How strategic leaders facilitate public sector digitalisation:

The context of two Saudi Arabian ministries

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my dear mother and father, as well as my wife, children, brothers, and sisters.

I am eternally grateful to my beloved mother for her support and encouragement. My father has given me so very much. My wife children and siblings have been there for me constantly. Hind, my cherished wife, has never let me down and has gone above and beyond for me. My darling children, Abdulaziz, Fahad, Badr, Hussah and Salman, have been incredibly patient and always prayed for me.

From my heart, I thank every one of you.

Declaration and Disclaimer

This thesis is my own original piece of work under the supervision of Dr Roger Fullwood, Dr Julie Davies and Dr Ernest Edifor and it is based on data I collected and analysed. All extracts and non-original work have been attributed and cited. No part of this thesis has been published yet unless acknowledged or submitted for a degree elsewhere.

Abstract

Digitalisation is a product of necessity converting analogue signals to digital ones, replacing paper-based processing with digital (technology) language for effective and timely service delivery Digitalisation is a complementary activity improving customer value intentions, effective interaction, and collaboration in the value-chain delivery processes. Digitalisation enhances the modernisation of better service delivery both in public and private institutions. The digitalisation of government services symbolises a paradigm shift in governance, transforming and integrating public services for agile, holistic, and responsive government. Combining insights from the literature on strategic leadership and national cultural factors within the strategic triangle model, this research examines how strategic leaders facilitate public sector digitalisation service delivery: The context of two Saudi Arabian ministries. Specifically, it evaluates the effect of national civilization and power dynamics on strategic leadership panache employed to drive digitalisation in the selected ministries for quality public service delivery in the Saudi context (Saudi Vision 2030). The study used the two ministries to gain access to the ten participants. The participants were carefully selected because they provided needed information on the characteristic of interest as revealed in the pilot study. In addition, his selection of participants for the research was carefully shaped by his employment with a management position in a public institution in Saudi Arabia for over five years. Descriptive statistics and Multiple regression analysis analysed data. All respondents in the research are males. Considering that the researcher is male and cannot access female leaders due to cultural restrictions, it was impossible to identify an organisation with female leaders. In addition, female leaders worked in different locations inaccessible to their male counterparts. The Respondents are between 45 and 55 years old, with a mean age of 55.5. Results revealed that the Development Director, Information Technology director and human resources director had 20% of the population sampled. Working years of experience in directorship range between 5-8 years. The mean years of working experience are 6.4, mean departmental size is 27.50. Departmental sizes 25 and 30 are in the modal class.

The driver of the strategic and operational elements of digitalisation in leadership influenced quality public service delivery by 27.5%. More so, about 20% of the leadership style compliance to digitalisation aligned with Saudi Vision 2030, while 20% of the respondents placed achieving desired results by positioning the allocation of resources, both human and natural, effectively. Moreover, 75% of the respondents reported that strategic leadership are

responsible for channelling who to lead the people. The study observed that the flexible strategic archetype adopted by these ministries balances public value, operational capability and interests of the appointing authority. Hence, the strategic leadership style adopted for the digitalisation drive is engrossed in the Saudi-Vision-2030. Although the study indicated different leadership styles, leaders at the upper echelons keyed into the Saudi-Vision-2030 for digitalisation drive. Thus, transformational strategic leadership needs to be discernible through goals to influence successful digitalisation drives, such as transformational visibility, effective communication, mode of strategic leadership-drive, a channel of the drive and clearly defined roles and responsibilities. The research deduced that digitalisation has led to achieving the organisation's desired results, improving culture collaboration and cooperation, building a solid internal system and a dependable internal culture, and generating a strong social network and strong internal and external networks. Strategic leaders facilitated public sector digitalisation through a medium organisation for better service delivery. This research recommends that, for sustained successful digitalisation, leaders should be aware of the national culture in the current Saudi public sector context, accelerating growth and inter-governmental collaborations aligned to Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030. Strategic leadership must be able to operationalise the digitalisation goals set by appointing authorities with a high degree of autonomy. Further research might draw on different methodologies and stakeholder analysis using larger samples.

Keywords: Digitalisation, strategic-leadership, public sector delivery, Saudi Arabia vision 2030.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Digitalisation is a product of necessity converting analogue signals to digital ones, replacing paper-based processing with digital (technology) language for effective and timely service delivery (Andersson et al., 2022). Digitalisation is a complementary activity improving customer value intentions, effective interaction, and collaboration in the value-chain delivery processes (Kuhlmann and Bogumil, 2021). Digitalisation enhances the modernisation of better service delivery both in public and private institutions (Kuldosheva, 2021). Digitalisation is using digital technology to alter a business model to enlarge the opening that will further maximise income and value-added activities within public and private institutions (Magnusson et al., 2021). Moreover, digitalisation is seen as electronic interaction between government and citizens and internal government procedures to simplify and improve all aspects of government business (Maxwell et al., 2019).

1.2 Background Information

Digitalisation has been seen from a different viewpoint; Alvarenga et al. (2020) see digitalisation as changes related to the application of arithmetical technology in all facets of human society. Baptista et al. (2020) depict that digitalisation as somewhat "paperless" and applying digital tools to all phases of societal values. Mergel et al. (2019) deduced that virtually all sectors are influenced by digitalisation. Gebre-Mariam and Bygstad (2019) define digitalisation' as an alteration and acceptance of processes through digital technologies for effective service delivery. Past studies argued that digitalisation is the digital governance applying digital tools (such as the internet (IoT), digital platforms, social media, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), and Big Data, among others) to bring quality value services to the public ((Hinings et al., 2018). Digitalisation is transforming public services using technology to deliver efficient, transparent, and timely services. Digitalisation originates new ways of creativity, providing quality valued services and, at the same time, ensuring new relationships.

Past studies argued that the effectiveness of digitisation lies in the medium of service delivery and strategic leadership employed by the administration in the operational plan of the

delivery (Sabine and Moritz, 2021)**.** It has been argued that leadership is critical to forming and implementing strategy (Shimengah, 2018). Leadership through delivery must display a level playing ground for competitiveness and balancing. Leadership enhances service delivery, ensuring strict compliance with an organisation's strategic management policy and goal. Moreover, leadership helps an organisation execute its strategies effectively and promptly. Literature depicts how digitalisation adoption has helped leadership achieve its tasks through a medium in attaining organisation/institution service delivery and achieving objectives and goals (Sow and Aborbie, 2018). It has been argued that strategies adopted by the leadership management in its operations go a long way in achieving goals and objectives (Uwanyiligira, 2021).

Strategic management and digitalisation adoption has enhanced the leadership structure to learn, renovate and impart management skills on performance. Evidence has shown how digitalisation through strategic management employed by the leaders helped simplify many organisational complexes and interrelated operations (Wilson, 2022). Nzioki et al. (2018) argued that performance by organisations would be further enhanced where strategic leadership is efficient. Michener and Nichter (2022) contend that strategic leadership explicitly defines the resolve of the organisation by providing a clear trail towards strategy formulation, being responsive to flexibility, and ensuring balanced and competitiveness in a changing environment. This level of quality makes tactical leadership multifunctional as it aligns the organisation's internal competencies with the outer environment.

It has been evidenced how leadership strategically changes public amenity design using digital technology to present responsive, easy-to-use consumer services at a lower cost to the public (Cabral et al., (2019). Leadership aimed to build insight among public officials using the radical impact typical service platforms might have on procedures and administrative models (Gobble, 2018). Literature deduced that public service is the vital machinery of government for implementing public policies and verdicts (Clarke and Craft, 2019). Public service delivery results from the intentions and decisions of the government and public institutions, the actions undertaken, and decisions made by people employed in public establishments. Public service delivery is also commonly understood to mean the setting up of public goods or social (education, health, housing), economic (grants) or infrastructural (water, electricity) services to those who need (or demand) them. Hence, improving this area is equivalent to the growth of the economy. The application of digital governance to the functioning of the government

placed them on the trail of effective public service delivery (Guenduez et al., 2020). Tactical leadership is crucial in establishing growth and advancement of an organisation's philosophy and adopting digitisation have shown tremendous progress in this direction of quality public service delivery.

Several works on strategic leadership and service delivery cite poor strategic leadership and non-adoption of digitalisation as critical contributors to poor service delivery (Mergel et al., 2019). Drechsler and Kattel (2020) argued that most organisations that prove inadequate of meeting the quality standards of service delivery are non-digitalisation compliance. Though claimed by past studies that to deliver services efficiently and effectively, tactical leaders must have an inbuilt channel mechanism and be digitalisation compliant (Hodges, 2017). Adopting digitalisation in the operational plan by the leadership enhanced the service to the public to be more effective and timelier (OECD, 2016). Strategic Leadership that embraces digitalisation naturally showcase creativity and innovations, which are the hallmark of quality service delivery. Xanthopoulou (2021) argues that a well-established public sector provides citizens with first-class services consistently with their needs. Effective strategic leadership fulfils the public's needs in a timely and efficient manner, and digitalisation is seen as the driving force.

Digitisation is a factor to increases in efficiency across the economy. Past studies argued that the digitalisation of governance is one of many fundamental policies transforming the quality of public service from conventional to modern (Xanthopoulou and Plimakis, 2021). In recent times, governments all over the world have adopted the use of digitalisation to improve the quality of administration, especially in the public sector. In addition, digital governance offers opportunities for more collaborative and participatory relationships across stakeholders to actively shape political urgencies (Yang Li and Zhang Jin, 2012). Digitalisation, however, not only involves the transformation of the delivery of quality service but also the transformation of the work performed by public administrators. Digitalisation has shown tremendous progress in the transaction of data and exchange, and it involves replacing humans with digital technology rather than just supplementing human labour (Wadmann and Hoeyer, 2018).

It is now widely accepted that digital governance offers augmented opportunities for public service to deliver quality service to the people. Digitalisation is an influential enabling tool that addresses some of the critical barriers and challenges of the traditional approach to striving in the global economy. Digitalisation facilitates meeting the ever-growing demands

of efficiency in public service delivery. It offers the potential to collect, store, process, and spread quantities of information at a minimal cost and network, also interact and communicate across the world (Soe and Drechsler, 2018). Hence, this research is built on the hypothesis that strategic leaders expedite public sector digitalisation and service delivery using samples from the two Saudi Arabian ministries.

Past studies argued that Saudi's public sector is under constant pressure to enhance service delivery through digitalisation (Hertog, 2006). Embracing digitisation to solve public governance has proved challenging due to opposition to change management, gender mainstreaming and poor strategic implementation (Alfaraidy, 2021). Mohammed (2020) used a correlational study method to investigate the effects of strategic management techniques in European governments employed in public service delivery. The result revealed that management's impact on strategies improved performance and productivity. In 2010, the Rwandese Association of Local Government Authorities (RALGA) released a report on the contests of influencing local government service delivery in Africa. Still, digitalisation has resolved most of these challenges (OECD, 2016, Uwanyiligira, 2021). Past efforts on the e-governance revolution in Saudi Arabia's policymaking regarding digitalisation are institutionally implanted in a highly decentralised federal structure and gender imbalance (Ashraf and Nereim, 2017). This national structure is characterised by many sub-national units involved in decision-making that possess a significant degree of self-government (municipalities, counties). Nevertheless, are constitutional states (Länder) with their legislatures, administrations and judiciaries as spelt out in the Saudi Vision 2030 (Saudi 2030 policy reform) (Kinninmont, 2017).

1.3 Saudi Arabia Political Structures and Leadership Style

The political structure of Saudi Arabia is an absolute monarchy which limits almost all political rights and civil liberties, with no political parties, unions, or other types of political involvement (Grand and Wolf 2022). No officials at the national level are elected but are appointed and dismissed by a royal decree regulated by the king. He is also the commander in chief of the military (Heibach, 2021). The king combines legislative, executive, and judicial purposes and chairs the Council of Ministers (Mitchell and Alfuraih, 2018). The administration of council mandates is accountable for executive and organisational matters such as foreign and domestic policy, defence, finance, health, and education, which it administers through

numerous separate agencies. Accordingly, appointment to and dismissal from the council are prerogatives of the king. The country does not possess a legally binding written constitution, but it is governed by the Basic Law of Saudi Arabia, which was implemented by royal decree in 1992. This royal decree in 1992 enacted the Law of the Provinces, where each province is managed by a governor and a deputy, who is appointed by royal decree upon the recommendation of the Interior Minister (Heibach, 2021). The leadership structure of government administration consists of three central systems; unitary, federal, and confederate.

Although, research focusing on the gender and leadership literature in Saudi has been poorly concentrated so far (Almansour and Kempner, 2016). Hence, examining gender leadership roles and perceptions of the challenges and opportunities of women's leadership in the workplace is urgently needed. Although, in Saudi Arabia, social and cultural structures confine women's progression to leadership positions. "Saudi Arabia has a legal structure that necessitates all Saudi women to have a male legal guardian" (Halifa, 2021 p.98). This guardian (maybe a father, husband or brother) has the authority to make several choices on behalf of women. Since women do not have the legal right to take on the position of leadership in the Saudis constitution, then what are the complications to women's advancement in Saudi Arabia. "what are women's experiences of becoming leaders, and what influences their leadership practice?" (Halifa, 2021 p.72)

Al-Olyan (2016) deduced that the difficulties faced by professional women in Saudi Arabia are social, religious, cultural, and organisational. Studies argued that women's relationships with self, others, place, and work are vital influences in how they process and experience leadership. Past studies argued that the world sees Saudi Arabia's slight view of women's place in society and leadership (Alsubaie and Jones, 2017). But there is increasing global recognizance that women's empowerment is enjoying a solid surge as more and more women enter the workplace due to their higher level of education (Lloyd, 2016, Alwazzan and Al-Angari, 2020). This global awareness was boosted when King Abdullah allowed women to be assigned full members into positions of leadership in 2013 after firstly permitting 12 women members to serve as part-time advisors in the council in 2011, which the women performed creditably well (Saudi Household Economic Survey (2017), Currently, there is magnificent progress in increasing the number of Saudi's women not just in the workforce but in senior administrative positions (Halifa, 2021). Futhermore, women are part of the decision-making

process in the public and private sectors, so much so that Forbes Middle East has named nine Saudi women to its 2017 register of the 100 Most Powerful Arab Businesswomen (Halifa, 2021).

By the end of 2015, more than 350,000 Saudi women were employed in the private sector, and prospects are that reports will show that 450,000 women were used at the end of 2016 (Saudi Household Economic Survey 2017). While this is just a fraction of the number of Saudi women that could be in the workforce, these numbers represent substantial progress toward forging equality for Saudi women. Recent developments in the Kingdom, according to (Grand and Wolf, 2022), indicate that policymakers now have a clear strategy to allow women to thrive professionally and assume more significant and responsible roles in the public sphere. Vision 2030, a roadmap to the future created by the Kingdom, precisely calls for a enormous development in the status of women, driven by a new focus on education, openness, and equality. Vision 2030 offers real hope and inspiration for Saudi women in leadership positions. "Women in Saudi don't want to be left in the dark". They want the same opportunities as male leaders" Halifa, 2021). The challenge, however, for women in Saudi Arabia is accomplishing this within the traditions and laws of the country (U.S.-Saudi Arabian Business Council, 2017).

1.4 Saudi Vision 2030 And Digitalisation Drive

For the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), the desire for digitalisation is expressed through Vision 2030 (Saudi-Arabia, 2017). It must be actualised in the form of various public services, such as listing employment programmes, online job searches, e-learning services, traffic, passports and civil affairs, online payment services and online issuance of marketable registers (Saudi-Vision-2030, 2020). The current digital services in the KSA have improved the country's ranking on several global pointers. For instance, the UN e-Government Index rated the KSA at number 36 in 2014, up from number 90 in 2004 (ibid). While current online services continue to improve, there is a government drive to expand the scope of the services to include areas such as geographic information, health care and education (Saudi-Vision-2030, 2020). The government aims to improve public service quality by streamlining processes and diversifying communication channels (ibid). In addition, the government hopes that, in due course, it can support the broader use of online applications in government organisations, such as cloud applications, data-sharing platforms and HR management systems.

Another goal is to strengthen the governance of online services within the government itself (Saudi-Arabia, 2017:71). Therefore, there is sufficient justification for examining how digitalisation could benefit the KSA.

The Saudi Vision 2030 "is built around three themes: a pulsating society, a booming economy, and an ambitious nation" (Mitchell and Alfuraih, 2018). A vibrant society's first theme encompasses citizenship, healthy lives, social and health care provision, and access. Also, embedded in the improvement of cities, environmental sustainability, increase in the number of social and entertainment options, family relationships and care for families, engagement of families in their children's education, development of children's character, empowerment of society, national unity, and cultural heritage. This topic is reinforced by following Islamic principles and the importance of Islamic values and teachings, which will be the motivating factor for the Kingdom to bring its vision to fruition. The second topic emphasises a booming economy that must be education-driven, connecting education to economic growth. The sediment must focus on providing quality education and training that leads to employment outcomes for the younger generation and development in private providers in the Kingdom. This anticipates the role of quality leadership as a driving force and reaching out to the world (open for business) through digital technology. The third topic is a determined nation that is efficiently governed. The Vision recognises the importance of continuous enhancement and the need for government to improve to face new challenges. This topic highlights the need for financial and administrative transparency. These stated goals are being achieved through the National Transformation Program 2020 and the publishing of goals, plans, and performance so progress can be measured. The central theme of Saudi Vision 2023 is to place the Saudi economy as a force to be reckoned with in the World Economy, reflecting sound and forthright leadership. This is the contextual framework this study is built.

In digital revolution, several problems and hurdles come to light because there is not one instance of unilateral decision-making and implementation, but number of entities with their rights and powers. To ensure a coherent implementation of digital services throughout the country, there is the need to establish the equality among citizens, and similar processing of cases must be put in place. These actors in the multilevel system need digitalisation to improve performance, uniform standards, and shared solutions. This is a contextual framework of this research.

This digital public service delivery journey appears to be reaching a dire point (Mazzucato and Ryan-Collins, 2019). The confluence of citizens' demands for more incredible speed and more transparency in service delivery is being met by digitalisation. Also, it has helped increase the public sector's appetite to deliver services more innovatively (Montealegre et al., 2019). The study contended that the efficiency and quality of public service provision depend solely on the capacity of local authorities to adapt to solid administrative structures and processes in a fast-changing environment and increasing the demands from citizens (Al-Mushayt, 2019). Hence, the digitalisation of local service delivery now goes beyond the mere conversion of analogue data into digital formats. Local service delivery must embrace a more robust model using an effective delivery in the intervention.

There are several areas that need further research on the digital transformation of public administration in terms of local government service provision and the frontline of administrative procedures (Grand and Wolf, 2022). Reviewed literature indicated that the governance patterns are multilevel systems, and effective delivery within the local government's digitalisation processes is the key (Grand and Wolf, 2022). Digital revolution in the public sector means new ways of working with stakeholders, generating value for service delivery. Despite an increased level of government on digitalisation, its benefits are yet to be ascertained in some public services (Gupta and Heath, 2020). Like any other developing country, Saudi has historically suffered a mismatch between political aspiration and any meaningful technical delivery approach on the ground (Moshashai et al., 2018). This research thus examines how strategic leaders facilitate public sector digitalisation using evidence from two Saudi Arabian ministries.

1.5 Overview and Research Direction

The drivers of the digitalisation of public organisations have long been intricately interwoven in the strategic political, national, and social-cultural dimensions (Hofstede, 1980) of the country where the organisation is located (Nutt and Backoff, 1993). Therefore, when a nation embarks on digitalisation as a form of transformation, as has been the case with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) through Saudi Vision 2030 (Saudi-Arabia, 2017), an evaluation of the transformation becomes useful. This creates an opportunity to evaluate the interaction between leadership, strategic change and accounting for the public sector's decisions (Carter et al., 2020), in whose name transformational change takes place (Weinberg and Lewis, 2009).

According to Carter et al. (2020), strategic organisational change in public sector institutions involves calculative practices that are heavily overlapping. Hence, the process of unpicking strategic decisions requires, among other elements, evaluation of strategic leaders' approach to the transformation.

In developing countries like the KSA, the public sector is often overwhelmed with bureaucracy, hierarchy, and poor customer focus (Gelinas and Dull, 2009; Simonet, 2015). Therefore, the government created Vision 2030, which includes a program for the digitalisation of public services (Saudi-Arabia, 2017). The operationalisation of this policy meant developing the capacity to increase the use of technology while addressing the rising public activism; this has created both opportunities and difficulties for the modernisation of these public sectors (Gelinas and Dull, 2009). The transformation policy in the KSA has a crucial development indicator – creating and using digital platforms to perform public sector functions (Saudi-Arabia, 2017).

For example, in many countries, citizens can renew their passports and driving licences by simply requesting online (Benington and Moore, 2010). Implementing digitalisation in public sector organisations requires leaders to act strategically and support the upper leadership of the organisations they represent (Leslie and Canwell, 2010). For such a goal, strategic leadership is a critical element of organisational success (ibid). Studies have established that tactical leadership within public service organisations is significant in augmenting the efficiency and effectiveness of the public service sector (Hofmann and Ogonek, 2018). Moreover, it will aid in creating better public value and help public sector organisations respond better to the modifications in their business environment (Moore and Moore, 2005). Indeed, Stahl (2008) argues that the public sector worldwide needs strategic change to radically improve output and improve efficiency.

In recent times, strategic management has become a significant part of the agenda in many public establishments and is becoming progressively increases its relevancy in practice due to New Public Management (NPM) changes (Hansen, 2011; Weiss, 2016). This is a small but growing research field (Rosenberg and Ferlie, 2014; George and Desmidt 2016; George et al., 2016a; Hansen, 2001; Johnsen, 2016) which has focused on the importance of studying strategic change administration in public organisations for the past decade. Several studies have researched the application of strategic change management (Bryson, 2004; Drumaux and Goethals, 2007), but few have investigated how public organisations apply strategic

management in practice (Lewis, 2008; Berry and Yang, 2010; Hansen, 2011). Therefore, the impact of using a strategic change management approach to the running of public sector organisations.

Furthermore, due to known cultural factors, there are gaps in evaluating strategic leadership in public institutions, particularly in the Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) region (Hofstede-insights.com, 2020). This research, therefore, examines the role that tactical leadership in the digitalisation of Saudi Arabian public sector organisations is taking. This research has adopted a tactical leadership theory as the framework for evaluating the strategic performance of public sector organisations in Saudi Arabia.

Based on (a) the outcomes from the primary data and the literature review and (b) the public value framework, it was found that the process of implementing digitalisation in the public sector in Saudi Arabia was haphazardly operationalised. With little or no regard for the potential for optimising the outcome using strategic leadership. Moreover, it has adopted an interpretivism research philosophy and deductive reasoning to design the interview technique for gathering data.

This research argues that the weak implementation of the digitalisation policy has been the primary concern for the appointing authorities in government, mainly because of the high-power distance between strategic leaders and government officials such as ministers. In trying to please the powers that appointed them, strategic leaders have failed to implement the digitalisation policy as well as possible. Little focus has been on improving organisations' staff (Hofstede, 2010). This research recommends a significant step-wide framework that might be used for future transformational projects in the Saudi public sector.

1.6 Digitalisation of the Public Sector

The role of strategic leadership in decision-making at the organisational level should not be underestimated because it significantly influences the organisation's existence (Banzato and Sierra, 2016). According to Moore and Moore (2005), cited in Li et al. (2016), leaders of organisations face the critical contest of aligning their organisational strategy with the continuous developments in digital technology to add value to their business now and in the future. This challenge arises mainly because the pace of the digital technology revolution has surpassed the speed at which leaders can react and strategically steer the organisation to maximise the benefits of digital technologies (Li et al., 2016). However, Li et al. (2016) argue

that digital technology deployment addresses strategic initiatives such as promoting competitiveness and efficiency in the private sector (Hunitie, 2018). Having examined the strategic approach to managing organisations, governments worldwide have developed leadership initiatives for the public sector that manifest themselves in various sectors such as health services (Williams et al., 2020).

Public sector innovation involves finding and implementing new ways of improving business processes (internally directed) or service delivery (externally required) to enhance overall value for the public sector organisations (Moore and Moore, 2005; Benington, 2010). With the increased penetration of technology in human society, digital platforms have become vital for creating more citizen-oriented services (Gelinas and Dull, 2009; Potts and Kastelle, 2010; Mckinsey, 2014; Simonet, 2015). Digital technologies have not only reduced service delivery costs but have also helped improve the quality of experience of the recipients. For example, e-services allow citizens to approach critical services at any time without the need to visit public sector offices (Mckinsey, 2014). Public sector offices have also reduced facing customers to focus more on resolving key service issues (Simonet, 2015). Therefore, the digitalisation of the public sector involves large-scale transformation, which takes many forms. These include replacing legacy systems with technology-based systems, restructuring processes to manage digital platforms, activities, and roles, and developing a more customer-centric culture (Misuraca and Viscusi, 2015). This is often achieved by effectively using technology to provide public services.

According to estimates from the consulting firm Dilmegani et al. (2014: 1), "capturing the full prospective of government digitalisation could free up to $1 trillion annually in economic value worldwide". Over the last two decades, there has been a rise in the popularity of ICT-driven business models, especially with the use of social media (Benington, 2010). It also affects how the public sector operates (Senker, 2006). With time ICT has become a vital element of the public service delivery system. Yet, the public sector has been sluggish in realising its full benefits, especially regarding how services are delivered to the public (Luke et al., 2010). For example, most public services in developing nations still require people to complete applications manually (Guma, 2013 Adair-Toteff, 2016). Governments in some parts of the world, such as Africa (Banga and Velde, 2018). It has realised the need to advance public service delivery processes and other aspects. It has adopted various information-technology-based solutions to enhance its organisation's performance (Moon and Welch, 2005). Luke et

al. (2010) espouse that public sector firms worldwide must realise the benefits of adopting information technology, just like private sector firms. It would mean a gradual shift from traditional public service delivery systems towards more technology-based and customer-oriented public service delivery systems (Moon and Welch, 2005).

Digitalisation aims to develop a new business model that best serves the customers' needs and maximises stakeholder value through improved internal and external efficiency. This radical and strategic transformation of the public sector involves several challenges, such as financial, organisational, cultural, reputational, technical, and legal issues (ibid). The feat of the transformation depends significantly on the extent to which the individuals involved manage the strategic change process. This strategic change management helps to bridge the gap between planning and implementation, which is often the leading cause of the failure of public sector reform projects (Damanpour and Aravind, 2012). Misuraca and Viscusi (2013) confirm other barriers associated with public sector digitalisation, such as financial, technical, people and security aspects. However, shifting from a manual to a digital platform requires changes in mindset and culture, which are not easy to achieve in the public sector (Brinkerhoff, 2008; Gelinas and Dull, 2009).

Strategic leadership is one of the important influencing factors in any form of strategic organisational change (Yukl, 2012). Most research on digitalisation focuses on the private sector. Little know about the part of leadership in the digitalisation of public sector organisations (Basamh et al., 2014). Even though the KSA developed the Vision 2030 policy, which embraces the formation of digital platforms for the provision of public services (Saudi-Arabia, 2017), no research has been conducted to evaluate the digitalisation policy's implementation in the Saudi context (Basamh et al., 2014). More importantly, there has been no analysis of the performance of tactical leadership for the digitalisation policy in the KSA. Therefore, this research aims to investigate the role that of strategic leadership takes in implementing digitalisation projects in the public sector in Saudi Arabia, using the public value framework as the critical yardstick.

1.7 Leadership and Digitalisation Processes

Managing strategic change, such as digitalising organisational processes, is an extremely challenging exercise (Carcary et al., 2016). It is complex and uncertain, especially in public sector organisations where complex structural and environmental issues further complicate

the implementation process (Van der Voet et al., 2014). Nevertheless, past research has overwhelmingly supported the role of leaders as one of the most critical ingredients of strategic administrative change in public sector organisations (Pollitt and Hupe, 2011).

Past research has mainly focused on transformational leadership for strategic alteration (Herold et al., 2008; Oreg and Berson, 2011). However, transformational leadership relates more to motivating individuals; it does not necessarily help convince people to adapt to strategic change (Higgs and Rowland, 2011). Such research fails to consider the range of strategic leadership approaches discussed in the literature. It focuses excessively on one kind of leadership, although it argues that leadership is not a 'one type fits all approach. The present research adopts the definition of change leadership from Higgs and Rowland (2010:39), who defines it as "the behaviours of direct leaders aimed at framing and determining organisational change and creating capacity among change recipients to implement the change."

Digitalisation is not only about moving manual processes to digital platforms; it requires a more extensive change in how organisations operate and carry out their business (Misuraca and Viscusi, 2015). According to Lægreid et al. (2013: 61), "a pervasive change of mindset, with more experimentation and an agile and personalised response to new constituent challenges, is essential for implementing digitalisation in the public sector." The process of digitalisation is usually considered tactical because it involves not only moving current processes to digital platforms but also changing the way that business is conducted, such as organisational culture (Cordella and Bonina, 2012). In addition, the poor ICT skills of employees and the apparent challenges in improving this lead to resistance to implementing such projects (Ashaye and Irani, 2013). Thus, despite its obvious benefits, the digitalisation of the public sector is a challenge that is difficult to overcome (Agolla and Van Lill, 2016; Gelinas and Dull, 2009; Stahl, 2008).

1.8 Strategic Leadership Theory and the Digitalisation Policy

Hughes and Beatty (2005) define strategic leadership as a process of renovating an organisation through its Vision, objective, and values, based on sustaining the valuation of internal and external administrative factors (culture and environment, structure and systems) within its strategy. Management scholars are investigating strategic change report that the strategic leadership theory is critical (Ireland and Hitt, 2005; Shields, 2007) to evaluate how

organisations – private or public – have implemented policy. Leaders must be able to envision upcoming opportunities and challenges, maintain flexibility in the duration of internal and external changes, and face more pressures from a broad range of stakeholders (Ireland and Hitt, 2005; Jing and Avery, 2008).

The role of strategic leadership in executing strategic change in the public sector should not be underestimated (Almutairi, 2021). Gaps in the literature have been indicated in the role of tactical change related to the public sector (OECD, 2013; Van der Voet et al., 2016). Caldow (2001), Cook et al. (2002), and McDaniel (2003) suggest that strategic leadership is the most crucial component in establishing an e-government creativities. Teofilovic (2001) recommends that leaders improve and establish strategies to overcome bureaucratic barriers such as rigidity, hierarchy, and routinisation. Similarly, Suan (2003) suggests that public sector leaders should commit to strategic change with long term effects, even though they may have to overcome public pressure while the change is ongoing. Other scholars recommend a leader's role in managing change, which is a crucial aspect of the success of any public sector digitalisation project (Agolla and Van Lill, 2016; Al-Rashidi, 2012; Gil-Garcia, 2013).

Therefore, Agolla and Van Lill (2016) observe that the role of strategic leadership in overcoming the hurdles to modernising the public sector, such as through digitalisation, is well supported in the literature (OECD, 2012a; OECD, 2013 and Schofield et al., 2008). However, little is known about the challenges faced by public sector leaders in developing countries when carrying out the digitalisation of the public sector; or which approaches are helpful for them in overcoming these challenges (Khan, 2016). Overcoming these challenges is central to the whole digitalisation process. Therefore, the ability to manage the issues involved will determine whether digitalisation is accomplished effectively (Lægreid et al., 2013). The effective implementation here refers to actual outcomes matching or exceeding the desired results of digitalisation (Kohnke, 2017).

To close the gaps identified (section 1.4), the research adopts the strategic leadership theory for evaluating the success or failure of the digitalisation of public sector processes in Saudi Arabia. According to Gardner., et al. (2010), the strategic leadership theory has been premised on the belief that leaders' influence on organisational performance and its constraints on executives and the contextual environment requires strategic leadership (see Chapter 4). Since public sector organisations are vast, evaluating the strategic leadership theory's effectiveness in digitalisation has been centred on the public value framework

(Weinberg and Lewis, 2009). Public value can be examined using three factors, namely (i) how the organisation meets the goals set by the authorising institutions, (ii) how it develops the operational capability of the organisation to serve the public and (iii) how the organisation can create public value through the services it provides (Weinberg and Lewis, 2009).

1.9 Research Justification

Saudi Arabia is fast becoming a centre for political, cultural, and industrial activities within the Middle East (World Bank, 2018). Possessing the largest proven oil reserves in the world, it continues to be crucial to the health of the universal economy (Woertz, 2013). In addition, Saudi Arabia hosted the G20 summit 2020 (Saudi Arabia, 2020). In these regards, the stability of Saudi Arabia is critical for the whole world, and recent uprisings in the Middle East indicate that public satisfaction with the public sector is crucial in determining the stability of Saudi Arabia (Lippman, 2012). However, the government realises that overreliance on a fossil fuel economy represents an unsustainable future, hence, introducing a vision that can transform the economy into a digital one by 2030 (Saudi Arabia, 2017). Another primary challenge has been inefficiencies in public service delivery, which Vision 2030 aims to redress through digitalisation (Algahtani et al., 2017), among other strategies (Saudi-Arabia, 2017).

Several studies, such as that of Davidson (2009), have sought to regulate the state of the public sector in Saudi Arabia. Public sector organisations in Saudi Arabia have started focusing on enhancing their effectiveness through digitalisation. Therefore, the primary purpose of the present case study is to understand the digitalisation of public sector organisations in Saudi Arabia. In terms of strategic leadership capabilities, the Saudi government has undertaken several initiatives, such as Saudi Vision 2030, which aimed at improving the future readiness of the KSA with efforts such as reforming the public service system (McKinsey, 2017).

1.10 Problem Statement

It is evidenced that digital technologies today strengthen almost all sections of public bureaucracies providing quality service delivery to the public (Plesner et al., 2018). Studies argued that in the last decades, there had been no clear consensus on the emergence of an alternative governance regime (Riemer and Peter 2020). According to past studies, the prospective benefits of digitalisation are diverse, such as value-added innovations, new procedures of citizen interaction, enhanced productivity, and quality service delivery (Michener and Nichter 2022). Digitalisation is changing public expectations and attitudes in

most countries; this is the age of globalisation and digital governance. Many countries now realise the need for digital government to provide cost-effective, customer-focused, and easy-to-use services for citizens and businesses (Andersson et al., 2022). Also, digital governance improves the internal workings of government (Mohammed, 2020). The digitalisation of the public sector has been concerned with the results and effects of established technologies on service quality, skills, or the attribute of public administration work (Vial, 2019).

Digital leadership is critical to the success of any digital transformation and entails a strategy that will focus on customer engagement and the provision of quality service delivery. Past studies argued that transforming from a manual process to a complete digital platform requires strategic leaders who can harmonise a multilevel system of governance to be impactful over a long-term period (Vitalis, 2021). Leaders' inputs are critical to driving digitalisation, and such strategic leaders must have the ability to be flexible, constantly acquiring new tasks and knowledge for effective execution and service delivery. Wambua (2021) contended that leaders should have some degree of impact and must demonstrate the capability to adopt a strategy which will positively impact the digital transformation process in the long term. Moreover, the literature indicated that organisations must have an e-leadership model to stimulate successful strategic change and stability during the digital transformation (Wagner, 2020). Hence, for successful digital transformation, a strategic model will lead to a successful implementation and enhanced outcomes.

OECD (2013) deduced that leadership is the most crucial component in implementing e-government initiatives. However, research does not mention the strategic leadership approach most suitable for executing e-government initiatives. In countries like Saudi Arabia, which are characterised by a high-power distance culture, leaders' role is critical in strategic changes (Hofstede, 2010). Existing research does mention the Saudi government progressive interest in the digitalisation of the Saudi public sector. Still, minimal attention has been paid to the factors that could boost the success of such inventiveness. With billions of dollars spent on these initiatives worldwide, the academic community can contribute by researching factors that support the success of digitalisation projects in public sector organisations.

Vial (2019) structured digital transformation as a process where digital technologies make changes, which prompts strategic retorts from organisations looking to change their value creation pathways while handling structural changes and organisational barriers. Leadership

strategy plays an essential role in this digital transmission process, influencing new service delivery frameworks and creating new forms of relationships. Mitchell and Alfuraih (2018) argued that successful strategy implementation is when the targeted results are met through a well-coordinated operational plan set out in the strategic plan. Magnusson et al. (2021) contended that the high rate of failure of digital revolution projects was due to poor implementation strategy imbibed by the leadership.

Santhidran et al. (2013) deduced that organisational change had been an issue of increasing interest among researchers and practitioners in the public sector. Kuipers et al. (2014) indicated that strategic leadership in the public sector is a important factor when considering change, regardless of the financial position. However, public sector organisations facing austerity need to scale up using digitalisation and wide-ranging innovations to increase performance and meet the needs of service users (Piercy et al., 2013; Campbell, 2015). Van der Voet et al. (2016) argued that the successful development of organisational through digitalisation had improved the quality of public service delivery. Even though the strategic change in the public sector is a significant topic of interest, the difficulties of its establishment have not been thoroughly looked into, particularly in developing countries like Saudi Arabia (Höglund, 2015; Kleine et al., 2013; Whelan-Berry and Somerville, 2010).

The success of a strategic management model as a framework was used to enhance police service delivery at the South African Police Service's top management level in the Free State Province of South Africa (OECD, 2016). The process embarked on the common understanding of tactical planning and the systemic mechanism to implement a strategic leadership style that positively influenced quality police servicing delivery. Furthermore, the government of Tanzania embarked on strategic governance and digitalisation to drive a government-wide reform program. Implementing strategic management in Tanzania transformed the traditional reform efforts whose progress enhanced the quality of public service delivery. The Rwandan government introduced strategic management measures to improve the efficacy and efficiency of services using the vision 2020 Economy Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (Uwanyiligira, 2021). This strategy helped achieve its goals and objectives and facilitated the economy's growth and the country's development. Wambua (2021) conducted a study on Nairobi County's health department whereby it adopted strategic management practices, which has promptly helped enhance quality service delivery. Vitalis (2021) investigated strategic change management approaches to service delivery. The study

deduced that organisations need to understand the requirement to alter their strategy due to changes in the competitive environment. In contrast, such organisations must have sufficient financial and administrative resources.

Evidence has shown that leadership styles are effective in the process of digital transformation within an organisation (Uwanyiligira, 2021). Past studies argued that leadership style must align with digital transformation to influence desired results. Technical knowledge at the leadership level and its impact on digital transformation must also be considered, as the suitable strategy is necessary to ensure that the organisation can be successful with its new technological capabilities within a defined medium. These defined media must be appropriately placed for the leaders to accomplish set goals effectively (Sow and Aborbie, 2018). Therefore, what remains to be seen is whether a leadership flair directly impacts digital transformation through a medium or not. From the foregoing, strategic leadership management practices in public service delivery are paramount. Past studies argued that management practices and reforms had positive results in the Middle of challenges (Shimengah, 2018). These studies contended that strategic management practices are necessary to improve service delivery and strategic leadership is crucial.

The present inquiry focuses on the hitherto under-explored internal processes through which these results are brought about, the stage where the digital solution is still being considered and assembled (Nzioki et al., 2018). The research aims to unload the digitalisation process of public services by paying close attention to the interactions through which a digital automation solution is implemented and adopted within the selected Saudi ministry. Several scholars in Saudi and beyond conducted research on strategy implementation in the public sector with a particular focus on organisational performance (Ghazi and Willoughby, 2014; Gregory, 2015 Poltera, 2019). None of these studies has highlighted on strategic plan execution and service delivery using digitalisation as a driving factor at the ministry endpoint. In addition, there were no studies that looked at the issue of participation of the local community.

Saudi Vision 2030 is a robust policy for transforming the country (Saudi-Arabia, 2017). Still, there is no evidence of how the public sector's digitalisation policy has been operationalised. Cook et al. (2002) and McDaniel (2003) reported that successful policy implementation related to the digitalisation of public sector organisations, such as e-government initiatives, requires leaders to take specific steps. First, they recommend that leaders articulate and

promote their Vision (OECD, 2016), as is the case with Saudi Vision 2030 (Saudi-Arabia, 2017). However, even if the leaders can articulate the strategic Vision and goals to produce a strategic transformation plan, they need to develop skills in communicating these ideas to followers (McDaniel, 2003) and linking e-government services to good governance intentions (OECD, 2016).

Although there have been many strategies to enhance e-governance as reflected in the Saudi vision 2030, this Vision did not look through the medium of the ministries and digitalisation adoption as a strategy in the provision of public quality service deliveries and the role of gender in leadership. The initial research gap regarding the digitalisation policy in Saudi Arabia has been the lack of a clear strategic path for leaders regarding the operationalisation of Vision 2030 at the organisational level. A past study argued that leaders should facilitate digitalisation and the medium of delivery for effective service delivery (OECD, 2013). Hence, this may require leaders to overcome barriers to digitalisation and medium of delivery while ensuring that the organisation moves towards a customer-centric work culture (Caldow 2001, McDaniel, 2003). In addition, leaders should create an environment that promotes cooperation and collaboration (Caldow, 2001; Cook et al., 2002; McDaniel, 2003). Moreover, no strict implementation processes (as identified through the reviewed literature and past studies) of digitalisation policy in Saudi Arabia can influence strategic leadership decisions and actions for effective service delivery.

Hence a gap was identified. Consequently, this research examines efforts to revolutionise public service delivery through digital governance and the place of strategic leadership in decision-making for structural transformation, with particular reference to the interaction between government and citizens using government ministries as a medium of intervention of quality public service delivery.

1.11 Research Objectives

➢ To conduct a systematic review of the extant literature on digitalisation, strategic change and strategic leadership in public service delivery.

➢ To identify drivers associated with the digitalisation of Saudi Arabian that influence quality public service delivery, using the exploratory analysis of operational activities of organisations during the pre-digitalisation era on service delivery.

➢ To examine strategic leadership styles employed to drive digitalisation in the selected ministries for quality public service delivery.

➢ To explore how digitalisation influences leadership, staff and citizens (looking at age stratification and gender) in providing quality public service delivery and customer satisfaction.

➢ To appraise the place of Saudi Vision 2030 in boosting digitalisation, strategic leadership and addressing the challenges of the gender leadership role in public service delivery.

1.12 Research questions

Considering the above argument, hence, the questions this research is proposing and hope to provide an answer to are as follows:

▪ What are the systematic reviews of the extant literature on digitalisation, strategic change and strategic leadership that enhanced quality public service delivery?

▪ What are the challenges influencing the drivers associated with the digitalisation of Saudi Arabian quality public service delivery (vis a vis Operational activity of organisations during the pre-digitalisation era on service delivery does not change even during the digitalisation phase)?

▪ What strategic leadership styles are employed to drive digitalisation in the selected ministries for quality public service delivery?

▪ How has digitalisation affected leadership/staff members and citizens so far (looking at age stratification and gender) in providing quality public service delivery and customer satisfaction?

▪ What is the place of Saudi Vision 2030 in boosting digitalisation, strategic leadership and addressing the challenges of the leadership gender role in public service delivery?

▪ This research aims to critically examine the role of strategic leadership in handling digitalisation in two government ministries in Saudi Arabia.

1.13 Research Design and Methodological Considerations

Based on Miles and Hubberman (2002) guidance on the critical phases of research, this study is premised on the philosophy of interpretivism as allowing the optimisation of largely qualitative data on digitalising the public sector. Qualitative research data was seen as central to strategic change in the Saudi public sector, with a specific focus on strategic change

involving digitalisation (Bryman and Bell, 2009). Moreover, the methodological design for this research relies heavily on the qualitative-centric approach (Miles and Hubberman, 2002), which allows for deeper evaluation (Creswell, 2009) of qualitative data.

According to Bryman (2012), the reasoning process needs to be undertaken in two phases: the first being mainly exploratory with no clear scope; the second being mainly centred on the outcome of the first (Saunders et al., 2016). Hence, this research is based on deductive reasoning because the research started with the observation of projects in the workplace. After establishing the tangible research problems, it moved on to identifying the logical sequencing of the research process to develop a theoretical argument for it and test the outcomes based on the literature and primary data (Collis and Hussey, 2009). Hence, it was inevitable that deductive reasoning would be adopted for this research. Walton (2005) argues that deductive reasoning is applicable when a researcher has a given set of data to a hypothesis that explains the data. In addition, it works better at a research stage that sets to discover a hypothesis formation and testing (Aliseda, 2006).

The design for the data collection was not only informed by the interpretive philosophy or the qualitative research methodology, but it was also equally informed by the subjectivism ontological position that supports more in-depth evaluation of the reasoning and connectivity of the outcomes from people (Bryman and Bell, 2009; Creswell, 2017). Therefore, the value of the knowledge from this research lies in its ability to interpret largely qualitative data to gather meaning and use it to make decisions on the improvement of the digitalisation policy. Hence, a survey method of data collection was ideal (Saunders et al., 2015), and it was implemented in two phases: phase one involved the gathering of data in the form of a survey, while phase two took the form of a follow-up case study from the two organisations who were sampled using purposeful sampling technique (Collis and Hussey, 2009). For this research, two Saudi public sector organisations that had implemented digitalisation projects in the recent past were selected as case studies. Using an exploratory case study approach was essential because it helped contextualise the leadership approach, a perspective that positivist research appears to overlook (Yin, 2009). Furthermore, comparing two cases will help the researcher to contrast the impact of different leadership approaches in different contexts using some, albeit perceptual, real-life data (Lincoln and Guba, 2002; Maxwell, 2002). Another reason for selecting these case studies was that both these organisations had digitalised processes and services within the last decade.

1.14 Thesis Outline

The structure of the research is outlined and consists of the following sections:

Chapter 1 outlines the background of this research, including why this research is valuable. The research uses interpretive philosophy, which requires prior knowledge of the subject – Figure 1. Identifying the purpose of the study is critical, and this chapter identifies the key challenges, why these are critical and how this research will enhance public sector leadership.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature on strategic leadership and its role in strategic change. This section also x-rays the research on change management and the digitalisation process, including various models of managing change and their relevance in different contexts.

Chapter 3 presents the conceptual framework that guides the data collection process. The chapter proposes using Moore's (2005) public value model to use strategic leadership theory. This section also examines the theoretical arguments on strategic leadership and how they form a measurement yardstick for the performance of the digitalisation policy in Saudi Arabia. This research uses interpretivism epistemology and subjectivist ontology because the researcher believes that the link between leadership and strategic change is perceptual at best. Chapter 4 presents the methodology adopted for this research. The chapter seeks to justify the choice of semi-structured interviews with top and middle-level leadership. It also explains the data collection process in detail, including justifications for decisions made at several different stages of data collection.

Chapter 5 presents the results of the research findings through a detailed analysis of both interview and case study data. It explores theme/code identified analysis based on the theoretical framework, remaining open to discovering new themes. This section also discusses the findings of the study. It also includes comparing the findings with the literature reviewed.

