an entity, a unit, around which there are boundaries. The case can be a person, a program, a group, an organisation, and so on (Merriam, 1998).

The definition of the multiple case study is a research design in which multiple cases are explored using multiple data collection methods to provide extensive descriptions and explanations of the phenomenon (Huberman, Miles, and Saldana, 2014).

The multiple case study contributes to building the knowledge of the individual, group, organisational, and related phenomena (Yin, 2013). The increase in confidence in the case study is a rigorous research strategy in its data and own right (Cassell and Symon, 2004)**.**

In this research, the researcher is interviewing organisational representatives, chairpersons, Boards of Directors, chiefs, and senior executives. The interviewees are at the centre of attention in the contemporary phenomenon in real-life context (Yin, 2003: 1). The replication in the multiple case design is analogous and used to reveal significant results by conducting second, third, and fourth analyses. This replication allows for robust findings either by literal replication where the findings are similar or by contrasting the results (Yin, 2013). The multiple case applied in the present study is based on a thorough literature review, initial propositions, and the research aim and questions. The results of the multiple case study are presented in individual case summary reports showing how and why the proposition or the findings were demonstrated (Yin). The cross-case synthesis is applied to present the similarities and the differences in the results across the four cases (Cruzes et al., 2015).

The selection of the multiple case and ensuring consistent data collection and the profoundly detailed data analysis are necessary to demonstrate the robustness of the research (Eisenhardt and Schoonhoven, 1990; Denis et al., 2001b). The rationale for the multiple case design is appropriate for two or more cases with a 'how' question, a cautious realist stance, and a constructionist epistemology. Figure 3.1 shows the holistic multiple case study design for the four cases. Interviews are the primary source of data. CEOs and TMT are the units of analysis.

**Figure 3-1 Research design**
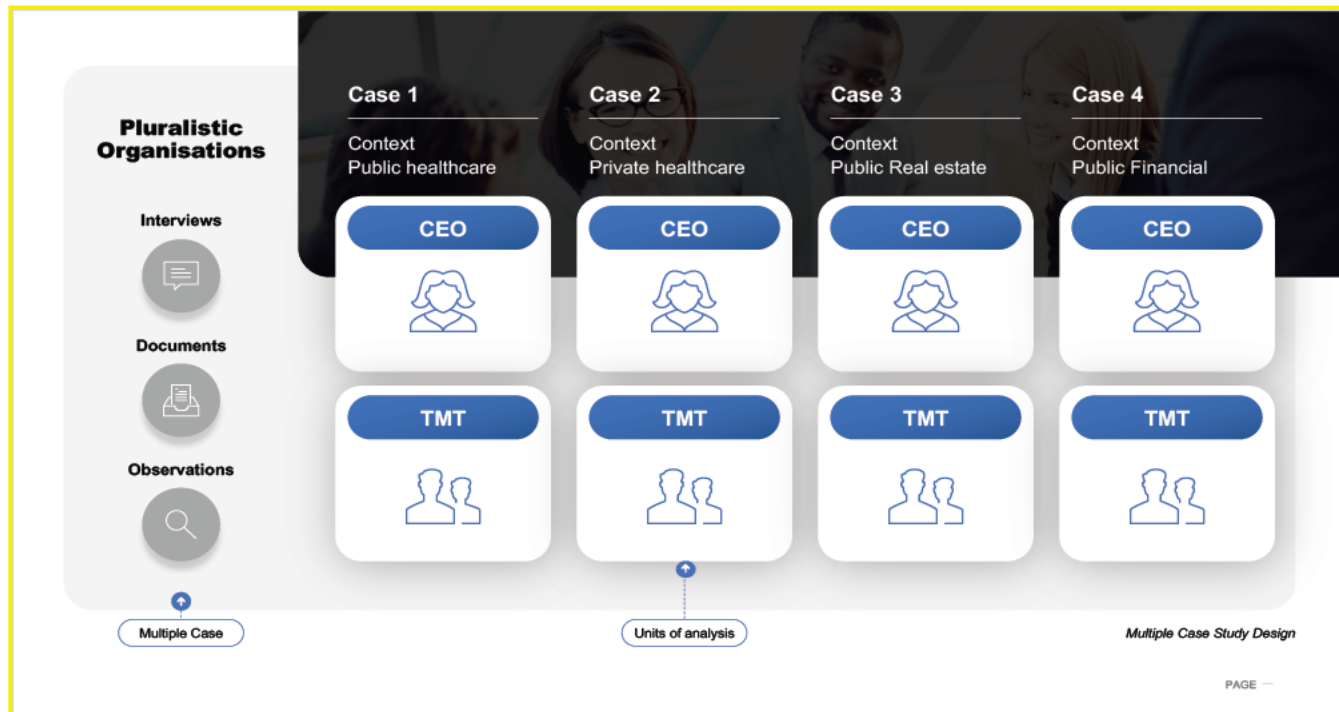


Yin (2003: 13) wrote, 'I deliberately wanted to cover contextual conditions' and believed that the diversified environment is highly pertinent to the phenomenon of the study. The different objectives in pluralistic organisations fit with the criteria described. The research cases were selected to identify the CEOs leading top management teams in the pluralistic organisation. The research questions and the research problem are the drivers of the researcher to think strategically about the sample, the data collection, and the analysis. In addition, the exponential growth of pluralistic organisations such as healthcare, financial services, development (industrial and residential) were incentives to strategically attract and recruit organisations (Toledo, 2013). The selection of cases with the best possible variation of the pluralistic organisations was a principal requirement, theoretically and empirically. The objective is to identify and engage with the pluralistic organisations characterised by multiple goals operating in the knowledge-based context. The sampling strategy is fundamental to determining the contextual factors that may add to such organisations' challenges (Denis et al., 2007).

The research questions how context impacts CEOs role and leadership effectiveness to deliver the organisational outcome. The direction of this strategy is appropriate to produce existing

phenomena in its context to understand the dynamics (Eisenhardt, 1989). In contrast, Stake (2010) defined the case as an empirical unit considered as a theoretical construct. The case boundaries after the selection of the case defined the aspects of the pluralistic organisations within a specific period. Researchers demonstrated that the combination of the three approaches is possible within the multiple case study. I followed Eisenhardt's (1989) flexibility in the research design, adopted the structure of the case report from Yin (2013) and I applied Stake's (2010) constructionist approach in the cross-case synthesis. The selected approaches for the present study are not intended to be mechanically implemented but to guide the researcher in following a consistent approach that ensures the high quality of the research findings.

### 3.4.3.1 The sampling strategy – step 1

Framing the case goals is essential to uncover, confirm, and qualify the basic concepts of the pluralistic context identified in chapter 2 (section 2.2) and based on the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO). The pluralistic organisation follows a set of regulated practices with multiple functions and employs qualified professionals in a specific industry. These technical qualifications are issued by regulators or other certifying entities in the country of origin (Bres et al., 2018). The national industry regulatory certification and international professional associations are relevant to the specific industry. The researcher can verify publicly listed pluralistic organisations and national and international accreditation entities. Table 3.2 shows the selection framework which guided the case selections. The variables to consider were international or national organisations having a PPP. The pluralistic characteristics are verified by the licensing and regulatory authorities of the specific industry: the teams' professional qualifications and the hierarchical structure and size of the organisation. The excluding factors were relevant to the organisation's sector, which serves the aim of this research.

**Table 3-2 Case selection framework**

| Variables to consider | Pluralistic characteristics | Possible industries | Excluding factors |
|---|---|---|---|
| International organisations | International practice accreditation | Healthcare, education cultural, engineering real estate, financial and investment. | Limited availability of cultural and political organisations |
| National organisations | Nationally accreditation licensed | | |
| National pluralistic organisation with | Have a signed PPP | | Education is outside the focus of this research. |

| PPP (public-private partnership) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Regulators of the industry | Reporting to multiple regulatory entities | Country industry specific authorities Additional monitoring authorities. Board of Directors | None |
| Certification of professionals | Employing professionals | Professional accreditation of the professionals | None |
| Organisation structure | Hierarchy structure | Organic, mechanistic structure, public and private | None |
| State and size | Ownership type | Publicly listed, public, private | None |

The status, size and domain of the organisation were thought part of the criteria. The multiple case study relies on the careful selection of the cases to predict similar results (literal replication) or different results (theoretical replication) (Yin, 2013). The pluralistic organisations operating in the context of UAE allows for exploration of the differences and similarities of the contextual impacts on strategic leaders in different industries and sectors. The objective was to attract and recruit organisations in growing healthcare, real estate development, and financial services.

The sample size in qualitative research lacks standardisation and guidelines. The qualitative inquiry depends on purposeful strategies rather than statistical approaches to determine the sample size (Marshall et al., 2013b). The research question, the research purpose and what will be useful, credible, and available are the main justifications for the number of cases in qualitative research (Patton, 2002).

Marshal and colleagues reviewed 83 studies to answer their research question, does sample size matter? The authors found only one study cited a prior qualitative research sample size.

The authors reported the minimum number of case studies is two cases and 34 as the maximum number of cases in their sample (Huberman et al., 2014).

In multiple cases, researchers reviewed the existing literature to understand how to narrow concentration to one or two key areas: for example, from broad leadership to the strategic contextual leadership. In multiple case studies, the number of cases aims to ensure a robust theory. The advisable number of cases ranges between four to ten (Eisenhardt, 1989).

The single case or the multiple-case design replication logic strengthens the robustness and confidence of the theory generated (Yin, 2013; Yin, 2018). The selection of four cases allows

replication and enhances the external validity of the research. The replication logic in this study depends on the careful selection of the cases to explore the impact of the context on strategic leadership in pluralistic organisations. Some strategic leadership scholars defined CEO leadership effectiveness by attracting and retaining TMTs (Lin and Rababah, 2014; Georgakakis et al., 2017). Other researchers linked leadership effectiveness to organisational expansion, competitiveness, and financial growth (Cannella Jr, 2001; Carpenter and Sanders, 2002; Uhl-Bien, 2006; Certo et al., 2006). The multiple case study is suitable to compare the meanings of the constructs.

### 3.4.3.2  Selection criteria

The selection criteria below were finalised after meetings with two research informant CEOs leading pluralistic organisations. The case selection was revised at the start of data collection in line with the recommendations of the expert informants and the CEOs interviewed during the case selection of the pilot study (Huberman et al., 2014). The selection probes resulted in successful access to four organisations, two in healthcare, one in financial services, and one in real estate development. The pilot study's participating organisation was an industrial real-estate development company. The sample selection was based on three main criteria:

- The pluralistic organisation definition developed in Chapter 2. Pluralistic organisations established during the rise of the knowledge-based economy industry (healthcare, real estate, investment, and financial service). The organisational logic theorists linked the organisational logic to its historical, cultural, economic, and social structure context (Mir et al., 2020; Bres and Raufflet, 2013).

- The diversity of the external context creates a collaborative arrangement of circumstances and networks which shape the pluralistic organisational structure. The pluralistic organisation objectives are aligned with the knowledge-based industry.

- The organisation employs professionals and executives in large or medium-sized organisations as defined by regulators. The middle size organisation is an organisation with a maximum of 100 employees. The large organisation is set as more than 500 employees (United Arab Emirates Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation, 2018). Small-sized organisations employ one to 10 employees, which were not included in the selection since small organisations have few executives.

**Figure 3-2 Case selection process**
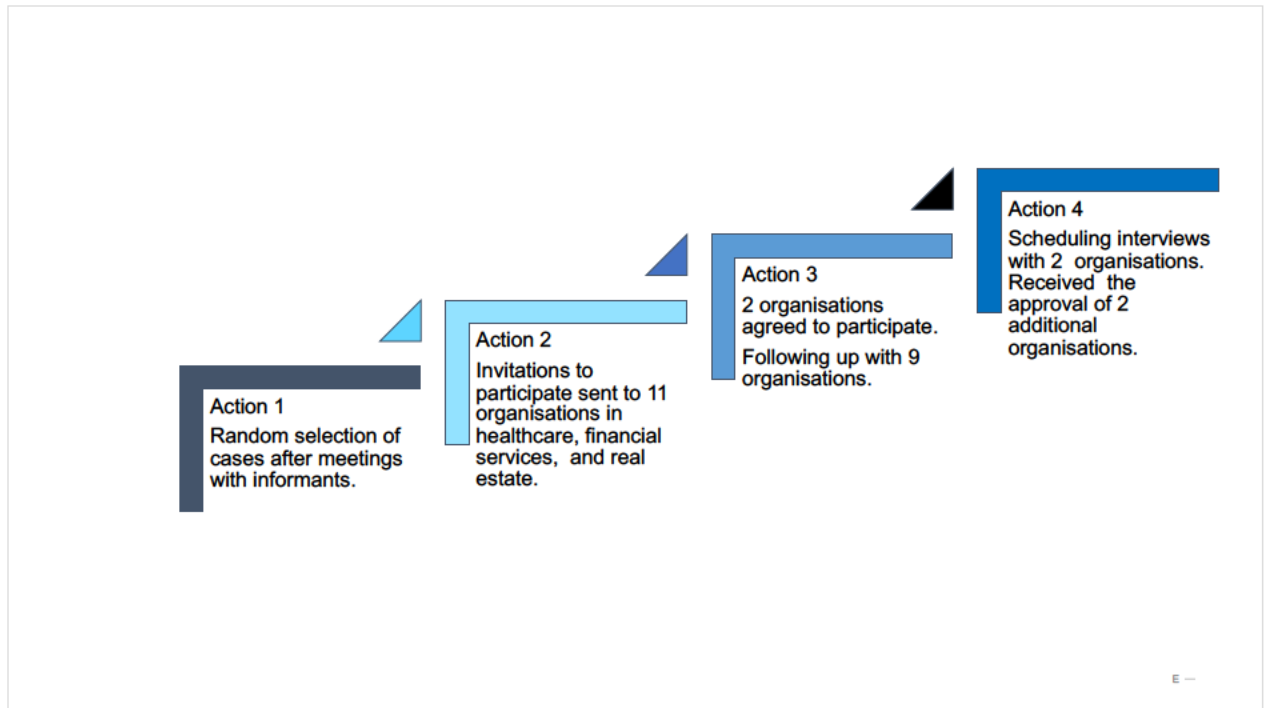
Figure 3.2 shows the start of the selection process based on informants and direct research into pluralistic organisations. Phases 1 to 4 are detailed below:

**Action 1** aimed to understand the nature of the organisations and the top management team, researching, and reviewing the publicly available information and having informal discussions with the local affiliations seeking introductions. The researcher contacted the CEO participants to organise the interviews.

**Action 2** sourced and contacted healthcare organisations, resulting in shortlisting eight organizations like the Canadian healthcare research conducted by Denis et al. (2001).

**Action 3** shortlisted the sample organisations and sought approval and access to the CEOs and the top management teams. I secured formal approvals from two organisations (a real estate development company, and a publicly listed healthcare operator.

**Action 4** and Phase 3 overlapped. The inclusion of the privately held healthcare organisation and the government-owned organisations ensured that public and private enterprises were represented in the research. The financial services organisation was the last to approve participation. The argument was that financial services are not pluralistic and are different from healthcare and real-estate development. Yet, the financial and investment professionals in public and private organisations are required to obtain international professional certification by local and international regulatory entities (CFA, CAA, NSD, FRIS, and many others). In addition, the

financial services represent various forms of organisational state and ownership change from government-owned to publicly listed.

**Table 3-3 Case selection process**

| PO Industry | Initial Cases sourced | Number of cases matching the framework | Number of cases Selected | Discrepancies due to: |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Public Healthcare government and Private healthcare | 6 | 5 | 1 | Two government-owned organisations declined to participate. |
| | 2 | | 1 | Two organisations declined to participate as the research is not organisational and not scientific. Major healthcare was disqualified after a case that was made public. |
| Financial and investment Government-owned | 7 | 4 | 0 | Government owned seniors require authorising to participate in non-government research. Two participated |
| owned | 2 | 2 | 1 | as informants and offered their network. |
| Publicly listed Private financial and investment | 2 | 2 | 0 | The private financial services TMT declined to participate for lack of interest in research. |
| Real Estate Publicly listed | 4 | 2 | 1 | Two organisations acquired. One accepted, but no access to the management team due to restructuring |
| Real estate private | 1 | 1 | 0 | The management team lack of time. |

Table 3.3 shows the targeted pluralistic organisation. The representative sample of all the cases included the healthcare professional services, real estate commercial and industrial development and community centres and schools. Access to cases is essential as sometimes it is possible to obtain unique insights from examining less accessible typical cases (Stake, 2013).

Four organisations were selected based on the discussed criteria. The four organisations represent 25% of the initial case selection. Three organisations declined for the lack of interest in academic research. The selection of the four cases was based on the participation of CEOs and TMT, and the sourcing of and affiliation with research informants who are knowledgeable and willing to contribute to the research.

Table 3.4 includes the titles, the affiliation, and the position of the informants. In addition, the support of the university leadership consortium and their sponsors provided several introductions

to pluralistic organisations in different domains. Moreover, interviewing TMT members from different areas of the business gave the researcher access to collect multiple perspectives (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007).

**Table 3-4 Research affiliations and informants**

| Title | Affiliation |
|---|---|
| Chairman | University Leadership Consortium |
| Chairman and Group CEO | Local leading conglomerate knowledge-based practices and research. |
| Chairman | Healthcare, education, and publicly listed organisations. |
| Chairman and professor | Professor and leader in the financial services domain |
| CEO | Financial regulatory entity |

### 3.4.3.3 Embedded multiple units of analysis

Leaders give strategic directions to enhance their competitive advantage (Child, 1992, 1997). Following the intermediate view in strategic leadership, the CEO and TMT bridge the external and organisational contexts to deliver organisation outcomes. The CEO and TMT are strategic leadership actors. The research question and sub-questions addressed the context influence on the strategic leadership to achieve pluralistic organisation outcomes. The embedded multiple units of analysis design is justified. Figure 3.3 shows the embedded units of analysis and the three levels of analysis: the country, the pluralistic organisation industry, and the individuals.

**Figure 3-3 Embedded multiple units of analysis**

Multiple Case Study Design

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The robustness of the inductive research is the ability to link the collected data to concluding issues and to the broader literature by the end of the case study (Brown and Eisenhardt, 1997; Yin, 2013).

### 3.4.3.4 Longitudinal design

The longitudinal study is observational conducted over a period of time. In qualitative research, the longitudinal researcher conducts several observations of the same case over a period, extending beyond a single time (Ployhart and Vandenberg, 2010). In this multiple case study, the researcher can detect development or changes in the case of the individuals. The most important aspect of the qualitative research is to interpret the context of the study at different times without any influence or interference from the researcher (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015). The longitudinal design was potentially viable to interview the participants over a period, and by following the events within the cases as they unfold (Yin, 2009). The longitudinal design aimed to increase internal validity by tracking the cause and effect (Brown and Eisenhardt, 1997). Observing CEOs, TMT, and their organisations for a period (2018 to 2020) resulted in obtaining a first-hand sequential relationship of events.

## 3.4.4  Data collection

The case study investigated a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clear (Yin, 2013: 13). The multiple case study is suitable to study strategic leadership in pluralistic organisations in the UAE in real time. I am not conducting sampling research; Yin (2009), Stake (2013) and Miriam et al. (2002) have highlighted this fact. The multiple case study is known for the multiplicity of the data sources systematically collected to ensure credibility. The first step is familiarisation with the participating organisations (orientation) by having introductory meetings, following the organisational progress, press releases, phone calls with the participants and informal discussions with research informants (Figure 3.4).

There are eight steps in data collection, as shown in Figure 3.4.  Phase 1, steps 1 to 3, took place before entering the interviews field.  Phase 2 (steps 4 to 6) starts with semi-structured interviewing and continues to the end of phase 3.  Steps 7, 8 and 9 are cyclical for each case.  For example, step 7 for case 2 coincides with step 9 for case 1.

**Figure 3-4 Data collection** phases and steps
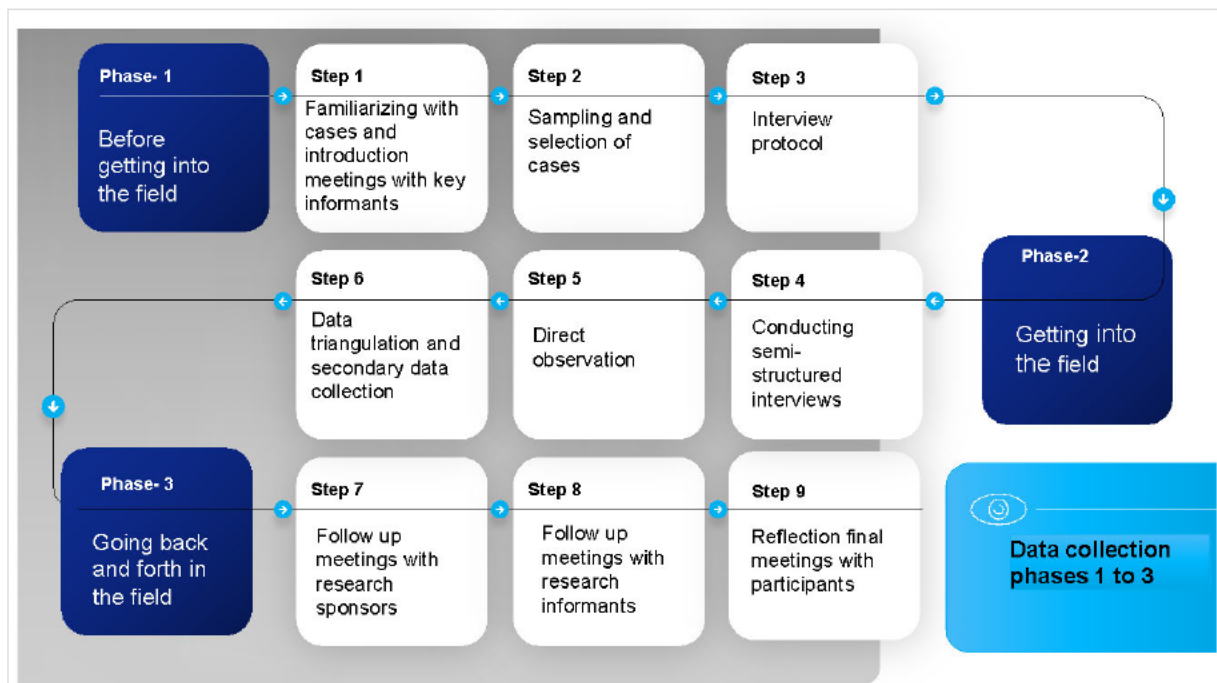
The multiple case design requires frequent site visits (Huberman et al., 2014). Most organisations in the UAE display information about the organisation activity, mission, vision, CEO and executive management profiles and other information. In this section, I discuss how I plan to collect the data and develop the interview protocol. Table 3.5 shows the type of data collected, the number of semi-structured interviews of each case, the number of participants, the positions of the participants, and additional notes. All first interviews took place on site, encompassing direct observations, participants observations, and meetings with the research sponsors to collect secondary documents.

**Table 3-5 Data collection overview**

| Data Type | Case | Number of interviews | Number of participants | Participants | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Primary data** | Case 1 | 30 | 20 | Chairman, Group CEO Deputy CEO, TMT | Chairman, GCEO interview was recorded. |
| | Case 2 | 10 | 6 | CEO1, CEO2, and TMT | CEO interview was recorded. |
| | Case 3 | 8 | 7 | Chairman Board Director CEO and TMT | Audio and visual recording of onsite observations, participant's quotes. |
| | Case 4 | 9 | 8 | CEO1, CEO2 and TMT | On-site |
| Secondary data | All Cases | On-site observation | 41 | Onsite review of transcripts | Office managers and HR managed access |
| | | Participant observations | | HR and office managers | Interviews on site and informal discussions |
| | | Additional questions | | HR and office managers | Additional information on selection of leadership and succession planning |
| | | Reflection meetings with participants | | Chairman, CEO, TMT, informants | Review of the cases' description and the research direction |
| | | Documents websites, | | HR and CEO office manager | HR provided the CVs of participants. |

### 3.4.4.1 Interviews

'An interviewer whose purpose is to gather descriptions of the life-world from the interviewee's perspective'
(Kvale, 1994).

Interviews in qualitative research are face-to-face verbal exchanges. The interviewer attempts to elicit information or expressions of opinion or belief from another person or persons (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018). Researchers advanced the study of the interview principals: 'two principal positions on research interviews can be identified: neo positivist (structured) and romanticist (unstructured) (Alvesson, 2003: 15). The structured interviews are mainly used in quantitative research (Alvesson, 2003). During the unstructured interview participants are asked spontaneous and variable questions. The participants answers varied, and it is harder to compare the answers (Robinson, 2014). The semi structured interviews serve the goal of the qualitative research to see the research topic from the interviewee's perspective and understand how and why this perspective has been formed (Cassell and Simon, 2004). To achieve this goal, the interviewer follows a less structured interview with semi-open questions and focus. The semi-structured interview is appropriate for the present empirical study of the CEOs and TMT in their context. The interviewees included chairpersons, Board members and CEOs.

### 3.4.4.2 Semi-structured interviews- Step 2

Face-to-face semi-structured interviews is the primary source of data collection in this multiple case study. Interviewing CEOs and executives increases the importance of conducting good interviews. The nature of the 'how' research question may be more satisfying and 'non-threatening' than the 'what' question during the interviews (Yin, 2013). 'How' questions make the study exploratory, which is expected (Baxter and Jack, 2008). The key feature of the case study approach is neither method nor data, but an emphasis on understanding the practises as they occur in their context (Alvesson, 2003). The semi-structured interview is an excellent way to gain insight into an organisation's success or failure (Kakabadse, 2015).

 Semi-structured interviews are the primary data collection method for this research combined with participants' observations and on-site observations.

The key feature of the case study approach is neither the method nor data; it emphasises understanding the processes as they occur in their context (Cassell and Symon, 2004).

Other forms of interviews have been conducted virtually using web-based platforms or by telephone when locations are inaccessible. I took notes to record the interviewees' answers when recording was not allowed. In some offices, it was not allowed to have a cellular phone switched on. The downside of notetaking is the speed in writing. As a result, the researcher may miss important observations made by the interviewees. However, the timely review of the notetaking and reflection is remarkable and important to understand the interviewee's answers to semi-structured questions (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011).

Notetaking granted the researcher numerous record notes where some participants shared confidential information related to the research. Some interviews extended for more than three hours. For example, during an interview, a chairman suggested including a question about the role of the Board of Directors. In another instance, a participant requested the researcher to stop writing and keep the information shared off the record. In compliance with the confidentiality agreement with the participants, off the record comments were not included in the transcripts (King et al., 2018). However, off-record notes were included in the reflection memos.

The semi-structured interviews of the first two cases overlapped. The interview invitations for both cases were sent in the same month. Twelve interviews were secured during phase one for the first and second cases. The interview date and time confirmations were relatively set by the office managers of the CEOs or the HR department. Case three and case four interviews started during the last round of case two interviews. I present the total number of interviews with the number of participants in the following section.

### 3.4.4.3  The number of interviews

Guest and colleagues (2006) reported that in qualitative research, the number of interviews lack guidance, justification, and standardisation. The number of interviews is considered the main barrier to many scholars and researchers to find qualitative research. Qualitative researchers cite similar precedents used in studies with the same research problem and design. Other researchers justify the number of interviews by reaching data saturation (Guest et al., 2006). Bernard (2000) observed that most ethnographic studies are based on thirty-six interviews. Qualitative researchers advised taking advantage of unexpected interview opportunities (King et al., 2018). Yin cautioned researchers to avoid being trapped by interviewing and exercise adequate care against potentially biased procedures (Yin, 2009). The selection of the interviewees was based on their positions:

- Chairman, Board of Director of the participating company
- Group CEOs, CEOs, and Deputy CEOs
- CEOs of the portfolio/units/hospitals/clinics/managed by the holding organisation

- Top management members reporting to the CEOs.

Yin (2009) advised that the minimum number of interviews should be five for each case in multiple case studies. Other qualitative researchers recommended twenty to thirty interviews (3 to 5 interviews per case) with two to three meetings per person (Guest et al., 2006). Table 3.6 shows the case number, the total number of participants in each case, and the number of semi-structured interviews for each of the four cases. The last row in the table shows the number of participants and the number of interviews. The difference is the number of the second interviews for each case. In addition to the interviews several phone calls with some participants were conducted for clarifications.

**Table 3-6 All cases number of participants and number of interviews**

| Case number and code | Number of participants | Number of semi-structured interviews |
|---|---|---|
| Case 1 | 20 | 30 |
| Case 2 | 6 | 10 |
| Case 3 | 7 | 8 |
| Case 4 | 8 | 9 |
| Total | 41 | 57 |

The research objective to explain how the strategic leaders bridge the context required a framework to guide the semi-structured interview questions.

### 3.4.4.4 Interview protocol - step 3

The qualitative, multiple case study case protocol is constructed to plan the investigation of the context of strategic leadership as a first stage. The protocol is designed to obtain background information regarding CEOs and the TMT leadership effectiveness to deliver a pluralistic organisational outcome, which serves the primary purpose of the research: how does the external context impact strategic leadership effectiveness to achieve the outcomes in pluralistic organisations (PO)?

The sub-questions are:

1. How does the context impact the selection of the CEOs, strategic direction, and leadership effectiveness in pluralistic organisations?
2. How does the context impact the TMT selection, performance, and retention in pluralistic organisations?

3- What are the contextual factors that impact the PO outcome?

Following the guide, a set of interview questions were formulated (Table 3.7). Chairmen and Boards were questioned about the CEO and TMT selection. Questions to the CEOs and TMT were based on the research questions from the interview guide (Rubin and Rubin, 2011).

**Table 3-7 Sample interview questions (detailed interview protocol is in Appendix A -1)**

| Interview question | Theoretical constructs |
|---|---|
| 1. Describe how you were selected? How long have you been in this position? | CEO and TMT selection context and individuals' background.<br><br>(Carpenter et al., 2004, Hambrick and Mason, 1984) |
| 2. Describe the current PO structure and the reporting hierarchy? | PO internal context. CEO authority in shaping PO hierarchal structure, the strategic direction of the organisation (Hambrick and Mason, 1984, Finkelstein et al., 2009) |
| 3. Does the nationalization of jobs impact the selection of TMT members? | PO internal context, selection o CEOs and TMT (Ryan, 2016a, Forstenlechner and Mellahi, 2011) |

The cases selection, the semi-structured interviews, and the follow-up meetings with the participants were conducted over 24 months. The inductive research strategy is data driven. The insights and constructs were generated during the meetings with the research informants. The researcher replicated the same interview guide and asked the same questions with all participants (Eisenhardt, 1989; Denis et al., 2001; Denis et al., 2010).

The observations emerging from the data drew the researcher's attention to the strategic leadership literature, highlighting the notion that the CEO bridges the context. The CEO reflects the organisation's vision and brand in the community. The leaders' actions and behaviours promote credibility as experts in their domain and their ability to attract, hire, retain, and advance competent TMT. At this point, the researcher is immersed in reading and transcribing the interview data (Agbor, 2008); Friedrich et al., 2009; Friedrich et al., 2016). Strategic leadership impacts the organisational outcome (Vyakarnam, 2005; Finkelstein et al., 2009). Interviewing and primarily data analysis occurs at the same time.

**Table 3-8 Data collection and primary analysis framework**

| Data Type | Units of analysis | Variables | Longitudinal | Thematic Frame-work |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Primary data** | CEOs and TMT | Gender, age, nationality Education, experience, position. | October 2018 March 2021 | Open-ended questions. Descriptive coding Emergent findings |
| **Secondary data** | CEO and TMT | Resources, roles, objectives, and outcome | 2018-2020 | Annual strategy and outcome |
| **Observations** | Individuals | Sites and offices Reactions, comments | 2018-2021 | Participants' observations |
| **Reflection** | Observation | Participants off the record notes | 2018-2021 | Participants' reactions and actions. |

The data collection and primary analysis framework includes the instrument used to collect the units of analysis, the variables, the case duration, and the themes (Table 3.8).

### 3.4.4.5 Direct observations

The researcher conducted the interviews at the participants' offices. Onsite visit observations were rich, reflective, and direct. The environmental conditions were good sources of evidence in this case study (Brannan and Oultram, 2012). The time and place of occurrence will be collected for the casual data from the field. Examples are the environment of the workspace, the culture of the organisation, location, and the furnishing of the offices. All could be indicators of the interviewee's status within the organisation (Yin, 1991). Also, direct observations during visits to the participating organisations' popular locations (hospitals, public places, sales offices for the development organisations, investors conferences for the publicly listed companies).

### 3.4.4.6 Triangulation

Another source of information is triangulation, which integrates the data sources and mitigates any risk of collecting weak data during the interviews. 'Triangulation is a process of repetitious data gathering and critical review of what is being said' (Stake, 2006: 1049). The clarity of the participants' perception and the authenticity of the descriptions and interpretations are vital for constructivist reporting (Schwandt and Gates, 2018). The authenticity of interpretation was ensured by using a combination of the interviews, document review, the informants' impartial

reviews, and comments of the anonymous transcripts and themes as second perspective (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011).

The use of observation was at the discretion of the participating companies. Participants provided their resumes, the strategy document, and the annual organisational reports. In the case of the publicly listed organisations (Cases 1, Case 2 and Case 3) the published information includes executives' profiles, annual financial statements, disclosures, corporate governance reports, and annual reports. The secondary data is pooled and used in the analysis from the start (King, 2004).

**Table 3-9 Secondary data collected**

| | Documents | Other permissions |
|---|---|---|
| Case 1 | TMT members profiles | Permissions to use public profiles on different websites (LinkedIn). |
| | Corporate presentations and strategy documents. | Attended the annual conference in 2019, media events, and health convention presentations. |
| Case 2 | Strategy document participants' profiles Investors' reports | Visits to the headquarters, hospitals, and centres. |
| Case 3 | CEO and TMT profiles | HR provided copies of the employee engagement report |
| | Annual reports | CEO office organises several visits to headquarters. HR organised visits to community centre. |
| Case 4 | TMT profiles, Annual reports, Investors' presentations | CEO sponsored the research and obtained the approval of the BOD to share the transformation journey. |

Table 3.9 includes the secondary documents collected to be used during the triangulation process.

### 3.4.4.6.1 Reflection on meetings with participants

The researcher used TMT questions about their CEO role and a follow-up question to describe their relationship with other TMT members. Sometimes the answer is not how the TMT felt or believed. A possibility exists that some participants did not reveal their beliefs about issues (stake, 2006). The reflection notes and interview transcriptions highlighted the discomfort of a few TMT members. For example, in one interview, a respondent was not forthcoming. However, when they were asked 'how' they envisioned the relationship with the CEO/TMTs, they engaged in a detailed response. Framing the question in this way resulted in a detailed answer of how the relationships are now, how the TMTs feel about it, and what they would like to change.

### 3.4.4.6.2  Synchronised data collection and primary data analysis - Step 10

Synchronised data and primary analysis form the ongoing process of coordinating the primary data analysis with data collection (Figure 3.5), going back and forth between thinking about the existing data and generating strategies for collecting new, most likely better-quality data (Huberman et al., 2014).

**Figure 3-5 Synchronised data collection and analysis**
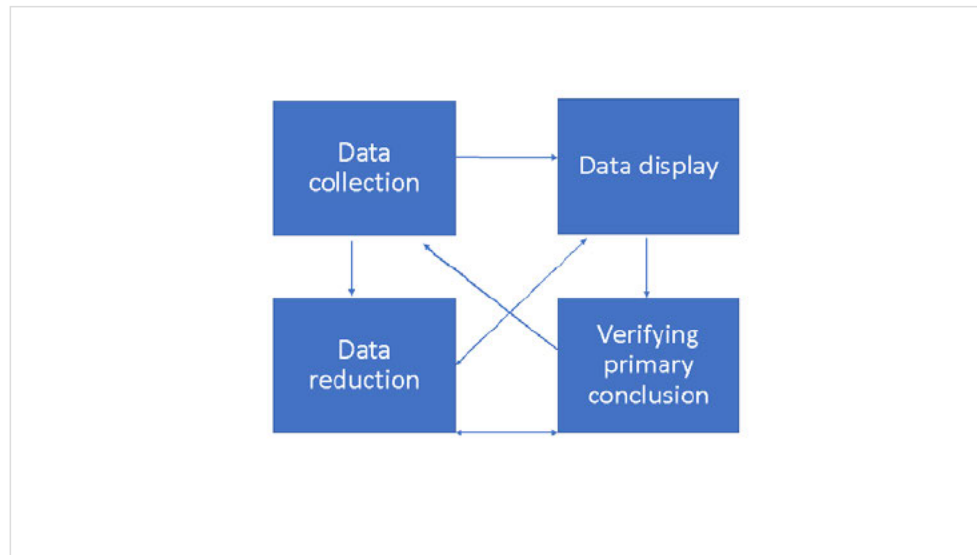


The analytical goal is to make sense of the entire context, the organisation, and the individuals. The constructionist stance requires iterative data collection and early data analysis (Huberman et al., 2014). Several participants were interviewed more than once, for two years, to collect additional data after reviewing the transcripts and performing the primary analysis. As I aim to preserve the richness and the meaning of the relatively large amounts of data collected during the interviews, adopting an analytical approach is critical to the data analysis strategy (Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

## 3.4.5  Data analysis

### 3.4.5.1  Overview

Data analysis is making sense 'by consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said, what the researcher has seen and read. It is the process of making meaning' (Merriam, 2002:

178). Eisenhardt described data analysis as the heart of building theory from the case study. It is the least codified part of the process (Eisenhardt, 1989).

This constructionist epistemology reflects the rich picture of the participants' experiences in their organisations (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015). Data collection was based on interviews conducted at the participating organisations over two years and included live observations.

The data analysis section is organised according to the data analysis framework presented in Figure 3.5, showing the three cycles of analysis:

Data collection continued during the first cycle of analysis (data reduction and management, descriptive coding, and attribute coding). Cycle two started with the template analysis identifying emergent themes within case. Cycle two concluded with the individual case report. Finally, the cross-case synthesis was conducted during the third cycle of the study, where aggregating the emergent themes from all cases, identifying the second-order themes, and concluded with the final template. Figure 3.6 shows research design phases and the steps conducted during the three data analysis cycles.

**Figure 3-6 Data analysis phases and steps**
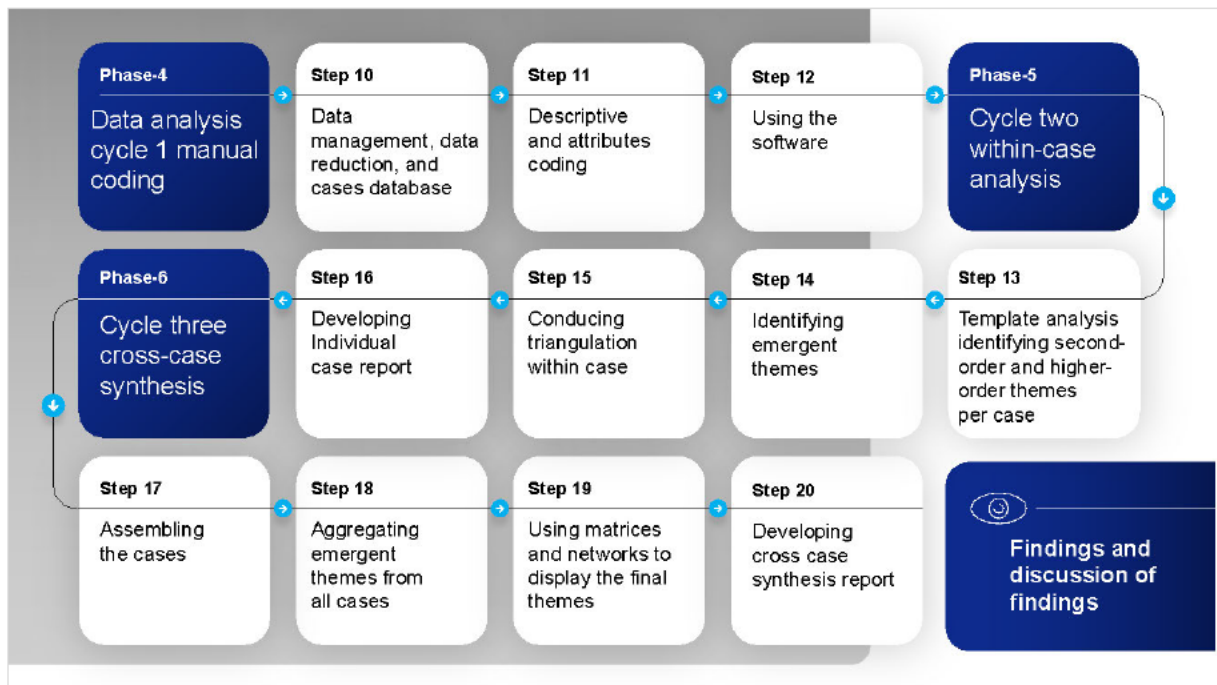
### 3.4.5.2  Inductive analysis techniques

Considering the nature of the research questions, the design of the analytical techniques consists of a mix-and-match approach to inductively conceptualise what is happening in the cases.  The template analysis was considered to capture the interview script themes and search for emergent themes (King, 2004).

In this present study the selected inductive approach fits with the constructionist stance of the researcher (Gioia et al., 2013). The analytical bottom-up technique is selected to search for themes, matching-series analysis, and within case analysis (Yin, 2013). Stake's strategies of categorical aggregation and direct interpretation are adopted to strengthen the inductive research strategy (Stake, 2010).

Bottom-up data analysis is rooted in the grounded theory qualitative research tradition of developing codes 'directly' from the data by using the participants' phrases and quotes more than using the theoretical background or the researcher's own words (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Charmaz, 2014; Linneberg and Korsgaard, 2019). Thus, the codes reflect the participants' ideas rather than the researcher's prior understanding of theoretical reviews.

The inductive coding with a researcher's open-minded approach aimed to familiarise the open coding to identify the participants' dominating characteristics and the sample, following the word-by-word or line-by-line coding as with the grounded theory strategies (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). I started with the attributes and the descriptive manual coding during the first cycle of data analysis, searching within the case themes, followed by the open coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Charmaz, 2014). While coding for Case 1, I continued collecting data during the second round of interview. At the same time, the first round of Case 2 interviews began. Table 3.10 shows the description of the analysis steps taken in each cycle.

**Table 3-10 Description of steps in data analysis phase 4, 5 and 6**

| Phase number and details | Step | Description | Step | Description | Step | Description |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Phase 4 Cycle one of data analysis | 9 | Preparing the data before coding | 10 | Data management, data reduction, and cases database | 11 | First cycle of data analysis (descriptive and attribute coding) |
| | 12 | Coding using the software (Nvivo) | | | | |
| Phase 5 Cycle two within case analysis | 13 | Template analysis identifying themes per case | 14 | Identifying emergent themes per case | 15 | Conducing triangulation within case |
| | 16 | Developing individual case reports | | | | |
| Phase 6 Cycle three Cross case synthesis | 17 | Assembling comparable cases | 18 | Aggregating emergent themes from all cases | 19 | Using matrices and networks to display and examine |

The inductive coding increases the research's loyalty to the data by giving voice to the data with the possibility of unearthing the relationship or the absence of the relationship between the context and leadership (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006). The inductive coding is described as the constant approach to the data with a focus to preserve the meaning of the text (Wolgemuth et al., 2015).

### 3.4.5.2.1 Preparing the data before coding – Step 9

I started reviewing the large raw amount of text collected from the interviews with the TMT and CEOs, observations, and reflections at this phase. During this phase, the rationale is to structure and organise the TMT and CEO transcripts. I drafted case summaries in memo style, including notes about stimulating topics (TMTs from different contexts think the professional TMTs are not the right leaders). Besides, there was a need to anonymise the organisation's name and function for the four cases. Table 3.11 below includes the domain and code of the four cases.

**Table 3-11 Anonymising the sample**

| Case number | Domain | Case code |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Public healthcare organisation | Case 1 PHC |
| 2 | Private healthcare organisation | Case 2 VHC |
| 3 | Real-Estate Development | Case 3 RED |
| 4 | Public investment/finance | Case 4 PIF |

Similarly, when anonymising the participants required distinguishing between TMTs who are CEOs reporting into the group CEO, a code of the section was assigned. TMTs are assigned number as shown in Table 3.12.

**Table 3-12 Anonymising participants**

| Case | Branch code | Participant position | Participants' Code |
|---|---|---|---|
| Case 1 PHC | Hospital 4 | CEO | H4 CEO |
| Case 2 VHC | Not applicable | COO | TM11 |
| Case 3 RED | Not applicable | CEO | CEO |
| Case 4 PIF | Not applicable | COO | TM20 |

### 3.4.5.2.2 Data management – Step 10

Data management started before conducting the cases. I prioritized the use of software and time planning. The empirical materials collected were saved in Excel sheets, including communication details, dates, names, and contact details of the participants (Appendix A). Participants provided documentation showing where and when the document was used. The data management included:

- Keeping a detailed record of field notes, digital recording of the sites, and onsite observations (Adams et al., 2014)
- Observations, notes, initial transcripts, and cleaned versions of the transcripts with comments (Marshall et al., 2013).
- Initial descriptive and attribution manual coding, notes, and reflections on the meanings of the data (Huberman et al., 2014).
- Case displays, matrices, and networks used to display the analytical text.
- The use of the software and the case version file to register codes and themes.
- Continuous reviewing and drafting of the multiple case design, methods, emergent themes, and initial findings.

- Cases chronological log, including a log of documentation of data collection and analysis. The software and the use of Excel programs were the primary tools used to create the case database, backed up on a frequently updated external drive.

### 3.4.5.2.3  Coding– Steps 11

The first coding cycle began by reviewing the transcripts and conducting manual coding, searching for themes. The first case transcripts created an overview of the data. Next, I reviewed the reflection notes, the onsite observations, and added remarks on the transcripts' margins. Table 3.13 includes the details of the analysis (with the step number), the sources of data, the technique used in the analysis, and the outcome.

**Table 3-13 Analysis techniques and outcomes**

| | Analysis | Source | Technique | Outcome |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **First cycle**<br><br><br>**inductive coding** | Data management and reduction | Engaging with the data for two years. Triangulation of data. Documents and reflective memos | Raw database, field notes transcripts, reflexive journals. Documentation of follow-up meetings and calls. | Establishing the data analysis framework (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007) |
| | Attribute and descriptive coding | Transcripts, documents media, events, and websites | Manual coding, Triangulation. Reflexive journaling and analytical memos. | Develop the coding framework audit trail of codes generation (Nowell et al., 2017). Documentation of meetings with informants. |
| | Using the software | Transcripts | Creating the cases, files, and participants attributes | Coding participants words describing their experiences (Gioia et al., 2013) |
| | Develop the case codebook | Transcripts, memos, and documents | Tables with initial codes, number of occurrences and location | Audit trail of codes Initial categories (Houghton et al., 2013) |
| | Reflection notes and memos | Reflexive notes, onsite observations, and participants feedback | Memos added to the software | The participants' contexts, actions, and reactions during the interviews (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006, King et al., 2018). |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Second cycle** | **Step 13** Template analysis | Searching for themes within each case | Link the themes to the research questions | Expanded tables with general themes (Brooks et al., 2015) |
| | **Step 14** <br><br> Emergent themes | Searching for emergent themes and second order | Test for coding adequacy by returning to raw data | Searching for the final themes by reviewing the original coding (Huberman et al., 2014) |
| | **Step 15** Data triangulation | Confirming themes and | Using the secondary data to verify themes and obtain contextual information | Examining the final themes by reviewing the raw and secondary data (Waring and Wainwright, 2008). |
| | **Step 16** Producing the case report | Informants and participants debriefing | Description of the context. Keeping an audit trail of initial codes, thematic framework codes, and final codes. | Report the evidence for theoretical, methodological, and analytical directions throughout the four cases (Nowell et al., 2017, Yin, 2009) |
| **Third cycle** | **Step 17** <br><br> Cross-case synthesis | Review of the case reports and relate the findings to the research questions. | Original multiple-case themes and emerged themes across the four cases | Create a theme-based matrix from the most important findings. Identify cases that contribute significantly to the strategic and contextual leadership topic (Stake, 2013). |
| | | Reporting the findings of SLC | Identifying researcher bias, influences, and reflection | Thematic syntheses. Graphic and textual description of the progressive themes from a chain of reasoning to construct interpretation and conceptual maps (Huberman et al., 2014) |

Coding is a practical step to create an inventory of the data. Glaser and Strauss (2017) articulated how the grounded theory procedure provides insights into understanding the emerging context. The procedure shows how organisational events unfold without forcing or adjusting the data to fit a previously designed theoretical framework (Strauss and Corbin, 1994). The engagement with the unstructured data in the transcripts, observations, documents, field notes, and reflection notes requires grounded theory procedures. This exploratory nature of the data analysis is conducted by attribute coding and descriptive coding in the first coding cycle (Saldaña, 2015).