Chapter 6 presents the study's conclusion, including its implications for leaders and policymakers. The chapter also discusses the limitations of the study, and it makes contributions and recommendations. Finally, it makes suggestions for further research on public tactical leadership reforms.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

To address the research question defined in the introductory section, the research employs an alternative of an organised literature review. Previous research claimed that a structured evaluation of the literature critically discovers, selects, and assesses acceptable material that elucidates the topic of the study to aid in the discovery of a bearing to address a specified research question. (Al-Mushayt 2019). As a result, doing a literature review is a systematic method of synthesising existing material from primary studies related to a set of research objectives. It entails developing a well-thought-out research strategy with a defined emphasis and approach for answering those research questions. According to previous research, a literature review must adhere to an established process in which the criterion is explicitly specified before beginning. According to previous research, a literature review must adhere to a detailed protocol process in which the criterion is explicitly specified before the review is conducted. A literature review is a detailed and transparent survey founded on databases and old literature that can be copied and recreated by other scholars. The study will identify the kind of information required to assist in achieving the research focus and will provide better clarity regarding terminology and procedures around themes and concerns covering the research's direction. As a result, rather than making a striking distinction, we chose to share what other scholars have previously stated. The reviews will help the research to recognize when and how such revisions can be made. Hence, the literature review focuses on the keywords of the research title, digitalisation, strategic leadership, and public value

2.2 Digitalisation and Occupational Standard Innovation

The use of digitisation as an invention to increase value and efficiency in delivering services in both the public and private sectors. The digitalisation of local service delivery now extends beyond just converting analogue data to a digital representation. (Andersson et al., 2022). It includes the alteration of relationships between residents and local governments, as well as within local administrations. The term "digitalisation" refers to "the revolution of all sectors of our economic system, government, and society driven by the widespread adoption of

existing and emerging web-based technologies (Gobble, 2018). This revolution that transpires due to digitalisation usually unsettles and alters present branches and operations of the organisations (Gebre-Mariam and Bygstad, 2019). A past study argued that digitalisation transforms organisations and how it creates, delivers, and apprehends value through developed use of digital technologies to enhance performance and business scope (Kuhlmann and Bogumil, 2021). Several studies indicated that digitalisation influences and changes organisations' business models and service delivery (ibid).

Changes in technology or the adoption of new digital technologies frequently result in changes in the service delivery business model. (Kuldosheva 2021). The advancement of digital technology, such as the internet, allows organisations to offer the same products and services in new and relatively evolved forms, as well as creative approaches to extract value from these services and products, including sales, marketing, and the "freemium model." (Magnusson et al., 2021). Examples of such developments may be found in how the newspaper, music, film, and manufacturing industries have evolved by embracing digital technology and thereby developing business structures. Existing research demonstrates how. Rachinger et al. (2019), for example, analysed existing literature and found three ways digitisation alters 38 (117) firms and their business strategies. According to the survey, digitisation improves current business models, changes existing ones, and creates new business models for successful service delivery. Teece (2010) also proposed that changes in digital technology impact both the value provision and cost aspects of the business model. Adopting new digital technology impacts the channels, relationships with clients, and critical activities that firms utilise to deliver the value produced to customers (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010).

Similarly, Baden-Fuller and Haefliger (2013) focus on four constructs: customer credentials, customer commitment, value delivery, and monetisation, when exploring the relationship between technological innovation and business model innovation and service delivery. The study revealed that the introduction of digital technology impacts all listed components by modifying them, causing businesses to develop strategies to keep up with the technology. Furthermore, Arnold et al. (2016) discovered that digitalisation mainly affects the value proposition, customer interactions, and infrastructure components of business models. According to Bouwman et al. (2018), technological disruption directly

influences organisations' business model experimentation by creating their business models in a research mode, particularly among small and medium firms. (SME).

The preceding study revealed the enormous potential of digitalising ICT tools for successful service delivery, decreasing expenses, service quality, appropriateness, innovation, and learning in the commercial and governmental sectors. Previous assessments have found that digitisation impacts private sector business models and service delivery innovations in major businesses and small and medium firms. However, scholarly research has generally concentrated on the consequences and results of digitisation on public service delivery, whereas strategic leadership has yet to be marginalised. (Vitalis, 2021). The research attempts to supplement the current literature with a case study of a strategic leadership structure and public sector focused on digitalisation in a ministry and its impact on business model creation and service delivery through these reviews.

2.3 Leadership and Digitalisation Processes

Managing strategic change, such as digitalising organisational processes, is extremely challenging (Uwanyiligira, 2021). It is complex and uncertain, especially in public sector organisations where complex structural and environmental issues further complicate the implementation process (Van Gelderen et al., 2000). Nevertheless, past research has overwhelmingly supported the role of leaders as one of the most critical ingredients of strategic administrative change in public sector organisations (Panagiotopoulos et al., 2019). Past research has mainly focused on transformational leadership for strategic change (Obedait et al., 2019). However, transformational leadership relates more to motivating individuals; it does not necessarily help convince people to adapt to strategic change (Arntz et al., 2019).

Such research doesn't include factors such as the range of strategic leadership approaches discussed in the literature. It focuses excessively on one kind of leadership, despite it being argued that leadership is not a 'one type fits all approach. The present research adopts the definition of change leadership from Arntz et al. (2019) define it as the actions of direct leaders strived at the structure, frame administrative change, and build capability among shift beneficiaries to implement the change. Therefore, the definition of leadership for digitalisation focuses on the public leadership archetype that "represents the unconscious likings of human beings as a species about the appropriate relationships between leaders and

followers" (Gebre-Mariam and Bygstad, 2019). Furthermore, public leadership promotes accountability while respecting rules and regulations from the government, hence, promoting loyalty to the political agenda and networked governance (Goos et al., 2019). The conceptual perspective of strategic leadership varies. The authentic strategic leadership archetype is not rigid but flexible to accommodate Vision, authority, communication, visible transformation, learning, and influence; performance and digitalisation development are structured. A flexible strategic archetype balances public value, operational capability, and interests of the appointing authority. This balance of the strategic leadership archetype forms the crux of the argument for which the research contributes to knowledge and practice in public institutions aiming for transformation.

The authority strategic leadership archetype focuses on loyalty to the leader (Hartl, 2019). Therefore, this research adopted the strategic leadership archetype because it transcends the influence of the government to deal with the visibility of the transformation to the government and the end-user. It is built from myriad threads, such as public value, fear of failure and the technology used for the digitalisation project in Saudi Arabia. Thus, each institution has a leadership archetype that they deploy to implement digitalisation.

2.4 Digital Transformation of Public Service Delivery

The digitalisation of governance is one of the fundamental policies transforming the quality of public service from conservative to modern (Xanthopoulou and Plimakis, 2021). Recently, governments worldwide have adopted information and communication technology to promote administration excellence, particularly in the public sector. It is consistent with the overall push to restructure the public sector to serve individuals and increase public sector production sufficiently. (Mazzucato and Ryan-Collins, 2019). The digital transformation of public welfare services shows various movements and advancements. Digital governance allows for enhanced cooperation and hands-on relationships among individuals who actively influence political priorities, collaborate in the design of public services, and engage in their delivery, with the public value chain demonstrating changes to public sector boundaries. (OECD, 2016).

This path towards digital public service delivery seems to have reached a challenging period. The convergence of people's expectations for more speed and transparency in service delivery is being addressed by a growing ambition within the public sector to offer services in

more innovative ways. (Magnusson et al., 2021). The transformation in ICT has enhanced the quality of governance at both levels the state and federal (Hinings et al., 2018). The imperatives for governments to renovate public service design and delivery create a compelling background for expanded usage of digital technology and labour-saving technological solutions in the public sector. That transition will rely primarily on digital technology to maximise the advantages for all residents (OECD, 2016).

Public service delivery is required for the survival and expansion sof developing countries and is of great concern for the socio-economic development of a country (Obedait et al., 2019). Most governments are now adopting digital governance as a minimum standard and new approach for public service delivery. Through this, the quality and effectiveness of public service provision are equally expected to improve. As Goos et al. (2019) argued, implementing online services does not automatically change the serving culture of public institutions but will develop the quality of public service delivery. Public service delivery may be defined as addressing residents' requirements in a timely and effective manner. (Cabral et al., 2019). According to the above concept, contact between the government and people should occur to satisfy citizens' demands immediately, hence expanding the citizen's key in public service delivery.

2.5 Imperatives for Transforming Public Service Delivery Through Digital Governance

In the fast-globalising world market of today, governments of the world over are acknowledging the importance of ICT in development. ICT is playing increasingly important roles in people's day-to-day lives, revolutionising their work and leisure, and changing business rules. The introduction and use of ICT in the commercial sector are putting pressure on the public sector to reconsider bureaucratic, hierarchical organisational approaches. Clients, residents, and enterprises are confronted with new creative e-business and e-commerce patterns deployed by the private sector and enabled by ICT tools and apps, necessitating the same from government agencies. (Srai and Lorentz, 2019). Consequently, there has been an increase in calls for developing countries like Nigeria to deliver excellent public services that fulfil the requirements of their inhabitants. (Panagiotopoulos et al., 2019). In such instances, citizens are known as clients of government, upon which governments should promote rather than serve them, the transition from hierarchy to cooperation and participation, customer-focused and mission-oriented and prioritise prevention over

treatment. Citizens in all republics call for better services at lower charges and more receptiveness in a dynamic and continuously changing environment (Udovita, 2020).

It is widely recognised that digital governance offers increased prospects for public service and plays a crucial role in service delivery to the people. It is a powerful enabling tool to address some of the key barriers and challenges of the traditional approach to public sector management for entering the international economy and meeting the ever-growing demands for efficiency in public service delivery. It can provide, store, process, and disseminate significant amounts of information at a minimal cost, as well as network, connect, and communicate with people all over the world (Ringenson et al., 2018). Digitisation is related to increased output across the economy, and it is getting harder to design a clear image of public sector expansions, particularly (OECD, 2016). The use of digital technology will require to be addressed in the framework in which governments operate, with users' perspectives increasingly prominent

2.6 Public Service Delivery and Digitalisation

Public service delivery is conceptualised as meeting citizens' needs through prompt and efficient procedures through government mediums (Rubino et al., 2020). It is a service delivery with the public interest at heart through government intermediaries/ministry (Mergel, 2017). Public service delivery, according to Larsson and Teigland (2019) argued that it is an intention or deliberate decision of the government and its institution to provide service to the people. Kuhlmann and Bogumil (2021) contend that public service delivery is the provision of intangible public goods and services that the private sector cannot create for the benefit of the majority. From the preceding, we can deduce that public service delivery is the interaction between government and citizens, where the needs of the citizens are met in a timely way, thereby making the citizens significant in public service delivery. A past study argued that doing business (Osterwalder and Pigneur, 2010). Businesses, citizens, and customers face new innovative e-business and e-commerce models daily. This innovative e-business and e-commerce model are implemented by the private sector daily through digitalisation (Rachinger et al., 2019). A past study argued that people in developing countries are agitating for better services at lower costs and more alertness in a dynamic and continuously changing government environment (Rubino et al., 2020).

Currently, the public sector has begun to recognise the potential prospects digitalisation offers to deliver enhanced performance and better services to citizens. Several works stressed the great potential of digitalisation for effective service delivery, cost reduction, quality of services, convenience, invention and learning in private and public sectors. However, scholarly works have focused principally on the effects and outcomes of digitalisation in the private sector and why the public sector has been side-lined (Srai and Lorentz, 2019; Andersson et al., 2022). Recently, the public sector has come to accept the possible importance of digitalisation to improve the quality and responsiveness of the services they provide to their citizens (Christensen et al., 2020). Also, adopting digitalisation will help expand the reach and accessibility of government services and public infrastructure by allowing citizens to experience faster and more transparent access to quality service delivery (Larsson and Teigland, 2019). The initiation of digital governance solutions within the public sector has primarily been concerned with moving away from out-dated information dominations and hierarchies (Kuhlmann and Bogumil, 2021).

Driven by growing consumer expectations, the success and efficiency of public service delivery are increasingly seen as critical metrics of a government's performance driven by digitalisation (Magnusson et al., 2021). These new models thrust has caused the shift toward digital governance, which stresses coordinated network building, external partnership, and customer services (Panagiotopoulos et al., 2019). It is now widely accepted that digital management offers improved opportunities for public service and plays a crucial role in service delivery to the people. It is believed to be a powerful enabling tool to address some of the critical barriers and contests of the traditional approach to public sector management for entering the global economy and meeting the ever-growing demands for efficiency in public service delivery. It offers the potential to gather, store, process, and diffuse quantities of information at a minimal cost and network, interact and connect across the world (Sabine and Moritz, 2021).

2.7 Historical Development of Leadership

To identify a strategy to develop leadership for digitalisation, it is prudent to start by examining a classical timeline (Johns and Moser, 1975; Johns and Moser, 1989; Kirkpatrick and Locke, 1991) (see Figure 2). Figure 2 below shows that the evolutionary development of

leadership takes many forms; however, a critical review of the rationale for leadership at each point in time is necessary.

Figure 2: Examination of leadership based on a classical timeline (Adapted from Johns and Moser, 1989; Johns and Moser, 1975; Kirkpatrick and Locke, 1991).

In the 1920s, leadership was about the "trait", – which implies attributes, character, or mannerisms (Johns and Moser, 1989). This characteristic of a leader is centred on the individual; therefore, developing a leader to bring out the best character cannot solve the digitalisation issue. There is a myriad of uncontrollable factors about one's character in the societal context of an organisation or an industry, let alone a country (Mathias, 2017).

Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) explain that, by the 1940s, leadership is centred on the 'behaviour' – actions, conduct and deeds of the individual responsible for leading. To date, behaviour is critical and seen in leadership decisions' results (Maccoby et al., 2004). However, the unpredictability of the drivers of leadership behaviour creates a significant weakness in this approach to leadership.

For instance, in the 1940s, leaders focussed on finding means to generate an emotional response to issues – for example, fear of God to make citizens conform to a particular narrative (Maccoby et al., 2004). By the 1970s, leadership had transformed to accommodate flexibility and contingency – exigence, emergency, incidental or unforeseen factors (Johns and Moser, 1989). This approach allows for both humanistic and formal elements that could promote rationality at an organisational level (du Gay, 2000). While, in the early 1900s, leadership focused on individual traits (Kirkpatrick and Locke, 1991), contemporary times have seen a shift in focus to fashionable and current elements (Jefferies, 2017). To this effect, the leadership timeline in Figure 5 shows the inadequacy of developing a leader based on a narrow perspective; hence, the need to establish leadership on a distributive, collective and integrative basis can be greater combined (Kets-De-Vries et al., 2010). Accordingly, developing leadership means using processes and factors that can focus on archetypes responsive to a particular point in time – argues Kets-De-Vries et al. (2010).

Figure 3 shows that best leadership practices emanate from balancing factors classed in tripod-type centred camps. The first camp looks at the intricate dynamic interface between leadership behaviour through factors such as traits, beliefs, values, position and experiences, to name but a few factors (Kets-De-Vries et al., 2010). Recognising individual leadership traits is critical because it shows that, even if the focus is not on the individual, leadership development cannot ignore personal characteristics and experiences (Kirkpatrick and Locke, 1991), as cited in Figure 5. However, these traits are weak unless they are galvanised cohesively for a particular goal (Kets-De-Vries et al., 2010).
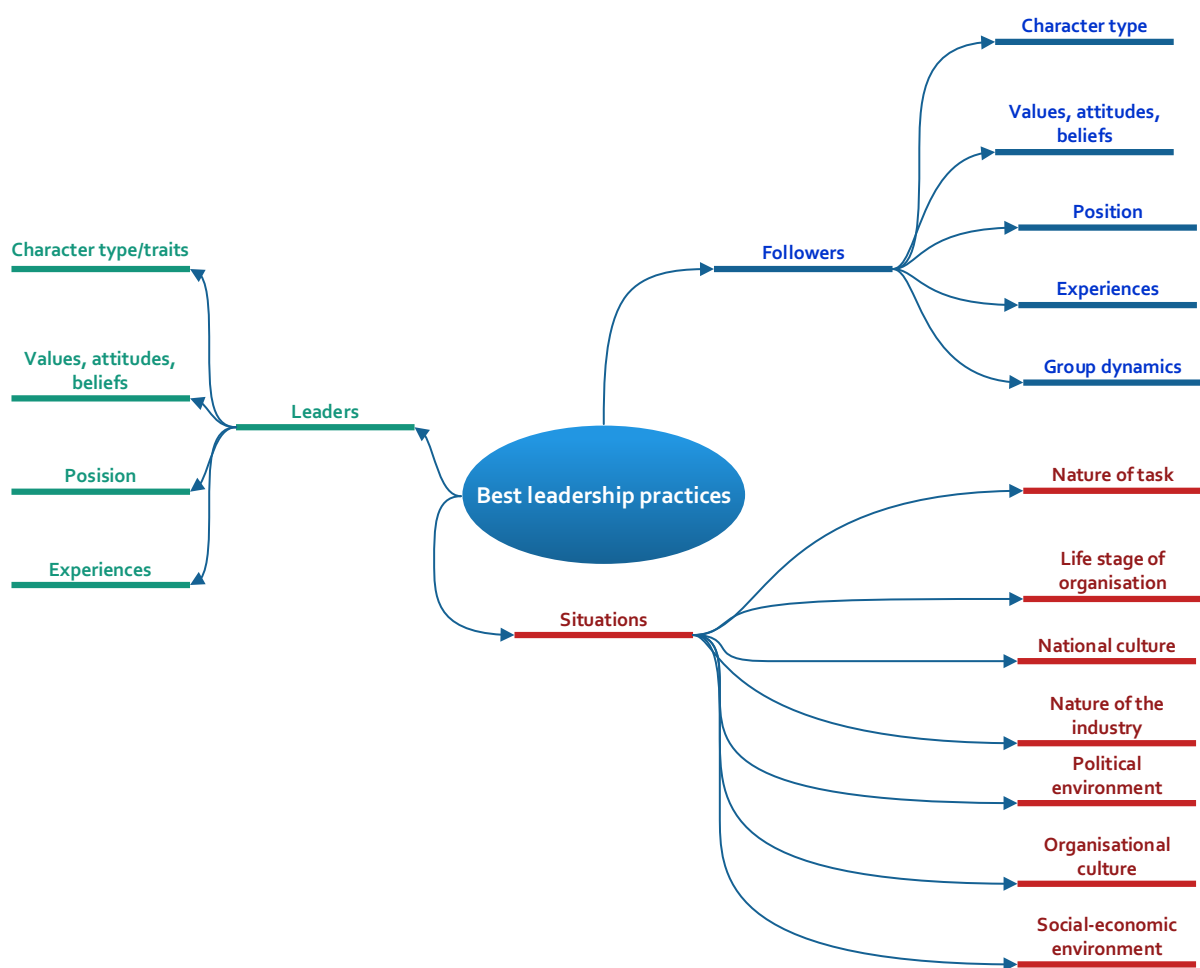
Figure 3: Domains for developing leadership practices (Adapted from Kets-De-Vries et al., 2010:2849).

The second element of the leadership archetype development focuses on the "follower" – highlighting their beliefs, values, group dynamics, their positions and character (see Figure 5)

(Kets-De-Vries et al., 2010). Leadership development cannot discount the mindset of followers because it forms a vital part of the leader; however, it works better in the situational context of the organisation. Contexts such as the social-economic environment, organisational culture, the industry at large and the national culture form the basis upon which leadership archetype can be defined and established (Kets-De-Vries et al., 2010). Figure 5 demonstrates that leadership development for digitalisation should focus on the archetype that can amalgamate a myriad of contextual, organisational, and national cultures and values. Reliance on a single approach to developing leadership would stifle the digitalisation process. For the public sector, leadership development cannot discount the "public" perception of leadership (Page, 2016). Values-based leadership is attainable when leaders apply their authority following societal values with less emphasis on self-interest (Page, 2016). However, the common good of the 21st century is highly complex such that traditional leadership modelled on hierarchical structures and traits, or belief systems cannot fit. A leadership of fear (Maccoby et al., 2004), delegation and control cannot meet the ever-changing contextual world order that focuses on public interest or improves society (Page, 2016).

According to Page (2016), leadership for public interest implies that leadership does not engage followers; instead, it works on collaborating with followers, creating audiences and stakeholders to create a leader-follower culture based on shared goals. Page (2016) also argues that "for leaders to be effective within the public sector environment, our understanding of leadership needs to move beyond simple dyadic and group effects, focussing on individual and shared values, particularly those values that sustain people in thought-provoking situations". This quote supports the argument in Figure 5 that developing leadership for digitalisation cannot be dyadic, focussing on leaders and followers or leaders and the organisation. This means that various factors must be considered to examine the best possible leadership archetype in particular circumstances.

2.8 Strategic Leadership

While people play leadership roles throughout their lives, strategic leadership is more related to senior managers, forming the organisation's upper echelons (Abatecola and Cristofaro, 2018). Senior managers affect managers at all levels through the decisions they make at the top (Agnihotri, 2014); they do so by setting the organisational direction, energising the creation of innovative strategies and motivating individuals to implement these strategies

(ibid). It can be said that, without effective leadership, organisations will lack direction, energy and drive, which will eventually lead to failure in a fiercely competitive market environment (Schneider and Somers, 2006).

Strategic leadership is a method to transform an organisation based on its vision, mission, and values through continuous evaluation of internal and external organisational elements: the culture and the environment, structures and systems, and strategy (Hughes and Beatty, 2004).

Boal and Hooijberg (2001:516) define strategic leadership as: "an all-encompassing style of leadership that focuses on the people entrusted with the general responsibility for the organisation, which does not refer to the titular head of the organisation but also members of the top management team". Schoemaker et al. (2013) contend that strategic leadership actions include five steps, summarised in Figure 4:
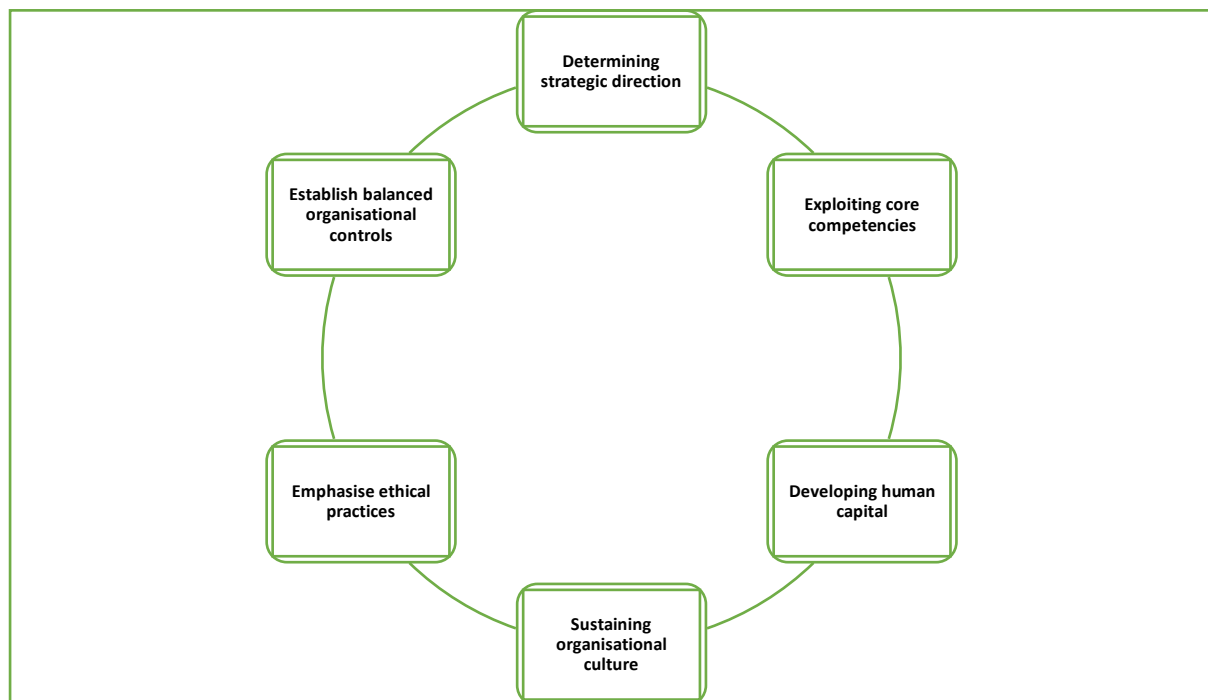
Figure 4: Key Strategic Leadership Actions (Adapted from Schoemaker et al., 2013)

Determining Strategic Direction: A clear vision is essential for leaders because it allows lower management and frontline employees to understand the overall objective of the leaders' strategy (Schoemaker et al., 2013). In this respect, strategic leaders must focus on developing, articulating and communicating an exciting and motivating vision to their followers. The concept can encompass what the leaders want the administration to achieve in the long term;

the articulation of a vision should be such that it motivates the followers/ employees to commit to it (Detjen and Webber, 2017).

A vision is not about what the organisation can currently achieve but what it can potentially reach and what it must achieve to sustain competition in the long run. In addition, a vision includes the ideology and core values that determine the organisation's behaviour as a unit. For example, an organisation envisioning sustainable development must ensure its business processes and practices promote sustainability. Finally, a vision helps to develop a culture within the organisation setting – not only what the organisation aims to achieve but also how it will achieve this. However, Mullane (2002) argues that it is essential that the vision is translated into something measurable or specific targets; otherwise, employees may consider it too superficial or vague to follow.

Utilizing and Maintaining Core Competencies: Core competencies are the competencies of an organisation that allow it to sustain competition, and each firm has some core competencies (Schoemaker et al., 2013). For example, some firms may be very innovative, while others may have a wealth of resources, such as human resources, capital, and cultural and political support, among other things (Carter and Greer, 2013). Therefore, firms must know their core competencies and then utilise them to achieve something meaningful. To this end, strategic leaders look to enhance a firm's core competencies, acquire new and valuable competencies, and guide the organisation toward materialising these competencies (Carter and Greer, 2013).

Strategic leaders often build organisational strategies around a firm's existing and achievable core competencies. In addition, the corporate strategy looks to sustain, enhance, and utilise the organisation's core competencies. Thompson et al. (2007) list several actions that strategic leaders might take with respect to the core competencies of their organisation:

● Nurture a results-oriented work environment.

● Promote a culture that enables employees.

● Set objectives and expectations that extend people's capabilities and expectations.

● Promote the use of benchmarking tools such as TQM and Six Sigma.

Developing Human Capital: Human assets assets are one of the organisations' most critical resources. Developing these resources requires capital investments such as those in training and development. In today's knowledge-based economy, human resources are the most vital

resource for firms to achieve and sustain competitive advantage. Organisations must continuously acquire and develop their human resources to maximise their benefits from such resources (Detjen and Webber, 2017). Investment in training and development is essential for building an organisation's human capital. Senior management must also provide the required budget to make it happen. The role of human resource administration is central in any organisation (Schoemaker et al., 2013). However, without the support of senior management, such activities cannot be carried out effectively.

2.9 Strategic Leadership in the Public Sector

The application of strategic leadership in the public sector has been necessitated by increasingly complex and ambiguous factors that pressure public institutions to improve and serve the people better (Vogel and Masal, 2015). Firstly, the leader can take a functionalist approach, emphasising innovation, performance, and results (ibid). Such an approach could benefit political loyalty and network governance because government focuses on positive publicity of service delivery (Schwartz et al., 2020).

Secondly, the leader can use behavioural leadership, where s/he strives to transform the organisational culture (Vogel and Masal, 2015). Such an approach can be complex because of the embedded national culture that trusts in leaders and sees them as absolute (Aldulaimi, 2019). Behavioural leadership is full of traditionally centred actions (Ali, 1995) that may stifle digitalisation projects. The third approach is where a leader adopts a biographical approach to public leadership whereby s/he relies heavily on contemporary politics as a driver for leading the institution (Vogel and Masal, 2015). The weakness of this approach is that politics is merged with the traditional leadership approach of "theocracy" (Ali, 1995), which can limit the much-needed innovation for digitalisation.

The fourth approach is to act as a reformist leader who explores and collaborates with various organisational systems to find a workable approach to reform (Vogel and Masal, 2015). It is a network governance-based system (Schwarz et al., 2020), the identity a leader should know and utilise. According to Grøn et al. (2020), the leader has discretion on how to approach the implementation of the leadership they see fit for the benefit of the public institution. Many researchers look at transformational leadership as a way of implementing change (Fernandez and Rainey, 2006; Herold et al., 2008; Oreg and Berson, 2011). For them, transformational leaders can motivate followers to rise above self-interest and commit to achieving

organisational objectives. Transformational leaders view the organisation as an effective entity where change can be induced through persuasion, motivation, and encouragement. According to a study by Jackson and Perry (2011:31), "a revolutional leader is a change agent, who defines organisational reality through the vocalization of a vision, and generation of policies to realise that vision".

The transformational leadership theory mainly hinges on motivational leaders articulating the directions and vision by valuing and nurturing employees. Transformational leadership generates commitment, strengthens the organisational culture, and improves employee performance (Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe, 2004). Studies have suggested that the environment for local governments is changing in the current world due to the increasing population and new technology. Therefore, leaders need a clear vision, strategic planning, and expert coordination and management skills. Leaders must continually manage and maintain the balance between revolution and "keeping the lights on" (Borins, 2002). Therefore, it is said that "Public bodies that effectively navigate their goals tend to have coherent, realistic policies and well-understood business cases" (Eggers and Bellman, 2016:12). Transformational leaders must face the challenges associated with competing priorities, such as inadequate funding. They might also face challenges related to security issues and employees' lack of understanding of digital trends (Eggers and Bellman, 2016). Therefore, motivating and managing employees is essential for public sector leaders as they balance several other work priorities (Borins, 2002).

Change management in public organisations has to be associated with the organisation's requirements, goals and aims. Bringing about change in accordance with goals can be problematic because it is not always easy to change processes that have been in place for decades. Bringing about change following goals can be problematic because it is not always easy to change processes that have been in place for decades. It has also been found that the leadership behaviour of the manager within an organisation is closely linked to employees' job satisfaction. Therefore, the leaders must apply change management according to employees' capabilities and job satisfaction requirements (Van der Voet, 2014).

2.10 Function of Strategic Leadership in Leading Change in Digitalisation in Saudi Public Sector Organisations

The first important aspect of leadership expansion for implementing change is the consequence of national culture (see the explanation in section 3.4). The influence of national culture is significant because it influences employees' thinking, perceptions, feelings and behaviour—the social environment and societal culture influence an individual's actual and potential behaviour. According to Hofstede et al. (2010), culture can be defined as "mental programming" or as the "software of the mind". Cultural influence differs from personality, which is mainly specific to the individual. People working in an organisation can have different beliefs, values, feelings, and attitudes, influenced by their ethnicity, religion or cultural influence. Therefore, culture, beliefs and values are informal rules that must be addressed for successful change. Values and norms that are followed or obeyed by people within an organisation come from the deepest layer of culture, through which people display preferences for specific activities and processes and reject others. People's tastes are connected with what is reasonable, safe and suitable according to their cultural values and norms.

The digitalisation process will require a massive change in established practices, procedures, and activities for many years. Therefore, leaders of organisations must focus on influencing and inspiring people from the perspective of their culture. For example, leadership practices can include different influential symbols, such as encouraging national language, using the example of role models, and giving preference to the needs of people, thereby satisfying their cultural values. In addition, using national culture when designing leadership practices and strategies can be beneficial for leading change. Hofstede et al. (2010) identify four different scopes of national culture (see section 3.8); however, for Saudi Arabia, particular attention must be paid to the "power distance" factor. Understanding this dimension is vital for leading change during the process of digitalisation. Alamri et al. (2014) identify that, in Saudi Arabia, the power distance between the top and lower management is exceptionally high. Hofstede (2010:61) defines power distance as "the extent to which less powerful members of establishments and organisations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unevenly". A high score in power distance within an administration reflects that the value and effect of national culture are high and can significantly affect the working environment and administrative culture (Obeidat et al., 2012). Therefore, managing change

through power distance can be effectual for digitalisation because, in Saudi organisations, people expect power to be unevenly distributed. Moreover, a high-power distance is a sign of autocratic leadership within an organisation (Alamri et al., 2014).

Collectivism is another crucial factor associated with civilisation in Saudi Arabia. Hofstede et al. (2010) explain culture's second dimension of independence or collectivism. In an individualistic culture, individuals mainly focus on their interests and welfares. However, in a collectivist culture, people work for the interests of groups, which develop a sense of protection and loyalty between themselves. In collectivist societies, relationships, teamwork, and collaborative working practices affect an organisation's leadership and management practices. Therefore, leaders in the Saudi public sector can simultaneously use power distance and collectivism to inspire people to understand the need for revolution and to engage them in change through directive influence (a form of authoritarian leadership).

The digitalisation of processes in the public sector of Saudi Arabia may require some authority and power to issue instructions and delegate responsibilities to subordinates. A high-power distance can also benefit uncertainty avoidance, which is essential for change management. On the other hand, change or transformation can lead to many new queries and questions for subordinates, a lack of structure and, therefore, the failure of the change or modification. Thus, the whole process of change in Saudi Arabia should be based on the cultural qualities of leaders. Some of the critical methods of reducing uncertainty avoidance could include (a) having a long period of employment in the same organisation, (b) having a strong belief in the leaders' vision and (c) the regular involvement of leaders and managers in operations. A high-power distance is also associated with a lower tolerance for ambiguity. Leaders who display power and authority can influence their employees to work according to the standard rules and norms.

The digitalisation process results in massive changes to an organisation's work culture and structure, and uncertainty can lead to significant failure and poor change management. Therefore, Saudi Arabian leaders can adopt directive leadership behaviour because of their high-power distance and collectivist culture. People employed in the public sector understand that power distance is an important factor used by organisations in the form of hierarchy and centralised authority. Therefore, directive leader conduct can "reduce the role ambiguity of subordinates by setting the clear structure of work to be implemented and measures to use to attain the predictable outcome" (Goolaup and Ismayilov, 2012:37). Directive leaders can

adopt several types of behaviour and practices significantly associated with directive leadership. Such behaviours include clarifying expected performance, clarifying the roles and responsibilities for the implementation of the assigned tasks, assigning specific, non-negotiable goals with the help of policies, procedures, and guidelines, and using liable reprimands to achieve cooperation from assistants or group members (ibid).

2.11 Digitalisation and Government Institutions

There is no ready-made or customised blueprint for the digitalisation of the public sector. Therefore, the relative success achieved by certain countries (Estonia and the UK, for example) represents a beacon of hope for others (Al-Bawaba, 2018a; Björklund, 2016; Kassen, 2019; Weerakkody et al., 2019). However, the public sector needs steps to facilitate reform, especially in developing countries (Simonet, 2015). For Saudi Arabia, digitalisation presents a noticeable challenge for the public sector (Basamh et al., 2014). This is because it requires changes in structure, culture and the ways of conducting business, with an increase in utilisation of ICT (El-sofany et al., 2012). Digitalisation brings fundamental changes in public service delivery (Chen, 2003). The digital government landscape has provided the means through which the government will apply innovative solutions to transform its departments (Janowski, 2015).

Due to these factors and others, digitalisation presents its challenges. According to McNeal et al. (2003), the drivers for digital government services do not necessarily emanate from citizens' demand for them but rather from the professionalism of those serving in government. They further argue that when there is a realisation of the need for efficiency or a better opportunity to improve service delivery, digitalisation becomes inevitable as an accurate way to ensure that government can deliver service efficiently, regardless of citizens' access to technology (McNeal et al., 2003). The implementation of digitalisation in public institutions goes beyond access to technology, argues Chen (2003). Otherwise stated, there needs to be a drive to change organisational culture and attitudes toward the privacy of information (Cullen, 2009). Such an approach would ensure transparency in safeguarding information (Margetts, 2011). In the digital space, there would be an increased share of economic, political, social and other human activities concerning citizens, and government agencies would need to demonstrate transparency and security of information (Calista and Melitski, 2013a). In other words, the ubiquitous technological solutions and the existing legal

frameworks cannot shape policies and the implementation of digital government processes. Instead, there needs to be a way to capture political, institutional and external forces that influence digitalisation, as argued by Castelnovo and Sorrentino (2018).

For the last two decades, there has been an emphasis on the digital government regarding e-commerce and revenue collection systems (Calista and Melitski, 2013b); however, the lessons learned by many governments have demonstrated poor uptake of proven and workable solutions to digitalisation (Calista and Melitski, 2013a). This failure amplifies many existing challenges associated with division, inequality, exclusion, fraud, power imbalance and insecurity, as well as the contextual factors driving digitalisation (Calista and Melitski, 2013a; Castelnovo and Sorrentino, 2018). Despite the various challenges, the digitalisation of government has become very important for transforming the Saudi public sector (Saudi-Vision-2030, 2020). Digitalising this sector is significantly influenced by the "global need of offering better, transparent and more effectual services and means through which citizens can interrelate and communicate with government supports through the internet" (Basmah et al., 2014: 297). It can also be a complex process, which will include many parties but will help improve service delivery (Saudi-Arabia, 2017). This will also assist in enhancing the public sector's internal inter-departmental and external inter-organisational activities.

Having established that digital transformation is the penultimate step before digitalisation (Figure 2), it would be prudent to evaluate the requirements and processes of digitalising a public institution (Wibowo and Dahlan, 2018). To this effect, Westerman et al. (2014) identify nine transformational processes, categorised into three broad areas (Figure 5), namely (i) operational processes, (ii) business models and (iii) customer experiences.

2.12 Leading Digital Revolution in the Public Sector

Having established that digital revolution is the penultimate step before digitalisation (Figure 2), it would be prudent to evaluate the requirements and processes of digitalising a public institution (Wibowo and Dahlan, 2018). To this effect, Westerman et al. (2014) identify nine transformational processes, categorised into three broad areas (Figure 5), namely (i) operational processes, (ii) business models and (iii) customer experiences.
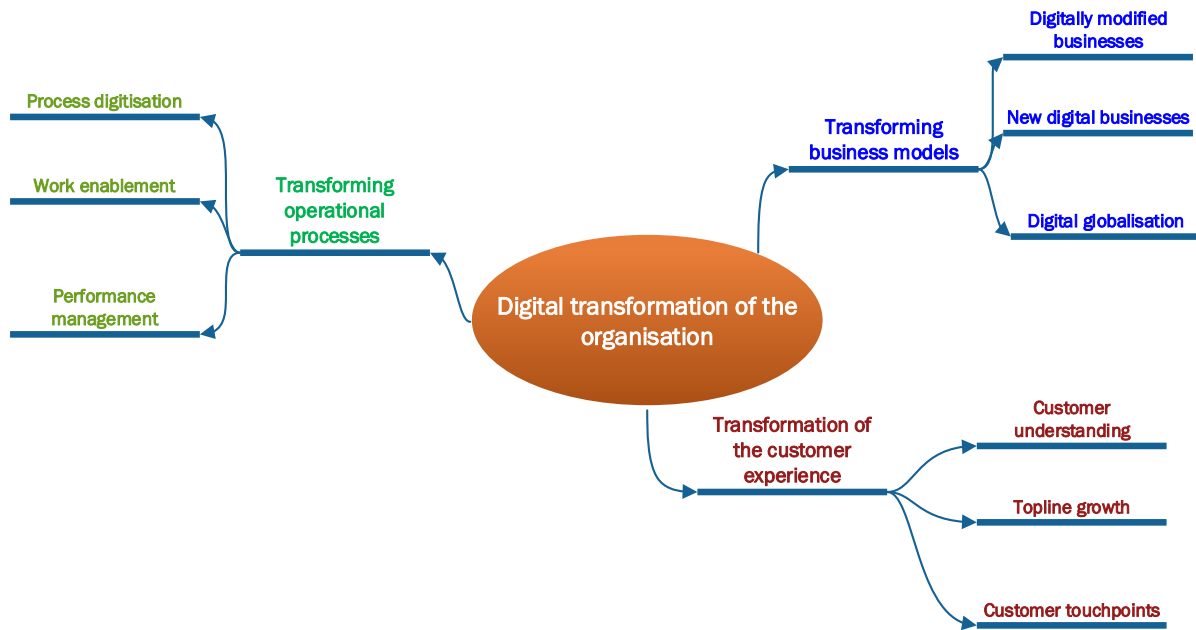
Figure 5: Abstraction of the critical steps for digital organisational transformation (Adapted from Westerman et al., 2014).

The three arms of organisational digitalisation from Westerman et al. (2014) in Figure 3 show a need to blend tangible corporate operations and intangible strategic leadership decisions to steer the transformation. For instance, the customers of a public institution represent the end user whom the government is responsible for; hence, strategic leadership for change would need to evaluate all the model elements in Figure 3. However, the digitalisation of a public institution cannot be achieved using the transformation model in Figure 3 because of the complexity associated with organisational communication systems, varied information exchange and integration systems, as well as the business transparency requirements, an example being the DVLA in the UK (Weerakkody et al., 2019). The operational, business, and experience models that constitute the digitalisation in Figure 3 cannot sync with government services as smoothly as desired, hence the necessity to learn from others (Al-Bawaba, 2018a). It has been observed that data sharing was a critical issue in Estonia (Kassen, 2019), such that the government opted for fast digitalisation for services (e-voting) over other services (legal services) (Kitsing, 2011).

Another critical issue is that, while the private sector approaches digitalisation from a business perspective, governments are required to balance various requirements and needs

for service provision (Clarke, 2020). This means that the rules governing the choice of ideal transformation processes for the public sector would vary slightly from those for the private sector (Wibowo and Dahlan, 2018). It would generally demand an amalgamation of systems other than digital solutions to deal with public administration, information management systems, communication systems and the government's political goals (Gil-Garcia, Dawes and Pardo, 2018).

2.13 Empirical Studies (Tactical Leadership and Service Delivery)

Rachinger et al. (2019), in their study on the effect of strategy implementation on the presentation of manufacturing small to medium enterprises, four of the five examined factors (leadership styles, structural adjustments, human resources, and technology) proved to have a substantial and positive effect on the performance of manufacturing SMEs. The investigation suggested that organisations embrace more flexible leadership characteristics, preserve flexible structures that are compatible with their objectives, maintain a suitable balance across strategy and human resources, and focus on their technology requirements in order to build more robust capabilities in leadership skills. According to Shimengah (2018), leadership substantially influences employee performance, and participatory leadership approaches assist in boosting employee performance. The study revealed that democratic or participatory leadership styles are the finest of all leadership styles because of the advantages that workers will receive and the ultimate result for the businesses.

A past study argued that organisational leadership is significant in management because good leadership can change an organisation through effective communication, especially in implementing corporate plans (Sow and Aborbie, 2018). Evidence abounds in the literature that strategic leadership help to communicate effectively to employees of the organisations in the comprehension of the goals and objectives of the organisations, and technology-driven medium (digitalisation) has been the key. Literature deduced that organisations must embrace digitalisation to gain a competitive benefit (Mergel et al., 2019). Digitalisation aids organisations grasp challenges that may occur and enhancing communication and service delivery (Maxwell et al., 2019). Goos et al. (2019), in their study of the effectiveness of technology for service delivery, revealed that effective communication of both formal and informal issues through the technology medium (WhatsApp) embraced by the organisation's staff saves time and is cost-efficient.

2.14 Organisation Structure and Service Delivery

There is a strong connection between organisation makeup and service delivery, as evidenced by past studies. Past research argued that formulating policies is very significant in an organisation's network and the watchword of strategy management (Clarke and Craft, 2019). Nzioki et al. (2018) highlight several factors affecting strategy implementation: leadership style, organisational culture, organisational structure, employee involvement, communication, and Information Communication Technology infrastructure. Baptista et al. (2020) emphasise the link between organisational structure and service delivery and recommend that public entities should always develop appropriate organisational structures based on the activities they do.

Uwanyiligira (2021) examined the consequence of strategic management practices on the service delivery of the public institution in the National Land Centre and Rwanda. The study deduced that the performance target was achieved through the execution strategy used as the tactical evaluation played a vital role in the upbeat service delivery. According to the study, there is a considerable association between strategic development, assessment, implementation, and service delivery. Also, Aosa (2006) worked on formulating and implementing strategic plans in Kenya using fivity sizeable private manufacturing firms to examine this relationship. The study revealed that strategic management was the significant factor that influenced strategy formulation.

2.15 Strategy Implementation and Service Delivery

There is a strong connection between strategy Execution and service delivery, and effective communication plays a key role. Communication is vital for the growth of any firm because communication is essential to operational team performance. Effective communication from the leadership to workers and strategic management plans to achieve and lighten up the goals and objectives of such organisations improves service delivery. Bekkers (2007) deduced that communication plays a crucial role in any strategic plan's implementation. Leaders must be able to influence and inspire personnel to follow a definite path to fulfil performance objectives. Kasera (2017) study appraised the strategic management techniques at Nairobi, Kenya's Mbagathi District Hospital. The study developed a model that captured all the resource personnel based on the strategy to help with strategy execution. The study indicated a strong correlation between strategy implementation that drive effective service delivery in

the study area. Also, Fredriksson and Pallas (2016) study deduced that implementation is an essential aspect of strategic planning. While a firm may require a well-constructed strategic proposition, managers are indulged in showing the direction to achieve the organisation's objectives. Testa (2017) study revealed that a functional interface between strategy implementers is decisive for strategy implementation achievement, which requires the participation of all workers in the organisation.

Moreover, to create knowledge, management must progressively reward and incorporate a broader range of organisational members in strategic management development (Xanthopoulou, 2020). This strategy could motivate strategy development and creates assurance and ownership of the system, which has a good impact on its feasibility and will help organisations achieve their goals. This strategy's success must be based on sound financial resources, human resources, and coordinating solid skills (Zimmer and Niemimaa, 2019). Hence, successful resource management leads to surpluses and growth in strategy implementation.

2.16 Human Resources and Service Delivery

Ziyadin et al. (2020) postulate that government-owned entities should invest in recruitment processes to ensure that their organisations have adequate employees and employees with a competitive talent to enhance organisational performance. Xanthopoulou (2021) also emphasises a favourable link between service quality, HR recruiting and selection, and performance management. According to the report, a proper capacity-building framework should be provided to improve recruitment and selection, training and development, pay management, and performance management. Long-term human resources incentives, such as sick leave, vacations, decent salaries and earnings, and bonus payments, should also be addressed. Studies have identified that inter-organisational support and collaboration are highly significant for innovation in public sector organisations (Picazo-Vela et al., 2018; Schedler and Schmidt, 2004). Invention in the public sector or general management is considered relevant for solving various problems to promote the public interest. Therefore, the theory of inter-organisational collaboration is highly appropriate for this context (Sabine and Moritz 2021). Plesner et al. (2018) identify that social atmosphere and organisations hinge on a complex and challenging system covering the operations of the different institutions and services involved in delivering public services. This, in turn, creates the need

for inter-organisational collaboration in public sector organisations during the digitalisation process. Adopting the digitalisation process can be difficult at the organisational level due to the various barriers occurring in said processes (Rubino et al., 2020).