### 3.4.5.2.4  Attribute coding

Attribute coding is used in this multiple case study to structure the larger data segments into sets for easy access (Yin, 2009). The attribute codes are also used in the cross-case analysis looking for similarities in cross cases or provoking a contrast in experiences and perspectives (Eisenhardt, 1989).

Attribute coding is applied in three ways to structure the overall data: coding the internal and external context, the organisational context and the individuals. At the organisation level, coding the organisation size, industry, status, and number of employees (Coast et al., 2012). Attribute coding at the individual level is used to code the participants' demographic data, age, gender, education, experience, and background. Attribute coding allows replication logic to constantly compare cases and participants (Linneberg and Korsgaard, 2019). By applying the attribute coding to all cases, participants, interview transcripts, sites, field notes, and documents, several holistic fact sheets about the four cases and the participants were generated. Table 3.14 is an example of the attribute coding used for the four cases. The code for status was to identify the organisation status, year of establishment, industry, and number of employees.

**Table 3-14 Phase 4 data analysis, cycle 1 coding example - Case context**

| Code | Case 1 | Case 2 | Case 3 | Case 4 |
|------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Status<br>Year established<br>Industry | Publicly listed<br>2007<br>Healthcare | Private<br>2011<br>Healthcare | Publicly listed<br>2005<br>Real estate | Publicly listed<br>2006<br>Investment |
| Number of employees | 17000 | 900 | 425 | 103 |

Attribute coding organises the data and provides essential participants information, sites specifics, types of activities or behaviours, and the context that appears in the data, and it could be used for future categorisation/theming and data interpretation (Saldaña, 2015).

### 3.4.5.2.5  Descriptive coding- step 11

Descriptive coding is a categorised inventory summary table containing the data extracted from the transcripts and reconstructed together in an organised and categorised context narrative for further analysis (Huberman et al., 2014). The descriptive coding of the four cases was done by reviewing the participants' transcripts. As the interviews were semi-structured, the participants' observations were coded under 'personal comments. Using descriptive coding is an appropriate approach in the inductive analysis. The descriptive coding created an overview of the case inventory of data (Saldaña, 2015).

Categorical coding prepares the code book of each case.  The case internal context included the structure, the hierarchy of reporting, organisational strategy, culture, and outcomes. The bottom-up data analysis reveals any emergent themes (number of predecessor CEOs Table 3.15).

**Table 3-15 Case organisational context**

| PO internal Context |
| --- |
| Governance and monitoring |
| Multiple reporting |
| Number of predecessor CEOs |
| Organisation strategy |
| Organisation structure |
| Organisational culture |
| PO Outcome |

Individual profiles consisted of codes assigned to large segments of data where one or two words describe the meaning of the data.  The descriptive codes contained segments of the participants' extracts relating to their selection background, nationalisation or international selection, function, and tenure.

### 3.4.5.2.6  Software (NVIVO) coding – Step 12

The research strategy and the data analysis procedure are inductive, involving a large amount of data (Saldaña, 2015). The text generated from the interview transcripts varied between 2000 to 10,000 words per interview. The long transcripts required organising before the coding and the analysis of all the interviews. The software allows for the coding and analysis of all interviews from the same organisation to capture/observe patterns/themes. The participants' age, experience, education, position, and function are a few of the attributes coded by the software (Table 3-16).

**Table 3-16 Second cycle of coding – Participants' demographics**

| Age | Years of Experience | Gender | Country of Education | Position | Function |
|-----|---------------------|--------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| 50+59 | 15-20 | Male | ME BSc | CEO | Corporate |
| 40-49 | 15-20 | Female | US MSc | CEO | Medical |
| 35-40 | 10-15 | Male | AUS BSc | CEO | Engineer |
| 40-49 | 15-20 | Male | US BSc | Chairman | Finance |

By using the software, I was able to keep track of the interviews' dates, duration, and the documents provided for each case. I imported all my analytical memos, including interviewee quotes, onsite observations, and other reflexive notes (Saldaña, 2015). The software served two pragmatic purposes: to code many interviews and produce visual matrices and networks of the cases, codes, and themes. The software had several benefits:

- Provided a structured sequence of the coding process and increased the rationality of the emerging themes by identifying the number of references in each theme, including the participant excerpts.
- Produced a practical number of codes, notwithstanding the data's complexity and diversity (Gioia et al., 2013). The initial list generated around 85 codes which exceeded the advised number of 50-70 codes (Gioia et al., 2013).
- The revision and aggregation of the initial codes produced emergent themes, such as the Board-CEO relationships (Appendix B includes the detailed cases' codebook).

### 3.4.5.3  Phase 5 second cycle- within case analysis steps 13 to 16

### 3.4.5.3.1  Template Analysis - Step 13

Template analysis is defined as the method of organising and analysing qualitative data thematically (Brooks et al., 2015). Developing a coding template to summarise the themes

identified by the researcher is necessary for repeated feature patterns that emerge from codes phenomenological analysis (King, 2004). 'Central to the template analysis is the development of a coding template, which summarises themes identified by the researcher' (Brooks and Nigel, 2015: 5). Themes are recurrent features of participants accounts characterising perceptions and experiences that the researcher sees as relevant to their research question (Brooks et al., 2015; King, 2004). The themes/patterns explain the individuals' relationships and can be organised according to the identified theoretical constructs and concepts. The qualitative multiple case study approach is concerned with the content of the participants' discussion, and the thematic analysis serves this objective.

The practicality of template analysis does not insist on an explicit distinction between descriptive and interpretive themes or a particular position of each of the coding structure themes (Barratt et al., 2011). One of the reasons for using template analysis is that it summarises key features of the extensive data set I collected. Inductive coding ensures that I follow a structured approach to data analysis to generate a clear and organised final report (Nowell et al., 2017).

Figure 3.3 shows the thematic analysis steps, the aggregating codes, the search for emergent themes for each case, and the iterative review of themes linked to the research question. This step results in producing several template versions. I revised the template for each case separately before finalising each case template in preparation for cross-case synthesis.

**Figure 3-7 Thematic analysis steps**



| Thematic analysis |
|---|
| Aggregating codes |

| Identifying emerging themes per case |
|---|
| Iterative review of the themes searching for links to research questions |

| Producing successive versions of the initial templates | | |
|---|---|---|
| Review and finalise case templates | Cluster the themes from the all cases | Apply the template to all cases |

| Apply the final template to the full data set in preparation for data interpretations |
|---|

### 3.4.5.3.2  The process of thematic analysis

The identified constructs were based on the research questions, and sub-questions were used to define the themes. I applied the template analysis to develop the themes, observing recurrent features and actions of the participants. The units of analysis are the CEOs and the TMT. Using the software to match the most frequent themes serves the same objectives as the pattern matching in a case study (Yin, 2013: 143). The interview protocol in section 3.5.6 explains the rationale of formulating the questions to gain an understanding of the pluralistic organisation structure, the selection of the CEOs and the TMT, the reporting lines, the relationship, and how they define their organisational effectiveness. Table 3.17 shows the theme number, the theme title, and the emergent themes.

**Table 3-17 Cases themes**

| Theme Number | Theme title and details |
|---|---|
| **Theme 1** | **Context** |
| | Dynamic context of change and uncertainty |
| | National culture shareholders expectation |
| | Hierarchal structure and reporting |
| **Theme 2** | **CEO** |
| | International |
| | Nationalisation |
| | The predecessor CEOs |
| | Internal |
| | External |
| **Theme 3** | **TMT** |
| | TMT role |
| | Communication |
| | TM-TM relationship |
| | TMT structure |
| | TMT- composition |
| **Theme 4** | **Organisational outcomes** |
| | Financial results |
| | Financial growth |
| | Growth (expansion in the region) |
| | Reputation in the community |
| | Technology and innovation |

Template analysis emphasises the use of hierarchal coding by clustering codes meaningfully. The aim of selecting template analysis is working with data from the bottom-up, searching for emerging themes to develop the initial template. The second phase of data analysis is reviewing and modifying the template. Finally, I interpreted findings and wrote up and applied quality checks (Brook et al., 2015; Cassell and Symon: 2015).

### 3.4.5.3.3  Developing and finalising the final template for each case- Step 14

Development of the final template is accomplished by searching for relationship between themes, clustering themes and identifying the meanings of the codes within the themes (Huberman et al., 2014). During the first coding cycle, working with the data from the ground up produced an initial

list of themes (Table 3.18). The CEO selection includes three second-order themes. The unit code of the second order theme CEO selection includes nationalisation, internal promotion, and international to set up (Table 3.18).

**Table 3-18 Sample second-order theme**

| Themes | Second-order themes | Files | Codes |
|---|---|---|---|
| Theme 2-<br>Sub- Research<br>question 1 | **CEO Selection** | 3 | 3 |
| | CEO Selection\CEO for Nationalisation | 1 | 2 |
| | CEO Selection\Internal promotion | 2 | 3 |
| | CEO Selection\International to set up | 1 | 1 |

I grouped the initial codes I identified in the data set without thinking about theoretical propositions (Yin, 2003). The emergent theme of the CEO Board dynamic relationship emerged during interviews with CEOs. The interview questions did not include questions about the CEO-Board relationship. The Board role was not part of the theoretical review. The CEO-Board relationship theme emerged in the four cases (Table 3.19).

**Table 3-19 Emergent theme sample**

| Third coding cycle | Emergent theme |
|---|---|
| 'The Board should let them present the strategy'. | CEO - Board Dynamic relationship |
| 'They want me to deliver, carrying 42 TMT mainly in a corporate function, and only eight are medical'. | |

I mapped the themes by using the software, showing the interconnectivity of the components against the research questions and the identified constructs.

### 3.4.5.3.4  Matrix template

Matrix is a table format that collects and arranges data as text (Table 3.20), using the matrix query to organise an essential selection of participants' views during the first and the subsequent interviews and phone calls. The matrix is used to distinguish between themes, cross-checks if the analysis is truthful, and sets the stage for the cross-case synthesis. While the interviewee quotes are not shown inside the table, it shows how many references the participant made to the theme. The darker the colour of the cell, the higher the number of connections. The number shown in

each cell includes the location of the data, case, and participants. Site is displayed in a summarised format or text.

**Table 3-20 Matrix coding query**

| Case 2-Theme 2- Sub-question 1 | 2 : TM13 | 2: CEO 1 | 2 : CEO 2 | 2 : TM11 | 2 : TM12 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 27 : CEO effectiveness | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 28 : Efficiency and cost of TMT | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 29 : Efficiency of professionals | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| 30 : Board support | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 31 : CEO network | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 32 : Delegation of authority | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 33 : Efficiency of processes | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| 34 : Like our fathers' national leadership | 1 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

(NVivo matrix query)

The matrix templates are used in the four cycles of analysis and interpretation. The matrix ensures the reliability of the interpretation and compares the transcripts of different interviews of the same participant. In addition, it is used for the cross-case synthesis. The matrices and network queries are suitable for organising the data by timeline and event (Saldaña, 2015).

### 3.4.5.4 Triangulation step 15

This multiple-case design with semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection method required triangulation at different stages of the study. First, methodological triangulation was applied to strengthen the understanding of the phenomenon, suitable for interviews, onsite observations, and participants observations (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Second, data triangulation was the most common process. Triangulation during data collection opened opportunities, access to the CEOs offices, interviewing different respondents (Office managers and strategy advisors), and interviewing the same respondent more than once (Flick, 2004).

Multiple data sources triangulation is applied by reviewing the documents provided by the participants to capture the context, details of the case context, and the individuals (Stake, 2013).

**Table 3-21 Methodological triangulation**

| Change at the top | interview 1 | Interview 2 |
|---|---|---|
| TMT | 'Disruption of innovation and processes make them feel drained sceptical, and stretched' | 'Many people were let go; we are working hard to gain the trust of those who stayed' |
| TMT | 'Good for all, trust, and efficiency' | 'He is amazing, world-class we trust his ability' |
| CEO | 'Change at the top left us with 8000 processes we should have less than 1000'. | 'We did good, have a long way to reach to best practice maximum 600 processes' |

Table (3.21) includes a sample of the theme variation during the first and the second interview with the participant. The change in the CEO TMT answers the same question during the case's duration. The first column belongs to the first coding cycle (Huberman et al., 2014). The second column shows the answers of the same participants in the follow-up interview. All answers are captured by comparing the interviews timeline, events, and statements (Saldaña, 2015).

### 3.4.5.4.1  Developing individual case reports – Step 16

The individual case report structure is based on the research question and the sub-questions for each case. The theme-based report of each case is organised in the order of the research questions (Yin, 2013; Stake, 2013). Each case report includes tables showing the higher order themes, second-order themes, and emergent themes. The length of the single case report depends on the number of second-order themes and emergent themes. The advantage of the case reporting is to better understand the individual case discussion and interpretation (Stake, 2010). The original coding was based on the first coding cycle, where a long list of codes was generated (case template). The review and clustering of the original codes produced the thematic framework organised in line with the research questions (Yin, 2013). The case report is structured in the following order:

Theme 1: Pluralistic organisational context:

- Overview and general information of each case
- Structure, status, size, and culture

Theme 2: Impact of pluralistic organisation context on the selection of the CEOs and the CEOs leadership effectiveness.

Theme 3: The impact of the pluralistic organisation context on TMT selection, performance, and retention

Theme 4: Impact of the external contextual factors impacting the pluralistic organisation outcomes.

I concluded each case report with the emergent case-specific conceptual framework. The case findings and the conclusions are based on themes and second-order themes, showing the strengths (how many times the theme appeared and how many participants referred to theme). I also presented any influencing factors and the contextual elements relevant to the case history.

### 3.4.5.4.2  Phase 6- Data analysis cycle 3, cross-case synthesis - Steps 17-20

Yin's (2013: 164) cross-case synthesis applies only to multiple case studies with at least two cases. I applied the cross-case synthesis technique to produce robust, transparent analysis that increases the case findings, evidence, and strengths (step 17). The cross-case synthesis technique provides evidence for emerging second-order themes, final themes, and the findings. Particularly in multiple case study, the cross-case synthesis shows the relevance and applicability of the results in other similar settings. The cross-case synthesis exceeds the factual and helps understand the higher level of the themes (Huberman et al., 2014; Ferguson et al., 2016). The most important benefit of the cross-case technique is that while it generates assertions, it maintains each case context (Kirimi and Barine, 2012; Stake, 2013). Stake (2013: 124) advised against merging the individual cases too quickly into the multi-case research questions.

Step 18 is aggregating emergent themes of all cases. To increase the validity of the case, the synthesis is performed by listing the main themes first in the individual cases, similarities, or differences across the four cases (CEOs and TMTs background). Another way of cross-case synthesis is to select a pair of cases (Case 1 and Case 2) and then generate a final higher-order thematic matrix. The cross-case synthesis investigates any differences between the themes of each case, goes beyond the impressions, and employs a well-structured and diverse lens to analyse the data (Stake, 2013). Table 3.22 includes an example of the cross-case synthesis of theme one across the four cases. The last column shows the total codes in each subtheme. The total number of codes represents the strengths of the theme.

**Table 3-22 Cross-case synthesis**

| Theme 1- PO context | Case 1 | Case 2 | Case 3 | Case 4 | Total number |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Number of participants** | 20 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 41 |
| | | | | | |
| **Second-order theme 1.1** Dynamic knowledge-based economy, governance, reporting and hierarchy | 22 | 8 | 12 | 18 | 47 |
| **Number of participants** | 20 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 41 |
| **Second-order theme 1.2** External context drives the change in PO strategic direction | 19 | 13 | 13 | 12 | 57 |
| **Number of participants** | 20 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 37 |
| **Emergent second-order theme** 1.3 National culture and national leadership expectations | 5 | 4 | 18 | 9 | 36 |
| **Number of participants** | 16 | 2 | 7 | 3 | 28 |
| **Emergent second-order theme** 1.4 Board of Directors role | 13 | 8 | 10 | 5 | 33 |
| **Number of participants** | 10 | 6 | 7 | 6 | 29 |

Table 3.22 illustrates step 19 using matrices and network to display the final cross-case and second-order themes. The number of codes of the second-order themes are shown to indicate the level of utility of the theme. The highest number of codes means the more substantial the evidence of the theme. The original themes and second-order themes can be strengthened by meaningfully combining second-order themes. In this example, the second-order themes 1.1 and 1.2 are the most mentioned by participants (41 and 37 participants respectively), followed by subtheme 1.3 (28 participants).

Table 3.22 is the matrix for generating the findings. The themes are shown in the first column followed by the most important factor. The cross-case emergent findings are case-based and themes-based.

Step 20 is developing the cross-case synthesis report. The cross-case synthesis is not just listing the findings against each research question. It is essential to sustain the contextual meaning during the drafting of the cross-case findings. The validity and confirmation of the results can be proved by keeping the track record of a large amount of data by using the matrices from the start of theme generation, quantitively illustrating the evidence by showing the number of references of themes, and second order (Stake, 2010).

## 3.4.6 Assessing the quality of data analysis strategy

The triangulation of the data sources can achieve rigour and trustworthiness of qualitative data. The data type was collected from the primary sources through longer intense meetings with the participants in their context. The triangulation was applied in the first and second data analysis cycles during the cross-case analysis (Stake, 2010) to ensure the multiplicity of evidence sources (Yin, 2013).

**Table 3-23 Multiple case trustworthiness**

| Measure | Proof |
|---|---|
| Credibility | The strategic leadership in the pluralistic organisation context clarified the multiple perspectives of the Longitudinal-2 years. Multi-level design-organisations and individuals |
| | Multiple data collection methods: triangulation |
| | Multiple analytical methods |
| | Participants feedback on the transcripts. |
| Transferability | The pluralistic organisations' selection rationale, the ample details on the case context (Houghton et al., 2015). The analytical generalisation from the empirical observations to theory rather than on the population (Yin, 2009). Cross case analysis also provided a sound basis for a multiple case study of different organisations (Eisenhardt, 1989, Brown and Eisenhardt, 1997). Thematic analysis is mostly instrumental in multiple case study (Barratt et al., 2011). Particularisation stems from generalisation (Waring and Wainwright, 2008). |
| Dependability | The detailed data collection and presentation provide a sound basis with low inference from the researcher to minimise the researcher bias (Gibbert and Ruigrok, 2010). The careful documentation in a case database, including the details of the interviews, the participants, profiles, and emails with participants (Huberman et al., 2014). The concurrent data collections of more than 50 interviews, preliminary analysis, and reflection during the first two cases facilitated replicating the third and fourth cases (Stake, 2013). |
| Confirmability | The inductive data analysis uses the participants' excerpts and quotes, applying the three levels of data analysis to ensure transparency of the process (Yazan, 2015). Thematic matrix and network analysis made moving from analysis to interpretation explicit (King, 2004) |
| Ethics | Participants received a formal communication: participation, data use, and protection. |
| | The interviewees signed the consent forms |
| | Cases and participants anonymity is imperative. |

I engaged with the participants by visiting them onsite for an extended period to finalise the transcripts and give the participants the chance to review their transcripts. In addition, the participants reviewed the quotes to ensure the research was ethical and credible.

The research informants were willing to review and comment on the anonymous interview transcripts. They gave feedback and advice in case of any misinterpretation (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). The discussion meetings and calls during the data analysis for additional clarifications of their perspectives were performed through the four cases (Yin, 2013). The criteria employed to ensure the trustworthiness of the research are based on Guba's (1994) constructs. In addition, the ethicality is also proved, as stated in Table 3.23.

The research integrity and quality rest within the thoughtful, careful, and correctness of data collection. I was obliged to uphold the privacy and anonymity of the participants. The confidentiality of the discussions resulted in gaining the participants' trust in sharing personal and off-the-record information.

## 3.4.7  Implications for the data analysis

Data analysis is 'a matter of giving meaning to the first impression as well as to final compilations' (Stake, 2010: 71). The analytical strategy is inductive and is based on working with the data in a recurrent approach. Although the inductive analytical techniques are not purely constructionist, the context is fundamental to understanding the participants, organisations, and outcomes. The template analysis used in the constructionist stance in this multiple-case study is impacted by the contextual outlook. I produced versions of the context that are fundamental to understanding how participants experience (King et al., 2018)

# 4 Research findings

## 4.1 Overview

The research aims to introduce an empirical model featuring the impact of the context on the strategic leadership building on four pluralistic organisations in the UAE. This research defines strategic leadership as the functions and actions performed by the individuals (CEOs and TMT) (Finkelstein et al., 2009). This chapter offers readers insights into four cases. The individual case results create the building platform for the cross-case synthesis insights.

The results of the inductive analysis generated several emergent themes included in the findings. The findings are presented in the same sequence as the research question and sub-questions as shown in Table 4.1.

**Table 4-1 Theme numbers and title and the research questions**

| Theme number and title | Research question |
|---|---|
| Impact of external context on PO context | How does the external context impact strategic leadership effectiveness to achieve outcomes of pluralistic organisations (PO)? |
| **Sub-questions** | |
| Impact of PO context on CEO selection and leadership effectiveness | How does the context impact the CEOs, selection, strategic direction, and leadership effectiveness in pluralistic organisations? |
| Impact of PO context on TMT | How does the context impact the TMT selection, performance, and retention in pluralistic organisations? |
| Impact of context on PO outcomes | What are the contextual factors that impact on PO outcomes? |

The chapter is structured as follows:

- Case overview and general information.
- Theme 1: The context of the PO, including the internal organisation context, structure, status, size, timeline, culture, and an account of the organisation's strategic direction.

- Theme 2: The research sub-question (Table 4.1) revealed the PO context impact on the CEO selection, distinguishing between internal selection (promoted from within the organisation) or external selection, CEO attributes national or international, and previous experience. The participants defined what leadership effectiveness means to them.
- Theme 3: Impact of the PO context on the TMT selection, structure (role and TMT size), composition (executive, experiences, tenure, and education), and the TMT interaction. The results included the CEO relationship with the TMT and PO context impact on the TMT relationships and communication
- Theme 4: A derivation of what constitutes elements of PO outcomes for each case and identification of the contextual factors impacting those outcomes.

Following the individual case results as described above, the cross-case synthesis is presented following the same order of themes and the research questions. I present the cross-case synthesis pooled results of the main themes. I compare similarities and differences between the cases and highlight the relationships among the themes. Finally, I present the emergent conceptual framework, followed by the cross-case key findings and conclusion.

## 4.2  Case 1: Public Healthcare (PHC)

### 4.2.1  Overview and general information

This section includes insights from the first case, public healthcare (PHC) organisation, researched between 2018 and 2021. Data collection started with a meeting with the Chairman on October 18, 2018, to gather insights (Figure 4.1).

The case sponsor is the Deputy CEO who reviewed and commented on the case summary report. The case sponsor comments highlight the strategic change, which started in February of 2019 and continued throughout the case.

**Figure 4-1 PHC timeline 2018-2021**
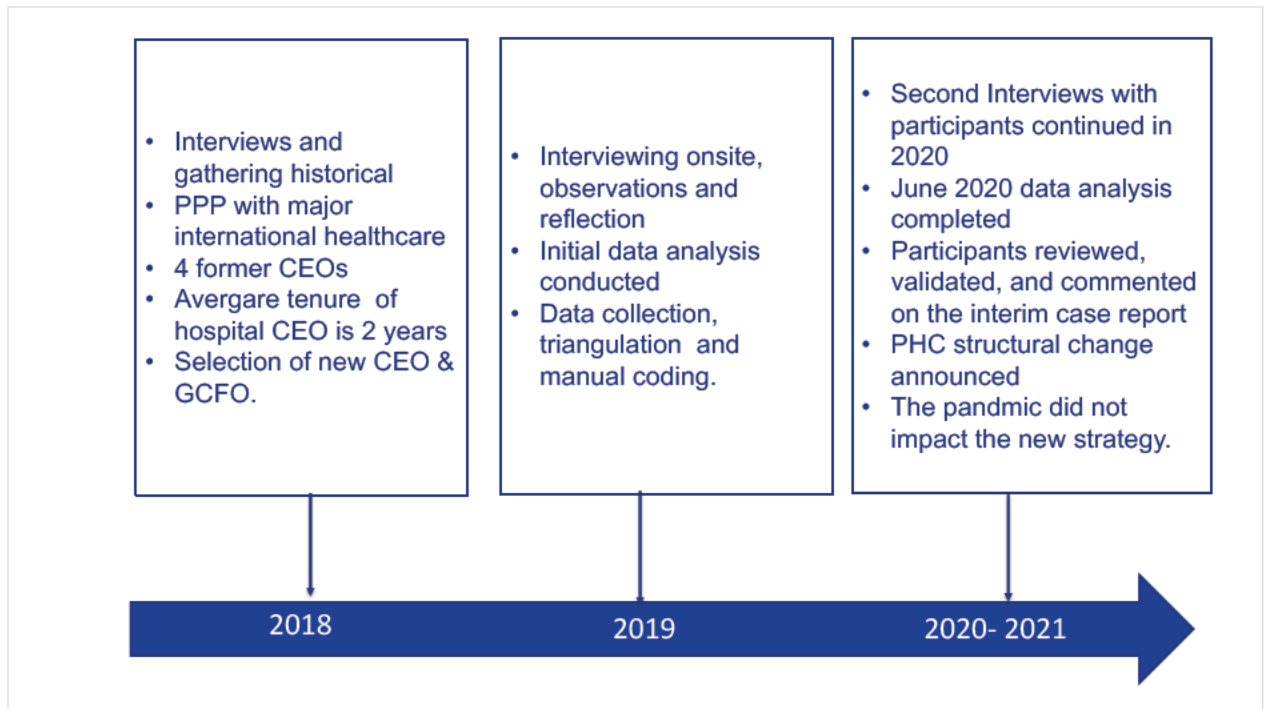


## 4.2.2  Theme 1: Impact of external context on PO context

Case 1 financial results are negative. TM1 and Group CEO (GCEO) referred to 'the new leadership,' which formulated new PPP to ensure both partners shared the liabilities. 'Assuming we work out our strategy, we need to address the strategic issues of who does what' (GCEO).

The pluralism of the PHC management arises from internationalisation due to the PPP (Hospital 2 CEO). International medical professionals operate in PHC but report to the CEO in their country. The professional and corporate teams hired by PHC in the UAE report to PHC GCEO. 'The long-term collaboration is a key part of our vision to advance healthcare' (Chairman). The first dimension of PHC pluralism is in the management by internal partners in the UAE-based organisation, the multiple reporting, and the unconventional reporting as shown in Figure 4.2.

The Deputy CEO provided a copy of the organisational structure.  The structure follows the publicly listed regulatory guidelines and the healthcare regulators. The appointed new Board of directors are mandated to monitor the CEO and the TMT (GCEO).

**Figure 4-2 PHC internal organisation structure**
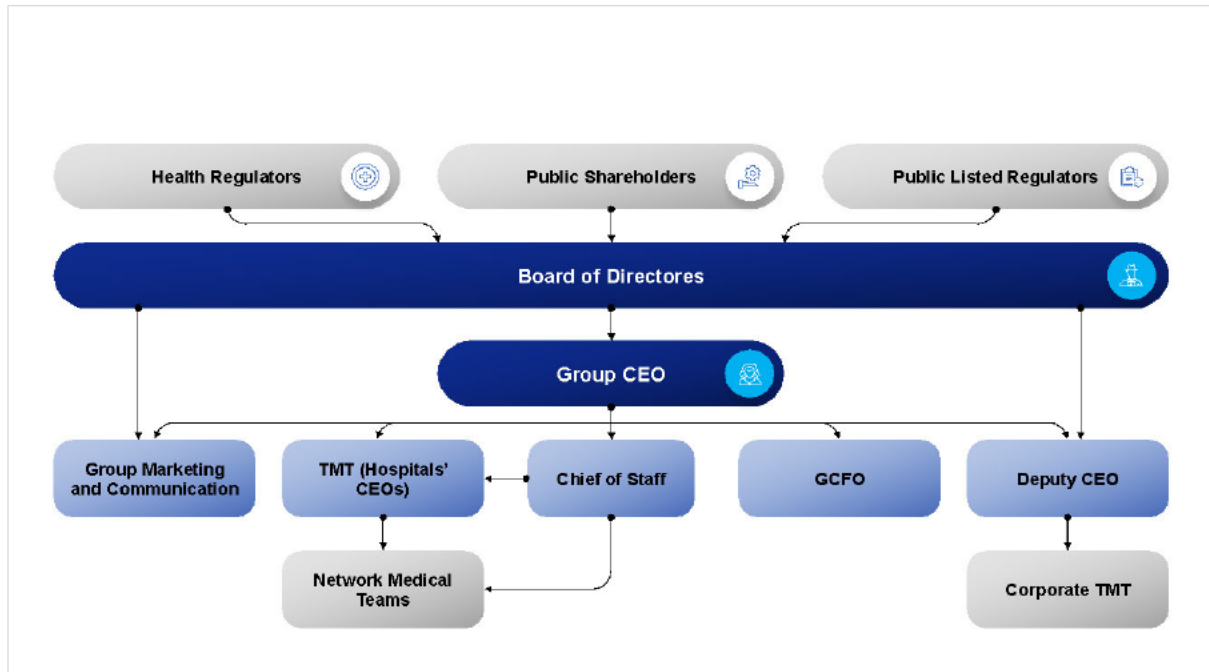


Figure 4.2 shows how PHC internal structure reflects the duality of internal reporting in three positions. The Group Marketing and Communication function reports to the Chairman and the GCEO. The Deputy CEO, who the Board appoints, has access to the Chairman and the Board and has the support of the Board. The hospital CEOs report directly to the GCEO: the hierarchy is dictated by the national context, and Deputy CEO cultural ability to manage the national teams. Table 4.2 includes five second-order themes describing the impact of external context on the PO internal context. All participants discussed the UAE government strategic direction to create a knowledge-based economy resulted in the new direction to shift from government funding to private funding. Budget reductions emerged during the interviews. All participants described this shift as the new strategic direction.

**Table 4-2 Case 1 PO context**

| # | Second-order themes | Number of codes |
|---|---|---|
| 1.1 | Knowledge-based economy new direction shift from government funding to private funding and budget reductions | 29 |
| 1.2 | National culture and national leadership expectations | 19 |
| 1.3 | Informal hierarchal structure and reporting | 17 |
| 1.4 | Multiple regulatory authorities for healthcare | 14 |
| 1.5 | Board role | 13 |

Multiple regulatory authorities for healthcare (second-order theme 1.4) are responsible for defining the strategic direction, monitoring performance, and the quality of services of private and public healthcare organisations and the professionals (DOH, 2019). This multiplicity of strategies and objectives is the second dimension of PHC as a pluralistic organisation. Six participants described how the multiple reporting resulted in shaping the hierarchical structure of the PO, and to different regulatory and monitoring authorities (TM6, TM7, Deputy CEO, GCEO and H1 CEO, H3 CEO).

> **Case 1 Finding 1.1: The dynamic knowledge-based economy shapes the PO internal context, impacts on the PO's strategic direction, and shapes the Board role.**

Most participants described the changes in the external dynamic context (the shift from government to private funding and budget reduction). The dynamic knowledge-based economy created frequent funding, budgets, and management changes in the strategic direction of the PO. Participants described the internal context as a context of uncertainty: 'We need stability. Fast changes created insecurity' (TM4). Participants conveyed how the internal context is filled with doubt and uncertainty to shift to private funding in 2021 (H1 CEO, H2 CEO, H3 CEO, H5 CEO, TM2, TM8, and TM9).

> **Case 1 Finding 1.2: The changing context and the new strategic direction instigate an internal context of uncertainty.**

### 4.2.3  Organisation culture

All participants were asked to describe PHC culture. The majority were national participants (11 out of 16). Figure 4.3 shows that most of the participants (12) discussed the organisation culture, the emergent national culture, and national leadership expectations.

**Figure 4-3 National culture and national leadership expectations' emergent theme**
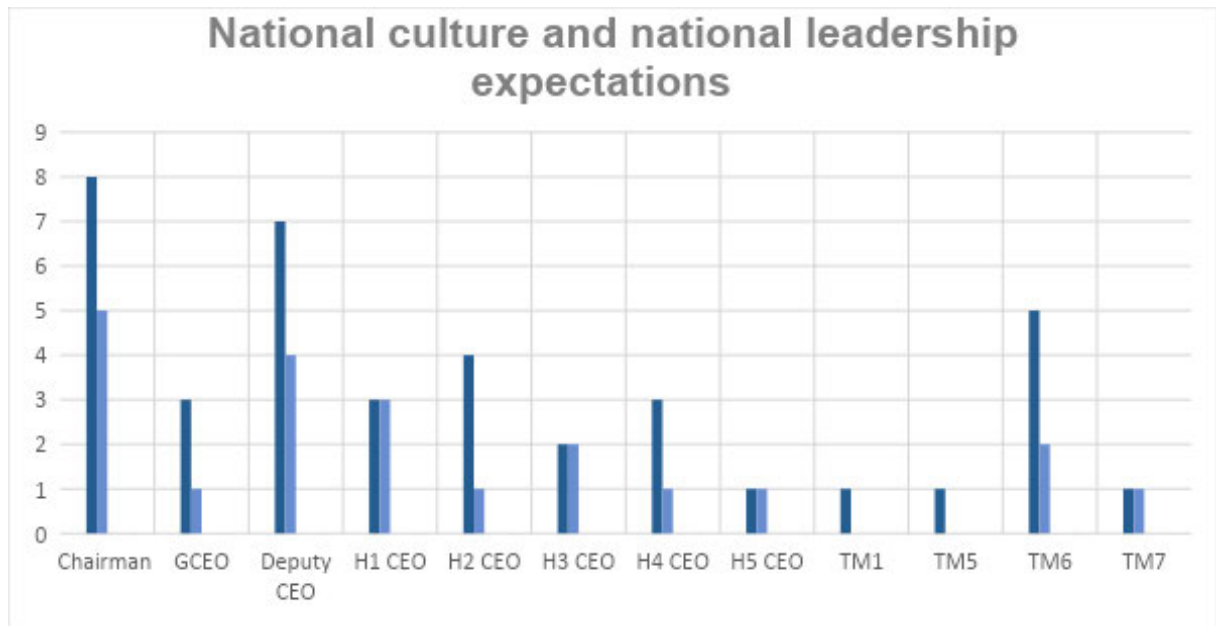


'The UAE national culture is based on respect, hospitality, family cohesion, tolerance, and solidarity among members of the society (TM9).  Of the constraints, 'It was a massive cultural change working with my deputy,' where interpersonal relationships dominated the performance. When the Board changed the hierarchal structure, they asked the Deputy CEO to lead the TMTs in the corporate headquarters. 'I manage people and hospitals; my deputy manages certain cultural and political conflicts' (GCEO).

The GCEO interaction with the national TMT members who joined before him was complex. The Deputy CEO disagreed with how the GCEO executed the resources' efficiency assessment and restructuring the TMT and their teams. The Deputy CEO, H4 CEO, and TM10 believed that the 'leadership success factor' was to follow the national leadership vision: 'Most important is the vision. We need to have alignment and empathy to lead like our leaders with humility and love. We must know how to do that change like our leaders. His Highness makes tough decisions but

implements his decisions with love' (H3 CEO). The government (the main shareholders) invested in hiring and developing national TMT members to lead the organisation as per the country's 2030 vision. PHC mission statement states 'attracting and motivating nationals to work in the healthcare professions is PHC culture' (PHC, 2018: 6). The result of this emergent second-order theme is:

> **Case 1 Finding 1.3: The national leadership expectations are associated with the development and advancement of nationalisation in PO.**

## 4.2.4 Theme 2: Impact of PO context on CEO selection and leadership effectiveness

The previous CEO, an internal national medical doctor who had served PHC for four years, was promoted from inside PHC (Deputy CEO, H3 CEO, and H4 CEO).

**Table 4-3 Case context of CEO selection**

| # | Second-order themes | Number of Codes |
|---|---|---|
| | **CEO selection** | |
| 2.1 | Negative past financial results | 15 |
| 2.2 | The number of former CEOs | 12 |
| 2.3 | Board - CEO relationship | 13 |
| | **Strategic direction** | |
| 2.4 | Reduce headcount and cost of human resources | 23 |
| 2.5 | Increase efficiency of processes | 20 |
| 2.6 | Performance excellence and integrated operational systems | 12 |
| 2.7 | Increase revenue | 10 |
| 2.8 | Technology and innovation | 8 |
| 2.9 | Moving away from the PPP | 6 |

Five national TMT members, who had worked with the previous CEO, stated that the predecessor CEO lacked transparency and was responsible for the false reporting of the organisation's negative financial results. Table 4-3 shows nine second-order themes. Seven participants described how the negative financial performance (second-order theme 2.3 with 15 codes) drew the attention of the national leadership, resulting in the dismissal of the CEO (Deputy CEO, H3 CEO, H4 CEO, TM2, TM3, TM4, and TM10).

### 4.2.3.1 CEO selection

During the first cycle of data analysis, the selection of the CEO was coded as national or international selection. No regulatory restrictions exist for the selection of the CEO in publicly listed organisations (SCA, 2019). The Chairman was mandated with the formulation of PHC's new strategic direction and hiring the new CEO. The emergent strategic direction higher-order theme included six second-order themes (2.4 to 2.9, Table 4.3).

The CEO's relationship with the Board second-order theme emerged during the discussions with participants (Table 4.3, second-order theme 2.3). The Chairman interview questions were about the process of the CEO selection. Thirteen references to the CEO-Board relationship emerged. The Deputy CEO was promoted by the Board to lead all national TMTs in the corporation and to have a direct reporting line to the Board. The second most discussed aspect of the Board-CEO relationship was the CEO delegation of authority and the CEO role in the strategic direction.

### 4.2.3.2 CEO delegation of authority

The CEO of the regulatory entity of UAE described how the CEO in a public organisation is delegated by the board or the organisation's articles of associations.

The delegation of authority generally includes the responsibilities of developing the strategic direction of the organisation, setting the budgets for consideration of the Board of Directors and how the CEO and TMT plan to implement these budgets, and strategies.

**Table 4-4 CEO leadership effectiveness theme 2**

| # | Second -order themes | Number of codes |
|---|---|---|
| 2.11 | The efficiency of human resources and processes | 20 |
| 2.20 | Leads like our national leadership | 19 |
| 2.12 | People-oriented leadership | 12 |
| 2.13 | Delegation of authority | 9 |
| 2.14 | Innovation and technology | 8 |
| 2.15 | Network | 5 |
| 2.16 | CEO relationship with the Board | 8 |
| 2.17 | CEO has the right TMT | 7 |
| 2.18 | Transformational leadership | 8 |
| 2.19 | Performance-driven leadership | 8 |

Table 4.4 shows that the CEO delegation of authority was discussed nine times (Deputy CEO, GCEO, and TM1). The new CEO delegation of authority is less than half: 'I sign off 40% of the financial decisions and my Deputy signs off 20%'; there are about 19,000 staff, of which 2000 have no role' (GCEO). The previous management was changed due to inefficiency, negative financial results, and inaccurate reporting: 'They did not report the financial losses' (H4 CEO). As a result, the predecessor CEO was changed for inefficiency, negative financial results, and false reporting. 'We lost the Board's support; they don't trust anybody'. (TM1). The GCEO delegation of authority was decreased, and the CEO - Board relationship was negatively affected by the past unsatisfactory performance of the predecessor CEO. Therefore, the findings from this emerging theme are:

> **Case 1 Finding 2.1: The negative past performance and the frequent CEOs succession have a negative impact on the Board dynamic relationship with the international external CEO and his/her delegation of authority.**

#### 4.2.3.2.1  CEO leadership effectiveness

The CEO and TMT were asked what leadership effectiveness means to them. Table 4.4 shows 10 second-order themes in the CEO leadership effectiveness theme. The CEO's leadership effectiveness was mainly related to the efficiency of human resources and processes (20 codes by 20 participants). In addition, the participants compared CEO leadership effectiveness to the national leadership: 'Leading like our national leadership' (H3 CEO). Finally, people-oriented leadership, performance-driven leadership, and transformational leadership were linked to CEO leadership effectiveness.

### 4.2.3.2.2  CEO effectiveness and efficiency of resources and processes

All participants were asked to define the CEO effectiveness. The GCEO said that his focus is to 'increase the efficiency' of the human resources and processes of PHC and its network. 'We have 8000 processes. The average number of processes in healthcare is 600' (GCEO). 'There are areas which would be more efficient' (TM1) by reducing the number of people; 'some executives do not have any role' (H1 CEO).

Participants believed it was difficult to improve the PHC performance with constraints on the reduction of headcount and cost (TM1, TM2, GCEO, and H1 CEO). Human capital efficiency is the extent to which PHC 'have the right people' (H1 CEO) with the right knowledge, experience, and the motivation to do the work effectively (TM1, and TM2). Therefore, the second finding for this theme is:

> **Case 1 Finding 2.2: CEO leadership effectiveness is to achieve the efficiency of human resources and processes.**

The emergent second-order theme 'having effective TMT', was mentioned by the Chairman, the CEOs of the hospitals, Deputy CEO, and the GCEO. 'The selection of the right team is the first stone in the build-up of our organisation' (Deputy CEO). They stressed that having effective TMT is a clear reflection of CEO leadership effectiveness. 'I need to have the right people, even if this means tough decisions, but we need to restructure and take out non-performing positions.' (GCEO). The Deputy CEO agreed that CEO leadership effectiveness depended on having an effective and supportive TMT 'What's the point of having the A-team if they are not supportive'? The Chairman described CEO effective leadership as 'the best leadership is to get the good guys in'.

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> **Case 1 Finding 2.3: CEO leadership effectiveness is demonstrated by the selection of effective and supportive TMT.**

#### 4.2.3.2.3 Participants' perspective on CEO leadership effectiveness

The GCEO mentioned the word 'people' instead of 'executives' or 'TMT'. H4 CEO spoke (verbatim) of the importance of a 'people-oriented leader'. Most participants used the phrase 'good people leadership' to describe the well-being of the individuals. The GCEO explained the importance of people-oriented leadership in a healthcare organisation. He gave an example: 'The most successful cardiologist needs the cleaner to do his job well and follow the process' (GCEO).

Table 4.4 shows the highest second-order themes, with people-oriented leadership mentioned by all participants (12 codes by 12 participants). Participants said that people's leadership is significant in healthcare (Deputy CEO, GCEO, H1 CEO, H2 CEO, TM1, TM6, and TM9).

Several national participants were emotional, describing people-oriented leadership as embedded in the national culture and the national leadership expectations. 'We have to know how to do that change like our leaders. His Highness takes very difficult decisions but implements his decisions with love' (H3 CEO). The Deputy CEO, H3 CEO, and H4 CEO agreed that the CEO and TMT leadership effectiveness is to follow the national leadership vision: 'Most important to have empathy and lead like our leaders with humility and love' (H4 CEO).

Eight national participants linked people-oriented leadership to the national leadership. Four international participants explained the importance of people-oriented leadership in healthcare organisation.

The result that people- oriented leadership is expected by the national leadership and is important in healthcare was significant as it relates to leadership effectiveness (Deputy CEO, GCEO, H1 CEO, H2 CEO, TM2, TM3, TM6).

> **Case 1 Finding 2.3: People-oriented leadership is linked to national leadership expectations and signifies CEO leadership effectiveness.**

### 4.2.4 Theme 3: Impact of PO context on TMT

Table 4-5 shows the sixteen TMT who participated in case 1. TMT coded name, education, nationality, tenure, function, and position are also shown.

**Table 4-5 TMT participants demographics**

| # | Coded Name | Education | Nationality | Tenure | Function | Position |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Deputy CEO | UAE Bachelor | UAE | 15 | Corporate | Deputy CEO |
| 2 | H1 CEO | US Master | UAE | 10 | Medical | Hospital CEO |
| 3 | H2 CEO | UK Master | UAE | 10 | Corporate | Hospital CEO |
| 4 | H3 CEO | US Bachelor | UAE | 10 | Corporate | Hospital CEO |
| 5 | H4 CEO | Middle East Bachelor | UAE | 8 | Corporate | CEO of services |
| 6 | H5 CEO | US Bachelor | USA | 12 | Corporate | Hospital CEO |
| 7 | TM1 | Australia Bachelor | Australia | 3 | Corporate | CFO |
| 8 | TM2 | US PHD | Jordan | 11 | Corporate | Acting TM20 |
| 9 | TM3 | US Bachelor | USA | 10 | Corporate | COO |
| 10 | TM4 | South Africa Nursing diploma | South Africa | 11 | Medical | Chief Nursing |
| 11 | TM5 | US Master | UAE | 3 | Medical | H1 Chief Operation |
| 12 | TM6 | UAE Bachelor | UAE | 10 | Corporate | Chief Technology |
| 13 | TM7 | US Bachelor | UAE | 15 | Corporate | Chief Maintenance |
| 14 | TM8 | Canada Master | UAE | 12 | Medical | Chief strategy |
| 15 | TM9 | UAE Bachelor | UAE | 9 | Corporate | Human resources |
| 16 | TM10 | Canada Masters | UAE | 12 | Medical | Chief Medical |

TMT were asked about educational background, when and how they were selected, their positions, and functions. Participants' answers were clustered in nine second-order themes shown in Table 4.6. In addition, participants discussed their development, retention, dedication, and incentives**.**

In Table 4.6, the development of professional national leaders (second-order theme 3.1) is the most discussed theme in the TMT selection (Chairman, H2 CEO, H3 CEO, TM6, TM7, and TM9). Five TMT participants were hired through the national leadership development programme. Four nationals received executive and professional development training (H1 CEO, TM5, TM6, TM8, and TM9) as part of the national leaders' development. The Chairman, H1 CEO, TM4, TM6, and TM7 believed that the development of professional national leaders is a 'social contract from our national leadership' in addition to being a regulatory requirement of publicly listed organisations.

**Table 4-6 TMT selection, dedication, retention, and incentives**

| # | Second-order themes | Number of participants | Number of codes |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3.1 | The development of professional national leaders is a national direction | 12 | 15 |
| 3.2 | Social contract to develop national teams | 6 | 7 |
| 3.3 | Retaining national TMT with the wrong skills | 5 | 10 |
| 3.4 | TMT dedication (buy in the PO) | 11 | 16 |
| 3.5 | TMT high retention | 10 | 14 |
| 3.6 | TMT Incentives | 5 | 15 |
| 3.7 | TMT performance effectiveness | 7 | 12 |
| 3.8 | TMT clarity of roles | 8 | 11 |
| 3.9 | TMT entitlement and expectations | 6 | 6 |

## 4.2.5 TMT structure (positions and size)

Table 4-5 shows that 12 TMT served PHC for ten years and more. The GCEO confirmed that the total number of his TMT is 42. The TMT was comprised of six medical professionals and 36 corporate executives. Out of these, 12 were hospital CEOs. The participants highlighted the negative impact of the large number of TMT in corporate and other non-medical functions. TM2, who heads the finance department, said, 'More than 50% of the TMT are legacy'. Five participants (Deputy CEO, GCEO, H5 CEO, TM1 and TM2) think that PHC is retaining many TMTs with inadequate skills for their roles (second-order theme 3.3). Participants were of two divergent views. The first group believed that they were entitled to their roles and positions (TM6, TM7, TM8, and TM9). The second thought that PHC previous management caused the surplus in the number of national TMT in the corporate functions. The large size of TMT contributed to the inefficiency of human resources that emerged in theme 2 (Deputy CEO, GCEO, H1CEO, H5 CEO, TM1, TM2, and TM5). In conclusion:

> **Case 1 Finding 3.1: The large size of TMT in corporate positions amplified the inefficiency of human resources.**

## 4.2.6 TMT composition (tenure, experience, and education)

Most of the participants discussed the emergent themes. TMT long tenure and effective performance are proofs of TMT dedication (H1 CEO, H2 CEO, H3 CEO, H4 CEO, TM1, TM4 and TM5). Eleven TMT considered their long tenure is a sign of their dedication. Sixteen TMTs participated in this case, 11 were nationals and five from different backgrounds (see Table B1 TMT demographic in Appendix B). The national TMTs were selected as part of the national leaders' development programs. TMT members described that working at PHC and its network was the only work experience (Deputy CEO, H1 CEO, H3 CEO, TM6, TM7, and TM9). International TMT members were selected for their education and expertise in international healthcare organisations (TM1, TM2, TM4, TM10, and H5 CEO).