The digitalisation process can introduce various changes to routine tasks, ways of working and relationships between people working in an organisation. It can also lead to many conflicts, potentially resulting in digitalisation failing. Riemer and Peter's (2020) work identifies that inter-departmental collaboration and coordination can help reduce or prevent process conflicts, reduce, or minimise substantive conflicts in routine work, and promote cooperation in performing complex tasks. Meanwhile, Magnusson et al. (2021) discovered that inter-organisational and inter-departmental collaboration is highly significant for sustainable digitalisation.

2.17 Evidence of Digital Transformation in Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia has undertaken several digital transformation projects in the past decade as it modernises its public sector. The digital transformation of the public sector in the Kingdom has experienced a model shift in terms of how the industry operates, its culture, values and structure, and how it performs its functions and duties (Basamh, Qudaih and Suhaimi, 2014). As a result, there is a realisation that digitalising the public sector is significant in facilitating communications between the government and citizens (Kemppainen et al., 2017). One considerable aspect of digital transformation is the effects on the economy and society, potentially affecting the work environment (Peña-Casas et al., 2018). However, there is no data to prove that the public sector has undertaken the whole digital transformation to realise the benefits of digitalisation (Combes, 2017).

According to Millard (2004), the digitalisation of public services offers a clear and direct benefit to end-users or recipients. However, there is no guarantee that digital systems in government institutions will lead to a positive outcome. A positive result of digitalisation occurs if the transformation has been strategically designed and implemented (Zhang et al., 2014), targeting specific areas of improvement, such as the quality and/or transparency of public services (Millard, 2004). Digitalisation could improve people's quality of life and boost public access to public services (ibid). Nevertheless, this does not occur by chance; it requires the use of technology alongside changing organisational culture and attitudes towards transformation (Welch and Feeney, 2014; Millard, 2004). In the case of the KSA, digitalisation

has involved a nationwide drive to digitalise both public and private sectors, creating half a million jobs for Saudi citizens (Combes, 2017).

Because of the strong argument that digitalisation has a broad positive effect on the economy of the Kingdom (Alzahrani et al., 2016), it is critical to evaluate performance indicators that led to such perceptions. Such performance indicators are not an accurate yardstick for digitalising services in the public sector. For the KSA, the public sector is a significant component of the real growth of gross domestic product (GDP), which was 2.9% in the first quarter of 2019 and reduced to 1.2% in the final quarter of 2019 (World-Bank, 2020). There has been a notable increase in government expenditure in the actualisation of Vision 2030 and the expansion of the economy to allow more private-led productivity and revenue collection, as the World Bank (2020) reported. However, the goal of the Saudi Government has been to reduce over-dependency on oil revenue while modernising society both economically and socially (World-Bank, 2020). The country's issue is plagued with inadequacy, causing a significant impact on public welfare (Simonet, 2015). Therefore, therein lies the potential for digitalising the public sector by achieving government goals.

2.18 Organisational Culture

Scholars have conducted various empirical studies to link organisational culture with performance (Vij and Bedi, 2016). Ghee, Ibrahim and Abdul-Halim (2015) identify those earlier researchers who had not recognised culture's significance or considered organisational culture too broad a topic to manage. However, currently, researchers are considering the significance of corporate culture and how it impacts employees and business performance (Vij and Bedi, 2016). Organisational culture is now considered to be an essential element in gaining a competitive advantage. Various companies, such as Apple and IBM, are leveraging their culture of innovation and changing their internal environment to achieve commercial success (Tahrp, 2009). However, it is vital to identify and understand the culture to use the element of culture strategically. Cameron and Quinn (1999) argue that organisational culture can be divided into four types: Clan (Collaborative), Market (Competitive), Hierarchy (Control) and Adhocracy (Creative).

Clan (Collaborative): In the values matrix, the collaborate (clan) culture is considered to be similar to the control (hierarchy) culture, as this form of culture also displays an inward focus, with concern for integration (Al-Ali et al., 2017). A study by Aasi et al. (2018) found that the

collaborative (clan) culture mainly emphasises flexibility and discretion rather than focusing on control and stability. The study further confirms that collaborative culture is significant for achieving success in technology governance (Aasi et al., 2018). In the clan culture, organisations operate like families. The environment within such organisations is highly friendly. The leaders in these firms are viewed as guides and mentors who support others in the organisation to improve their performance (Kim and Chang, 2019). For digitalisation, collaboration is possible if institutions develop a framework to act as a blueprint (Grant and Chau, 2005). Collaboration on its own may not occur if there is no blueprint to work from because digitalisation covers many public interests served by various institutions (Crant and Chau, 2005).

Market (Competitive): Companies or organisations with market culture also value standardisation and control. However, instead of having an inward focus, they mainly focus on external inclination. The leaders in such organisations are result-oriented and focus on getting the job done (Al-Ali et al., 2017). Market culture places more value on differentiation than integration. People working in such a culture are competitive and emphasise their goals. Studies have identified that leaders working within a market culture drive change (Naranjo-Valencia, Jiménez-Jiménez and Sanz-Valle, 2016).

Meanwhile, market culture assists in promoting and encouraging innovation and new ideas. Leaders in a market culture have high expectations of their employees and, therefore, emphasise winning (Hogan and Coote, 2014). Organisations with a market culture specifically focus on relationships, such as transactional relationships with customers, suppliers, contractors, unions, legislators, consultants, regulators, etc. (Tharp, 2009). The control (hierarchy) culture mainly focuses on establishing stability and control by implementing strict rules, specialised job functions and standard operating procedures. According to Hartnell et al. (2016), leaders in the compete (market) culture are concerned with keenness and productivity. For digitalisation, there is no competition; instead, there is pressure to ensure they can continue improving services. Kalvet (2012) argues that governments must use all ethical means available to achieve their goals. He reports that, in Estonia, the government used ethical hackers to improve their digital services. This was a severe change in organisational culture; however, it served the purpose at that time.

Hierarchy (Control) Culture addresses the hierarchical needs of organisations, having similarities with large bureaucratic organisations. Acar and Acar (2014:20) suggest that

"hierarchy (control) culture is located between internal administration focus and stability/control extents ". The values and norms often related with bureaucracy are also found in hierarchical culture (Al-Ali et al., 2017). This organisational culture is influential because the leadership uses order and rules (Eisend, Evanschitzky and Gilliland, 2016).

Such a culture is often found in large and global organisations to manage business functions and reduce autonomous decision-making. Leaders in this culture value standardisation and control and, therefore, have well-defined organisational structure and authority (Al-Ali et al., 2017). However, such power can stifle digitalisation due to resistance, fear of change and poor innovation in ideas (Mawela et al., 2017). This was experienced in the e-government project in South African municipalities, where a culture of control created operational silos that stifled e-government (Mawela et al., 2017). Joshi and Islam (2018) argue that, for an organisation to digitalise and sustain its successes, it should have a culture of detailing the processes to facilitate agility in accessing services while using state-of-the-art technology. This way, they would develop and sustain trust and awareness (Joshi and Islam, 2018) of the digitalised services.

Adhocracy (Creative) Culture: In the value matrix framework, adhocracy is considered similar to the clan culture, as both cultures mainly focus on providing flexibility and discretion. According to Oh and Han (2018), the difference between them is that they do not share the same inward emphasis, as adhocracy is externally focused and involves a concern with differentiation (Kraśnicka, Głód and Wronka-Pośpiech, 2018). Studies have revealed that businesses must operate in a volatile, fast-paced environment with the advent of technology. Tharp (2009:4) states, "Social, economic and technological changes made older corporate outlooks and tactics less efficient." Therefore, this culture and its leaders encourage innovation and creativity. Adhocracy is thus considered the most important organisational culture, as it helps develop a culture that promotes better technology adoption and implementation (Goncalves et al., 2019). However, creating a culture can only work if there is a clear strategy (Chen et al., 2006). According to Chen et al. (2006), the strategy predominantly evaluates the initial phases before moving to the infusion of electronic government so that it can graduate to customisation. These three phases would dictate the type of data required from the technological platform to consent and use data from citizens.

2.19 Cultural Change and Digitalisation Success

Culture is highly significant in perceiving and accepting change (Cummings and Worley, 2014). A culture must hold specific values to be adopted by an organisation. Determining the appropriate culture to fuel change in an organisation or a sector is vital. The definition of culture varies. It entails observing people's responsibilities, customs, rules, geography, race and beliefs. All these factors affect interpersonal acts. Culture has been defined by Hofstede (2005) as "the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others". Su and Adams (2005: 237) define it as the "mental programming-software of the mind". However, McCoy et al. (2007: 82) define culture as the " outlines of personality characteristics found among people within the same nation". Therefore, culture can be understood as a structural phenomenon or the association of individuals' different properties. According to Hofstede's culture theory, every individual has two properties: individualist and collectivist tendencies. Differences occur due to individual attitudes, behaviours and principles (Aldraehim, 2013). Therefore, according to this theory of cultural dimensions, leaders in the Saudi public sector are not only required to manage local culture, but the development will also give rise to ethnic and racial mixing. Therefore, different cultural dimensions can affect the implementation and acceptance of new technology (Aldraehim, 2013).

The digitalisation of the public sector involves digitalising the context and structure of the organisation (Alvesson and Sveninggsson, 2008). Reshaping the system has significant implications for leadership, as leadership is one of the critical determinants of the effective execution of change. To lead digital transformation, leaders must ensure the application of the drivers of performance and productivity, as leaders shape the organisation's culture according to the new needs and goals (Dehinbo and Alexander, 2011). Studies have identified that the digitalisation process needs strategic leadership because digitalisation will transform the organisation and change how business is conducted. According to Afandi (2017:19), "from an organisational standpoint, digitalisation assumes reshaping processes using incorporating digital technologies and tools". Digitalisation will improve the effectiveness of services, innovativeness and customer responsiveness, which are essential requirements in public sector organisations (Afandi, 2017). Digitalisation will not only enhance the performance and productivity of the employees but will also improve the customer experience. Kahre, Hoffmann and Ahlemann (2017) assert that evaluating the external and internal business

environments is highly important for leaders. Analysing the internal and external environments assists in improving the efficacy of the business and leads to the success of the digitalisation process.

The digitalisation of an organisation, particularly in the public sector, involves more than merely using technological platforms to perform functions and deliver services. It consists of the need to change the organisational culture from an internal, cost-driven, static culture to one which is externally focused, customer needs-driven and adaptive to change (Alvesson and Sveninggsson, 2008). It is thus essential to assess the problem of digitalisation from cultural perspectives. According to the evidence, culture significantly influences Saudi Arabian society and the business environment. Saudi culture is group-oriented, believing in maintaining close relationships with people (Hofstede, 2017). Culture has had various effects on transforming the public sector and accepting the digitalisation of public services in the country. Currently, technology is mainly used in the private sector, but to varying degrees (Bahaddad et al., 2014). Most organisations and companies in Saudi Arabia still deem technology to be an option and not a necessity (Al-Otaibi and Al-Zahrani, 2004). Basamh (2014) states that more than 60% of the population comprises younger people under 25. However, the top positions are still held by people over 40, many of whom do not know how to use computers (Basamh et al., 2014). They have developed their own organisational culture according to their knowledge, beliefs and values, which could represent a significant barrier to the digitalisation of public services in the Kingdom (Al-Shehry et al., 2006). The process of digitalisation is associated with transforming the public sector and converting the current practices to digital forms through technology. Nevertheless, the eagerness to adopt change is low because of ineffective leadership and gaps between planning and implementation (Al-Shehry et al., 2006; Cullen, 2009).

Digitalisation has the potential to influence organisational culture. Cultural change is subject to new technology-based access to information, dissemination and production. Cultural transformation can also occur through creation and participation in the digitalisation process. Therefore, the process of digitalisation is also influenced by culture in various ways (Alvesson and Sveninggsson, 2008). Public sector organisations can benefit significantly from digitalisation, which, on the whole, will significantly influence workplace culture and national culture. Therefore, digitalisation can lead to a cultural gap and can be influenced by the diversity of culture in a country such as Saudi Arabia. The digitalisation of services is also

affected by cross-cultural differences between countries (Dunleavy and Carrera, 2013). For example, in countries where people are tech-savvy, they prefer convenience, demand digital services and are willing to take risks. However, demand for such services will be lower in countries with a less tech-savvy, risk-averse population. In general, Dunleavy (2006) recommends that there should be a minimal cultural gap in the application and management of technology.

Organisations that have digitalised their workplaces have witnessed increased productivity, developed an agile workforce and demonstrated acceptance and flexibility regarding the increased complexities of the global marketplace. Therefore, the workplace culture must adapt according to market needs. The digitalisation of the workplace also influences the way of working and organisations' culture. Organisations incompatible with the digital age must adapt to changing digital environments (Calista and Melitski, 2013a). Culture affects people's behaviour (Hofstede, 2015; Taras, 2011). In this respect, it is critical to understand how customers and service providers utilise technology. Culture influences organisational practices. Thus, Hofstede et al. (2015: 67) divide organisational culture into the following six categories: "(1) process-oriented versus results-oriented; (2) employee-oriented versus job oriented; (3) parochial versus professional; (4) open system versus closed system; (5) lose control versus tight control; and (6) normative versus pragmatic".

People's cultural orientation affects their perception of technology and may affect the success of digitalisation efforts (Wei et al., 2014). Culture affects all individuals and their group behaviour (Budin et al., 2015; Yang, 2007). It must be stressed that organisational culture significantly influences digitalisation (Aier, 2012; Budin et al., 2015). As a result, organisations wishing to digitalise their processes must first address any cultural issues that may exist. This is where leadership becomes critical because leaders play a crucial role in shaping culture (Agolla and Van Lill, 2016). For example, leaders provide a strong vision and resources for the organisation to achieve that vision while eliminating conflicts by continuously restating their support for the digitalisation drive (Aier, 2012). Leadership is also critical because leaders can stress the importance of establishing a customer-focused culture, which may lead to a higher perceived customer value. New technology accompanies the inventor's culture but may not be compatible with the receiver's culture. Leaders must focus on culture, among other factors, to enable the development and adoption of new technology through digitalisation.

Organisational leaders are the primary decision-makers, as they hold power and have the right to decide what is appropriate and important for the business's success. Therefore, they must decide whether to adopt digital technology (Lee and Joshi, 2018). The digitalisation processes and the adoption of digital technology in business also significantly influence the type of leadership required. Hofmann and Ogonek (2018) state that traditional leaders must encourage and support employees to improve their presentation and capabilities to achieve common goals. However, digitalisation has resulted in changing the approach and scope of leadership. Leaders now have more responsibility for managing technology-capable resources (Fehér and Szabó, 2018). These technology-capable resources are significant for the success of the digital process. They may include competent individuals, infrastructure, effective organisational culture and appropriate tools and strategies for evaluating, monitoring, and supporting the progress of the digitalisation process (Fehér and Szabó, 2018; Okunola et al., 2017).

2.20 Drawing from the GLOBE study

The Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness project (Project GLOBE), begun in the early 1990s, was instituted to promote a culturally worldwide model of embedded leadership. This embedded leadership style sensitised individuals and groups on how leaders can be influential in a cultural entity (Gabrernya and Smith 2015). Gabrernya and Smith (2015) and Angulo-Ruiz et al. (2022) assumed that GLOBE offers a new tool for research on leadership dimensions that are culturally streamlined in the provision of public service delivery. Past and similar studies examined the dimensional and leadership projects and identified the choices made by the GLOBE team at the conceptualisation stage to interpret their considerable dataset (de Mooij, M. 2015, Fox, 2016, Swoboda & Batton 2019).

Literature argued that Hofstede and GLOBE models revealed that international cultural alterations need to be integrated into the local dimension of leadership and therefore suggested that researchers and practitioners should exercise caution when employing national culture paradigms in their study, ideally until their dimensions are modified by more academic research to provide better clarity, accuracy, and uniformity across cultural constructs and definitions. These constructions' measurement items (Javidan & Dastmalchian, 2009, Robert et al., 2014). Moreover, Vecchi and Brennan (2011) used Hofstede and GLOBE national culture dimensions, hierarchies and scores to measure the

individual and organisational levels and their benefit for organisation theory and approach. The study Evidence that the validity of most methods dimensions was much stronger than the validity of the values scopes. It is expected that the outcomes will provide an efficient valued, oriented service for the general good of the populace. The study concludes that the leadership project (GLOBE) provides a new tool and dimension on leadership across nations and countries, further leading to additional research of value to global leaders.

Furthermore, Kabasakal et al. (2012) identified three essential constructs of the GLOBE project: values, practices, and organisational culture. Marketing through deepening our awareness of the many cultural components of Hofstede's method for MNCs across borders. According to the study, consumer-centred CR research gives a fresh perspective into cultural developments in CR perceptions and consequences across nations. When we include unique cultural factors and combine all sizes into one model, the findings are consistent. (Swoboda et al., 2017). Hayat et al. (2009) used the GLOBE project to reflect on leadership and culture in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. The finding reveals that cultural practices are reflected by stronger in-group collectivism and power distance, whereas cultural values reflect a shared goal for more extraordinary achievement and future orientation. The study finds that a leader is supposed to be effective but also caring about the well-being of team members. Exceptional leaders can effectively practice this by articulating the vision, providing direction, and providing merit-based recognition (Swoboda and Hirschmann 2017).

From the foregoing, this study examines cross-cultural leadership and strategic leadership using strategic leaders under the scheme of digitalisation service that influences public sector delivery: The context of two Saudi Arabian ministries. The scope is to understand the drivers and consequences of leadership at the highest level of organisations.

2.21 Research Gaps Methodology

The above literature review is evidence that strategic management and the role of leadership enhanced service delivery. The literature has shown that strategic leadership practices are a factor in organisational performance. Several practices are adopted by strategic leaders that vary from the private sector to the public sector. Study on this issue has not been significant in how strategic leaders facilitate the public sector using digitalisation. In Saudi Arabia, basic leadership competencies and the daunting challenge of integrity and ethical conduct have not

been studied, especially in gender leadership roles and mediums of delivery. Hence this paper examines the literature on how core competencies and ethical practices are imperative in in-service delivery. Therefore, there is a need to look at how strategic leaders facilitate the public sector using digitalisation as a driver and the role gender leadership role. Also, there is a need for more information regarding the connection between service delivery and tactical practices and management processes. More so, the need to conduct this research to provide a baseline for other work on this topic and to educate stakeholders on the significance of good management practices and the place of strategic leadership. Significant works are on strategic management process and service delivery, but the place of leadership using digitalisation as a driver has received less attention. This is a challenge to this research and the identified gap, which this research hopes to fill.

2.22 Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed some basic, essential information about the digitalisation of the public sector, including the elements involved in the digitalisation of government, concluding that governments worldwide need to be digitalised. The primary purpose of digitalising public sector services is to increase service delivery for customers and the public and to improve system efficiency. It has been found that competitive and political pressure on the government and public sector organisations is also transforming them. Digitalisation can lead to better delivery of services. The use of information and communication technology can improve the flow of information and communication between the government and stakeholders. The quality of services improves by offering various e-service options, which can further enhance customer satisfaction. Digitalisation can also assist in saving time and effort and provide a seamless flow of information from government to customers and for an organisation's internal operations.

This chapter has critically reviewed the drivers and challenges associated with the type of leadership that can be used in the digitalisation of public sector organisations in Saudi Arabia (section 1.8, [objective ii]). The chapter argues that leadership is critical in transforming private or public sector organisations. Leaders understand the significance of change and different implementation strategies to bring about change in organisational culture. The chapter stresses that, for the process of digitalisation to materialise, leaders need to

determine how new information and communication technology will be applied. In addition, many employees should adopt the latest technology to make digitalisation successful.

Public sector leadership must be closely aligned with organisational goals so that employees can be effectively engaged and motivated. This chapter has discussed how public sector leadership is applied and the most appropriate leadership behaviour that public sector leaders could adopt. This chapter also concludes that there is no proof to support the view that leadership in the Saudi public sector can transform digitally in a complex mix of factors. This research gap is to be addressed in the present research.

Apart from the many benefits of e-government, some significant challenges can affect the success of the digitalisation of the public sector in Saudi Arabia. The chapter has discussed various challenges that can potentially lead to the complete failure of the digitalisation process. One significant factor is organisational culture. Digitalisation involves delivering change to the structure and culture of an organisation. This chapter includes various theories and definitions of corporate culture and how different factors influence it. Some factors – such as the attitudes and aspirations of employees, conflict to change, significant lack of training and education, lack of appropriate financial support, and lack of collaboration and partnership – represent substantial elements that can affect the effective implementation of digitalisation. The role of leaders is highly significant in developing a thriving organisational culture. Leadership has been identified as the most important element for digital government's successful adoption and execution. Therefore, in the next chapter, the literature review will discuss the prominence of leadership in implementing organisational change, the effectiveness of leadership in the public sector and other important factors associated with digitalisation.

CHAPTER THREE: CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

The conceptual framework in this study depicts how digitalisation and other socio-economics as independent variables influence the public service delivery of a strategic leader. The linkages between these variables are described in figure 6.

3.2 Conceptual Framework

Literature deduced that a conceptual framework is a paradigm of exposition where researchers illustrate the relevance between variables in a study and offer graphics or a diagram relationship (Orodho, 2008).

Independent Variables   **Dependent Variables**

Strategy Leadership

Delegation

Decision Making

Innovation

Strategy Formulation

Development of Vision

Development of Mission

Setting Objectives

Strategy Implementation

Service Delivery
Better Proficiency Service
Quality

Enhanced Accountability for
Results

Revenue Flow Consistency

Resources Allocation

Allotting Responsibility

Staff Motivation

Strategy Evaluation and

Control

System Assessment

Process Effectiveness

Benchmark
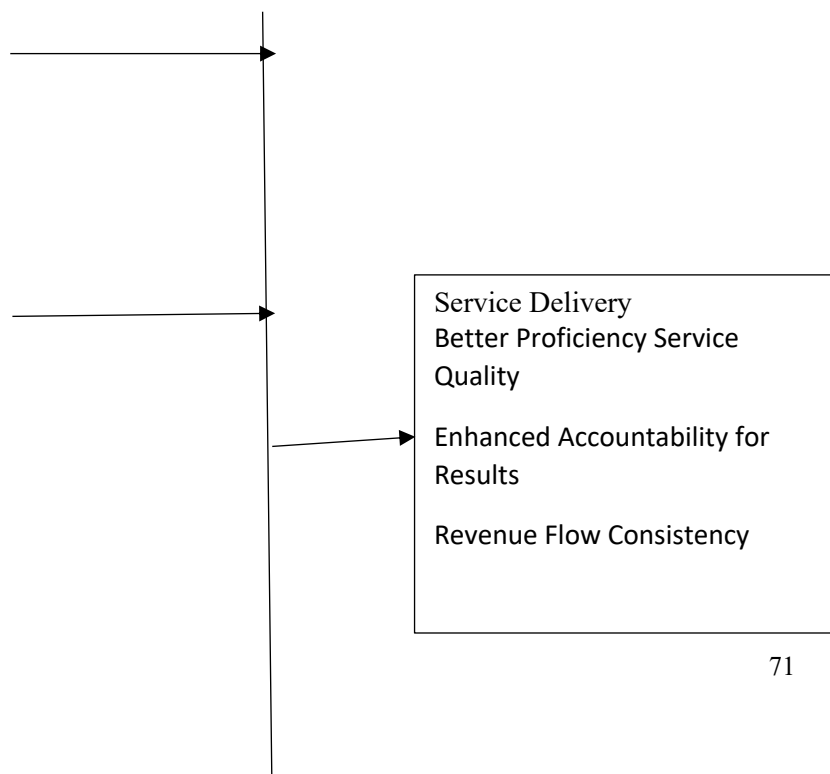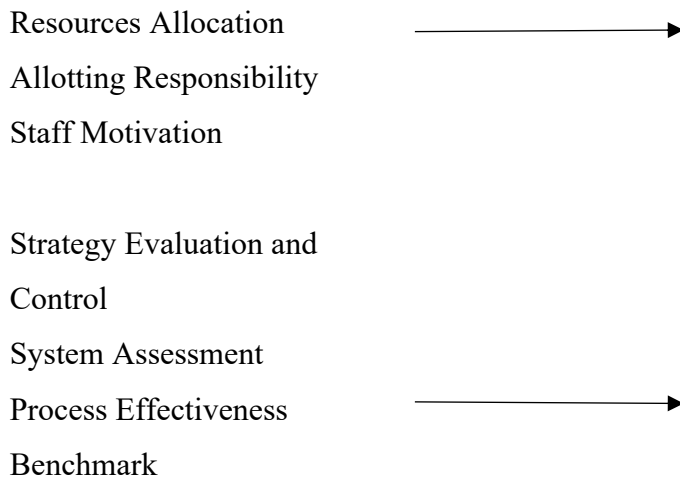
Figure 6: Conceptual Framework

Source: Adapted from the work of Jerono (2016). Effect of tactical change management exercises on service delivery at the Ministry of foreign affairs of Kenya

The figure displays the conceptual framework adapted for this research. It can be deduced from the figure that strategy leadership will directly influence service delivery. In addition, it is also anticipated that strategy formulation will impact service delivery positively. More so, appropriate strategy implementation is expected to have a positive effect about service delivery. At the same time, Strategy evaluation and control are presumed to influence positively quality service delivery in the study area.

The digitalisation model examines whether the transformation of the public sector is internal, without affecting its customers, as the digitalisation process transforms not only the internal working but also the structure of the government (Andrews, 2019). However, if it changes the relationship with its customers, citizens or stakeholders, it can fulfil the people's aspirations (see Figure 7).

Stage	Application Context	CHARACTERISATION		
		Internal government transformation	Transformation affects external relationships	Transformation is context specific
Digitalisation	Technology in government	no	no	no
Transformation	Technology impacting government organisation	yes	no	no
Engagement	Technology impacting government stakeholders	yes	yes	no
Contextualisation	Technologu impacting sectors and communities	yes	yes	yes

Figure 7: Digital government evolution model (Source: Janowski, 2015).

The main concern of the digital government model is to reintegrate bureaucratic structures and simultaneously focus on connecting the government departments and levels of the government with their environment (Persson and Goldkuhl, 2010). Such reintegration in the public sector can only be facilitated by using new technology and changing the administrative mechanism (Kosorukov, 2017). The administrative functions of public sector organisations are often complex; digitalising the public sector also helps reduce the complexity of the functions, eliminating duplication in administrative functions and simplifying public administration processes through standardisation (Gray and Rumpe, 2015).

3.3 Theoretical framework

"There is nothing so practical as a good theory" (Lewin, 1943:1)

Literature argued that the place of the theoretical framework is to present a set of thoughts drawn from one related notion to the other and the application of the same theory to explain an event or shine some light on certain research problems (Al-Debei and Avison, 2010). Scientists believe that there is no action without theory. Several theories have been presented to explain the link between tactical management exercises and quality service delivery. These ideas describe the advantages of strategic management to a variety of stakeholders, spanning from the public sector to the economy. It also demonstrates how this type of tactical management philosophy helps diverse organisations inside a public organisation. According to Swanson (2001:299), "a good theory is something detailed, and that has been tested both intellectually and in practice". To assess the role of tactical leadership in the digitalisation of Saudi public sector organisations, the researcher needs to evaluate theories that are likely to have an impact on the issue. The theories that expanded this study and improved public service knowledge were resource-based perspective theory, strategic fit theory, SWOT analysis theory, and public value theory.

Despite leadership being a key determinant of organisational performance at the global level, leadership styles play a critical role. Elliott and Stead (2017:19) report that, over the years, leadership styles have largely remained masculinist, which could be attributable to worldwide organisational inefficiencies. Therefore, as organisations strive to improve their performance, leadership forms a strategic vehicle to implement operational performance and effectiveness

in what they deliver or produce (Buchner, 2007). Hence, the digitisation of Saudi Arabia's public services may improve efficiency, amongst other things. Still, the involvement of leaders underlines the recognition of undertaking a systematic approach to nurturing the process through human resource development (HRD).

The digitalisation of Saudi public sector organisations can be seen as a twofold strategy; one looks at how the workforce can implement government policy on digitisation, while the other looks at how technology platforms have been used to implement policy. Swanson (1999:2), "a theory simply explains what a phenomenon is and how it works." Hence, the theories needed for this research are those relevant to leadership decisions and how they affect workers. There needs, therefore, to be consideration of the HRD set of theories as well as the digital platform theories that explain the acceptance of technology. This chapter examines the theoretical arguments that form the basis for implementing leadership and HRD in the digitisation process of public organisations in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

3.3.1 Resource Based View Theory (RBV)

The resource-based theory came to the limelight by Wernefelt (2010), who elucidated how tangible and intangible resources influence the success of service delivery. The theory expresses that when an organisation utilises its resources to drive all of the organisation's fields, such an organisation can accomplish set objectives better. Resource-based theory amplifies the importance of internal company resources and their use in developing a plan for obtaining long-term gains in service delivery (Udovita, 2020). A past study argued that resource-based theory, in a setting that is external to the enterprise, drives an organisation's internal resources to determine the tactical option it makes in competing and balancing (Barney, 2011). Literature argued that the place of competitiveness and balancing is the act of tactical management activities and its influence on the service delivery of a business (Schroeder, 2014). Hence, RBV is deduced to recognise and analyse staff resources and strategic planning processes that will help the company establish sustainable strategic objectives and goals. Also, in the RBV, the core human capital resources and the levels of skills and abilities are crucial to achieve a better and more coordinated team to explain better the balance of help and expertise (Roberts, 2016).

The RBV theory contends that resources are more significant when they can satisfy a client's needs. The central theme of RBV theory is found in utilising resources and skills deemed appreciated, usefull and rare, presenting a more significant profit and providing leverage for

the achievement of organisations' strategic objectives and goals (Cyert and March 2002). The RBV theory showcases a distinct relationship between the strategic staff aptitude of organisations and learning and development processes recognised at the level of service delivery. Consequently, human resources play a critical role in the success of a business's core purposes. The RBV theory is an approach to strategically developing specific efficiencies and resources and involving them in creating higher value (Igbaekemen and Odivwri 2015). To the level that these qualifications can stand exceptional to the organisation, they can be employed to construct an upper indicator (Zheng et al., 2010).The resource-based theory is of significance for this research as it will help to elucidate whether the organisations have unique resources and capabilities to give them an advantage when executing strategies that positively influence enactment.

Moreover, the research beams its searchlight on the behavioural theory of the firm, which is embedded in the resource-based view theory. The behavioral theory of the firm has been ordered by literature as part of an organisational investments process to strategic management (Barney, 2011). The theory emphasises the strategy for generating well-informed business decisions and offers extensive observations on how firms make these judgements. The previous study suggested that the basics of a firm's behavioural theory were shown to be necessary to both economic theory and the idea of complex organisations (Cyert and March 2002). In this theory, the emphasis is on the organisation's strategic means and leadership structure that will drive the organisation's resources to the desired end (Kotler, 2016).

This theory is relevant to the research as it emphasises the importance of organisations making essential decisions and explains how organisations embrace these decisions. As a result, the theory is concerned with implementing strategic plans, which necessitates strategic leadership, a solid organisational structure, and talented people resources to provide excellent service.

3.3.2 Strategic-fit theory

The strategic fit theory, also known as best-fit strategic administration or strategic decision theory, describes why strategic management policies aren't homogenously viewed. Regardless of the organisation's situation and condition, organisations strive to build management strategies (David, 2009). This management strategy is mandated to survive and succeed, as the organisation must raise its bar to create productivity and creativity in its

operations. A past study argued that strategic management approaches must be implemented by the public institution's service delivery goals, corporate planning, and culture. According to the literature, the notion of strategic fit emphasises the significance of ensuring that strategic management practices are exact for service delivery components such as organisational processes, community and external surroundings (Wright and Snell, 1998). Strategic-fit theory conceptualises that strategic management must consider a strategic criterion of the public institution's service delivery system and its investors for it to be effective and successful. This theory relates to the research as it shows the significance of organisations deciding on critical decisions and providing the ways in which the organisations make these decisions. Therefore, the theory relates to the strategic plan execution, which requires tactical leadership, a sound organisational structure and capable human resources to deliver quality service. Also, the strategic-fit theory will help the research seek a functional strategic management technique that will drive innovation and enhance resources to be appropriately combined with accurate service delivery in the understanding of public organisations and the community. Hence, the central aim of strategic-fit theory is to employ a functional strategic management technique that drives innovation and enhances those resources that must be appropriately combined with accurate service delivery to understand public agencies and the community (Johnson and Scholes, 2008).

3.3.3 SWOT Analysis Theory

SWOT Analysis is a useful technique for understanding your strong points and were you are lacking in and identifying the Prospects open to you and the risks you face. The SWOT analysis is a mean used for strategic planning and management in organisations to build organisational and competitive strategies (Anya Sammut-Bonnici, 2015). The SWOT analysis helped the organisations to examine their environments for tactical management implementation and activities. This procedure of reviewing the organisation and its environment is called SWOT Analysis. A past study argued that SWOT analysis is simple tool whereas an effective for the magnitude of an organisation's resource competencies and shortages, its demand prospects, and the external intimidations to its future. (Thompson, 2017). It is a strategic planning framework used to evaluate an organisation, a plan, a project, or a business activity (Manguru, 2011). Literature indicated that SWOT Analysis is, therefore, a powerful situation analysis tool that helps administrators identify organisational and environmental factors. SWOT Analysis has two sides: Internal and external. The internal dimension includes

organisational factors, strengths, and weaknesses. External dimension includes environmental factors, opportunities, and risks.

Thompson and Strickland (2003) also said that the SWOT analysis assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the internal organisation as well as external chances and threats. The internal analysis evaluates supplies, fundamental skills, and competitive advantage by reviewing management, infrastructure, procurement, finance, reputational factors, manufacturing, distribution, marketing, and invention using a functional approach. This theory is relevant to the research because it explains why companies must assess their strengths and weaknesses and identify the possibilities and challenges they face (GÜREL, 2017).

The SWOT analysis will help the study through the strategic leadership to identify organisational and environmental factors, both the internal and external dimensions, that will influence positive service delivery. The SWOT analysis will help the research to enhance sound decisions through the tactical plan implementation, strategic leadership, a sound organisational structure and capable human resources that will effectively influence quality service delivery.

3.3.4 Public Value Theory (PVT)

The public value indicates that individuals and their representatives strive for the experiences and instrumental outcomes of public services (Alford and O'Flynn, 2009). The theory was introduced to orient public organisations beyond the pursuit of competence and toward the generation of values desired by citizens and other investors (Aritonang, 2017). According to the PVT, service delivery may generate public value if stakeholders and government officials commit and disclose information. (Kamau et al., 2017). The advocate of the theory argues that the value of citizens should guide the operations of public organisations in relation to the delivery of public services. Public value theory reformulates essential components of both old and contemporary public management. (NPM). The PVT seeks to revitalise the role of publicly produced values in the conceptually hostile terrain between NPM, which focuses almost entirely on lowering public bureaucracy using measures and organisational practises centred around commercial efficiency and the PVT. (Kelly et al., 2002). The idea focuses on the demands of the public as individuals as well as customers, the generation of value rather than reaching aims, and public value being more than the aggregate of individual wants, with the fundamental topic being what constitutes public value. The theory's basic thesis is that public

resources should be used to enhance value equal to value creation in private companies through current innovation (digitalisation).

Public value theory is employed as a diagnostic tool to examine the existing environment by addressing how the authorising environment stands, what public value is currently being generated, and the current ability to deliver public value (Alford and O'Flynn, 2009).

A past study argued that the PVT helps analyse digital governance for public service delivery. Shared value is increasingly becoming the advanced driver in modern e-governance happenings, aims at producing value for citizens, and using ICT to improve government provision of public value. Public value theory presents innovative ways to plan, create, and implement digital government programmes. The strategy has piqued the researcher's interest due to its robust way of shifting the concentration of public sector management from internal significance to value-creation systems outside the organisation.

The focus of public sector management changes from within organisational borders to society from how to more effectively generate public services to how to offer public services that suit individuals that will employ them. The spread of digital technology has accelerated this transformation and produced fierce competition for contributing value creation as the focal point of digital government activities. Public value theory has been significantly effective in creating a counter-narrative to the New Public Management narrative, which views digital technologies as administrative competence aids. Instead, public value management offers a broader perspective to account for the significant transitions necessary to move the emphasis from service production to meeting public expectations and aspirations. (Joyce, 2015).

Previous research claimed that PVT had transformed the problems, complexity of systems, and expectations that public sector companies confront when creating public value. While these viewpoints have proven the importance of public value, understanding and quantifying how digital government programmes generate public value remains a work in progress. Digital government initiatives must now, more than ever, achieve high societal expectations in terms of public value production while dealing with rising complexity and integration issues.

Digital government transforms how government agencies develop, distribute services, and engage with individuals. These transitions are facilitated by digital technology and organisational and institutional considerations. Public value theory provides a solid platform for investigating the changes brought about by digital technology in general

administration. The researcher has used public value theory in public administration as a conceptual framework to describe public sector practice and as a normative approach that considers public value an essential element for enhancing services. (Lane, 2018). Accordingly, the theory has offered a wealthy setting to re-evaluate the critical role of public leaders and how digital government innovations should be evaluated from a value-oriented standpoint. (Roberts, 2016; Michael, 2019). This is the conceptual construct in which this was research-based, that is, to adopt the public value theory to assist in integrating the nature of public value production facilitated by digital government executions, as well as how the output of public value creation is mirrored in the integrated consumption of multiple services pushed by digitalisation of public ministries.

3.4 The Theoretical Argument for the Research within the Saudi Arabian Context

According to Gardner et al. (2010), the operationalisation of the strategic leadership theory is centred on the belief that leaders influence organisational performance. In addition, strategic leadership theory constraints executives, such as evaluating the contextual environment (ibid). It is also argued that the focus should be on top-management teams in the upper tier levels of the organisations (ibid). De Church et al. (2010:1070) state that "the top-level leadership layer in the organisations forms the strategic apex"; it establishes a vision and sets broad objectives for the organisation. Parallels could be drawn with the digitisation problem in the Saudi Arabian public sector, where the implementation of tasks has been entrusted to strategic leaders. However, Weinberg and Lewis (2009) argue that the application of strategic leadership in public institutions varies from that in private sector organisations.

For public institutions, such as those implementing digitisation in Saudi Arabia, the strategic leadership theory could not be applied without ensuring that public value can be fashioned (Weinberg and Lewis, 2009). The definition, the public value of a government institution implies that the given organisations can demonstrate how it positively impacts the individual and cooperative lives of the citizens it serves (ibid). Using the "Moore's strategic triangle" model presented in Figure 10, the strategic leaders of organisations need to not only fulfil the organisations' goals in isolation. Instead, they need to ensure that (i) they can meet the goals of the authorising institutions, (ii) they can develop the operational capabilities required to

meet and surpass the aspirations of the people they serve and (iii) they can create public value (Weinberg and Lewis, 2009) (see Figure 8).
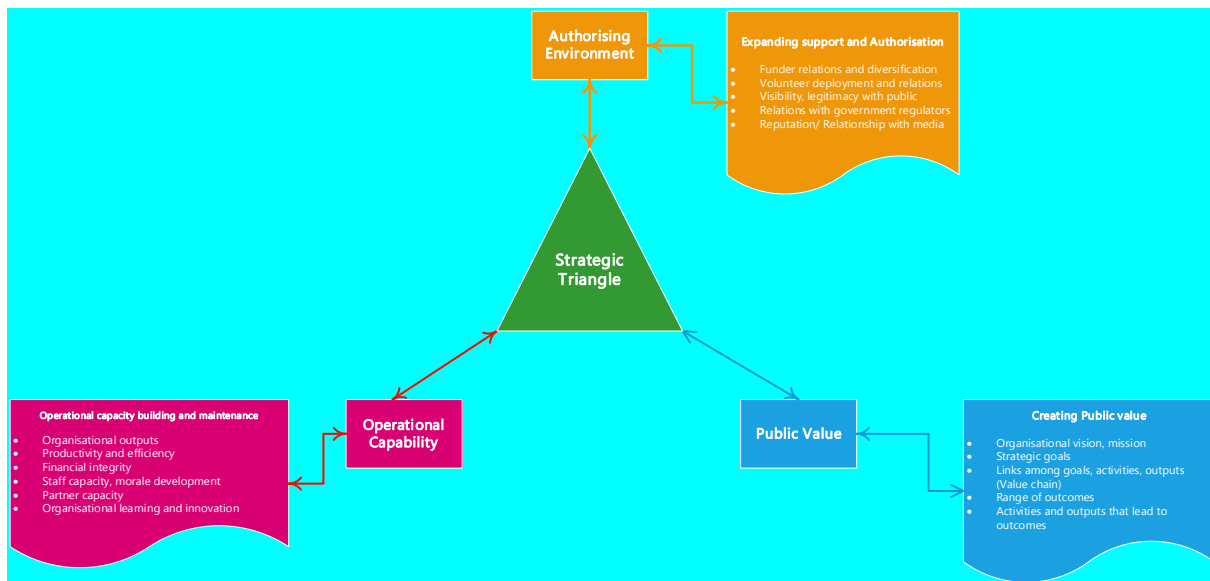
Figure 8: Components of the public value framework (Source: Moore, 2002; Weinberg and Lewis, 2009)

It could be argued that applying the strategic leadership theory to the digitisation protocols in Saudi Arabian public institutions should entail an evaluation of leadership performance, firstly, from the process of digitisation itself and, secondly, from the public value created by the implementation of digitisation.

3.5 Developing a Taxonomy of Strategic Leadership Archetypes

According to Hoffman and Lord (2013), assessing the leadership archetypes at a specific point in time within a particular context demands the use of a taxonomic approach that can identify critical dimensions. Because of the ever-changing environment, organisations constantly seek effective leadership (Hamlin and Hatton, 2013). They analyse behavioural and contextual factors and optimise the outcomes (Hamlin and Hatton, 2013; Hoffman and Lord, 2013). Over the years, Bloom's taxonomy model has helped develop strategic leadership capabilities at the organisational level (Strategic direction, 2017). However, Bloom's taxonomy focuses on developing individual capabilities and behaviours (Michel et al., 2011). The issue in the present research is identifying the strategic leadership archetypes for the digitalisation of public institutions. For public institutions to respond, there should be creativity in establishing strategic leadership archetypes (Sarfraz, 2017), even though existing taxonomies of

leadership have a simplified view of leadership (Markham, 2010). Thus, the taxonomic view of strategic leadership can bridge the stakeholders' perception of digitalisation (Özşahin, 2019) because it goes beyond individualistic leadership assumptions to more robust interpretations (Anderson et al., 2008; Fischer et al., 2017).

3.6 Chapter Summary

Resource-based view theory, tactical fit theory, SWOT analysis theory and public value theory, the organisation's vision, strategy, fiscal and economic policy, market orientation, products and services for quality service delivery. Strategic leaders must develop a system that focuses on cognitive and behavioural capabilities (ibid). Such leaders are also called executives, and they have a mandate to take overall obligation for the organisation, their features, what they do, how they do it and, mainly, how they affect administrative outcomes (Özer and Tınaztepe, 2014). Strategic leaders are expected to make strategic decisions and plans; and to anticipate uncertainty or risks when they evaluate the vision (Tutar et al., 2011). For strategic leaders to achieve organisational and personal goals, they need to be flexible, learn and ensure they can work under dynamic conditions that may change at any time (ibid). Therefore, an "understanding of the theoretical constructs of this framework will facilitate strategic leadership to produce a strategy-focused organisation" (Mahdia and Almsafir, 2014:290). This means that strategic organisational leaders should equally be able to focus on "critical assets which are most likely to make a difference in the assurance of prolonged future success" (Mahdia and Almsafir, 2014:290). For this, the necessary resources are human and social capital. For the present research, resource-based view theory, tactical fit theory, SWOT analysis theory and public value theory will be adopted as the foundation for evaluating the digitisation process in the Saudi public sector and to drive this research systematically. The next chapter will explain the research method and data gathering process.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The past study figured interpretative methods are action research where the scientist begins with data and attempts to construct an opinion about the fact of interest from the revealed data (Aziz & Khan 2020). According to Pervin and Mokhtar (2022), the explanatory investigation is a research paradigm founded on the concept that social reality is not unique or objective but is somewhat influenced by the experiences of individuals and social situations (ontology). As a result, it is best understood in its sociohistoric context, including the subjective perceptions of its diverse participants (epistemology) (Chipindi et al., 2020). The interpretive study aims to comprehend social reality via the personal perspectives of the persons who surround fact.

The case study method is widely used in entrepreneurship and information systems research as part of interpretative methods. It contributed to the advancement of fresh conceptual and theoretical models that had become locked in the literature. Thus, strategies that emphasise the relevance of people's personalities and engagement in social and cultural life are referred to. (Lowe 2019). This knowledge is theoretically related to a researcher's worldview (Berryman 2019) by choosing a paradigmatic camp that entails a slew of underlying expectations about reality (Dzwigol 2020). This interpretive method of research allows the researchers to take position that people's knowledge of reality is socially constructed. This paradigm help research to identify a depth life experiences research through data focus on objective attainment.

Through the analysis of the data, this study deduced that participant's vision or thinking design helped to reconstruct the text's intended meaning (Odigwe et al, 2020). The interpretive case study adopted in this research helped the case study to dig deeply into the societal fact via the testimonies of the evidenced relayed and "their lived situations (Muresherwa and Jita 2022). Hence, the case method described efforts gathered via narrative interviews, through an extra or much less biased, thus enable the research to interpret individuals' performance in the case study through their accrued experiences, beliefs, and views inside optimistic contexts. Thus, encouraged simulation of ideas through sure price structures of their tradition and society (Pervin and Mokhtar 2022). As such, this research

interprets the fact which are built outstandingly with the aid of exploring people however additionally fashioned through contending values in society (Peterson & Panofsky 2020).

Thus, articulation of the understanding of interpretivism and associated methods in research method as applied to this research has brought out succinctly, the relevance of data analysis drive by theory which are explained by the incident of interest from the observed data. The research deduced that the Interpretive research is a research model that is based on the postulation that social reality and it is best studied within its socio-historic setting. The case study adopted in this research attempts to interpret social reality through the independent viewpoints of the embedded participants within the context where the reality is situated. Hence, cases study adopted in this research were subjugated through qualitative data that were driven by sound and relevance theory.