Since its inception, most TMT joined PHC (Deputy CEO, H3 CEO, H5 CEO, TM6, TM7, TM8, H5 CEO). The Deputy CEO was promoted and considered as a high potential CEO by the Board. TM6, TM7, TM8, and TM9 were hired through the national development programme and promoted to TMT by the predecessor CEO. All national TMT holding corporate functions received 18-month healthcare higher education programmes during their tenure. Seven participants linked their long tenure to dedication to their organisation. TM9 related the TMT retention to TMT development plans and incentives.

> **Case 1 finding 3.2: TMT dedication to their organisations is associated with TMT effective performance, retention, incentives, and development**.

## 4.2.7 TMT interaction and dynamics

International TMTs and GCEO are focused on improving PHC performance efficiency by implementing 'the best international healthcare metrics around the world' (TM1). The medical team has no tolerance for administrative bureaucracy: 'I am shocked that HR ask my doctors to record in and out' (GCEO). The corporate TMTs with long tenure are following the administration and human resources processes that are outdated (Deputy CEO).

As a government-funded organisation that is shifting from government funding to private funding, the Chairman, GCEO, Deputy CEO and a limited number of the TMT attend the strategy discussion meetings with the Board.  The need to 'balance the number of stakeholders involved in the major decision making' (Deputy CEO) created tensions among TMT: 'Our team is not part of the new strategy team' (TM8).

The TMT's divergence of objectives resulted in a disagreement and a state of indecision. 'We meet almost daily, but we don't agree on any decisions. Doctors only want to hire more resources' (Deputy CEO). The professionals stated disagreements and divergence of objectives: 'We need to hire. I don't have time to justify this. HR should just do it' (TM5).

**Table 4-7 TMT interaction and dynamics**

|  |  | Number of codes | Number of participants |
|---|---|---|---|
|  | **Second-order theme** | **20** | **20** |
| 3.7 | TMT challenging communication | 18 | 18 |
| 3.8 | TMT divergence and disagreement | 11 | 10 |
| 3.9 | TMT aligned with strategic direction and supporting CEO | 10 | 9 |
| 3.10 | TMT neutral (non-aligned) | 9 | 6 |
| 3.11 | TMT - TMT supportive interaction | 9 | 8 |
| 3.12 | TMT opposing and misaligned | 8 | 8 |

Table 4.7 includes six second-order themes describing the TMT interaction and dynamics. Many participants described their internal communication as challenging (18 participants). TMT divergence of objectives emerged when participants described their positions and how they interact with other TMTs. Most participants discussed the divergence and disagreements amongst professional and corporate TMTs, supporting, neutral, and opposing TMTs. Nine participants stated that they are supportive of the CEO and are aligned with the strategic direction.

**Figure 4-4 TMT supporting new strategic direction**
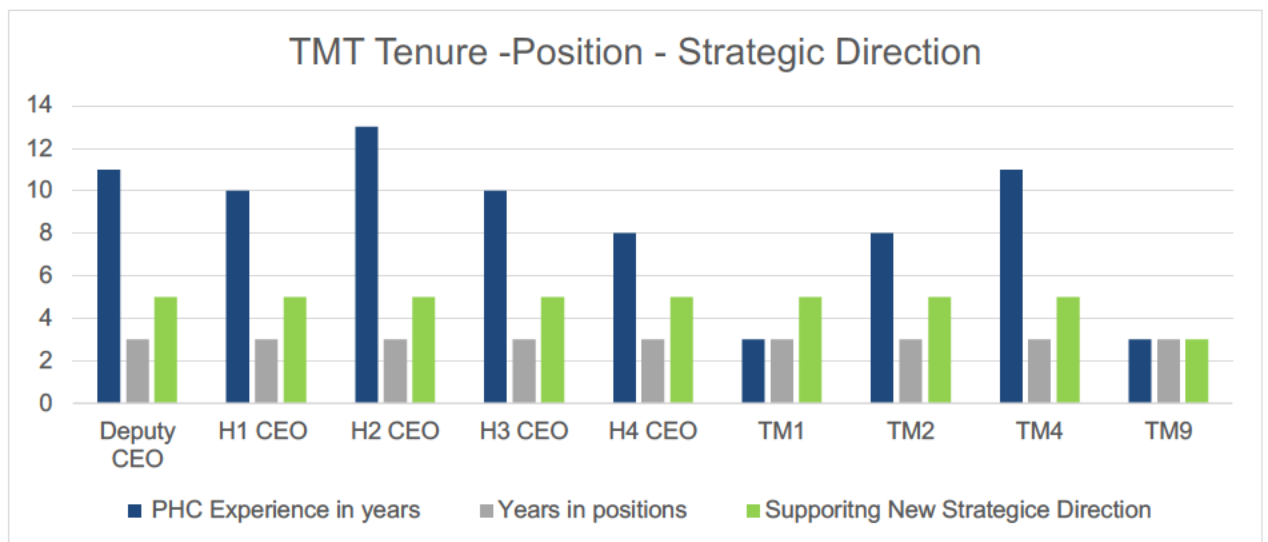


Figure 4.4 shows that the experience of nine participants in PHC ranges between eight and 13 years (the blue column experience 0 to 14 years). The brown column shows TMT tenure in the current position in years. The dark blue middle column shows nine TMT members supporting the CEO and aligned with the new strategic direction. The supportive TMT members had long organisation tenure but a shorter tenure in their position. H1 CEO and TM9 are medical doctors promoted to their positions as the CEO and the COO of the largest hospital in PHC's network. H1 CEO and TM5 support the GCEO and are aligned to deliver the strategic objectives. The GCEO described the medical TMT supporting the strategic direction (H1 CEO, TM5) as 'professional team leaders, efficient and top performers and with their support we will deliver great results' (GCEO).  Similarly, the newly promoted H2 CEO, H3 CEO with ten years tenure, and H4 CEO with eight years tenure have been promoted to their current position by the GCEO. The three CEOs support the GCEO and are aligned with the strategic direction: 'It is achievable and will carry PHC into the private funding in 2021' (H3 CEO).

**Case 1 Finding 3.3: Promoting TMT with long tenure to new positions positively impacts their support and alignment with the CEO and the strategic direction.**

### 4.2.7.2  Divergence in TMT objectives

Achieving private funding with increased revenue depends on Group CEO and TMT effectiveness. 'The senior professional team drive the numbers and other doctors' (H1 CEO). The finance team thinks otherwise: 'Profitability is achieved by applying core financial principles to the 'business,'

which ensures correct practices and financial controls' (TM1). Ten participants shared examples of the TMT divergence of objectives, disagreements, and how to implement the strategic direction (Table 4.7 TMT dynamics). The new strategic direction and the 'transformation' (TM1) of several TMT positions 'caused major disconnection' (Deputy CEO). As the national leadership mandated the Chairman and the GCEO to implement the new direction, the Deputy CEO was the only corporate TMT who was, as he quoted, 'sometimes' invited to the strategic meetings.

TMT opposition to the CEO and misalignment with the strategic direction emerged during the interviews (Table 4.7). Four participants (H5 CEO, TM6, TM7, and TM9) were in a defensive mode and critical of the new CEO and the strategic direction. 'There are no roles for us' (TM6). 'The team is in a defensive mode as we are going through the strategic change' (TM10). The opposing TMT were not asked about their role in the new strategic direction. Instead, they expressed openly (without prompting) why they were diverging away from the strategic direction. They were not satisfied with 'how' the new CEO acted. 'Seven people are against and only one with the new direction' (TM7). TM6 confirmed that '2018 engagement survey data [exists]' (TM6).

TMTs who opposed the new strategy felt it was unrealistic and impossible 'to achieve the self-funding in 2021' (H5 CEO). TM2, on the other hand, based his views on the average hospital cost, revenue, and new strategic target to be privately funded by 2021. 'There are 110 employees in the finance department alone, [and] working with every one of them [is necessary] to develop the revenue model. 'They' will not receive funding after that date'. When asked to clarify who 'they' were, TM2 referred to the professional TMT leading the hospitals and the new GCEO.

> **Case 1 finding 3.4: The long tenure in the same role and position stimulates the TMT opposition to the new CEO and the strategic direction.**

### 4.2.7.3  TMT communication

Participants were asked to describe their responsibilities, relationship with other TMTs, and whether interdepartmental processes were formal or informal. Participants described TMT communication as a primary challenge in their role in general and specifically during the new strategy and with the new leadership. H5 CEO labelled the TMT's communication as 'disastrous. Deputy CEO described it as 'too much technology but too little communications. The new leadership and the new strategic direction were the sources for this 'calculated communication' (H1 CEO). 'I watch what I say, to stay in' (TM7). Other TMT related the communication problems

to working in different locations. Several TMT worked in remote areas and outside the city. 'It is difficult to gather in the meeting room with all 42 TMT from different locations. Instead, TMT communicate via email and phone. 'We meet daily; we call it 'huddle' and it works well. We bring issues to light, discuss our disagreements at a strategic, not operational level. When it comes to our patients, we are on the same page' (H1 CEO). She shared an example of an 'inflammatory communication' issue with a medical senior in the hospital and how she must be 'direct to stop the toxic communications'.

> **Case 1 finding 3.5: The context of change increases the divergence of TMT objectives, disagreements and negatively impacts the TMT communication.**

## 4.2.8 Theme 4: Impact of context on the PO outcomes

Participants were asked to depict PHC outcomes and what the challenges were to achieve organisational outcomes. Table 4.8 includes the participants answers organised by the highest number of codes. The participants defined the PO outcomes as performance excellence, efficient processes, and the positive financial results. 'The performance metrics measure resource efficiency'. The GCEO and the TM1 confirmed PHC financial performance is negative; the organisation performance metrics for 2020 have been cascaded to the PHC network. Seven participants identified performance excellence as the most important outcome. They believed that performance excellence is critical to delivering effective outcomes (18 participants and 30 codes). The GCEO, TM1, and TM2 stressed the need to increase the efficiency of the resources by reducing the surplus in headcount. 'We are at half the loss of previous years, but it is still a loss' (TM3). The new strategy is to increase the efficiency, achieve international standards of healthcare performance excellence value in PHC, 'keeping the patients at the heart of everything we do' (GCEO).

**Table 4-8 Case 1 Second-order theme PO outcomes**

| # | PO Outcomes | Number of codes |
|---|---|---|
| 4.1 | Performance excellence | 30 |
| 4.2 | Future national leaders' development | 20 |
| 4.3 | Financial growth | 12 |
| 4.4 | Advanced technology and innovation | 11 |
| 4.5 | TMT retention and development | 10 |
| 4.6 | PO reputation and ethical reporting | 7 |
| 4.7 | National TMT development and satisfaction | 7 |

In contrast, the TMT (Deputy CEO H4 CEO, H3 CEO, TM6, and TM10) answered that national leadership satisfaction and the national talent retention defined successful PHC organisational outcomes.

Participants were asked to share contextual challenges that hindered their achievement of the specified outcomes. Theme 4 included 12 second-order themes reviewed and clustered into three higher-order themes: knowledge-based economy, national culture impact, and the impact of the healthcare industry in the UAE (Table 4.9).

The knowledge-based economy created the dynamic context and the economic and policy changes that impacted PHC in three ways:

1. The knowledge-based dynamic context and the frequent regulatory changes were the most referenced. The changes in the funding strategy were linked to the dynamic context, and the hospitals' CEOs stated that the frequent regulatory changes to encourage the establishment of new healthcare organisations facilitated the creation of competitors.

**Table 4-9 Contextual factors second-order themes**

| Contextual factors | Second-order themes | Number of Codes |
|---|---|---|
| Knowledge-based economy | 1.2 External dynamic context- Economic and policy changes | 29 |
| | 4.2 Uncertainty due to changing context | 22 |
| | 4.3 Shift to private funding and budget reductions | 9 |
| | 4.4 Frequent changes of strategic direction | 4 |
| | 4.5 Frequent healthcare regulatory changes | 2 |
| National culture and national leadership expectations | 4.6 Nursing is not an acceptable profession in the national culture | 6 |
| | 1.3 National culture, national leadership expectations | 19 |
| | 4.7 & 4.8 National TMT retention and development | 17 |
| Healthcare | 4.9 Healthcare industry in UAE | 18 |
| | 4.10 Mature healthcare market | 3 |
| | 4.11 Competing with the modernised private sector | 8 |

2. Healthcare's recent expansion has centred on the private sector due to the government's strategy of encouraging investment in a knowledge-based economy. The CEOs of the four hospitals asserted that PHC growth had reached a stage of maturity.

3. All participants expressed that PHC did not benefit from the external changes apart from the government financial funding. In addition, PHC's old hospital buildings were not modernised at the pace of other real estate, which was a challenge to compete with the modernised new private hospitals. 'The hospital buildings are old; we are competing with the modern and new private hospitals' (H2 CEO). H5 CEO reached the same conclusion saying that her hospital generates 75% of PHC revenue. Still, the hospital was losing out to the competition with 'the modernised private hospitals and fertility clinics having new shiny buildings, compared with our more than 40-year-old buildings and equipment' (H5 CEO).

4. Theme 1 results showed that the national leadership expectations are linked to the advancement of the nationalisation (Finding 1.3). Table 4.9 shows the national leaders' development is considered a primary PO outcome.

   Five participants (GCEO, H1 CEO, H5 CEO, TM1, and TM4) mentioned that nursing is not an acceptable profession in national culture; this impacts the performance and retention of nurses. However, the impact of the observation (6 codes) did not include any examples to support it.  The direct contextual impacts on the PO outcomes are:

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**Case 1 finding 4.1: The knowledge-based economy is the main contextual factor that signifies the importance of performance excellence and positive financial results as fundamentals of PO outcomes.**

**Case 1 finding 4.2: The national leadership expectations are associated with the realisation of the national leadership development**.

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## 4.2.9 Conclusion

The multi-level case explored how the changing external dynamic context shapes the PO structure and industry competitiveness. The knowledge-based economy, the PO industry, the national culture, and national leadership expectations were the contextual elements that influenced the PO internal context, the strategic leaders, and the outcomes of the PO.

The conclusion of the findings is presented following the research questions:

**How does context impact the strategic leadership effectiveness to achieve outcomes in pluralistic organisations?** Three findings show the multi-level relationships between the country-level external context, the internal PO context, the individuals, and the PO outcomes. First, the knowledge-based economy influences the industry market conditions, policy and regulations, consequently impacting the PO industry and the strategic direction (finding 1.1). Second, participants described the external context changes and the new strategic direction challenges that caused an internal context of uncertainty (finding 1.2). Third, nationalisation is a regulatory requirement for publicly listed organisations. Nationalisation is a country-level strategy, a cultural contract, and the publicly listed organisation requirement (finding 1.3) shown in Table 4.10.

**Research sub-question 1: How does the context impact the CEO selection, strategic direction, and leadership effectiveness**? Four results were reported. First, the emergent predecessor CEOs and the organisation's negative past performance resulted in two effects: the Board's relationship with the international CEO; the CEO's delegation of authority. A national

leadership symbol evolved that described how CEO and TMT actions should reflect the national leadership consideration and compassion towards their people.

The second result linked CEO leadership effectiveness to the ability of the CEO to achieve the efficiency of human resources and processes. The third result of this theme linked CEO leadership effectiveness to TMT effectiveness, alignment, and support (finding 2.3). The fourth result is that people-oriented leadership was related to national leadership and CEO leadership effectiveness (finding 2.4).

**Research sub-question 2: How does the context of the PO impact the TMT selection, performance, and retention**?

Five findings showed the context impacts on the TMT structure, composition, and interaction. The results revealed the relationships between TMT tenure, positions, and their dedication to the organisation (finding 3.1). Three findings revealed the TMT support, opposition, and neutrality to the CEO and the strategic direction (3.3, 3.4, and 3.5). The last finding showed how the external context changes created the context of uncertainty and increased the TMT divergence (finding 3.5).

**Research sub-question 3: What are the contextual elements that impact the pluralistic organisation outcomes?** In theme 4, participants identified what accounted for the PO outcomes. The dynamic context and the change from government funding to private funding significantly increased the importance of performance excellence and positive financial results (finding 4.1). The second finding showed that the national culture and the leadership expectations are associated with the success of the national leadership development as a PO outcome (finding 4.2).

**Table 4-10 Case 1 PHC primary findings**

| Research question | Number of findings | Primary findings |
|---|---|---|
| Research question | 1.1 | The knowledge-based dynamic context outlines the PO strategic direction, structure and shapes the Board role. |
| | 1.2 | The external dynamic context of change creates a context on uncertainty. |
| | 1.3 | The national leadership expectations are associated with the development and advancement of nationalisation in PO. |
| Sub-question 1 | 2.1 | The organisational negative past performance and the frequent CEOs succession have a negative effect on the Board relationship with the international external CEO and his/her delegation of authority. |
| | 2.2 | CEO leadership effectiveness is to achieve the efficiency of human resources and processes. |
| | 2.3 | CEO leadership effectiveness is demonstrated by having an effective and supportive TMT. |
| | 2.4 | People-oriented leadership is linked to national leadership and signifies CEO leadership effectiveness. |
| Sub-question 2 | 3.1 | The large size of TMT in corporate positions amplified the inefficiency of the human resources. |
| | 3.2 | TMT dedication to their organisations is related to TMT effective performance, retention, incentives, and growth |
| | 3.3 | Promoting TMT with long tenure to new positions positively impacts their support and alignment with the CEO and the strategic direction. |
| | 3.4 | The TMT long tenure in the same position stimulates the TMT opposition of the new CEO and the strategic direction. |
| | 3.5 | The context of change increases the divergence of TMT objectives, disagreements and negatively impacts the TMT communication |
| Sub-question 3 | 4.1 | The change from government funding to private funding significantly increases the importance of performance excellence, positive financial results as the leading indicators of organisational outcomes. |
| | 4.2 | The national leadership expectations are associated with the realisation of the national leadership development. |

### 4.2.5  Case 1 Hybrid strategic and contextual leadership framework

Case 1 (PHC) results reflected how strategic leaders are confronted by the dynamic knowledge-based economy, the PO industry policies and regulations, the national culture, and the national leadership expectations: Figure 4.5 shows the hybrid (synthesis of the contextual leadership and the strategic leadership) emergent framework for Case 1.

**Figure 4-5 Case 1 hybrid strategic contextual leadership framework**
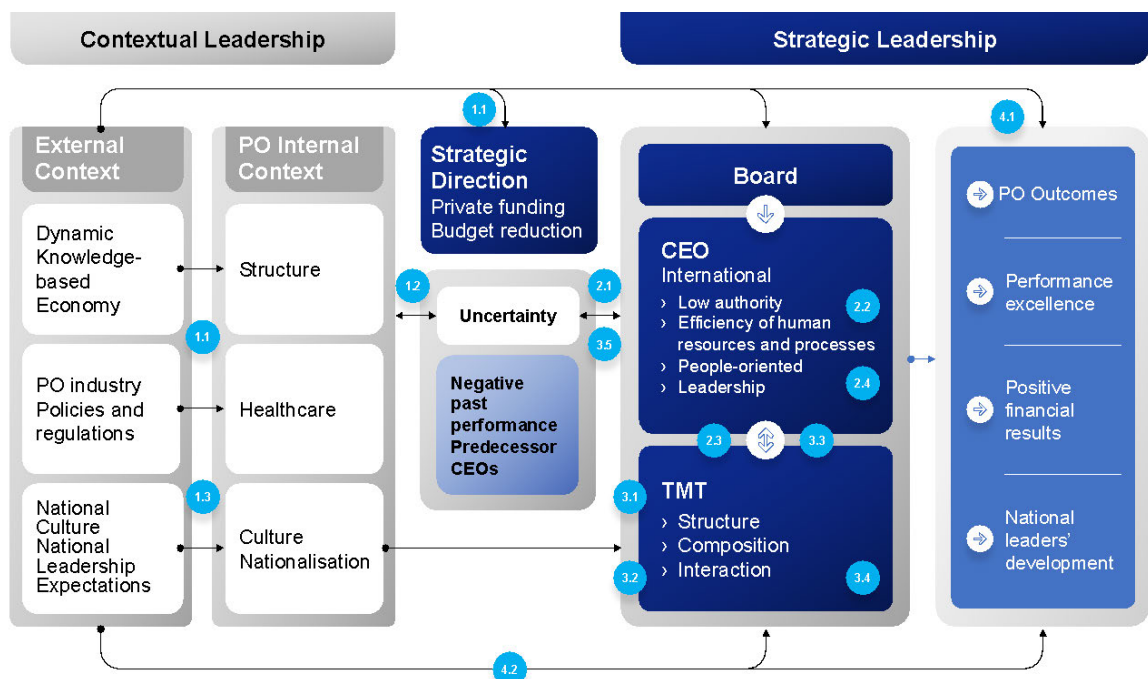


The figure can be read from left to right, showing the following items:

- Grey rectangle boxes show the external context and the internal context.
- Arrows represent the relationships between the external context, the PO context, the individuals, and the PO outcomes.
- The blue boxes represent the strategic leaders (CEO and TMT).
- The grey bordered blue PO outcome box represents the hybrid strategic contextual leadership.
- The findings numbers are shown in circles.

**External context**

- The top arrow from the external context to the PO strategic direction represents the impact of the dynamic knowledge- based context on the PO structure, PO industry (country level), and the PO industry (finding 1.1).
- The first horizontal arrows from the external context to the strategic direction represent the effects of the three external context sub-units on the Board's role and the strategic direction.
- The arrow (at the bottom) from the external context shows the emergent national culture and the national leadership as the macro contextual factors impacting the TMT and the PO outcomes (1.3).

**PO internal context**

- The emergent predecessor CEO's and the negative past performance created the context of uncertainty (finding 2.1).

**Emergent strategic direction**

- The arrow from the external context to the new strategic direction represents the context impact.

**Emergent context of uncertainty**

- The new strategic direction, the negative past performance, and the predecessor CEOs created a context of uncertainty.

**Emergent Board role**

- The arrow from the Board to the strategic direction represents the role of the Board to set the strategic direction.
- The second arrow from the Board to the CEO represents the Board relationship with the CEO. This relationship includes the Board support and approval of the CEO delegation of authority.

**CEO**

- The international external CEO received low authority.
- CEO leadership effectiveness is in the efficiency of human resources and processes.
- People-oriented leadership is linked to the CEO leadership effectiveness.
- The bidirectional arrow from the CEO to the TMT represents the CEO and TMT relationship.

- The arrow from the CEO and TMT to the strategic direction represents the impact of the CEO and the TMT actions on the strategic direction.

**TMT**

- The TMT structure, composition, and interactions influence the TMT relationship with the CEO.
- The arrow from the national leadership expectations to the TMT represents the link between national culture, leadership expectations, and national TMT.

**PO outcomes**

- The outcomes in healthcare identified are performance excellence, positive financial results, and the national leaders' development.

## 4.3  Case 2: Private Healthcare (VHC)

### 4.3.1  Overview

In this section, I present the insights from the second case. The description of the private healthcare organisation is based on interviews with participants, the documents provided by participants, the organisation's website, and data published by the holding organisation, a publicly listed organisation. VHC was founded in 2011 by an international founder as a private healthcare organisation. VHC was acquired in 2013 by a national investment holding organisation (PIF). VHC Chairman stated: 'UAE leadership have rightly pinpointed healthcare as a priority area for private investments, and the policy is working to raise standards' (VHC, 2019). Case 2 participants shared the rapid change in the healthcare systems and the rise of medical innovation and technology. The private healthcare organisation follows a new regulatory body for private healthcare organisations. TM13 is the CEO of VHC regulatory. He shared the legal requirements to set up a private healthcare organisation.

**Figure 4-6 Case 2 timeline 2019 to 2021**
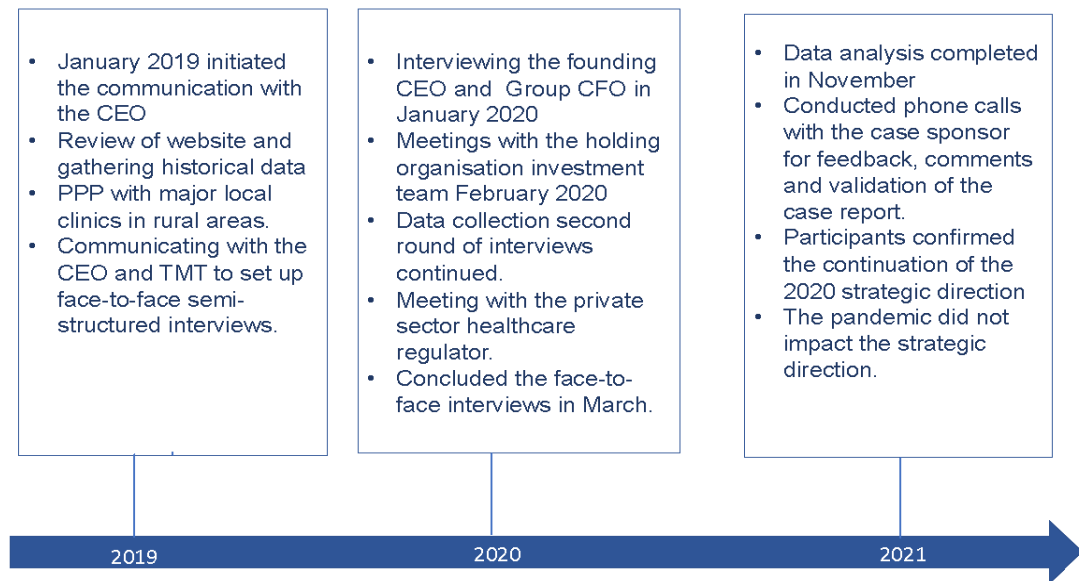


The case started in March 2019 with informal discussions with the CEO. The last face-to-face interview was conducted on site on March 6, 2020. Figure 4.6 shows the timeline of the case in 2019. The first round of interviews was concluded in March 2020. The second round of interviews was with the new CEO and TM11. Informal virtual meetings with the participants were held in June 2020 for feedback and comments on the case.

## 4.3.2 Theme 1: Impact of external context on PO context

VHC employs 900 employees, with more than 180 professional doctors serving over 800,000 registered outpatients (VHC Annual report, 2019). VHC holding organisation is a publicly listed investment organisation that owns 97.1% of VHC. The remaining shareholders are former clinic owners. 'The Healthcare sector in UAE is saturated and competitive' (TM13). VHC is considered to have become one of the top private healthcare providers in a short period.

### 4.3.2.1 Organisation structure

The VHC Board comprises the holding organisation officials and the minority shareholders (CEO2). 'The country provides an excellent environment for private healthcare providers, and experienced management teams can build scale and raise operating and clinical standards' (CEO1). Figure 4.7 shows VHC hierarchal structure and the top level of the organisation. The

Chairman, the CEO of the holding organisation, and the Board of Directors monitor the performance of the CEO and the TMT CEO2). TM12 and TM14 (TM12) stated that they report directly to the Board.

**Figure 4-7 Case 2 organisational structure**
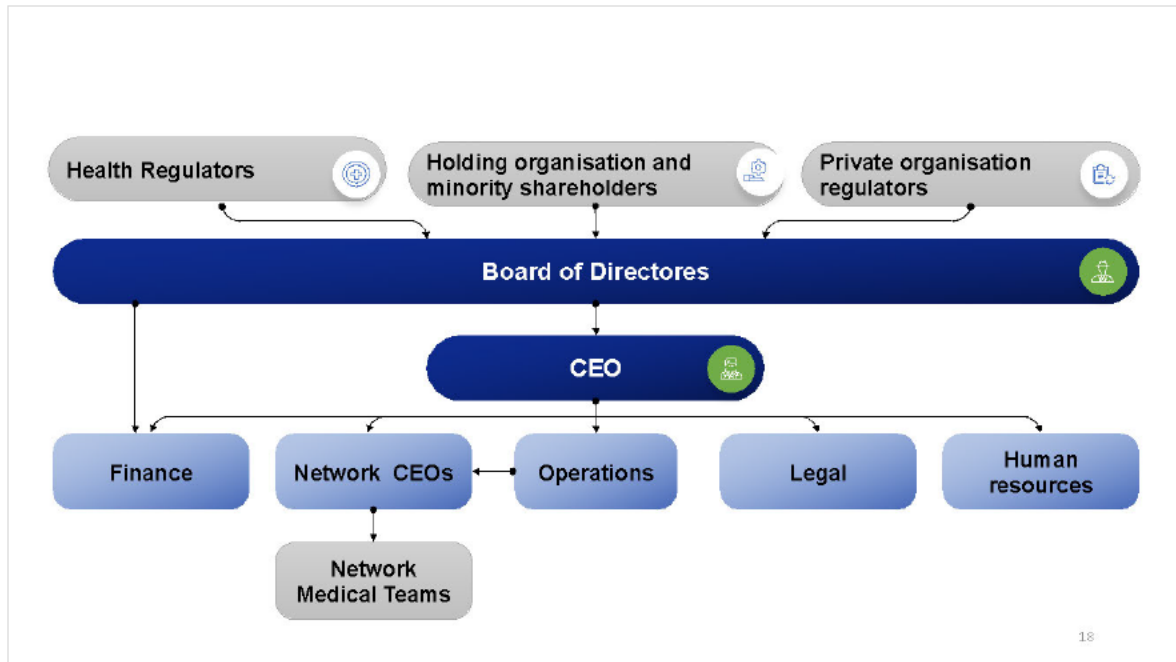


VHC is a multi-disciplinary healthcare provider offering healthcare to the communities in the UAE (VHC, 2018).

**Table 4-11 Case 2 Context**

| | Second-order themes | Number of codes |
|---|---|---|
| 1.1 | International organisational culture | 12 |
| 1.2 | Governance and monitoring | 5 |
| 1.3 | Multiple reporting | 5 |
| 1.4 | National culture shareholders expectations | 4 |
| 1.5 | Hierarchal structure and reporting | 4 |
| 1.6 | Board role | 8 |

Table 4.11 shows the context second-order themes (1.1 to 1.6), the multiple reporting, and the hierarchal structures, and reporting. The Board consists of the national holding organisation CEO and several investment directors. Participants referred to the Chairman as national leadership and

the holding organisation as the national shareholders; the second-order themes were national culture and shareholders' expectations (four references). The set-up of the private healthcare organisations was encouraged by the government. Therefore, the primary finding of theme 1 is:

> **Case 2 finding 1.1: The dynamic knowledge-based economic context shapes the PO internal context, the Board's role and impacts the strategic direction.**

Participants said the change in economy towards the dynamic knowledge-based economy created uncertainty due to two changes: first, the new private healthcare regulations aim to attract new international healthcare and increased the competition. This caused the negative financial results and the dismissal of CEO and several TMT and created an internal context of uncertainty. Second, VHC formulated its strategy around knowledge-based economic demographics. 'We built a hub and a spoke model. We bought clinics and hospitals with fantastic care in their modern neighbourhoods' (CEO1). VHC mainly serves multinational communities. Most of the participants described how the economic slowdown caused a decrease in the multinational population and impacted VHC outcomes: 'Corporate clients are our big assets to revenue; in a downturn they cancel many healthcare programmes' (TM14). The new strategic direction of budget and headcount reductions created an internal context of uncertainty. Hence, the second finding of theme 1 is:

> **Case 2 finding 1.2: The external dynamic context of change creates a context of uncertainty**

### 4.3.2.2  Organisation culture

The organisational culture first-order theme consisted of four second-order themes (shown in Figure 4.8). VHC culture is grounded in positive behaviour through 'effective leadership, sound business acumen, and healthcare expertise, and preferring to lead by example' (VHC, 2019:2). VHC aims to continue to offer high-quality standards throughout its healthcare operations and teams. 'Ethical behaviour and clinical excellence [are achieved] through strong leadership and the implementation of international quality accreditation' (VHC, 2019: 5).

VHC serves the expatriate community; its services are tailored around the patients' demographics. 'We build a hub model close to their residential neighbourhoods' (CEO1). The international culture of TMT, employees, and targeted customers includes more than 20 nationalities (TM11).

**Figure 4-8 Case 2 organisational culture**
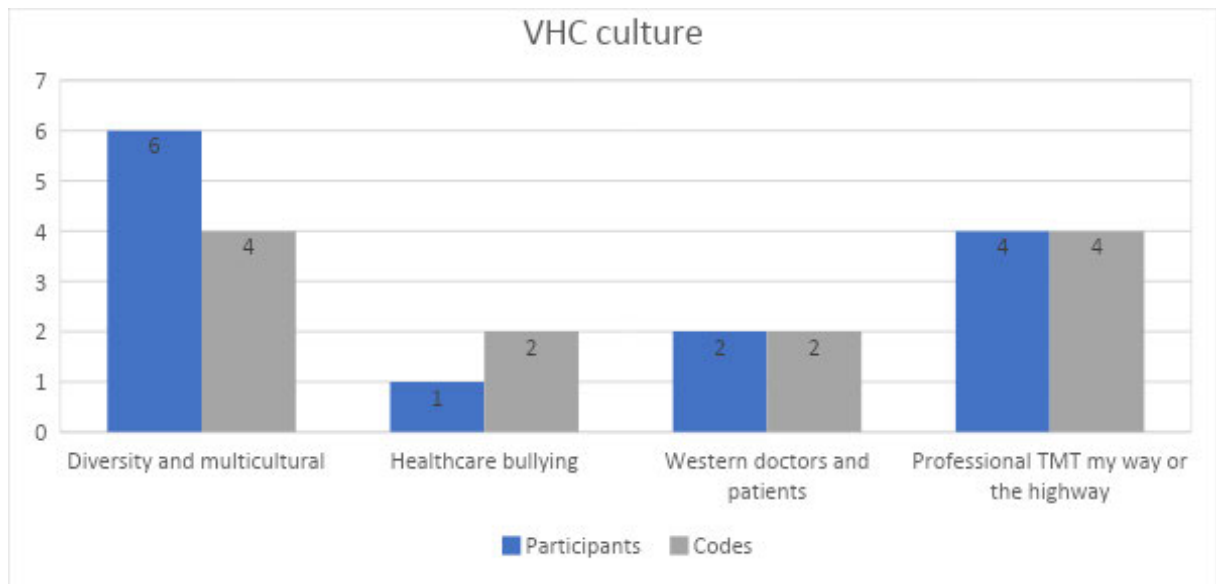


Figure 4.8 shows four second-order themes in the theme (VHC culture). Four participants described the diversity of VHC culture and the pressure of working with the professional teams as 'my way or the highway' (CEO2).

The private healthcare regulation does not state nationalisation of jobs as a requirement. Hence, CEO1, CEO2, and TM13 detailed that nationalisation is not mandated but is encouraged by the Board.

### 4.3.3 Theme 2: Impact of PO context on CEO selection and leadership effectiveness

Table 4.12 includes the results of the CEO selection and strategic direction. The first-order theme consists of seven second-order themes (2.1 to 2.7). Participants described the new strategic direction in four second-order themes: reduction of headcount and cost of human resources, increase efficiency of processes, performance excellence and integrated operational systems, and increase revenue. The Board role, past performance, and the predecessor CEOs second-order themes emerged in the participants' responses to the CEO selection questions. The Chairman announced the 'footprint expansion in 2019 was done by opening earnings since the acquisition

in 2013' (TM12). The role of the Board is to set the strategic direction and the performance of the CEO and the TMT.

**Table 4-12 Case 2 CEO selection and strategic direction**

| # | Second-order themes | Number of codes |
|---|---|---|
| | **Strategic direction** | |
| 2.1 | Reduce headcount and cost of human resources | 8 |
| 2.2 | Increase efficiency of processes | 8 |
| 2.3 | Performance excellence and integrated operational systems | 3 |
| 2.4 | Increase revenue | 9 |
| | **CEO selection** | |
| 2.5 | Negative past financial results | 7 |
| 2.6 | The former CEO | 6 |
| 2.7 | Board- CEO relationship | 8 |

### 4.3.3.1 Predecessor CEO

During the interview, CEO1 conveyed his role as a founder and first CEO. He is an international CEO with over 35 years of healthcare management experience in the UK, USA, and Gulf Cooperation Council countries (GCCs). CEO1 stated that 'The rise of the healthcare industry and the upsurge of the knowledge-based economy in the UAE attracted international healthcare professionals and organisations to set up in the UAE' (CEO1). The rapid rise of the number of healthcare providers in the UAE required the old and the new healthcare organisations to review their strategies to improve their competitiveness.

The predecessor CEO1 started the interview by deliberating on the fundamental disagreement with the Board regarding 'the strategy and the focus of the Board on the financial drivers. The holding organisation sets the financial targets as the main organisational outcome.

The predecessor described the Board decision as an 'unrealistic timeline to deliver positive financial outcomes and start operations at the new hospital'. TM12, who has been with VHC since 2013, confirmed 'undoubtedly' that the Board decision to terminate CEO1 was due to the 'the negative financial results and the fictitious positive financial projections reported in 2018'. TM14 said that the predecessor CEO1 was trying to please the Board and gain time by presenting the 'unrealistic projections of revenues.  The predecessor CEO was not given the time needed to set up a healthcare business, was pressured to focus on achieving positive financial results, and

reducing expenses.   The CEO strategic objectives were not aligned with the shareholders' expectations.

### 4.3.3.2  The CEO selection

The Board promoted a TMT member as CEO of the new hospital to lead VHC after the dismissal of the predecessor CEO1. The new CEO is of Asian background, a medical doctor with previous experience as a hospital CEO in India. CEO2 was sceptical of his appointment in the high uncertainty context. 'My colleagues were sacked; the CEO was let go'. The new strategic direction is 'to reduce the cost of resources by 15 percent, increase human resources and processes efficiencies, and achieve positive financial returns' (CEO2).

Since the dismissal of the predecessor CEO1 and several TMT members, the Board is leading the strategic direction and the TMT. The internal international CEO did not have any previous relationship with the holding organisation. The Board interviewed him once during his selection to lead a hospital in October 2017 (CEO2).

Figure 4.9 shows five participants discussing the emergent theme CEO authority. The horizontal chart from left to right shows the file followed by the names of participants. The vertical blue columns show the number of codes (from 0 to 18). The CEO's low authority was extensively discussed by CEO2, with 16 codes. TM13 agreed that the CEO had no authority and was 'just a title'. The CEOs (CEO1, CEO2, and TM13) said their relationship with the Board impacted VHC through past negative financial results and decreased authority in setting and implementing the strategic direction.

The new CEO's responsibilities were not clear as he was 'handed the new strategic direction and the structure' to implement. 'I have no power or influence over the structure. Unlike other healthcare organisations, the Board approves your strategy'.

**Figure 4-9 Case 2 CEO low authority**
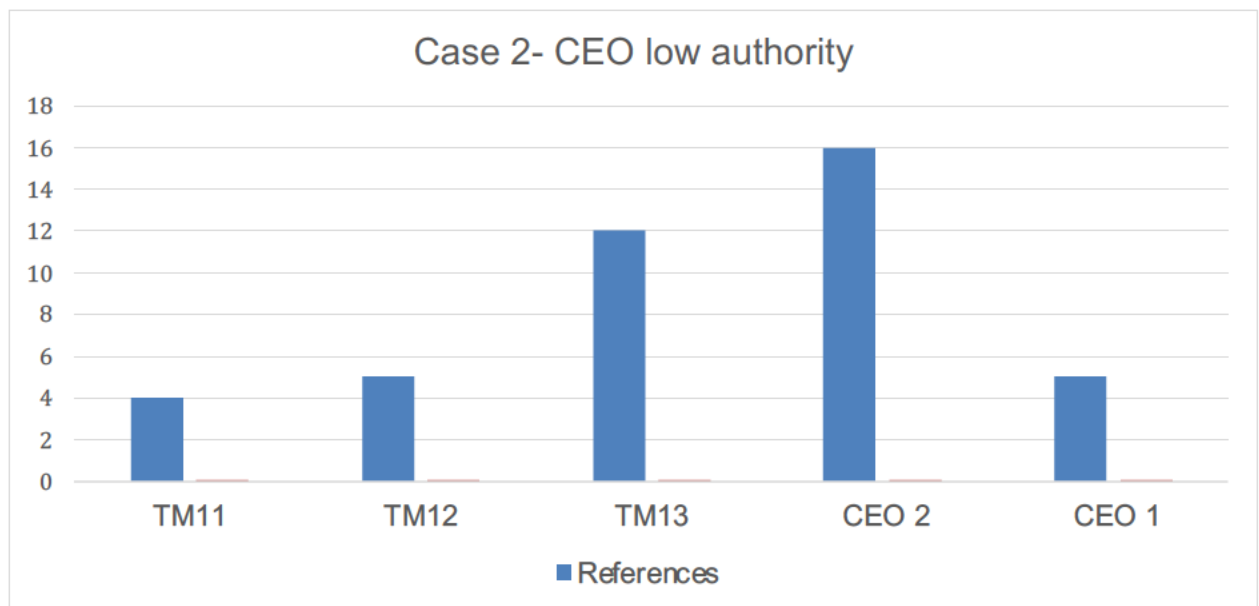


CEO2 expected that the Board would grant him the authority to turn around VHC performance, based on his previous experience as a professional medical doctor and as a CEO of one of the largest private healthcare providers' networks. Instead, CEO2 was mandated to execute the strategy crafted and approved by the Board without any consultation or input from him.

> **Case 2 finding 2.1: The organisational negative past performance and the performance of the predecessor CEO have a negative impact on the Board relationship with the international CEO and his/her delegation of authority.**

### 4.3.3.3  CEO leadership effectiveness

The leadership effectiveness higher-level theme included the second-order themes (2.7 to 2.14) as shown in Table 4.13. All participants discussed achieving positive financial results as the first indication of CEO effectiveness. Similarly increasing the efficiency of human resources and processes. The second most discussed topic by participants was CEO hiring effective TMT, aligning the TMT, and gaining their trust and support trust (2.10 and 2.11). People-oriented leadership and performance-driven leadership were linked to the CEO effectiveness. Five participants related CEO leadership effectiveness to the CEO-Board relationship and CEO

delegation of authority. Lastly, three participants linked transparency and ethical reporting to CEO leadership effectiveness.

**Table 4-13 Case 2 CEO leadership effectiveness**

| # | Second-order themes | Number of codes | Number of participants |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2.7 | Achieve positive financial results | 12 | 6 |
| 2.8 | The efficiency of human resources and processes | 12 | 6 |
| 2.9 | People-oriented leadership | 6 | 4 |
| 2.10 | Hires effective TMT | 6 | 6 |
| 2.11 | Attain TMT alignment, trust, and support | 10 | 6 |
| 2.12 | CEO relationship with the Board and the CEO delegation of authority | 7 | 5 |
| 2.13 | Performance-driven leadership | 5 | 4 |
| 2.14 | Transparency and ethical reporting | 8 | 3 |

The most discussed second-order themes were the efficiency of resources and processes and positive financial results (12 codes each). The positive financial outcome was discussed by most of the participants, as it was included in the strategy of VHC. 'We have to improve the organisation efficiency and outcome and simply generate more revenue' (TM14). The shareholders and the investment holding organisation are working 'with the absolute focus on the financial return on their investment' (TM12). The focus of the Board on the unrealistic increase of financial returns are alarming to the predecessor and CEO1.

The efficiency of resources and processes was as important as positive financial results and involved resources optimisation and assessing the underperforming doctors (medical team and nurses to be reduced by 20-30%). Participants believed that achieving effective outcomes depended on effective operations, having efficient processes to ensure consistency and good practice. Five participants including TM12 and TM14 described the focus on financial profit as the dominant factor in the organisational outcomes. TM12 who had been working in VHC since inception commented: 'I deliver the 120% and keep my head down'.

> **Case 2 finding 2.2: CEO leadership effectiveness is to achieve positive financial results and advance the efficiency of human resources and processes.**

### 4.3.3.4 Participants' perspective on CEO leadership effectiveness

All participants indicated that hiring, retaining effective TMT, and gaining their support was discussed in CEO leadership effectiveness (2.10, 2.11). 'From day one as a CEO, I want to build a perfect relationship with all the doctors, this is a team job, not only the CEO. We have to have the right team, but they need to agree how to implement the new strategic direction' (CEO2).

The third finding of this theme is:

> **Case 2 finding 2.3: TMT effective performance, alignment, and support are significant indications of CEO leadership effectiveness.**

The people-oriented leadership theme was discussed by five participants: 'We set the tone around the people approach from most senior to the reception' (CEO1). Being people-oriented, working in the best interest of the people with reciprocal influence, and sharing goals were used to describe effective leadership by the participants. Similarly, the same participants discussed the performance-driven second-order theme. The results of the two second-order themes have been mentioned, but no evidence links to CEO leadership effectiveness as the case of findings 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3.

## 4.3.4 Theme 3: The impact of PO context on TMT

TMT members were asked questions about the background of their selection, tenure, reporting lines, relationship with the CEO, and relationships with other TMT. Four TMT members remained employed after the termination of the predecessor CEO. TM11 was the newest member, who joined VHC in 2018, followed by CEO2.

**Table 4-14 Case 2 participating TMT demographics**

| Participant | Education | Nationality | Tenure | Experience | Position |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| TM11 | Bachelor business Ireland | UK | 2 | 20 | COO |
| TM12 | Bachelor finance Middle East | ME | 8 | 15 | Finance |
| TM13 | Medical Ireland | UAE | 6 | 12 | Regulatory |
| TM14 | Masters finance Middle East | ME | 8 | 20 | CFO |

Table 4.14 shows that five international and one UAE national participated in the study. Two TMT members have been selected by CEO1. The holding organisation selected TM11 and TM14. TM14 was previously working for the holding organisation. The Board transferred him to VHC to set up the centralised financial department and consolidate the financial results of its network. TM11 was hired by the Board to replace the dismissed CEO in 2018. When TM11 joined VHC he was asked to turn around VHC performance. 'My mandate was to grow the revenues by 50% and increase the profit margin by 30% (TM11). The role required an 'entrepreneurial' approach to deliver the strategic direction (TM11)'. TM11 was unable to achieve his strategic objectives due to the Board decision to focus on reducing the budget and the cost of human resources.

TM13 was hired to develop medical tourism, manage public-private partnerships, and oversee government relations. The role of the TM13 was to expand VHC in services and geographies. 'That was on the job description: managing the expectations of the new medical teams is what I do best' (TM13). TM12 has been selected since the inception of VHC in 2011. TM12 has a Middle Eastern background, sixteen years of experience, and eight years in healthcare. All participants individually were clear on their roles and responsibilities.

### 4.3.4.1 TMT structure

The participants oversaw three departments: finance, operations, and legal TMT size was reduced after the dismissal of CEO1. The Board decided to reduce the human resources number and cost after VHC registered a financial loss for the first time in 2018. During the same year the Board implemented the retrenchment of the TMT from eight members to five members. The reasons for the downsizing of the TMT size were: (1) to reduce the cost of resources (TM14), and (2) to increase the degree of consensus amongst the TMT, especially 'when reporting numbers' (TM12). There were no clear results for the reduction of TMT size.

### 4.3.4.2 TMT composition

TMT held international education and experience in healthcare. One had a medical education (TM13), and three finance and corporate backgrounds. The TMT tenure ranges between 2 to 7 years. The TMT executive experience ranged from 12 to 20 years. Table 4.15 includes TMT education, years in position, tenure, experience, and function.