The research engages a specific methodology in the realisation of the study objectives. The data collection method was made in phases to elucidate steps taken in addressing how the research gaps identified were addressed. The study engages a variant of designed steps to answer the research question articulated in the introduction part of the research. A past study argued that a research methodology critically illuminates steps to address the identified research gaps. Moreover, this section evaluates appropriate methods that elucidate the focus of the research to find a bearing on a formulated research question (Al-Mushayt 2019). The methodology section describes the type of information needed to help achieve the research focus and gives greater clarity about the expressions and methods surrounding concepts and issues encompassing the focus of the research.

4.2 Area of Study

The research draws its arguments from participants in the research and integrates them with strategic leadership theory to create a framework for the digitalisation of public institutions in Saudi Arabia. The study area is two Saudi Arabian ministries in Riyadh. The research argued that for the digitalisation of public services to foster, there is a need for enhanced efficiency and competence. However, the implementation of digitalisation needs not to be unsystematic or just an awkward reaction to government initiatives.

The University approved the ethical approach to the research (see appendix 1), and the two ministries agreed to access participants.

Figure 9: Map of Political Structures of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA)

4.3 Method of Data collection

4.3.1 Pilot Study Sampling

To ensure that valuable data are gathered, which can provide detailed/enough information to realise the research objectives. The research first conducted a pilot survey to test the instrument adopted for data collection.

The Pilot survey was carried out to identify pilot cases of strategic leaders in government-owned institutions because of the hierarchical positioning of participants in the public sector organisations of Saudi Arabia. There were three reasons for doing this:

It was essential to verify that respondents fully understood the questions and that accurate and valuable information was collected; It was also necessary to ensure that questions could be asked and recorded without technical problems. Thus, a test run of the processes and equipment was carried out.

A pilot test presented a prospect for the researcher to practice and gain assurance in his role as a researcher, for example, using encouragement and probes appropriately, keeping the conversations on track while acclimatizing to the content of each interview.

After the pilot interviews, the researcher realised that the digitalisation policy had different meanings for different government organisations. Therefore, he adjusted all the questions to ensure they were linked to the Saudi Vision 2030. The pilot interviews were conducted in the Arabic language in Saudi Arabia, as organised by the department of Human resource leaders. The Pilot interviews created an opportunity for the researcher to assess the depth, relevance and timeliness of the survey questions on digitalisation.

4.3.2 Field Data Collection

The During the pilot survey, preliminary interviews were predominantly qualitative (Malhotra and Birks, 2006; Saunders et al., 2012) to establish the perception of strategic leadership styles for digitalisation. They were a necessary precursor for deeper discussions on individual case studies on how digitalisation was operationalised. The strategic leadership theory was used under the public value framework created by Weinberg and Lewis (2009) to formulate the questions for the conceptual framework for data collection.

The research adopted a purposive sampling approach for sampling techniques. Purposive sampling is a non-probabilistic that allows the researcher to use their peculiar knowledge, expertise, judgement, and experience of the research population (N) to identify the sample (n) (Creswell and Plano, 2011; Lavrakas, 2008; Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2007; Tongco, 2007). Past studies argued that using Purposive sampling allows prior knowledge of strategic leadership of government organisations and their line ministries. Moreover, how the social context fits with the research contribution based on the detailed information from participants was used to enhance sample selection (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). This helped the researchers to adopt the use of expert knowledge about strategic leadership positions to identify capable and willing participants (Acharya et al., 2013; Etikan et al., 2016 and Lavrakas, 2008), particularly those who were not fearful about commenting on the digitalisation policy of Saudi Vision 2030. The main criterion for selecting participants was their willingness to elucidate on their organisation's strategic direction, the digitalisation concept and how they see their position in relation to Saudi Vision 2030.

Moreover, the purposive sampling technique was adopted because it simultaneously considers situated knowledge of digitalisation (the phenomena under research) with the

maximum statistics on the attributes of interest (Guarte and Barrios, 2006) while maintaining rapport with research participants (Barratt et al., 2014). In addition, this technique helped the researcher to use residuals/expert knowledge about strategic leadership positions to identify capable and willing participants (Acharya et al., 2013; Etikan et al., 2016 and Lavrakas, 2008), particularly those who were not fearful about commenting on the digitalisation policy of Saudi Vision 2030. The main criterion for selecting participants was their willingness to elucidate on their organisation's strategic direction, the digitalisation concept and how they see their position in relation to Saudi Vision 2030.

The criteria for sample selection involved the use of a combination of

a) Working in strategic leadership (Hiebl, 2017),

b) Working in Saudi public institutions (Hofstede, 2001) and

c) A high level of influence from appointing authorities (Weinberg and Lewis, 2009) created a problem in identifying the optimum sampling technique.

Based on these criteria; therefore, the sample of participants enrolled on the research was based on the following:

(i) An approved consent for the research data collection was pivotal in accessing participants.

(ii) Participants must work in government institutions based in Riyadh – the capital and administrative city of Saudi Arabia.

(iii) The target sample was a top leader with a specific role and experience in leading the organisation.

(iv) The target sample must work in (a) the Human resources and social development ministry or (b) Education Ministry.

(v) All participants had to be available in January & February 2020 for face-to-face interviews.

4.3.3 Sample selection methodology

The researcher then contacted the selected individual (gatekeeper), the human resources (HR) department leader, granting access to each organisation's leader. The researcher chose an HR leader who listed the participants in each case. There were two reasons for using this technique:

First, the HR leaders were sufficiently aware of who had participated the most in the digitalisation project in his organisation (Bakkalbasioglu, 2020). Secondly, this was intended

to minimise research bias by choosing someone to list the participants (Campbell et al., 2020) as a critical requirement in purposive sampling (Robinson, 2014). The HR department issued consent, establishing a clear sampling frame for the organisations (Guarte and Barrios, 2006; Suen et al., 2014). The sampling frame included strategic leaders involved in their organisations' digitalisation projects at the highest level. In doing this, the researcher established critical lines of questioning about the research problem, strategic leadership approaches and the public sector appointing authority-overseeing digitalisation.

The researcher used the two ministries to gain access to the ten participants. The participants were carefully selected because they provided needed information on the characteristics of interest as revealed in the pilot study. In addition, his selection of participants for the research was carefully shaped by his employment with a management position in a public institution in Saudi Arabia for over five years. At the time of participant consent, the researcher had work experience in training management. Hence, he has participated in the digitalisation project since 2014.

A detailed review of ethical approval requirements for research (Dawson, 2013) took the following steps:

c) The researcher conducted a detailed evaluation of mechanisms for capturing factors for organisational change (Golden-Biddle, 2020) through digitalisation using feedback from the pilot survey. He found the ideal approach to capture organisational hierarchy and the complexity associated with strategic leadership and facilitate the situational linking of the research problem (Editors, 2008). Using this approach, he identified vital government organisations undertaking digitalisation and earmarked them for participation in the research.

d) The researcher used the Director of Studies (DoS) letter from the University as an official introductory letter to interviewees to win participants' confidence, credibility, and transparency.

e) The researcher also used the letter from the Saudi Cultural Bureau in London as an overarching approval document for the research in government ministries.

f) The researcher used the Human Resource (HR) leaders at both ministries to verify leaders at each organisation.

This process was iterative, and it took forty-five working days, mainly because of the researcher's experience who had dealt with government organisations. The details of the interviewees are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Detailed profiles of research participants (Source: KSA government, 2020)

Respondent	Gender	Leader's Age	Work Experiences, Position	Department Size
LH1	Male	Under 50	5 years, Financial Director	25 employees
LH3	Male	Under 50	5 years, IT Director	22 employees
LH4	Male	Above 50	7years, Training Director	20 employees
LH6	Male	Above 50	5 years, HR Director	25 employees
LH7	Male	Above 50	7 years, Development Director	30 employees
LE2	Male	Above 50	6 years, Development Director	30 employees
LE5	Male	Under 50	8 years, HR Director	35 employees
LE8	Male	Under 50	8 years, IT Director	33 employees
LE9	Male	Above 50	6 years, Customer Services Director	25 employees
LE10	Male	Above 50	7 years, Equipment Director	30 employees

The factors considered include:

➢ Gender: Male individuals hold most strategic leadership positions in the Saudi public sector. Considering that the researcher is male and cannot access female leaders due to cultural restrictions, it was impossible to identify an organisation with female leaders. In addition, female leaders worked in different locations inaccessible to male counterparts.

➢ Age: The researcher set the age between 45 and 55 years old because this was the most common age category for leadership in public sector organisations. In addition, the age group allowed for knowledge and experience of those assigned the leadership role to demonstrate their performance and leadership approach thus far.

➢ Work experience: The researcher set 5 years of experience for participants dealing with digitalisation and the like. Because five years is the minimum digitalisation period accepted for the leadership role.

➢ Department size: Preference was given to leaders with a minimum of 25 employees attached to implement digitalisation. Higher numbers of employees were expected to indicate better how the leader used strategic practice in the work, such as vision, communication and articulating with staff to encourage and motivate to implement such a digitalisation project.

Ten semi-structured interviews were took place in January 2020, in Saudi Arabia, with the identified partakers from ministries that had accepted digitalisation since 2014. The interviews lasted 45 to 65 minutes and took place in the interviewees' offices. Seven interviews were documented digitally, with three participants declining to record the interviews. Therefore, the researcher transcribed them. Although Table 1 shows that each organisation had many workers, the conditions for participation were that one needed to be in a strategic position and responsible for implementing government policy in general. In addition, it was critical to adhere to the aim and intentions of the research.

Table 2: The Summarises of The Two Case studies organisations of the participant's Interviewees (Source: KSA government, 2019):

	Case A	Case B
Activities	Prominent education to build a globally competitive knowledge society	Providing community support and protection in order to support the economy
Size (staff)	22,475	15,950
Customers	5,998,809	4,500,634
Digital project started year	2011	2011
Main online applications	32	50

4.4 Study Cases

4.4.1 Classification of Two Case Study Participants

Permission was granted by HR to identify ten participants willing to take part in a detailed interview about their experience of digitalisation as a case study. Table 2 summarises the key details about the organisations wherein the case studies were conducted. The rationale used to select the three case studies was (i) the high volume of customers and (ii) the high number of employees in the organisation. The researcher found that these two factors dictated the overreliance on digitalisation; hence, the case studies presented an excellent opportunity for a detailed account.

Maurizio et al. (2019) recommend an approach to case studies that can be transparent in order to increase the balances of navigating the complexity and practicality of the issues of the research at hand. The case study approach taken is clear, transparent and designed to gain insight (Yin, 1999) into the organisational systems to evaluate how strategic leadership is being applied. The complexity of the narratives from organisations warrants the use of multiple methods (Jick, 1979), of which case studies offer the optimal access to the multiplicity of ideas, themes and narratives from the phenomenon (Yin, 2018).

4.4.2 Case study 1: influence of digitalisation on service delivery

Rationale of this case study was to assess the effect of digitalisation by personnel of the ministry in addressing service delivery. The case study focuses on using IT through setting facilities like Personal Computer technology internet to facilitate ease of use of digitalisation in managing service delivery. The case study was based on Davis's "Technology Acceptance Model" (TAM), which he developed in 1986 [1]. "A key purpose of TAM is to provide a basis for outlining the impact of external factors on internal beliefs, attitudes, and intentions," (page number ??) writes Davis [1]. TAM examined two core characteristics, "Perceived Usefulness" and "Perceived Ease of Use" [1]. These criteria govern a system's use and adoption [Figure 10]. This case study examines all the original TAM routes, as well as additional elements (perceived personal utility) such as organisational culture and individual factors such as education level and training duration as external variables impacting service delivery.

Technology Acceptance Model
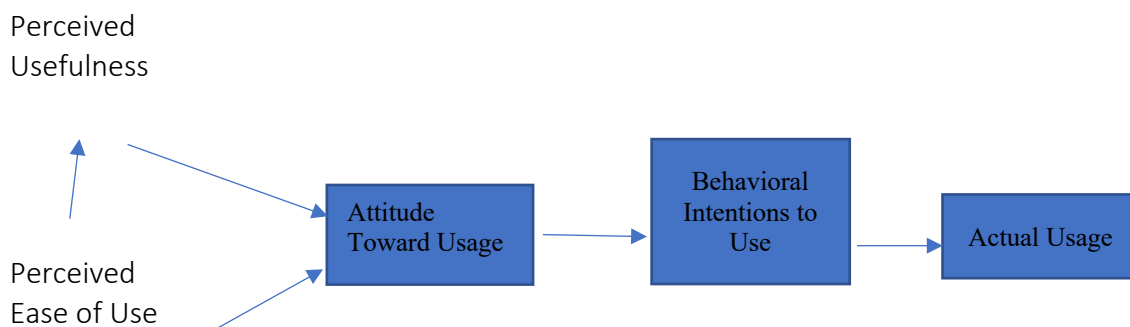
Figure 10: Perceived usefulness, Perceived Ease of use and User of Acceptance of IT.

The use of TAM by the staff of the concerned ministries' process of voluminous records was done quickly, meticulously, and impeccably. The use of IT by personnel generates reliable and consistent records. Moreover, digitalisation has improved attitudes toward usage because of the facilities provided, ease of access (personal computers, fast and dependable internet) and sound working environment. These indicators enhanced the attitude toward adopting digitalisation because attitudes toward an object influence intention and ultimately influence behaviour concerning digitalisation usage.

Highlight the concept of digital transformation and the many qualities that relate to the case in the identified ministries. The case study demonstrated the concerned ministries' advancement toward an improved approach of increasing the speed of the stages of development related to Digital Transformation by adopting and implementing cutting-edge telecommunication systems and ICT technology to support efficient public service delivery deployment.

4.4.2 Case study 2: The role of strategic leadership in the implementation of service delivery

Literature deduced that firms and leaders should be fortified with the right strategic administration tools and techniques to help them analyse the environment in which they operate and make strategic decisions to have a competitive advantage. Hence, this case study analyses strategic management in implementing public service delivery by the identified ministries using the digitalisation process. The case study deduced that service acceptance and commitment are the outcomes of understanding, ability, social acceptance,

sophistication, and service provision. Earlier research on this study found that insufficient creativity in creating attention, building trust, and providing proper instruction and training resulted in a lower percentage of adoption and contentment. With the rapid advancement of technology and improved framework, the situation might drastically alter in a short amount of time. . This case study revealed for attaining the success of the efficient deployment of public service delivery to the people by the identified ministries, the administration must take a greater understanding of social, cultural, and religious habits and behaviors, educational and economic of people and then adopt technology in an approach that fits them. If required, facilitate access to the appropriate training programs to increase the potential of technology adoption. The case study recorded successes in deploying efficient service using the digitalisation process because competence and superior quality of infrastructure, mainly hardware and associated technology, were put in place.

In addition, the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has demonstrated a solid commitment to developing ICT. KSA government implemented a multi-stage plan to restructure the ICT sector to encourage effective competition, attract local and foreign investment, and protect the public interest and consumer and stakeholder rights. It aims to invent the government digitally to facilitate services. Moreover, KSA initiated various initiatives and policies to stimulate the spread and usage of the Internet. By the end of 2010, individuals would be able to get government services at a high level from anywhere and at any time using integrated, simple, and secure electronic means and allowing individuals to access effective government services in a safe, integrated, and efficient via many electronic channels. As a result of significant worldwide technological advancements as well as political and institutional developments, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) government has advanced. It has digitalised old procedures and developed five-year plans to attain excellence and efficiency.

The research reflected on the Saudi national laws, guidelines and constraints on handling information and the varied nature of the public institutions (Henry et al., 2013). This was an example of the principle that the ethical process cannot discount the national culture (Hofstede, 2001). In Saudi Arabia, the fear of appointing authorities creates attitudes and practices of mistrust toward information seekers (Henry et al., 2013). Therefore, the research needed to develop an ethical process incorporating face-to-face interviews because it is

crucial in the Saudi context where he needed to demonstrate cultural humility while nurturing trust and assuring confidentiality. The researcher found this factor critical to the research, just as Bromley et al. (2015) encouraged researchers in community-based projects to demonstrate cultural sensitivity and humility. He was surprised by the high-power distance in the upper echelons of public institutions and the fear of appointing authorities. Strategic leaders needed persuasive multi-layered questioning to glean the meaning of their answers. The first data collection for this research was a pilot study, which involved conducting three interviews with three strategic leaders in digitalisation in Saudi public sector organisations. The three pilot interviewees knew digitalisation's strategic, technical, and operational issues. Observations, views, and lessons learnt from the pilot survey were incorporated into the final enumeration.

To ensure clarity in data collection, the following steps were taken:

- Strategic leadership actions and practices under the digitalisation policy were considered to create clustered themes used in data analysis and discussion of results. This process allows the researcher to interact directly with the experts (Bryman, 2012).

- The research adopted flexibility in questioning. The questioning varied from highly structured, more akin to an oral questionnaire, to relatively unstructured, as proposed by Rowley (2012). The researcher adapted as much as possible without compromising the objective of the information sought from participants.

- A comparative evaluation of themes and comments from detailed accounts of digitalisation in Saudi Arabia was undertaken. This enables the research to compare strategic decisions before digitalisation to the recent decisions during the implementation of Saudi Vision 2030. Due to this process, the researcher collected high-quality information from people with a deep understanding of the issues that their organisations face (Bryman, 2012; May 2011).

Therefore, factors such as the context and the approach to digitalisation were captured and examined to establish the strategic leadership options chosen by each participant. Individual quotations were equally useful in highlighting commonalities and/or differences in perceptions of digitalisation and the organisation's actions regarding the national Vision 2030. Word processing software was used to generate word clouds as a diagrammatic representation of themes used in data analysis. As part of the data evaluation, step 3 was to

engage case study data on digitalisation conducted in two organisations. The researcher used the two case studies on the digitalisation projects from the public sector organisations in Saudi Arabia to gain a better understanding of strategic leadership at play amidst the challenges of high degrees of power distance and fear of leadership amongst the cultural norms of the working environment.

4.5 Data Collection Instrument

The study employed a descriptive survey design. The descriptive research design collects information that identifies the current event by polling people on their thoughts, perspectives, and values. (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The descriptive research design may contain a vast quantity of data, which assists in decision-making. The descriptive research approach aided in the collection of qualitative and quantitative data. We adopted both primary and secondary data. Self-administered questionnaires were used to collect data. The researcher selected questionnaires since they are inexpensive and time-saving. The use of questionnaires was advantageous since respondents could overcome any anxiety or sensitivity associated with giving information. The researcher selected questionnaires since they are inexpensive and time-saving. As stated by Jerono (2016), close-ended questionnaires facilitate the analysis of data collected for the researcher. The questions were either closed-ended or open-ended, as well as semi-structured. The open-ended questions yielded well-structured replies that were easier to analyse and make conclusions from. The closed-ended questions provided more information than the open-ended questions.

4.6 Ethical Management of the Research

Henry et al. (2013:40) assert that Middle Eastern nations suffer from a "lack of adjusting oversight and research ethics capacity" compared to the international research community in many fields. Weak ethical decision-making has been a long-term organisational leadership challenge (Winston, 2007). Setting this research on a weak ethical base could lead to negative validity and reliability perception of the data generated, considering that, at best, the research deals with cultural tendencies of Saudi society (Bromley et al., 2015) from a strategic leadership standpoint (Gastrock, 2013). To avoid moral issues, the researcher followed the university protocol of ethical approval and the protocol with the Saudi Cultural Bureau. This necessary step facilitated the research on strategic leadership in Saudi Arabia.

Bell and Bryman (2007) state that each piece of research faces unique ethical considerations and requirements because of the contextual factors that play a critical character in methodological choices. Therefore, the researcher learnt from ethical protocol in social sciences research (Bell and Bryman, 2007) because this research required an ethical process related to the digitalisation research problem. To create an ethical protocol, the researcher started by being "thoughtful and explicit about why I decided" (Palanski et al., 2021:116) to use face-to-face interviews with purposively sampled participants. The research design's explicit statements clarified his aspirations for the project to avoid ethical compliance (Bell and Bryman, 2007).

Secondly, the researcher reflected on the Saudi national laws, guidelines and constraints on handling information and the varied nature of the public institutions (Henry et al., 2013). This was an example of the principle that the ethical process cannot discount the national culture (Hofstede, 2001). In Saudi Arabia, the fear of appointing authorities creates attitudes and practices of mistrust toward information seekers (Henry et al., 2013). Therefore, the researcher created an ethical process that incorporated face-to-face interviews because it is crucial in the Saudi context where it was needed to demonstrate cultural humility while nurturing trust and assuring confidentiality. The researcher found this factor critical to the research, just as Bromley et al. (2015) encouraged researchers in community-based projects to demonstrate cultural sensitivity and humility. The researcher was surprised by the high-power distance in the upper echelons of public institutions and the fear of appointing authorities. Strategic leaders needed persuasive multi-layered questioning to glean the meaning of their answers.

4.7 Data Collection and Analysis

The data coding and analysis approach was designed to conform to research processes so that analysis drills down to respondents' perceptions (see Figure 11).

In step one, inductive reasoning was used to identify strategic leadership factors necessary for public institutions. The second step involves using an interpretivist paradigm and a qualitative methodology to establish critical factors that could be used to measure strategic leadership and its influence on digitalisation. Through the pilot study, he evaluated the elements to create the questions for interviewees. The first data collection for this research was a pilot study, which involved conducting three interviews with three strategic leaders in

digitalisation in Saudi public sector organisations. The three pilot interviewees knew digitalisation's strategic, technical, and operational issues.

Stages in coding and data analysis
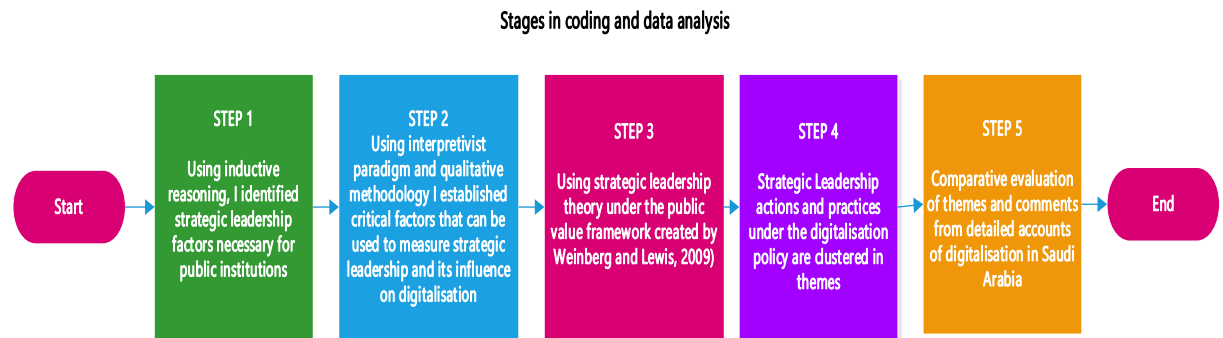
Figure 11: Steps for coding and data analysis from January 2020 to May 2021.

In step three, strategic leadership theory was used under the public value framework created by Weinberg and Lewis (2009) to formulate the questions to collect primary data. These preliminary interviews were predominantly qualitative (Malhotra and Birks, 2006; Saunders et al., 2012) to establish the perception of strategic leadership styles for digitalisation. They were a necessary precursor for deeper discussions on individual case studies on how digitalisation was operationalised.

Step four considers strategic leadership actions and practices under the digitalisation policy to create clustered themes used in data analysis and discussion of results. This process was underpinned by the second data collection stage of further interviews of the other ten interviews, allowing the researcher to interact directly with the experts (Bryman, 2012). The researcher noticed the varied nature of organisations for which participants worked from the pilot interviews. Hence, it was critical to design questions that could help ascertain common themes in a varied manner.

This factor of interviewing became crucial for this research, mainly because the varying degree of the interview structure (Rowley, 2012) promoted flexibility in questioning. Therefore, the type of questioning varied from highly structured, more akin to an oral questionnaire, to relatively unstructured, as proposed by Rowley (2012). The researcher adapted as much as possible without compromising the objective of the information sought from participants.

Step five considered a comparative evaluation of themes and comments from detailed accounts of digitalisation in Saudi Arabia. During the implementation of Saudi Vision 2030,

the researcher was able to collect high-quality information from people with a deeper understanding of the issues that their organisations face (Bryman, 2012; May 2011) via the primary data collection on previous and current strategic decisions.

4.8 Validity and Reliability of the Research Design

For the research to underscore information validity and reliability, it must demonstrate that the research design and its approach to data collection are focused on mitigating bias (Suen et al., 2014). As the researcher had presented two papers at the BAM conference in 2018 and 2020, he had received valuable feedback from reviewers and audiences, giving him awareness and information to improve the research design and mitigate the bias.

Scandura and Williams (2000) argue that the validity and reliability of management-related research largely depend on the chosen research methods' appropriateness and rigour. This means that the design of the research instruments influences the collection and analysis of the data and construct validation (ibid). The current research approach adopted interpretivism as its philosophical worldview. Interpretivist research can easily integrate social and cultural contexts of the phenomena under research, allowing the researcher to critically review the norms and behaviours of society (Creswell, 2003; May 2011; Saunders and Tosey, 2012). The justification for adopting an interpretivist philosophy focuses on the demand for flexibility (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008) in handling primary information from research participants in Saudi public sector organisations.

The research was designed with social desirability bias in mind, considering that, for organisational investigation, participants tend to represent themselves favourably with respect to current social-cultural norms - also referred to as social desirability responding (Zerbe and Paulhus, 1987) – poses the main challenge. The main factors causing social desirability issues in Arabic countries include, but are not limited to, ethnicity, religion, culture, and the economic and political background of research participants (Sheblaq and Al-Najjar, 2019), hence weakening the transparency and quality of information (Abouchedid and Abdelnour, 2015).

Zerbe and Paulhus (1987) state that social desirability in responding should not necessarily mean contamination of the research but a valuable tool in designing ethically proper information gathering protocols for the research, as demanded by many countries in the Middle East (Alahmad et al., 2012). To this effect, the researcher used purposive sampling

(Campbell et al., 2020) and created an objective data gathering protocol that included the public institutions and human resource department to reduce research barriers (Sheblaq and Al-Najjar, 2019).

Retrospective bias is the other significant bias that might be anticipated from strategic leadership-related research, bordering on inaccurate recollection of information from research participants (Huber and Power, 1985) or mere lack of knowledge. The upper echelons of the organisation and the information they possess about their strategic decisions are retrospective. They are shaped by their facts, belief systems, the activities they undertook and the motivations behind their choices (Huber and Power, 1985). However, if they have inaccurate information about past events, they have no knowledge to analyse matters, and errors are likely to filter through to the research outcomes (Huber and Power, 1985). According to Golden (1992), there had been an overreliance on retrospective accounts as a means of constructing the past; however, reviewing errors appear to occur analytically and may be attributable to faculty memory or attempts to cast past behaviour in a positive light.

The researcher focused on designing a data collection system that appreciated the social-culture sensitivity of strategic leadership, which respects traditions, promotes truth and supports change without suspicion (Margetts, 2011) by adopting tact and flexibility. However, the research problem borders on organisational transformation through digitalisation. Hence, the research approach needed practical relevance (Pettigrew et al., 2001). Based on the factor of practical relevance, the researcher sought critical information on how strategic leadership of public institutions could implement the digitalisation policy in Saudi Arabia without disrupting the social-cultural working environment.

For this reason, the researcher adopted a qualitative research approach because of its experimental nature, facilitating the inherent appreciation of the critical role of social consciousness and the dynamism of cultural belief systems (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Gill and Johnson, 2010). Hence, the exploratory approach helps to mitigate the retrospective bias and inaccurate information on strategic leadership with the social networks while evaluating the contextual relevance of the information in Saudi public organisations.

Van Maanen (1979) reports that research that strives to form premature theories upon insufficient data could ruin the validity and dependability of the research outcome. This point implies that the result can be invalid if the study has a weak design. To counter this argument, the researcher started by examining the perceptions of the best leadership approach for

digitalisation. The research examined perceptions from research participants and compared them to the theoretical framework in the public sector organisation. He recommended a qualitative approach because it allows a researcher to establish formal patterns from formal and informal discussions while assessing connectivity and interrelatedness (Creswell, 2012). In addition, each participant produces varied depth or richness in type and value of information (Dawson, 2013).

According to Munyon et al. (2019), attributional bias is when individuals develop moments of cognitive bias and information processing deficit such that they can make causal assessments that are motivated to understand and control their environments. As they make the causal assessments, they rely mainly on personal attributional bias by blaming others for their negative experiences or motivational consequences (Fishman and Husman, 2017). In leadership, the attributional theory is framed as moments when "individuals draw causal links to professed events or others' conducts" (Seele and Eberl, 2020:765). When applied to a single person, the attributional theory would refer to "an individual locating the cause of a perceived event or behaviour in another person" (Seele and Eberl, 2020:765). In research, attributional bias can make the researcher focus on causal assessments and specific people in specific organisations (Ginder et al., 2021 and Munyon et al., 2019).

The research approach anticipated the need for information from research participants at the strategic leadership level involved in the digitalisation project. However, to avoid attributional bias, the researcher designed the process to be transparent regarding sampling techniques, approach to identifying participant organisation and the pilot study to reinforce the research process. By way of this research design, the data collected allow for in-depth analysis that captures the contextual and situational ambience of public organisations in Saudi Arabia (Woodside, 2010). The researcher also used a qualitative approach as a means to establish data interrelationships (Bryman, 2012; May 2011), in particular, between strategic leadership at the organisational level and the appointing authorities in government ministries, considering the excellent power distance between stakeholders in Saudi Arabia (Hofstede, 2001), using two case studies (Siggelkow, 2007).

Due to the research ethical approval restrictions, the researcher was the only person allowed to assemble preliminary information from accomplices through interviews and detailed examination of cases for digitalisation. However, the researcher encountered significant problems restricting the responses to digitalisation issues because of the participants'

enthusiasm about implementing government policy. Each recording was forty-five minutes to one hour; however, the data collected was too bulky to code quickly. This problem was compounded by the varied nature of the context and perception of digitalisation at each respective organisation. Such a phenomenon was expected because the central theme of case study data was data variability (Larsson, 1993).

Table 3: Table 3: Integrating different themes for data coding

Strategic Leadership	Strategic Influence	Hofstede Factors
	Strategic thinking	
	Strategic planning	
	Strategic teaming	
	Strategic acting	
	Strategic learning	
	Strategic resource planning	
Issues	Knowledge	
	Technical skills	
	Bureaucracy	
	Culture	Power distance
		Individualism/ collectivism
		Masculinity
		Uncertainty avoidance
		Long term orientation
		Indulgence/ restraint
	Stress / psychological	
	Performance	

The researcher only coded research participants when it was clear they had participated in the digitalisation project. This was a critical prerequisite to ensure the discussion's reliability and validity, as Ali and Brooks stressed (2009). Case studies were coded differently because the three participants had consented to provide complete organisational information to validate the case. The rationale for using different coding for case studies emanates from the

nature of case methods. For instance, Sandelowski (2011:153) defines a case study as "singular combinations of various displays of methodological methods directed towards sustaining "empirical intimacy" with the one, or more temporally and spatially defined objects researchers construct and target for study." Each case is expected to deliver "multiple data sources to provide detailed accounts of complicated research phenomena in real-life settings" (Morgan et al., 2017: 1060).

Although all case studies examine digitalisation, they cannot be presumed to have a similar contextual research environment (Seawright and Gerring, 2008). According to Yin (2014), the advantage of using case studies is that they offer the opportunity for a researcher to undertake a detailed exploration of information, including the behaviour, thoughts, perceptions, and body language of the research participants. In addition, there is an opportunity to adopt a flexible format to question the participants and report or code the events (Sandelowski, 2011; Seawright and Gerring, 2008). There is a clear prospect of undertaking a realistic analysis of various variables within the contextual setting (Yin, 2014).

4.9 Reasoning Approach for the Research

The researcher adopted an inductive approach for the leadership strategy in digitalisation because it promoted a transparent way to indicate how the research was to be conducted (Collins, 2010). From the methodology design and the Saudi context, inductive reasoning allows for stepwise verification of the study (Saunders and Tosey, 2012). Without clarity in the reasoning, it could have weakened the reliability of research results (Creswell, 2013; Saunders et al., 2012).

Inductive research aims to move from specific comments to broader generalities and theories. The inductive approach aims to understand the different perspectives of a social problem (Yin, 2009) and often results in a new theory/framework (Saunders et al. 2015). The researcher examines tendencies apparent in empirical reality, draws general conclusions from them, and conceptualises a theory/framework based on them. Because the assumptions are created in the context, the theory/framework may be context-specific and not generalisable (Table 4). Some researchers, however, may use data sufficiently varied to claim generalisation (Collis and Hussey, 2009).

Table 4: Inductive reasoning to research (Source: Collis and Hussey, 2009; Saunders et al., 2015)

	Inductive approach
Aim	Aims to gain insight into human perceptions and behaviour Often aimed at understanding problems in a specific context
Focus	Generalisation is not possible. Can be undertaken with smaller sample sizes Exploratory data analysis Research process is unstructured and flexible. Often, the data and methods involved are qualitative. Researcher involvement is essential and there is possibility of bias. (Creswell, 2013; Saunders *et al.*, 2015)

4.10 Justification for Adopting Inductive Reasoning

Based on the literature review outcomes, it can be proven that there have been few studies on the public sector change management ideal for digitalisation linking strategic leadership with public sector digitalisation change management. This allows the researcher to provide to the existing body of knowledge. It may also involve bringing together scattered knowledge to achieve a meaningful solution. Information about strategic leadership approaches and challenges involved in public sector digitalisation projects exists but may be too scattered and unconnected to be considered valuable. The present research aims to link the two and generate solutions to this research's issues address.

4.11 Diagrammatic Representation of the Research Process

The research process took a holistic approach that linked actions from the philosophy to data analysis (Creswell, 2009; Saunders et al., 2015). Figure 12 summarises all the critical rudiments of the research process used herein and the anticipated link to each other based on the schematic view.
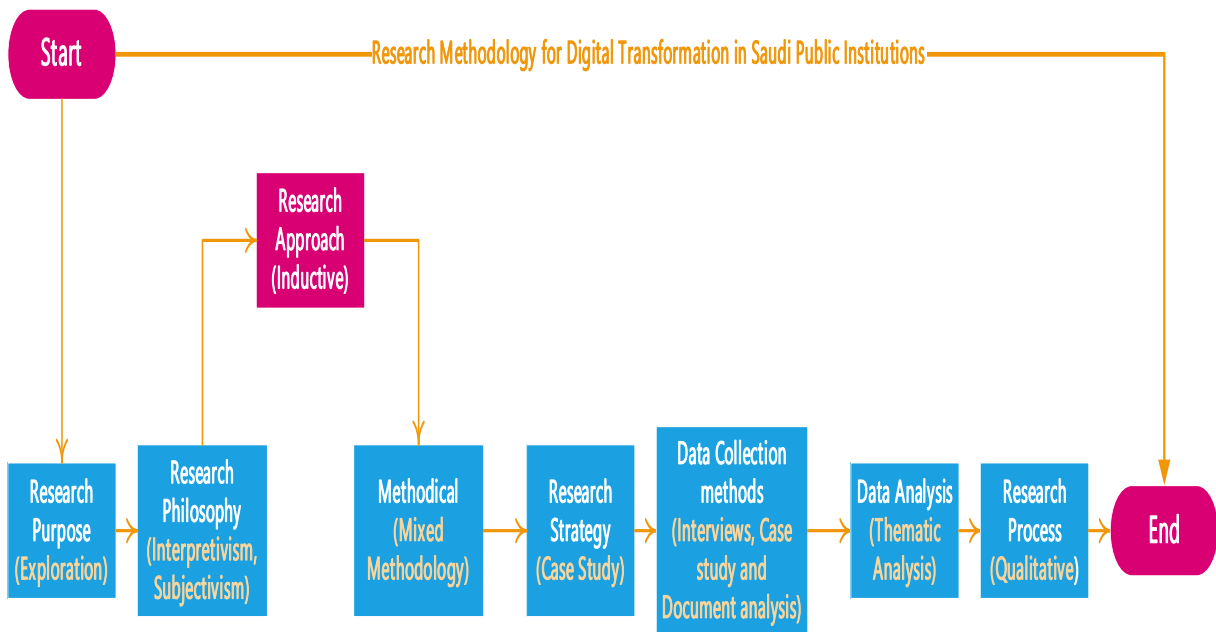
Figure 12: Schematic presentation of Research Methodology (Adapted from Creswell, 2009; Saunders et al., 2015) from September 2016 to May 2021

While Creswell (2009) recommends a typical research process to reflect Figure 12, it was critical to examine how previous research projects had been conducted. A summary of the review of prior research work by the likes of Misuraca and Viscusi (2015), Cummings (2015) and Satirah et al. (2013) helped to shape the present research (see Table 5). The rationale for the research presented in Table 5 is dictated by the data type, starting with qualitative and ending with quantitative data.

Table 5: Examples of research processes from previous studies

Author (Year)	Theoretical Foundation	Type of Data
Scherer and Cho (2003)	Network contagion theory	Mixed methods (1) face-to-face structured interviews and (2) self-administered questionnaires given to each respondent after the face-to-face interview
Nusair, Ababnehabd and Kyung Bae (2011)	Transformational leadership theory	Quantitative data

Wan Satirah Wan Saman and AbrarHaider (2013)	Institutionalisation theory. Institutional isomorphism, information systems theory	Qualitative case study approach – sources of data include semi-structured interviews, personal observations and document reviews
Savoldelli, Codagnone and Misuraca (2014)	Public sector innovation theory, public value theory	Qualitative data
Cummings (2015)	Collective entrepreneurialism	Qualitative data
Misuraca and Viscusi (2015)	Public sector innovation theory, network model of innovation, social network analysis	Qualitative data

As Table 5 above, past research has used qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. Qualitative research is most employed in research associated with technology execution and is most appropriate to it (Harrigan et al., 2008). Research into technology execution is somewhat complicated, and qualitative approaches allow the researcher the sophistication and flexibility needed to investigate such a complex issue (Jain et al., 2006). In precisely, qualitative research helps explore the familiarities of individuals, including how they felt and acted in particular circumstances. Qualitative research is also valuable for examining the convolutions of human behaviour in organisational contexts (Spector, 2005). It was, therefore, considered the most appropriate approach for the present study.

The nature of challenges, in general, is that strategic leadership styles cannot be quantified reliably and holistically. This research is not aimed at establishing causal relationships. Therefore, the answers to the research questions chapter cannot be obtained through a simple structured questionnaire. It is challenging to prepare a structured questionnaire that will include all the relevant questions and answers because so many aspects of the research are indistinct. The researcher, thus, aimed to uncover the unknown through direct, face-to-face interactions with individuals who were aware of these aspects due to their experience of dealing with such matters in their respective organisations. Another reason that semi-structured interviews were useful for this research is that none of the respondents was likely

to know all the aspects; hence, preparing a comprehensive questionnaire to collect a holistic perspective from individuals was not possible.

Furthermore, even if the respondents provided this data, part of it would be speculative and susceptible to bias. The researcher, thus, saw it futile to try to find all the information from a limited number of sources. Instead, this research aims to combine the data from different respondents to ensure that respondents only provide the information they are qualified to provide as a mixed methodology (Creswell, 2003; Saunders et al., 2015).

4.12 Data Coding

Data coding for this research centres on the three-step "Gioia methodology" (Gioia et al., 2012 and Gioia, 2020), whose thrust ensures a transparent and rigorous approach to the data analysis. In the first step, preliminary data for coding emanates from the primary data in conjunction with the integrated strategic leadership themes established in Table 3.

The base for data coding in this research was the strategic leadership themes in Table 3. The researcher integrated strategic leadership theory, strategic influence factors and the Hofstede cultural factors (Hofstede, 2001; DeChurch et al., 2010) for each interviewee in their respective ministry. To keep the participants' identities anonymous, the researcher created a unique code for each research participant in his respective organisation. For example, the code "LE" and "LH" was used for this purpose for leaders, which represent an initial of the partaker's name followed by a number, e.g., "LH2".

In step 2, second-order coding develops themes critical to identifying strategic leadership threads (Cornelissen, 2017 Laubert and Geiger, 2018). Step 3 focuses on assessing the aggregate themes from the participants (Gioia, 2020) in line with the research questions, particularly the issue of public value (see Figure 13). The data coding was based on the three steps of Gioia's (2020) method to create a connection between the initial phases of the data collection and the subsequent themes. To increase the coding process's transparency, communicability and reliability (O'Connor and Joffe, 2020), standard templates for questions were used, hence promoting the dependability of the information emanating from the coding process. In addition, this chapter shows a mapping exercise of how the data from the codding exercise is used in a taxonomy of strategic leadership archetypes under step 4 and the interconnectivity of themes under step 5 of Figure 13.

4.13 Reliability for Coding Using Pilot Study and Interviews

While the Gioia method uses three steps for coding (Gioia et al., 2012) (Figure 13), the research uses information from the pilot study, interview, and case study. This qualitative research process introduces gaps in the coding, hence introducing intercoder reliability by undermining the potential for accurate information measurement (Ruggeri et al., 2011).

Step 1: First order strategic leadership interests coding

Step 2: Second order coding to examine the links between interests and perceptions

Steps 1 to 3 applies Gioia coding (Gioia et al., 2012: p21)

Step 3: Aggregate thematic perceptions of strategic leadership theory using the public value framework proposed by Weinberg and Lewis (2009)

Step 4: Creating a taxonomy of archetypes of strategic leadership in public institutions

Step 5: Detailed analysis of interconnectivity between strategic leadership archetypes

Step 4 to 5: Creates a taxonomy of archetypes and interconnectivity using coded information

Figure 13: An abstraction of the data coding steps and creation of taxonomy of archetypes

From the onset, coding the pilot study was an iterative process of convergence (MacPhail et al., 2016) of ideals, fears, perceptions, opinions and beliefs about digitalisation policy and the Saudi public sector. Following the University approved ethical approach to data collection, changes were made after the pilot study.

> (9) There was a synchronised approach to interviews between the researcher and the participants at each organisation. This was crucial to assure participants that the research was necessary for digitalisation and that their views were important to enhance the implementation of government policy.

(ii) The pilot study clarified the presumption of ideas over strategic leadership, which created through literature review has a different meaning in government institutions. Participants were reminded that they had strategic leadership positions at the research time, so they did not have to speak about other people who were not present in the interviews.

The pilot study focussed on those in charge of implementing digitalisation. (iii) There was an opportunity for a deep reflection (Campbell et al., 2013) on how leaders perceived situations. For example, while interview coding cannot identify an interviewee's mood, facial expressions, tone of voice or general uneasiness (or otherwise), the pilot study eased this pressure. The goal of asking the questions correctly was identified. In addition, if the question was avoided, the process allowed for an opportunity to ascertain the reason.

(iv) The pilot study offered consensus with practitioners on the approach to questioning the policy on digitalisation.

The interview process used the preceding to collect as many cognitive arguments as possible from the qualitative data (O'Connor and Joffe, 2020; Ruggeri et al., 2011). This meant packaging the questions, the tone to use, and the beacons of consistency as the interview were conducted and data collected became critical. Another critical issue of the interview process was creating a platform for the reliability of information coding (O'Connor and Joffe, 2020). This was based on allowing standardised question sets and how to sequence those (Campbell et al., 2013). It also allowed for identifying critical wording as the identifier of the information (Drevon et al., 2017). Despite the clear coding guidelines, it was difficult to maintain uniformity in the pattern of responses without compromising the reliability of the coding; therefore, participants were at liberty to stray and add anecdotes to their answers.

Thus, inter coding became reliable due to the transparency and flexibility introduced in the data collection process.

Step 1: Coding for Initial Strategic Leadership Interests

The initial coding of strategic leadership for this research is based on the idea that "the social world" has meaning, which is "not independent of people interacting with each other" and that "human experiences are socially constructed by people interacting with each other" (Gioia, 2020:22). Therefore, the initial coding takes the social interactions between research participants as a profound recognition of their knowledge about strategic leadership in their organisations, as asserted by Gioia, (2020). Therefore, in Table 6, participant information is coded based on the theoretical framework (Alajaji et al., 2018; Sabbagh and Cavanagh, 2018) to make sense of the participant's responses. This coding forms an initial inductive perspective (Davies, 2014), leading to the grounding of the arguments (Gioia et al., 2012).

Table 6: Coding based on initial response to perceptions of strategic leadership

1st Order Concepts	2nd Order Themes	Aggregate Dimensions
What were the factors that affected management's **choice to digitalise** in your organisation? What **substitutes to digitalisation** were considered for improvement? How did the management **evaluate organisational readiness** for digitalisation?	Anticipating change Readiness for change	
How and when was the **risk assessment** done? How extensive as the risk **management planning** and what were the **contingencies** that the management planned for?	Envisioning	

Who participated in risk management planning?	Managing risks for digitalisation
How was the **allocation of people** and **resources during digitalisation** taken care of? Who were the people in charge of people and resource allocation?	Managing resources
How did the **digitalisation project** affect the culture of your organisation in terms of how the work is done, **bureaucracy**, norms, behaviour of employees, etc.?	Managing people
How effective was the **communication** between the management and employees before, during and **after digitalisation**?	Change processes
How did digitalisation affect the **interpersonal relationships** of employees?	Interpersonal relationships before digitalisation
How did the management take into consideration the **interpersonal relationships** of employees during and after digitalisation?	Relationships after digitalisation
What steps were taken by the management to ensure that the **organisation act** as a team during digitalisation?	Team behaviour
How was the **digitalisation project controlled** and managed?	Cultural control

How did digitalisation affect the manner in which your organisation is managed?	Team management
How extensively did **digitalisation affect your organisation's structure**?	Organisational culture
How did the change in your organisation's formation affect the employees?	Organisational structure

Organisational culture: power dynamics	
How has **digitalisation affected the autonomy** of employees?	Power dynamics

Digitalisation success: Objectives realized (technology focused culture, digitalised processes)	Technology
What noticeable changes occurred in your organisation due to digitalisation?	Notable changes
How did tactical leaders supply to this change?	
Digitalisation success: KPIs achieved	Contributions
What were the main KPIs for the digitalisation project?	
How was the achievement of KPIs evaluated?	Performance indicators
Do you have any recommendations for the leaders of other public sector organisations planning to undertake digitalisation projects in their organisation?	

Gioia (2020:22) warns that grounded data based on informants' experiences and their understanding of the experiences should emanate from the informants' sense-making about their experiences. The danger of coding their foregrounded experiences is the unlimited number of informant terms, codes, and categories (Davies, 2014; Gioia, 2020). However, it is

a critical inductive approach to theory building because it reduces interference from the researcher and helps develop a straightforward narrative to insights (Yanto and Liang, 2017) on strategic leadership. For the initial coding, a list of questions was generated using the pilot study as first-order concepts (Alajaji et al., 2020), creating a basis for data analysis. However, 38 words were used as second-order concepts from the participants, resulting in 136 words that formed aggregate dimensions (Alajaji et al., 2020). These dimensions formed a critical base for the participants interviewed because, on the one hand, they form the basis for building the themes and the theory (Geiger, 2017). Meanwhile, the aggregate dimensions form a rich and detailed explanatory account (Cornelissen, 2017) of the experiences (Alajaji et al., 2020).

Step 2: Coding to Examine the Links between Interests and Perceptions

For the research to systematically derive meaning from participant experiences (Urquhart et al., 2010), responses were coded (Hidenori, 2019) to link participant interests and perceptions of strategic leadership in public institutions (see Table 7). Twenty-nine (29) key themes were created from the first-order concepts, meaning that participants commonly referred to these terms, hence the need to allow for coding (Hidenori, 2019; Konecki, 2018).

Table 7: Coding to examine the links between interests and perception

1st Order Concepts	2nd Order Themes	Interests and Perceptions
LE2 stated that the main factor for digitalisation was to trade the organisational culture to align with the digital generation. Participants LH4 and LH6 pointed out that digitalisation was necessary to implement the Saudi Arabia Vision 2030 by instituting development and improvement in the work environment in line with the Kingdom's Vision 2030.	Anticipating change	Officialdom, bureaucracy, government Vision 2030

LH5 remarked to the lack of sufficient training and definition of the transformational system. Furthermore, LE8 supported this point and add that the digitalisation was taking place slowly and processes were still completed on paper in many organisations' departments;	Readiness for change	No alternative vision, government planned action; ministerial drivers to modernise
LH4, LE5 and LH6 stated that they had seen no alternative vision from leaders undertaking digitalisation; there were no alternatives available. There was an inherent imposition of transformation, which resulted in a trial-and-error approach and grumbling from both leaders and followers; LH1, LH3 and LH7 were of the view that digitalisation project was a planned action from the government through ministries.	Envisioning	No alternative vision: people, procedures, systems tied to organisations
LH1 reported that developing tactical plans and building limited goals with a timetable for achievement is critical. The evaluation was based on several indicators; "reshaping the way people live, work, think, interrelate and communicate with people, depending on techniques available, with continuous planning and a constant quest to reformulate practical experiences. LH4 mentioned the significance of using performance indicators, but the organisation did not evaluate organisational readiness. LE9 reported that there was no clear plan to measure the impact of leadership and readiness.	Evaluation of status-quo	Impact

Very high national culture of fear regarding uncertainty and risk-taking. LE2, LE5, LE8, LE9 and LE10 were not sure of the risk assessment being undertaken in their organisation. Therefore, LH1, LH3, LH4, LH6 and LH7 indicated that there were visible risk assessment processes in their organisations;	Managing resources	Risk transferred (Ministry)
LE8 and LE9 said that risk management and contingency planning was not critical issue in their organisation. Strategic leaders at the apex of some organisations were not using risk management plans to match their vision. Risk management and contingency planning were that strategic leaders had embedded elements thereof in the overall organisational planning (LH1, LH3 and LH6). Furthermore, LH7 remarked that risk management and contingency planning were extensive, and most of the foreseeable risks were accounted for, including financial and technical risks. LE10 supported this view by stating that the organisation had committees assigned to create the "on-call" team;	Change processes; embedded fear	Top-down, embedded training
Strategic leadership influence, or the lack of it, is due to the influence of the appointing authorities. LE2, LE5, LE8, LE9 and LE10 were not sure whose responsibility it was to lead the risk management planning.	Influence; in-house or ministry	Dispersal
LH1, LH6 and LE9 were the most experienced participants demonstrating a level of competence in information technology and	Interpersonal relationships	Technology enabler and barrier

procurement of people and resources in line with the departmental demands of the centralised system.	before and after digitalisation	
Organisational culture was affected significantly because people had to do most things using a culture of fear among the employees, fear of change communication feature discussions with these employees face to face reduced the time to complete and follow-up works by concerned departments.	Team behaviour	Fear of failure
Another key observation was made by LH7, who reported that leaders tried to minimise changing the roles and the composition of teams to limit the cycles of group dynamics.	Cultural control	Appointing authority
Even though LH1 stated that there is an observed reduction in personal friction, there is evidence of workers building good relationships while working remotely. LH7 argued that digitalisation had affected interpersonal relationships in many ways: There were a lot of changes in positions, so many new faces came into every department, and many old faces left. LH3 said there was resistance to digitalisation from those who did not want to deal with change. LE9 stated that no organisation reported the benefits or downsides of digitalisation on interpersonal relationships.	Organisational culture	Structuring

Leaders had deliberately developed teams to achieve the same result. LE2, LE5 and LE9 were not aware of the teams set up to deliberately address an issue, except the traditional line-section of the organisation. LH1 and LH4 reported that their leaders had clarified the vision while distributing the roles to various people, and they continued to motivate the people continuously (LH1).	Organisational structure	Directive from government
LH1, LH4, LH6 and LH7 indicated leadership relied on the then-existing control measures. The organisation used a specific time plan for the implementation of the project. Technologies were seen as a critical tool for controlling digitalisation. According to LE2, LE5, LE8 and LE9, there was no significant improvement in the management of the organisation's affairs after the implementation of digitalisation. In addition, LH6 reported that the organisation had become more professional, effective and efficient.	Power dynamics	No change
LE8 and LE9 were not sure of the impact of strategic leadership on digitalisation protocol: The organisation had largely remained static. LH1, LE2 and LH4 believed that digitalisation had made the organisation more responsive and better prepared for achieving the desired goals with high efficiency. LE5 and LH6 did not look at organisation structure changes from the performance perspective as LH3 reported	Technology	Pivotal

that transpiring in several local and international organisations that have resorted to administrative restructuring to develop their performance and reduce costs by directing material and human resources more effectively. Leadership in the upper echelons of public institutions did not fully apply all the necessary elements of the strategic leadership theory because they did not share the vision or the broader digitalisation goals.		
LE8, LE9 and LE10 reported that they had not seen significant changes to the organisational structure. In addition, they could not tell the impact of a changed organisation on its employees. Performance of workers through organisational change (strategic change in the field of technology, change in the organisational structure, and change in human resources); This change manifests itself as the change in behaviour, values, and attitudes between individuals emerging through training, promotion, and a system Incentives, and because of this relationship. Participant LE8 argued that in his organisation, there was some fear among the employees; they found they would be redistributed among the departments because digitalisation had changed the way of working. Furthermore, digitalisation has made employees more	Performance indicators, contributions	Efficiency (tangible, intangible)

autonomous. Still, it has come with the pressure of greater responsibility. Digitalisation has created a positive energy for employees, but there was a perception that their leaders are spying on employees.		

The code for the links between participants' interests and perceptions of strategic leadership indicate that, as they anticipated change, they were cognisant of the officialdom and bureaucracy associated with the Saudi Government's Vision 2030. They were also aware that the digitalisation project needed a level of readiness at the organisational level, but that could also mean they did not offer an alternative vision. Therefore, the government planned action, which the ministerial drivers sought to modernise.

Participants had a clear view of the nation's vision, but they could not translate it into their own because of the people, procedures and systems linked to the organisations. This indicates that the status-quo of strategic leadership approach has an influence. Participants discussed the role of strategic leadership in handling resources and how the risk associated with resources were transferred to government ministries. Table 7 also shows that digitalisation triggered change processes in technological ways and demonstrated embedded fear because of the top-down approach, even if the employees have enough information about using the technology. The influence is real and it emanates in-house or in-ministry, but the dispersal of that strategic influence has links to interpersonal relationships before and after digitalisation. Technology has been recognised as an enabler and a barrier to existing team behaviour and power dynamics, while the fear of failure acts as the invisible force for control.

There was a realisation of the organisational cultural control from appointing authorities such that the structuring of the organisations reflects the culture derived from the government way of working. Table 6-2 also shows that performance indicators, contributions and purpose of the digitalisation project are measured by way of efficiency. When taken as a "tangible" yardstick, the referrer to technology considers as a crucial factor. On the other hand, the intangible yardstick refers to perceptions from end users and the commendation from the government.

Step 3: Aggregate Thematic Perceptions of Strategic Leadership Theory

As the coding of strategic leadership archetypes cascades towards themes, Davies (2014) demonstrates how to synthesise information to drill down to distinct wording. Therefore, codes were identified to synthesise themes (Cakiroglu, Caetano and Costa, 2020; Yanto and Liang, 2017) to unpack the participant's antecedents and create the archetypal strategic leadership of the public sector in Saudi Arabia (see Table 8). According to Gioia (2020), participant terms, codes, and categories can be limitless; however, similarities and differences must be sought out within the codes. The goal is to develop an understanding devoid of theoretical prescription (Gioia et al., 2012).

Table 8: Synthesis of the themes to create archetypal strategic leadership of the public sector in Saudi Arabia

Synthesis of Information from Participants	First Order	Second Order	Archetypal Themes
Leadership decision to digitalise	Anticipating change	Vision 2030	Authorities
There could be alternatives to digitalisation	Improvement		
Embedded at organisational level	Ready, visionary	vision ownership	Transformational
Setting values and goals. Establish continuous development of the devices and tools. Triggering digitalisation. Raise customer satisfaction. Visibility of elements of upper echelons' decisions at the public sector level. Digitalisation is the general global trend of engagement. Evidence of severe short-termism.	Strategy, Digitalisation, public value,	Envisioning	Visibility

Visibility of strategic plans. Ensure public value Strategy, digitalisation, public value,			
Communicate the vision and organisational goals. Evaluation of the alternatives. Timing of the risk assessment for digitalisation. Formal risk management techniques. Uncertainty avoidance by the strategic leadership of public institutions. Centred on facilitating training. Resourcing of departments and the identification of potential snags in the digitalisation process.	Communication, goals, threats, participation	Managing risks for digitalisation	Communication
What steps were taken by the management to ensure that the organisation act as a team during digitalisation? They also learnt the new systems, which was stressful. People became busier as they could no longer delay their work. Performance became central in driving the culture in the organisations.	Leadership, micro-management	Organisational culture	Learning

Promote the cultural distance between leaders with power and employees.			
Digitalisation enabled leaders to learn ways to make employees more interested and enthusiastic about the work.			
Strategic leadership at the upper echelons			
of the organisations took deliberate decisions to micro-manage the digitalisation issue.			
Creating a negative organisational culture that compounded digitalisation's poor performance was meant to address.			
Communication became direct, fast and reliable. Most of it was conducted online, which lost references and citizens, the language of conversation and confrontation			

	Leadership and interpersonal dynamics	Organisational power dynamics	Influence
Interpersonal relationships have been disrupted and almost lost in the workplace, and good interpersonal relationships are built within specialisms or work-related ones. Old interpersonal relationships are built using structures before digitalisation and building other relationships through their tasks and lines of duty. The lack of knowledge about the goals to attain perceived disruption of bureaucratic systems and administrative processes, While interpersonal relationships had been disrupted, the relationship between employees and leadership had become challenging. Leadership shortcomings enhance personal relationships between employees. There is insufficient interest in building a positive social			

community within the workplace.			
Clear plans by leaders for setting goals. Leaders organised many group activities. Training session's strategic leadership did not consider the re-ordering of priorities, and that implementation was mandatory without the courtesy of positions. Decentralised control system. Leaders provided instructions and guidance so that middle leaders could create their way of implementation and issued directives to workers on the importance of a rapid transition to the digital method.	Priorities, goals and organisational systems	Organisational structure	Control

Digitalisation had a pervasive impact on the organisation structure. Strategic leadership of the organisation created a framework to operate digitalisation. Then, they implemented specific tasks and duties and facilitated. Now have minimised the organisational layers, which means that for a task to be completed, there are only a few people involved likened to many people who all used to do a bit of work to complete the task.	Framework for digitalisation	Implementation of strategy	Performance
Strategic leaders were afraid of the government appointing authorities because of tradition, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has a high-power distance at the institutional level. Changes in the organisation structure led to improved clarity of tasks, such that workers could even follow up on issues that needed to be resolved.	Structured to achieve government vision	Ministers appointing	Structured achievement

The organisation structure has created a situation where employees can make their own choices without relying on other individuals. This has also decreased the level of disagreements. Digitalisation has led to achieving contentment and maintaining the firmness of the work environment by facilitating employees' lives and reducing the time spent researching difficulties related to information technology or requirements, thus reducing frustration, and improving output and efficiency.			
Digitalisation has improved implementation and speed of delivery. Replace traditional operations with digital ones; the most significant change is the result-oriented culture because it is easier to track the performance of each employee using the system. The ease in procedures and clarity of steps. Positive	Outcome and project sponsors	Organisational transformation, and public value	Attainment (of the vision)

change has taken place in the administrations because they implemented digitalisation. Strategic leadership has created a link between public value goals critical to the government's vision through the various ministries.			

To harness the meaning (Cornelissen, 2017) from the themes in Table 8, it was critical to use second-order codes to generate and synthesise participant experiences. The first theme emanates from the "authorities". Their goals translated into digitalisation, the power to appoint authorities, from the government to ministries and organisations. The second theme emanates from "vision ownership", which translates to "transformational" leadership; it explores the application of transformational leadership as part of the tactical leadership drive in the public sector.

Third, the "visibility" of the vision relied on strategic leadership. It was noticed that strategic leadership was tasked to establish how to operationalise, transforming the organisation according to international standards. There were elements of targeting public value and examining how the environment allows leaders to deal with customer requirements even if they are not united with the needs of the government. If the focus is on short-termism, visibility was largely reactionary, not proactively.

"Communication" is the fourth theme to synthesise strategic leadership experience from participants. They argued that if leaders in the upper echelons have their vision, they must communicate it and articulate it to employees. However, they would also find it challenging to clarify it in accordance with the government (appointing authority), how to undertake communication of the threats and opportunities (risks) and how they transfer it to establishing authority (ministry). Communication in these terms means verbal, written and face-to-face communication within institutions.

Learning is the fifth code that can be synthesised from the experiences that leadership can learn about their goals, the organisation, the employees and the environment supporting learning. This leads to "influence", the sixth theme, under which organisational power

dynamics emanate. Strategic leadership influences internal organisational power dynamics, official systems and how they move from the traditional to the digital environment. The traditional leadership archetype is concerned with government directives, while the modern strategic leadership is concerned with public value. Classic leaders have a great deal of experience in the upper echelons, while newer and fresher strategic leaders are more robust. For strategic leadership to be strong, it is expected that there will be adaptability and absorptive competencies to implement leadership decisions.

The seventh code for synthesis is "control", through which organisational structure is designed to control the process of digitalisation. It shows how strategic leadership responds to control systems through the organisational structure. This can be seen through decentralised and autonomous or traditional micro-managed processes that overcontrol processes. The implementation of the strategy relies on the eighth theme of "performance", demonstrating how strategic leadership facilitate digitalisation through a framework with specific goals, roles, duties and resources, resulting in a particular level of performance.

The ninth theme is how to implement a "structured achievement", meaning that strategic leadership has structured the organisation to respond to appointing authority requirements, responding to individual requirements, navigating organisational conflicts and promoting a measured level of productivity.

The tenth and final theme relates to "organisational transformation" regarding public value attainment (of the vision). Meaning that whether strategic leadership has attained the vision, shared value, organisational transformation, internal success, and external results that the appointing authority can accept, the public and the workings of the organisation.

The ten themes extracted from the coding in Table 8 above have helped create the strategic leadership archetype and the taxonomy of leadership for public institutions in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, these ten themes are interlinked. Hence, they form an integral part of the leadership taxonomy for strategic leadership.

Step 4: Creating a Taxonomy of Archetypes of Strategic Leadership in Public Institutions

A taxonomy of strategic leadership archetypes emanating from the coding was added to the process to improve the transparency and flexibility (O'Connor and Joffe, 2020) of utilising information from the Gioia (2020) coding. This approach is part of the effort to increase in-depth evaluation (Campbell et al., 2013) of the connectivity of thinking and belief systems from the phenomenon of tactical leadership.

Table 9 presents the taxonomy of the archetypes for strategic leadership to create a bridge to detailed analysis and discussion. The taxonomy comprises (i) own vision, (ii) overall strategy, (iii) performance, fear, and uncertainty avoidance, (iv) certainty from government, (v) top-down strategy while setting goals, (iv) resistance and flexibility, (vii) communication, (viii) consultation, (ix) control and (x) digitalisation.

Table 9: Taxonomy of strategic leadership archetypes

Taxonomy of strategic leadership archetypes		
1st Order Concepts	2nd Order Themes	Strategic Leadership Archetype
Perception of strategic leadership decisions and the protocol that triggered the digitalisation	Government Vision 2030	No vision
No alternative to digitalisation is providing information through electronic communication.	Government vision 2030	Strategy
A reactionary pattern of severe short-termism, referencing "strategic plans" The requirements of the appointing authority to ensure public value. Strategic leaders focus on organisational performance, developing operational capabilities of the workers and tools, hence, creating shared value.	Ministry goals for public value, uncertainty avoidance	Performance, fear, uncertainty avoidance
Strategic leadership undertook the risk assessments for the digitalisation strategy goals cascading from the line ministries at government-level which translated into a certain environment for which strategic leadership could heavily rely on as they operationalised the digitalisation policy	Digitalisation policy	Certainty by government

authorities provided certainty		
Upper echelons strategic leadership in leading the risk management processes Strategic leadership at the organisations' apex were involved in determining the constraints for digitalisation. However, they were mandated to be responsible for implementing the policy.	Operational processes	Top-down strategy
Allocation of resources for the digitalisation process was "based on taking over the resource allocation process so that leaders can take care of the interests of the departments that are joint with each other". The idea was to establish the professional goals and purposes at the organisation level.	Resourced centrally, power-distanc	Goal setting
Long years depending on traditional paperwork do not favour digital transactions, leaders to create "an alternative plan for employees who may not have been able to work with the new approach, " creating a flexible working environment that accommodates every worker.	Organisational structure, culture, human resource base	Resistance and flexibility
A positive view of the communication between strategic leadership and workers before and after digitalisation complexity of the digitalisation and the performance targets set for by appointing authorities, it was not easy for strategic leadership to communicate directly with the employees and address their concerns. The high-power distance attribute is a reality at the organisational level because strategic leadership was not felt at the operational level except through departmental leaders.	Change process and complexity	Communication

Critical decisions were made without consulting employees, knowing there were less competent leaders and experienced staff. That tactical leadership at the peak of the organisations did not set the vision and broader goals. Therefore, they did not own the implementation process and were bound to neglect many aspects of the organisation's culture.	Internal power dynamics, organisational structure	Consultation
The mechanism for measuring the impact of digitalisation needed to be seen from a holistic perspective, especially from the view that global organisations operate, With the inevitability of every existing system towards finding administrative mechanisms to achieve citizen satisfaction and providing quality services, People are more result-oriented and focused now. Everyone is responsible for his task now, so there is a great deal of clarity by the restructuring, resulting in better performance.	Impact, control, organisational structure,	Control
Strategic leadership failure in vision creation, poor holistic transformation planning and goal setting would have created systematic interrelatedness in public institutions. Because of the high-power distance and long-term centric societal culture, the fear of authorities negated the strategic leadership influence.	Success or failure	Digitalisation

Step 5: Detailed Evaluation of the Interconnectivity between Strategic Leadership Archetypes

This research has used the taxonomy of archetypal strategic leadership perceptions from participants in step 4 above to conduct a plausible evaluation of the interconnectivity that

leads to data analysis. From the outset, strategic leadership is understood as the highest force triggering the vision for digitalisation. Such a force did not emanate from the upper echelons; instead, it was harnessed from the government's image. Second, there is no evidence for strategic ownership of digitalisation. Organisational readiness remains top-down, from ministry to individual organisations, with no alternative to the digitalisation policy. Thirdly, the short-term outcome is critical to changing an organisation for a speedy outcome which will satisfy the appointing authority.

The fourth factor is interconnectivity is that strategic leadership focuses on threats to digitalisation policy by authority, not the organisation's performance. The fifth factor is that there is no involvement in setting the strategy, but they are mandated for implementation; this is strategic leadership by proxy. The sixth point is that leadership should receive resources as requested to focus on setting goals for achievement. There should be no room for deviating from government plans, high power distance, and fear of authority within the organisation. The seventh factor is that leadership is faced with resistance; strategic leadership had to apply flexibility in organisational structure to create a suitable organisational culture. The eighth factor is that sets communication, vision, and strategies, dealing with complexity, goals, fear of failure, appointing authorities, high-power distance, and control systems form a coherent argument for detailed analysis. The ninth factor is that strategic leadership uses high-power distance to instil fear, generate certainty and create power through structures.

The tenth factor is that strategic leadership has structured, implemented, and controlled the outcome of digitalisation and anticipated success.

4.14 Chapter Summary

Perceptions, views, and beliefs about the leadership of any sort vary from individuals' experiences, such that collecting information about it generates highly complex and interwoven data sets. The complexity of the datasets stifles communicability if not handled well. This research has adopted the three-stage Gioia coding method (Gioia, 2020; Gioia et al., 2012) because of its systematic and transparent manner of coding for qualitative research that demands flexibility, reflection and dialogue with the research process. While the Gioia coding method (Gioia et al., 2012) is useful, it cannot capture all the data elements. One has to establish links and connectivity between data, hence undertaking a reductionist approach

to capturing data. There is a risk that critical information could be missed if the coding system is not sufficiently rigorous.

There was a need to harness the critical lessons from the pilot study interactions as a vehicle to inform the interview process and, eventually, the case study. The coding and the reliability of procedures adopted herein demonstrate how transparent the approach has been. This creates trustworthiness in the standardised approach to coding and its themes. However, the path to coding made a massive problem in consistently selecting the correct themes from the interview data. Each participant had their perspective on digitalisation. Therefore, consensus and the meaning of the data could only be achieved by taking a reductionist approach. Another struggle for coding was the multiple meaning of words in Arabic.

The results from the coding process generated a taxonomy of strategic leadership archetypes, forming a basis for evaluating the interconnectedness of the themes. The next data analysis chapter relies on these two factors: the taxonomy of leadership archetypes and their interconnectedness. The strategic leadership archetype for this research does not apply to that found in general leadership, as shown in section 3.8; rather, it is the archetype that this research identified through the development of the strategic leadership taxonomy. This integration of the strategic leadership taxonomy (section 4.8) and the leadership archetype for this research emanate from the data coding exercise undertaken in the present chapter. The next chapter presents the overarching findings of the research, including quotes from participants in support of the themes emanating from the results.

CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

5.1 Introduction

The research engages a variant of a structured method to collect the necessary data to answer the research question articulated in the introduction part of the research. Various analytical model used in the methodology and method of data analysis will be examined in this section. This becomes necessary to justifies the used of model adopted in the analytical section. This section presents results of the data analysis and discuss the results to identifies, selects, and evaluates appropriates methods that elucidates the focus of the research to presents articulated responses to the formulated research questions.

5.2 Descriptions of Socio-Economics Variables of The Respondents.

5.2.1 Description of Respondent's Gender in The Area of Study

All respondents in the research are all males. Male individuals hold most strategic leadership positions in the Saudi public sector. Considering that the researcher is male and cannot access female leaders due to cultural restrictions, it was impossible to identify an organisation with female leaders. In addition, female leaders worked in different locations inaccessible to male counterparts.

Table 10: Description of Respondent's Gender in the area of study

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	10	100.0	100.0	100.0

5.2.2 Distribution of Respondent's Age in the area of study Age:

The researcher set the age between 45 and 55 years old because this was the most common age category for leadership in public sector organisations. In addition, the age group allowed for knowledge and experience of those assigned the leadership role to demonstrate their performance and leadership approach thus far. The results revealed that 60% of the respondents are above 50.

Table 11: Distribution of Respondent's Age in the area of study

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Under 50	4	40.0	40.0	40.0
	Above 50	6	60.0	60.0	100.0
	Total	10	100.0	100.0	

5.2.3 Present Post of the Respondents

The present status of the respondent's post was analysed and the results revealed that all respondents were in a position of directorship with different functions. Table indicated that Development director, Information Technology director and human resources director had 20% of the population sampled.

Table 12: Distribution of the Present post of the respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Financial Director	1	10.0	10.0	10.0
	Development Director	2	20.0	20.0	30.0
	Information Technology Director	2	20.0	20.0	50.0
	Training Director	1	10.0	10.0	60.0
	Human Resources Director	2	20.0	20.0	80.0
	Customer Service Director	1	10.0	10.0	90.0
	Equipment Director	1	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	10	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2021

5.2.4 Distribution of the Respondent's Working Experience (Present Post)

The working years of experience of the respondents in their present post of directorship ranges between 5-8 years. The mean years of working experience is 6.4 with a standard deviation of 1.17.

Table 13: Distribution of the Respondent's working experience (present post)

Years of Experience	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 5.00	3	30.0	30.0	30.0
6.00	2	20.0	20.0	50.0
7.00	3	30.0	30.0	80.0
8.00	2	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	10	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2021
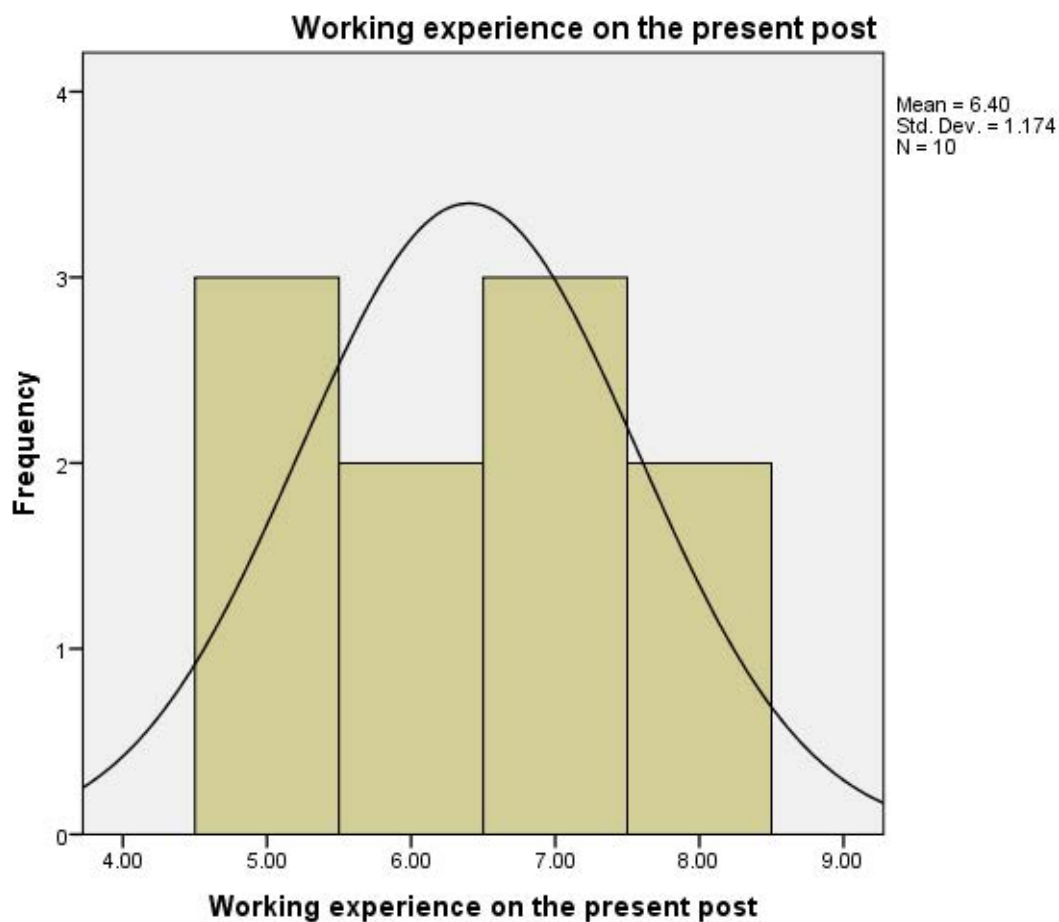
Figure 14: Distribution of the Respondent's working experience

5.2.5 Departmental size of Respondent's Working Place

Preference was given to leaders with a minimum of 25 employees to implement digitalisation.

Higher numbers of employees were expected to better indicate how the leader used strategic

practice in the work, such as vision, communication and articulating with staff to encourage and motivate to implement such a digitalisation project. Mean of size of the department where the respondents are working is 27.50 with a standard deviation of 4.84. The departmental size 25 and 30 are in the modal class.

Table 14: Departmental size of Respondent's Working Place

Dept. size No.	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 20.00	1	10.0	10.0	10.0
22.00	1	10.0	10.0	20.0
25.00	3	30.0	30.0	50.0
30.00	3	30.0	30.0	80.0
33.00	1	10.0	10.0	90.0
35.00	1	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	10	100.0	100.0	

The cross-tabulation analysis between present post and working experience on the present post indicated that years of working experience influence the present post.

Table 15: Present post * Working experience on the present post Cross tabulation

Years spent on the present post		Working experience on the present post				Total
		5.00	6.00	7.00	8.00	
Present post	Financial Director	1	0	0	0	1
	Development Director	0	1	1	0	2
	Information Technology Director	1	0	0	1	2
	Training Director	0	0	1	0	1
	Human Resources Director	1	0	0	1	2
	Customer Service Director	0	1	0	0	1

Equipment Director	0	0	1	0	1
Total	**3**	**2**	**3**	**2**	**10**

5.3 Analysis of the Research Objectives

5.3.1 To conduct a systematic review of the extant literature on digitalisation, strategic change and strategic leadership on public service delivery.

The rationale of this objective is to review present literature and past studies on digitalisation and public service delivery. In addition, the role strategic leadership played in digitisation adoption and implementation and how strategic leadership was able to enhance public service delivery under the direction of Saudi vision 2030. A methodical review of the extant literature on digitalisation, strategic change and strategic leadership on public service delivery were done using the indicators in the table below. The results revealed that internal mechanism and Control system and Authority structures (Saudi Vision 2030) were the most significant indicators influencing strategic change and strategic leadership on public service delivery.

Table 16: Digitalisation process through indicators experimental in the field

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Objectives achieved through technology focused culture	5	12.5
	Internal mechanism and Control system	11	27.5
	Authority structures (Saudi Vision 2030)	10	25.0
	Authorize technology to achieve goals	8	20.0
	Strategic leadership to drive vision	6	15.0
	Total	40*	100.0

Notes: * Multiple responses

Frequency

- Internal mechanism and Control system
- Authority structures (Saudi Vision 2030)
- Authorize technology to achieve goals
- Strategic leadership to drive vision
- Objectives achieved through technology focused culture

Digitilization process through1

- Objectives achieved through technology focussed culture
- Control system
- Authority structures (Saudi Vision 2030)
- Authority technology to achieve goals
- Startegic leadership to drive vision

Figure 15: Digitalisation process through indicators experimental in the field

Moreover, appropriate department that drive digitalisation implementation were also examined. The results revealed that National transformation department are most

appropriate (46.7%). In addition, these departments have been positioned to handle risk management and financial plans for the organisation.

Table 17: Appropriate department that drives the implementation of digitalisation

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Quality and general planning department	07	23.3
	Planning and development department	09	30.0
	National transformation department	14	46.7
	Total	30*	100.0

Note: * Multiple responses

Finding from this systematic review of the benefit of digitalisation on public service delivery if adopted and implemented indicated that it will be so effective if it aligns with organisational structures and government vision (Saudi Vision 2030). More so, to get a full benefit of digitalisation, the Strategic managers must ensure that goals, vision are rationalised in line with the dictates of Saudi vision 2030.

Table 18: Review of the benefit digitalisation will bring if adopted and implemented

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strategic managers must ensure that goals, vision are streamlined into digitalisation process	8	16.0
	Digitalisation process must align with Saudi Vision 2030	9	18.0
	Align with organisational structures	11	22.0
	Interest and perceptions to inculcate structuring	9	18.0
	Digitalisation significantly develops organisational instrument including the strategic leader	8	16.0
	Digitalisation improves on the communication system	5	10.0
	Total	50*	100.0

Note: * Multiple responses

Appropriate department that drive the implementation of digitilization

Legend:
- Quality and general planning department
- Planning and development department
- National transformation department
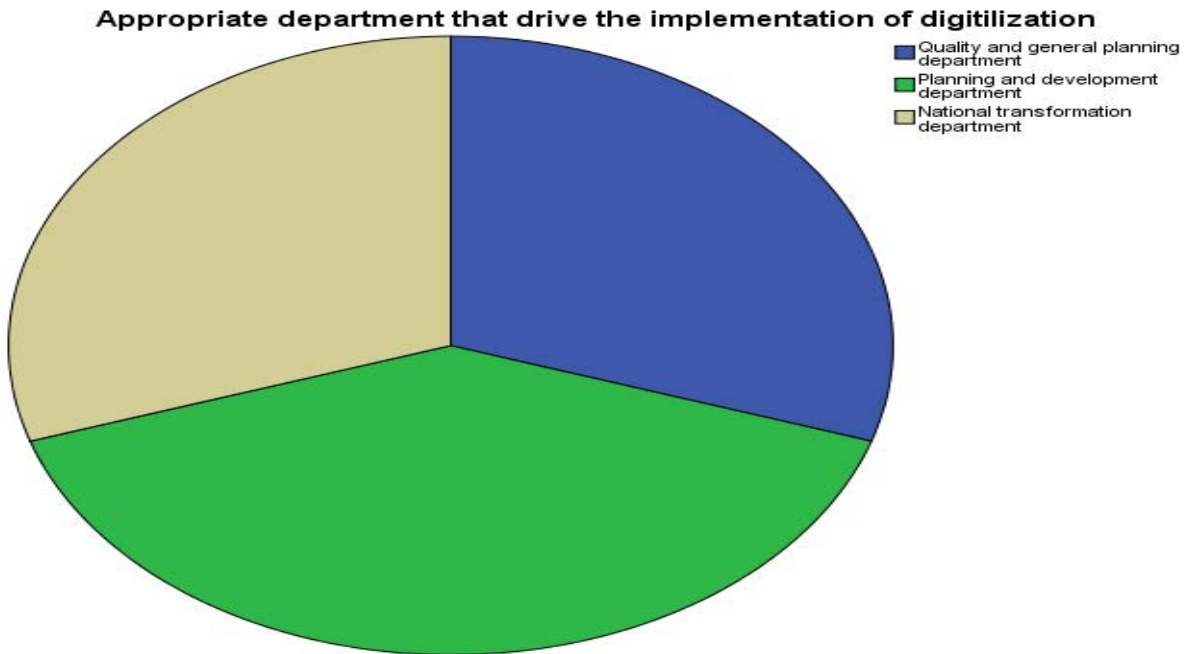
Figure 16: Appropriate Department that drive the implementation of review of the benefit digitalisation

The research also did cross tabulation analysis of digitalisation process and appropriate department that drive the implementation of digitalisation. The result revealed that technology focused culture is influenced by the National transformation department.

Table 19: Digitalisation process through * Appropriate department that drive the implementation of digitalisation Cross tabulation

		Appropriate department that drives the implementation of digitalisation			
		Quality and general planning department	Planning and development department	National transformation department	Total
Digitalisation process through	Objectives achieved through technology focused culture	0	1	2	3

Control system	1	1	0	2
Authority structures (Saudi Vision 2030)	1	1	0	2
Authority technology to achieve goals	0	1	1	2
Strategic leadership to drive vision	1	0	0	1
Total	3	4	3	10
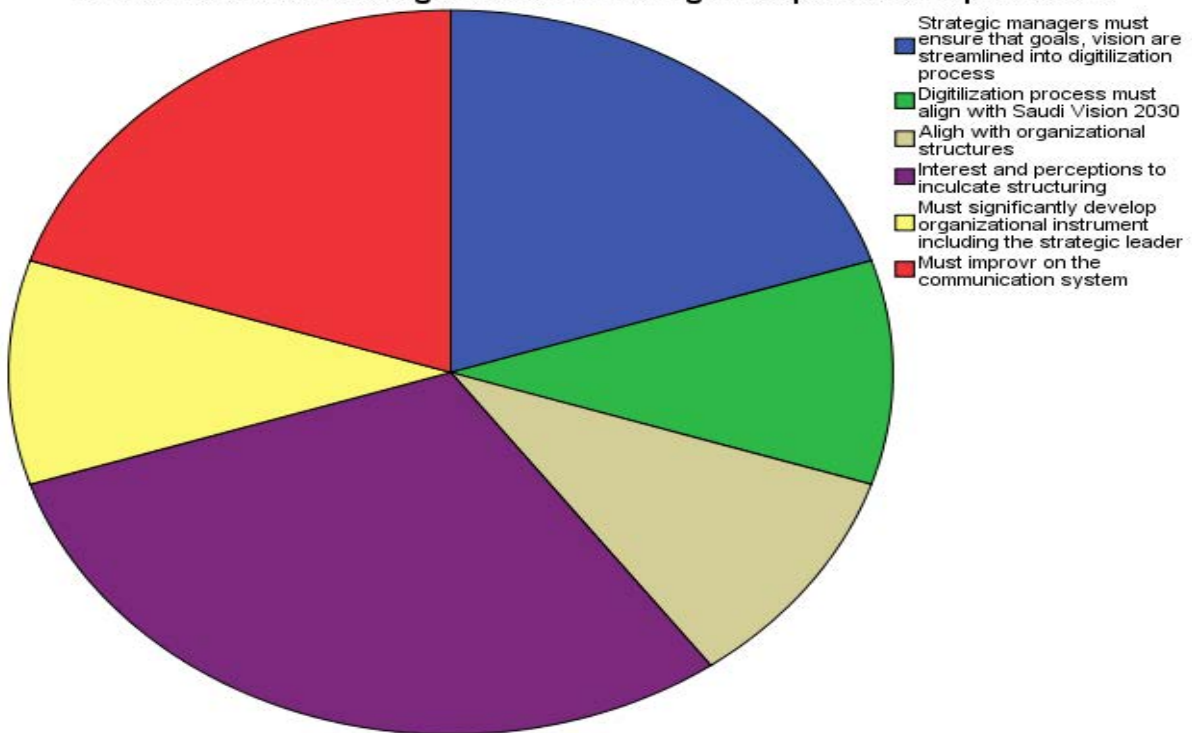
Figure 17: Review of the benefit digitalisation will bring if adopted and implemented

5.3.2 To identify drivers associated with digitalisation of Saudi Arabian that influence quality public service delivery through exploration of operational activities of organisation during pre-digitalisation era on service delivery

This objective was envisioned to examine driver of tactical and operational elements of digitalisation in leadership and how its influenced quality public service delivery. This means that the "strategic vision" at the national level, must be positioned to operationalised to influence public sectors service delivery. This thus, implies that the focus must be on the performance of individual in the organisations. This factor according to past study is a critical factor in the drive for digitalisation. This objective activates and operates four strategic leadership archetypes for public institutions in Saudi Arabia (summarised in Figure 18), to drive the discussion for the attainment of this research objective.

More so the objective explored the operational activities pre-digitalisation and its effect on public service delivery. The result of this analysis revealed that 33.3% of the respondents inferred no significant impact on public service delivery even with digitalisation. The respondents argued the organisations' structure had no clear view of who was responsible for leading the people as a resource. Hence, there was no clarity on the specificity of the leader's responsibility for people. Moreover, there is the existence of the traditional methods of doing business which was dependent on manual work for the most part. According to the respondents this manual activity was governed by bureaucracy and the mood of employees in responding to public service delivery. In addition, the respondents observed that people are used to traditional leadership systems because that has been the situation for years. Whether one likes it or not, transformation appears in the organisation. Although as argued by the respondents that there had been an awareness among the people within the organisations concerning their leadership being blighted by people who adopted aggressive behaviour as a means to lead them.

Therefore, how the organisation moves from a traditional to a digital working environment requires learning. However, the more traditional the strategic leadership approach, the more it is concerned with government directives. In fact, strategic leadership should be concerned with public value, while accommodating differences in education and exposure. The research observed that more classic leaders have extensive experience in the upper echelons, while those newer and fresher to strategic leadership are more robust but with less experience in leading organisations. Respondents deduced that challenges with the initial pre-digitalisation

process have led to the drive for modernisation within organisations. Modernisation means that new technologies have been adopted in attempt to improve the outcome of the transformation process.

Table 20: Pre-digitalisation processes

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Administrative structured to develop their performance thru directing material and human resources more effectively	7	15.6
	Duty is to raise customers satisfaction thru cordial relationship	6	13.3
	Digitisation was working slowly for those that imbibed it while majority of the work are still done manually	7	15.6
	Many procedures were done manually, and results still achieved.	10	22.2
	No significant impact on public service delivery even with digitalisation	15	33.3
	Total	45*	100.0

Note: * Multiple responses

Cross tabulation analysis on the review of the benefit digitalisation will bring if implemented and pre-digitalisation process indicated that administrative structured must be position to influence strategic managers to perform their roles and to ensure that goals, vision are streamlined into digitalisation process.

Table 21: Review of the benefit digitalisation will bring if implemented * Pre-digitalisation processes Cross tabulation

		Pre-digitalisation processes			
		Administrative structured to develop their performance thru	Duty is to raise customer satisfaction	Digitization was working slowly for those that imbibed it while	Total

		directing material and human resources more effectively	thru cordial relationship	majority of the work are still done manually	
Review of the benefit digitalisation will bring if adopted and implemented	Strategic managers must ensure that goals, vision are streamlined into digitalisation process	2	0	0	2
	Digitalisation process must align with Saudi Vision 2030	1	0	0	1
	Align with organisational structures	0	0	1	1
	Interest and perceptions to inculcate structuring	1	2	0	3
	Must significantly develop organisational instrument including the strategic leader	1	0	0	1
	Must improve on the	0	1	1	2

	communication system				
Total		5	3	2	10
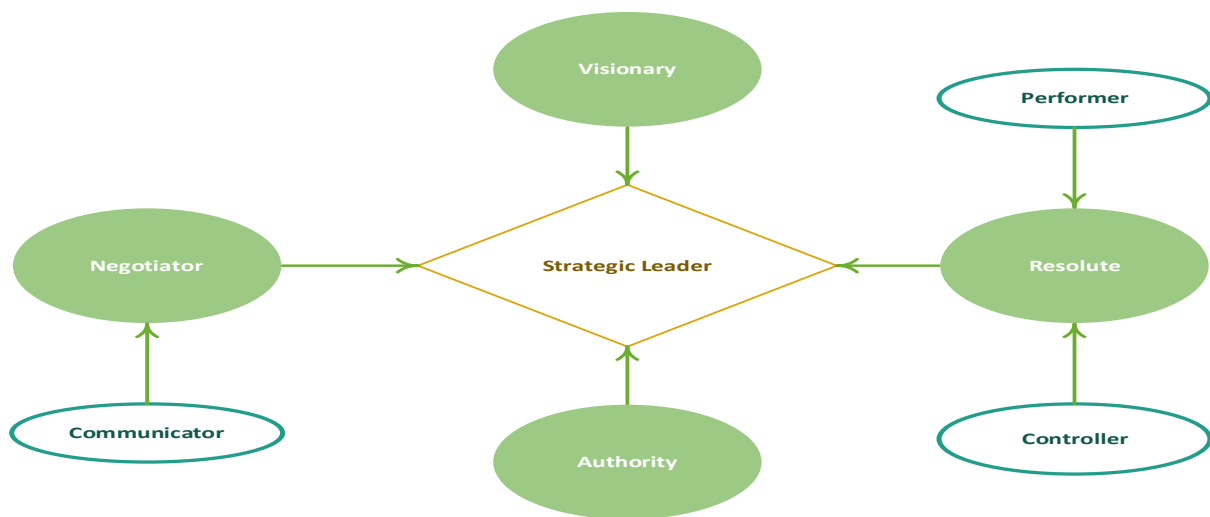
Figure 18: Strategic leadership archetypes in Saudi public organisations.

Findings indicated that 27.5% of the respondents reported that the strategic of organisational structure, goals, transparency, and culture must be imbibing for strategic activation in the organisation. In addition, the strategic contribution to digitalisation depends on the level of alignment with Saudi Vision 2030 as indicated by 20% of the respondents. Also, for effective strategic allocation of resource both human and natural must be appropriately placed to achieve desired results as indicated by 20% of the respondents

Table 22: Driver of strategic elements digitalisation in Leadership

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strategic contribute to digitalisation align with Saudi Vision 2030	8	20.0
	Imbibe the strategic of organisational structure, goals, transparency and culture	11	27.5
	Developing risk management and contingency plan	9	22.5
	Embrace top-down embedded training	4	10.0

Allocation of resource both human and natural appropriately to achieve desired results	8	20.0
Total	40*	100.0

Note: * Multiple response

In addition, the strategic elements digitalisation must facilitate innovation that is faster in order to achieve the desired results and march towards success. The results as found by the research must largely depended on strategic leaders to provide a strategy that can create higher competitive value, advanced teams and the sustainability of a culture of creativity. Hence, 75% of the respondents suggested that strategic leadership are responsible to channel who to lead the people. Who to lead the people must be at least a director or head of the financial department, human resource and equipment departments among others.