**Table 4-15 Case 2 TMT composition**

| # | Participant | Education | Years in position | Tenure | Experience | Function |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | TM13 | Local Medicine | 6 | 12 | 12 | Corporate |
| 2 | TM14 | ME Bachelor | 6 | 8 | 20 | Finance |
| 3 | TM11 | UK Bachelor | 2 | 2 | 20 | Corporate |
| 4 | TM12 | ME Bachelor | 8 | 8 | 15 | Finance |

The role of the financial controller is 'difficult'. It straddles the divides between 'financial accounting, strategy, and the leadership' (TMT12). A need exists to ensure the 'accuracy of reporting and improve VHC efficiency'. The two leading performance indicators are difficult to achieve 'if TM12, TM14, and the Holding are not on the same page'. The TMT education, experience, tenure, and functions shown reflect that the TMT have been selected effectively.

TM13 was hired to develop medical tourism, manage public-private partnerships, and oversee government relations. The role of TM13 was to expand VHC in services and geographies. TM13 is the only national TMT in VHC. He feels pressured to be the only UAE: 'The major pressure is not to disappoint the whole nation' (TM13). Most of the participants related the restructuring to reducing the budgets, the headcount with the slow economy, and the tight time frame given to achieve the strategic goals.

> **Case 2 finding 3.1: The restructuring of the TMT composition and the reduction of the TMT size did not improve the TMT communication and relationships.**

### 4.3.4.3 TMT interaction dynamics

The participants described the relationships with other members as the most difficult. 'My role depends on successful negotiation with other executives' (TM11). There was no clarity of roles: the doctors would ask for new equipment instead of the new technology 'we hire new resources' (TM11). But then the doctors do not use the new resources resulting in 300 employees in a healthcare centre. TM11 and the TM14 think that VHC can be managed and operated by 50% of

the resources. 'We need a process where all our activities and interactions take place' (TM11). The TMT divergence intensified after the dismissal of several TMT members.

**Table 4-16 Case 2 TMT interaction and dynamics**

| # | Second-order themes | Number of Codes | Number of Participants |
|---|---------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| 3.1 | TMT challenging communication | 10 | 6 |
| 3.2 | TMT aligned and supporting CEO | 5 | 2 |
| 3.3 | TMT neutral (non-aligned) | 7 | 2 |
| 3.4 | TMT divergence and disagreement | 7 | 5 |
| 3.5 | TMT - TMT collective interaction | 7 | 6 |
| 3.6 | TMT opposing and misaligned | 4 | 2 |

Table 4.16 includes the TMT interaction and TMT dynamics second-order themes (3.1 to 3.6). TMT divergence and problematic communication were clear during the interviews. All participants described their communication with other TMT as challenging. TMT alignment and support to the CEO was partial. Only two TMT members supported the CEO and the strategic direction (TM11 and TM12). One neutral TMT and one opposing TMT were discussed by three different participants (Table 4.17). All participants believed that the TMT collective interaction is highly needed to achieve the new strategic direction to increase revenue and reduce the budget.

'TMT interaction in healthcare and doing our work Is very difficult' (CEO2). The new TM11 described his relationship with other TMT members as problematic: 'The conflict requires resolutions from the Board. There are many seniors here'. The CEO leadership and relationship with the TMT is central to the TMT relationship (CEO2). TM11 and the CEO2 are both determined to have a strong positive relationship with TMT.

**Table 4-17 Case 2 TMT positions from the CEO and the strategic direction**

| | Participant | Years in position | Tenure | Education | Function | Nationality | New CEO and strategic direction |
|---|-------------|-------------------|--------|-----------|----------|-------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | TM11 | 2 | 2 | UK | Corporate | British | Supporting |
| 2 | TM12 | 8 | 8 | Middle East | Finance | Middle East | Supporting |
| 3 | TM14 | 6 | 8 | Middle East | Finance | Middle East | Neutral |
| 4 | TM13 | 6 | 12 | USA | Medical | National | Opposing |

Table 4.17 shows the TMT tenure and position, educational background, and nationality. Two of the four TMT are supporting the new CEO and the strategic direction (TM11, TM12).

TM11 had the shortest tenure (2 years) as a supporting TMT. TM12 had the long tenure (8 years). Both TMTs supported CEO2 and the new strategic direction. The neutral TM14 had six years tenure. TM13 is the only opposing participant with the longest tenure. TM13 was working with the VHC network before the establishment of VHC. Twelve years is the longest tenure. Hence, there is no evidence that tenure is linked to the support, opposition, or neutrality of the TMT.

### 4.3.4.4  TMT communication

TMT communication with the holding organisation, the CEO and other TMT did not improve with the reduction of TMT size and the reduction of the budget.  It was clearly stated by several participants that they are anxious about VHC future.  The reduction of the headcount and budget, and the negative financial outcomes resulted in creating a context of uncertainty. TM12 keeps his communication and connection with other TMT members to the minimum: 'I give them what they ask for exactly'. With the diversity of objectives, the pressure of the 'international-local competition, the pressure of time, and 'less people we have a smaller team' (TM13).  The Chairman's announcement of the new strategy during the staff dinner 'shattered any chance of a normal relationship with other TMTs' (TM14). The Board's second announcement of the promotion of one of the TMT to the CEO role affected TMT interactions and morale negatively. TM11 was hired as a successor to CEO1 and was mandated to 'resources optimization by assessing the underperforming medical TMT and corporate TMT and reduce by 20-30%' (TM12).

Two Board decisions created a context of uncertainty inside VHC:  first, the Board selection of the internal CEO which increased the tension between several TMT members, and  second, the Board's announcement of the new strategy to reduce the headcount and the budget as the 'transformation to a new era'. TMT disagreement intensified. TM14 stressed that his success was dependent on the information and the resource sharing with other TMT members (technology, operations, and medical).

The relationships between the TMT members were complex and uncertain due to the change in strategic direction. The TMT related the constant pressure to do more in less time as proving difficult: 'The uncertainty complicate[s] our work as a team, so I do my best as a member' (TM14).

Relationships between the corporate TMT members and the professional TMT are the most difficult.

> **Case 2 finding 3.2: The context of uncertainty imposes pressure on the TMT, increases their divergence and disagreements.**

## 4.3.5 Theme 4: Contextual factors impacting PO outcomes

The participants were asked what they account as organisation outcomes and what hinders the achievement of expected outcomes. Table 4.18 shows that all participants answered the questions regarding their organisational outcomes. Performance excellence is considered the most critical outcome. This was followed by positive financial growth (with nine codes) and reputation and ethical reporting as essential healthcare organisational outcomes (six codes). Professionals' retention and dedication in private healthcare (4.3) are linked to positive financial outcomes and retention of 'doctors with returning patients and revenue makers' (CEO2). The patients 'trust in a medical team takes time but lasts long. We are growing from under the ashes; we were negative 33 million UAE Dirhams; today we are positive 14 million UAE Dirhams. Yes, we need profit in healthcare' (CEO2).

**Table 4-18 Case 2 PO outcomes**

| # | Second-order themes | Number of codes | Number of participants |
|---|---------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| 4.1 | Performance excellence | 10 | 6 |
| 4.2 | Positive financial results | 9 | 6 |
| 4.3 | Professional TMT dedication and retention | 7 | 5 |
| 4.4 | Shareholder's satisfaction | 6 | 4 |
| 4.5 | Reputation and ethical reporting | 6 | 5 |
| 4.6 | Growth | 5 | 3 |
| 4.7 | Technology and innovation | 4 | 2 |
| 4.8 | TMT alignment | 3 | 2 |

The shareholder satisfaction, technology, and innovation reputation, and ethical reporting were equally identified as PO outcomes. Surprisingly, the least essential outcome for VHC was TMT alignment.

**Table 4-19 Case 2 Contextual elements theme**

| # | Second-order themes | Number of codes |
|---|---|---|
| 4.11 | Knowledge-based direction to attract international healthcare investors and operators' competitors | 3 |
| 4.12 | Delivering targets at unprecedented speed | 2 |
| 4.13 | The holding organisation expectations are positive financial results | 2 |
| 4.14 | Economic slowdown impacts on healthcare outcomes | 1 |

Table 4.18 presents responses about the contextual elements that impact performance to achieve financial growth, which I explain further here:

- The knowledge-based-economic direction increased the competition with the fast-expanding private sector. While VHC is 'correcting course; our good doctors and nurses are being poached by our competitors. We lost around 25 of our top doctors' (CEO2).
- With the economic slowdown and the drop in oil prices, the population of the multinationals has decreased leading to a decrease in VHC revenue.
- Healthcare requires time to improve performance excellence, deliver positive results, and meet shareholder expectations.

> **Case 2 finding 4.1: The dynamic knowledge-based economy is the main contextual factor that signifies performance excellence and positive financial results as leading indicators of PO outcomes.**

## 4.3.6 Conclusion

The knowledge-based economy advanced investment into private healthcare. VHC was set up as a privately held PO in 2011. The strategy documents confirmed that the economic context caused an increase in the number of private and public healthcare providers, which resulted in an increased number of VHC competitors. CEO1, CEO2, and most of the TMT are internationals.

Theme 1 resulted in two main findings: the knowledge-based economy affects the PO internal context, the board role, and the strategic direction. The context of change created a context of uncertainty.

Exploration of theme 2 delivered three findings. First, the organisational negative past performance and the performance of the predecessor CEO have a negative impact on the Board's relationship with the international CEO and his delegation of authority. Second, the result of theme 2 is that CEO leadership effectiveness is related to the PO positive financial results. The second results linked the efficiency of human resources and processes to CEO leadership effectiveness. The third result of theme 2 showed that TMT's effective performance, alignment, and support are Linked to CEO leadership effectiveness.

Theme 3 delivered two findings. The restructuring of the TMT composition and the reduction of TMT size did not improve TMT communication and interaction. The second result revealed how the context of change and uncertainty increased TMT divergence and disagreements.

Theme 4 finding was that the dynamic knowledge-based economy is the main contextual factor that signifies performance excellence and positive financial results as leading indicators of PO outcomes.

**Table 4-20 Case 2 Primary findings**

| # | Finding number | Primary finding |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1.1 | The dynamic knowledge-based economic context shapes the PO internal context and the Board role and impacts the strategic direction. |
| 2 | 1.2 | The external dynamic context of change creates a context of uncertainty. |
| 3 | 2.1 | The organisational negative past performance and the performance of the predecessor CEO have a negative impact on the Board's relationship with the international CEO and his/her delegation of authority. |
| 4 | 2.2 | CEO leadership effectiveness is to achieve positive financial results and advance the efficiency of human resources and processes. |
| 5 | 2.3 | TMT effective performance, alignment, and support are significant indications of CEO leadership effectiveness. |
| 6 | 3.1 | The restructuring of the TMT composition and the reduction of the TMT size did not improve TMT communication and relationships. |
| 7 | 3.2 | The context of change and uncertainty imposes pressure on the TMT and increases divergence and disagreements. |
| 8 | 4.1 | The dynamic knowledge-based economy is the main contextual factor that signifies performance excellence and positive financial results as leading indicators of PO outcomes. |

## 4.3.7  Case 2 Hybrid strategic and contextual leadership framework

Figure 4.10 shows Case 2 emergent hybrid strategic and leadership framework.

The external context consists of the knowledge-based economic changes, private healthcare regulatory, and shareholder expectations. The framework shows the synthesis of contextual and strategic leadership. The framework consists of main units (external context, internal context, strategic leaders, and organisation outcomes). The figure flows from left to right:

- The external context and the PO internal context.
- The knowledge-based economy and the PO industry policies and regulations impact on the PO internal structure and the private healthcare industry.
- The relationships between the external context, the emergent strategic direction, the emergent Board role, and the PO outcomes.
- The emergent past negative performance and the predecessor CEOs impact on the emergent context of uncertainty.
- The context of uncertainty with a bidirectional arrow that shows its impact on the PO internal context and the strategic leaders.
- The outcomes of the PO (performance excellence, positive financial results, and shareholder satisfaction.

**Figure 4-10 Case 2 Hybrid strategic and contextual leadership framework**
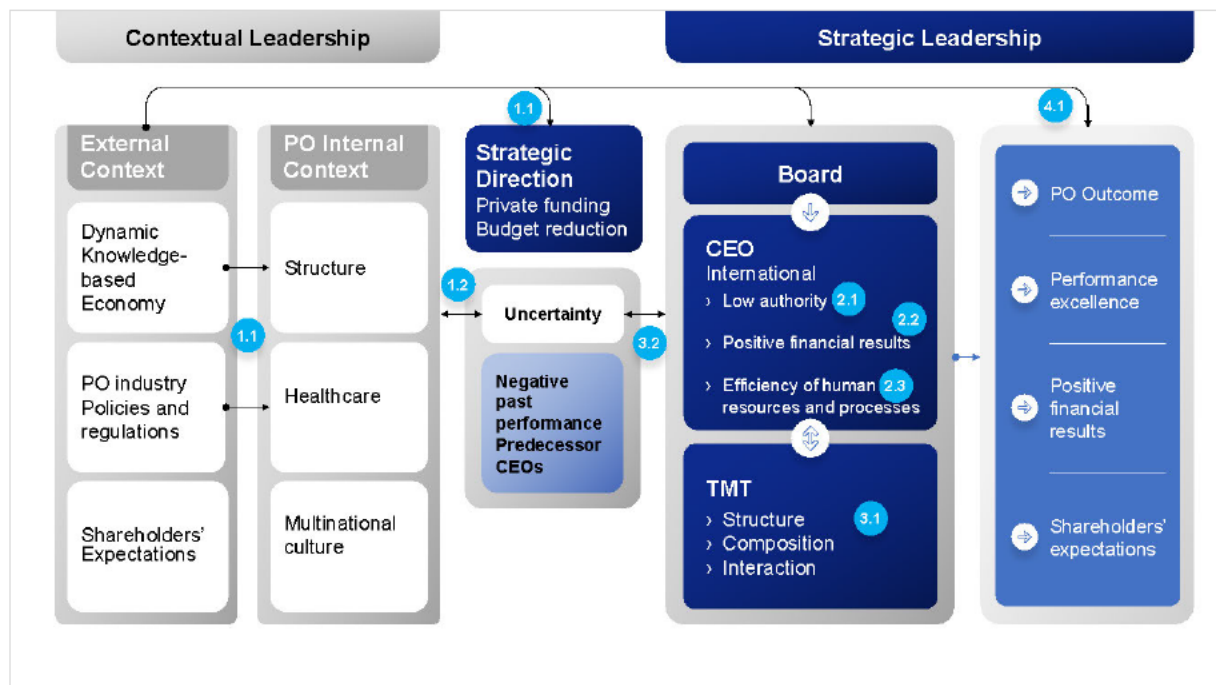
## 4.4 Case 3: Real Estate Development (RED)

### 4.4.1 Overview

Figure 4.11 shows the case timeline. TM17 was the case sponsor and shared RED annual reports, the objectives of the national leaders' development charter, and the human resources' role in the organisation. Case 3 started in December 2018 and concluded in March 2020.

**Figure 4-11 Case 3 timeline**
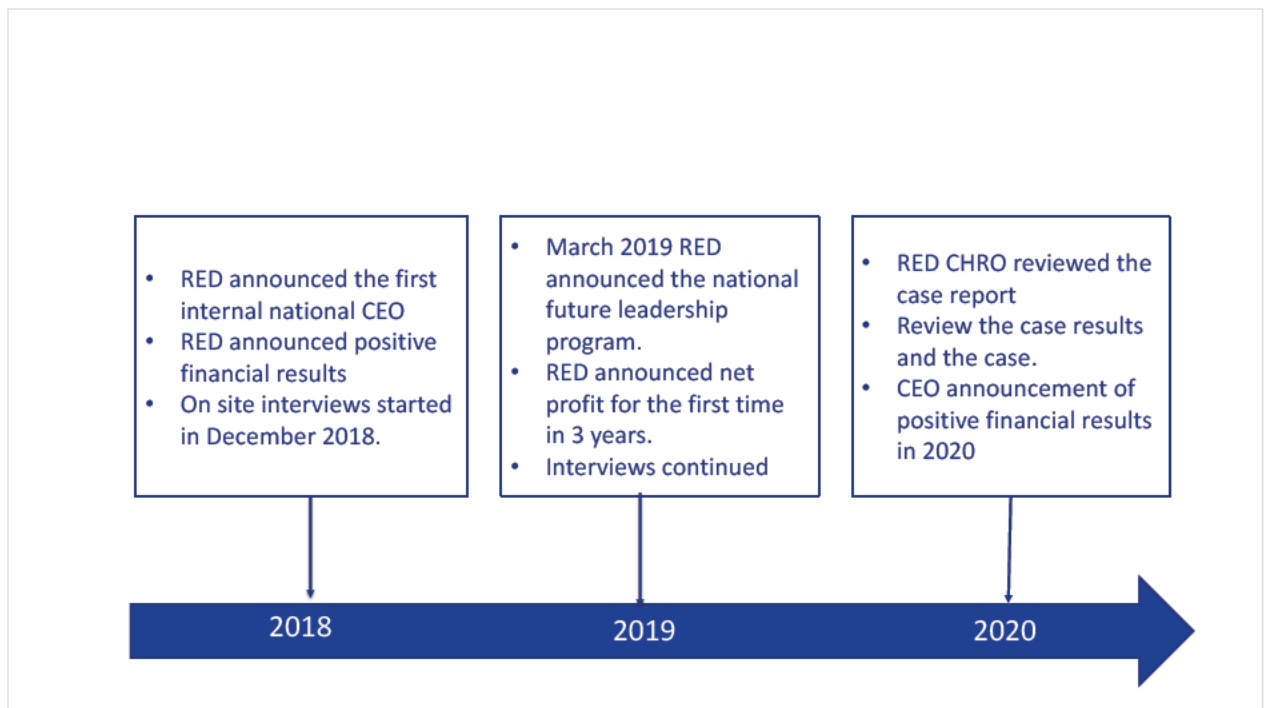


### 4.4.2 Theme 1: PO Context

'Our strategy is clear: placing our people and customers at the heart of everything we do' (CEO). RED receives government funding. Case 3 was established in 2006 as a publicly listed organisation to fast-track investment opportunities in the real estate sector to fulfil the high demand for real estate: 'We hired 800 employees in the first three years of its establishment' (TM17). Ownership is mixed, with 37% owned by more than 18,000 shareholders. RED structure has two profiles: the legal form, which covers the PPA, and the hierarchal design (RED Annual Report, 2017). The legal regulation enhances the long-term attractiveness of the real estate sector. As

described by the participants, the hierarchal reporting structure is systematically changing (CEO) and challenging.

### 4.4.2.1  Organisation structure

The organisation structure shows the regulatory authority is the highest authority; the shareholders are represented by the Board of Directors and its committees. Figure 4.12 shows the vertical hierarchal structure: the CEO reports to the Board and the TMT reports to the CEO.

**Figure 4.12 Case 3 organisational structure**
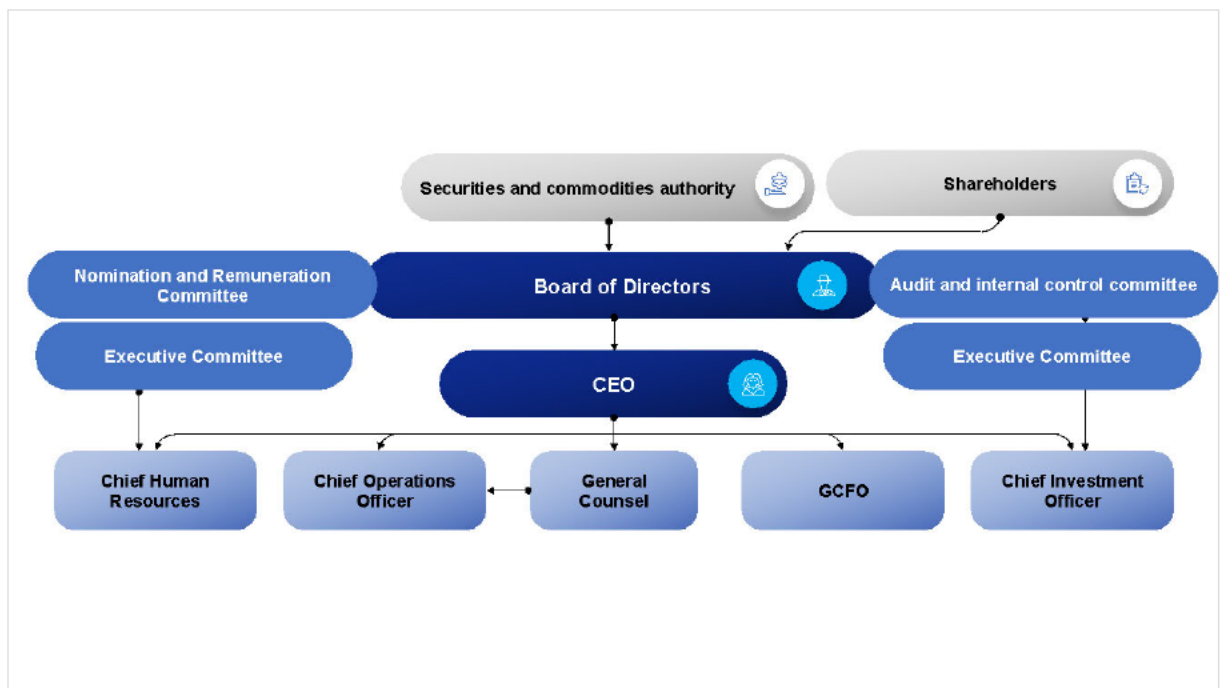


The emergent second-order themes dynamic knowledge-based economy and the changing economy were the basis of the strategic shift from government funding to private funding. The real estate market still suffers from decreased demands for properties as the economy changes with low oil prices and lagging job creation (CIO). The strategic direction towards private funding was discussed mainly by the CEO, CIO, and the Chairman.

The national culture, national leadership, and shareholders' expectations were included in the discussion of the external context (12 codes each Table 4.21).

**Table 4-21 Case 3 Impact of external context on the POs internal context**

| # | Second-order themes | Number of codes | Number of participants 7 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1.1 | Dynamic knowledge-based context governance, reporting, and hierarchy | 7 | 4 |
| 1.2 | Economic context drives the change from government funding to budget reduction and private funding | 5 | 7 |
| 1.3 | Increase efficiency of human resources and processes | 10 | 9 |
| 1.4 | National culture, national leadership, and shareholder expectations | 12 | 7 |
| 1.5 | Board role | 10 | 7 |

All participants described the dynamic external context impact on the internal context, which resulted in the budget reduction, reduction of the headcount, and the cost of headcount. 'This organisation spins with changes: 425 employees reduced from 800 employees. The national employees represent 28%' of RED total workforce (CEO). The head of human resources (TM17) started the interview by describing the importance of the national culture and the national leadership development programmes, which she led as part of RED's commitment to the development of national leadership. The Board's role emerged during the first interviews with the CEO and the Chairman describing the responsibility of the Board over the strategic direction to shift from public funding to private funding (second-order themes 1.2 and 1.5). The CEO described RED's unique context: 'The fundamental difference in this region is that organisations are predominantly managed, not only supervised, by the Board and the Chairman'.

> **Case 3 finding 1.1 - The dynamic economic context shapes the pluralistic organisational structure, impacts the Board role, and sets the strategic direction.**

### 4.4.2.2 Organisation culture

The CEO described the culture as a performance culture following the steps of the national leadership. RED is mandated to modernise urban planning and development with innovation and

sustainability. 'Let's stop shying away: it is what you leave behind that matters. What you live by in terms of your own culture, you embed in your organization' (CEO).

RED's mission statement (RED, 2018) states that the nationalisation of the CEO position is aligned with the national direction of the country's vision. The employment of nationals is driven by 'their in-depth knowledge of the company and its projects as well as their experience, making them the natural team to guide the business through the next stage' (Chairman).

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**Case 3 finding 1.2: National culture, nationalisation, and national leadership expectations are significant characteristics of the PO internal context.**

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### 4.4.3 Theme 2: Impact of PO Context on CEO selection and leadership effectiveness

The Board responsibilities include selecting the CEO and TMT and implementing the corporate governance (RED, 2018). Table 4.22 includes the emergent second-order themes: the negative past financial results, the predecessor CEOs, the Board CEO relationship, and the strategic direction which is a combination of second-order themes 2.4 and 2.5.

**Table 4-22 Case 3 Impact of context on CEO selection**

| # | Second-order themes Number of Codes | |
|------|---------------------------------------|-----|
| | **CEO selection** | |
| 2.1 | Negative past financial results | 8 |
| 2.2 | The number of predecessor CEOs | 9 |
| 2.3 | Board- CEO relationship | |
| | **Strategic Direction** | |
| 2.4 | Shifting to private funding | 10 |
| 2.5 | Increase revenue | 5 |

'The organisation has hired seven CEOs since 2006' (TM15). All participants, especially the TM17 and the CEO, discussed the emergent theme, the predecessor CEOs, during the interviews.

#### 4.4.3.1 Predecessor CEOs

Most of the participants talked about the frequent dismissal of former CEOs as a challenge. The announcement of the departure of the predecessor CEO preceded the announcement of negative financial results (RED, 2007-2019).

**Figure 4-12 Case 3 past negative financial results**
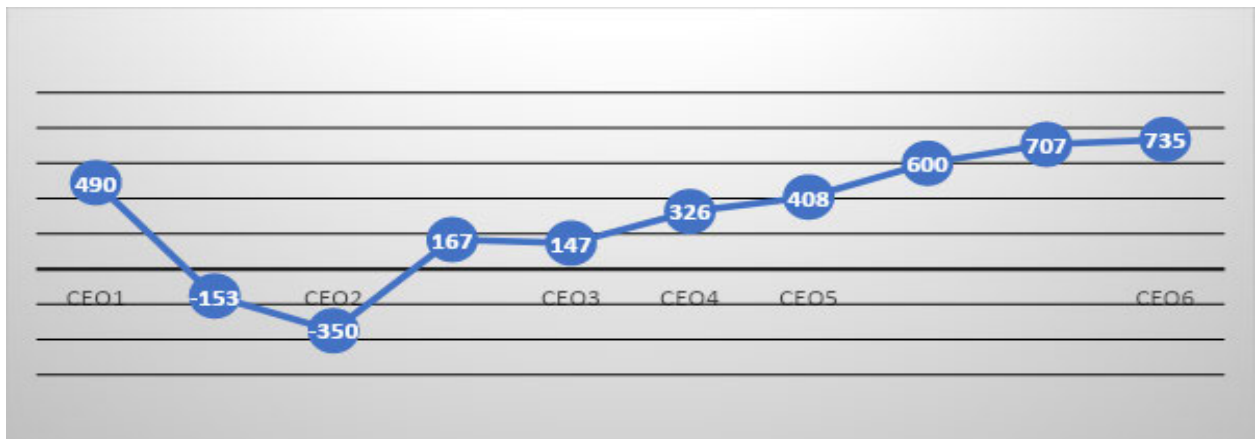


Figure 4.13 shows the financial results and the CEO turnover. RED participants discussed the impact of the CEO's dismissal on the organisational performance and outcomes. The financial results dropped from 490 million to negative 153 million when the first CEO was dismissed. The second CEO dismissal was announced before the announcement of the negative 350 million US dollars. Positive financial results (147, 326, and 408) are due to the government financial bailout (RED, 2007; RED, 2010; RED 2019). The Chairman stressed that the ineffectiveness of the predecessor CEOs resulted in negative financial results. Their departures confirmed that positive financial results are a perceived requirement for the demonstration of CEO leadership effectiveness (second-order theme 2.5 Table 4.22).

### 4.4.3.2 CEO selection

The Chairman announced that the 'new external search for the CEO had been closed'. The Board promoted the head of asset management to the CEO position. The CEO appointment announcement positioned him as a strategic leader. 'He brings to the CEO role significant leadership and experience across the real estate, leisure, tourism, and corporate governance' (Chairman).

The national internal CEO expressed his surprise to be promoted to his current position. RED does not have a formal succession plan. "Succession planning is not our strength " (CEO). The CEO joined RED in 2006 as a junior trainee in the nationalisation programme. He did not receive any CEO development program and stated that he was not ready to be a CEO. In November 2017: 'I was given the CEO position' (CEO).

### 4.4.3.3 CEO Delegation of authority

The CEO delegation of authority second-order theme was discussed by the Chairman and the CEO only (eight codes, Table 4.22). The CEO delegation of authority is full and satisfying. He was not satisfied with the Board limitations on TMT discretion. The CEO believed that the 'Board is not supposed to be 'doing the strategy' empowering the CEO and the TMT. I am sure the management team will deliver on strategy, governance, processes. They are the right people, but we need empowering leadership at the top'.

> **Case 3 finding 2.1: The organisational negative past performance and the frequent CEO succession do not impact the board's relationship with the national CEO and his/her delegation of authority.**

### 4.4.3.4 CEO leadership effectiveness

The dominant second-order theme shown in Table 4.23 is the efficiency of human resources and processes mentioned more than once by all the participants (19 codes). The participants discussed the importance of positive financial results (eight codes each). TM17 and the CEO used the term 'performance driven' repeatedly during their interviews as a reference to human resources efficiency and the performance metrics they implemented to monitor the organisational performance.

**Table 4-23 Case 3 Theme 2 CEO leadership effectiveness**

| # | Number of participants | Number of codes | Number of participants |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2.6 | The efficiency of human capital and processes | 19 | 7 |
| 2.7 | People-oriented leadership | 8 | 7 |
| 2.8 | Leads like our national leadership | 5 | 5 |
| 2.9 | Hires effective TMT | 8 | 7 |
| 2.10 | Attain TMT alignment, trust, and support | 12 | 7 |
| 2.11 | CEO relationship with the Board and the CEO delegation of authority | 6 | 4 |
| 2.12 | Performance-driven leadership | 8 | 4 |
| 2.13 | Transparency and ethical reporting | 3 | 2 |
| 2.14 | Transformational leaders | 2 | 2 |

The efficiency of human resources and processes is the highest second-order theme (19 codes). All participants described their organisation as a performance-driven organisation: 'Our performance is synchronized; our metrics depend on our collective efficiency'. (TM16). The focus on efficiency resulted in:

> **Case 3 finding 2.2: CEO leadership effectiveness is to achieve the efficiency of human resources and processes.**

Second-order themes (2.10, 2.11) are relevant to the effectiveness, alignment, trust, and support of the TMT. The Chairman, DB, CEO, and all TMT participants agreed that TMT effectiveness and alignment are primary indicators of the CEO leadership effectiveness. 'I don't think that the CEO alone can achieve anything. It is the top team and the CEO, then the Board, and the Chairman'. (DB).

The CEO discussed his strategic responsibilities to retain his TMT and attract professionals: 'I know we have the right TMT; we are in the right geography, and we have the operating systems to deliver'. The most challenging aspect of the CEO role as described by the CEO and Chairman was the efficiency of TMT. 'My responsibility is to make sure we can handle growth in a controlled manner. It is not just managing our people; they cannot do everything. We need to have the right top team and effective performance metrics in place so that we can deliver' (Chairman). The CEO described the TMT as follows: 'They are the source of the success; everything else is manageable'.

The second result that defined CEO leadership effectiveness:

> **Case 3 finding 2.3: The CEO selection of effective TMT, attaining TMT alignment, and gaining their support are significant indications of CEO leadership effectiveness**

Leading like our fathers was mentioned by the Chairman, CEO, DB, TM15, and TM16 when asked to describe CEO leadership effectiveness. The five participants expressed how their national leaders influenced their leadership styles. Their fathers (referring to the national leadership) 'worked harder' (DB). They were taught to work harder than their leaders. DB described the national leadership as 'support those on your side and look after the young talent'. The national leadership expectations are to look after the well-being of the people. The CEO linked effective

leadership to the CEO and people's actions. The CEO stressed the need to focus on and improve 'people performance. Same week I was hired, I set the people performance department to motivate them to perform better. I am their voice now' (CEO).

> **Case 3 finding 2.4: People-oriented leadership is related to the national cultures and the national leadership and signifies CEO leadership effectiveness.**

### 4.4.4 Theme 3: Impact of PO context on TMT

#### 4.4.4.1 TMT selection

TM17 joined RED when it was established. It is her first experience since her graduation (Table 4.23). TM16 and TM17 were selected as part of the nationalisation leadership development programme. TM17 was promoted into her position on the first week of the CEO appointment. TM16 joined as a project manager with a MA in Engineering and was promoted to his current position three years after joining. The international TMT members were hired for their experience in real estate sales (Table 4.25). TMT 16, 17, and 18 linked their long tenure to their dedication to the CEO and the organisation.

**Table 4-24 Case 3 participating TMT demographics and tenure**

| Participant | Education | Nationality | Experience | Function | Tenure | Position Tenure |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| TM15 | US Bachelor | National | 20 | Finance | 3 | 2 |
| TM16 | US Master | National | 12 | Engineer | 10 | 9 |
| TM17 | Local Bachelor | National | 13 | Corporate | 10 | 2 |
| TM18 | UK Bachelor | Asian | 18 | Corporate | 7 | 5 |

#### 4.4.4.2 TMT structure

TM17 was the storyteller of the organisation. She witnessed the joining of most of the TMT members. The human resources team had executed many reconfigurations and downsizing of the

TMT. 'With all the changes at the top, I learned to pick up my team and move forward' (TM16). The size of the TMT was reduced from 15 to five members.

The reduction of TMT size from fifteen to five was explained by: 'the fewer executives the better and faster we interface' (TM15). 'We are a small TMT; we work closely to support our CEO' (TM18). The TMT structure divides RED into five units at the top. TM15 heads asset management, and investments. TM15 goals are interrelated with those of the TM16 who heads the operations (development, operations, and sales). TM17 heads the human resources and nationalisation. TM18 is the head of sales and is the only participant who reports to the TM16 with an indirect reporting line to the TM15 and the CEO. The balance between the corporate team (TM17 and TM18) and the professional team (TM15 and TM16) was linked to better TMT communication and support to the CEO.

> **Case 3 finding 3.1: TMT structure (small size) and the balanced composition improves TMT communication and support to the CEO.**

### 4.4.4.3  TMT composition

Most of the TMT members were in the organisations since inception (TMT demographics Appendix B). Most of the national employees stayed in their positions with slight changes in titles and responsibilities.  The TMT retention is high due to receiving 'high income and allowances' (TM18).

TM17 is the only TMT who received her education in the UAE. TM15, TM16, and TM18 were educated in Western countries. Education emerged during the discussion with the TMT, CEO, and the Chairman. The participants received education sponsorship grants from the national leadership to study abroad. The national education sponsorship programmes are aligned with the national leadership expectations to develop national leaders.  TM16 and TM17 were hired through the national leader's development programme and had been employed by RED since graduating. TM17 was hired after graduation and was promoted into her position by the current CEO.

TM15 was the newest addition appointed by the Board two years previously. TM16 progressed into the current position based on his previous international project management experience. TM17 confirmed that her main objective in 2019 was to implement several performance improvements programmes. 'We changed the human resources department to a people performance department on the first month of his appointment' (TM17).

TM17 described the relationships within the TMT as effective for two reasons. First, they have long-term organisational experience; most TMT members have been hired for more than five years. Secondly, the CEO was one of them and understands their frustrations and motivations. The international TMT member is the head of sales: 'This is a great place to work for internationals who are willing to transfer their knowledge to the future national leaders' (TM16). The organisation invested in on-the-job training for national TMT members: 'My knowledge and experience are by trial and error. I learned everything I know here' (TMT17). The TMT described their support, trust, and dedication to the CEO, who was promoted from TMT to CEO.

> **Finding 3.2: TMT dedication to their organisations is connected to TMT effective performance, retention, incentives, and growth.**

### 4.4.4.4 TM interaction

Table 4.25 shows the TMT participants' responses regarding their satisfaction/ dissatisfaction, interacting with other TMTs.

**Table 4-25 Case 3 TMT interaction and dynamics**

|  | Second-order themes | Number of codes | Number of Participants |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3.7 | TMT challenging communication | 11 | 7 |
| 3.8 | TMT aligned and supporting CEO | 14 | 3 |
| 3.9 | TMT neutral (non-aligned) | 5 | 1 |
| 3.10 | TMT divergence and disagreement | 9 | 4 |
| 3.11 | TMT - TMT interaction | 8 | 3 |
| 3.12 | TMT opposing and misaligned | 7 | 1 |

All participants shared their communication challenges (3.7). Three participants discussed their alignment and support to the CEO. Three TMT members work closely with the CEO and with each other. 'We do the strategy work; the CEO presents to the Board' (TM16). Three participants discussed TMT interfacing with other TMT members. TM17 described the relationships between the TMT members as 'positive'. TMT 16 stated: 'I am committed and dedicated to support other

TMT and the CEO'. A collegial relationship dominated the TMT relationships: 'We have been working together for more than eight years' (TM16).

> **Case 3 finding 3.3: TMT members with long tenure are aligned and support the internal national CEO and the strategic direction.**

Four participants discussed the TMT pressure of implementing the new strategic direction with five TMT instead of 15. The changing context to private funding and the reduction of the headcount and the budgets were the source of the uncertainty (as identified in Theme 1). TM16 explained that the impact of the Board control over the strategic direction was a source of tension and dissatisfaction of TMT: 'Sometimes I think of leaving because of the ambiguous changes of strategy'. (TM16)

The head of sales described the difficulties of working with the professional engineering teams: 'The pressure is the time frame and resources.

> **Case 3 finding 3.4: The context of uncertainty imposes pressure on the TMT to perform effectively and increased their support the internal national CEO.**

One participant (TM15) discussed the TMT divergence and disagreements. TM15 is the only TMT who expressed opposition to the CEO.

## 4.4.5 Theme 4: Impact of context on the PO outcomes

### 4.4.5.1 Organisational outcomes

Participant responses to the question to define their organisational outcomes and any challenges hindering their ability and CEO effectiveness to deliver the identified outcomes are presented in Table 4.26. All participants identified performance excellence as the most important element of the organisational outcomes. Positive financial results and TMT dedication and alignment were equally mentioned (12 codes each) as influential on organisational outcomes. Factors were technology and innovation (8 codes).

**Table 4-26 Case 3 Organisational outcomes as described by the participants**

| # | Second-order themes PO outcomes | | Excerpt |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4.1 | Performance excellence | 13 | 'Our, processes are aligned, with tight schedules'. (TM16) |
| 4.2 | Positive financial results | 12 | 'Financial robustness has huge impact on us all' (CEO) |
| 4.3 | TMT dedication and alignment | 12 | 'There is no other way'. (Cook and Mobbs) |
| 4.4 | Technology and innovation | 8 | 'Sustainability and innovation initiatives' (TM18) |

### 4.4.5.2 Contextual factors impacting the PO outcomes

Red received several free plots of land to develop modernised real estate. RED investors' report stated that this grant aligns with the government directives towards a knowledge-based economy (RED, 2018). The budget cuts and the new strategic direction for private funding moved the organisation towards becoming an independent PO (Table 4.27). The participants identify five second-order themes as contextual factors influencing RED outcomes. The main factor identified was the change from government funding to self-funding. The slow national economy weakened the real estate market demand in the country, which impacted the RED outcome. Two emergent second-order themes (4.7, 4.8), Board and shareholders' misalignment and the Board roles and objectives, were identified as a publicly listed regulatory factor impacting RED outcomes.

**Table 4-27 Case 3 theme 4 second-order themes**

| # | Theme 4 - contextual factors second-order themes | Number of codes |
|---|---|---|
| 4.5 | Change from government funding to self -funding | 6 |
| 4.6 | Slow economy weakened real estate demand | 5 |
| 4.7 | Board and shareholder misalignment | 1 |
| 4.8 | Board roles and objectives | 2 |
| 4.9 | Consolidations with another public organisation | 1 |
| 4.10 | National youth and national leadership development | 12 |

External economic changes had an impact on real estate: the slow economy and the drop in oil prices decreased the demand for real estate. RED's new strategic direction to shift from government funding to the international investors was to own more than a 40% stake in RED properties: 'We invest in more mature markets to balance the risks for our shareholders' (CEO). RED latest Annual Report states that the real estate development demonstrated strong

performance and strong positive financial results. The recent agreements with regulators to develop more strategic projects are in line with the country strategy to attract the international investors (RED, 2020). Hence, the first finding for the fourth theme is:

> **Case 3 finding 4.1: The context of change increases the importance of performance excellence and positive financial results as the main indicators of organisational outcomes.**

Five participants discussed the last second-order theme, the national youth council, and the national leadership development. National leadership development is an important part of RED's human resources strategy: 30% of the workforce are nationals. RED national leadership development is a culture and a policy; three participants (TM16, TM17, and the CEO) were hired under the nationalisation policy after graduation. The CEO's main objective is to 'not disappoint our national leaders or our network of support again' by increasing the efficiency. TM17 described the CEO as 'one of us; he presents our work to the BOD, takes the heat or the praise, and provides us with feedback'. Hence the second result of this theme is:

> **Case 3 finding 4.2: The national leadership expectations are associated with the success of the national leadership development.**

## 4.4.6 Conclusions

Table 4.28 presents four higher-order themes including twelve results.

- Theme one answered the primary research question and provided two results: The dynamic national economy shapes the PO internal context, shapes the Board's role, and impacts the strategic direction. The second result appeared in three levels, the external context, the internal context, and its impact on the TMT: the external dynamic context of change created a context of uncertainty.
- Theme two provided four answers to the first sub-question: First, the theme included the Board's role as the emergent subtheme. The Board supported the selection of the internal CEO after the frequent dismissals of international CEOs. The negative financial results were linked to the dismissal of the predecessor CEOs. However, this did not impact the Board relationship with the national internal CEO who received the full delegation of authority (finding 2.1). CEO leadership effectiveness was associated with the CEO actions

to achieve efficiency (finding 2.2). CEO effectiveness was linked to CEO ability to retain effective, aligned, and supportive TMT members (finding 2.3). The last result is the link between national leadership and people-oriented leadership (finding 2.4).

- Theme three answered the second research sub-questions. There were four findings, three of which are new ones. First, the reduction of the TMT size and balanced composition of professionals and corporate TMTs improved their communication and support to the CEO (finding 3.1). The second result showed that TMT dedication to their organisations is connected to their effective performance, retention, incentives, and growth. The fourth result related the TMT long tenure and their support to the internal national CEO and the strategic direction (finding 3.3). The last result revealed how the change in the economy created an internal context of uncertainty and increased pressure on TMT performance, but also increased their support to the CEO (finding 3.4).

- Theme four resulted in two primary findings. The economic context impacted the demand for real estate. Consequently, it affected Case 3 outcomes and placed attention on performance excellence and the positive financial results as the main factors for PO outcomes. The national leadership development appeared in three different levels, the external context, the PO internal context (nationalisation and national leadership development), and the outcomes of the PO (finding 4.2).

**Table 4-28 Case 3 Primary findings**

| # | Finding number | Primary finding |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1.1 | The dynamic knowledge-based economic context shapes the PO internal context and the Board role and impacts the strategic direction. |
| 2 | 1.2 | The external dynamic context of change creates a context of uncertainty. |
| 3 | 2.1 | The organisational negative past performance and the performance of the predecessor CEO do not impact the Board relationship with the national CEO and his/her delegation of authority. |
| 4 | 2.2 | CEO leadership effectiveness is to achieve the efficiency of human resources and processes. |
| 5 | 2.3 | TMT effective performance, alignment, and support are significant indications of CEO leadership effectiveness. |
| 6 | 2.4 | People-oriented leadership is related to the national culture and the national leadership and signifies CEO leadership effectiveness. |
| 7 | 3.1 | TMT structure (small size) and the balanced composition improves TMT communication and support to the CEO. |
| 8 | 3.2 | TMT dedication to their organisations is connected to TMT effective performance, retention, incentives, and growth. |
| 9 | 3.3 | TMT with long tenure support the internal national CEO and the strategic direction. |
| 10 | 3.4 | The context of uncertainty imposes pressure on the TMT to perform effectively and increased their support the internal national CEO. |
| 11 | 4.1 | The context of change increases the importance of performance excellence and positive financial results as the main indicators of organisational outcomes |
| 12 | 4.2 | The national leadership development is a strategic PO outcome. |

## 4.4.7 Case 3 Hybrid strategic and contextual leadership framework

Figure 4.14 presents the emergent framework of the real estate publicly listed organisation. The framework shows the multi-level contextual impact on the organisation and the individuals. The presentation of the framework is from the left (external context to the right, PO internal context, strategic direction, Board, CEO, TMT, and PO outcomes.

Figure 4.14 shows the external context consists of the direction towards the knowledge-based economy, the regulatory change in the real estate, the national culture, and the national leadership expectations.

**Figure 4-13 Case 3 Hybrid strategic contextual leadership framework**
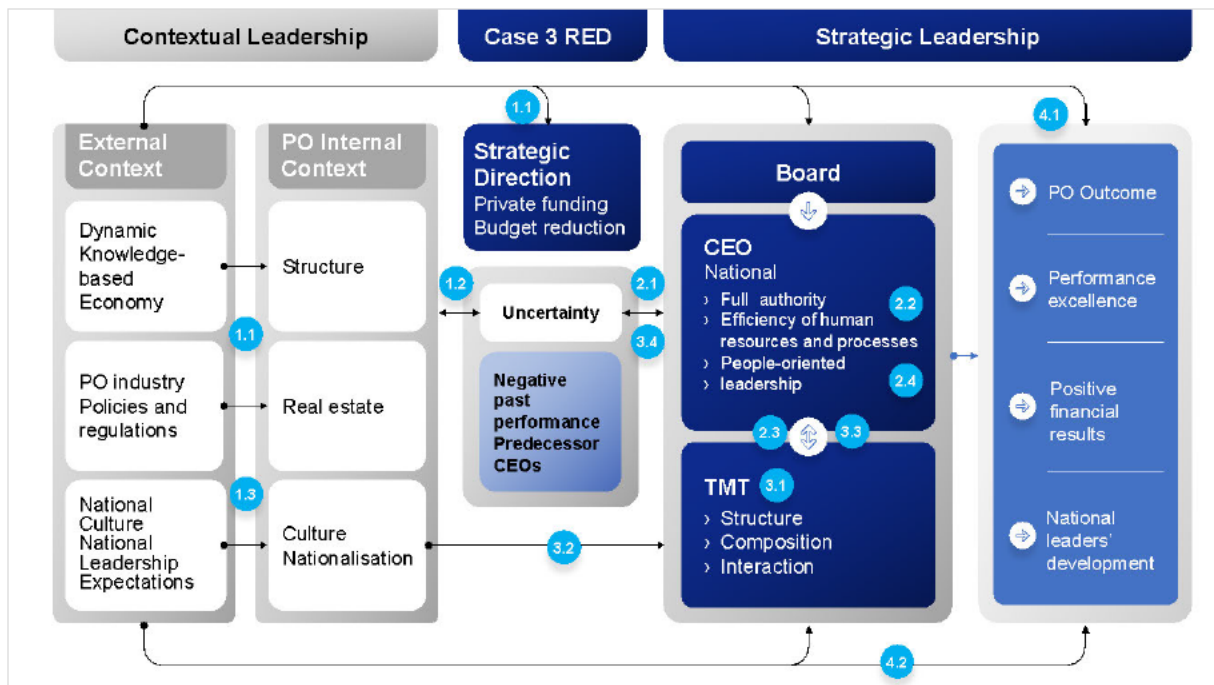


The framework consists of main units (external context, internal context, strategic leaders, and the outcomes of the PO). The figure flows from left to right:

- The external context impact on the PO internal context
- The knowledge-based economy and the PO industry policies and regulations shapes the internal structure of the PO and the real estate industry.
- The relationships between the external context, strategic direction, the emergent Board role, and the outcomes of the PO.
- The emergent strategic direction.
- The link between the strategic direction on the emergent context of uncertainty.
- The emergent past negative performance and the predecessor CEOs linked to the context of uncertainty.
- The relationships between the Board and the CEO, the Board, and the strategic direction.
- The CEO -TMT relationship.
- The strategic leadership effect on the PO outcomes.

- The impact of the external context on the outcomes of the PO (performance excellence, positive financial results, and national leaders' development).