More so, in achieving this objective the research adopts the framework of digitalisation and operational capability theory. This framework argues that adapting to the skills of existing workers is likely to stifle innovation under the strategic leadership as this can promote learning in the organisation. If the mission and goals of the strategic leadership are aligned with the organisational vision, therefore, organisational outputs will be in line with the end user's (the public) needs. Consequently, the design of the digitalisation protocol becomes unique to each organisation and the services it offers.
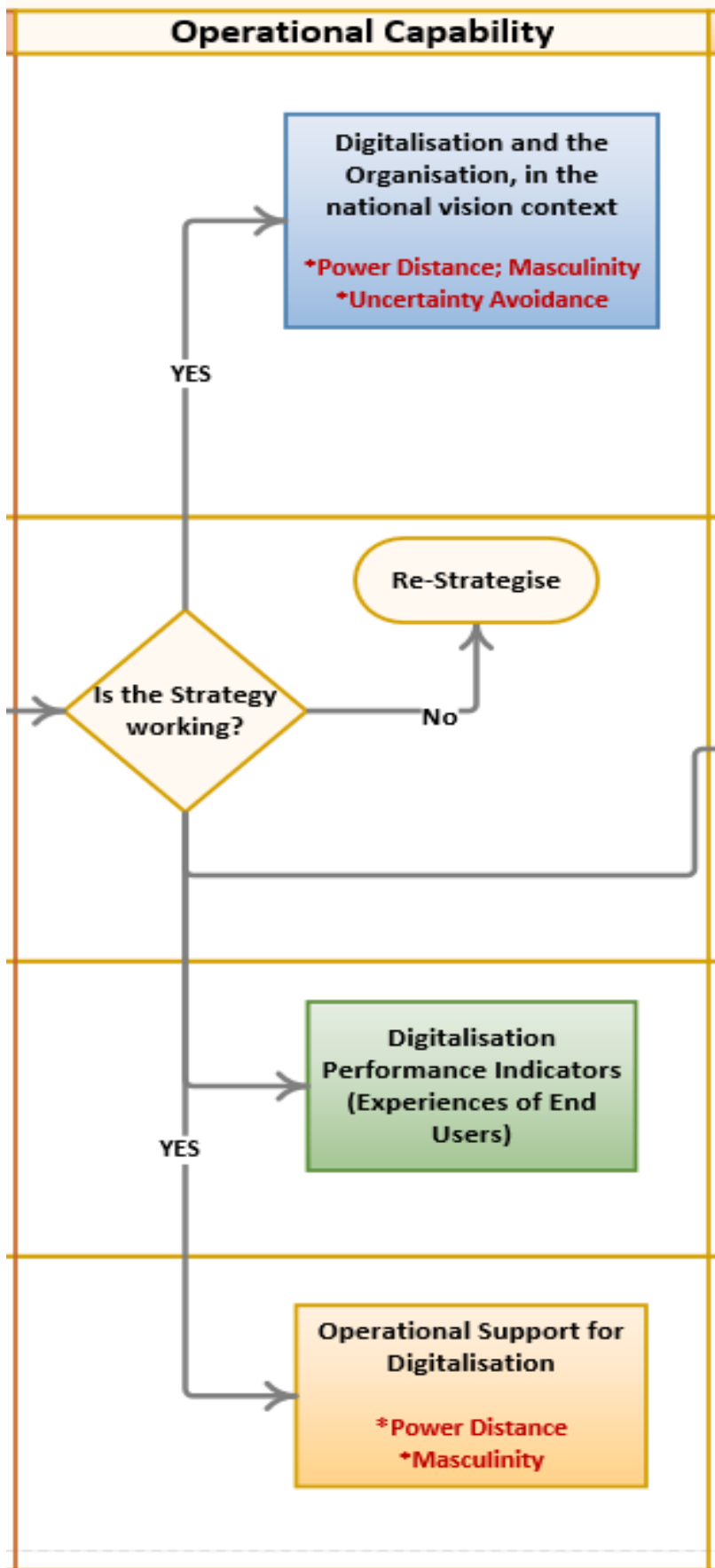
Figure 19: Digitalisation and operational capability of the organisation

This research argues that strategic leadership in the upper echelons of public organisations are appointed by government ministers to undertake government programme such as the implementation of the national Vision 2030. Once appointed, strategic leaders become critical to the expansion of government programme as well as authorisation of the implementation. Moreover, the visibility of government programme to the public at the organisational level are value and are attached to government programme (Figure 20).
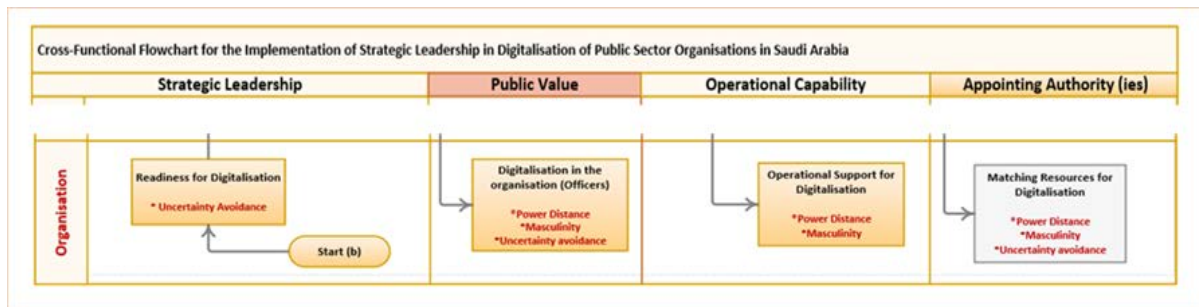
Figure 20: Strategic leadership and appointing authorities

5.3.3 Driver of operational elements of digitalisation in Leadership

The theoretical underpinnings of the conceptualised strategic leadership in public institutions were used to examine the operational model of the leadership adopted in the digitalisation administration. This conceptualised strategic leadership in public institutions was described in the figure below. This chart is all-encompassing theory that argues public institutions exist for the sole purpose of making a positive impact on citizens, individually and collectively. Moore's illustration of the public value according to past study is called the "strategic triangle" (see Figure 16). Hence, public organisations have to balance the needs of appointing authorities, improve operational capabilities of the organisations as they serve and create public value (ibid). Figure below uses the triangular recycle shape to illustrate the importance of the continuous need to balance the components of public value theory in a government institution.
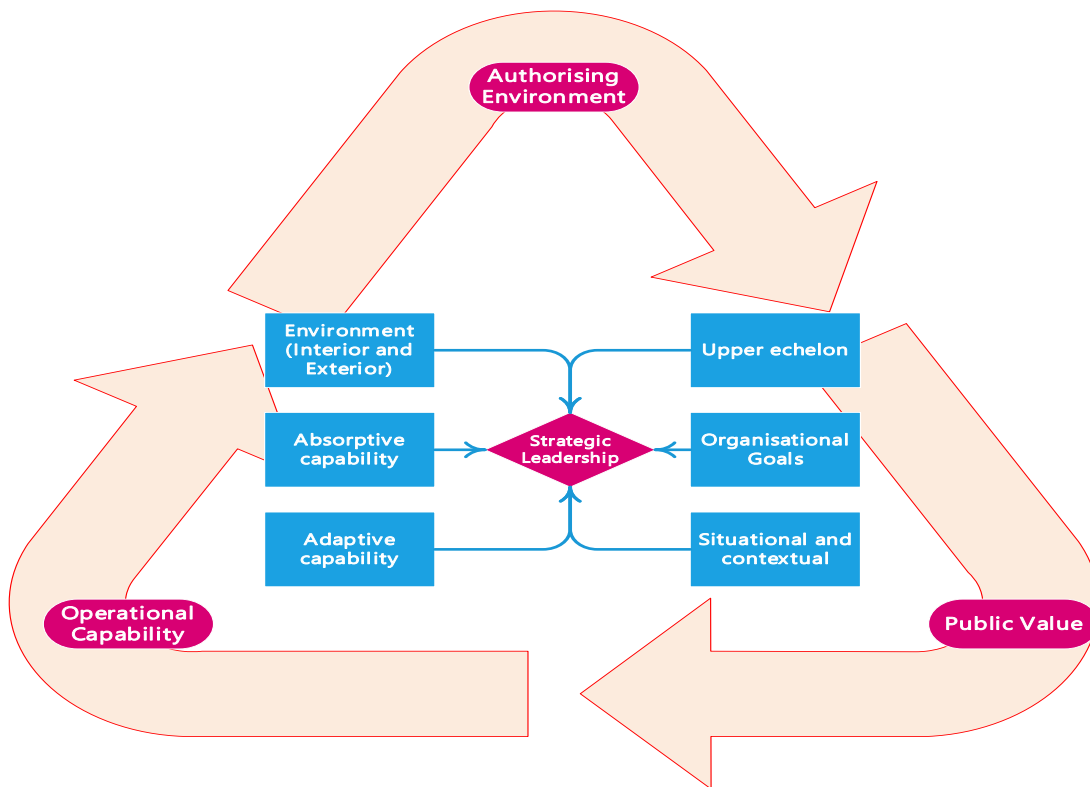
Figure 21: Theoretical underpinning of the strategic leadership archetypes.

Once the strategic triangle of public value is entered, the strategic leadership theory comes into play because it postulates that strategic leaders need to (i) take the upper echelons of the organisation, (ii) consider the organisational environment (both internal and external environment) and (iii) set organisational vision through goals. In addition, the strategic leader should also (iv) examine the situational or contextual factors of the organisation and (v) be adaptable as well as (vi) being absorptive (DeChurch et al. 2010; Mahoney and Cogliser, 2010). In addition, this objective was designed to examine the operational activities influenced by digitalisation. The research deduced that 27.5% of the respondents reported that digitalisation influences the culture of work, managing people and complexity of the Heads of departments. These heads made most of the decisions regarding the allocation of resources. They had a clear perspective of the operational effectiveness at the strategic level. The varied responses from tactical leadership in the upper echelons of the public sector organisations were naturally a reflection of the varied structure, composition and level of experience each had at the beginning of digitalisation. Their reaction to fulfilling performance criteria set by appointing authorities varied, which confirms a high-power distance societal

attribute for Saudi Arabia. Strategic leadership had to be seen to institute measures that could implement government programmes and if not operationalise, such institution can jeopardize public value.

Table 23: Driver of operational elements of digitalisation in Leadership

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Digitalisation influences the culture of work, managing people and complexity	11	27.5
	Operationalise routine and streamline repetitive work	10	25.0
	Recognises the significant of education and experience on competencies	6	15.0
	Fulfilling and complying to Saudi Vision 2030	6	15.0
	Allocation of resources based on the specialisations and competencies	7	17.5
	Total	40*	100.0

Note: * Multiple responses

Moreover, findings in the actualisation of this objective indicated that operative strategic leadership influence the public value. Respondents indicated that operationalize of digitalisation within the context of motivation empower the workers through planning, resourcing, and other means to assured of basic operational capability that enhances public service delivery. This finding is in line with the study of Weinberg and Lewis (2009) that indicated strategic leaders need to be aligned with government implementation of Vision 2030 to ensure quality public service delivery.

Although this objective raised the awareness' that the mechanism for measuring the impact of digitalisation needed to be seen from a holistic perspective, especially from the position from which global organisations operate. Therefore, with digitalisation, the operation must be linked to technological progress and the transformation of organisations must be streamlined into globally acceptable level. Therefore, one of the main impacts of digitalisation has been the prompt public service delivery and effective communication among the people

within an organisation. Hence, organisations must move towards the idea of modernising management processes and institutions. Majority of the respondents (75%) indicated that within the digitalisation process organisations must set targets of improving public services, as well as upgrading them.

In addition, the ability of a strategic leadership is to allocate workers and other resources for optimum public service delivery. Moreover, 25% of the respondents argued that strategic leadership must be an experienced leader and must demonstrated a significant level of competence on the knowledge of the digitalisation process. In this line of thought, 17.5% of the respondents indicated that allocation of resources is based on the specialisations and competencies; also, 15% of the respondents recognizes the significant of education and experience on competencies. These factors are significant drivers in the digitalisation process. Moreover, the distribution of resources for the digitalisation process is based on the strategic thinking of appropriateness, so that leaders can take care of the interests of the numerous interlinked departments. All these are within the purview of the strategic leadership. Significant number of the respondents (27.5%) stated that digitalisation influences the culture of work, managing people and complexity.

For public institutions in Saudi Arabia, it is critical to integrate strategic leadership theory with public value theory to examine the context of digitalisation. On the one hand, the leadership occupying the upper echelons need to create the vision for their organisations within the boundaries set by government ministries. On the other hand, the upper echelons are mandated to ensure that their organisations can provide a valuable service to the citizenry and the general public, hence the need to balance organisational needs with public value (Weinberg and Lewis, 2009).

Driver of strategic elements digitilization in Leadership

Legend:
- Strategic contribute to digitilization align with Saudi Vision 2030
- Imbibe the strategic of organizational structure, goals, transparency and culture
- Developing risk management and contigency plan
- Embrace top-down embedded training
- Allocation of resource both human and natural appropriately to acheive desired results
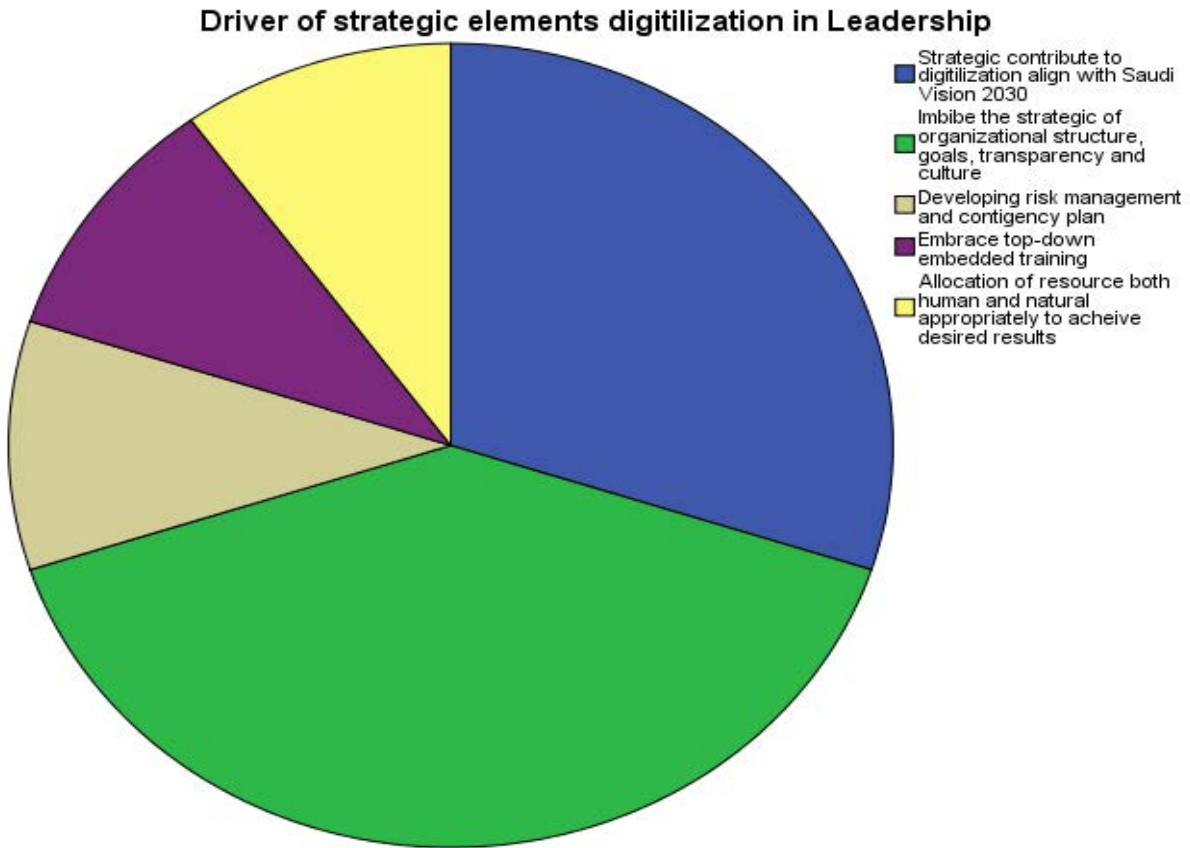
Figure 22: Driver of Strategic elements digitalisation in leadership

Cross tabulation analysis between the strategic and operational elements of digitalisation indicated that fulfilling and complying to Saudi Vision 2030 by the organisations shaped the full benefits of the digitalisation process. In addition, the Strategic elements influence the operation of the digitalisation process and enhanced public service delivery. More so, the strategic elements of digitalisation that aligned with Saudi Vision 2030 influenced the operation element to remove redundancy and trial and error in the donation of the public service delivery.

		Driver of operational elements of digitalisation in Leadership				
		Digitalisation influences the culture of work, managing people and complexity	Operationalize routine and streamline repetitive work	Recognizes the significant of education and experience on competencies	Fulfilling and complying to Saudi Vision 2030	Total
Driver of strategic elements digitalisation in Leadership	Strategic contribute to digitalisation align with Saudi Vision 2030	1	1	0	1	3
	Imbibe the strategic of organisational structure, goals, transparency and culture	0	2	2	0	4
	Developing risk management and contingency plan	0	0	0	1	1
	Embrace top-down	0	1	0	0	1

embedded training					
Allocation of resource both human and natural appropriately to achieve desired results	1	0	0	0	1
Total	2	4	2	2	10

Table 24: Driver of strategic elements digitalisation in Leadership * Driver of operational elements of digitalisation in   Leadership Cross tabulation.
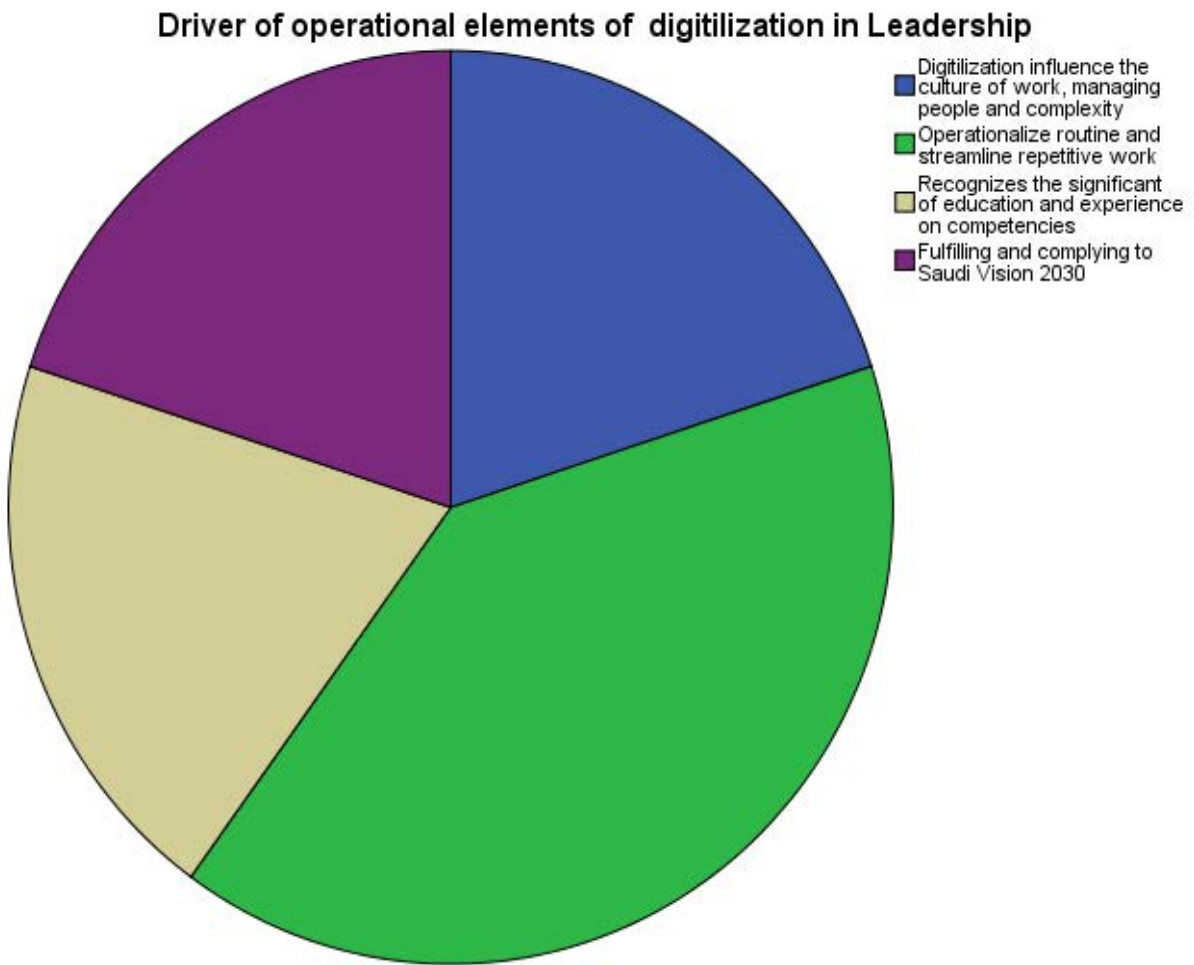
Figure 23: Driver of operational elements of digitalisation in Leadership

This objective examined driver associated with digitalisation that influenced public service delivery. Literature has deduced how digitalisation enhanced public service delivery. Result of this analysis indicated that the challenges with paperwork has led the drive for modernization to enhance service delivery (30%). This thus implies that this drive has enhanced the achievement in work and avoid bureaucracy, and preserve the content with ease when needed. This finding infers that the desire to alter the mechanism of the work process and develop a digital mind-set, to reduce mistakes and speed-up work outputs, as well as to achieve high quality work. Also, respondents (20%) deduced that technologies are a critical tool for controlling digitalisation and sincerity to develop. Moreover, 20% of the respondents inferred that Organisations culture are responsive to digitalisation and are better prepared for achieving desired goals of service delivery with high efficiency. More so, there exists the effective communication between the management and employees as expressed by 17.5% of the respondents. Majority (75%) of the respondents argued that digitalisation offers an opportunity for a major change in people's lifestyle where they are accessing most information online without the need to travel, making it useful for government organisations to adopt an effective method of communication. Hence, digitalisation enhanced effective communication. However, 12.5% of the respondents stated that digitalisation enhances organisational work-culture for better service delivery because digitalisation offers them sincere desire to develop.

Table 25: Driver associated with digitalisation that influences public service delivery

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	There exists effective communication between the administration and employees	7	17.5
	Recognises technologies as a critical tool for controlling digitalisation and sincerity to develop	8	20.0
	Challenges with paperwork has led to drive for modernisation to enhance service delivery	12	30.0

Organisations responsive and better prepared for achieving desired goals of service delivery with high efficiency	8	20.0
Enhances organisational work-culture for better service delivery	5	12.5
Total	40*	100.0

Note * Multiple responses

In addition, "excesses and errors" worked as indicators of challenges with the digitalisation strategy – a reactive rather than proactive way of dealing with change. Respondents argued that the role of digitalisation was set to "improve efficiency, reduce spending and execute new services quickly and flexibly. Digitalisation was tantamount to "changing business models and changing mentalities", as well as to "take benefit of new technologies to be more aware, flexible at work, able to predict and prepare for the future
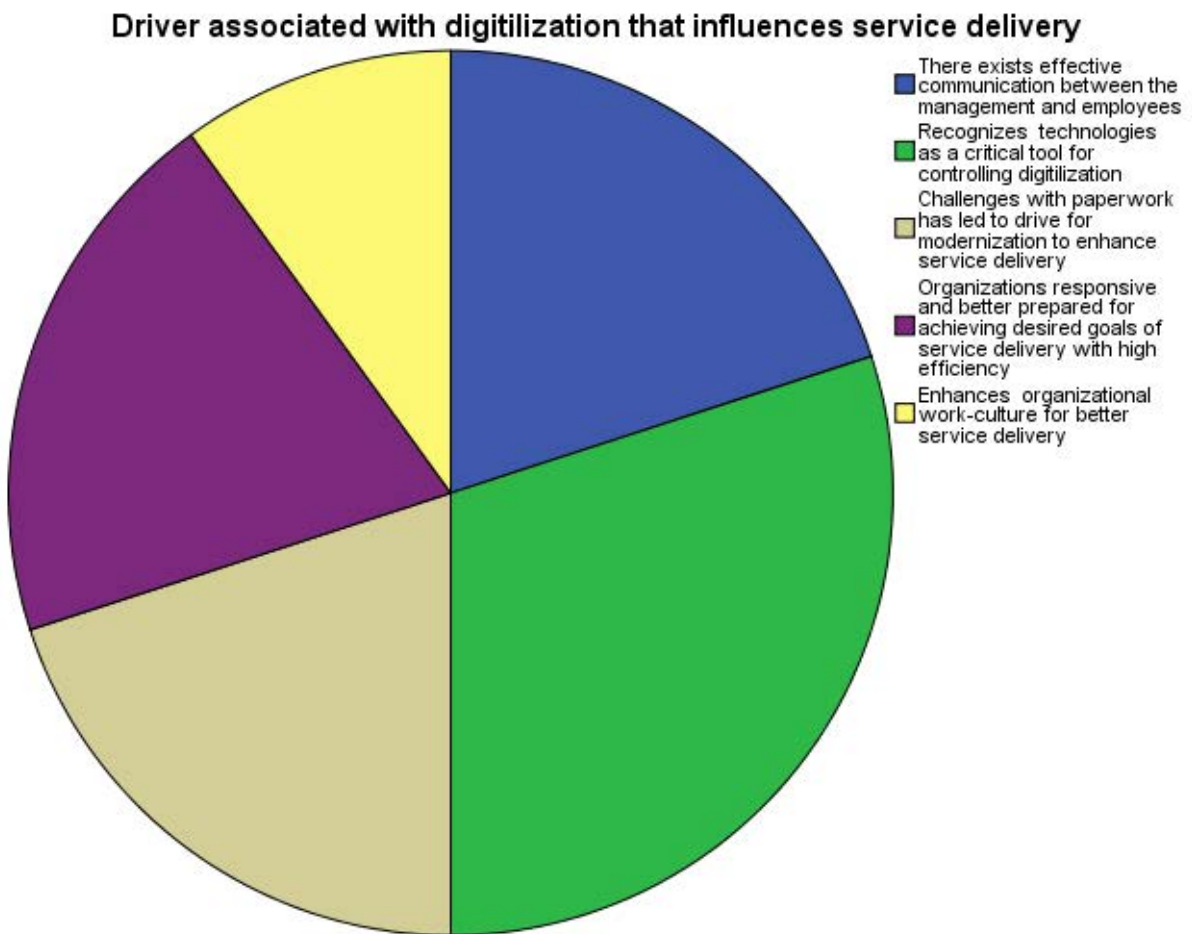
Figure 24: Driver associated with digitalisation that influences service delivery

5.3.4 To examine strategic leadership styles employed to drive digitalisation in the selected ministries for quality public service delivery

This objective was achieved by taking a cue from the detailed conceptual discussion of strategic leadership themes, information presented in the figure below. This taxonomy of archetypes of strategic leadership in public institutions helped to shape the data analysis and discussion in the realisation of this objective. The information from respondents were in line with the conceptualisation of tactical leadership behaviours, as shown in figure below. The core of the conceptualisation of strategic leadership behaviour of leaders at the upper echelons of public institutions is the integration of public value model created by Weinberg and Lewis (2009), because it categorizes expectations of leadership, hence, creating an influence on the strategic leadership typology. These include (i) visionary-authority, (ii) transformational visibility, (iii) communicating, (iv) learned influence, (v) controlled performance and (vi) structured attainment.

The research deduced that the strategic leadership theory drives the application of transformational leadership. It is argued that strategic leadership needs to be visible. The activation of this drive when it is operationalised enhanced the transformation of the organisation in accordance with international standards, while safeguarding the interests of the workers and the organisation. As 32.5% of the respondents deduced that reshaping the way employee work, interact and communicate make transformation needs to be visible. This implies that digitalisation as a single unifying factor can influenced the necessary change in the public sector organisations.

Moreover, 27.5% of the respondents argued that strategic leadership is responsible for building effective and specific (limited) goals and timetable for attainment. These services must be transformational. In addition, 25% of the respondents were of the opinion that strategic leadership should be able to do bureaucracy elimination, encouraging efficiencies and anticipating positive change. Moreover, 15% of the respondents argued that the responsibility of the strategic leadership is to enhance on the existing control measures and effective time plan for project implementation. This implies that consolidating the general direction of the state represented in the Kingdom's Vision 2030 regarding electronic transformation. The authority wielded by the strategic leader was directly proportionate to

the influence of the appointing authority. This was largely perceived as being a vision that was not home grown by the upper echelons of the institutions.
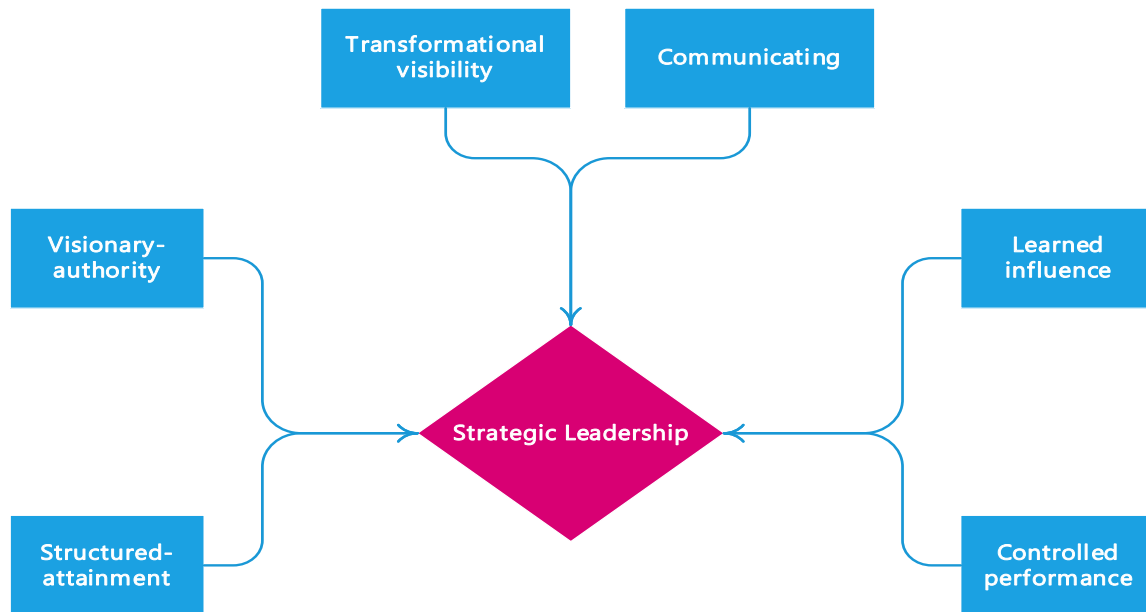
Figure 25: Conceptualising strategic leadership behaviour based on participant's information.

Detailed analysis of these themes improves the perceptions of participants regarding the form of strategic leadership that they envisage in their organisations based on their observations. These themes generate the initial consolidation of strategic leadership archetypes from this research, as alluded to in figure 14 above.

Table 26: Style of strategic leadership to drive digitalisation for quality service delivery

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Bureaucracy elimination, encouraging efficiencies anticipating positive change	10	25.0
	Building limited goals and timetable for achievement	11	27.5
	Reshaping the way employee work, interact and communicate	13	32.5
	Enhances on existing control measures and effective time plan for project implementation	6	15.0
	Total	40*	100.0

Note: * Multiple responses

The performance evaluation of each organisation has been fundamental for the upper echelons as documented by past studies; therefore, how strategic leadership has responded to control systems through the organisational structure is of great importance. Controlled performance implies the understanding of a decentralized system as well as the autonomy to lead. Respondents argued that strategic leadership transmit the organisational values and goals of the organisations to employees in a clear and simple terms so that everyone is able to do their job better. In addition, to be able to align with the continuous development of the devices and tools used. Similarly, in possession of modern applications and websites which require a national identity number. Therefore, communication of the threats and opportunities (risks), and how they are transferred to the appointing authority (ministry) remains a critical role for strategic leadership in the digitalisation project. This is what the objective was designed to achieve.

In addition, as argued by the respondents that strategic leadership must bring competencies in the functions of activities of the organisation. Because competence played a significant role in allocation of resources. Where the industrial experience and academic level of experience of the employees are considered because this had influence on their competencies as revealed by past studies. Hence, strategic leadership must be able to operationalize the digitalisation goals set by appointing authorities with a high degree of autonomy. This is line with the findings of this research as majority of the respondents (65%) affirms that strategic leadership had optimum operation with the aid of digitisation in providing effective service delivery. The research deduced that appointing authorities through the various government ministries had a significant influence on operational planning and implementation of the digitalisation policy. Hence, their best option was to freely allow strategic leaders to undertake the planning. However, the reaction from strategic leaders creates the impression that, even though they were not involved in setting organisational goals, due to fear of powerful appointing authorities, they were expected to implement them. As a result of this research shielded strategic leadership from government expectations on public value.

Moreover, this objective deduced that strategic leaders were expected to create their own controlled way to improve performance but must operate within the limit of Saudi vision 2030 as regards digitalisation. The respondents deemed that digitalisation was a planned action from the government through ministries because of a drive to ensure that services provided.

Digitalisation is the general global trend of engagement, and it is the most appropriate option, hence, strategic leadership must operate within a framework that can facilitate digitalisation process for effective public service delivery.
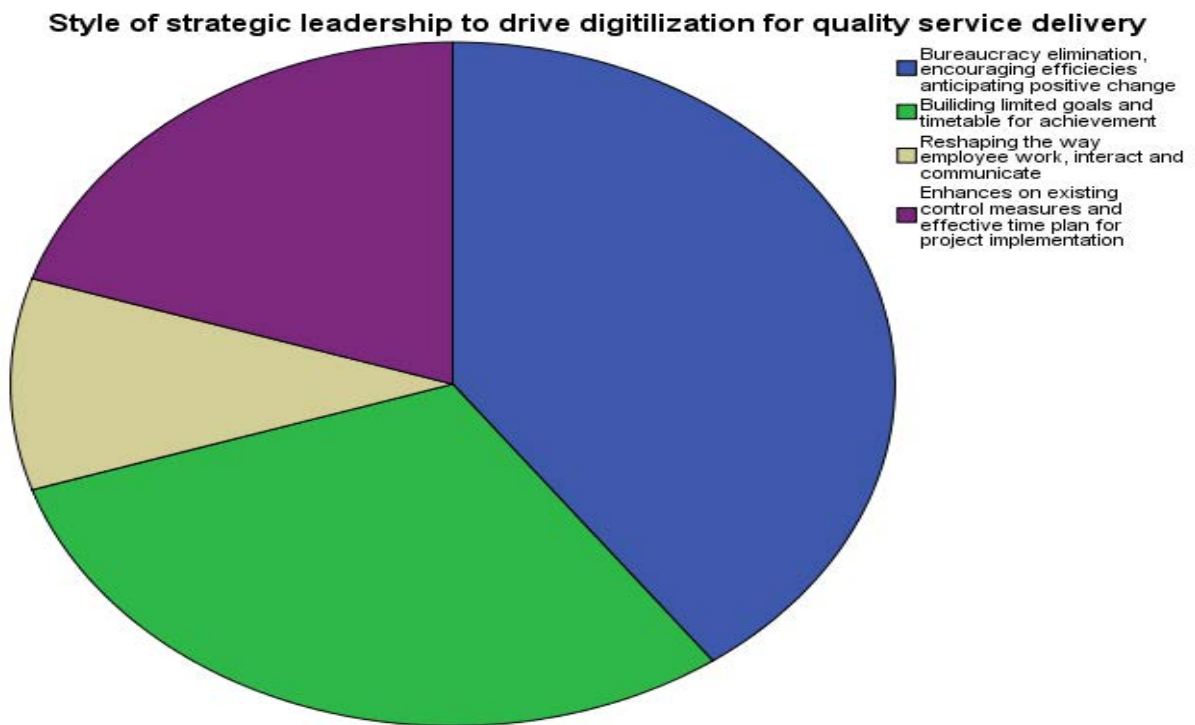
Figure 26: Style of strategic leadership to drive digitisation for quality service delivery

Table 27: Working experience on the present post * Style of strategic leadership to drive digitalisation for quality service delivery Cross tabulation

		Style of strategic leadership to drive digitalisation for quality service delivery				
		Bureaucracy elimination, encouraging efficiencies anticipating positive change	Building limited goals and timetable for achievement	Reshaping the way employee work, interact and communicate	Enhances on existing control measures and effective time plan for project implementation	Total
Working experience on the present post	5.00	3	0	0	0	3
	6.00	0	1	0	1	2
	7.00	1	1	0	1	3
	8.00	0	1	1	0	2
Total		4	3	1	2	10

Table 28: Present post * Style of strategic leadership to drive digitalisation for quality service delivery cross tabulation

	Style of strategic leadership to drive digitalisation for quality service delivery				
	Bureaucracy elimination, encouraging efficiencies anticipating positive change	Building limited goals and timetable for achievement	Reshaping the way employee work, interact and communicate	Enhances on existing control measures and effective time plan for project implementation	Total

Present post	Financial Director	1	0	0	0	1
	Development Director	0	2	0	0	2
	Information Technology Director	1	0	1	0	2
	Training Director	0	0	0	1	1
	Human Resources Director	1	1	0	0	2
	Customer Service Director	0	0	0	1	1
	Equipment Director	1	0	0	0	1
Total		4	3	1	2	10

5.3.5 To explore how digitalisation influence leadership/staff and citizens (looking at age stratification, gender) in the provision of quality public service delivery and customer's satisfaction

This objective throws its searchlight on the role institution played in driving digital tools for quality public service delivery. The result of this analysis revealed that 30% of the respondents confirmed that management takes into consideration the interpersonal relationship of employers within an organisational system. This was replicated in various government ministries and regions. The general trend of the state and the ministry, with its various facilities towards adopting digitalisation, has been that the policy significantly involves developing themselves and keeping up with the digital society. As a result, there is an upward

"improvement in the speed of delivery and getting rid of Waste and delays; and avoid secret transactions.

Table 29: Institutional process of new digital tools on service delivery

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Management evaluates organisational readiness for digitalisation thru strategic planning, align with Saudi Vision 2030	3	7.5
	Management takes into consideration the interpersonal relationship of employers	12	30.0
	Top-down communication from the appointing authority	7	17.5
	Institution organised stakeholders project leader according to their specialisation	10	25.0
	Create platform for modernisation process and leadership role	8	20.0
	Total	40*	100.0

Note: * Multiple responses
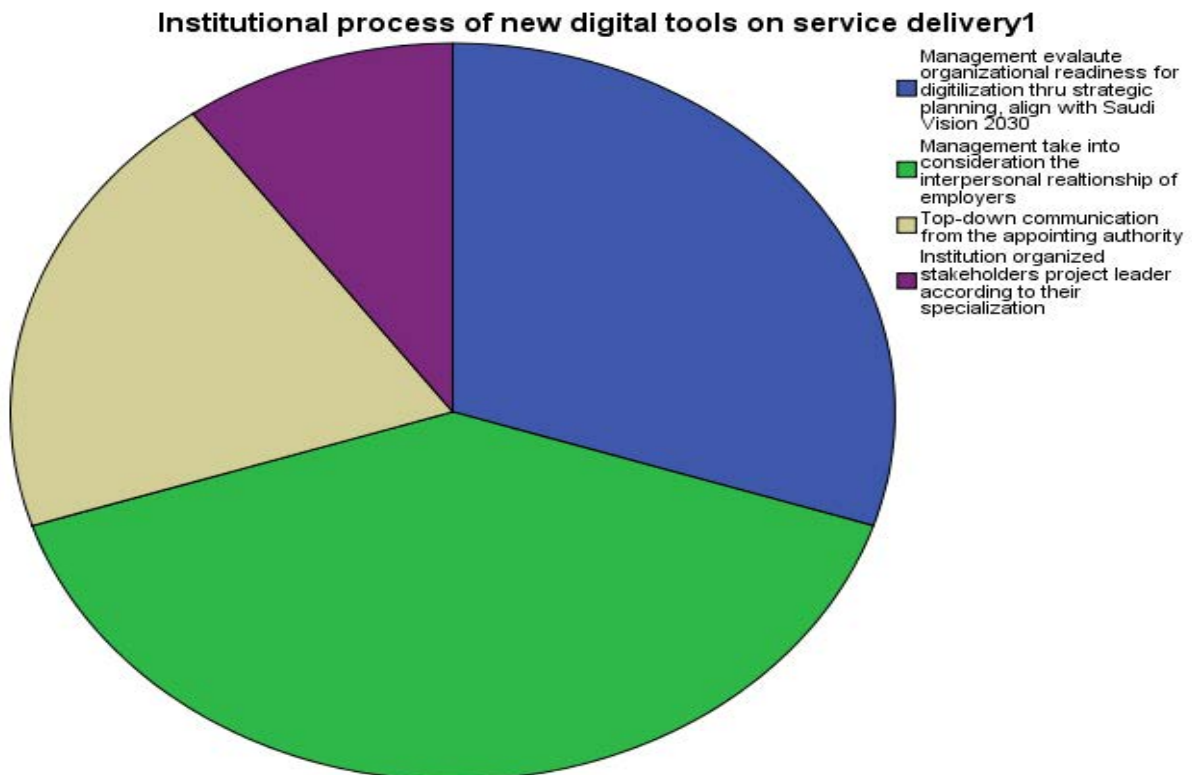
Figure 27: Institutional process of new digital tools on service delivery

The results of how digitalisation influence leadership revealed that 27.5% of the respondents believed digitalisation enhanced effective service delivery through using competencies in leadership driving by ICT. In addition, 25% of the respondents affirmed that Improve on the organisations for strategic position for service delivery is a sine qua non for effective leadership. Also, 25% of the respondents asserted digitalisation enhanced organisational structure and culture are streamlined in the leadership structure.

Table 30: Digitalisation enhanced leadership/staff for quality service delivery

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Enhanced organisations to act as a team for service delivery	9	22.5
	Improve on the organisations for strategic position for service delivery	10	25.0
	Enhanced effective service delivery thru using competence driving by ICT	11	27.5
	Enhanced organisational structure and culture	10	25.0
	Total	40*	100.0

Note: * Multiple responses

Digitilization enhanced leadership/staff for quality service delivry

- Enhanced organization to act as a team for serevice delivery
- Improve on the organization for strategic position for service delivery
- Enhnaced effective service delivery thru using competence driving by ICT
- Enhanced organizational structure and culture
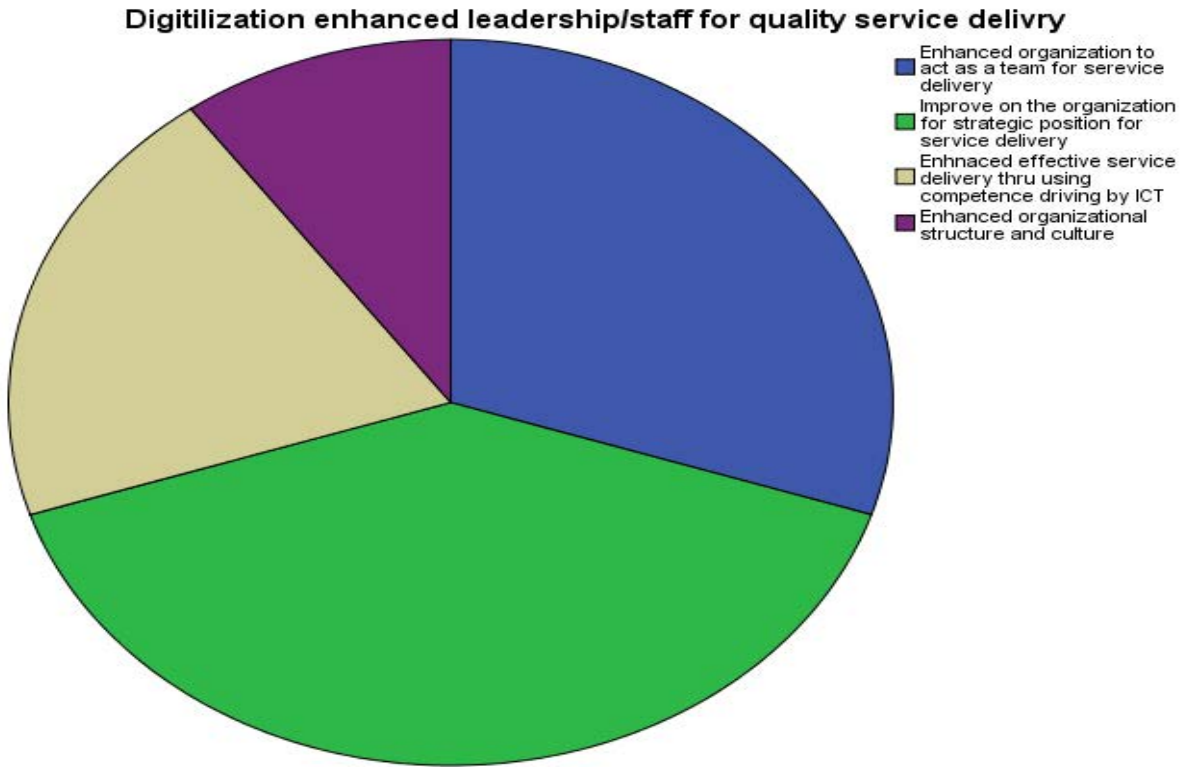
Figure 28: Digitalisation enhanced leadership/staff for quality service delivery

Institutional process of new digital tools on service delivery1 * Digitalisation enhanced leadership/staff for quality service delivery Cross tabulation.

The cross-tabulation analysis between assess to digital tools and leadership structure revealed that effective service delivery was enhanced through the use of digitalisation processes that align with Saudi Vision 2030. Also, the organisational structure is Top-down communication.

Table 31: Institutional process of new digital tools on service delivery1 * Digitalisation enhanced leadership/staff for quality service delivery cross tabulation.

	Digitalisation enhanced leadership/staff for quality service delivery				
	Enhanced organisations to act as a	Improve on the organisations	Enhanced effective service	Enhanced organisational	Total

		team for service delivery	for strategic position for service delivery	delivery thru using competence driving by ICT	structure and culture	
Institutional process of new digital tools on service delivery1	Management evaluates organisational readiness for digitalisation thru strategic planning, align with Saudi Vision 2030	0	2	1	0	3
	Management takes into consideration the interpersonal relationship of employers	2	1	1	0	4
	Top-down communication from the appointing authority	1	1	0	0	2
	Institution organised stakeholders project leader	0	0	0	1	1

	according to their specialisation				
Total		3	4	2	1	10

5.3.6 To appraise the place of Saudi Vision 2030 in boosting digitalisation, strategic leadership and addressing the challenges of gender leadership role in public service delivery.

Results from the case study interviews in this research demonstrated the phenomenon of digitalisation in practice, allowing detailed descriptions and close interpretations of strategic leadership in Saudi public institutions. This objective shed more light on the visionary authority theme that recognises the power of appointing authorities, from government to ministries to organisations, and how the goals of the appointing authorities have translated into digitalisation via Saudi Vision 2030. Vision and authority are intertwined as 90% of the respondents are in total agreement with this Saudi vision 2030. Moreover, 13.3% of the respondents stated that Saudi Vision 2030 enhanced transformational internal system through quality training to drive service delivery. Digitalisation embedded in the vision was needed to resolve the lack of suitable training and definition of the transformational system in the public sector.