## 4.5 Case 4: Public investment and financial holding (PIF)

### 4.5.1 Overview

Figure 4.15 shows the start of the research in 2018 when the approval of PIF to participate in the research was granted in 2018. Due to the Board and the CEO change, the interviews with participants started in April 2019 and continued throughout 2020. The change of the CEO and the TMT impacted the case timeline and the case context, which is discussed in the following section.

**Figure 4-14 Case 4 PIF timeline**
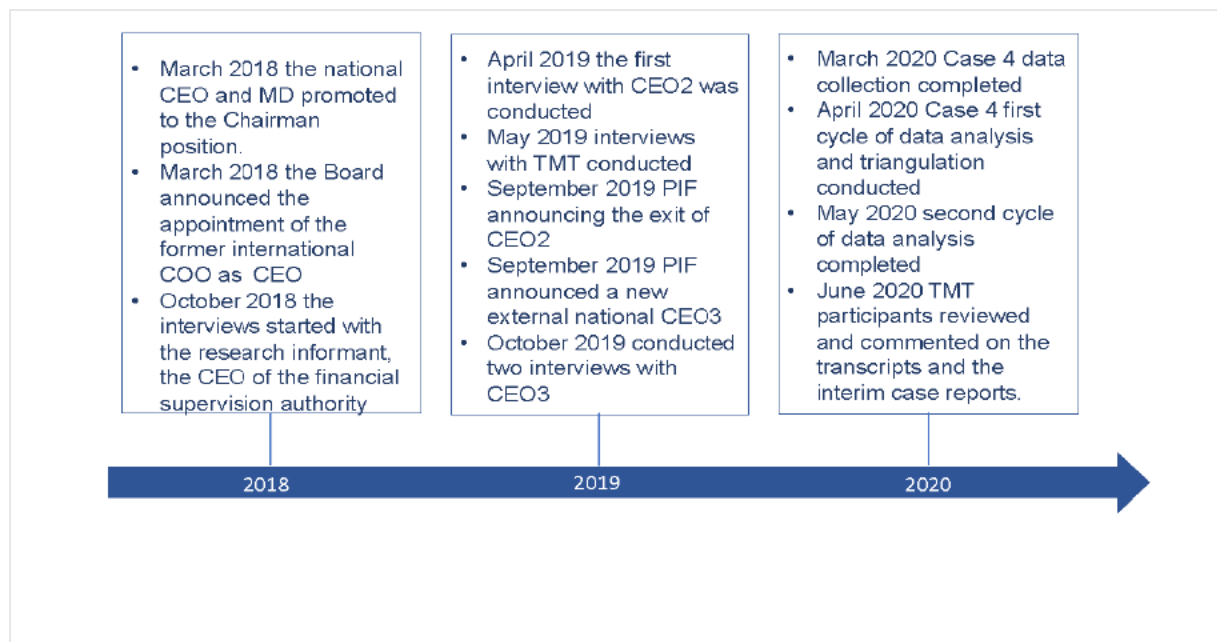


### 4.5.2 Theme 1: Impact of external context on PO context

The external context of PIF consists of national investors and public shareholders (22,000). The new financial regulations and reforms affected PIF in two ways: first, PIF was affected by the competition with international investors to attract the shareholders. Second, international investors were disruptors with advanced technology requiring PIF to advance its own technology to compete (PIF, 2019).

### 4.5.2.1 Organisational structure

Figure 4.16 shows that PIF fits with the public organisations' framework. The regulatory and commodities authorities and the shareholders approve the nomination and the appointment of the Board of directors. The Board sets the strategic direction and oversees CEO and TMT performance (PIF, 2020). The Board sets the internal control, the nomination, and remuneration, and audit committees set the financial supervisory controls. Figure 4.15 shows PIF organisation structure including the Board committees, the CEO, and the top management teams. The hierarchical structure follows the laws governing publicly listed organisations.

**Figure 4-15 Case 4 PIF organisational structure**
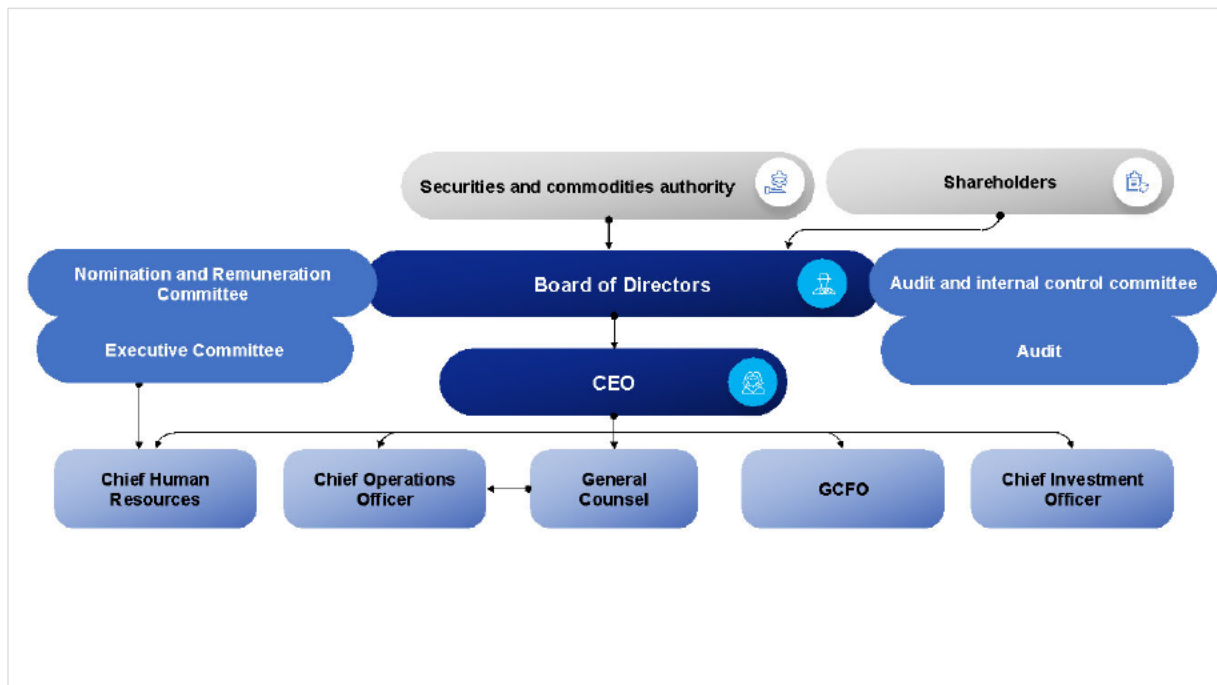


Table 4.29 contains the participants' description of the external context theme. The answers included eight second-order themes. First, the knowledge-based economy sets the governance reporting and hierarchy, as shown in Figure 4.16. All participants expressed the impact of the dynamic context of change (new financial regulations, competing with international investors) as the main reason for the shift from public to private funding and budget reductions (10 codes). Participants identified this shift as the new strategic direction. Third, the national culture, leadership, and shareholders' expectations were identified as impacting PIF context (1.3). Fourth,

the governance and monitoring, multiple reporting, and hierarchal structure and reporting themes affect the internal context of PIF.

**Table 4-29 Case 4 Theme 1 Case 4 context**

| # | Second-order themes | Number of codes | Number of participants |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1.1 | Dynamic knowledge-based context governance, reporting, and hierarchy | 11 | 5 |
| 1.2 | Economic context drives the change from government funding to budget reduction and private funding | 10 | 8 |
| 1.3 | Increase efficiency of human capital and processes | 9 | 8 |
| 1.4 | National culture, national leadership, and shareholder expectations | 5 | 3 |
| 1.5 | Board role | 5 | 6 |

PIF's strategic direction is to be the 'premier investment company in the Middle East, setting the highest standards in investment expertise, professionalism, and corporate governance' (PIF, 2019: 5). The strategic objectives are to maximise returns to shareholders (CEO2). The Board issued a delegation of authority to CEO2 to conduct the day-to-day management of PIF, subject to the limits imposed by the Board (PIF, 2020). The CEO reports to the Board and the TMT reports to the CEO (Figure 4.16).

> **Case 4 finding 1.1: The dynamic economic context shapes the pluralistic organisational structure, impacts the Board role, and sets the strategic direction**

### 4.5.2.2 Organisation culture

PIF fosters a culture that attracts, empowers, and rewards talent. 'We promise professionalism, clarity, and act in the interests of our shareholders' (PIF, 2019: 2). The national participants described the national values: 'People are the heart of PIF. To hire top experts is easy, but to hire the right attitude and values is a challenge' (Chairman). The Vice-Chairman thinks that the national

culture is demonstrated within the 'transparent context' of the publicly listed organisation. The international participants described the organisational culture as highly competitive, performance-driven, and political, with 'outstanding performance, no fluff' (TM21). PIF aims for outstanding performance 'keeping the management team on their toes' (CEO2). TM21 differed in describing that the culture is predominately political, 'depending on who do you know'. Nationalisation is mandated by the Board to the CEO and the head of human resources to attract and develop national talent at all levels (CEO3). Participants discussed the national culture, national leadership, and shareholders' expectations relationship with the organisational culture and values. All international participants referenced the national culture, and the national leadership expectation was mainly referred to regarding nationalisation (PIF, 2019).

**Case 4 finding 1.2: The national culture and the national leadership expectations are associated with the nationalisation in PO.**

## 4.5.3  Theme 2: The impact of PO context on CEO selection and leadership effectiveness

PIF's first national CEO served 12 years as a CEO before he was promoted to the Chairman position. The international CEO2 was selected by the Chairman and approved by the Board to re-join PIF as the second CEO (CEO2). CEO2 participated in the research and was dismissed by the Board after 18 months.

Table 4.30 includes nine second-order themes (2.1 to 2.9). Technology and innovation are the new strategic direction decided upon by the Board (2.1). The Board's strategic direction is to increase PIF revenue (2.2) and to reduce the budget and move towards private (third-party) funding (2.3). The second-order theme (2.4), the reduction of headcount and cost, can be clustered into efficiency of resources and processes (2.6). The predecessor CEO1 was discussed as the interviews were taking place during the transition of three CEOs.

**Table 4-30 CEO leadership effectiveness**

| # | Theme 2- Second-order themes | Number of codes |
|------|------------------------------|-----------------|
| 2.1 | Technology and innovation | 15 |
| 2.2 | Increase revenue | 12 |
| 2.3 | Budget reduction and private funding | 10 |
| 2.4 | Reduce headcount and cost | 9 |
| 2.5 | Predecessor CEOs | 8 |
| 2.6 | Increase efficiency of human resources | 7 |
| 2.7 | Board role | 5 |
| 2.8 | Integrated operational systems | 4 |
| 2.9 | Negative past organisational performance | 3 |

The Chairman selected an external national CEO to lead PIF. The third CEO3 also participated in the research; hence, below is the selection of the two CEOs, the leadership effectiveness of CEO2 and CEO3, as described by PIF participants.

### 4.5.3.1 Predecessor CEO

The promotion of the national CEO to Chairman is supported by the Board. The newly appointed Chairman nominated CEO2 who was working with PIF COO from 2008 to 2016. CEO2 left PIF and moved to his country, 'With the approval of the Board to bring him back as the successor CEO' (Chairman). CEO2 had a low delegation of authority. As a publicly listed financial and investment organisation, the Board Committees had the delegation of authority in the budget and the strategic direction. PIF's new CEO2 received low authority to implement the new strategic direction (CEO2).

> **Case 4 finding 2.1a: Organisational negative past performance has a negative impact on the Board relationship with the international CEO and his/her delegation of authority.**

### 4.5.3.2 CEO selection

The Chairman announced the selection of an external national CEO a few weeks after the dismissal of CEO2. During the interview with CEO3, he shared that the Board contacted him for PIF's CEO position several times, even before the selection of the predecessor CEO2, but he had not accepted their offer. The national CEO3 had studied and graduated with a degree in Business Management and had over 20 years of experience in the banking sector. PIF (2020: 6) included the new CEO's profile, describing how many 'transformational restructuring projects' he had led

in his previous roles and his experience as 'an independent Board Director of several international financial organisations' (CEO3).

The Board instructed CEO3 to review the strategic direction, reform the TMT, and present a strategy on how to implement the new strategic direction. The new CEO had authority over 75% of the budget. The Chairman and the Board supported the new national CEO and extended their 'leadership and mentorship' (CEO3).

**Case 4 finding 2.1b: The organisational negative past performance and the succession of predecessor CEO did not impact the Board relationship with the national CEO and his/her delegation of authority.**

### 4.5.3.3 CEO leadership effectiveness

PIF participants were asked to describe CEOs leadership effectiveness. The table below shows participant responses. Table 4.31 shows nine second-order themes reflecting the difference in the participants' views. They agreed on two performance-related second-order themes: the efficiency of resources and processes (the highest 12 codes), followed by performance-driven leadership. Another second-order theme was CEO selecting effective TMT. Two participants discussed transparency and ethical reporting in financial services (TM19 and TM22). Technology and innovation are part of PIF strategic direction to increase revenue according to TM20 and TM21. Two participants linked transformational leadership to the implementation of the new technology and innovation (TM20 and TM23). CEO relationship with the board and the CEO delegation of authority was linked to CEO leadership effectiveness by two participants.

**Table 4-31 Theme 2 second-order themes number of codes and excerpts**

| # | Second-order themes | Number of codes | Excerpt |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2.1 | The efficiency of resources and processes | 12 | 'We deliver at 120 percent efficiency it is in our financial returns' (CEO2) |
| 2.2 | Performance-driven leadership | 8 | 'Our incentives are aligned with our profits' (TM22) |
| 2.3 | CEO hires the right TMT | 7 | 'The right team are the revenue makers' (TM21) |
| 2.4 | Transparency and ethical reporting | 6 | 'Investment is not an outcome, the return-on-investment is' TM19) |
| 2.5 | Technology and Innovation | 5 | 'Our growth depends on the new technology' (TM23) |
| 2.6 | Transformational leadership | 5 | 'a transformational CEO to lead the new fintech strategy' (TM20) |
| 2.7 | CEO relationship with the Board | 4 | 'CEO ability to lobby with the Board, have a one to one with the Board member' (TM20) |
| 2.8 | Delegation of authority | 4 | 'I had more authority when I was the COO' (CEO2) |
| 2.10 | People-oriented leadership | 4 | 'People are our main assets' CEO3 |

CEO leadership effectiveness was most closely linked (evidenced by the highest number of participants and codes) to the efficiency of resources and processes (all participants and 12 codes) and performance-driven leadership (6 participants with 8 codes). Performance-driven leadership emerged in the organisational culture, CEO leadership effectiveness, and the TMT theme. Hence three results can be interpreted:

**Case 4 finding 2.2: CEO leadership effectiveness is to achieve the efficiency of human resources and processes.**

**Case 4 finding 2.3: Selection and hiring effective TMT is linked to CEO effective leadership**

**Case 4 finding 2.3: Performance-driven leadership is an indication of CEO leadership effectiveness.**

## 4.5.4 Theme 3: The impact of PO context on TMT

### 4.5.4.1 TMT selection

The TMT was selected by the first CEO when he was promoted as the first national CEO with the support of the former Chairman (TM21). Three international participants were selected between 2008 and 2012. The selection was based on education, expertise in the investment field, professional qualification, and leadership. The latest two TMT members to join were TM20, who was selected and hired in 2017, and TM23, who was hired in 2018. Both members were selected by CEO2.

**Table 4-32 Case 4 TMT demographics**

| Participants | Education | Nationality | Experience | Years in position | Tenure | Function |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| TM19 | Middle Eastern MBA, CPA | Middle Eastern | 25 | 11 | 11 | Finance |
| TM20 | France Finance | French | 30 | 3 | 3 | Operations |
| TM21 | France Doctorate Engineering | Moroccan | 30 | 1 | 13 | Corporate strategy |
| TM22 | Canada Finance Masters | Moroccan | 20 | 9 | 9 | Financial Risk |
| TM23 | UK Technology | English/ Middle Eastern | 22 | 2 | 2 | Technology |

Table 4.32 displays the five participating TMT. All participants have an international education. The TMT years of experience ranged from 20 to 30 in financial services. TM19 has 11 years tenure and has been in her position since she joined PIF in 2010. TM21 tenure is the longest at 13 years and was promoted to his role by CEO2 in 2018. TM22 tenure is 9 years. TM20 and the TMT6 have the shortest tenure of three and two years respectively.

### 4.5.4.2 TMT structure

All participating members are required by the financial regulators to have professional qualifications, especially the Chief Financial Officer (TM19), and the Chief Risk Officer (TM22).

The size of the TMT was reduced from ten to eight members. Table 4.33 shows that six participants linked the TMT long tenure to the lucrative incentives and rewards: 'we reward the performance and the returns on our investment' (Chairman). TMT high retention was linked to their dedication to the organisation and the shareholders 'We are responsible to provide the highest returns to our shareholders' (TM21).

**Table 4-33 Theme 3 TMT tenure, retention, and roles**

| # | Second-order themes | Number of codes | Number of participants |
|---|---------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| 3.1 | TMT dedication (buy in the PO) | 12 | 6 |
| 3.2 | TMT high retention | 10 | 6 |
| 3.3 | TMT Incentives | 11 | 7 |
| 3.4 | TMT performance effectiveness | 9 | 8 |
| 3.5 | TMT growth and satisfaction | 6 | 6 |

Therefore, the first finding of the TMT theme is:

**Case 4 3.1: TMT dedication to their organisation is connected to TMT effective performance, retention, incentives, and growth.**

Table 4.33 showed that all participants discussed the emergent second-order theme. Participants linked the TMT performance effectiveness, extensive expertise, and qualifications in finance and investment to increasing PIF financial profitability (TM20) and increasing the shareholder values (TM19) as a priority.

### 4.5.4.3 TMT composition

The TMT have been reduced from 12 to six members. TM19 is responsible for finance, TM20 operations of asset management and private investments. TM21 oversees the strategy. TM22 is financial risk management, and TM23 oversees technology and innovation. The functions of TM19 and TM22 are required by the regulators for the publicly listed investment. In addition to the standard TM19 role to forecast and budget, the main responsibility is to report the quarterly and annual financial statements to the regulators. TM22 has similar reporting responsibilities. Hence, TM19 and TM22 must work closely with each other (TM19).

### 4.5.4.4 TMT interaction

All TMT participants were asked to describe their interactions. Five participants discussed the TMT communication in 18 codes, as shown in Table 4.34. The participants discussed the emergent TMT performance effectiveness (12 codes). The five participants linked the TMT divergence and opposition to the opposing objectives between the new strategic direction (reduction of budget and the shift to private funding) and spending on the new technology. 'It is not the right strategy or the right time' (TM19). The TMT-CEO relationship (10) was discussed.

**Table 4-34 Case 4 TMT interaction and communication**

|  | Second-order themes | Number of codes | Number of participants |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3.7 | TMT challenging communication | 16 | 8 |
| 3.8 | TMT aligned and supporting CEO | 11 | 1 |
| 3.9 | TMT neutral (non-aligned) | 11 | 4 |
| 3.10 | TMT divergence and disagreement | 6 | 2 |
| 3.11 | TMT - TMT collective interaction | 5 | 5 |
| 3.12 | TMT opposing and mis-aligned | 7 | 1 |

### 4.5.4.4.1 TMT communication

TM21 described the TMT complex communication protocol as follows: 'Everything should go through him, or you are taking a risk'. CEO2 sits at the centre of the TMT interactions. TM20 and TM22 were in favour of indirect communication with other TMT. TM19 explained that 'Going through the CEO it is less risky'. The participants described CEO2 because they had served PIF together for more than a decade.

> **Case 4 finding 3.2: The TMT composition and the reduction of the TMT size did not improve the TMT communication and relationships**.

TMT divergence and opposition were expressed by TM20 and TM21. TM22 was assigned by the CEO as a facilitator and to manage the relationships between the new TM23, the external providers, and TMT members. TM19, TM21, and TM22 were focused on delivering financial

results rather than on the delivery of technological transformation (TM19, TM21, TM22). The implementation of the new technology strategy was a secondary objective that could be offered to new investors.

All participants deliberated and explained that they and other senior members did not support the new TM23 or grant him access to their departments (Table 4.33) (second-order theme: divergence and opposition). TM19 oversaw financial budgeting, reporting, and procurement, in addition to the technology department. TM19 said she is not willing to give this up to 'jargon technology transformation'. TM21 oversees PIF strategy and did not support TM23: 'He is not the right guy to trust with the new technological strategy and budget' (TM21).

> **Case 4 finding 3.2: TMT long tenure stimulates TMT opposition to the international CEO and the strategic direction.**

TM22 is responsible for the investment policies and processes and is the coordinator between the TMTs and the new CTO: 'My team must have the policies and processes' manuals, but nobody seems to have them' (TM23). TM20 is the newest and was cautiously aligned with the new strategy and supportive of TM23 and CEO2: 'The successful implementation is our goal; failure isn't an option' (TM20).

During the second round of interviews, the new external national CEO was selected. The participants were fully supportive of the new CEO. They described him as a 'macro thinker' not interested in being in the middle like CEO2 (TM21). The TMT support for the new CEO and the strategic direction was linked to the Board support for the new CEO (TM19, TM21, TM22).

> **Case 4 finding 3.3: The TMT with longer tenure and experience than the national external CEO have a positive impact on the successful implementation of the strategic direction.**

TM19, TM21, and TM22 described the dynamic context of changes and the uncertainty due to the failed implementation of new technologies and the growth strategy to expand (TM21). TM23 was dismissed due to failing to implement technology and innovation. The uncertainty increased the disagreement between TM19 and TM21 from one side and TM20 and TM23. The divergence of the objectives and the disagreements were linked to the failure to agree on the integration of the new strategy.

> **Case 4 finding 3.4: The context of uncertainty imposes pressure on the TMT, increases the divergence of TMT goals and disagreements.**

## 4.5.5 Theme 4: Impact of the context on the PO outcomes

PIF participant responses placed financial growth as the most important organisational outcome. Performance excellence and cost reduction were the important organisational outcomes followed by shareholder satisfaction. The dedication and alignment of TMT financial services were significant to attract new investors locally and internationally (TM22) (Table 4.35).

**Table 4-35 Case 4 Theme 4 outcomes as identified by the participants**

|  | Theme 4- Outcome second-order themes | Number of codes |
|---|---|---|
| 4.1 | Financial positive results | 18 |
| 4.2 | Performance excellence | 12 |
| 4.3 | Technology and innovation | 8 |
| 4.4 | Shareholder's satisfaction | 16 |
| 4.5 | TMT dedication and alignment | 9 |
| 4.6 | TMT-CEO alignment | 3 |

### 4.5.5.1 External context impact on financial and investment industry

Table 4.36 below includes the participants answers regarding the contextual factors that affected their organisational outcomes:

- The knowledge-based economy's new policies and regulations to attract international investors to the country increased competitors (TM19, TM22).
- The move to self-funding requires significant advancement of technology and innovation to attract third-party investors locally and internationally (TM21, TM20).
- National culture and the national leadership expectations are linked to positive financial results, performance excellence, and shareholder satisfaction (TM19, TM22).

**Table 4-36 Case 4 External context factors second-order themes**

| # | Second-order themes | Number of codes |
|------|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 4.8 | New financial policies and regulations | 11 |
| 4.9 | Technology and innovation | 14 |
| 4.10 | International investors | 10 |
| 4.11 | National leadership and shareholder's satisfaction | 7 |

PIF aims to advance its investment competitiveness and global reach while it 'remains deeply rooted in the national economy' (PIF, 2020: 12).

> **Case 4 finding 4.1: The context of change increases the importance of positive financial results, the shareholders' expectations, and performance excellence, as the main indicators of organisational outcomes.**

## 4.5.6 Conclusion

The findings of the four themes resulted in eleven primary findings in Table 4.37.

**Theme 1** resulted in two findings. As a result of the dynamic knowledge-based economy, Case 4 new strategic directions evolved to change funding from shareholders' funding to private funding by attracting international investors.

The findings captured the strategic direction at the PO level as to invest in innovation and technology to compete with national and international POs (finding 1.1, 1.2).

**Theme 2** concluded with four results. Case 4 had two CEOs during the case. The organisation's past performance negatively impacted the Board's dynamic support to the international CEO and his delegation of authority (finding 2.1). In contrast, finding (2.2) shows that the Board supported the national external CEO and granted him the required delegation of authority. CEO leadership effectiveness is linked to the ability of the CEO to achieve the efficiency of human resources and processes in CEO2 and CEO3 (finding 2.2). The CEO having an effective TMT was linked to CEO leadership effectiveness (finding 2.3). The theme included a new finding in performance-driven leadership (finding 2.4).

**Theme 3** concluded with four findings. First, the TMT reduced size and new structure did not have any impact on TMT communications and relationships (finding 3.1). The second result of this theme is that TMT dedication to their organisations is connected to TMT effective performance,

retention, incentives, and growth (finding 3.2). The third result of this theme was different than the case of the international CEO where TMT long tenure stimulated TMT opposition to the international CEO and the strategic direction (finding 3.3a). Inversely, in the case of the external national CEO, TMT with longer tenure and experience than the national external CEO have a positive impact on the successful implementation of the strategic direction. The last result of this theme revealed how the context of change and uncertainty imposes pressure on the TMT, increasing their divergence and disagreement (finding 3.4).

**Table 4-37 Case 4 PIF primary findings**

| # | Finding number | Primary finding |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1.1 | The dynamic knowledge-based economic context shapes the PO internal context and the Board role and impacts the strategic direction. |
| 2 | 1.2 | The external dynamic context of change creates a context of uncertainty. |
| 3 | 2.1 | The organisational negative past performance do not impact the Board relationship with the national CEO and his/her delegation of authority. |
| 4 | 2.2 | CEO leadership effectiveness is to achieve the efficiency of human resources and processes. |
| 5 | 2.3 | CEO hiring effective TMT is linked to CEO effective leadership |
| 6 | 2.4 | Performance-driven leadership is an indication of CEO leadership effectiveness |
| 7 | 3.1 | The TMT composition and the reduction of TMT size did not improve TMT communication and relationships. |
| 8 | 3.2 | TMT dedication to their organisations is connected to TMT effective performance, retention, incentives, and growth. |
| 9 | 3.3a | TMT long tenure stimulates TMT opposition to the international CEO and the strategic direction. |
| | 3.3b | The TMT with longer tenure and experience than the national external CEO have a positive impact on the successful implementation of the strategic direction |
| 10 | 3.4 | The context of change and uncertainty imposes pressure on the TMT, increase their divergence and disagreements. |
| 11 | 4.1 | The context of change increases the importance of positive financial results, the shareholders' expectations, and performance excellence, as the main indicators of organisational outcomes. |

**Theme 4** concluded with one finding. The context of change increases the importance of positive financial results, the shareholders' expectations, and performance excellence as the main indicators of organisational outcomes (finding 4.1).

### 4.5.7 Case 4 hybrid strategic and contextual leadership framework

The multilevel case study revealed how the external contextual elements (dynamic knowledge-based economy, PO industry at the country level (financial services and investments in this case), national shareholder expectations) affect the PO internal context, the strategic leaders, and the outcomes of the PO.

Figure 4.17 shows the external and internal context and the relationships with other main units and sub-units.

**Figure 4-16 Case 4 hybrid strategic contextual framework**
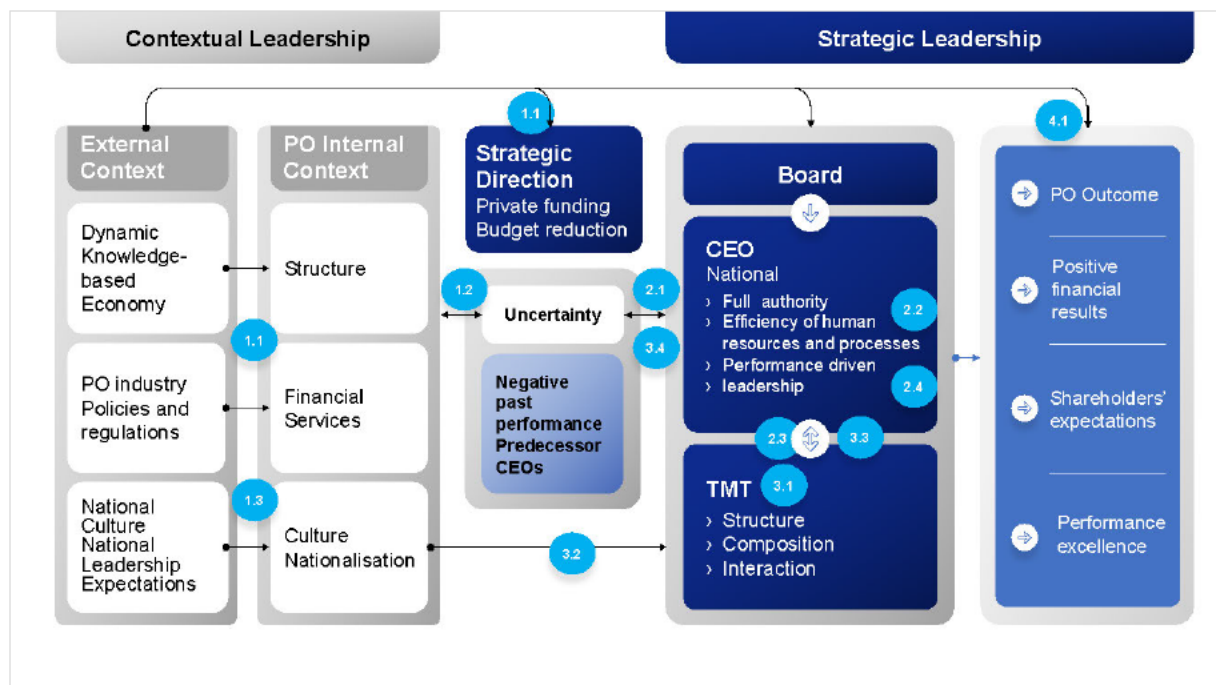


- The top horizontal arrow leads to three downward arrows toward the strategic direction, the Board, and the outcomes of the PO (finding 1.1)
- The PO internal context consists of the PO structure, industry (financial services), and the nationalisation, and has the following relationships:
  - The emergent Board role, the predecessor CEO turnover, and negative past financial performance created the impact of the context of uncertainty on the PO internal context and the TMT directly (findings 1.2).

- The national CEO has authority from the Board to lead the TMT and to contribute to the implementation of the new strategic direction (finding 2.1).
  - The CEO effectiveness is represented by the CEO to achieve efficiency (finding 2.2), hire effective TMT (2.3), and the performance-driven leadership (finding 2.4).
- The second box is the TMT structure (role and size), composition (experience, education, and tenure), and interactions affecting the CEO directly (bidirectional vertical blue arrow). This represents the TMT support, opposition, or neutrality towards the CEO and the strategic direction (finding 3.1)
- The direct arrow from the strategic leaders' box to the PO outcomes (finding 4.1)

  - Positive financial income
  - Shareholders' expectations
  - Performance excellence.

## 4.6  Cross-case synthesis

### 4.6.1  Overview

This section presents the findings of the cross-case analysis. The selection of the PO was based on case similarities and differences in structure, status, culture, and organisational outcomes. The synthesis reflects on the differences and similarities of the contextual impact on the organisational internal context, selection of the CEOs, TMTs, leadership effectiveness, and the contextual elements impacting organisational outcomes. The synthesis considered the flexible nature of the cases and the mixed characteristics of the data (interviews, documents, observations, and informants). The case synthesis complements and integrates the strategy of analysis as it summarises, integrates, combines, and compares findings from the four cases (Cruzes et al., 2015). As postulated in Chapter 3, data analysis, phases five and six of this research tables and links of the final themes from each case are assembled to arrive at the key findings of the cross-case (Figure 4.18).

**Figure 4-17 Cross-case synthesis**
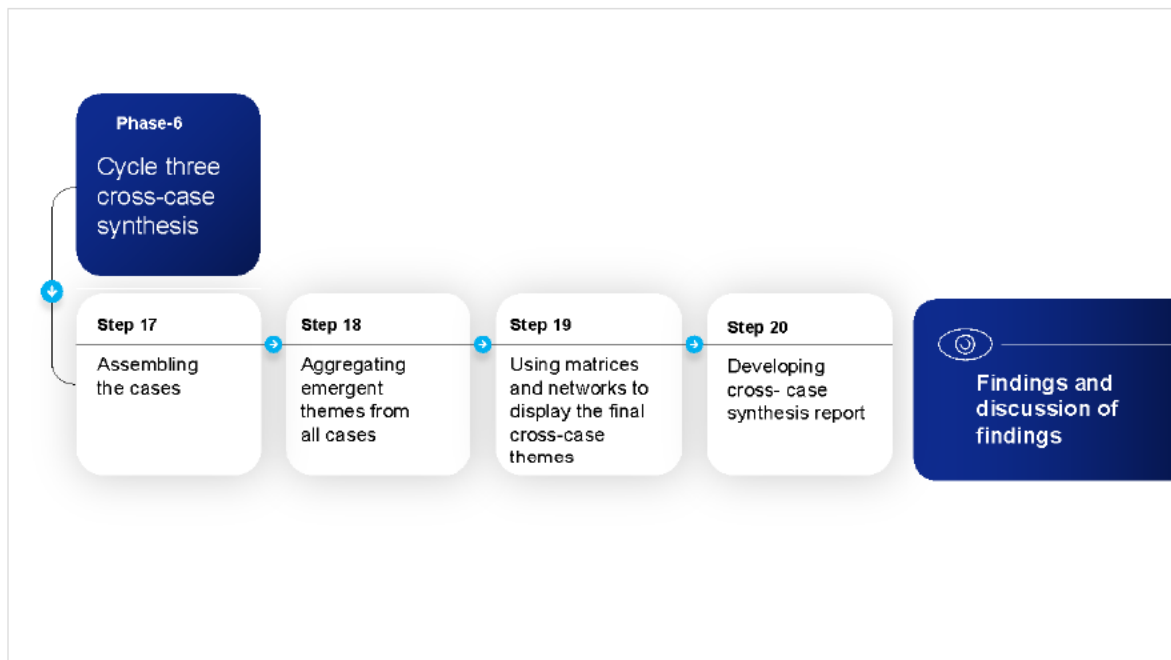
To arrive at the transparent and unbiased results I presented the number of codes, the number of participants per case, and the interpretations of the relationships between the themes: for example, the TMT structure, composition, and interaction dynamics themes. The higher level of TMT composition consisted of combining the second-order themes (TMT backgrounds, education, position, reporting lines, tenure, and experience). The TMT interaction dynamics was based on the conceptual model of the TMT in the Upper Echelons theory, in addition to the emergent themes (TMT communications).

## 4.6.2 Cross-case synthesis

The different industries of the four POs, financial services, real estate, and healthcare provided a view of the policy shifts at a national level and their impact at the individual organisational levels. Other variations included the relationship between the knowledge-based economy and the establishment year of the POs, the PO ownership, the funding features, Board, structure, status, size, and culture. Three of the samples are publicly listed organisations (Case 1, Case 3, and Case 4), established between 2005 and 2007. The age of the organisations ranges between 10 to 15 years. Table 4.38 shows the size of the organisation (the number of employees), the strategic direction, and the past organisational financial outcome.

**Table 4-38 The four cases characteristics, strategic direction, and past financial outcomes**

| Case name and number | Case 1 | Case 2 | Case 3 | Case 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Status and function** | Public Healthcare | Private Healthcare | Public Real-estate | Public Investment Finance |
| **Foundation year** | 2006 | 2013 | 2005 | 2007 |
| **Age** | 14 | 10 | 15 | 13 |
| **Size - number of employees** | 17000 | 900 | 800 to 425 | 103 |
| **Strategic direction (2018 to 2021)** | Private funding and offer services to expatriates | Private funding. Reduction of headcount by 15%. and expansion | Private funding international investors | Private funding Budget reduction Innovation technology |
| **Organisation outcomes in 2018 and 2019** | Negative financial results | Negative financial results | Negative financial results | Negative financial results |

The initial strategies of the four organisations were to grow and improve performance, achieve positive financial returns, and make a positive social impact (RED 2018; PHC, 2019; VHC, 2020). The new strategic direction of the organisations is to shift to private funding (All cases). Case 1 and Case 3 were fully funded by the UAE government to fulfil the knowledge-based economy strategy (UAE Vision 2030) (Government.ae, 2016). Case 2 and Case 4 are funded by the national shareholders. All participants (41) described how the dynamic economic context imposed economic changes to the PO funding. Table 4.39 shows the strategic direction is centred around private funding and budget reduction and growth. PIF included innovation and technology.

As discussed in Chapter 3 (Table 3.21) I rely on Stake's (2010) within-case analysis matrix for generating theme-based findings for multiple case. The presentation of the number of codes and the number of participants is meant to provide indicative unbiased findings. The cross-case synthesis of the four themes is presented in tables (4.39, 4.41, 4.42, and 4.44).

### 4.6.3 Theme 1: Impact of the external context on POs contexts

**Table 4-39** External **context impact on the POs internal context**

| # | External context theme 1 | Case 1 | Case 2 | Case3 | Case4 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Number of participants** | 20 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 41 |
| | | | | **Number of codes** | | |
| 1.1 | Dynamic knowledge-based context governance, reporting, and hierarchy | 22 | 14 | 7 | 11 | 54 |
| | Number of participants | 10 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 25 |
| 1.2 | Economic context drives the change from government funding to budget reduction and private funding | 29 | 9 | 5 | 10 | 53 |
| | Number of participants | 20 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 41 |
| 1.3 | Dynamic context of change and uncertainty | 23 | 11 | 12 | 7 | 52 |
| | Number of participants | 12 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 29 |
| 1.4 | Increase efficiency of human capital and processes | 30 | 8 | 10 | 9 | 50 |
| | Number of participants | 20 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 41 |
| 1.5 | National culture, national leadership, and shareholder expectations | 21 | 4 | 12 | 5 | 42 |
| | Number of participants | 16 | 2 | 7 | 3 | 28 |
| 1.6 | Board role | 13 | 8 | 10 | 5 | 36 |
| | Number of participants | 10 | 6 | 7 | 6 | 29 |

Table 4.39 includes six second-order themes of the external context across the four cases. All participants (41) associated the shift from government funding and national shareholder funding to private funding and budget reductions due to the changes in the external economic context. The Board role emerged when participants were discussing the internal PO context and the shift to private funding (29). The participants referred to the shift as the new strategic direction when

describing the role of the Board. Second-order theme (1.1) included the highest number of codes (54). Twenty-five participants linked the knowledge-based economy to how POs established their governance, reporting, and hierarchy. The first finding of theme one is:

**Cross-case finding 1.1: The dynamic knowledge-based economy shapes the PO internal context, impacts the PO's strategic direction, and shapes the Board role.**

All participants in Case 2 and most of the participants of the other three cases (74%) described the effects of the dynamic contextual changes: changes in policies and regulations, the shifting from public funding to private funding, and the reduction in budgets created a context of uncertainty that impacted the internal PO context. Thus, the second finding of theme 1:

**Cross-case finding 1.2: The external dynamic context of change creates a context of uncertainty.**

The national leadership expectation's theme emerged in Case 1, Case 2, and Case 4. Participants were referring to national leadership when describing the context of their organisations, especially the Arabic-speaking participants. The national leadership expectations are that PO organisations develop national leaders. Participants discussed four second-order themes, which included the development of professional national leaders. The national participants stated that nationalisation is a long-term strategic direction. The international participants discussed the need to manage the national employees' entitlement and expectations (GCEO, H5 CEO, TM1, TM3). The selection and development of national leaders as a regulatory requirement was the most discussed theme by participants, with 35 participants. Participants considered nationalisation a country-level long-term strategy, describing it as a social contract from the national leadership. In the case of the three publicly listed POs (Case 1, Case 3, and Case 4), hiring and developing nationals is a legal requirement. The third finding of the first theme is:

**Cross-case finding 1.3: The national culture and the national leadership expectations are connected to the nationalisation in PO.**

### 4.6.4 Theme 2: The impact of PO context on CEOs selection and leadership effectiveness

> The CEO is a mix of things, a 'MOSAIC'. The leader is 'himself' and the people around him'.
>
> (Chairman)

#### 4.6.4.1 CEOs attributes and implications

The selection of CEOs in the four cases was led by a chairman decision, followed by Board approval. Case 3 Chairman stated that the problem in the selection of CEOs was a regional challenge. 'We compete to attract the right CEO and management teams. There is resources competition, regionally and globally'. Case 3 CEO reiterated that he was shocked when the Board promoted him to CEO: 'Succession is not our strength'.

**Table 4-40 CEOs background, relationship with Board and outcomes**

|  | Case 1 | Case 2 | Case 3 | Case 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Predecessor CEO** | Internal national with no previous CEO experience | Internal international CEO with 20 years CEO experience | External international with 20 years' CEO experience | Internal international with 5 years of CEO experience |
| **Participant CEOs** | External with 30 years' experience | Internal 20 years' experience | Internal no previous CEO experience | External no previous experience |
| **Nationality** | International | International | National | National |
| **Age** | 58 | 40 | 37 | 33 |
| **Functional experience** | Medical and CEO | Medical and COO | Management | Finance |
| **Educational background** | International Medicine | Asian Medicine | International Engineering | Local Business |
| **Board- CEO relationship** | Dynamic | Dynamic | Supportive | Supportive |
| **Delegation of authority** | Less than 40% | No authority | Full authority | Moderate authority |

Table 4.40 shows that out of the four predecessor CEOs, three were internally selected and one was an external CEO (Case 3). The two international predecessor CEOs had twenty years of experience. The four predecessors were dismissed for negative financial results. Two of the four

participating CEOs were internally promoted and two were selected externally. Case 1 and Case 2 CEOs are of international background and were internally selected. Case 3 and Case 4 replaced the international CEOs with national CEOs. One was promoted internally, while Case 4 CEO was selected externally. Both were CEOs for the first time. 'The hands-on experience is a vital to the success of a young CEO. We selected someone with the board experience, he joined as a junior' (Chairman). The predecessor CEOs emerged in all cases. However, the interview questions did not include any questions regarding the former CEOs. Participating international CEOs considered the number of preceding CEOs and the negative past performance as a challenge for the new CEO (Case 1 GCEO and Case 2 CEO2). 'I witnessed the six CEOs start and exit' (TM17).

The CEO relationship with the Board emerged in 26 codes when participants answered the CEO selection background (19 participants). While the chairman thinks he is responsible to craft and deliver the strategy 'Chairmanship is not just a title; it is strategic responsibility to deliver results' (Chairman). Case 3 CEO thinks inversely that the CEO: 'Go check all announcement, strategic changes, results are made by the Chairman. The CEO should oversee the strategy, the Chairman role is oversight'.

The CEO delegation of authority and Board–CEO relationships were discussed extensively by all CEOs and other participants (19 participants Table 4.41). The dismissal of the predecessor CEOs resulted in a dynamic Board-CEO relationship: 'I learned a lot from those who failed like the previous CEO' (GCEO). The international CEOs in Case 1 and Case 2 received a low delegation of authority. The national CEOs were satisfied with the full and moderate delegation of authority (Case 1 CEO and Case 4 CEO3). The CEO ability to build, manage, and maintain a good relationship with the Board was expressed as follows: '[to] meet their expectations demonstrates by far the CEO's effectiveness' (H4 CEO).

Two findings can be concluded from this theme:

> **Cross case finding 2.1a: The organisational negative past performance and the frequent CEOs succession have a negative impact on the Board relationship with the international CEOs and their delegation of authority.**
>
> **Cross case finding 2.1b: The organisational negative past performance and the frequent CEOs succession do not have an impact on the Board relationship with the national CEOs and their delegation of authority.**

### 4.6.4.2 CEO leadership effectiveness defined by participants

Participants were asked to explain what constitutes CEO leadership effectiveness. The participant responses are shown in Table 4.41.

**Table 4-41 CEO leadership effectiveness second-order themes**

| # | Number of participants | Case 1 20 | Case 2 6 | Case 3 7 | Case 4 8 | Total 41 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Second-order themes** | **Number of codes** | | | | |
| 2.6 | Efficiency of human capital and processes | 20 | 12 | 19 | 12 | 63 |
| | Number of participants | 20 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 41 |
| 2.7 | People-oriented leadership | 12 | 6 | 8 | 4 | 34 |
| | Number of participants | 10 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 23 |
| 2.8 | Leads like our national leadership | 19 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 30 |
| | Number of participants | 12 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 19 |
| 2.9 | Hires effective TMT | 7 | 6 | 8 | 7 | 28 |
| | Number of participants | 7 | 6 | 7 | 6 | 26 |
| 2.10 | Attain TMT alignment, trust, and support | 14 | 10 | 12 | 8 | 44 |
| | Number of participants | 12 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 33 |
| 2.11 | CEO relationship with the Board and the CEO delegation of authority | 13 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 26 |
| | Number of participants | 6 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 19 |
| 2.12 | Performance-driven leadership | 8 | 5 | 8 | 8 | 25 |
| | Number of participants | 3 | 4 | 8 | 8 | 23 |
| 2.13 | Transparency and ethical reporting | 4 | 8 | 3 | 6 | 20 |
| | Number of participants | 4 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 11 |
| 2.14 | Transformational leaders | 8 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 19 |
| | Number of participants | 4 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 10 |

All participants depicted that CEO leadership effectiveness is in embedding the efficiency of human capital and processes (41 participants). The second-order theme 2.9 (hires effective TMT) was discussed by 33 participants (2.9 can be combined with 2.7); the efficiency of the CEO in selecting effective TMT falls within the efficiency of the human capital. Therefore, the result of this theme is:

> **Cross case finding 2.3: CEO leadership effectiveness is to achieve the efficiency of human resources and processes.**

The second most discussed theme under CEO leadership effectiveness was CEO ability to align TMT and gain their trust and support (33 participants). CEO reliance on TMT: 'They are the essence of my success' (Case 3 CEO). The international and the national CEOs agreed that gaining the trust of effective, aligned, and supportive TMT are the main factors of CEO leadership effectiveness. An effective leader has the right expertise: 'I look for the expertise in my TMT to compliment my expertise. I look for those with solid experience, knowledge, and robust opinions to count on' (H1 CEO). Participants described CEO leadership effectiveness as the focus on performance effectiveness in implementing the new strategic direction (Case 1, Case 2, and Case 3). All participants in Case 4 described the performance-driven leader as the most effective. Similarly, transparency and ethical reporting were linked to effectiveness (11 participants). Thus, the result of the three second-order themes is:

> **Cross case finding 2.4: TMT effective performance, alignment and support are significant to CEO leadership effectiveness.**

The second and the third second-order themes, people-oriented leadership (23 participants) and leading like our national leadership (19 participants), are interrelated. National participants linked people-oriented leadership to the national culture and leading like the UAE national leadership. Leadership 'is about people and what is best for us' (TM15). People-oriented leadership in healthcare and real estate was discussed most (21 participants out of 23 participants).

> **Cross case finding 2.5: People-oriented leadership is aligned with the national leadership and signifies CEO leadership effectiveness.**

## 4.6.5 Theme 3: Impact of PO context on TMT

Participants were asked to describe their selection background, education, experience, role, function, relationship with the CEO, and relationship with other TMTs. The participants' responses were clustered in 13 second-order themes to arrive at five higher-order themes: TMT selection, structure, composition, and communication and interactions. The two emergent themes, all national TMT members (16 participants) were selected after their graduation in line with the nationalisation strategy. 'I started as a senior engineer, and in five years, I was the COO with 350

employees reporting to me' (TM7). All international TMT members (13 participants) were selected based on their expertise and market knowledge (Case 1 PHC, Case 2 VHC, and Case 4 PIF). Case 4 PIF CEO2 selected professionals who had worked with him previously and had international experience. 'They are here to work with me. I promised them a rewarding experience'. Table B-2 (Appendix-B) includes the participating TMT, educational background, number of years in the current position, and tenure with the organisation. The function is shown as corporate (administrative and general business position) or professionals (medical, engineering, qualified financial, and investment).

### 4.6.5.1 TMT composition (education, executive experience, and tenure)

The majority of the twenty-nine participants provided their resumes. Eighteen TMT received a Western education, four a Middle Eastern education, five were locally educated, and two had Asian education. The average tenure for the participants in Case 1 is 11 years, Case 2 is 7 years, Case 3 is 8.5 years, and Case 4 is 7 years. Seven national TMT participants have been in the organisation since graduation and have worked with no other organisations. Participants considered the long tenure in one organisation a sign of national leaders' retention (27 participants, Table 4.42).

**Table 4-42 TMT role, retention, incentives, and performance effectiveness**

|  |  | Case 1 | Case2 | Case3 | Case 4 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Number of participants | 20 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 41 |
|  | Second-order themes | Number of codes |  |  |  |  |
| **3.1** | TMT dedication (buy in the PO) | 16 | 5 | 8 | 12 | 41 |
|  | Number of participants | 11 | 3 | 7 | 6 | 27 |
| **3.2** | TMT high retention | 14 | 8 | 12 | 10 | 44 |
|  | Number of participants | 10 | 3 | 7 | 6 | 26 |
| **3.3** | TMT Incentives | 15 | 6 | 12 | 11 | 44 |
|  | Number of participants | 5 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 21 |
| **3.4** | TMT performance effectiveness | 12 | 7 | 17 | 9 | 45 |
|  | Number of participants | 7 | 5 | 6 | 8 | 26 |
| **3.5** | TMT clarity of roles | 11 | 5 | 16 | 8 | 42 |
|  | Number of participants | 8 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 19 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **3.6** | TMT entitlement and expectations | 6 | 3 | 7 | 6 | 22 |
| | Number of participants | 6 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 18 |

TMT in the four cases linked their dedication to their organisation, not the CEO or the strategy. 'Eleven years of outstanding results to our shareholders' (TM21, Table 4.50). TMT participants linked their long tenure and high retention to three other reasons: clarity of roles (19 participants), good incentives (21 participants), and personal and professional growth (18 participants). National and international TMT discussed the emergent 'effective performance' and linked it to retention, expectations, and entitlement: 'Nobody wants to leave. They are highly rewarded' (TM17). Thus, the result:

> **Cross case finding 3.1: TMT dedication to their organisations is connected to TMT effective performance, retention, incentives, and growth**.

### 4.6.5.2 TMT structure

Table 4.43 shows the total number of TMT employed in the four cases with 65 TMT members. Corporate TMT represent the majority 71% of the total number. Professional TMT represent the remaining 29%. A smaller number of the professionals have been mentioned by several participants 'like divas, and they know it' (H5 CEO). Case 2 CEO2 is determined to retain the professionals: 'We need to retain the golden hands.' The corporate (general business and administrative) functional roles represent 43% of the TMT participants.

**Table 4-43 TMT functional roles and size**

| Structure | Case 1 | Case 2 | Case 3 | Case 4 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total number of TMT** | 42 | 7 | 8 | 8 | 65 |
| **Corporate TMT** | 33 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 46 |
| **Professional TMT** | 9 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 19 |

Case 1 GCEO is a medical professional and described the professional TMT as performance-driven with clear objectives. Nine medical TMT members report to the CEO. 'I have two female stars, heading the medical teams. They are motivated by what we are doing and delivering. They are so dedicated and committed to delivering our objectives'. In contrast, the Deputy CEO, with a

business and a corporate background, believed the ineffectiveness was caused by the professional team's 'unrealistic requests for resources and inability to control their costs'.

### 4.6.5.3 TMT interaction

The TMT interaction theme emerged when the TMT were asked about their roles and responsibilities (Table 4.44). TMT discussed communication as the most common challenge (39 participants and 55 codes), describing TMT communication as 'inflammatory' (H1 CEO), centralised, and channelled through the CEO: 'CEO is the hub of our communication' (TM19).

**Table 4-44 Theme 3 TMT interaction second-order themes**

| | | Case 1 | Case 2 | Case 3 | Case 4 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number of participants | 20 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 41 |
| | Second-order themes | Number of codes | | | | |
| 3.7 | TMT challenging communication | 18 | 10 | 11 | 16 | 55 |
| | Number of participants | 18 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 39 |
| 3.8 | TMT aligned and supporting CEO | 10 | 5 | 14 | 11 | 40 |
| | Number of participants | 8 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 14 |
| 3.9 | TMT neutral (non-aligned) | 9 | 7 | 15 | 11 | 42 |
| | Number of participants | 6 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 13 |
| 3.10 | TMT divergence and disagreement | 11 | 7 | 9 | 6 | 33 |
| | Number of participants | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 12 |
| 3.11 | TMT - TMT collective interaction | 9 | 7 | 8 | 5 | 29 |
| | Number of participants | 8 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 26 |
| 3.12 | TMT opposing and mis-aligned | 8 | 4 | 7 | 7 | 26 |
| | Number of participants | 8 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 17 |

TMT interaction theme included six second-order themes, showing the dynamics of professional and corporate TMT. TMT participants were divided into three groups: supportive to the CEO and the strategic direction (15) neutral (8) opposing and misaligned, and (5) neutral   (see TMT interaction Table B2, Appendix B).

PHC TMT supporting members were promoted and transferred to the current position by the external CEO and the new Chairman. They fully supported the GCEO, had a good relationship with other TMT members and their teams, and worked to implement the new strategic direction.

'They are all my colleagues. I was the CHRO when I was promoted to the CEO, still working at that level. They support me and want me to succeed' (H3 CEO).

Case 3 CEO was a TMT. He described his TMT as the 'A-team' with good relationships. The TM16, TM17, and TM18 supported the CEO, were dedicated to improving the people and the organisational performance. 'I was in HR and handled his joining formality. He supports HR, considers us as business partners' (TM17). Table B-6 in Appendix B shows all supporting TMT have been promoted to the position by the current CEO.

TM20 was a new joiner and was the only TMT supporting Case 4 CEO. Two TMT members in Case 2 were supportive of the organisational direction; they were committed to improving the PO performance. The majority of the Case 3 TMT were promoted to their position by the CEO. 'I am the first female on the TMT' (TMT17). Therefore, the finding:

> **Cross case finding 3.2: Promoting TMT with long tenure to new positions positively impacts TMT support to the new CEO and the strategic direction.**

The neutral TMT acted diplomatically, working without 'fuss and noise' (TM10). Although professionally committed to delivering, they 'do not have the time. I'd rather work at the hospital' (TM8). Other TMTs were insecure about the reduction of the resources and the budget cuts. However, 'change is painful, but better than being let go' (TM14).

Two TMT were acting as a bridge between the supporting and the opposing TMT (TM22 and TM14). The non-aligned TMT did not oppose, neither did they support. However, the five neutral TMT are in strategic roles: Chief medical officer, Chief of operations, Chief of Risk management, Chief strategy, and Chief Human Resources. The roles are critical to the success of the CEOs in implementing the strategic direction. The five neutral participants represent 18 percent of the total TMTs. The abstaining of their support during the shift to private funding, growth, and new technology is disadvantageous to the success of the CEO and the implementation of the strategic direction.

> **Cross-case finding 3.3: The neutral stance of TMT members in critical functions is disadvantageous to the success of the CEO and the implementation of the strategic direction**

The opposing TMT appeared in all cases. All TMT had been in the same position since they joined. The common attributes amongst the opposing participants are the long tenure in the same organisation and the same position, except for TM7, an engineer demoted from COO to Chief hospital maintenance. The eight TMT expressed their dissatisfaction (see second-order theme number 3.9 in Table B-5, Appendix B). Case 1 showed that TMT were dissatisfied with the new strategic direction. However, other TMT were not satisfied but did not oppose the CEO or the strategic direction.

> **Cross-case finding 3.4: The TMT long tenure in the same position stimulates TMT opposition to the new CEO and the strategic direction.**

Participants were asked to describe their responsibilities, relationship with other TMT, and whether there were formal processes for formal and informal communication. TMT communication was expressed by the participants as the main challenge in their role in general and specifically during the new strategy. All participants considered the context of uncertainty a main challenge caused by the change in the strategic direction and the change in the CEOs and TMT. In Case 1, the TMT members were defensive and sensed that they were being profiled and marginalised (H5 CEO, TM6, TM7, and TM8). TMT in Case 2 described their relationships as complex and uncertain due to the reduction of the budgets, the headcount, and the change of two CEOs in eighteen months. In Case 2, the feeling of uncertainty increased the divergence among several TMT.

Similarly, in Case 4, TMT members described the organisation context as dynamic and uncertain due to the failed implementation of new technologies, the change of CEO2 in 18 months and the TM23 dismissal due to failure to implement the strategic direction. The uncertainty increased the disagreement between the TMT in the three cases, causing 'failure in integration and little consensus' (Deputy CEO). The further challenging context is the focus is on the cost control and reduction of the headcount.

> **Cross-case finding 3.5: The changing context creates uncertainty, imposes pressure on the TMT, increases the divergence and disagreements of the TMT.**

In Case 3, the COO pointed toward Board control over the strategic targets as a source of tension and dissatisfaction of TMT. The TMT was pressured to increase revenue and achieve private funding. The TMT support to the internal national CEO can only be completed if they collectively performed effectively to achieve the organisational results.

## 4.6.6  Theme 4: Impact of context on PO outcomes

The question to all participants to define the organisational outcomes to understand the contextual elements which impact the PO outcomes constituted theme 4 shown below in Table 4.45. The organisational outcomes included the participants' views about what constituted effective outcomes. Eight second-order themes were collected from the four cases. To arrive at a realistic comparison of the themes, the number of participants of each case is shown. Table 4.45 shows that performance excellence is the primary organisational outcome across the four cases. Positive financial results are the leading indicator for private healthcare, financial services, and real estate.

**Table 4-45 Contextual elements second-order themes**

| Contextual factors | | Second-order themes | Total codes |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Dynamic knowledge-based economy** | | | |
| | 4.1 | Economic slowdown impacts the population and healthcare | 19 |
| | 4.2 | Economic slowdown weakened demands on real estate | 6 |
| | 4.3 | Frequent regulatory changes to attract international competitors with advanced technologies and innovation | 10 |
| **National culture** | | | |
| | 4.4 | Nationalisation and national leaders' development | 30 |
| **PO Industry** | | | |
| **Healthcare** | 4.6 | Attracting and retaining professional | 5 |
| | 4.7 | Reputation and ethical reporting | 13 |
| | 4.8 | Mature healthcare market and real estate, and financial services | 15 |
| | 4.9 | Old building and equipment competing with the modernised private sector and international competitors | 6 |
| **Real estate and financial services** | | | |
| | 4.10 | Consolidation with other government-owned organisations | 2 |
| | 4.11 | Delivering targets at unprecedented speed | 4 |
| | 4.12 | Reputation and ethical financial reporting | 10 |

The contextual elements as referenced by the participants included four second-order themes: dynamic economic context (slow down economy impact on industry), change from government funding to budget reduction and private funding, and, lastly, the frequency of regulatory changes to attract international investors in healthcare, real estate, and financial services. The second-order themes were described by participants as factors challenging the achievement of effective PO outcomes. Performance excellence, positive financial results, and the national leader's development are the first three outcomes identified by 30 participants. The PO outcomes reputation and ethical reporting were the last PO outcomes discussed by 10 participants.

The knowledge-based economy created the dynamic context and the economic and policy changes that impacted the four cases in three ways:

1. Recent expansion has been mainly centred on the private sector due to the government's strategy to encourage investment in a knowledge-based economy. The CEOs of the four cases asserted that PO growth had reached a stage of maturity. The factors impacting the growth were due to market supply and demand and regulatory reforms (25 participants).
2. All participants expressed that they did not benefit from the external change apart from the government financial funding. Case 1 old hospital buildings were not being modernised at the pace of the growth of the modernised real estate (6 participants). 'The hospital buildings are old; we are competing with the modern and new private hospitals' (H5 CEO). Case 2 have modernised private hospitals and clinics buildings. However, participants confirmed that their PO is facing the challenge of competing with international competitors (10 participants).
3. The national culture and the national leadership expectation impact the Board role in theme 1. Theme 2 showed that CEO effectiveness was linked to the CEO's ability to meet the national leadership expectations by advancing national leadership development. The national TMT selection and development is based on the national leaders' development. The national leaders' development is considered a primary PO outcome (30 participants).The results of the fourth theme therefore can be summarised in two findings:

**Cross-case finding 4.1: The knowledge-based economy is the main contextual factor that signifies performance excellence and positive financial results as fundamentals of POs outcomes.**

Cross-case finding 4.2: The national leadership expectations are associated with the success of the national leadership development.

### 4.6.7 Cross-case emergent hybrid strategic contextual leadership framework

The contextual leadership in the rectangular boxes represents the major model elements. The external and the PO internal contexts boxes are illustrated in grey colour. The relationships are expressed in grey arrows.

The strategic leadership elements are displayed in blue boxes. The emergent units are the Board, the strategic direction, the predecessor CEOs, and the negative past performance.

The national culture, the national leadership expectations influence on the TMT structure, composition, and interaction is illustrated.

Similarly, the external context changes from government funding to private funding. Finally, the external context subunits influence the PO outcomes. The internal PO context influence on the strategic leaders (Board, CEO, and TMT) is shown.

**Figure 4-18 Cross-case emergent hybrid strategic contextual leadership framework**
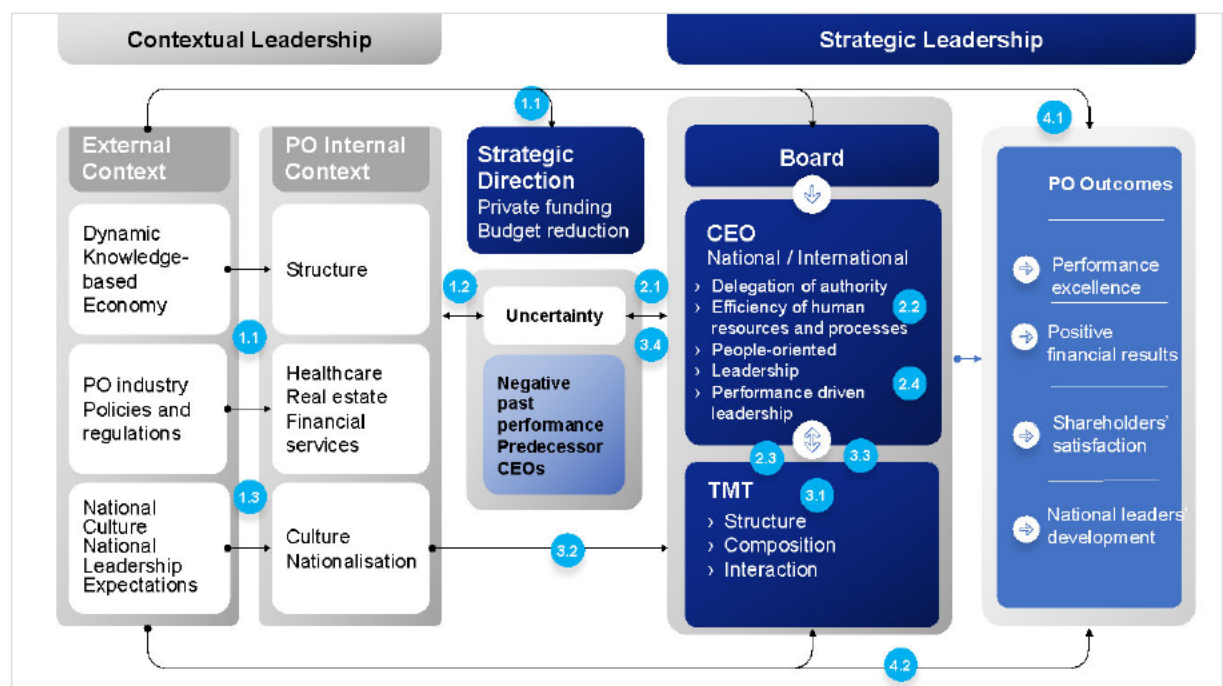
Figure 4.19 shows the framework, read from left to right, moving through four basic levels:

- The external context, the internal PO context, the strategic leaders, and the PO outcomes.
- The emergent predecessor CEOs and the organisation's negative past performance produced the uncertainty context which affects the PO internal context and the strategic leaders.
- The CEO leadership actions to mobilise the TMT to deliver effectively.
- The influence of strategic leadership actions on the PO outcomes.

**External Context -** The dynamic knowledge-based economy to the PO structure and the PO industry represent:

- The PO ownership and hierarchy.
- The policies impact on the PO industry (findings 1.1, 1.2).
- The external context has a significant influence on the Board's role in setting strategic direction, selecting the CEO, and the Board's relationship with the CEO.
- The national leadership expectation is to advance the nationalisation of TMT (finding 1.3).

**PO Internal Context**

- The emergent PO's negative past performance resulted in the frequent dismissal of predecessor CEOs.
- In all cases, the context of uncertainty affects the PO strategic leadership relationships.

**Board role**

- The emergent finding: the Board role has a direct impact on the strategic direction.
- The Board's relationship with the CEO: Finding 2.1a and 2.1b disclosed the link between the PO negative past performance, and the predecessor CEOs.

**CEO**

- The Board-CEO relationship, the CEO authority
- Leadership effectiveness (findings 2.2 and 2.4),

**TMT**

- TMT included the TMT structure (role and size), TMT composition, educational background, executive experience, tenure, and interaction.

- Three main relationships between the TMT and the CEO were identified:

  o When the CEOs promoted TMT with long tenure to new positions, the TMT supported the new CEO and the strategic direction (finding 3.1).
  o The TMT in critical position neutrality is disadvantageous to the success of the CEO and the implementation of the strategic direction (finding 3.3).
  o TMT with long tenure in the same position stimulates TMT opposition to the new CEO and the strategic direction (finding 3.4).

- The context of uncertainty impacted the relationships, communication, and interaction of TMT (finding 3.5).

**PO Outcomes**

The model shows in healthcare, real estate, and financial and investment services: performance excellence, positive financial results, and shareholders' satisfaction are the main elements of POs outcomes (finding 4.1). The national leadership expectations association with the success of the national leaders' development is central to PO outcomes (finding 4.2).

## 4.6.8  Cross- case primary findings

This section presents the results of phase six of the research design by aggregating the emergent themes from across the cases.  Table 4.46 below shows the four CEOs, the Board relationship with the CEO, the CEO and TMT relationship, and the PO outcomes. Of two international CEOs, one was externally selected (Case 1) and the other internally (Case 2). Of two national selected CEOs (Case 3 and Case 4), Case 3 was internally selected, and Case 4 was externally selected. Table 4-46 shows the Board relationship with the CEO is declining in the case of the international CEOs. The national CEOs Board relationship in Case 3 and Case 4 was improving, and both CEOs received regular and satisfactory delegation of authority. The international CEOs in Case 1 received low delegation of authority and CEO2 in Case 2 had no authority (icon with the arrow down).

The table displayed the international CEOs' relationship with their TMTs as partially good. Both CEOs received support from TMT members as well as opposition, while other TMT were neutral.

The national CEOs received full support from their TMTs. It is reasonable to derive the conclusion that the Board relationship with the CEO impacts the CEO relationship with the TMT as well.

In addition to the financial results, the PO outcomes include: (1) The national leaders' development is apparent in the two government-owned POs, partially existing in Case 4 (owned by a national holding organisation), while it is non-existent in the private VHC. (2) Growth strategy, Case 2 and Case 3 have growth, Case 4 has a partial growth plan. (3) Shareholders' satisfaction in Case 1 and Case 2 are inadequate.

**Table 4-46 Vignette of four cases strategic leaders and PO outcomes**

Table 4.47 includes the results of the four themes. The table shows the research question, the number of findings, followed by the details of the finding. The last three columns show in which case the finding is fully supported, partially supported, or not supported. Five primary findings are supported in all four cases. Seven findings are supported by three cases, and two findings are supported inn two cases only are shown in table 4.47.

**Table 4-47 Cross-case primary findings**

| | Finding Number | Main research question | Fully supported | Partially supported | Not supported |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1.1 | The dynamic knowledge-based economy shapes the PO internal context, impacts the PO's strategic direction, and shapes the Board role. | Case 1 Case 2 Case 3 Case 4 | | |
| 2 | 1.2 | The external dynamic context of change creates a context of uncertainty. | Case 1 Case 2 Case 3 Case 4 | | |
| 3 | 1.3 | The national culture and the national leadership expectations are associated with the nationalisation in PO. | Case 1 Case 3 | | Case 2 Case 4 |
| | | **Sub research question 1** | | | |
| 4a | 2.1a | The organisational negative past performance and the frequent CEOs succession have a negative impact on the Board relationship with the international CEOs and their delegation of authority. | Case 1 Case 2 Case 4 (CEO2) | | Case 3 Case 4 (CEO3) |
| 4b | 2.1b | The organisation negative past performance and the frequent CEO succession do not impact the Board relationship with the national CEOs and their delegation of authority. | Case 3 Case 4 (CEO3) | | Case 1 Case 2 Case 4 (CEO2) |
| 5 | 2.2 | CEO leadership effectiveness is to achieve the efficiency of human resources and processes. | Case 1 Case 2 Case 3 Case 4 | | |
| 6 | 2.3 | TMT effective performance, alignment, and support are significant indications of CEO leadership effectiveness. | Case 1 Case 2 Case 3 | | Case 4 |

| | Finding Number | Main research question | Fully supported | Partially supported | Not supported |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 2.4 | People-oriented leadership is related to the national culture and the national leadership expectations and signifies CEO leadership effectiveness. | Case 1 Case 3 | Case 2 | Case 4 |
| **Sub research question 2** | | | | | |
| 8 | 3.1 | TMT dedication to their organisations is connected to TMT effective performance, retention, incentives, and growth. | Case 1 Case 3 Case 4 | | Case 2 |
| 9 | 3.2 | Promoting TMT with long tenure to new positions positively impacts TMT support to the new CEO and the strategic direction. | Case 1 Case 3 Case 4 | | Case 2 |
| 10 | 3.3 | The neutral stance of TMT members is disadvantageous to the success of the CEO and the implementation of the strategic direction | Case 1 Case 2 Case 4 | | Case 3 |
| 11 | 3.5 | TMT long tenure in the same position stimulates TMT opposition to the new CEO and the strategic direction. | Case 1 Case 2 Case 4 | | Case 3 |
| 12 | 3.6 | The context of uncertainty imposes pressure on the TMT and increases their divergence and disagreement. | Case 1 Case 2 Case 4 | Case 3 | |
| **Sub research question 3** | | | | | |
| 13 | 4.1 | The knowledge-based economy is the main contextual factor that signifies performance excellence, positive financial results, and shareholders' satisfactions as fundamentals of POs outcomes. | Case 1 Case 2 Case 3 Case 4 | | |
| 14 | 4.2 | The national leadership expectations of the POs strategic leaders are associated with the advancement of the national leadership development. | Case 1 Case 3 | | Case 2 Case 4 |

# 5   Discussion and conclusion

## 5.1   Overview

The aim of the research is to introduce an empirical framework featuring the impact of the context on strategic leadership. This multilevel leadership study looked at contextual influences (two levels external and internal), strategic leaders (three levels, Board, CEO, and TMT), the context (national culture, national leadership expectations) and the strategic leadership. Following strategic leadership theorists, in this research strategic leadership means the overall management of the organisation and the individuals.  It implies substantive decision-making, responsibilities beyond the interpersonal and relational aspects usually associated with leadership. Crossland and Hambrick's (2007: 334) definition of leadership as a 'shared activity'.

This chapter provides insights into the findings presented in Chapter 4. The storyline of each case was an attempt to reconstruct a holistic case narrative, including emergent themes. The cross-case synthesis aimed to integrate the themes in a cohesive case summary. The discussion here considers the literature on strategic leadership, contextual leadership, cross-cultural leadership, and Middle Eastern strategic leadership.

POs are characterised by the multiple objectives of their professional and corporate teams, which represent a challenge for the implementation of the strategic direction (Denis et al., 2007). In addition to the divergent objectives, the discussion included the multiple strategies, the context of POs, the members' authority, and autonomy (Bres et al., 2018). In pluralistic organisations, relationships and collaboration are challenging to attain in their less effective hierarchical and multiple governing authorities (Bres and Raufflet, 2013). The realistic challenge in POs is 'how' to attract, retain, and stimulate CEOs and TMT with little authority and incentives (Sorsa and Vaara, 2020). Moreover, the discussion included the PO's structure and context identified by the divergent objectives, the strategic leadership, level of authority, and organisational processes.

Figure 5.1 presents the last phase of this study: the synthesis of findings and arriving at final theory.

**Figure 5-1 Phase 7 discussion of findings**
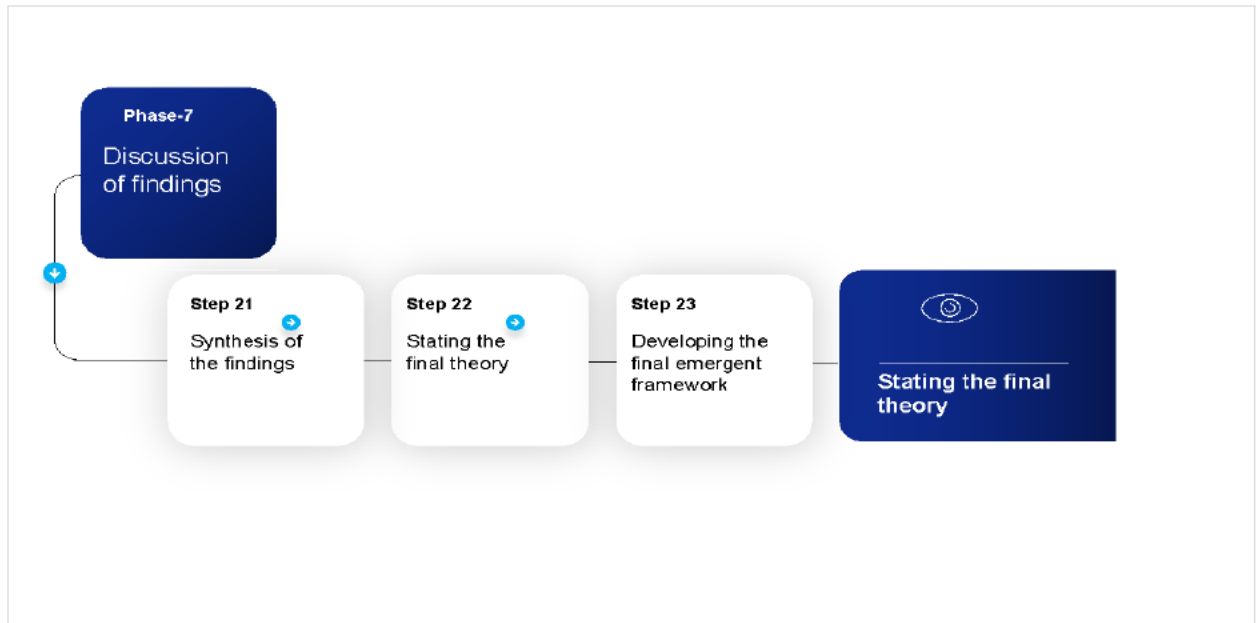


Discussion of the findings is organised as follows:

- Theme 1 findings answered the research question, 'How does the external context impact strategic leadership effectiveness to achieve the outcome in pluralistic organisations (PO)? The dynamic macro-level external context (knowledge-based economy) shapes the PO internal context in terms of policy, ownership, reporting, industry practices, and culture (Johns, 2006; Osborn and Marion, 2009).

- Theme 2 findings answered the research sub-question: How does the context impact the CEOs, selection, strategic direction, and leadership effectiveness in pluralistic organisations? The frequent CEO turnover and the organisation's negative past performance have an adverse effect on the internal PO context by creating a context of uncertainty at the apex of the organisation (Wiersema and Zhang, 2011; Ma, 2018).

- Theme 3 answered the second research sub-question: How does the context impact the TMT selection, performance, and retention in pluralistic organisations?
TMT structure, tenure, and interaction impacts CEO leadership effectiveness, strategic direction, and organisational outcomes, the emergent findings in this theme.

- Theme 4 results answered the last research sub-question: What are the contextual factors that impact the PO outcomes? Two results identified what counts as effective PO outcomes, in addition to the contextual impacts on the PO outcomes.

## 5.2 External context impact on the PO context

The first research question explored how the external context influences the strategic leadership of PO in the UAE. Three findings explained the external context impact on the PO:

> **Finding 1.1: The dynamic knowledge-based economy shapes the PO internal context, sets the strategic direction, and shapes the Board role.**
>
> **Finding 1.2: The external dynamic context of change creates a context of uncertainty.**

The four organisations were established in response to the national strategic direction towards the knowledge-based economy between 2004 and 2010. As a result, the number of POs in the UAE increased because of the increased population in the country (Toledo, 2013; Luciani and Moerenhout, 2020). The increase in the population augmented the demand for healthcare (Abuhejleh et al., 2016) real estate (Mosteanu and Alghaddaf, 2019), and financial services (Tabash and Anagreh, 2017). During the period 2005 to 2014, the government funding of POs was in line with the dynamic context to increase opportunities for POs to grow and advance their performance, transfer knowledge, and promote diversification of the knowledge-based economy (Khoja et al., 2017). The drop in oil prices in 2014 after a long period with high oil prices caused a revision in the government budgets in the UAE (Luciani and Moerenhout, 2020). As a result, the government-funded organisations including Case 1 and Case 3 shifted from public funding to private funding. The POs shift to private funding required an increase in revenues and reduction in budgets.

One of the research informants was the CEO of a regulatory authority. She explained the regulatory requirements of the publicly listed organisations. The Board is mandated to set up and oversee the new strategic direction. The distinction in the structure of the publicly listed organisation in the UAE (Case 1, Case 3, and Case 4) is the legal requirement to appoint national Board members and shareholders (SCA, 2020).

Following the UAE vision 2030 towards the knowledge-based economy, hiring, and developing national executives was a unique attribute of the country context (Godwin, 2006; Aljanahi, 2017; Emiratisation, 2018; Waxin, 2018).

**Figure 5-2 The external context impact on PO internal context**
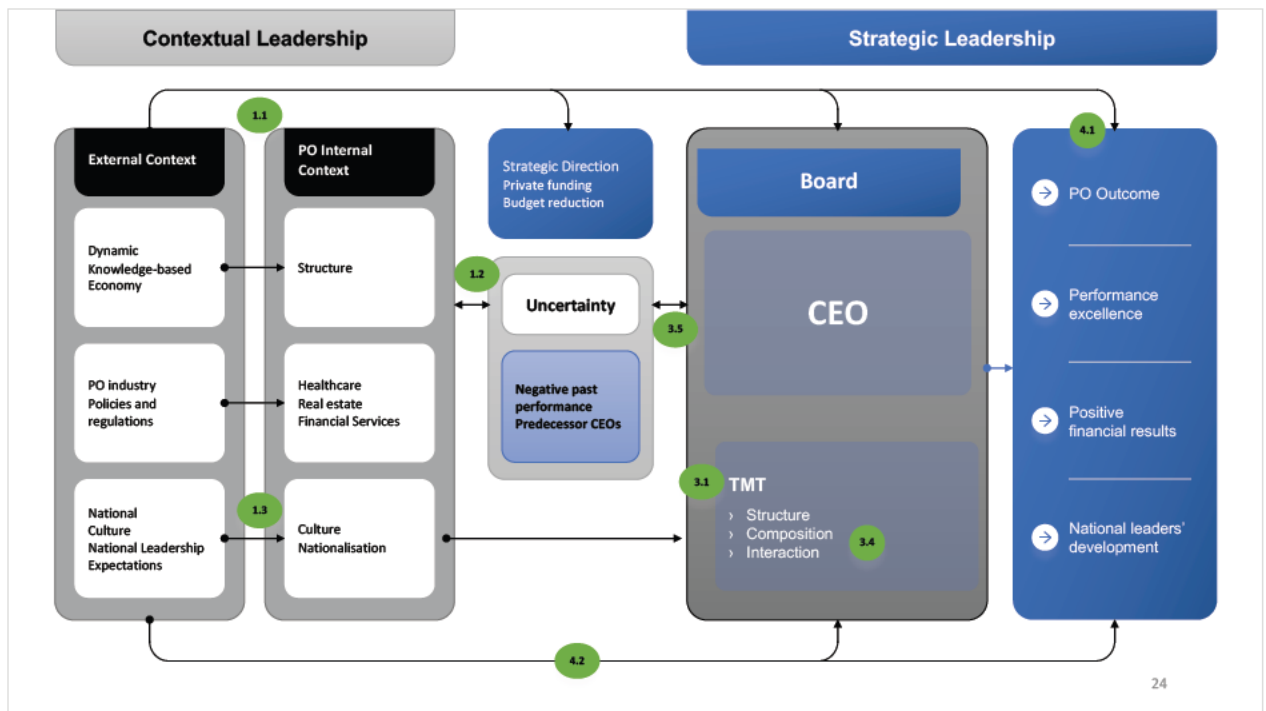


Figure 5.2 shows that the dynamic knowledge-based economy shapes the PO internal context in three levels: directly through setting the regulatory structures of the publicly listed PO, indirectly through shaping the interest in the PO industry, and changing the existing policies and rules. Figure 5.2 shows that the nationalisation is a country-level contextual condition that shapes the internal organisational context. House et al. (2013) study of strategic leadership effectiveness highlighted the importance of the country-level context impact on leading organisations and delivering effective outcomes. House et al concluded that national culture and national leadership expectations have strong impact on CEOs leadership effectiveness in 24 countries.

This present study findings showed the contextual impact on the emergent Board role. The Board role was not included in the literature review. The results reflected that in addition to the provision of advice and monitoring of the CEO and the TMT, the Board set up the strategic direction in addition to the independent control they are expected to perform. Strategic leadership researchers

reported that when Boards are mandated to select and monitor the performance of the CEO and the TMT, they serve as strategic consultants to the CEO and the TMT rather than exercising an independent role (Carpenter et al., 2001). The Board's role in this research was shaped by the national context (knowledge-based economy, the national culture, and the national leadership expectations). Similar results showed the effect of the country context on the Board role change (Iren and Tee, 2017). Therefore, finding (1.1) is that the external dynamic knowledge-based-economic context shapes the PO internal context.

The external contextual changes created an internal context of uncertainty. The context of uncertainty appeared in two levels, organisational and individual. The research showed the components of the external context as the knowledge-based economy, the PO industry, the national culture, and the national leadership expectations. Contextual leadership researchers studied different contextual elements that impact the organisational internal context uncertainty due to the change in strategic direction (Carpenter and Frederickson, 2001). Cannella and Holcomb (2005) extended the work of Carpenter to include how the instability and uncertainty moderate the team member interaction. The results of this study revealed how external context factors shape and constrain organisational context. The uncertainty influences the extent to which the Board, the CEO, and TMT roles can be effective by conforming with the requirements of the national leadership expectations.  Griffin et al. (2007) research result is similar to finding 1.2 of this research that uncertainty is created by the contextual changes.

The CEO turnover and the changes in the strategic directions created a context of uncertainty. Strategic leaders (CEOs and TMT) reported that the context of uncertainty decreased the efficiency of TMT and impaired the organisational reputation. A study by Wiersema and Zhang (2011) introduced uncertainty as a moderator. In their study the relationship between TMT and the organisational outcomes was negative. Participants described the frequent succession of CEOs as a challenge and resulted in uncertainty.

## 5.3 The impact of context on CEO selection and leadership effectiveness

Two findings linked the past organisational performance to the frequent CEO succession and the emergent Board role:

> **Finding 2.1a: The organisational negative past performance and the frequent CEOs succession have a negative impact on the Board relationship with the international CEOs and their delegation of authority.**
>
> **Finding 2.1b: The organisation's negative past performance and the frequent CEO succession do not impact the board's relationship with the national CEOs and their delegation of authority.**

The frequent CEO turnover instigated by financial loss created an internal context of uncertainty in the POs (Gomulya and Boeker, 2014; Gomulya and Boeker, 2016). Finkelstein and colleagues (2009: 5) pointed that 'Upper Echelon theorists positioned the CEO within the TMT as one group'. While the Board was studied as a separate unit that controls the organisation at four levels: the organisation's strategic direction (Quigley et al., 2012), the legal and hierarchal structure of the organisation (Callen et al., 2010; Sarhan and Ntim, 2019), the Board relationship with the CEO (Shen, 2003), and the CEO delegation of authority (Horner, 2010: 43).

### 5.3.1 The role of the Board of Directors in POs

Three cases in this research are publicly listed POs. The regulatory requirements result in having national Board members to advance the PO efficiency and performance. The availability and readiness of the national Board members to set up the PO strategic direction, select the CEO, maintain the required level of corporate governance, and hire and develop national leaders are challenging to achieve for three reasons. First, the UAE national board members are scarce. The UAE national executives represent less than 15 per cent of the workforce (De Bel-Air, 2015). Second, due to the limited availability of national Board members, the nomination and appointment of Board members are random and not based on relevant experience and adding value. For example, Case 2 (private healthcare organisation) Board does not include any medical doctors. Third, Board members do not have the time to add value to the PO. Each Board member

represents more than seven organisations, as stated by the Board of Directors of Case 3. The Chairman of PHC was the Chairman of PIF and VHC. The Chairman of RED is the Vice Chairman of PIF. The regulatory authority issued new corporate governance rules in July 2020 stating that a director of the Board may not be a member of a board of more than five public organisations based in UAE (SCA, 2020).

When organisational financial performance declined in previous years, the Board dismissed the predecessor CEOs in the four cases. The frequency of the CEO dismissal had negative impacts on the Board's decisions to select the new CEOs (Fisman et al., 2014; Samimi et al., 2020). The emergent organisational past performance and the predecessor CEO dismissal result showed the implications of the internal context as explained here:

1. The frequency of the CEO succession influences the relationship between the Board and the newly selected CEO. Gomulya and Boeker (2016) found that the dismissal of the CEOs highlights the Board's responsibility in the selection of the predecessor CEO. Therefore, the Board's relationship with the successor is scrutinised (Gomulya and Boeker, 2016). Comparably, in this present study, the high frequency of the CEO succession led to a decrease in the CEO delegation of authority in two cases (Case 1 and Case 2). The emergent findings of the impact of the organisation's negative past performance and the turnover of CEOs are analogous with the conclusions from Wiersema and colleagues (2011). Several risks are associated with the Board's decision to remove a CEO because of negative financial results. Wiersema et al. (2011) reported that the relationship between organisational performance and the CEO's dismissal is complex and ambiguous.

2. The dismissal of a CEO due to negative financial results in a publicly listed PO must be disclosed to the regulators, which attracts the attention of the shareholders. Furthermore, the Board's decision to hire a new CEO in this context may lead to a mismatch between the required and the selected CEO skills for the distinctive organisation structure, culture, and strategic direction (Shen, 2003; Westphal, 2005; Quigley et al., 2019). This emphasises the importance of finding that the organisational negative past performance and the frequent predecessor CEOs succession create a context of uncertainty that affects the PO internal context, the Board-CEO dynamics, and the TMT.

The Board is mandated by their shareholders to set up the strategic directions for publicly listed pluralistic organisations (Figure 5.3). The organisation theory, Carnegie theory, and the strategic management theory considered the organisation as an independent system (see Chapter 2). Authority is exercised by the organisation's decision makers, the Board, and the management, but they do not decide the faith of their organisation. The view of the strategic management and the original Upper Echelons theories is that an organisation reflects its Board, CEO, and TMT (Hambrick, 2015; Quigley and Hambrick, 2015). Hambrick et al. (2007) accentuated the role of the Board, CEOs, and TMT in shaping the organisational outcomes, and complemented the focus of leadership research on the individual executive level. The central logic of Upper Echelons theory is that executives' perceptions are shaped by the personal attributes of the individuals' professional experiences, demography, values, and personalities without accounting for the higher external context they exist in (Hambrick, 2007). The contextual leadership scholars Osborn et al. (2002) added the macro level and expanded the role of executives in the multilevel context concluding that the organisational context conforms with the characteristics, rules, requirements, and other norms of the external environment to gain support and legitimacy (Oc, 2018). Hence, the external context has a direct impact on the strategic direction and the Board's role.

**Figure 5-3 The external context impact on the CEO selection**
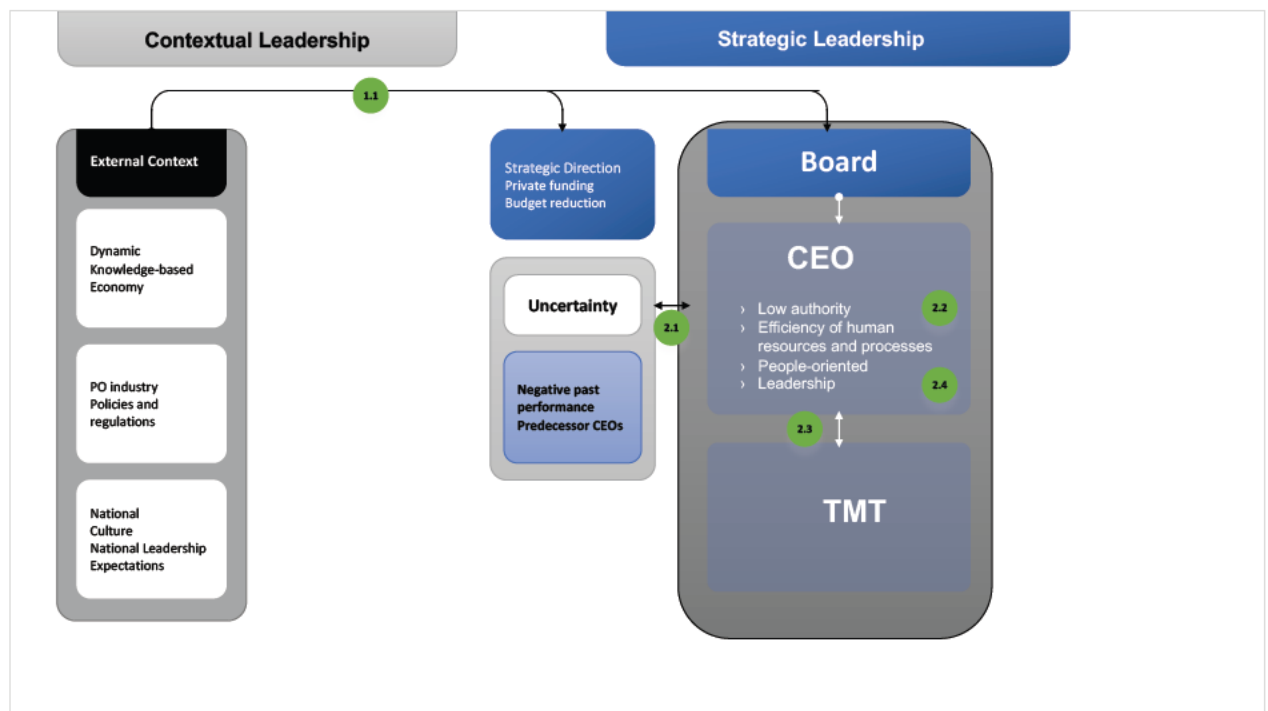
With the global financial crisis in 2008 and 2009, the discussion about the Board's role in organisations gained increasing relevance in leadership research and practice (Hein, 2019). The main tasks of the Boards shifted to more governance globally. The authors of a recent study presented how several countries altered their national legislation of the Board composition, structure, and function as part of the essential tasks in the highly complex and changing environment (Luciano et al., 2020). In this research, two Chairmen participants and a director of the Board highlighted the need to resolve Board conflicts and the misalignment of the Board and shareholders and called for more regulatory reforms.

This multiple case study explored the CEO beyond the traditional description as one who has power, influence, and discretion over an organisation. The second research question directed the attention to the riskiness associated with the Board role in the selection of the CEO and how the organisational context (past and present) influences the CEO relationship with the Board, CEO authority, and leadership effectiveness in PO.

## 5.3.2  CEOs leadership effectiveness

Upper Echelons theory describes the executive experience as a primary factor in the selection of the CEOs for their unique capabilities and historical achievement of outstanding results (Finkelstein et al., 2009; Carpenter et al., 2004). Hambrick (2007) asserts that the executive's background (education and experience) may indicate potential value for the selection of CEOs. Formal education and experience influence strategic decision making and directly impact organisational performance (Hambrick, 2015).

The research findings (2.2, 2.3, and 2.4) were conclusive that the effectiveness of the CEO inside the organisation is achieving and advancing the efficiency of human resources and processes. TMT effective performance, alignment, and support to the CEO and the CEO people-oriented leadership and performance driven leadership are aligned to CEO leadership effectiveness inside the PO.

### 5.3.2.1  CEOs leadership effectiveness and organisational efficiency

**Finding 2.2: CEO leadership effectiveness is to achieve the efficiency of human resources and processes.**

The result that efficiency of resources and processes is linked to CEO leadership effectiveness constitutes a new construct in the study of strategic leadership. Upper Echelons theorists' expansive study of the CEO and TMT roles, strategic direction, and the organisational performance focused on how the individuals' differences affect CEO and TMT actions (Finkelstein et al., 2009), TMT executive experiences (Rizzi et al., 2019), organisational outcomes (Cannella, 2001), and the consequences of executive turnover and succession (Boone and Hendriks, 2009).

Optimising the operational efficiency was identified as the capacity of the leader to optimise and align human resources at all levels. A demand exists to minimise the cost of the human resources, including the TMT, to deliver the strategic directions. Yukl discussed efficiency as the extent to which leaders reduce the cost of the people and design effective processes to elevate the operations and the productivity of these resources relative to their cost (Yukl, 2008; Yukl, 2009; Yukl and Mahsud, 2010; Yukl, 2013,). The strategic objectives of the four cases in this research included the need to increase the efficiency of human capital.

Hence, finding 2.2 was that CEO leadership effectiveness is linked to the ability of a CEO to achieve and advance the efficiency of human resources and processes.

**Finding 2.3: TMT effective performance, alignment and support are significant indications of CEO leadership effectiveness**

One of the major CEO tasks is to select, appoint, and reward TMT to implement the strategic direction and achieve performance efficiency (Bredlich et al., 2021). The efficiency of human resources and processes reflects the TMT and their teams' reliability, agility, precision, and rigorous adherence to the governance and procedures in the use of the resources (Yukl, 2008). All participants in this research emphasised that CEO leadership effectiveness is defined by selecting effective TMT, positioning the TMT in the right function and position, aligning the TMT and gaining their support to implement the strategic direction. The efficiency of the human capital is the extent to which the TMT and their teams have the skills and motivation needed to perform

effectively (Hitt et al., 2011). The acquisition of human capital has a strong impact on organisational results and creates an organisational competitive advantage (Money, 2012). Theorists identify two drivers in the formation of the TMT. The first driver is the strategic alignment of the collaborators' TMT, which is necessary for CEO leadership effectiveness to achieve the strategic direction (Carmeli et al., 2012). The second driver is the CEO's capability to reorganise the TMT to achieve efficiency (Ma and Seidl, 2018).

The CEOs of three organisations in this study have a shorter tenure than their TMT; the newly selected CEOs inherited most of their TMT.  In Case 1 69 percent of the TMT are not professionals in a healthcare organisation.   The CEOs mandate to advance the efficiency of their human resources, including TMT and processes is unachievable if the TMT have the wrong skills in the first place. The CEOs reorganised their TMT to increase their alignment and gain their support to implement the strategic direction (finding 2.3).

The participants described what effective leadership means to them in four ways. The national TMT described their national leaders as the 'fathers' of leadership. The national leadership is centred around people-oriented leadership. The healthcare PO results showed that people-oriented leadership was important on two levels: national culture and national leadership expectation. In real estate and financial services, performance-driven leadership is a strong indication of CEO leadership effectiveness.

### 5.3.2.2  CEO leadership effectiveness and people-oriented leadership

House et al. (2013: 269) studied 1,000 CEOs and 5,000 TMTs across 24 countries; they report evidence that team-oriented leaders are the next most important in Anglo and Asian contexts, and of medium importance in Middle Eastern contexts. Team-oriented leaders are the second most impactful leadership on organisational performance and outcomes. House defined 'people-oriented leaders…[as] loyal to their people and care for the welfare of the members.