Table 32: Saudi Vision 2030 to boost digitalisation, strategic leadership and overcoming challenges

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Overcoming visible risk in digitalisation processes	6	20.0
	Performance indicators thru outcomes of digital era and non-digital	9	30.0
	Planned action from government thru ministries to drive effective service delivery	6	20.0
	Institutionalise development and improvement on the work environment for quality service delivery	5	16.7

Enhanced transformational internal system through quality training to drive service delivery	4	13.3
Total	30*	100.0
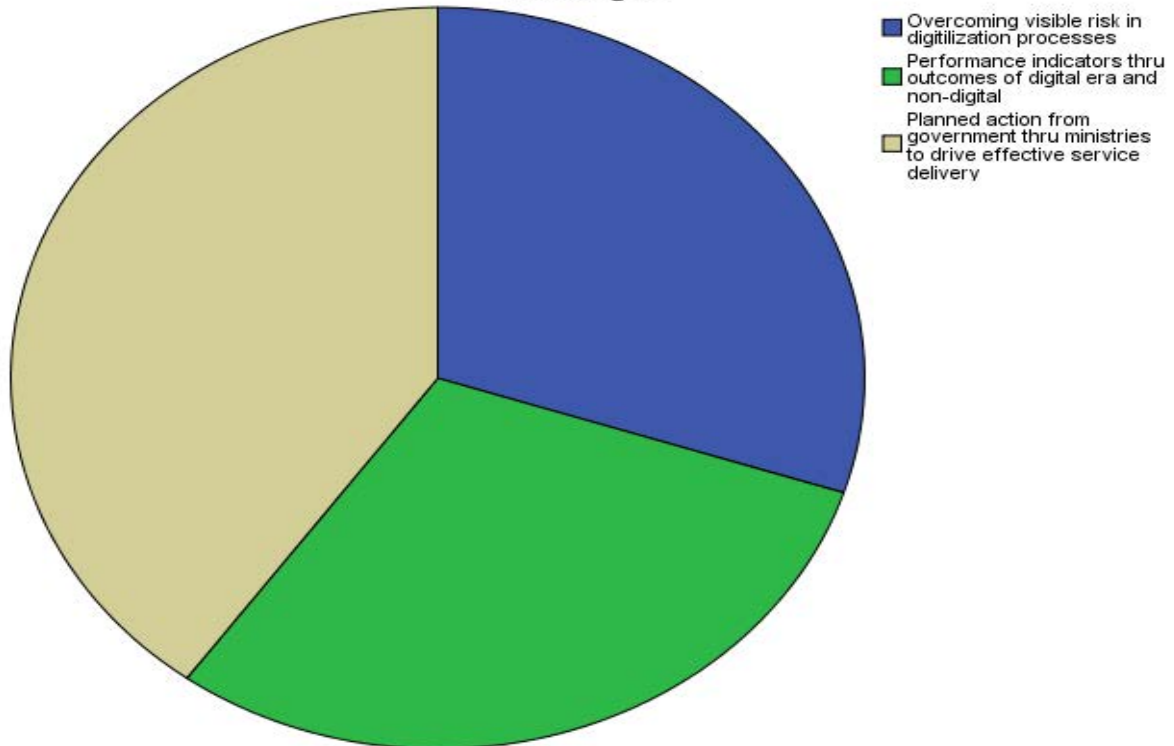
Figure 29: Saudi Vision 2030 to boost digitalisation, strategic leadership and overcoming challenges

Hence, organisation's strategic plans must be in line with government plans (Saudi vision 2030). Whether strategic leadership has achieved the vision of the organisations or not. Hence as a matter of necessity, public value, organisational transformation, internal success and external results is a matter to be ascertained by evaluating the digitalisation results. This objective examines the measures use in attainment of service delivery and yardstick (Saudi vision 2030) set by the appointing authority to operationalize organisation's processes. Majority (85%) of the respondents inferred that evaluation of readiness for digitalisation was based on the detailed examination of institutions under the following criteria: experience, performance indicators and procedures that fully align with Saudi vision 2030. Hence,

strategic leadership need to institute measures that would activate full compliance to digitalisation under the watch of Saudi vision 2030.

Major challenge as identified by the respondents that are threats to the full adoption digitalisation processes are, incessant government's interference in the affairs of public value and service delivery. Also, the financial constraints of the organisations to fund information technology systems and tools, and the realisation of critical goals set out by the appointing authorities are some of the challenges respondents pointed out.

5.4 Multiple Regression Model

Multiple regression model analysis was used to measure the cause and effect of how strategic leaders motivated by digitalisation through an institution drive public service delivery. The use of this model analysis is to examine factors influencing quality public service delivery through an institution by strategic leaders driven by the usage of digital tools. The question this research is interested is; the application of digital tools by strategic leaders enhanced public service delivery? What are the factors driven this motivation? These are questioning this research want to achieve by using multiple regression analysis.

To examine factors influencing strategic leaders motivated by digitalisation through an institution to drive public service delivery will be regressed against selected variables. Hence, multiple regression model was used to examine this relationship and it is expressed as

$Y = b_0 + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + \ldots + b_{10}X_{10} + \mu$

Where   Y   =   Public service delivery through an institution by strategic leaders driven by digitalisation

b0   =   Constant

X   =   Coefficients

$X_1 - X_{10}$ =   Independent variables.

U   =   Error term assumed to have normal distribution with zero mean, and

constant variance i.e $U \sim N(0\ \sigma_2)$ and $E(U_i, U_j) = 0_{ij}$.

The following variables are hypothesised as having substantial influence on strategic leaders motivated by digitalisation using an institution to drive public service delivery.

The variables are

X1= Saudi Vision 2030 to boost digitalisation,

X2 = strategic leadership and overcoming challenges 4 reg,

X3 = Digitalisation process through reg,

X4= Driver associated with digitalisation that influences service delivery reg,

X5 = Style of strategic leadership to drive digitalisation for quality service delivery4 reg,

X6 = Pre-digitalisation processes reg,

X7 = Driver of operational elements of digitalisation in Leadership reg,

X8 = Working experience on the present post,

X9 = Digitalisation enhanced leadership/staff for quality service delivery reg,

 X10 = Appropriate department that drive the implementation of digitalisation reg

The choice of these variables was based on economic theory and suggestions of previous/similar studies. The ordinary least square (OLS) technique was used to assess the model.

5.5 Assumption for the use of multiple regression for this research

1. There is a direct relationship between the dependent and independent variables. Multiple regression can handle all sorts of relationships.

2. The independent variables do not need to be multivariate normal – although multivariate normality yields a more constant solution. Also, the error terms (the residuals) do not need to be multivariate normally distributed.

3. Homoscedasticity is not needed.

4. It can handle ordinal and nominal data as independent variables. The independent variables do not need to be metric (interval or ratio scaled).

Overall, the multiple regression model successfully predicts the possibility of the strategic leaders motivated by digitalisation through an institution to drive public service delivery. More so, results from the diagnostic statistics indicated robustness of the function of the model. In the estimated model the indicator of good measurement is R^2 which is the multiple determination of the model and it ranges between 0 and 1, where 1 is complete/total

prediction and towards 0 otherwise. The result of this model analysis indicated R2 = 0.645, Adjusted R2 = 0.601 and DW (Durbin Watson) = 2.13. Durbin Watson is an indicator of multi-collinearity in the independence variables. This indicate whether one independent variable explains one another. The result of this research DW indicator of 2.13 revealed no multi-collinearity between the independent variables. Hence, the model exhibits a good fit for the equation. The multiple determination of the model result of 0.645 means that selected independence variables explain the dependent variable by 65% of the dependent variables, while 35% remains unexplained. This indicate that there some independent variables left out to be included in the equation. This is future research to examine factors responsible for these unexplained variables.

Based on the estimated results, 6 variables out of 10 were found to have significantly influenced how strategic leaders motivated by digitalisation through an institution to drive public service delivery. However, 4 independent variables were found to be substantial and have positive influence on the dependent variable. They are variables X3, (Digitalisation process through) X4 (Driver associated with digitalisation that influences service delivery), X7 (Driver of operational elements of digitalisation in Leadership), and X5 (Style of strategic leadership to drive digitalisation for quality service delivery). Other 2 variables that is significant but with little influence on the dependent variable are X1 (Saudi Vision 2030 to boost digitalisation) and X9 (Digitalisation enhanced leadership/staff for quality service delivery). The insignificant variables are X2 (strategic leadership and overcoming challenges), X8 (Working experience on the present post), X6 (Pre-digitalisation processes) and X10 (Appropriate department that drive the implementation of digitalisation).

Moreover, the 4 independent variables significantly contributed to dependent variable and also, predicted the valued marginal effects to dependent variable expressed as follows: a unit increase in the digitalisation process through would influence public service delivery by 0.349. Similarly, a unit increase in the Driver associated with digitalisation, Driver of operational elements of digitalisation in Leadership and Style of strategic leadership to drive digitalisation for quality service delivery would influence public service delivery by 0.307, 0.256 and 0.234 respectively.

Table 33: Multiple regression model results

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1 (Constant)	1.153	.436		2.644	.067
Working experience on the present post	-.005	.045	-.086	.111	.040
Digitalisation process through reg	.349	. 0.04	.658	8.725	.002
Appropriate department that drives the implementation of digitalisation reg	-.389	.065	-.433	1.282	.042
Pre-digitalisation processes reg	-.138	.150	-.230	.920	.130
Driver of operational elements of digitalisation in Leadership reg	.256	.054	-.279	4.741	.002
Driver associated with digitalisation that influences service delivery reg	.307	.061	-.307	5.031	.030

Style of strategic leadership to drive digitalisation for quality service delivery4 reg	.234	.050		.278	4.682	.006
Digitalisation enhanced leadership/staff for quality service delivery reg	1.223	.695		-.887	1.761	.042
Saudi Vision 2030 to boost digitalisation, strategic leadership and overcoming challenges4 reg	.652	.035		.387	1.863	.390

a. Dependent Variable: Public service delivery through an institution by strategic leaders driven by digitalisation

5.5 Key findings and implications

This research reports on the premise of strategic leadership based on the experiences of the research participants (respondents). It also examines the strategic leadership archetype of the public sector in Saudi Arabia and compares it with the theoretical underpinnings of strategic leadership for public value. Evidence of this strategic leadership experience was based using the Saudi public sector. Proofs were based on the primary data from the ten participants from two ministries that had undertaken digitalisation since 2011. Additionally, the primary data on strategic decisions before digitalisation has been compared to the current decisions during the implementation of Saudi Vision 2030. These case study interviews in this research demonstrated the phenomenon of digitalisation in practice, allowing detailed descriptions and close interpretations of strategic leadership in Saudi public institutions.

All respondents in the research are all males. Male individuals hold most strategic leadership positions in the Saudi public sector. Considering that the researcher is male and cannot access female leaders due to cultural restrictions, it was impossible to identify an organisation with female leaders. In addition, female leaders worked in different locations inaccessible to male counterparts. The researcher set the age between 45 and 55 years old because this was the

most common age category for leadership in public sector organisations. The results revealed that 60% of the respondents are above 50. All respondents were in a position of directorship with different functions. Table indicated that Development director, Information Technology director and human resources director had 20% of the population sampled. Working experience of the respondents in their present post of directorship ranges between 5-8 years. The mean years of working experience is 6.4 with a standard deviation of 1.17. Mean of size of the departmental size where the respondents are working is 27.50 with a standard deviation of 4.84. The departmental size 25 and 30 are in the modal class. The cross tabulation analysis between present post and working experience on the present post indicated that years of working experience influence the present post.

A systematic review of the extant literature on digitalisation, strategic change and strategic leadership on public service delivery. Results revealed that Internal mechanism and Control system and Authority structures (Saudi Vision 2030) were the most significant indicators influencing strategic change and strategic leadership on public service delivery. Moreover, appropriate department that drive digitalisation implementation were also examined. The results revealed that national transformation department are most appropriate (46.7%). In addition, these departments have been positioned to handle risk management and financial plan of the organisation. To get a full benefit of digitalisation, the strategic managers must ensure that goals, vision are rationalised in line with the dictates of Saudi vision 2030.

The operational activities pre-digitalisation and its effect on public service delivery was examined and the result revealed that 33.3% of the respondents expressed that there is no significant impact on public service delivery even with digitalisation. Moreover, there is the existence of the traditional methods of doing business which was dependent on manual work for the most part. The research argued by the digitalisation awareness is gathering a momentum among the people within the organisations. However, the more traditional the strategic leadership approach, the more it is concerned with government directives. The research observed that more classic leaders that have extensive experience should be incorporated into the position of strategic leadership. Respondents deduced that challenges with the initial pre-digitalisation process have led to the drive for modernisation. However, the research deduced that strategic leadership had to be seen to institute measures that could implement government programmes and if not operationalise, such institution can jeopardize public value. The research found out that strategic leader must evaluates the

contextual, situational, and organisational factors to enhanced public service delivery. This research finding is in line with the study of Tutar et al., (2011) that argued organisational need to enhance the desired goal of digitalisation, without missing the goals set by appointing authorities at government ministries.

In addition, resolute strategic leadership archetype starts from many strands to the creation of the digitalisation policy, especially the clear implementation strategy. This is because it relies on a top-down vision cascading from the government to the upper echelons despite the inherent bureaucratic structure that promotes inefficiency due to the high-power distance and uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 2001). Therefore, the discussion established that the negotiator strategic leadership in Saudi public institutions facilitates navigation to the ultimate goals (Daskal, 2017) by being adaptive and promoting capabilities of adapting to contextual environments (Jefferies, 2017), while undertaking reflective practices that help to change the leader or the organisations (Dixon et al., 2015; Hofmann and Ogonek, 2018). To be absorptive, strategic leadership embed learning within the organisational systems at every level (Mustafa et al., 2019).

The assessment of the driver of tactical and operational elements of digitalisation in leadership and how its enhanced quality public service delivery indicated that 27.5% of the respondents stated that the strategic of organisational structure, goals, transparency, and culture must be imbibe for strategic activation in the organisation. In addition, the strategic contribution to digitalisation depends on the level of alignment with Saudi Vision 2030 as indicated by 20% of the respondents. Also, for effective strategic allocation of resource both human and natural must be appropriately placed to achieve desired results as indicated by 20% of the respondents. In addition, the strategic elements digitalisation must enable innovation that is faster to achieve the desired results and march towards success. Hence, 75% of the respondents suggested that strategic leadership are responsible to channel who to lead the people. The research adopts the framework of digitalisation and operational capability of the organisation to captures how employees are adapting to the skills of existing workers. The design of the digitalisation protocol becomes unique to each organisation and the services it offers. However, the strategic leadership in the upper levels of public organisations are appointed by government ministers to undertake government programme such as the implementation of the national Vision 2030. Moreover, the visibility of

government programmer to the public at the organisational level are value and are attached to government programme.

Thus, it concluded that each institution has a leadership archetype that they deploy to implement digitalisation. Therefore, the conceptual perspective of strategic leadership varies. The authentic strategic leadership archetype is not rigid, but flexible to accommodate vision, authority, communication, visible transformation, learning, influence, performance, and digitalisation development in a structured manner. A flexible strategic archetype balances public value, operational capability, and interests of the appointing authority. This balance of the strategic leadership archetype forms the crux of the argument for which the research contributes to knowledge and practice in public institutions aiming for transformation. Therefore, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia created the Vision 2030 policy to systematise public service delivery (Saudi-Arabia, 2017; Saudi-Vision-2030, 2020). From this theme, participants argued, leaders at the upper echelons had no clear vision for digitalisation; they did not own the vision because they did not anticipate its demand for improvement of public services (Sidani, 2019). This implies that leadership at the upper echelons of the public institutions did not fully apply the necessary elements of the strategic leadership theory because they did not own the vision or the broader goals of the digitalisation. They were only created out of fear of the repercussions or consequences of failure in public value. In addition, strategic leadership were afraid of the government appointing authorities because by tradition, with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia having a high-power distance at the institutional level.

Conceptualised strategic leadership in public institutions were used to drive public organisations in maintaining balance and improve operational capabilities of the organisations as they serve and create public value. Strategic leader should also examine the situational or contextual factors of the organisations and be adaptable as well as being absorptive (DeChurch et al. 2010; Mahoney and Cogliser, 2010). Moreover, 27.5% of the respondents reported that digitalisation influences the culture of work, managing people and complexity of the Heads of departments. In addition, operative strategic leadership influence the public value. Respondents indicated that operationalise of digitalisation within the context of motivation empower the workers through planning, resourcing and other means to assured of basic operational capability that enhances public service delivery. Mechanism for measuring the impact of digitalisation needed to be seen from a holistic perspective, especially from the position from which global organisations operate. Therefore, with

digitalisation, the operation must be linked to technological progress and the transformation of organisations must be streamlined into globally acceptable level. Therefore, one of the main impacts of digitalisation has been the prompt public service delivery and effective communication among the people within an organisation. For public institutions in Saudi Arabia, it is critical to integrate into the strategic leadership theory with public value theory in order to examine the context of digitalisation. On the one hand, the leadership occupying the upper echelons need to create the vision for their organisations within the boundaries set by government ministries. While the upper echelons are mandated to ensure that their organisations can provide a valuable service to the citizenry and the general public, hence the need to balance organisational needs with public value (Weinberg and Lewis, 2009). By so doing, they create an organisational culture, beliefs, values and systems designed to achieve the goal (or strategy) (Elmholdt et al., 2016).
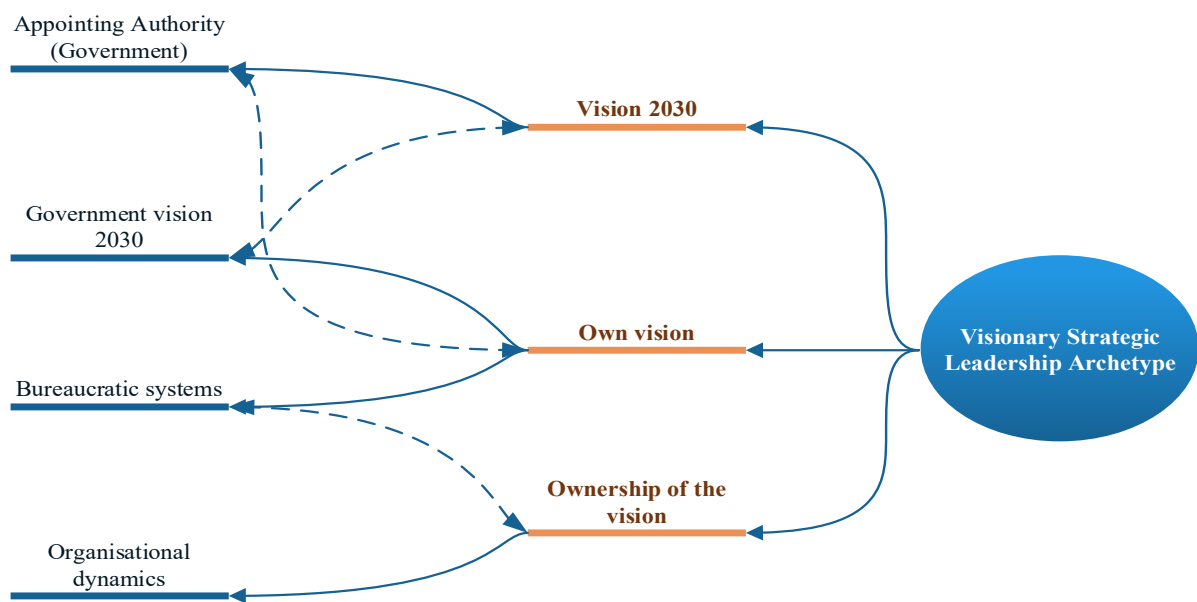
Figure 30: Mapping of the themes and practices leading to visionary strategic leadership archetype

In addition, the responsibility of the strategic leadership is to allocate workers and other resources for optimum public service delivery. Moreover, 25% of the respondents argued that strategic leadership must be an experienced leader and must demonstrated a significant level of competence on the knowledge of the digitalisation process. In this line of thought, 17.5% of the respondents indicated that allocation of resources is based on the specializations and

competencies. While 15% of the respondents recognises the significant of education and experience on competencies. These factors are significant drivers in the digitalisation process. Moreover, the allocation of resources for the digitalisation process is based on taking over the resource allocation process, so that leaders can take care of the interests of the numerous interlinked departments. All these are within the purview of the strategic leadership. Significant number of the respondents (27.5%) stated that digitalisation influences the culture of work, managing people and complexity. Cross tabulation analysis between the strategic and operational elements of digitalisation indicated that fulfilling and complying with Saudi Vision 2030.

Challenges with paperwork has led the drive for modernisation to enhance service delivery. Desire to change the structure of the work process and develop a digital mind-set, to reduce mistakes and speed-up work outputs, as well as to achieve high quality work influenced the acceptability of digitalisation. Technologies are a critical tool for controlling digitalisation and sincerity to develop. Organisations cultures are responsive to digitalisation and are better prepared for achieving desired goals of service delivery with high efficiency. There exists the effective communication between the management and employees. Digitalisation offers an opportunity for a major change in people's lifestyle where they can access most information online without the need to travel, making it useful for government organisations to adopt an effective method of communication. Hence digitalisation enhanced effective communication. The role of digitalisation was set to "improve efficiency, reduce spending, and execute new services quickly and flexibly.

Taxonomy of archetypes of strategic leadership in public institutions helped to shape the data analysis and discussion in the realisation of this objective. Strategic leadership drive the application of transformational leadership. Strategic leadership needs to be visible and must be operationalised in transforming the organisations in accordance with international standards, while safeguarding the interests of the workers and the organisation. Digitalisation as a single unifying factor can influenced the necessary change in the public sector organisations. Strategic leadership is responsible for building effective and specific (limited) goals and timetable for achievement. These services are transformational. The responsibility of the strategic leadership is to enhance on the existing control measures and effective time plan for project implementation. This implies that consolidating the general direction of the state represented in the Kingdom's Vision 2030 regarding electronic transformation.

Communicating of the threats and opportunities (risks), and how they are transferred to the appointing authority (ministry) remains a critical role for strategic leadership in the digitalisation project. Strategic leadership must bring competencies in the functions of activities of the organisation. Also, strategic leadership must be able to operationalise the digitalisation goals set by appointing authorities with a high degree of autonomy. Strategic leaders were expected to create their own controlled way to improve performance but must operate within the limit of Saudi vision 2030 as regards digitalisation.

The overarching themes for the strategic leadership archetype in Saudi Arabia show that public institutions have lacked proactive steps to institute values, beliefs and behavioural norms that strive for organisational change that can conform to strategic leadership theory (Secka, 2017). Strategic leaders do not embed the visionary leadership archetype; hence, they cannot communicate a vision through words or actions because of the public sector's inherent bureaucratic, structural characteristics (Jacobsen, 2013, Van der Voet et al., 2014). Strategic leaders in public institutions did not initiate the digitalisation projects, nor did they anticipate government policy; however, they felt the need for efficiency in service delivery. While the dynamism in regional affairs made the Saudi government act by way of Vision 2030, strategic leaders were focused on operational events because they are afraid of the appointing authorities. The national culture is such that the power distance is very high (Hofstede 1980; 2001). Strategic leadership positions are figurative; they are not free to work outside the bureaucratic norms created by government ministries. The fear of appointing authorities is not a Saudi Arabian problem alone but an issue in the Middle East and North African (MENA) as a region (Almutairi et al., 2020; Alves et al., 2006).

Management takes into consideration the interpersonal relationship of employers within an organisational system. The general trend of the state and the ministry, with its various facilities towards adopting digitalisation, has been that the policy significantly involves developing themselves and keeping up with the digital society. As a result, there is an upward "improvement in the speed of delivery and getting rid of Waste and delays; and avoid secret transactions. The researched revealed that digitalisation enhanced effective service delivery through using competencies in leadership driving by ICT. Access to digital tools and leadership structure enhanced effective service delivery. Saudi Vision 2030 enhanced the transformational internal system through quality training to drive service delivery. Digitalisation embedded in the vision was needed to resolve the lack of sufficient training and

definition of the transformational system in the public sector. Evaluation of readiness for digitalisation was based on the detailed examination of institutions under the following criteria: experience, performance indicators and procedures that fully align with Saudi vision 2030. Hence, strategic leadership need to institute measures that would activate full compliance to digitalisation under the watch of Saudi vision 2030.

Even though Vision 2030 activated digitalisation, a review of literature by this research found out that government ministries had the upper hand over strategic leadership. This is because there is a very high-power distance between appointing authorities and strategic leaders (Hofstede, 2001). In turn, strategic leaders have not created an organisational vision (Boal and Hooijberg, 2001) within the existing contextual environment (Tutar et al., 2011). In other words, strategic leadership could not create a visionary connection between their organisations and the government's vision for digitalising the Saudi public sector, and the vision as this research found out. Moreover, in course of literature reviewed, the research discovered out that there is no evidence of an independent strategic leadership vision and/or an initiative resonating with the needs for digitalisation in the public sector. Independent actions at the strategic leadership level in the public sector are stifled by fear (Maccoby et al., 2004; Moxley, 2001). Hence, the research deduced that strategic leadership is only in "position" and "name", not in action, because they were merely reacting to the perceptibly poor service delivery to citizens. This implies that poor public value was noticeable in government ministries; hence, the appointing authorities were driving the vision for digitalisation cascading it from Vision 2030 to be seen as socially compliant with people's needs (Darendeli et al., 2020).

Literature argued that Saudi culture translates into challenges in setting organisational goals. For instance, the Hofstede (2001) score for uncertainty avoidance in Saudi Arabia is high, meaning that leaders in the upper echelons are highly likely to avoid uncertainty while hiding in the bureaucratic structures of their institutions. This factor translates into fear of creating strategies without the approval of appointing authorities.
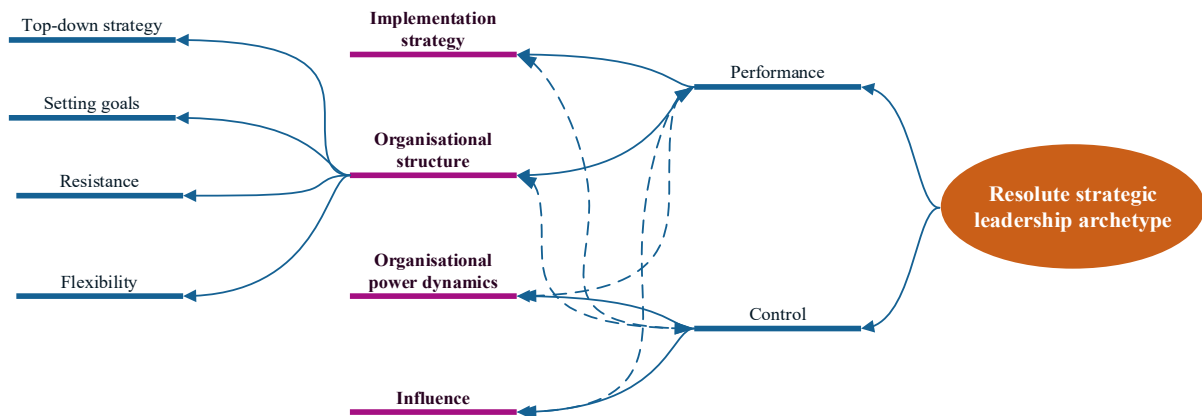
Figure 31: Mapping of the themes and practices leading to resolute strategic leadership archetype

According to Maccoby et al. (2004), fear cannot motivate people to work as efficiently as possible; it creates inherent resistance (the fourth mapped factor – see Figure 31. Moreover, if they are tasked to improve their working environment, fear cripples their performance, resulting in adverse outcomes (Moxley, 2001). This is evidenced by the responses on the anticipation for digitalisation of public institutions. For the resolute strategic leader, operationalising the digitalisation vision is towered on controlled performance (section 2.8), starting with the realisation that digitalisation is important to efficient delivery of public services (Alvesson, 2009; Jacobsen, 2013; Morse et al., 2007). Digitalisation offers an opportunity for a significant change in people's lifestyle through improved procedures in the organisations that were routinely done manually in the department using incoming and outgoing paper-based documents. Major challenge as identified by the respondents that are threats to the full adoption digitalisation processes are, incessant government's interference in the affairs public value and service delivery. In addition, the financial constraints of the organisations to fund information technology systems and tools, and the realisation of critical goals set out by the appointing authorities are some of the challenges respondents pointed out.

Based on the appraised results, 6 variables out of 10 were found to have significantly influenced how strategic leaders are motivated by digitalisation through an institution to drive public service delivery. These are Digitalisation process; Driver associated with digitalisation processes, Driver of operational elements of Leadership, and Style of strategic leadership to drive digitalisation for quality service delivery. These variables are found to be

significantly contributed to dependent variable of public service delivery and, predicted the valued marginal effects to dependent variable expressed as follows: a unit increase in the digitalisation process through would influence public service delivery by 0.349. Similarly, a unit increase in the Driver associated with digitalisation that influences service delivery, Driver of operational elements of digitalisation in Leadership and Style of strategic leadership to drive digitalisation for quality service delivery would influence public service delivery by 0.307, 0.256 and .234 respectively.

5.7 Discussion of the key findings of the research

The research indicated that transformational strategic leadership needs to be discernible through goals. How it is operationalised and transforming the organisation in accordance with international standards, while safeguarding the interests of the worker and the organisation. Hence, there is a demand for strategic leadership to communicate the digitalisation project, which is strongly linked to the source of the vision. Majority of the respondents argued that leadership must control, and construe own the vision, communicating the visionary action points in a clear and simple terms that would enhance effective communication in accordance with government instructions.

The research deduced the significant role strategic leadership play in the elimination of bureaucratic organisational dispensation thus designing strategic that enhance flexibility, adaptability, learning and training. This outcome of the research is in line with Hofstede (2001) theory which states that leaders' performance at any level reflects societal, cultural, and behavioural norms. This theory helped to understand the flex around the Saudi society which is predominantly masculine, where competition for success and achievement is very high within the male dominated region. Besides, Saudi society has a particularly high national culture of fear of uncertainty and risk-taking; hence, they avoid uncertainty (ibid). The patterns of themes and practices as documented from the evidence gathered from the respondents revealed that organisational culture, leadership influence and power dynamics, and the perception of risks associated with digitalisation implementation in Saudi Arabia. This finding is line with figure which mapped out the strategic leadership archetype.
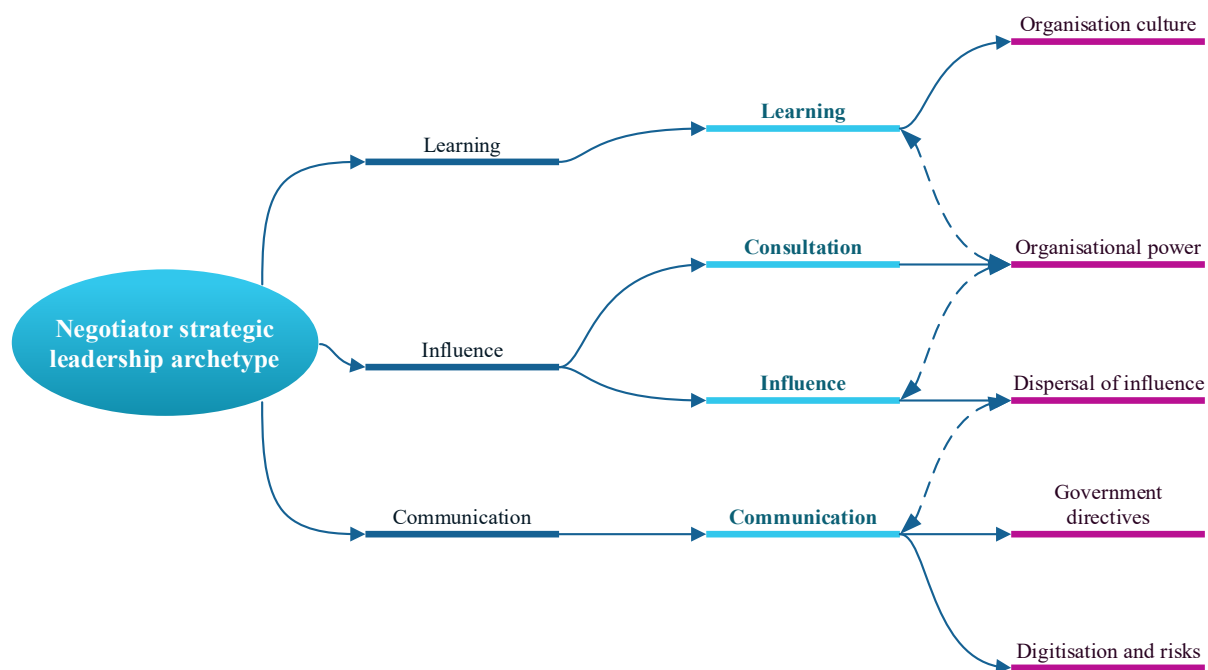
Figure 32: Mapping of the themes and practices leading to the negotiator strategic leadership archetype

The research deduced that communication was another critical factor for consideration by the negotiator strategic leader because digitalisation introduces many changes in roles and responsibilities held by individuals, while introducing new faces in every department. Many old faces have moved to different positions; however, employees have had little time to socialize, as they have had produce tangible results quickly. Even for employees who remained in the same department, life changed significantly, and they could no longer socialise with their colleagues, affecting leadership influence through communication (Figure 32). Evidence from the respondent's opinion indicated that strategic leadership comprehend the impact on interpersonal skills shaped by aligning with digitalisation and effective communication embedded in digitalisation process. Hence, there is the need by strategic leadership to build a strong organisational system that would promote an organisational identity and culture of interrelatedness. In line of this argument the strategic leadership can create a learning process that accommodates digitalisation also strategic leadership's response to control systems through the organisational structure is pivotal. Another factor is controlled performance which implies the understanding of a decentralised system as well as

the autonomy to lead. Hence, the research deduced that strategic leader archetype emanates from the realisation of the highest force actualising the goals of digitalisation. However, the information shows that this force does not emanate from the upper echelons; rather, it is harnessed from the government's vision, through various arms of government.

Moreover, the research results are in line with the theory of strategic-fit theory which centre around the visibility of the transformation to the government and to the end user. This is built from a myriad of threads, such as public value, fear of failure and the technology used for the Saudi digitalisation project (see Figure 33).
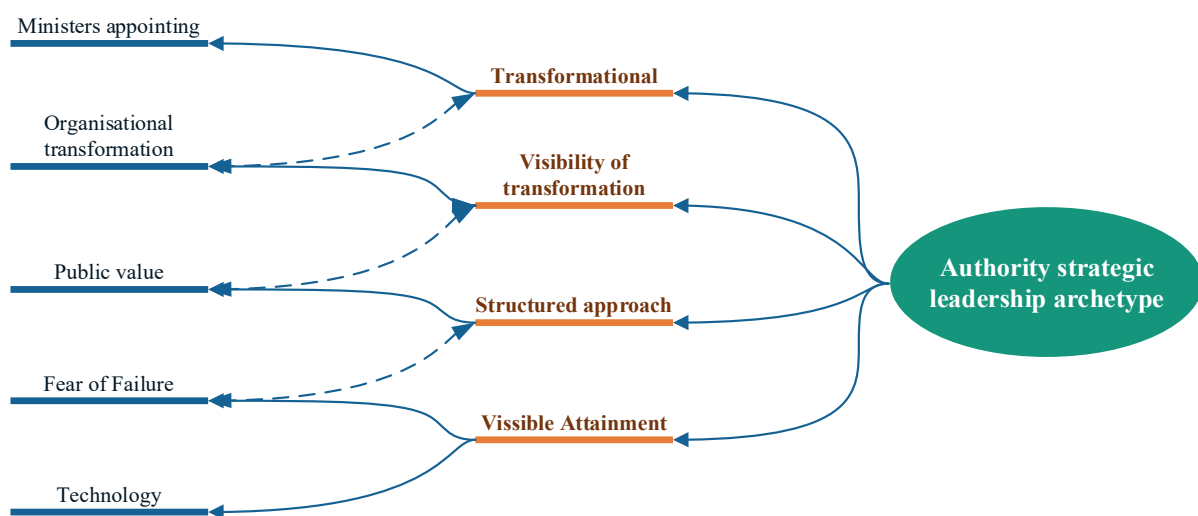
Figure 33: Mapping of the themes and practices leading to authority strategic leadership archetype

The patterns of response on the authority strategic leadership archetype emanate from the narrative that the speed with which public organisations respond to local and regional demonstrations about general governance has become a function of strategic leadership relevance society as documented by Abdelzaher et al., (2017) and Darendeli et al., (2020).

The overall themes and practice of the authority strategic leadership archetype indicate the importance of public value to the people of Saudi Arabia via their government. Public value, in theory, argues that a government institution's public value aims to address the positive impact on the individual and collective lives of the citizens it serves, meaning that public institutions need to focus on public services (Weinberg and Lewis, 2009). Findings from this

research is line with the SWOT Analysis Theory which requires a balanced approach to managing the operational capability of the organisation and evaluating the resources from the appointing authority while fulfilling the needs of the public by creating goals, visions, outcomes, a range of activities and the like and taking care of the risks and anticipating weakness.

The research also deduced that leadership style focused more on the operational activities than strategic matters. Results from this research indicated that operational perspective had a strong top-down influence from appointing authorities than the strategic issues. Public value relates to the Saudi culture, which is group-oriented and believes in maintaining close relationships between people (Hofstede, 2001; 2017). Literature reviewed that public sector organisations in Saudi Arabia view technology as an option (Al-Otaibi and Al-Zahrani, 2004); however, such perceptions have been changing due to the digitalisation drive. Therefore, implementing the cultural shift elements of the digitalisation process is the responsibility of the strategic leadership in the upper echelons of organisations.

Evidence from this research revealed that there are three significant positive outcomes from digitalisation: (i) The organisation had discussions with these employees face to face. In this regard, the director must make sure to listen to them during the more than he talks. This was a massive achievement considering that the cultural distance between leaders with power and workers on the shop floor has traditionally been vast in Saudi Arabia. (ii) Digitalisation has enabled leaders to learn how to make employees more interested and enthusiastic about their work. In this context, employees were given additional time to work on the items they were most interested in and, wherever appropriate, to create an environment conducive to cooperation and team spirit. (iii) There was an opportunity to arrange bilateral meetings regularly to assess the success of the new strategy used to encourage employees and increase their enthusiasm for working. The process also allowed leaders to create an alternative plan for employees who may not have been able to work with the new approach, creating a flexible working environment that could accommodate every worker. All these features enhanced strategic leadership to fulfil the goals and objectives of the organisations of providing quality public service delivery.

The integration of public value theory (PVT) evaluates how the implementation of the digital organisations requires strategic leaders to create an environment where teams can thrive in order to fulfil the organisations goals. This means that, in theory, organisational strategic

leaders should have a vision that establishes teams that would eventually promote the desired change management within their teams to meet public desires of quality service delivery (Nograšek, 2011). The overall perception from the respondents indicates that leaders organised training for digitalisation. This was, in a way, the most visible manifestation of teams. There was a realisation that an open communication policy using modern technologies between individuals and decision-makers was necessary.

Evidence from the research findings indicated that strategic leadership relied on the then-existing control measures by developing measures like those used before digitalisation and following up the performance measurement systems as planned. The processes-controlled digitalisation by citing four major areas as follows:

> **(5)** The practise of technologies was seen as a critical tool for controlling digitalisation; therefore, control was embedded using a system of devices, operating systems, storage media and software that operate within technical environments and information centers that allowed the use of all assets with ceaseless operational efficiency. Professional teams were responsible for handling the technical system and network infrastructure, whether local or cloud.

(ii) Data: Carrying out regular and effective data management and analysis to provide unswerving and complete quality information and procedures while providing and developing suitable tools for statistical analysis, data search and future prediction. The data was also continuously monitored to ensure its continued flow and operation aligned with the organisation's goals and expectations.

(iii) Human Resources: It was necessary to provide experienced cadres capable of using data and analysing them to make effective decisions. It also required planning the vision and implementing it, based on human proficiencies and scientific and practical experiences, with a great belief in them for change and development.

(iv) Operations management: A group of activities or tasks arranged and interrelated that produce a specific service or a specific product for the beneficiaries. It was found that the organisations must establish an effective technical building that allows the expansion of operations internally and externally to ensure the optimal application of digitalisation. This includes internal and external alignment in operational accomplishments, with oversight of their execution; which is one of the keys to the organisation's inputs and outputs.

The findings from this research revealed that the goal closely associated to providing a digital environment that helps to activate electronic administration by promoting society from its traditional image to an information society, without compromising societal values and traditions, which constitutes a clear contest to the authorities. The vision, therefore, has been to reach a point where each sector could achieve the mainstreaming of e-governance at all levels therein. Therefore, the impact of digitalisation had both good and bad effects. It was bad because many of them started working using new teams. This meant that workers lost the original teams that they had been acquainted with. Sometimes this meant difficulty in getting help too. It was good in that people are more result-oriented and focused now. This finding is line with the study of Alvesson and Sveninggsson (2008). Dunleavy and Carrera (2013) argued that the impact of structural culture on strategic leadership is critical for the overview of archetypes. For a country like Saudi Arabia with cultural diversity, it was vital to examine the power dynamics in organisations.

Finding from this research deduced that digitalisation has led to attaining satisfaction and sustaining the stability of the work environment by facilitating the lives of employees and reducing the time spent investigating problems related to information technology or requirements, thus reducing frustration, and refining productivity and efficiency. In addition, it has led to the establishment of a collaborative culture in organisations. Such cooperation should lead to building a strong internal system and a dependable internal culture, creating a strong social network and strong internal and external connections. Digitalisation has resulted in flexibility for employees to complete tasks and collaborate remotely. The workplace has evolved beyond the office to become almost everywhere from which the employee can reach and communicate with his work/team through his internet connection. This theoretically unlimited space is one of the most important advantages of digital work platforms.

The research suggests as a result from the evidence presented in this research that the strategic leadership archetype that can deliver digitalisation in the Saudi public sector in meeting quality service delivery if the leaders are allowed to make a choice to integrate the national vision and the aspirations of their organisations. Also, in the realisation of the fulfilment of the benefits of digitalisation and the implementation, strategic leadership should follow a cross-functional framework as documented by works of Hofstede, (2001); Weinberg and Lewis, (2009); DeChurch et al., (2010). Furthermore, the integration of strategic leadership can superimpose (assert) itself on the critical awareness of cultural indicators of

the organisational environment and those of Saudi Arabia at large. The framework considers four critical leadership issues represented in Figure 25, starting with (the) strategic leadership archetype (section 3.15), public value, operational capability and appointing authorities (captured as vertical factors). In addition, the framework includes operational swim-lines (captured as horizontal factors), representing the national vision, organisational leadership (upper echelons) and end-user groups, as well as organisations. Implementing the digitalisation process in Saudi public institutions is attainable if there is the systematic integration of the cross-sectional factors articulated in the framework proposed herein.
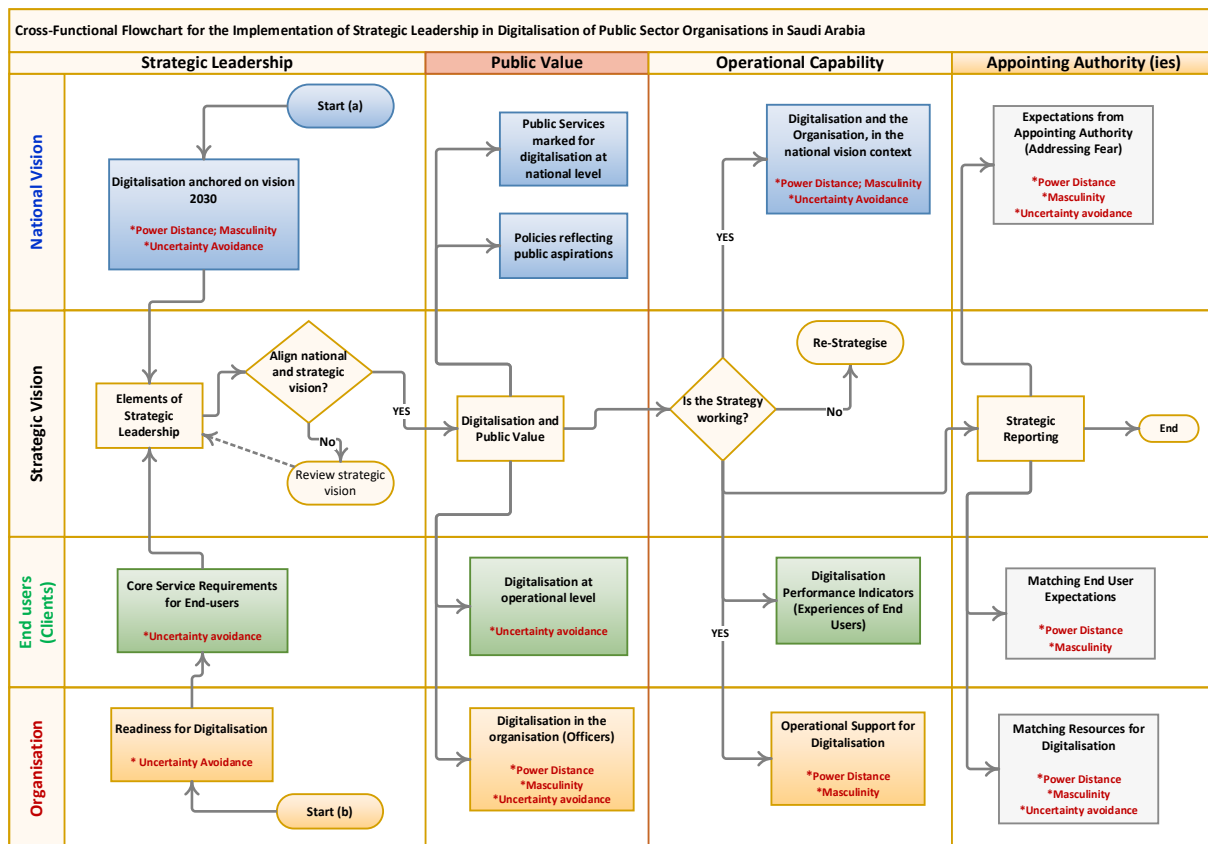
Figure 34: Cross-functional flowchart for the implementation of tactical leadership in the digitalisation of public sector organisations in Saudi Arabia (factors integrated sourced from: Hofstede, 2001; Weinberg and Lewis, 2009; DeChurch et al., 2010).

Literature argued that the Saudi National Vision 2030 is too generic for strategic leadership to rely on it in developing plans for digitalisation; however, it can be used as a means to set and align organisational goals with the national vision. In explaining this vision in relation to Saudi vision 2030, this research adopts the concept of Hofstede, (2001) in interpreting the role of strategic leadership in the provision of the public service delivery.