In addition, they use their competence and interpersonal skills to manage the team's internal dynamics and create a cohesive working group' (House et al., 2013: 323). The international CEOs focus was to successfully achieve the efficiency of resources and processes, performance excellence, and positive financial results. Participants in this research who believed that people-

oriented leadership was linked to leadership effectiveness were international, national CEOs, and TMTs. The international participants agreed that in healthcare and real estate, people-oriented leadership is an indicator of the CEOs leadership effectiveness, which resulted in reducing the number of TMT, including national TMTs. The international CEOs require national leadership and cultural integration plan to align their understanding of people-oriented leadership.  Thus, finding 2.3 was that people-oriented leadership and the CEO sharing their culture and organisational experience with the TMT positively influenced TMT alignment with the CEO and the strategy.

Following Upper Echelons theory and strategic leadership theorists, TMTs recruited in this research were a group of top managers working in the same organisation and reporting to the same CEO. As presented in section 4.5, the results of the TMT replicated the strategic leadership theorist description of the TMT as a 'label', not an actual team, but a group of people working in the same organisation (Tuckman's, 2010; Suliman et al., 2019; Luciano et al., 2020). Many of the participants described people-oriented leadership as the leadership actions to advance the well-being of individuals as Metcalfe and Mimouni (2011) found in their Middle East leadership research.

### 5.3.2.3  CEO leadership effectiveness and performance-driven leadership

Twenty-three participants described the performance-driven leadership as an indication of leadership effectiveness. House et al. (2013) and Yukl (2012), in their research about strategic leadership effectiveness, recognised the need for more research on the contextual variable of the leader's performance. Upper Echelons framework examined the relationships between leaders and organisational performance. Strategic leadership researchers studied Upper Echelons to identify how the CEO and TMT attributes influence the organisational effective performance (Finkelstein et al., 2009; Carter et al., 2013; Latham, 2013; Luciano et al., 2020). The definition of performance-driven leadership in this research was linked to CEO ability to advance the organisational effective performance by achieving the human resources efficiency and processes to achieve the desired outcomes. In addition to CEO attributes, this research accounted for the contextual impact on the CEOs leading their PO performance effectively. Comparable to House et al. (2013) and Yukl (2012), performance driven leadership is linked to CEO leadership effectiveness, as stated in the last finding of the CEO theme.

## 5.4  TMT selection, structure, composition, and interaction

Strategic leadership theorists defined the TMT as 'the relatively small group of most influential executives at the apex of an organisation, usually the CEO and those who report directly to him or her' (Finkelstein et al., 2009: 10). TMTs are the central group in strategic leadership theory and research (Hambrick et al., 2005). This research deployed the group definition of the TMT with the three conceptual elements of the TMT: structure (role and size), composition (experience, education, tenure) and interaction dynamics (Finkelstein et al., 2009). TMT interaction reflects the relationships and communication in the context of the PO (Finkelstein et al., 2009: 123). The operationalisation of TMTs in this research integrated professionals and corporate TMT, executive experiences, education, the role of TMT members in the strategic direction, leading teams, and reporting to the CEO.

### 5.4.1  TMT selection

One of the most studied aspects of the TMT in Upper Echelons theory is the TMT demographics. Hambrick and Mason's (1984) popularity among researchers is due to the accessibility, objectivity, and reliability of the TMT demographic data in their research. Similar strategic leadership studies reported the diversity of functional experience (expertise and education in a specific function) is a primary factor in TMT selection (Carpenter and Fredrickson, 2001; Hambrick and Fredrickson, 2001). This research showed that the selection of TMT was based on three factors: nationalisation for the national TMT, executive experience, and qualifications in the case of the international TMT. The national corporate and professional TMT participating in this multiple case study discussed the need for a strategy for TMT selection. The results showed that the context of national leadership expectations and the nationalisation, during the high demand for POs in all industries, resulted in hiring and retaining excess resources and costs. Selecting and leading effective and competent TMT was identified as one of the main challenges for the CEOs during the shift from government funding to private funding. Figure 5.4 shows the direct impact of the external context impact on the TMT selection, structure, composition, and interaction.  The figure also presented the direct impact of the context of uncertainty on TMT. The results of this theme are discussed in the following sections.

**Figure 5-4 PO context TMT structure, composition, interaction**

Contextual Leadership

Strategic Leadership

External Context

Dynamic Knowledge-based Economy

PO industry Policies and regulations

National Culture National Leadership Expectations

Strategic Direction
Private funding
Budget reduction

Uncertainty

Negative past performance
Predecessor CEOs

TMT
› Structure
› Composition
› Interaction

PO Outcome

Performance excellence

Positive financial results

National leaders' development

25

## 5.4.2 TMT structure (function and size)

Strategic leadership theorists studied TMT structure with a focus on TMT size and associated TMT size with PO growth if a larger TMT size provides more capabilities. The findings (3.1) of Case 3 and Case 4 are in line with the view that TMT smaller size positively influences the professional and corporate TMT dynamics and communication in POs. However, Case 2 finding showed that TMT size did not improve TMT communication. Case 1 findings did not include the TMT size. In conclusion, the size of a TMT has a partial impact on TMT interaction and performance.

Upper Echelons theorists distinguished between TMT in publicly listed organisations and those in privately held organisations. They concluded that TMT education and experience are extremely important in regulated organisations (Finkelstein et al., 2009). In addition to the regulatory requirements of publicly listed organisations, the PO industry standards add to the significance of the TMT qualification. Three of the studied POs are publicly listed and are required to hire qualified professionals with formal and international accreditations and certifications in the respective organisational domain. Chapter 4 (section 4.6.4, Table 4.42) reflected the low number of

professionals (less than 30%) and the dominance of the corporate non-qualified TMT (more than 70%).

The results of this study showed that organisations would perform effectively if their TMT had the appropriate education, executive experience, interpersonal and leadership skills to perform effectively in different contextual conditions. The impact of TMT structure (size and function) is inconclusive in PO cases. The healthcare organisation results revealed that the large size of the corporate TMT increased the inefficiency of resources and impacted TMT communication negatively. The reduction of TMT size did not improve the efficiency or the communication in two cases. Inversely, in the case the real estate (case 3) the reduction of TMT size and the balanced composition improved TMT communication and support to the internal national CEO.

### 5.4.3  TMT composition (executive experience, education, and tenure)

In this research, 69 per cent of the TMT tenure is more than 10 years. TMT long tenured is linked to TMT retention and dedication (emergent finding in cross-case 3.1). In Case 1 most of the TMT are nationals.  The national TMTs receive high salaries and are promised leadership positions as part of the nationalisation plans.  The international TMT long tenure is linked to their satisfaction with their incentives and growth. These results confirm that in PO contexts TMT tenure, educational background, and executive experience still serve as useful proxies for the study of TMT.

**Finding 3.1: TMT dedication to their organisations is connected to TMT effective performance, retention, incentives, and growth.**

The results showed that the long-tenured TMT members were found to adhere to the industry standards and practices. Other strategic management scholars found that TMT experience, education, and tenure shape their decisions and actions which significantly affect the organisational performance (Suliman et al., 2019), strategy (Díaz-Fernández et al., 2019), and outcomes (Cannella, 2001; Colbert et al., 2014). TMT members with longer tenure were less innovative and followed more persistently strategies that conformed to the status quo. The TMT in three cases stated that they are dedicated to their organisations and satisfied with their incentives and growth (Case 1, Case 3, and Case 4).

The results are analogous with Hambrick's (2015) study results. Hambrick acknowledges that analysis and interpretation of the TMT black box may be speculative, to state that international education is a factor that may influence the TMT alignment or misalignment. In one of Upper Echelons TMT study of 100 organisations in different industries (energy, technology, and other sectors), Hambrick and colleagues found that TMT tenure had a significant effect on the organisation strategy and performance (Hambrick et al., 2015).

### 5.4.4  TMT interaction

This research showed four findings linked to TMT tenure, the new CEOs, and promoting TMT.

**Finding 3.2: Promoting TMT with long tenure to new positions positively impacts TMT support to the new CEO and the strategic direction.**
**Finding 3.3: TMT in critical position neutrality is disadvantageous to the success of the CEO and the implementation of the strategic direction.**
**Finding 3.4: The TMT long tenure in the same position stimulates TMT opposition to the new CEO and the strategic direction.**

The TMT dynamics have been linked to the CEO tenure and succession. When new CEOs join, they make immediate changes to TMT composition to facilitate the implementation of the strategic direction (Cannella and Holcomb, 2005b). Researchers reported that new TMT configurations are necessary to the new CEO to mitigate the risk of the long-established understanding and entrenched activity patterns (Amason, 1996; Carmeli et al., 2012;). New CEOs tend to affiliate with selected long-tenured and effective TMT with an inclination towards supporting and influencing other TMT to do the same (Shen, 2003).

This research results showed that new CEOs seek to gain support to avoid the risk of miscoordination of the activities and managing conflicts. By promoting a few long-tenured TMT, the new CEOs set a new team design that reflects distinct roles, goals, and rewards. The TMT new formation is a process that manages strategic disagreements (Smith, 2011). In addition, the new formation encourages TMT members to consider fresh insights and discuss alternative solutions to increase efficiency or to successfully implement the strategic direction. Similar results were reported by several strategic leadership researchers. Finkelstein and Hambrick (1990)

showed that the long-tenured TMT support the new CEOs and the strategic direction is difficult to achieve.

This study advanced the Upper Echelons research on the link between TMT tenure, support, and alignment by revealing a link between TMT re-positioning (promotion to a new position), TMT international education, and TMT support of the CEO.

Other research results showed that the longer the TMT has worked with other TMT members, the stronger their alignment to keep the status quo in the organisation and the stronger the opposition to the new strategic direction (Denis et al., 2007; Boone and Hendriks, 2009). In this present study the third group of the long-tenured TMT opted to oppose the new CEOs and the strategic direction. The opposing TMT members have been in the same position for a long period, between eight and 20 years. Most of the TMT participants have long tenure but have been transferred within their organisation to new positions by the current CEO, and they all have international education in common.

Another group of the long-tenured TMT who worked together and continued with relatively few unavoidable changes exhibited cautiousness and opted for neutral responses to changes. Webster dictionary defined the word "neutral" as not engaged on either side, not decided or indifferent. Finding 3.4 of this research showed that the neutral TMTs were in critical positions. TMT in critical functions refrained from aligning with the new CEOs and the strategic direction. This neutrality is disadvantageous to the success of the CEO and the implementation of the strategic direction.

**Finding 3.5: The changing context creates uncertainty, imposes pressure on the TMT, increases the divergence and disagreements of the TMT.**

Extensions of the upper Echelons and the strategic leadership theorists recently identified significant relationships between the multinational organisation context, the TMT characteristics (age, team tenure, educational prestige), and TMT turnover (Hambrick and Quigley, 2014; Hambrick, 2015). Other researchers reported that the results are different in different countries. For example, the results in Japan reported a stronger link between the TMT characteristics and the TMT turnover than in the USA (Quigley and Hambrick, 2015).

The international organisation found that TMTs with foreign experience and education were associated with the success of the strategic directions (Simsek et al., 2015; Gharama et al., 2020). In this research, fifty five percent of the participating TMT members supported the CEO to drive and implement the strategic direction. Thirty percent of the TMT opposed the CEO and had a negative impact on the CEO's effectiveness to implement the strategic direction. The impartial TMT members delivered their tasks and did not oppose the CEO in implementing the new direction. Impartial members avoided actions that may place them at risk of being associated with new leadership or with resistance to it (Steinbach et al., 2017). The context of uncertainty imposes pressure on the TMT, increases the divergence of TMT goals, and negatively impacts PO performance and outcomes (finding 3.5).

This study focused on the significant TMT roles and explored how actions impact their effectiveness to achieve strategic direction. It is crucial to focus on TMT interactions as they impact the efficiency of their teams and the rest of the organisation's functions. In addition to long-tenure impact on TMT interaction opposing forces are found within the TMT: professional objectives, corporate objectives, and the pressure of the context of uncertainty associated with the new strategic directions. Professional and corporate objectives were opposed in this research: the medical teams needed to hire more resources, while the corporate TMT members were reducing resources and cost. These opposing objectives created constant dynamic tension.

## 5.5  Impact of external context on PO outcomes

> **Finding 4.1: The knowledge-based economy is the main contextual factor that signifies performance excellence, positive financial results, and ethical reporting as fundamentals of POs outcomes.**
>
> **Finding 4.2: The national leadership expectations of the POs strategic leaders are associated with the advancement of the national leadership development.**

The findings identified how context affects the strategic leadership (Board, CEO, and TMT). The external context impacts the PO internal context. The research revealed that a set of contextual elements (knowledge-based economy, PO industry domain, national culture, and national leadership expectations) influence the PO internal context, CEO selection and leadership effectiveness, TMT selection and performance, and PO outcomes (Osborn et al., 2014).

These study results are similar to the results of strategic management theorists who found that CEOs and TMT account for little variance in organisational outcomes. Leadership in organisations operates within constraints deriving from internal structural, procedural factors, and from the external demands on the organisation (Finkelstein et al., 2009). The deregulations in many countries lead to obvious changes in the strategic leaders' authority (Hambrick, 2004). A shift is also visible in the national direction from government funding to performance excellence and profitability. The financial results became the focus of the Board and the higher leadership. The main performance indicator of the CEOs is the financial result.

Strategic leadership studies results showed that the relationship between the organisational characteristics and organisational performance and outcomes is not clear. While the collaboration of the CEO, TMT, and the Board is essential, the CEO's reliance on the TMT is critical to achieve effective outcomes (Alimo-Metcalfe et al., 2008; Georgakakis et al., 2019). Figure 5.5 shows the impact of the external context on the PO internal context and the PO outcomes. The changes from government grants and funding to budget reductions and private funding significantly increased the importance of performance excellence, positive financial results and the national leaders' development as the main indicator of POs' outcome and reputation (finding 4.1).

**Figure 5-5 External context elements impacting the PO outcomes**
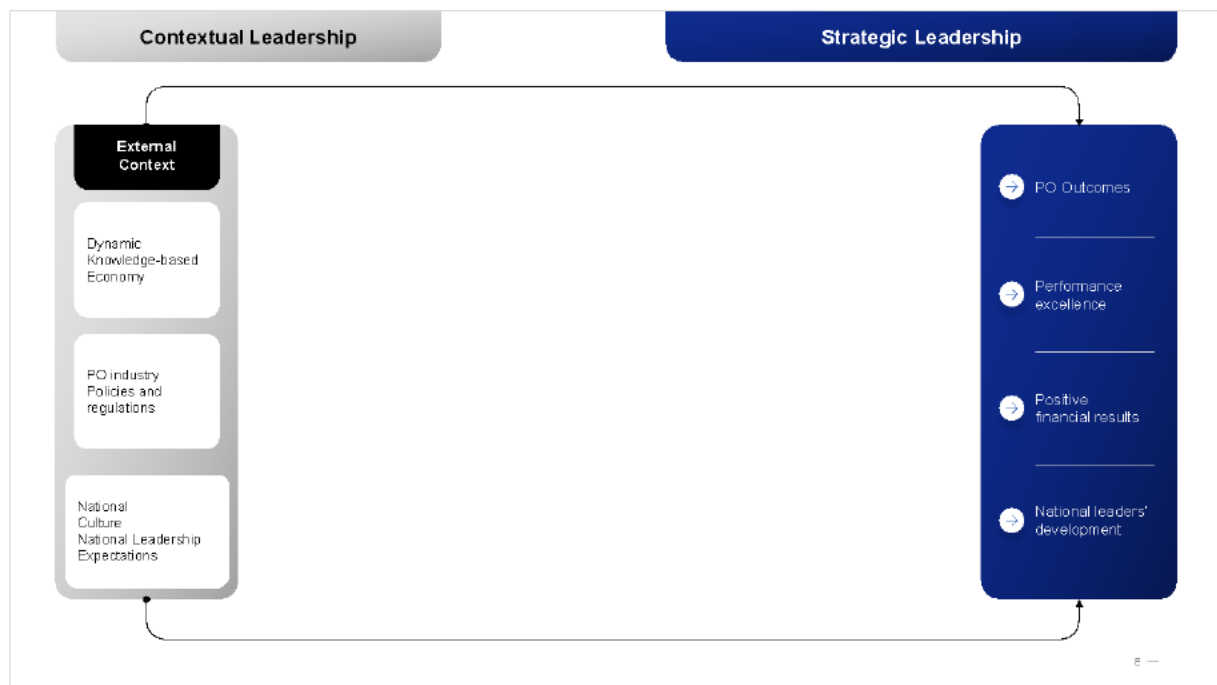
## 5.6 Summary of discussion and conclusion

The discussion of the results showed how the influences from the external context, the PO internal context, affect the individuals and the PO outcomes. The discussion concluded that the multilevel strategic contextual leadership influences the POs in three levels:

- **PO Context**- Knowledge-based economy, national policy, and regulations shape the PO context. The economic context outlines the PO structure. Nationalisation is integrated into the PO internal context and influences the strategic direction.

- **Strategic leaders** -The emergent Board role revealed the effect of the past organisational performance on the frequency of CEOs succession. The national culture and the national leadership expectations have a direct association with the CEO Board dynamic relationship, the conditional delegation of authority, and the ability of the CEO to achieve organisational efficiency:
    - o The CEO leadership effectiveness is achieved when the efficiency of resources is improved, and nationalisation is advanced. First, nationalisation is a social contract between the national leadership and the national TMTs. Second, termination of employment is not aligned with national culture.
    - o The TMT considered their long tenure as an indication of their dedication to the organisation. Promotions and international education positively influence TMT alignment, support for the CEO, and strategic direction. TMT supporting the CEO and the strategic direction have long tenure, new positions, and have received international education. In conclusion, TMT effective performance is negatively impacted by the context of uncertainty.

- **PO Outcomes**- Contextual elements influencing the PO outcomes are the economic slowdown and the change from government funding to budget reductions and private funding, and the national leadership expectations.

The Board's dismissal of the predecessor CEOs due to adverse financial results amplifies the Board's accountability to select successor CEOs. The Board supported the national CEOs and

decreased the support and the delegation of authority of the international CEOs. CEO selection is not subject to the nationalisation context. However, the CEO is faced with the dichotomies of cultivating the culture of efficiency, advancing the national leadership development, attaining the Board's support, and meeting the national leadership expectations.

In conclusion, the study results confirmed that the context effects on the organisational performance and outcomes are more substantial than the CEO effects. Strategic leadership studies have used large data sets to assess the variance in organisational outcome attributable to the CEO and TMT effects, compared to organisations' external and internal contexts (Crossland and Hambrick, 2007; Hambrick and Quigley, 2014; Quigley and Hambrick, 2017). The results from these studies vary, but they collectively report that while the CEOs have slight impact on the variance of the organisational performance, the external and internal contextual factors have an average impact on the variance in organisational performance and outcomes (Visser and Scheepers, 2021).

The frequent changes (negative past performance and predecessor CEOs) caused uncertainty among the TMT members, which affected their performance and the organisational reputation, as also reported in the literature by Cannella and Holcomb (2005). The national leadership expectations from the Board are to advance the nationalisation and the national leadership development. The Board dismissal of the international CEOs in two cases and selecting two national CEOs may mitigate the uncertainty and deliver a positive strategic objective. This objective meets the national leadership expectations to develop national organisational leaders. Researchers reported the frequency of CEO succession reflects negatively on the Board. The Board may select a CEO to fit the context (Cook and Mobbs, 2019), 'focusing on pivot rather than a deeper analysis' of the CEO strengths which allows for imperfections and pitfalls (Wiersema and Zhang, 2011: 1161).

The cross-cultural strategic leadership literature is discussed in Chapter 2. In Arab countries, classical management is concerned with efficacy and delivering expected outcomes. The traditional attitudes place the satisfaction of the higher authorities with the CEOs and TMT actions as a significant outcome (Metcalfe and Mimouni, 2011; House et al., 2013). Meeting the leadership expectations positioned the newly appointed international CEOs at a disadvantage, as they lack

the network and what may satisfy national leaders. National CEOs have two advantages: first, the organisational and societal network strengthen the CEO position and, second, the selection of a national CEO fulfils the national leadership development objective. This research confirmed that the national CEOs received higher delegation of authority. The findings revealed that the national internal and external CEOs gained the Board support and the TMT support. However, Board support to the international internal and external CEOs was dynamic and granted the international CEOs low delegation of authority. Figure 5.6 shows the final emergent hybrid framework.

**Figure 5-6 Hybrid strategic contextual leadership framework**
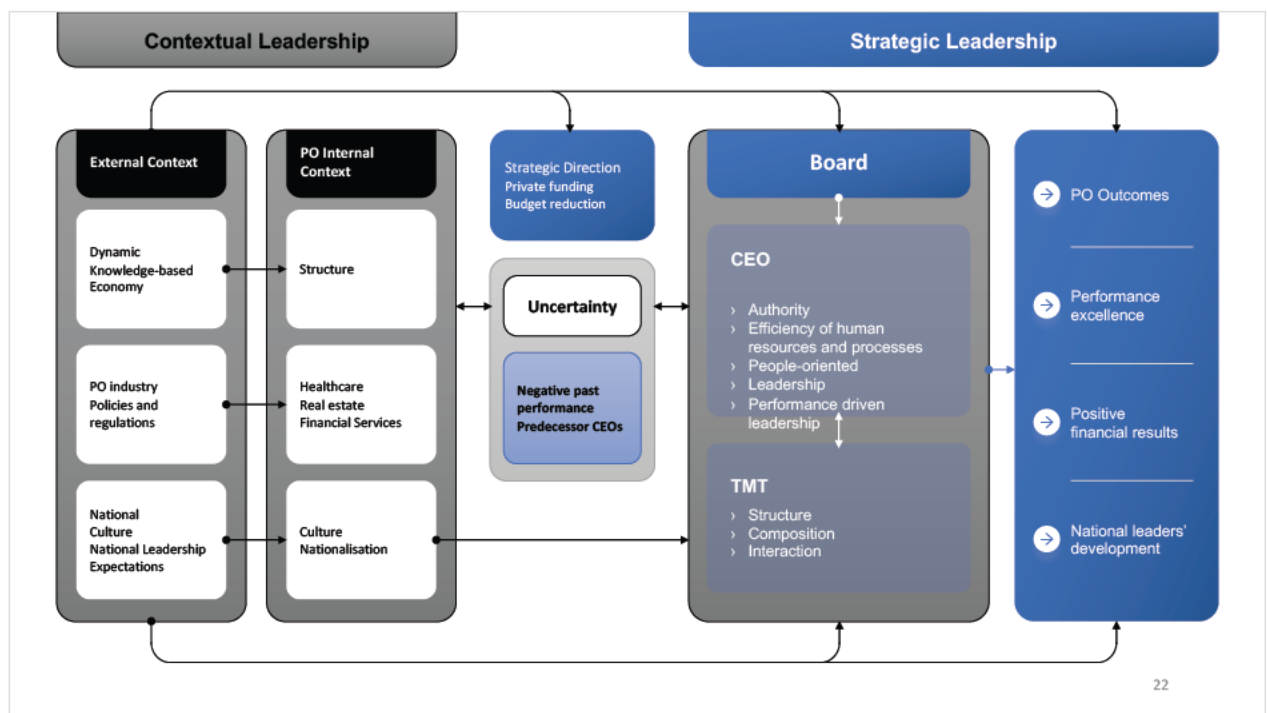


The hybrid framework (Figure 5.6) and the initial framework (Figure 2.10) revealed the link between the external and internal context, and strategic leaders, and PO outcomes. The external context impacts the POs at four levels:

- The PO context structure, industry, and culture
- The PO strategic direction
- The individual level Board, CEO and TMT
- The PO outcomes.

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The initial theoretical framework that was introduced at the end of Chapter 2 showed:

The organisation's structure reflects organisation size and ownership (publicly listed and privately held). For example, in large-sized organisations, the reporting to authorities, and the internal hierarchy is formal and highly structured (White, 2016).  The PO industry is directly linked to the country-level PO industry and regulations (Carmeli and Vinarski-Peretz, 2010).  National culture patterns are influenced by the external economic context (Hofstede, 2003).

The hybrid framework shows the potential influence of the interdependence between the PO strategic direction and country-level industry context. First, the PO establishment and operation standards and guidelines are set at the country-level regulatory. (Jarzabkowski et al, 2009). The emergent findings revealed the significance of the context in the selection of CEOs and TMTs (Hambrick and Quigley, 2014; John, 2006).

Organisational outcomes are a combination of proximal (shareholders' satisfaction, national leadership development) and distal outcomes such as performance excellence, financial results, and organisational reputation (Guest et al, 2011).

The emergent hybrid framework incorporated context and strategic leadership (Figure 5.6) and the initial framework (Figure 2.10), showing the direct link between POs outcomes, the external and internal context. Finally, this study showed the components of the PO outcomes.

# 6 Contributions, research evaluation, and future research

## 6.1 Overview

The transparency in this research is not an aim but a process. In Chapter 3, I discussed the philosophical stance of the cautious realist and the constructionist. As a cautious realist, I reflected on the reality of the participants. As a constructionist, I portrayed the context of the participants to discover, describe, interpret, and extract their views (Blaikie, 2009; Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). The multiple interactions with the participants realised the efficacy and authenticity of this research (Stake, 2010). I understood and interpreted the participants' views technically and subjectively. The selected inductive research strategy ensured the trustworthiness and transparency of 'how' this multiple case was carried out and how trustworthy the conclusions are maintained (Pratt et al., 2020). I identified and presented the evaluation criteria of the analysis strategy in Chapter 3 (Table 3.19).

In the following sections, I discuss the contribution, research quality, limitations, future research, and conclude the chapter with my reflection as a human resources expert**.**

## 6.2 Contributions

My original contribution to knowledge in this research is the expansion of the strategic leadership existing model with a contextual perspective in a non-Western context. The emergent hybrid model of strategic leadership is contextually relevant to the time and place of the organisation. The uniqueness of this research is the synthesis of strategic and contextual leadership through a qualitative multiple case study design, focusing on pluralistic organisations in the Middle East.

In the following section I discuss the theoretical contributions, methodological contributions, and contributions to practice.

## 6.2.1  Theoretical contributions

My original contribution to the Upper Echelons (strategic leadership) and contextual leadership research is three-fold.  First, this present research adopted the missing Upper Echelons multilevel approach (Cannella and Holcomb, 2015).  Second, this research explored the vastly stimulating cultural differences that were lacking from Upper Echelons and strategic leadership research (Yamak et al. 2014; House et al. 2013), and to my knowledge, is still missing.  Third, this research appropriately identifies the specific attributes of the context that influence the CEOs and TMT.  The theoretical contributions are presented in the following section.

**The first theoretical contribution** is the integration of strategic and contextual leadership theories.  The integration of the two theories in this research elaborated on how the dynamicity of the external context (macro-system) may impact CEOs and TMT selection, leadership effectiveness and organisational outcomes (Yamak et al., 2014).

The construction of this multiple case study in a specific place and time was filtered through the perspective of previous research and theories. The recently collected and analysed data, the adoption of the Upper Echelons theory, strategic leadership, and contextual leadership produced the hybrid strategic and contextual leadership framework. The framework exposed the multilevel powerful role of the Board, not only on the downward relationship with the CEOs, but with the shareholders, the strategic direction, and TMT (Lord, 2001; O'Shannassy, 2021; Cortes, 2021). This research revealed how individuals (predecessor CEOs, CEOs, and Board) influence the organisation's internal context, TMT, and the PO outcomes (Mazutis, 2013). This study defined leadership as a position (CEOs and TMT) and its hierarchal influence (context).  This hybrid approach viewed leadership as necessarily embedded in the country context.  Nested model leadership researchers have drawn on psychology and social psychology literature closely to support the core concepts (Osborn et al., 2002; Osborn et al., 2014).  In this present study, the interaction of leadership in a broader context (knowledge-based economy, the national culture, and the national leadership expectations) triggered the emergence of specific aspects of leadership and the effectiveness of different leadership dimensions.

**The second theoretical contribution-** is the direct multilevel relationship between national leadership expectations (country), nationalisation (organisation), TMT (individual) and PO outcomes.  This present study is a response to the call of the strategic leadership GLOBE study

to conduct strategic leadership research in countries that they did not include in their study (House et al., 2013; House et al., 2004). Furthermore, the present study recognised how multinational organisations with international executives decrease the cultural gap between national and international leaders. This contribution to strategic leadership and contextual leadership shows how the cultural background did not have an impact on the TMT-CEO interface which contradicts the collective values Hofstede's theory. Hofstede (2003) defined national culture as the collective beliefs and values that differentiate people of one nationality from those of another (Hofstede, 1983). The national CEOs and TMT participants called for a cultural change to empower the national CEOs to implement the strategic directions that match the dynamic knowledge-based economy in this era (Luciani and Moerenhout, 2021).

The GLOBE study of 62 societies, including the Middle East, integrated Hofstede's value-belief theory (House et al., 2013). Discerning the GLOBE study country clusters enabled the emergence of the links between the national TMTs international education and their support to the international CEO and the new strategic directions in this present study. This study revealed the specific relationships of the national cultural values and practices to predict if the leadership practice was socially (nationally) and culturally accepted and expected (culturally endorsed implicit leadership theory (House et al., 2002; House et al., 2004; House et al., 2013). The cultural clustering demonstrated the individuals' belief system about what contributes to or obstructs effective leadership (Yukl, 2013). Participants in this research belonged to nine different cultural backgrounds grouped.  This research revealed the impact of education on CEO-TMT interface. The high numbers of internationally educated national participants, international CEOs and TMT, and the multicultural population reduced the cultural gap between the CEOs and TMT, a fact that decreased the speculative nature of the match between culture and leadership

This present study revealed differences between CEOs and TMT regarding what is considered effective leadership. The four CEOs led national organisations with national targets to create and grow their POs, develop national organisational leaders, and they were expected to satisfy the national expectation of leadership. Bass (2009) writes: 'Images of ideal leader prototypes tend to vary from one country and culture to another.  At the same time, some prototypical traits generalise across countries' (Bass and Bass, 2009: 1021).  Little attention has been devoted to unlocking the transitional role of the context, not only culture, in the relationship between strategic leaders (CEOs, TMT, and Boards) and firm performance and outcomes (Simsek et al., 2015).  This

research contributed to theory by revealing the significance of the country context (knowledge-based, industry and leadership expectations) impact on the national and the international CEOs.

**The third theoretical contribution-** Upper Echelons theory assumption is that CEOs are selected for their executive experience in the specific PO industry, inspiring strategic choices, and organisational outcomes (Hambrick, 2007; Hambrick, 2014). This study showed that it is not always the case in CEO's selection. This research revealed the significant contextual effects on CEOs' selection on three levels: country, organisational, and individual. The CEO's expertise in the specific PO industry is incidental to the contextual influences on CEO selection, the delegation of authority, and leadership effectiveness in this research**.** This present study shows how the external context (knowledge-based economy and the national leadership's expectations) affects the strategic leadership at four levels (PO internal context, Board role, CEO, TMT, and PO output). This contribution illuminated the impact of divergence of the CEO leadership from the national leadership expectations**. '**How' the CEO implemented strategic decisions did not meet the national leadership expectations. This study disclosed that national leadership satisfaction with CEO leadership exceeds the significance of the CEO experience and performance. Strategic and contextual leadership researchers have concluded that leadership occurs in the external and the internal contexts (Yukl, 2013; Osborn et al., 2014). This study contribution showed external and internal context impact on the CEOs' actions, values, and alignment with the national leadership expectation.

**Two theoretical contributions illuminated** the specific contextual elements that impact the selection of CEOs. The distinction between internal or external CEO selection in strategic leadership literature is dominant (Quigley et al., 2019).  This study's emergent strategic contextual framework identified the context's hidden impact on the Board's role in CEO selection, CEO-Board relationship, CEO delegation of authority, and TMT alignment and support.   Introducing these links reduces the predictions over whom to select, identifying who will perform well and who will perform poorly in a specific context (Zhu et al., 2020; Quigley et al., 2020).  The newly selected CEO is given three months (100 days) to quickly demonstrate his/her efficiency with a directional mandate (Karaevli and Zajac, 2012). In addition, CEOs are expected to have unparalleled knowledge of balancing competent and efficient human capital skills within the organisational

context (Denis et al., 2007). The revelation of these links may benefit the newly selected CEOs in how they can meet the expectations of the Board and the national leadership.

**Fourth contribution to theory is the selection** of external and internal CEO. Researchers would consider the selection of an internal CEO as less risky than an external, even if the selected internal did not have any CEO experience (Quigley et al., 2019; Zhu et al., 2020). This research contributes to the CEO selection in the context of multinational PO by expanding the selection of internal, external, national, and international CEOs. The internal and external CEOs in this study demonstrated high commitment and interest in implementing strategic directions. The emergent findings uncovered the cause of the Board cautious and dynamic relationships with the internal and external CEOs. This contribution to theory contradicts the results of Cook and Mobbs (2019) study that Board shows extreme preference to insider CEOs. This contribution identified the context attributes (dynamic economy, fast growth and changing strategies) that affected the Board relationship with the CEO. This study showed that both CEOs internal and external did not gain the Board supportive relationship.

Furthermore, this research results challenges the results of two recent strategic leadership studies that the internal selected CEOs are expected to influence and gain TMT dedication, trust, and support (Quigley et al., 2019; Zhu et al., 2020). This study showed that TMT were not aligned or supportive of the internally selected CEOs who did not receive authority from the Board. This contribution to theory exposed that internal or external CEOs have no impact on the TMT alignment and support.

**The fifth contribution to theory-** is the exposure of the CEO cultural background (national versus international) in strategic leadership research. The latest strategic leadership research studies followed the same path as the Upper Echelons initial framework but did not look at the cultural difference between the CEO and the national level culture in their studies (Hambrick, 2007; House et al., 2013; Hambrick and Quigley, 2014; Quigley et al., 2019). For example, in Hambrick et al.'s (2015) TMT study of 100 organisations in different industries (energy, technology, and other sectors), they found that TMT tenure significantly affected its strategy and performance. However, Hambrick acknowledges that analysis and interpretation of the CEO and TMT black box may be

speculative, to state that CEOs background is a factor that may influence the Board, CEO, TMT relationships (Crossland and Hambrick, 2007; Hambrick et al., 2015).

In the present study, three CEO participants were international, with extensive executive experience and international education.  The emergent findings (2.1a, 2.1b) showed international CEOs with extensive experience in their domain did not receive the delegation of authority to set up and implement the strategic direction of their organisations.  Moreover, the TMT supported the national CEOs who have received the Board's support and full or moderate delegation of authority. This study illuminated the divergence between international CEO performance and national leadership expectations.  Most of the participants related the importance of the international CEOs' actions aligning with the national leadership expectations.  According to the national leadership expectations, the CEO's effectiveness in achieving organisational efficiency must not contradict or diminish the nationalisation strategy.

**The sixth theoretical contribution** shows how the principal indicators of CEO leadership effectiveness change with the dynamic context of the POs. Yukl (2008: 719) affirmed that strategic leadership effectiveness influences the efficiency of human resources and relations, resulting in better efficiency and organisational performance.'  House et al. (2013: 322) stated, 'although it is intuitively appealing to consider the efficiency of human resources and processes, they belong to effective management rather than leadership.  This consideration does not represent the strategic leaders' (Board, CEOs, and TMT).  The present study contributes to theory by the demonstration of two new and critical factors to consider when theorising about strategic leadership effectiveness: (1) Consideration of the external context (nationalisation and national leadership expectations) impact on the CEO's ability to achieve the organisational efficiency in harmony with the nationalisation strategy.  (2) Researchers should not be reluctant to evaluate Boards and CEOs human capital skills.  Researchers related the frequency of the predecessor CEOs to the inability of the Board to evaluate CEOs skills and suitability (Wiersema and Zhang, 2011). This contribution clarified the inference of the Board's and the CEO's human capital skills as a critical factor in strategic leadership effectiveness.

**The seventh theoretical contribution** is a definition of what accounts for PO outcomes.  For example, the efficiency of resources and processes results in efficient organisation outcomes (Yukl, 2012; Yukl, 2013; Zhu et al., 2020).  Finkelstein and Hambrick (1990: 484) defined

organisations outcomes as strategic persistence and conformity in strategy and performance with other organisations in an industry.

Organisational outcomes are either proximal (growth, employees' dedication, alignment, and retention, and organisational reputation) or distal (outcomes, such as, performance excellence, financial performance, and stakeholders' satisfaction) (Guest, 2011). Other researchers considered the impact of strategic leadership on three levels of outcomes: economic, social, and environmental (Carter et al., 2013). The contribution to theory in this study is by validating the link between strategic leaders, the external and internal PO context, and the organisational outcomes. This study identified the components of the PO outcomes: Performance excellence, positive financial results, growth, and national leadership development. The emergent PO outcomes definition expands the definition of outcomes in strategic and contextual leadership research. The PO outcomes in this study are performance excellence, positive financial results, shareholders satisfaction, and national leadership development. The differentiation between the proximal organisational outcomes and the distal outcomes that is driven by the country's context (national leadership development). The contribution with organisational outcomes' definition in strategic leadership and contextual leadership research. This theoretical contribution with a definition of the organisation's outcomes can provide information and enhance the study's integrity by preserving the characteristic nature of this study (Cassel and Symon, 2004).

## 6.2.2 Contributions to methodology

Strategic leadership and contextual leadership researchers reconsidered the research on Upper Echelons and strategic leadership. An earlier review of the Upper Echelons and strategic leadership by Carpenter et al. (2004) showed that 16 reviewed research studies used quantitative data collection, and five used the interview method to collect data. The authors concluded that the Upper Echelons model should not be static. CEO and TMT attributes change over time, and so does the TMT model. A study reviewing TMT functional backgrounds considered examining the context (place and time) as dependent variables (Díaz-Fernández, 2020). Upper Echelons authors called for longitudinal and possibly qualitative research to explain the competing findings (Carpenter, 2004 et al.; Nielsen, 2010; Hambrick, 2015). Kempster and Parry (2011) reported that leadership researchers embraced the context. The authors stated that the dominant methodology shaping the field is the positivist approach in hypothesis testing, quantitative data collection, and

analysis. Quantitative researchers deployed positivist and post-positivist methods of investigating organisational leadership to ensure generalizability (Basias, 2018). Basias (2018) argued that human-created constructs are occupied by humans who appear to have free will and thus do not always obey undisputable quantitative paradigms. This research contributes to the methodology by conducting a qualitative multiple case study. Data collection by conducting semi-structured interviews in qualitative research is the art of hearing data (Rubin, 2011).

The second methodological contribution is the empirical investigation of the CEOs and TMT as two separate sub-units of analysis. The separation of the CEO and the TMT contributes to the methodology that advances strategic leadership research. Upper Echelons research essentially included the CEO as a member of the TMT (Carpenter et al., 2004; Hambrick et al., 2015). This research question is a 'how' question that requires a flexible questionnaire to investigate the phenomenon. The use of the semi-structured interviews allowed the understanding of the nature and the complexity of the strategic contextual leadership (Basias, 2018). The interviews were coupled with note taking, as national participants did not allow recording during the meetings. As a result, the participants were more comfortable sharing their experiences, relationships, challenges, and expectations without being recorded. There was no audio recording having more than eight interviews that lasted more than three hours. This trust established between the interviewer and the interviewee allowed the understanding of the nature and complexity of the multilevel contextual impact on strategic leadership in pluralistic organisations. Seven emergent findings revealed the links between the context (macro-level) and the effect on individuals (1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 3.4, 3.5, and 4.2).

### 6.2.3  Contributions to practice

The research problem discussed in chapter one (section 1.5) explained the consequences of the scarcity of national professionals in pluralistic organisations in the UAE. Three additional issues were identified. The first issue is that the multinational workforce accounts for more than 80% of the population in the UAE (Abuhejleh et al., 2016). The second issue is that the UAE professionals and executives receive higher salaries than the expatriates, which results in higher human resources costs for organisations. The third problem is that due to the scarcity of UAE professional leaders, pluralistic organisations hire additional nationals in the administration with high salaries

to meet the expectations of the national shareholders and the regulators (Alnaqbi, 2018; Aljanahi, 2017).  This research offers four practical contributions.

**The first contribution to practice** is that this research showed the CEO's effectiveness inside and outside the organisation.  The CEO's internal organisational effectiveness included the quality of CEO relationships with the TMT (trust and buy-in), TMT satisfaction and dedication, and TMT support.  The CEO's effectiveness outside the organisation was shown through the organisational outcomes, precisely within national leadership expectations.  The results showed that new CEOs in this research exhibited high levels of evaluation and low levels of implementation.  The new CEOs promoted several TMTs based on evaluation rather than working together, which created conflicts between other TMTs and CEOs in three cases.  The research findings (2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4) showed when and how TMT members support the CEOs and the new strategy.

This research showed how new CEOs achieved changes in the TMT (repositioning, reducing the size of TMT, and promoting TMT) to alter the status quo radically.  Researchers of strategic leadership explained that when CEOs change TMT, they gain more authority to entrench the TMT activity patterns (Ferreira, 2014).  The CEO effectiveness outside the organisations was demonstrated by achieving national leadership satisfaction with the POs' outcomes (finding 4.2).

**The second contribution to practice is CEO succession planning**

The emergent findings of the frequency of the predecessor CEOs highlighted those CEOs' successions were due to the PO's negative financial results.  Succession is an event-based perspective contrary to the practical evidence regarding CEO succession.  The event-based CEO succession contradicts the strategic leadership approach to CEO selection and succession as a continuous process (Berns and Klarner, 2017).  The final decision of CEO selection and succession lies with the Board.  The frequent event-based CEO succession contradicts the core of Upper Echelons and strategic leadership (Morton, 2018).

This study revealed the emergent Board's role in selecting the predecessors and the successors.  The Board's role in a proactive search for a successor leads to a broader, available, and suitable list of potential successors in case of an unexpected CEO dismissal or departure (Cook and Mobbs, 2013).  This present study highlighted the role of the Board in assessing the PO's current and future strategic direction.  Succession planning requires continuous communications between the Board and the incumbent CEOs.  The Board is responsible for developing the criteria for

prospective CEO candidates, considering the strategic direction, the organisation's past and current performance, and CEOs of competitors' POs (Schepker, Nyberg, Ulrich, and Wright, 2018). The CEO change phase created uncertainty to the TMT and hindered the new CEO integration (Santora, 2004). The contribution of this research is identifying specifically how CEOs succession can be linked to the incumbent CEOs' objectives and even leadership effectiveness. The pre-succession Board activities require strategic human capital skills to identify suitable candidates, with access to internal leadership development activities to determine any internal successors and monitor and strengthen the Board-CEO interactions during the pre-succession phase (Quigley, Wowak, and Crossland, 2020). The Board and the Board's committees cannot manage or access the details of leadership development to identify talented executives leading challenging and strategic assignments that prove their skills' suitability as CEO successor (Karaevli and Zajac, 2012).

This study revealed the Board's role, responsibilities and authority in the strategic direction and the selection of the incumbent CEO. The strategic CEO succession is a part of the strategic direction and within the Board authority (Chen et al., 2015). The successor CEO has a direct relationship with organisational outcomes in the case of public organisations (Zhang and Jahanshahi, 2016). The study showed that the leadership's effectiveness is linked to resource efficiency, including CEO and TMT. The contribution of this present study showed links between the PO context of uncertainty, the frequency of CEO succession, and the Board-CEO relationships. Therefore, integrating CEO succession planning in the strategic direction and the CEO objectives is achievable.

**Third contribution to practice is TMT composition**
TMT education has specific impact on TMT-CEO interface and TMT-TMT interface. Upper Echelons black box linked the CEOs and TMT demographics to their strategic decisions and choices and indirectly affected the organisational performance (Finkelstein, Hambrick, and Cannella, 2009). Strategic leadership studies in the UAE have identified significant relationships between education diversity, TMT background, organisational strategy, TMT effectiveness, and organisational outcomes (Alseiari, 2019; Alkheyi, 2020). Upper Echelons linked the MT collective attributes to organisational effectiveness and performance. 'If we want to explain why organisations do the things they do, or in turn, why they perform the way they do, we must examine

the people at the top' (Hambrick, 1989: 6). TMT collective attributes (experience, education, and backgrounds) increased TMT pool of expertise, knowledge, and enhanced TMT interaction (Díaz-Fernández, González-Rodríguez, and Simonetti, 2019). The constructive disputes and discussions of the supportive TMT enabled them to understand the complexity of the new strategic direction, contribute with ideas and better-quality decisions, and cope better with uncertain situations. The diversity of education and experience is considered a deep level attribute (Bengtsson, Raza Ullah, and Srivastava, 2020). This diversity supports the TMT in addressing challenges and complexities associated with performance effectiveness. A contribution of this research is the discovery that the TMT members who supported the CEOs had attained international education (94%; 13 out of 15 TMT members). The supporters' international education positively influences long tenure and TMT support to the new CEO and the strategic direction. This present study contextually examined how to further study TMT demographics by examining multifaceted aspects of the context embedded at multiple levels (country, industry, and PO) (Colbert, Barrick, and Bradley, 2014). This attempt showed the macro-level (national leadership expectations, national culture) influenced TMT dynamics. This contribution advances the understanding of the cross-level nature of TMT interaction dynamic and facilitates theorising in TMT and Upper Echelons literature.

POs can adopt the strategic contextual framework to develop integration plans, including the country-level context. Such plans should include the impact of the laws and regulations on selection, positioning, reforming, and terminating TMT.

**The fourth contribution to practice is strategic and contextual leaders' development**
Nationalisation in the UAE has decreased the dependency on international executives since 1990 (Waxin, Lindsay, Belkhodja, and Zhao, 2018). The present study was conducted within the current urgent context of nationalisation, identifying the leadership effectiveness factors that are fundamental to national leadership development. In the current PO context claiming efficiency is not as welcome as proving it (Al Mannae and Rayan, 2018). Several national TMT who studied internationally thought there was a high need to change the nationalisation strategy to fit the new strategic direction. The historical nationalisation approach does not fit with the national leadership expectations from the national CEOs to achieve efficiency and to deliver the strategic direction. The CEO's effective leadership is directly linked to the efficiency of resources and processes. The efficiency requires selection, positionings, reorganization, and reduction of human resources,

including the national TMT. Nationalisation policies do not have written restrictions regarding the termination of employment of national TMT members. However, it was evident in this current study and other regional studies that it is very challenging for national and international CEOs to terminate national TMT members to achieve resource efficiency (Rees, Mamman, and Braik, 2007). The National Human Resources Development and Employment Authority recommended an amendment to the existing labour law that oblige employers to contact the ministry before the dismissal of any national employee (Forstenlechner et al., 2012).

Considering the increasing regulatory pressure on public and private POs to achieve the efficiency of human resources, this contribution is shown in the impact of nationalisation and the national leaders' development (findings 1.1, 1.2, and 4.2). The insights of this research revealed that nationalisation is not optional, and the success of the strategic leaders is contingent on developing national leaders for PO. The research contribution disclosed the demand for a sensible methodology to leadership development in critical industries such as oil and gas, healthcare, real estate development, and financial services organisations. A multilevel strategic contextual leadership development (SCL) for national and international TMT incorporates nationalisation, performance management, and effective team leadership. Setting and measuring performance objectives, actions, expected deliverables, and timely and regular feedback goes beyond the routine annual check-in (Tseng and Levy, 2019).

The contribution with the multilevel framework disclosed the direct links between the national leadership expectations, the TMT selection and composition, and the national leadership development.

## 6.3 Research limitations

The limitation of the multiple case study includes paradoxes and acknowledgement that there are no simple answers for the concerns with the methodological rigour, researcher subjectivity, and external validity (Flyvbjerg, 2006). The case study limitation has been considered during the pilot study and in the research methodology chapter. The pilot study brought to the surface the need for more than one case. The multiple case selection identified the organisational industry (non-oil related and knowledge-based related) and hiring professionally qualified CEOs and TMT. The

multiple case study sample consisted of three different sectors, different organisational sizes, and a different number of participants**.**

The theoretical, methodological, and practical limitations are discussed in the following sections**.**

## 6.3.1 Theoretical Limitation

The research questions were broad. The research explores the significance of the contextual influences on the strategic leadership of pluralistic organisations (healthcare, real estate, and financial services) in the Middle Eastern context. The limitation is in the broadness of the research questions. The questions did not specify the internal or external context (Osborn and Marion, 2009; Muna, 2011; Oc, 2018). The interview questions included questions about the participants background, their CEO leadership effectiveness and what does account as the organisational outcome.

The research questions created exploratory-oriented answers. The answers to open questions reflected participants' perception, understanding, and actions which required the participants' feedback to clarify, verify and identify the rationale for the relationships between the context-organisation-strategic direction and the individuals (Agee, 2009). The 57 semi-structured interviews generated a large amount of data. Therefore, the strategy of analysis of empirical data is critical and needed the researcher's subjectivity and the participants' involvement with the case. The cautious realist-constructionist stance of the researcher required numerous rounds of data analysis. While during the results reporting the focus was on: How much to make the report a story? How much to iterate in each case report? How much to formalise generalisations?

Research on PO is limited and mainly in healthcare (Bres and Raufflet, 2013) in the Middle East (Bakr Ahmad et al., 2009). Because of this limitation, the literature reviewed, and references are not limited to pluralistic organisations.  Organisational pluralism in this research included organisations with industries that require specific professional qualifications in healthcare, real estate, and financial services in the UAE. The four organisations in this research were considerably more than the industry domain; internally, they are large and complex organisations with historical background and non-conventional reporting to several internal and external authorities**.**

## 6.3.2  Practical limitations

Participants from different cultural backgrounds used different terminology to discuss leadership styles (e.g., the word 'people' instead of 'teams'; 'our fathers' to describe the national leadership). The diversity in this research is extended to bilingual participants.  Several Arabic speaking participants used Arabic and English. Knowing that I am bilingual the potential for misunderstanding was addressed during the interview by reviewing the English transcripts with the Arabic quote in brackets (Temple, Edwards, and Alexander, 2006). All participants' feedback included clarifications of intended meanings.

Two additional practical implications were identified while conducting this present research. First, the contextualising of the field work that is based on Western theories in non-Western context, and the researcher previous experiences.  Second, my interpretations on contextualisation fieldwork have been shaped by the Western theorists and methodologists.  There is a need to recognise the legitimacy and usefulness of exploratory non-Western research or not entirely Western organisations increase the importance of subjectivity (Scott-Jackson et al., 2012). Recognising contextualisation as an integral part of the field work and the researcher previous experiences.

## 6.3.3  Contextual framework limitations and significance

The limitation of the multiple cases in the context of a specific country, during a specific period of deregulation, may reflect that the findings are limited to those characteristics.  This limitation may introduce advantages and disadvantages. The advantages are: first, the framework included the country-level context, which can be replicated in other countries; second, three subunits are considered within the external context:  the main unit (country level), the economy, policies and reform, the industry, and the national culture and national leadership expectations.

The disadvantages are related to the risk of overlooking broader patterns. First, the distinctive environment may dominate the focus and cause unintended limitations to the interpretation of the specific context (Kessler and Bach, 2014).  Second, research and practice need to be cautious when generalizing the developed theoretical framework beyond similar contexts. Third, the framework can be limited to multicultural organisations. Fourth, the framework reflected the relationship between the dynamic context of change and the PO context, which may reflect that the framework can be generalised only in similar dynamic and changing contexts. However, Walter

et al. (213: 319) suggested that 'it is the fit between the environment and an organisation's strategic priorities that matters for organisational performance and not so much the level of environmental uncertainty or dynamism, per se'.

## 6.4 Research process

Three aspects of the overall research process may have introduced limitations: selecting the research cases, recruiting participants, and analysing the data collected. Access to the participating organisation was based on a sampling strategy and being opportunistic about gaining access (detailed in Chapter 3). For example, seizing introduction opportunities to prospect organisations was applied to achieve access to two cases (Case 2 and Case 3). Recommendations and access were given by Board members of the publicly listed participating organisations, after gaining organisational approval for participation, (subject to keeping organisation names anonymous).

The primary data collection method was semi-structured interviews, with participants interested in participating and providing supporting documents. The interviews resulted in immense transcripts that required multiple revisions to ensure that the data analysis was free from researcher bias and reflected the participants' views (King, 2018). In addition, participants' observations and comments on the interview transcripts were obtained.

Automated dictation was used during the interview to guarantee that the notetaking was comprehensive. While this was technically new and challenging to review and edit, it provided accurate recordings of participants' words.

The data collection methods produced big data that could not have been reduced manually. The software was therefore employed to store all data, interview details, and secondary documents. I attended two virtual workshops with the software providers to utilise the advanced data management, analysis, and reporting features to help avoid mistakes. The advantage of the software, besides managing data, is the easy access to quotes with a good level of accuracy. The disadvantage is the temptation to focus on quantitative research, such as the number of codes. Identifying these risks was mitigated by keeping close to the data, continuously reviewing the transcripts, and maintaining the meanings beyond the number of codes.

## 6.5  Research evaluation

Due to the inadequacies of the human senses, observing can be an interpretive process; it cannot be observed directly or accurately. Hence, a cautious and critical attitude was adopted to construct the context of the organisation story (Blaikie and Norman, 2010: 93). The objective of the research evaluation that was discussed in Chapter 3 (section 3.4.5) was to critique how the execution of the research influenced the quality of the research, and what steps I have added or avoided to ensure the research credibility, integrity, transferability, and the privacy and confidentiality of the cases and participants.

### 6.5.1  Credibility

The credibility of the qualitative data can be claimed when others can recognise experiences after reading about them (Guba and Lincoln, 1994).  Qualitative credibility is achieved by following five steps during this research and clarifying the research method.  First, credibility was acquired by explaining the clear research strategy and the consistency of the inductive analysis process. Second, triangulation is conducted to improve credibility: the methodological triangulation was applied during data collection by having multiple sources of data, during data analysis, and the continuous review of transcripts. Third, communication with participants was accomplished for feedback and comments, sharing the draft reports and draft framework, and including the participants comments (Cutcliffe, 1999).   Finally, triangulation was used in a later phase, during the interpretation and reporting of the cases.  The research informants are practitioners who have provided meaningful feedback on the framework.  For example, the emergent themes of the national leadership expectations were endorsed by (Case 1 H3 CEO, H4 CEO, H1 CEO).  CEO delegation of authority was reviewed considering the feedback from Case 3 Chairman and CEO. TM21 of Case 4 critically reviewed the case report and the model, incorporating suggestions regarding the role of the CEO in TMT interaction**.**

### 6.5.2  Research integrity and quality

Capturing 'how' context impacts the strategic leadership in pluralistic organisations in multiple case studies requires rigorous design (Yin, 2013).  The rigour in this qualitative case study starts with choosing the strategic leadership in a pluralistic organisation (four cases) and identifying the units of analysis as the CEO and TMT (Stake, 2013).  I collected data through interviews, direct on-site observations, and documents. The data collection phase was intense and demanded

systematic data management at the beginning of Case 1. I used technology to maintain a database for each case separately, organised by the case name, and included the following:

1. Case background, when and where the visited sites, the list of participants, and the interviews with notes of cancellation or re-scheduling. Participants' contact details and information.

2. The interview questions, on-site observations, and communication (mostly emails from and to participants). By keeping a record of modification in any interview question. The number of questions answered by each participant.

3. Audit records of questions modification, careful observations. Evidence of systematically reviewing and familiarisation with all research participants.

4. Reflection and diary notes.

Data analysis is the core of building the multiple case study. First, for within-case analysis, I developed the individual case themes and report. Second, I assembled the cases in the cross-case synthesis. Rigour was achieved by the trustworthiness of the data collection, data management, and data analysis. The concurrent data collections of 57 interviews, preliminary analysis, and reflection during the first two cases facilitated replicating the third and fourth cases (Stake, 2013). Third, the triangulation across multiple case studies assured clarity, avoided bias, and could be conducted at different stages of the research design (Flick, 2004). Denzin's (2011). Four types of triangulations are data triangulation, investigator triangulation, theoretical triangulation, and methodological triangulation. Two types were applied to ensure the credibility of the research:

1- **Theoretical triangulation** uses several theoretical schemes to interpret data and enriches the phenomenon. Using more than one theory to analyse data may support the findings (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011).

2- **Methodological triangulation** deployed more than one source to collect data to strengthen the validity of the findings. This technique was used with this multiple case study. Yin described data triangulation as a corroboratory strategy: having multiple sources supports the construct validity of the case study (Yin, 2013). Various sources of evidence are essential to provide various measures of the same phenomenon (Stake, 2013). For example, during the interviews, a noticeable discrepancy emerged in the number of hospitals in the network, the number of former CEOs, and the number of employees (which

varied from 17,000 to 19,000). Although gathering quantitative values was not the aim of this research, the accuracy of the interpretations was fundamental

In the field observations, reflections, participant reviews, and feedback strengthened the interpretation with detailed descriptions of the context of the PO. The methodological triangulation enriched the data collection and analysis to maintain what Yazan (2015) described as the instrumental advantage of the multiple case study.

### 6.5.3 Transferability of the research

In chapter three, I addressed the methodological strategy to ensure the transferability of the research by case selection, analytical generalisation (addressed above), and cross-case analysis of four different organisations.  I applied the instrumental thematic analysis in multiple case study (Barratt et al., 2011).

The transferability of this research to different pluralistic or standardised organisations are demonstrated by.

1- The applied case selection strategy addressed the sampling bias in a large organisation (Case 1 and Case 3), where the snowballing recruitment of interviewees was possible. Snowballing sampling identifies initial research participants who help identify additional participants (King et al., 2018). The sample became more significant as the study continued. Triangulation of data was applied to mitigate the risk of sampling bias in snowballing sampling, such as omission or inclusion.

2- As detailed in Chapter three, the selection rationale of four pluralistic organisations, included three different industries and different sizes (Houghton et al., 2015). Transferability of findings is relevant to other domains of the industry: technology, communication, and other PO industries.  Organisations may benefit from the research to help develop their leaders to create a culture that promotes strategic contextual leadership under increased levels of contextual dynamism.  The hybrid framework of strategic leadership effectiveness can be functional in the selection of strategic leaders. The framework is needed to decrease the prediction of the suitability of the CEO, reduce the turnover of CEOs and TMT members, reduce uncertainty, and advance organisational efficiency.

### 6.5.4 Privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity

Three of the four participating organisations are publicly listed organisations. So, it was imperative to maintain the organisations and the participants' anonymity.

I shared confidentiality agreements with the participants and organisations. The consent forms included details of what would be done with the data, how data would be stored confidentially and safely, and how results would be anonymized. I used codes for the names of the organisations and the individuals to protect their anonymity. In addition, the case sponsors were provided with a printout of the individual case reports.

The case study notes, reports, and websites are available for the examiners to maintain the confidentiality of the organisations and the participants.

## 6.6 Future Research

The hybrid strategic contextual leadership (SCL) framework highlighted the need for future research in pluralistic organisations to contribute to the availability of relative and tailored strategic and contextual leadership research. The systematic studies about the failure of the CEO's attention to strategic and contextual leadership gained the attention of theorists, researchers, and practitioners. The strategic leadership theories and empirical research reflected heroic images of the CEOs who are solely responsible for the organisational effectiveness and outcomes. The SCL framework showed the contextual influences on the strategic leaders, their effectiveness, and PO outcomes.

There is a need for future research that is multilevel strategic contextual leadership that is specifically designed in PO organisation with a focus on:

- Specific research questions to identify each external context central unit (economy, industry, and national culture) impact on the organisation and the strategic leaders (Osborn et al., 2014).
- Qualitative multiple case study with multiple sources of data collection. In addition to the interviews, a survey method to draw conclusions based on a more comprehensive and deeper understanding of the strategic leadership effectiveness in the external and internal contexts of their organisation (Kurzhals, 2020; Samimi et al., 2020).
- Research that shows how access to international education may reduce the cultural gap between Western and non-Western leadership values. In this research, 70% of TMT participants were Western educated. The strategic contextual leadership framework

showed a decreased discrepancy between Western and Eastern leadership values. Recent research showed the Anglo cluster (United Kingdom, Australia, and other English-speaking countries) values performance-driven leadership (House et al., 2013). Studies showed that values of the Middle Eastern leaderships' perspectives are more Westernised than in the past decade (Dorfman et al., 2012; Javidan et al.; 2006; Kabasakal et al., 2012; House et al., 2013).

- The pluralistic organisational structure includes the reporting hierarchy and corporate governance (Sorsa and Vaara, 2020). This research voiced the call for more research on the importance of corporate governance and ethical practices in pluralistic organisations (Mir, 2020; Lai, 2014). In addition, there was a loud call from several participants for research into the ethicality of practices (mainly healthcare) (Hussain et al., 2019).

- Board members and Chairmen in the four cases called for research into the Board's conflicts of interest. A recent study alerted regulators, policymakers, practitioners, and organisations in Middle Eastern countries to further corporate governance reforms and enforcement and increase institutional pressure (Iren and Tee, 2017; Garas and ElMassah, 2018).

- The strategic and contextual leadership prerequisite are standardised and comprehensive definitions of leadership effectiveness and organisational outcomes to assess the leadership effectiveness (House, et al. 2013; Hussain et al., 2019; Alkheyi et al., 2020). This research outlined the effectiveness of the strategic leaders as advancing the human resources and processes efficiencies to achieve performance excellence, secure positive financial results, and advance national leadership development while maintaining people-oriented leadership. Researchers reported that it is challenging for practitioners seeking to follow the effectiveness of strategic leaders and researchers attempting to assess the existing strategic leadership research (Latham, 2014). While it does not require outstanding leadership to rationalise resources and processes. what is needed is a comprehensive understanding of how strategic leaders can create the required context for TMT to perform effectively and meet the expectations of the multiple stakeholders (Luciano et al., 2020).

- As shown in the hybrid final strategic contextual leadership framework, the most evidenced results of this research pointed towards the human capital element in more than 27 themes. For example, the themes of the predecessor CEOs, the internal and external

CEOs, the CEO-TMT interface, and the TMT-TMT interaction dynamic. Future research on the role of strategic human resources could advance the theory and practice of selecting strategic leaders (Waxin et al., 2018; Alkheyi et al., 2020).

●

## 6.7 Reflection

At the beginning of the MSC, I headed the human resources and administration departments of Case 4 PIF.  I presented the research proposal to the chairman and the CEO, and they agreed to a partial financial sponsorship of the research.  The conditions of the research sponsorship were as follows:

- The financial sponsorship covered 70% of the tuition fees.
- Outstanding and exceeding target performance ranking is a requisite for eligibility.
- Sponsored postgraduate employees will commit to a minimum of 3 years of employment with the organisation.
- If the sponsored employees national/expatriate resign before the end of the committed three years of employment, they will reimburse the sponsorship tuition paid by the employer.

I received this partial sponsorship with gratitude and confidence in choosing the research topic, problem, and purpose.

'The choices we make and type of work we want to do as scholars are not just intellectual ones, they are intricately interwoven with who we are, concerning others, and have political consequences in terms of our identities and careers' (Cunliffe, 2009:  96).  Anne Cunliffe is an academic author; in her reflection, she described the shift in her identity from a scholar to a practitioner consultant.  I found Cunliffe's experience relatable to mine as a practitioner and a researcher.

When I started this research, I was confronted with the dichotomy of qualitative versus quantitative research.  Quantitative leadership research is dominant and breeds confidence in the readers' minds.  I was confident that practitioners would better receive quantitative analysis.  For example, the financial services organisation is more related to statistics and numbers than descriptive results.  My rationale was to demonstrate the research results in numbers.  Quantifying the results

may be accepted more than qualitative research. However, transparency, authenticity, and relevancy were the bases for my motivation in conducting qualitative research.

As a human resources and leadership development consultant practitioner, I relied on my MBA studies, executive education, and business cases and books. As a practitioner-researcher, I based my arguments on leadership theories. The strategic leadership theories considered the executives' personality traits impact their strategic choices (Hambrick, 1984). They referred to the study as the' black box' of the executive in 1984. Hambrick's 'Black Box' was detected during interviews with CEOs and TMTs in this present research. Moreover, the same authors confirmed the need to study executives' dynamics, alignment, or misalignment in the latest revision of Upper Echelon (Cannella Jr, 2001; Hambrick and Mason, 1984; Hambrick, 2007; Hambrick, 2015).

In her article about the researcher and practitioner divide, Empson concluded that Hambrick and other academics who engaged directly with practitioners deviated from the institutionalised academic identities (Empson, 2013). I disagree with Empson's views, as when academics write about the research-practice divide, they examine themselves. Thus, their theoretical contribution included the practitioner's perspective. As the researcher in this present study, I identified the restraints that may limit the researcher's stance. My objective was to decontaminate the practitioner who supported the results with deliverables and actions. As a researcher, I support statements and arguments with theories and research, thus making any claim directly relevant. Also, I gained a superb tool and learned how to argue, communicate, and support my ideas with knowledge. This shift from practitioner to researcher is supported by successful access to leading public organisations. The participants' interest in my research was an incentive that exceeded my expectations.

The researcher's stance as a constructionist requires profound knowledge to bridge the human resources practitioner and the constructionist researcher trying to gain the trust, access, and information from other practitioners. Interpretation of others' experiences without bias in perpetual data collection and analysis is not made in the traditional sense of understanding another person's intention or meaning. Instead, it is done to introduce possible ways of seeing and being, which gives me a new capacity as an instrument (Cunliffe, 2016).

The philosophical and methodological stances are the basis of my identity as a researcher. I adopted intuitive and critical thinking to bridge my research and practice. The interpersonal skill that I assumed were based on personality assessment. I interacted with others diplomatically, sympathetically and in a friendly way. Yin's case study comprises these basic rules: plan, prepare, write, and review the participants' information and questions (Yin 2013). I kept an open mind and a flexible calendar. At work, my colleagues were supportive of the research. Some of the recommended people volunteered to introduce me to other organisations. A participating CEO said that he was envious of my focus on the DBA during organisational change and uncertainty. I related to his vulnerability and experience of fear of unknowingness. Uncertainty forced us to ask more profound questions about who we are and what we are doing (Cunliffe, 2018).

My outlook calendar was crowded with meetings, names, and notes during data collection. I noticed that meetings with CEOs, Chairmen and Board of Directors were on time, lasted longer than the scheduled time, and in some cases, second and follow-up meetings were scheduled. On the other hand, most of the interviews with the top management teams were rescheduled multiple times, and many were cancelled after three or four rescheduling. TMT3 shared that the CEOs and Chairmen have the time because the TMTs do all their work.

The barrage of face-to-face interviews with several participants was seized when the opportunities arose (Case 1 Chairman, Group CEO and Deputy CEO, Case 3 Chairman, Director of the Board, and CEO). The original time allocated for the interviews was an hour for each discussion; however, some interviews lasted for more than three hours on multiple occasions, discussing the misalignment of the Chairman, the Board, and the CEO. Chairman of Case 1 answering the research questions stirred reflections about his start as a CEO in Case 4. Another example, Case 3 chairman, reflected on his start as a CEO and the difference between the two roles. He asked his office manager to organise a second interview. The same situation reoccurred during the interview with a Director of the Board. The participants' interest in strategic leadership in their organisation was demonstrated by referring me to other organisations and participants. They wanted to tell their stories to an unbiased listener. However, confusing experiences result when a participant seeks information about other interviewees or diverges to a psychoanalysis session. I provided support, guidance, and referrals at the end of the interviews and focused on the interview questions and the research (Robinson, 2014). I evaluated and analysed interviewee

skills, performance, and personalities as a practitioner. As an instrument in this research, I focused on conveying the participants' raw views. My characteristics as an interviewer were beneficial, and I did not ask or seek any confidential information.

Nevertheless, the 'elites' shared critical and personal information. As a researcher, I concentrated on the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants. Confidential data was kept in a reflective journal. Reflection and reflexivity must be taught as part of the interview training practices in qualitative research.

## Moving on to consultancy from reflection to reflexivity

To become the consultant, business author, and mentor I aim to be, I collected and read business stories and case studies and wrote about how we live and work. Moon defined reflection as the mental process with purpose and outcome in which manipulation of meaning is applied to relatively complicated or unstructured ideas in learning or problem solving for which there is no obvious solution. Making sense and meaning is equally essential to understanding (Moon, 2013).

At the beginning of this research, I selected the cautious realist and the constructionist epistemology. However, asking why not the contemporary critical theory or any other ontology was essential to finalise the qualitative methodology. The cautious realist stance fits with my research and complements the constructionist. I integrated strategic and contextual leadership theories in a pluralistic data collection and analysis method as a constructionist. The pluralism of the engaged scholar identity influenced the strategy I developed during the multiple case study. Plurality advances several competing goals as participants seek divergent organisational success (Smith and Lewis, 2011).

This transformative learning experience of a qualitative researcher needed a deeper form of thinking. Reflexivity is the researcher's awareness while conducting the research and how this is influenced by the purpose of the study, enabling me, the researcher, to acknowledge how I affect both the research processes and outcome (Haynes, 2012). Cunliffe (2002) described reflexivity in management as the humming integration of head, hand, and heart to tell the kind of thoughtful scholarship that leads to the new practice. Reflexivity is thinking about how our thinking came to be. As a researcher interviewing and meeting with the research informants necessitated direct observations, reflections, and analytical memos.

The personal research plan revealed that combining the sense-making, critical thinking, reflection, feedback and integrating the change as a professional and a researcher is significant to achieve the objectives.  Many participating CEOs asking to meet more than once is an indicator of the successful approach of the engaged researcher.  The research aim, strategy, and actions to conduct the research were very well received.  The researcher's plan is a hybrid plan.  It is a combination of writing and consulting.

# Appendix A: Appendix A 1 Research participants consent forms

**Henley**
**Business School**
UNIVERSITY OF READING

## Consent form

### Context impact on strategic leadership effectiveness in pluralistic organisations

1. I have read and had explained to me by *Ergham Al Bachir* the information sheet relating to the project and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

2. I agree to the arrangements described in the information sheet insofar as they relate to my participation.

3. I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw from the research project at any time.

4. I agree to the primary data being used in publications directly related to this research. I understand that data will be retained securely for this purpose, after which it will be destroyed.

5. I have received a copy of this consent form and of the accompanying information sheet.

6. I am aged 18 or older.

**Name of participant:** ………………………………………

**Signed:** ………………………………………………………

**Date:** …………………………………………………………

**Contact details of Researcher:**

**Ergham Al Bachir**

**Appendix A 2: Interview protocol**

| Interview question | Theoretical constructs |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Can you share how you were selected? How long have you been in this position? And some background on you and the organisation? | PO structure and background<br><br>CEO and TMT selection context and individuals' background.<br><br>(Carpenter et al., 2004, Hambrick and Mason, 1984) |
| 2. Describe the current PO structure and the reporting hierarchy? | PO internal context. CEO authority in shaping PO hierarchal structure, the strategic direction of the organisation (Hambrick and Mason, 1984, Finkelstein et al., 2009) |
| 3. Does the nationalization of jobs impact the selection of TMT members? | PO internal context, selection o CEOs and TMT (Ryan, 2016 ; Forstenlechner, 2011) |
| 4. How did you select your TMT? Can you describe your relationship with the TMT? | CEO role in selecting the TMT, CEO, and TMT relationships (Wiersema and Bantel, 1992, Finkelstein et al., 2009). CEO-TMT interface (Carmeli et al., 2012, Ling et al., 2008, Georgakakis et al., 2019) O-TMT shared responsibilities (Yukl and Mahsud, 2010). |
| 5. Can you describe the organisational culture? | PO internal culture (House, 2002; House, 2013) |
| 6. How do you define your/ CEO leadership effectiveness? | Strategic leadership effectiveness defined by the participants (Yukl, 2008, Yukl, 2012) |
| 7. How long have you been in this position? Can you describe your relationship with other TMT members? | TMT composition, relationships, and communication (Hambrick, 2015; Finkelstein, 2009; Carmeli, 2011) |
| 8. How do you define your organisational outcomes? Can you share any challenges that have or may affect your ability to deliver? | Definition of organisational outcomes and identifying any challenges facing CEOs and TMT to deliver the contextual influences. (Osborn, 2014; Osborn, 2009; Smith, 2007; Osborn, 2002). |

**Appendix A 3– Lists of interviews**

| # | Number of Interviews | Job Title | Nationality |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Case 1 PHC** | |
| 1 | 2 | Chairman | UAE national |
| 2 | 3 | Deputy group CEO | UAE national |
| 3 | 2 | Group CEO | Australian |
| 4 | 2 | Group CFO SEHA | Australian |
| 5 | 2 | Chief Strategy, Performance and Business intelligence | UAE national |
| 6 | 1 | Chief Maintenance Officer COM | UAE national |
| 7 | 1 | Chief Information Officer | UAE national |
| 8 | 1 | Deputy Chief Financial Officer | UAE national |
| 9 | 1 | Head of Marketing | Syrian/USA |
| 10 | 1 | Chief Operation Officer | USA |
| 11 | 2 | CEO SKM | UAE national |
| 12 | 2 | COO SKM | UAE national |
| 13 | 1 | CMO SKM | UAE national |
| 14 | 2 | ACFO SKM | Jordanian |
| 15 | 1 | CHRO SKM | UAE national |
| 16 | 1 | CEO TWM Hospital – Al Ain city | UAE national |
| 17 | 1 | Chief of Nurse- Project manager | South African |
| 18 | 1 | CEO Women Hospital | USA |
| 19 | 1 | CEO DAF | UAE national |
| 20 | 2 | CEO AHS | UAE national |
| | 30 | | |
| | | **CASE 2 – VHC** | |
| # | Number of Interviews | Job Tile/responsibility | Notes/comments |
| 1 | 2 | CEO2 | Indian |
| 2 | 1 | COO- Health Bay | British |
| 3 | 2 | Group Finance Controller | Palestinian |
| 4 | 1 | Chairman of AAH the holding company | Canadian/Moroccan |
| 5 | 2 | CEO1 | British |
| 6 | 1 | Group CFO | Lebanese |
| 7 | 1 | CEO DHCC | UAE national |

| # | Number of interviews | Job Title | Nationality | Other events/comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Case 3 RED** | | | | |
| 1 | 1 | Chairman | UAE National | |
| 2 | 1 | Board of Director | UAE National | |
| 3 | 2 | CEO | UAE National | |
| 4 | 1 | CIO and CSO | UAE National | |
| 5 | 1 | CHRO | UAE National | |
| 6 | 1 | COO | UAE National | |
| 7 | 1 | Head of Sales | Indian | |
| **Case 4 PIF** | | | | |
| # | Number of interviews | Job Title | Nationality | Other events/comments |
| 1 | 1 | Chairman | UAE National | |
| 2 | 1 | CEO1 | British | |
| 3 | 1 | CEO 2 | New CEO | |
| 4 | 1 | COO | French national | |
| 6 | 1 | CSO | Moroccan | |
| 7 | 1 | CFO | Lebanese | |
| 8 | 1 | CRO | Moroccan | |

**Appendix A 6-4- The Pilot study – A holistic single case study**

The pilot study was conducted to assess the research design and to confirm the research case selection criteria. The research question was, 'How does the context impact CEOs leading their TMT to achieve organisational outcomes?' The how question explored the distinctive cultural context's impacts on the CEO and TMT members. The study was conducted at an industrial real-estate development organisation (ICD). The research design was a single holistic case study. The case study highlighted the impact of the external context on the organisation context, the individuals, and the organisational outcomes. The emergent framework showed the emergent impact of the contexts (external and internal) on the individuals at the top layer of the organisation, CEO, and TMT (Hambrick et al., 2005; Osborn, 2002). First, by considering strategic leadership where different individuals' actions contribute to organisation outcomes (House, 2013). Second, this process allowed the researcher to focus on the actions of participants, not their demographics. Third, strategic leadership was the core theory and contextual leadership was the lens that guided the study of the roles and effectiveness of the CEO and TMTs in their context over time. The selection of the single case study approach was considered to collect the data through semi-structured interviews. The research question is 'how' CEO and TMT interact in the specific organisation context (Yin, 2013). The case study design was initially selected to highlight the external context impacts on the organisational internal context impact and the strategic leaders (Sanders, 2011, 41). The selection of the method did not change after the implementation of the pilot study (Buchanan and Bryman, 2007).

**Pilot case study: Industrial real estate development organisation (IDO)**

The selected sample is an industrial real estate development organisation based in UAE. The CEO is a national. All employees, and the TMT members, are m. Access to the organisation premises was easy. IDO location is in the middle of the desert and required more than four hours of transportation for each site visit. The criteria for selecting the pilot case were based on the following criteria: (1) the organisation's set up and function is relevant to the knowledge-based economic direction; (2) a pluralistic organisation with multiple actors and objectives (industrial real-estate development company); (3) employs national and international CEOs and TMT. Access to interview the participants more than once was a random criterion. Miles and Huberman (2014) stated that the unit of analysis is a phenomenon occurring in a bounded context. The context is in effect, the unit of analysis. The pilot study deployed an inductive strategy which allowed the theory to emerge from the data (Gioia, 2013, 15-31).

**Pilot data collection**

The holistic case study data collection consists of on-site observations, semi-structured interviews, and documents provided by the participating CEO. The semi-structured face-to-face interview was the primary source of the data. The company provided the secondary data, including the organisation structure, the policies and the procedures manual, and the TMT profiles. All interviews were conducted at the participants' offices at the company remote site.

**Pilot data analysis**

The inductive strategy was selected for the data analysis. I worked with the data from the ground up, following the analysis procedure holistically and categorically to develop the case description, examining the plausible explanations, and searching for patterns. The interpretation of the inductive data analysis is coupled with triangulation. This inductive strategy and the flexible overlapping approach of data collection and analysis enriched the data with the direct observations, participants feedback and comments, and researcher reflections (Miles, 2015; Houghton). The inductive research demonstrated by linking the contextual impact and the social expectation on the CEO and the TMT leadership effectiveness and, consequently, the organisational outcome (Yin, 2013). Emergent patterns were noticeable during the multiple reviews of the interview transcripts. Table 3.2 shows a sample of the pattern and the emergent patterns. All participants were asked to describe how and when they were selected, their background, and their roles. The TMT selection and the organisational outcomes were asked.

**Pilot findings and discussions**

Table 3.2 shows a sample of the IDO vignette. The CEO and COO are at the top, followed by a horizontal hierarchy of the TMT. The TMT does not have any form of authority in the current structure, internally (within their departments or interdepartmental) and externally (shareholders and policymakers). Instead, the TMT create alliances where individuals align their actions and the actions of their teams to increase effectiveness and reflect their CEO's credibility and effectiveness in the community (Carmeli, 2012; House, 2013 #2800).

**Appendix A 5 Pilot case study vignette**

| Theme | CEO 1 | COO | TM1 | TM2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **TMT selection** | Focus on skills and knowledge to attract. Flexibility, diversity, and alignment. | TMT selection and effective retention skills. Gaining the trust of shareholders, CEO. | The hiring decision is with the CEO and COO | The hiring decision is with the CEO and Board |
| *Interview extracts* | 'Role diversity and fluidity. Willingness to work in harsh conditions. Adaptable and the most important is fit in factor'. | We look for expertise education and track record. The most important is owning the mistakes things go wrong in our organisations'. | 'Experience, knowledge and resilience to fit in and gain the trust of the CEO'. | 'Engineers are hired in UAE for technical skill and execution'. |
| **Emergent National culture and national leadership expectations** | Leadership is linked to national culture and national leadership expectations. | Leadership is effective actions and ownership. | Leadership built on trust and buy in. | Effective processes to deliver projects on time. |
| *Interview extracts* | 'I am loyal to our national leaders; I care about a good outcome and image of our family name'. | 'CEO leads our shareholders' I lead by directing them, a black and white leadership'. | 'Delegatory by nature, trusting us to deliver'. | 'The CEO is driving the people and the results'. |
| **Organisation outcomes defined by participants** | Shareholders' value Financial returns Growth & IPO | Growth Shareholders' value Financial returns | Shareholders' value Financial returns | Financial returns |
| *Interview extracts* | 'The reputation of IDO in the community and the satisfaction of the national shareholders'. | 'Stability and profitability CEO fear of failing, he is working for the extended family and community'. | 'We deliver the CEO vision; we succeed if we align and trust each other'. | 'Our results rely on delivering our projects on time'. |

The secondary data source included the organisational state, hierarchal structure, the diversity of the TMT, the roles, and the organisational outcome. The cross verification between the interviews' transcripts and the documents provided the evidence that the professional TMT objective to deliver collectively is dominant.

The identification of the impact of the external context on the organisational context and the strategy was confirmed by the participants' reviews and feedback of the case report. The

organisational reputation in the community and the satisfaction of the shareholders are the top priority of the CEO and the TMT.

The pilot study served my aim to explore and understand the impact of the context on leadership, test the viability of the case design empirically, and explore my research skills and interests. The results pointed the researcher toward strategic and contextual leadership. All participants stressed that gaining trust is important and linked it to the national culture, and national leadership expect and team leadership.

In conclusion, the pilot study confirmed the importance and interest in strategic and contextual leadership research. The theoretical and empirical contributions to the relevant regional research are needed. The findings of the case study are a combination of strategic, contextual, and cross-cultural leadership. The pilot emergent framework revealed a unique opportunity to advance the understanding of the CEO and TMT leadership in pluralistic organisations in the UAE.

**Pilot study practical and methodological limitations**

During the pilot study, while the national CEOs are cautious about prioritising and hiring of nationals, they are challenged with to find and attract national engineers.

- Participants were asked to describe CEO leadership and effectiveness. Three participants answered conservatively, one TMT did not answer and thought the question is not controversial and may cause him problems. The international TMT participants were concerned to describe the CEO leadership openly.
- The interview with high profile CEOs highlighted the cultural sensitivity to audio recording the interviews.

**The pilot study conclusion**

The case study design is appropriate for the research question. However, for the research, a multiple case study is more suitable to reflect the diversity of the organisations. In addition, the replication of cases and the across case analysis may address the issue of generalizability of one case with a small number of TMT.

- Importance to have a robust strategy to select the cases to reflect the organisations with knowledge-based function.
- The need for theoretical propositions strengthens the contextual condition analysis and explains what is being examined (Yin, 2013).
- Develop a strategy for systematic data collection to achieve within-case analysis and cross-case analysis.

- Obtaining data on processes proved to be difficult to confidentiality of the processes. The pilot study experiences the organisational processes was not included in the data collection framework, including organisation structure, state, and location.
- Keeping the trustworthiness of data in mind during data collection can be achieved by the researcher's reflection, field notes, and the participants' examination of the data. The rich data collected from one case confirmed the research methodology, the multiple case study as the research design, the hybrid data collection method, and the inductive strategy for the data analysis.

**Appendix B 1 - Case 1 TMT participants demographics**

| # | Name | Education | Nationality | Tenure | Function | Position |
|---|------|-----------|-------------|--------|----------|----------|
| 1 | Deputy CEO | UAE Bachelor | UAE | 15 | Corporate | Deputy CEO |
| 2 | H1 CEO | US Master | UAE | 10 | Medical | Hospital CEO |
| 3 | H2 CEO | UK Master | UAE | 10 | Corporate | Hospital CEO |
| 4 | H3 CEO | US Bachelor | UAE | 10 | Corporate | Hospital CEO |
| 5 | H4 CEO | Middle East Bachelor | UAE | 8 | Corporate | CEO of services |
| 6 | H5 CEO | US Bachelor | USA | 12 | Corporate | Hospital CEO |
| 7 | TM1 | Australia Bachelor | Australia | 3 | Corporate | CFO |
| 8 | TM2 | US PHD | Jordan | 11 | Corporate | Acting TM20 |
| 9 | TM3 | US Bachelor | USA | 10 | Corporate | COO |
| 10 | TM4 | South Africa Nursing diploma | South Africa | 11 | Medical | Chief Nursing |
| 11 | TM5 | US Master | UAE | 3 | Medical | H1 Chief Operation |
| 12 | TM6 | UAE Bachelor | UAE | 10 | Corporate | Chief Technology |
| 13 | TM7 | US Bachelor | UAE | 15 | Corporate | Chief Maintenance |
| 14 | TM8 | Canada Master | UAE | 12 | Medical | Chief strategy |
| 15 | TM9 | UAE Bachelor | UAE | 9 | Corporate | Human resources |
| 16 | TM10 | Canada Masters | UAE | 12 | Medical | Chief Medical |

**Appendix B 2 Codes Matrix Case 2**

| Strategic direction | A: DHCC | B: CEO 1 | C: CEO 2 | D: GCOO | E: GFC | F: CFO |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 : Budget cuts | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 : CEO Authority | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 3 : Chairman and Board of Directors role | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 5 : CEO and TMT change | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 6 : Professional TMT | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 7 : Regulatory challenges | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 8 : Restructuring and uncertainty | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| 9 : Communication | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 10 : Cultural changes | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 11 : Geopolitical context | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 12 : Highly paid CEOs and TMTs | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 13 : Hired more than needed | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 14 : Inefficient processes | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 15 : Lack of governance and ethical practice | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 16 : Lack of leadership | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 17 : Lack of trust and support | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 18 : Nationalisation challenges | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 19 : Fast tracking is counterproductive | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 20 : Immoral practices | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 21 : Professionals retention | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 22 : Research and development | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 23 : Structural challenges | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 24 : Technology | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 25 : TMT in wrong positions | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| **26 : CEO effectiveness** | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 27 : Efficiency and cost of TMT | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 28 : Efficiency of professionals | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 29 : Age is a factor in leadership | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 30 : Agility | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 3: Autonomy | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 32: Board support | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 33 : CEO network | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 34 : Clear vision and strategy | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 35 : Delegation of authority | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 36 : Efficiency of processes | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 37 : People leadership  style | 1 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 38 : National  leadership | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 39 : Team oriented leadership | 0 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 40 : Implement change | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 41 : Innovation and sustainability | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 42 : Partnerships | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 43 : Performance driven | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 44 : TMT alignment | 0 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 45 : Transparency accuracy and ethical reporting | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 46 : Trust and buy in from TMT | 0 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 47 : Turn around performance | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 48 : CEO relationship with TMT | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 50 : Good relationship | 0 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 51 : Problematic relations | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 52 : CEO selection | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 53 : CEO for Nationalisation | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 54 : Internal promotion | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 55 : International to set up | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 56 : International to transform | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 57 : Nationalisation CEO strategic responsibility | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 58 : Nationalisation | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 59 : National selection | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 60: Nationalisation has negative impact | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 61: Nationalisation has positive | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 62: Social contract to learn as a team | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **64: PO Context** | 1 | 2 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| 65: An integrated model | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 66: Governance and monitoring | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 67: Multiple reporting | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 68: Number of former CEOS | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| **69: Strategic direction** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 70 : Increase efficiency | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 71 : Increase revenue | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 72 : Integrated health system | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 73 : Investment short term model | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 74 : Moving away from the PPP | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 75 : Reduce resources | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 76 : TMT set the strategy and time line | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 77 : PO Structure | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 78 : Board role | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 79 : PO size | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 80 : unclear structure and reporting | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 81 : organisation vision | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 82 : Organisational culture | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 83 : Context of change and uncertainty | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 84 : Healthcare bullying | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 85 : My way or the high way | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 86 : Not performance driven | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 88: Nursing is not accepted by the national culture | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 89: Outdated HR monitoring attendance culture | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 90 : Tied to our society cultural values | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 91 : We work as a family | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 92 : Western doctors and patients | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 93 : Resisting strategic change | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 94 : Slow economy | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 95 : Underperforming | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 96 : PO Outcomes | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 97 : Financial growth | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 98 : Reduce cost by 15% | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 99 : Growth | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 100 : Patients satisfaction | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 101 : Performance excellence | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 102: PPP Knowledge and skills transfer | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 103 : Reputation and SCR | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 104 : Technology and innovation | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 105 : TMT Retention | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 106 : TMT Satisfaction | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 107 : TMT-CEO alignment | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 126 : Past performance impact on CEO | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 127 : Former CEO and TMT | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 129: Unrealistic time frame for healthcare | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **130 : TMT** | 1 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| 131 : Professional TMT | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 132 : TM role | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 133 : Role clarity | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 134 : TMT Communication | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 135 : TMT dedication | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 136 : TMT development | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 137 : TMT divergent | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 138: TMT effectiveness and performance | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 139 : TMT expectations | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 140 : TMT Fragmentations | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 141 : TMT Incentives | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 142 : PE and healthcare incentives | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 144 : TMT reporting lines | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 145 : TMT selection | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 146 : TMT turnover | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 147 : TMT Relationships | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 148 : TM- CEO relationship | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 149 : TMT- Middle Managers | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

**Appendix B 3 Case Template**

| Theme number | Second - order theme |
|---|---|
| **Theme 1** | **Context** |
| | Dynamic context of change and uncertainty |
| | National culture shareholders expectation |
| | Multinational organisational culture |
| | Governance and monitoring |
| | Multiple reporting |
| | Hierarchal structure and reporting |
| **Theme 2** | **CEO theme** |
| | Board role |
| | CEO delegation of authority |
| | The predecessor CEOs |
| | Past financial performance |
| | Board CEO relationship |
| | **Strategic direction** |
| | Increase efficiency of processes |
| | Increase revenue |
| | Integrated operational systems |
| | Budget reduction |
| | Moving away from the PPP |
| | Reduce headcount and cost |
| | Technology and innovation |
| | People-oriented leadership |
| | Performance driven leadership |
| | Transformational leadership |
| | |
| **Theme 3** | **TMT Theme** |
| | Problems with professional TMT |
| | TMT role |
| | TMT Communication |
| | TMT divergence and disagreement |
| | TMT effectiveness and performance |
| | TMT high retention |
| | TMT- CEO supportive relationship |
| | TM-TM relationship |
| | TMT reporting Lines |

| | |
|---|---|
| | TMT communication processes |
| | TMT structure |
| | TMT divergence and disagreement |
| | TMT composition - Tenure |
| | TMT support and alignment |
| | TMT promotions and support |
| | TMT interaction |
| | TMT-CEO support |
| | |
| **Theme 4** | **PO outcomes** |
| | Performance excellence integrated model |
| | Governance and monitoring |
| | Increase efficiency |
| | Increase revenue |
| | Positive financial results |
| | Growth (expansion in the region) |
| | Reputation in the community |
| | Technology and innovation |
| | |
| **Emergent themes** | Investment short term model |
| | Moving away from PPP |
| | Nursing is not accepted by the national culture |
| | Tied to our multinational cultural values |
| | Western doctors and patients |
| | Slow economy |

**Appendix B 4 All TMT Participants demographics and composition**

| | Participant | Education | Years in position | Tenure | Experience | Function | Case |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Deputy CEO | Local Bachelor | 3 | 14 | 18 | Corporate | |
| 2 | H1 CEO | US Master | 3 | 10 | 10 | Corporate | |
| 3 | H2 CEO | USA Bachelor | 3 | 12 | 13 | Medical | |
| 4 | H3 CEO | USA Bachelor | 3 | 13 | 15 | Corporate | |
| 5 | H4 CEO | ME Bachelor | 3 | 9 | 13 | Corporate | |
| 6 | H5 CEO | USA Bachelor | 10 | 20 | 25 | Corporate | |
| 7 | TM1 | Australian | 3 | 3 | 20 | Finance | **Case 1 PHC** |
| 8 | TM2 | USA PHD | 3 | 11 | 15 | Finance | |
| 9 | TM3 | USA Bachelor | 10 | 10 | 30 | Corporate | |
| 10 | TM4 | South African | 7 | 11 | 30 | Medical | |
| 11 | TM5 | USA Master | 3 | 6 | 6 | Medical | |
| 12 | TM6 | Local Bachelor | 9 | 13 | 15 | Corporate | |
| 13 | TM7 | USA Bachelor | 3 | 15 | 20 | Engineer | |
| 14 | TM8 | Canadian MD | 3 | 13 | 18 | Medical | |
| 15 | TM9 | Canada | 8 | 14 | 20 | Medical | |
| 16 | TM10 | Local Bachelor | 3 | 10 | 10 | Corporate | |
| 17 | TM11 | UK Bachelor | 2 | 2 | 20 | Corporate | **Case 2 VHC** |
| 18 | TM12 | ME Bachelor | 8 | 8 | 15 | Finance | |
| 19 | TM13 | Local Medicine | 6 | 12 | 12 | Corporate | |
| 20 | TM14 | ME Bachelor | 8 | 8 | 20 | Finance | |
| 21 | TM15 | US Bachelor | 5 | 5 | 20 | Finance | **Case 3 RED** |
| 22 | TM16 | Local Bachelor | 2 | 15 | 15 | Corporate | |
| 23 | TM17 | Indian Business | 7 | 7 | 15 | Corporate | |
| 24 | TM18 | USA Master | 9 | 11 | 20 | Engineering | |
| 25 | TM19 | ME MBA | 11 | 11 | 20 | Finance | **Case 4 PIF** |
| 26 | TM20 | UK Bachelor | 4 | 4 | 20 | Finance | |
| 27 | TM21 | France PHD | 4 | 13 | 30 | Corporate | |
| 28 | TM22 | Canada Bachelor | 9 | 9 | 20 | Finance | |
| 29 | TM23 | UK Bachelor | 11 | 11 | 20 | Technology | |

**Appendix B 5- Cross-Case Synthesis TMT aligned with CEOs and strategic direction**

| | Aligned and supportive TMT | Years in position | Tenure | Education | Function | Nationality |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Case 1 PHC** | | | | | | |
| **1** | Deputy CEO | 3 | 14 | UAE | Corporate | National |
| **2** | H1 CEO | 3 | 10 | USA | Medical | National |
| 3 | H2 CEO | 3 | 13 | UK | Corporate | National |
| 4 | H3 CEO | 3 | 13 | USA | Corporate | National |
| 5 | H4 CEO | 3 | 9 | Middle East | Corporate | National |
| 6 | TM1 | 3 | 3 | Australia | Finance | Australia |
| 7 | TM2 | 3 | 11 | USA | Finance | Middle East |
| 8 | TM4 | 4 | 11 | South Africa | Medical | South Africa |
| 9 | TM9 | 3 | 3 | USA | Medical | National |
| **Case 2 VHC** | | | | | | |
| 10 | TM11 | 2 | 2 | UK | Corporate | British |
| 11 | TM12 | 8 | 8 | Middle East | Finance | Middle East |
| | | | | | | |
| 12 | TM16 | 4 | 11 | USA | Engineering | National |
| 13 | TM17 | 4 | 15 | UAE | HR | National |
| 14 | TM18 | 3 | 7 | India | Sales | Indian |
| | | | | | | |
| 15 | TM20 | 3 | 3 | France | Banking | French |

**Appendix B 6 Non-aligned (neutral) TMT**

| | Participant | Education | Years in position | Tenure | Experience | Function | Nationality |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Case 1 PHC | | | | |
| 1 | TM3 | US Bachelor | 10 | 10 | 30 | Corporate | USA |
| 2 | TM8 | Canadian Medicine | 3 | 10 | 20 | Medical | National |
| 3 | TM17 | Local Bachelor | 3 | 9 | 15 | Corporate | National |
| | Case 2 VHC | | | | | | |
| 4 | TM14 | Middle East Bachelor | 8 | 8 | 20 | Finance | Middle East |
| | Case 4 PIF | | | | | | |
| 5 | TM22 | Canada | 9 | 9 | 18 | Finance | Morocco |

**Appendix B 7 TMT Opposing the CEO and the strategic direction**

| | TMT opposing | Years in Position | Tenure | Education | Function | Nationality |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Case 1 PHC** | | | | | |
| 1 | H5 CEO | 20 | 20 | USA | Corporate | USA |
| 2 | TM6 | 15 | 15 | UAE | Technology | National |
| 3 | TM7 | 3 | 15 | USA | Engineering | National |
| 4 | TM9 | 10 | 15 | Canada | Medical | National |
| | | | | | | |
| 5 | TM13 | 8 | 8 | USA | Medical | National |
| | | | | | | |
| 6 | TM15 | 7 | 7 | USA | Corporate | National |
| | | | | | | |
| 7 | TM19 | 10 | 10 | Middle East | Finance | Middle East |
| 8 | TM21 | 11 | 11 | France | Corporate | North Africa |

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