Cross-Functional Flowchart for the Implementation of Strategic Leadership in Digitalisation of Public Sector Organisations in Saudi Arabia

Strategic Leadership	Public Value	Operational Capability	Appointing Authority (ies)

National Vision

Start (a)

Digitalisation anchored on vision 2030
*Power Distance; Masculinity
*Uncertainty Avoidance

Public Services marked for digitalisation at national level

Policies reflecting public aspirations

Digitalisation and the Organisation, in the national vision context
*Power Distance; Masculinity
*Uncertainty Avoidance

YES

Expectations from Appointing Authority (Addressing Fear)
*Power Distance
*Masculinity
*Uncertainty avoidance

Figure 35: Aligning national vision using Hofstede cultural factors for Saudi Arabia (Adapted: Hofstede, 2001)
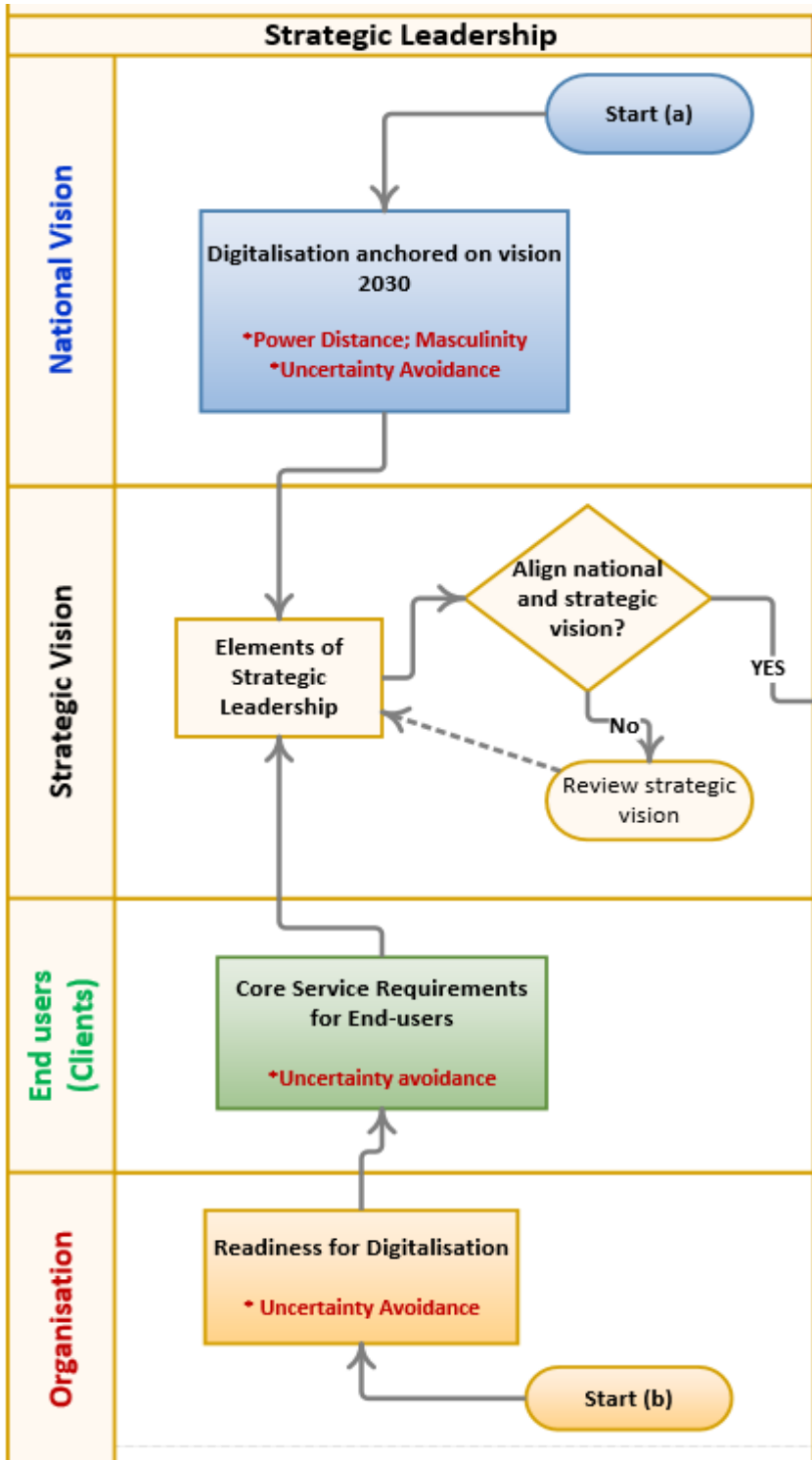
Strategic Leadership

Literature argued that if strategic leadership is to be applied to the full, the digitalisation project needs to be implemented to assimilate and apply new information, embedding learning continuously because leaders would have absorptive capabilities. Organisational performance digitalisation would equally need to be set at the organisational level, as leaders see fit, because of the demands of the contextual environment, hence allowing for adapting

their goals. These attributes of strategic leaderships according to past study are critical to the digitalisation of public institutions because of the necessity to integrate change factors, as demonstrated in Figure 36 below.
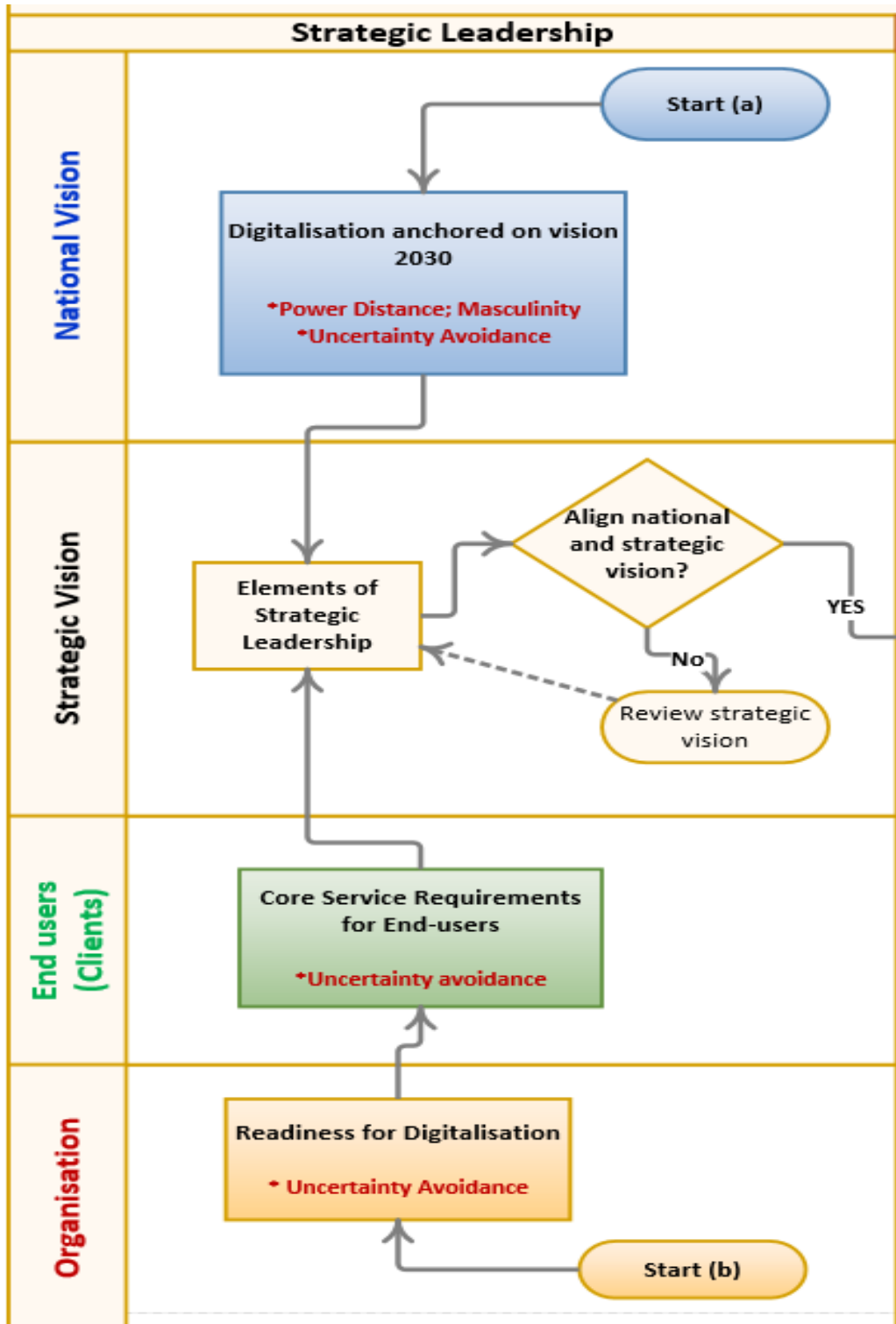
Figure 36: Using strategic leadership to unify the national vision, establish end-user service requirements and the organisational needs.

More so, the research indicated that strategic leadership must develop vision for digitalisation processes and there must be a link to public value. Past study indicated that public value drives government action through policy pronouncements, such as the Saudi National Vision 2030 (see Figures 36 and 37).
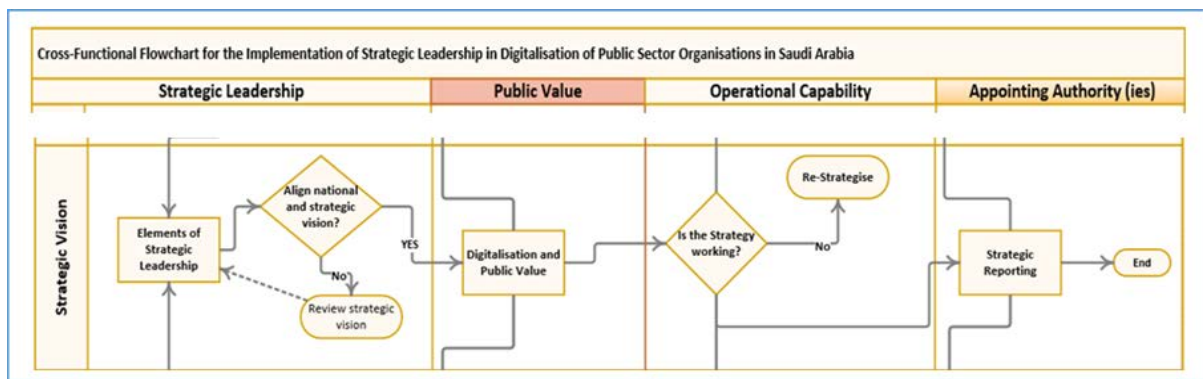
Figure 37: Strategic vision on digitalisation and the public value

Past study indicated the significance of public value to the strategic leadership of digitalisation in Saudi Arabia. This significant starts with align fully with the national Vision 2030 and the public perception of government performance. Hence, strategic leadership needs to be absorptive and adaptive to make the organisation valuable to the nation (Figure 37). The research identified that applying strategic leadership to make the organisations alive to public value relies on navigating organisational challenges related to masculinity, high-power distance and uncertainty avoidance. Hence, public institutions must be involved in the implementation of government policies (Figure 37).
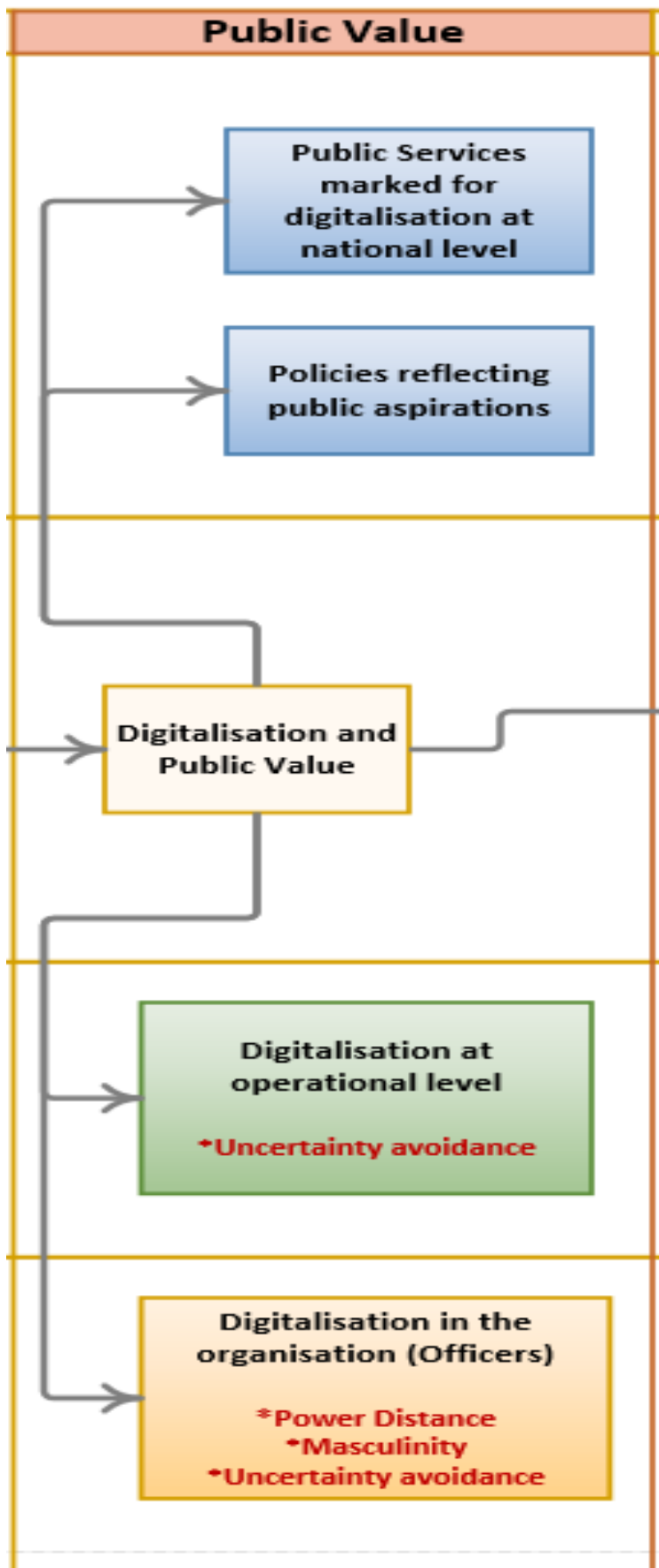
Figure 38: Public value and digitalisation of the Saudi public sector

Moreover, this research established the critical link strategic leadership has to create to transform the national vision into the organisational vision to achieve digitalisation (Figure 30).
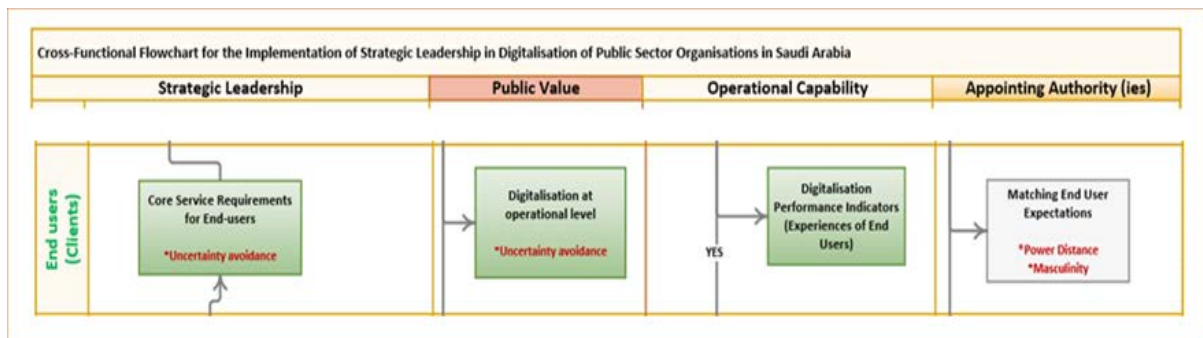
Figure 39: Strategic direction for operational capability to digitalise

5.8 Chapter Summary

The strategic leadership archetype that can deliver digitalisation in the public sector of Saudi Arabia needs to integrate the national vision and the aspirations of their organisations. The upper echelons need to be resolute in their application of strategic leadership so that they can own the vision and impose their ownership of the vision for digitalisation without missing the goal of improving the experiences for the end users.

The implementation of strategic leadership should follow a cross-functional framework; it allows for the integration of strategic leadership that can superimpose itself on the critical awareness of cultural indicators of the organisational environment and that of Saudi Arabia. Implementing the digitalisation process for Saudi public institutions is attainable if there is a systematic integration of the cross-sectional factors articulated in the framework proposed herein. The framework considers four critical leadership issues represented in Figure 25, starting with strategic leadership (archetype), public value, operational capability, and appointing authorities (captured as vertical factors). In addition, the framework includes operational swim-lines (captured as horizontal factors), representing the national vision, organisational leadership (upper echelons), end-user groups, and organisations.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This research supplies to knowledge and understanding of the responsibility of strategic leadership and its use in the transformation of two Saudi Arabian ministries in Riyadh. It argues for the digitalisation of public services to foster proficiency and competence. However, the implementation of digitalisation needs not be unsystematic or just a awkward reaction to government initiatives.

6.2 Thesis outlines

This research is one of the few recent studies, after launching the Saudi Vision 2030, looking at the role of tactical leadership in facilitating the digitalisation project in the Saudi public sector organisations. This research can be summarised into the following points:

(i) There has been no system evaluating strategic leadership in public institutions in the Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) region for last decade because of the perceived difficulties associated with political and cultural factors.

(ii) For Saudi Arabia, the digitalisation policy requires a strategic change to refocus the economy away from its overreliance on fossil fuels. However, the strategic change could not be led by examining individual traits but rather focusing on public institutions' strategic leadership.

(iii) There is a need for a digital platform to facilitate amassing present information about transactions or offering real-time updates to customers. Evidence from Estonia and the UK shows that increased availability of and accessibility to information creates a digitalised public sector or e-government.

(iv) Not all digitalised services turn out to be efficient and cheaper, and that there are times when services become more expensive, upsetting end users in one way or the other. This was the case with the driver and vehicle licensing agency (DVLA) in the UK.

(v) Digitalisation demands a technical platform with an organisational transformation strategy that can focus on service provision to the end-user, according to the government's goals.

(vi)The execution of digitalisation relies on integrating the organisation's digital activities and the strongest possible leadership strategy; because of the ability to transform policies into

workable digital platforms beyond digital capabilities, such as hardware. However, without strategic leadership opportunities, digitalising organisations would be impossible.

(vii) Digitalisation of individual traits of strategic leadership occupying the upper echelons are inadequate because the leadership of Saudi Arabian public institutions reflects societal, cultural, and behavioural norms. As a result, the evaluation of the digitalisation demanded an archetypal leadership analysis of an issue focused on detecting any recurring patterns of leadership across cases, contexts, and scales. Additionally, the archetypal leadership approach allowed for the complexity of the strategic leadership factors, institutional disposition, and the general multifaceted data on digitalisation.

(viii) Strategic leadership theory could work in public institutions that uphold public value in Saudi Arabia, because public institutions positively impact citizens by achieving the authorities' goals and developing the operational capabilities of the institutions. Strategic leadership archetypes at a point in time within a specific context can use a taxonomic approach to identify critical dimensions of digitalisation.

(ix) The core strategic leadership archetype of the upper echelons of public institutions that offers public value are (i) visionary-authority, (ii) transformational-visibility and (iii) communicating.

> a. Other archetypes include the authority archetype, which offers the certainty of the digitalisation policy from the government, such that the upper echelons could focus on implementing digitalisation as well as dealing with threats to digitalisation policy.
>
> b. The leaders are also expected to be resolute. The resolute strategic leadership archetype began with the premise that digitalisation can succeed in Saudi Arabia.
>
> c. The negotiator strategic leadership archetype also commenced with the processes of consultation at both the organisational upper echelons and the respective government ministry.

(x) A visionary strategic leader evaluates the contextual, situational, and organisational factors to establish the organisational vision and redirect it to the desired digitalisation goal without missing the goals set by appointing authorities at government ministries.

(xi) The resolute strategic leadership archetype starts from many strands to create the digitalisation policy, especially the clear implementation strategy. This is because it relies on a top-down vision cascading from the government to the upper echelons despite the inherent

bureaucratic structure that promotes inefficiency due to the high-power distance and indecision avoidance

(xii) The negotiator strategic leadership in Saudi public institutions facilitates navigation to the ultimate goals by being adaptive and promoting capabilities of adapting to contextual environments while undertaking reflective practices that help to change the leader or the organisation. To be absorptive, strategic leadership embed learning within the organisational systems at every level.

(xiii) Regarding the authority strategic leadership archetype, it is focused on loyalty to the leader. This transcends the influence from the government to deal with the visibility of the government transformation and the end-user. It is built from a myriad of threads, such as public value, fear of failure and the technology used for the digitalisation project in Saudi Arabia.

(xiv) Each institution has a leadership archetype that they deploy to implement digitalisation. Therefore, the conceptual perspective of strategic leadership varies. The authentic strategic leadership archetype is not rigid but flexible to accommodate vision, authority, communication, visible transformation, learning, influence, performance, and digitalisation development in a structured manner.

(xv) A flexible strategic archetype balances public value, operational capability and interests of the appointing authority. This balance of the strategic leadership archetype forms the crux of the argument for which the research contributes to knowledge and practice in public institutions aiming for transformation.

6.3 Summary of the Main Findings

This research based its methodology on the theories of Resource based theory, strategic-fit theory, SWOT analysis theory and Public Value Theory to propelled how strategic leaders facilitate public sector digitalisation service delivery. The RBV theory was used to amplify the cost of internal resources within the business and the use of these resources in communicating strategy for achieving viable profit in service delivery. In other word how strategic leaders through a medium (organisation/ministry) can facilitate public sector digitalisation for a better service delivery. Likewise, the strategic-fit theory utilizes the best-fit strategic management or strategic decision theory available to achieve organisational goal. In the same vein, SWOT analysis theory helped the research to instil strategic planning and

tactical management in organisations. SWOT theory analysis was used in this research to build organisational strategy and driven strategy. In addition, helping the organisations to analyses their environments for strategic management implementation and practices. However, Public value theory promotes the worth that citizens and their envoys pursue with strategic objectives and experiences of public services. In other words, the study concluded that service delivery might generate public value provided if there is an obligation and an exchange between shareholders and government officials.

These theories helped in the contextual framework for the research scope and attainment of the research objectives. Moreover, the theories facilitated the essence of public institutions relevance in the donation of public services delivery and the position of a strategic leadership. More so, these theories helped to chart sustainable path of managing the operational capability of the organisations and evaluating the resources from the appointing authority while fulfilling the needs of the public by creating goals, visions, outcomes, a range of activities and the like and taking care of the risks and anticipating weakness. Literature argued that in driving these range of activities to a desired end need a strategic leader. In line with this argument, Hofstede (2001) theorise that leaders' performance at any level must reflects societal, cultural, and behavioural norms. In other words, strategic leadership archetype must inculcate the significance of public value to the service delivery to the people. Literature argued that digitalisation has directed to accomplishing satisfaction and upholding the solidity of the work environment by enabling the lives of employees and enriched public service delivery. In addition, diminishing the time spent researching problems associated to information technology or requirements, thus reducing frustration, and improving productivity and efficiency. In addition, it has led to the establishment of a collective culture in organisations which is driven by strategic leader. Findings from this research revealed the significance of adopting digitalisation process in the operational activities of the organisation. Digitalisation has enabled leaders to learn how to make employees more interested and enthusiastic about their work thus creating public value.

In addition, digitalisation has resulted in flexibility for employees to complete tasks and collaborate remotely. The workplace has evolved beyond the office to become almost everywhere from which the employee can reach and communicate with his work/team through his internet connection and thereby improving on the public value for effective service delivery. The research found out that major responsibility of strategic leadership is to

fulfil the goals and intentions of the organisations and developing a team that will enhance quality public service delivery. Literature reviewed that public sector organisations in Saudi Arabia view technology as an option (Al-Otaibi and Al-Zahrani, 2004); however, such perceptions have been changing due to the digitalisation drive. Therefore, implementing the cultural shift elements of the digitalisation process is the responsibility of the strategic leadership in the upper echelons of organisations. Literature argued that the Saudi National Vision 2030 is too generic for strategic leadership to rely on it in developing plans for digitalisation; however, it can be used as a means to set and align organisational goals with the national vision. Similarly, well position strategic leadership can develop a team in the elimination of bureaucratic organisational dispensation thus designing plan that enhanced flexibility, adaptability, learning and training for public value.

The research deduced that strategic leadership comprehend the impact on interpersonal skills shaped by aligning with digitalisation and effective communication embedded in digitalisation process under guidance of Saudi vision 2030. Hence, there is the need by strategic leadership to build a strong organisational system that would promote an organisational identity and culture of interrelatedness. In line of this argument the strategic leadership can create a learning process that accommodates digitalisation also strategic leadership's response to control systems through the organisational structure is pivotal. Therefore, implementing the cultural shift elements of the digitalisation process is the responsibility of the strategic leadership in the upper echelons of organisations. Therefore, the impact of digitalisation had both good and bad effects. It was bad because many of them started working using new teams. This meant that workers lost the original teams that they had been acquainted with. Sometimes this meant difficulty in getting help too. It was good in that people are more result-oriented and focused now. This discovery is line with the study of Alvesson and Sveninggsson (2008). Dunleavy and Carrera (2013) that argued that the impact of organisational culture on strategic leadership is critical for the overview of archetypes. For a country like Saudi Arabia with cultural diversity, it was vital to examine the power dynamics in organisations.

Also, in the realisation of the fulfilment of the benefits of digitalisation and the implementation, strategic leadership should follow a cross-functional framework as documented by works of Hofstede, (2001); Weinberg and Lewis, (2009); DeChurch et al., (2010) that the integration of strategic leadership can superimpose (assert) itself on the

critical awareness of cultural indicators of the organisational environment and those of Saudi Arabia at large. Literature argued that if strategic leadership is to be applied to the full, the digitalisation project needs to be implemented to assimilate and apply new information, embedding learning continuously because leaders would have absorptive capabilities. Organisational performance digitalisation would equally need to be set at the organisational level, as leaders see fit, because of the demands of the contextual environment, hence allowing for adapting their goals. These attributes of strategic leaderships according to past study are critical to the digitalisation of public institutions because of the necessity to integrate change factors. Strategic leadership must develop vision for digitalisation processes and there must be a link to public value. Past study indicated that public value drives government action through policy pronouncements, such as the Saudi National Vision 2030. Past study indicated the implication of public value to the strategic leadership of digitalisation in Saudi Arabia. This significant starts with align fully with the national Vision 2030 and the public perception of government performance. Hence, strategic leadership needs to be absorptive and adaptive to make the organisations valuable to the nation (Figure 36 and 37). The research identified that applying strategic leadership to make the organisations alive to public value relies on navigating organisational challenges related to masculinity, high-power distance, and uncertainty avoidance. Hence, public institutions must be involved in the implementation of government policies. The research suggests as a result from the evidence presented in this research that the strategic leadership archetype that can deliver digitalisation in the Saudi public sector in meeting quality service delivery if the leaders are allowed to make a choice to integrate the national vision and the aspirations of their organisations. Strategic leadership must be able to operationalise the digitalisation goals set by appointing authorities with a high degree of autonomy. This is line with the discoveries of this research as majority of the respondents (65%) affirms that strategic leadership had optimum operation with the aid of digitisation in providing effective service delivery. strategic leaders were expected to create their own controlled way to improve performance but must operate within the limit of Saudi vision 2030 as regards digitalisation. Digitalisation was a planned action from the government through ministries because of a drive to ensure that services provided. Digitalisation is the general global trend of engagement, and it is the most appropriate option, hence, strategic leadership must operate within a framework of Saudi

vision 2030 so that there will be effective ease digitalisation process for valuable public service delivery.

The overarching conclusions of this research are that tactical leadership in the digitalisation of Saudi public organisations emanates from the national Vision 2030. In addition, the national vision needs to anchor strategic vision in the upper echelons of each ministry/agency/department in such a manner that the strategic leader can rely on leadership traits and adaptive and absorptive capabilities. Strategic leaders in the upper echelons should balance the priorities of public value while exerting visionary authority within the organisation. This is required to balance the inward organisational vision with the outward national vision.

The research further concludes that the strategic leaders in the upper echelons should negotiate their ownership of the digitalisation policy in their institution. By so doing, strategic leaders can demonstrate that their authority emanates not only from the appointing authorities in government, but from the knowledge of the actions needed to improve the effectiveness of services to the citizenry.

6.4 Contributions

The overarching contribution of this research highlights the argument that classical leadership norms are insufficient to implement the successful digitalisation of public sector organisations in Saudi Arabia, mainly because of the inherent cultural tendencies of a high-power distance in organisations and masculinity– identified as in attribute of Saudi Arabia as per Hofstede's (2010) cultural dimensions. This research, therefore, makes the following contributions:

6.4.1 Framework for strategic leadership

- The framework for strategic leadership offers a clear flowchart for leadership of the public institution (upper echelons) to integrate strategic leadership principles with the strategic triangle requirements for the public sector (Hamlin and Hatton, 2013; Weinberg and Lewis, 2009). It recognises the significant influence from appointing authorities occupying positions in the upper echelons of government, exerting undue pressure on the strategic leadership of public institutions. The leadership framework also recognises the concerns that strategic leaders show towards appointing authorities, which manifest in decision making in the upper echelons of public institutions.

- The stepwise framework forms a critical part of the implementation protocol in public institutions. It takes the requirements of the strategic triangle (Moore and Moore, 2005) and overlays them with the performance indicators of the appointing authorities in government.

- This framework can be used as a vehicle for future digitalisation projects in Saudi public institutions, hence addressing fuzzy implementation systems for the digitalisation policy because implementers have a high level of fear of appointing authorities in government. The fear is exacerbated by the high-power distance (Hofstede, 2010) between strategic leaders and government officials such as ministers (section 1.1). In trying to please the appointed authorities, strategic leaders have failed to implement the digitalisation policy as possible.

6.4.2 Bridging the gaps in evaluating strategic leadership in public sector organisations

-The present research contributes to knowledge by establishing and bridging the gaps in evaluating strategic leadership in public institutions, particularly in the Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) region. In recent decades, strategic leaders have not been subject to scrutiny due to well-known cultural factors. This research, however, has examined the role of tactical leadership in the digitalisation of Saudi Arabian public sector organisations (section 1.2), using strategic leadership theory (Hughes and Beatty, 2005) as a basis for evaluating the strategic performance of public sector organisations in Saudi Arabia. In other words, the research sets a clear path for questioning the performance of the upper echelons in an environment with no means of undertaking an evaluation on performance and accountability.

-The research adopts proven and well-renowned digitalisation experiences in countries like Estonia (section 2.2) and the UK: It is globally accepted that Estonia is a leader in promoting the information society, a highly advanced digital economy and e-government services. Furthermore, the strategic leadership evaluation process linked the digitalisation of public sector institutions with a leadership strategy that can articulate and translate the vision into organisational operations.

6.4.3 A unique conceptual mapping of leadership behaviour

This research provides a unique conceptual mapping of strategic leadership. It argues that the authentic strategic leadership archetype is not rigid but flexible enough to accommodate vision, authority, communication, visible transformation, learning and influence. A flexible

strategic archetype balances public value, operational capability, and the interests of the appointing authority (section 3.3). This balance of the strategic leadership archetype forms the crux of the research's contribution to knowledge and practice in public institutions seeking to digitalise (Hamlin and Hatton, 2013; Hoffman and Lord, 2013).

The research demonstrates that, for years, the bureaucratic-centred leadership archetype in Saudi Arabia has focused on how top management authorities adapt their leadership approach to promoting flexibility while respecting the official structures of the organisation (section 3.15). Moreover, the bureaucratic–centred leadership archetype respects the sensitivity associated with governance structures, mainly because government agencies have strict bureaucratic procedures critical to implementing projects. These are the archetypes that have weaknesses in delivering digitalisation.

-The distinctive conceptual mapping in which the leaders' behaviours are likely to influence the type of strategy that leadership adopts for digitalisation, constituting an early warning system of leadership indicators. Hence, applying the strategic leadership theory to digitalisation protocols in the Saudi Arabian public institutions should entail an evaluation of leadership performance, firstly, from the process of digitalisation itself and, secondly, from the public value created by the implementation of digitalisation. This research offers the means to evaluate performance through conceptual mapping.

6.4.4 Traditional leadership approaches intertwined with religious beliefs and national culture

The research has examined a case study of a non-western country. This non-western style is maintained in the Arabic cluster of nations (section 3.6). In this regard, the present research creates a combination of traditional leadership approaches intertwined with religious beliefs and national cultural norms that lead to the development of an appropriate leadership archetype befitting the Arabic context to implement the strategic change in such important projects as digitalisation.

-Therefore, this research also provides to the body of knowledge on the operationalisation of strategic renewal in a public sector organisation set in the socio-cultural context of an Arab country (section 5.1). The research draws its arguments from interviewees and integrates them with strategic leadership theory to create a framework for the digitalisation of public institutions in Saudi Arabia.

6.4.5 Research design for a socio-culturally sensitive environment

This study's methodological contribution is that the researcher focused on designing a data collection system that appreciated the socio-cultural sensitivity of the strategic leadership, which respects traditions, promotes truth and supports change without suspicion by adopting tact and flexibility (section 5.6). However, the research problem borders on organisational change through digitalisation. Hence, the research approach required practical relevance. Based on the factor of practical relevance, the researcher sought critical information on how the strategic leadership of the public institutions could implement the digitalisation policy in Saudi Arabia without disrupting the socio-cultural working environment.

6.4.6 Drawing from the GLOBE Study

A team of industry-organisational psychologists and business school instructors launched the International Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness Project (Project GLOBE) in the early 1990s. This team endeavored to alter our knowledge of cultural values and attitudes and evaluate global leadership on a scale that most people would accept. GLOBE emphasises thorough culture-comparison research aimed at response significant theoretical concerns regarding leadership variations across cultures and offering actual recommendations to managers in a globalised commercial setting (Van de Vijver & Fischer, 2009). Learning from the GLOBE project, the research integrated the strategic leadership project with the dimensional project to develop an innovative psychometrically high-level collection of societal dimension measures that might also be employed for organisational evaluation. (Hanges and Dickson, 2004).The GLOBE project helped the study to facilitate the advance of the understanding of the relevant cultural aspects of leadership in integrating a model of sound service delivery. In addition, the GLOBE project provided new archetypal for a inclusive scope of research specialties both in and outside of organisational psychology and enabled the leadership project to impact science and scientific tools to create value for service delivery in Saudi public sector organisations.

6.5 Anticipated Practical Implications

This research anticipates that improving the perception of the importance of tactical leadership would support implementing the digitalisation project in Saudi Arabia. In addition, increasing the awareness of tactical leadership among public sector institutions is expected

to play a significant role in overcoming the challenges that face public sector organisations when implementing digitalisation projects.

Leaders must consider the training programme within the parameters of organisational goals. They should also build a positive community within the organisational vision and direct workers towards achieving organisational objectives. These policies could support an organisation to achieve success in its new projects.

Moreover, government ministries need to recruit expert leaders and staff from the private sector. The main challenge in Saudi public-sector organisations is insufficient governance structures to effectively supervise digitalisation projects, which could be attributed to variables in the organisation's culture. Thus, experts could promote and raise awareness of the importance of digitalisation in developing an organisation's performance quality, leading to accelerating the organisation's growth to cope with other governmental organisations in implementing the digitalisation to achieve Saudi Vision 2030's objectives more effectively.

6.6 Practical Implication of the Research

The generally practical impact of this research is the outcome that the strategic leadership archetype used for managing the digitalisation project in Saudi Arabia is not rigid. It is reliant neither on individual attributes nor on classical leadership styles. Therefore, strategic leaders and their influence on the digitalisation process in Saudi public sector organisations need to be focuses on customers and efficiency, as well as on the new culture that accompanies transforming an organisation. This research has the potential to affect the role of tactical leadership on change, which had not hitherto been discussed concerning public sector organisations.

In terms of participation and activities, the researcher has participated in a few academic activities throughout the PhD journey. Two papers were presented at BAM conferences in 2018 and 2020, which were valuable academic experiences. Furthermore, the meeting with academic staff generated a significant and useful feedback afterwards. Furthermore, the researcher served as a member of the organising team at the 7th MMU Postgraduate Research Conference 'Changing Lives', MMU, UK, February 2017. The researcher also worked as a volunteer facilitator, and committee/chair member of the 8th MMU Postgraduate Research Conference 'Innovation', MMU, UK, November 2018. Attendance at the CIPD Annual Conference and Exhibition on 6-7 November 2019 at Manchester central also, enhance the

researcher's skills. The researcher submitted a response to review papers for the Academy of Management 2020 (AOM) Annual Meeting, August 7 – 11, in Vancouver, BC, Canada. Such these academic activities lead to improve researcher's skills and knowledge.

6.7 Limitations of the Research

The limitations of this study start with the adoption of purposive sampling, which is associated with lacking design for unbiased variance estimators (Guarte and Barrios, 2006). This weakness for purposive sampling is compounded using two case studies, which are believed to be subjective (Siggelkow, 2007). The data obtained offers honest perspectives to the researcher (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). According to Barratt et al. (2014:6), external legitimacy of results arising from a purposive sample is unknown; therefore, there can be no generalisation of results beyond the sample.

Despite the weaknesses associated with purposeful sampling, the researcher designed the research to accommodate an detailed understanding of complex phenomena, explicable through experiences and perceptions, demanding careful evaluation of contextual factors (Ames et al., 2019), making purposeful sampling ideal for research into the Saudi digitalisation project. While the results cannot be generalised, the research needed to balance rigor and practical implementation of the sampling techniques. This is because probability sampling, despite its many merits (Barratt et al., 2014), does not apply to this research.

Due to the numerous limitations, each stage of this research was challenging, the data collection phases being the most so. In addition, the qualitative interviews with members of the leadership were time consuming and considerable effort was required to organise travel within Saudi Arabia. There were also issues of arranging the meeting times, collecting, translating, and transcribing, followed by data analysis. Despite these challenges, the researcher gained valuable experience from the process.

The first aspect of the practical challenges for this research is linked to the pre-data collection stage. The process of ethical approval at the MMU was time-consuming, as the researcher had to complete the ethical forms twice due to academic issues. Previously, the university used a manual method by which the researcher provided pertinent information needed for ethical approval. Later, when the researcher intended to start data collection, he was advised to submit a second ethical approval application because the manual system was now defunct. Eventually, the university changed the approval process to an online platform. Thus, the

whole process for obtaining the ethical approval from the MMU took seven months and caused a delay to the research schedule.

The other set of practical challenges faced in this research relate to data collection in Saudi Arabia, where the researcher had difficulty arranging a time for flights and travelling to expedite the process. During the data collection period, the researcher needed a flexible and adaptable timeframe because the research participants work at the leadership level. However, the researcher faced some complications in making appointments for data collection because some participants cancelled due to their busy schedules. Rescheduling appointments proved extremely problematic.

The final challenge encountered during the data collection stage was the respondents' reluctance to consent to recording the interviews because they did not have confidence in the data integrity of the recording devices. Therefore, participants who did not comply to recording their interviews demanded that the researcher write the responses by hand, which was not only time-consuming, but also tedious.

Some other challenges which the researcher faced were:

- Changing the supervision team twice disrupted the research continuity strategy.
- Covid -19 affected the study in terms of data collection strategy, as well as movement to discuss the research.
- Interviews were conducted in Saudi Arabia and were extremely costly.

6.8 Recommendations

The research findings explain that Saudi public sector leaders should use productive magnitudes of power distance and collectivism to inspire people to understand the need for transformation and to engage them in change through more directive impact. This is a critical recommendation because societal, cultural and behavioural norms are critical in the context of Saudi public organisations (ministries) (Hofstede, 2001). The general influence of national culture on leaders' performance cannot be underestimated where national cultural heterogeneity is strong (Almutairi at al., 2020; Alves et al. (2006). For instance, the theory that "masculinity" – the level of societal competition, achievement, and success – is 60 out of 100 (Hofstede Insights, 2020). This translates into a society that is assertive, decisive, and low on feminism (Almutairi et al., 202). The Hofstede model used herein has been known to lack the elements of feminism or voices for women (Moulettes, 2007). However, Saudi Vision 2030

strives to implement inclusive development through digitalisation. Elliott and Stead (2018) argue that organisations have persistently underrepresented women in leadership roles, creating a perception that women are feminists lacking in leadership credibility. If leadership is seen only from a masculine perspective, it falls short of leveraging female capital (Elliott and Stead, 2018). This issue is compounded in Saudi organisations because of the national culture and societal values (Brewer and Venaik, 2012; Jeffrey et al., 2008; Moulettes, 2007). The present study recommends that, for continued successful digitalisation in the current Saudi public sector context, leadership behaviours based on formal authority and power of position are likely to remain as important as technical knowledge, given the categorized nature of the workplace, and to maintain energy despite the presence of more unofficial and tech savvy performances amongst younger civil servants.

The "power distance" score (Hofstede 2001) for Saudi Arabia is 95 out of 100. This score translates into creating a fear factor of appointing authorities or senior managers, particularly in the public sector (Soraya, 2002). Government appointing authorities should therefore prioritise "Moore's strategic triangle" that (i) goals from the authorising institutions are critical, (ii) they develop operational capabilities to meet people's aspirations and (iii) they can create public value (Weinberg and Lewis, 2009). Government officials expect that transformation of organisations paints a better picture of the government (Abatecola and Cristofaro, 2018; Abdullah et al., 2019).

It is highly recommended that leaders apply technical practices to 'iscover how they could avoid failure and focus on the organisations' learning to improve employees' skills and practices. They also need to implement digitalisation comprehensively in all Saudi public sector organisations. There is much fear of failure from senior personnel in the upper echelons. This is linked to Saudi Arabia's score of 80 out of 100 for "uncertainty avoidance" (Hofstede Insights, 2020). Iszatt-White et al. (2021) report that the world seeks legitimate leadership. However, the political environment is continually changing such that political leadership have disruptive strategies to mobilise social capital and seek leadership legitimacy. In Saudi Arabia, the government has a way of ensuring leadership legitimacy is fostered by promoting Vision 2030. However, at the organisational level, leadership legitimacy demands the mobilisation of multiple resources and capital (Iszatt-White et al., 2021; Stead et al., 2021). Therefore, leaders in organisations must consult (Drummond and Al-Anazi, 1997) in order to align their leadership with uncertainty avoidance.

The present research recommends increasing the awareness of the need for transformation between individuals within the sector, specifically leaders. The institution, as a whole, can play a substantial role in enhancing the influence of the overall transformation. This should result in an overall increase in the engagement of those concerned. There are challenges regarding the lack of access to information and data, and Saudi public sector organisations' demand to enhance the value of training programmes on how to provide and use online services. Gardner et al. (2010) argue that leaders influence organisational performance.

This research recommends that sustained, successful digitalisation, in the Saudi context through learning and development, could take the form of absorptive and adaptive strategic leadership that promotes learning (DeChurch et al., 2010). Ross et al. (2020) argue that learning and development forms a critical approach for achieving a particular goal. In the case of strategic leadership for digitalisation, learning and development can help the upper echelons establish a vision, set broad objectives for the overall organisations (DeChurch et al., 2010) and align them with the needs of the government (Weinberg and Lewis, 2009). This is because learning and development facilitate strategic leadership implementation in public institutions where competing factors abound.

6.9 Future Research

To overpower the restraints of the present study, future research should consider multiple aspects that could improve an understanding of the public sector's needs, including more case studies from diverse sorganisations. It was observed by Al-Bawaba (2018a) that many countries and international organisations, such as the United Nations (UN), sought Estonian expertise to be part of the integrated sustainable development strategy (Al-Bawaba, 2018a). This means that the technical element of digitalisation has been proven to be efficient. However, the universality with which digitalisation has been accepted does not necessarily mean that it is easy to implement, because each country has its own societal demands that need to be implemented in an electronic platform (Kassen, 2019).

The success of information technology (IT) expertise in digital solutions for Estonia is modelled on "de-politicised and detached from a social context" (Björklund 2016:914). The example of Estonia shows that the approach to the digitalisation of the public sector allowed a cross-functional platform comprising a hybrid between public experts and private IT specialists, and

promoted e-voting (Kitsing, 2011). However, Elliott and Stead (2018) report that organisations have continued to underplay female leadership.

Future research is needed to discover organisational leaders' practices and how leaders deal with daily contests, including the role of gender. For instance, female leaders in Saudi public sector organisations can enhance the equality of contribution within the sectors. Public organisations in Saudi Arabia need to be understood from both a politicised and depoliticised angle to devise the correct digital platform to serve stakeholders. This includes governmental and private organisations that are directly accompanying digitalisation projects in the public sector. It also includes some kinds of organisations that do not deal directly with the public sector but whose partnership could influence them, such as external IT agents dealing with and contracting with public sector organisations.

6.9 Policy implications of the study

All respondents in the research are all males. Male individuals hold most strategic leadership positions in the Saudi public sector. Considering that the researcher is male and cannot access female leaders due to cultural restrictions, it was impossible to identify an organisation with female leaders. In addition, female leaders worked in different locations inaccessible to male counterparts. In addition, the role strategic leadership played in digitisation adoption, implementation and how strategic leadership were able to enhance public service delivery under the direction of Saudi vision 2030. The results revealed that Internal mechanism and Control system and Authority structures (Saudi Vision 2030) were the most significant indicators influencing strategic change and strategic leadership on public service delivery.

The results revealed that National Transformation Department are most appropriate (46.7%). In addition, these departments have been positioned to handle risk management and financial plans for the organisation. Finding from this systematic review of the benefit of digitalisation on public service delivery if adopted and implemented indicated that it will be significantly effective if it aligns with organisational structures and government vision (Saudi Vision 2030). Moreso, to get a full benefit of digitalisation, the strategic managers must ensure that goals, vision are rationalized in line with the dictates of Saudi Vision 2030. Strategic leadership should be concerned with public value, while accommodating differences in education and exposure. Respondents deduced that challenges with the initial pre-digitalisation process have led to the drive for modernisation within organisations.

Administrative structure must be positioned to influence strategic managers to perform their roles and to ensure that goals, vision are streamlined into digitalisation process.

Also, the strategic contribution to digitalisation depends on the level of alignment with Saudi Vision 2030 as indicated by 20% of the respondents. Also, for effective strategic allocation of resources both human and natural must be appropriately placed to achieve desired results as indicated by 20% of the respondents. Strategic elements digitalisation must facilitate innovation that is faster to achieve the desired results and march towards success. The results as found by the research must largely depended on strategic leaders to provide a strategy that can produce higher competitive value, advanced teams, and the sustainability of a culture of creativity. Hence, 75% of the respondents suggested that strategic leadership are responsible to channel who to lead the people. Who to lead the people must be at least a director or head of the financial department, human resource, and equipment departments among others? The research deduced that 27.5% of the respondents reported that digitalisation influences the culture of work, managing people and complexity of the Heads of departments. Strategic leadership had to be seen to institute measures that could implement government programmes and if not operationalise, such institution can jeopardize public value.

Operative strategic leadership influence the public value. Respondents indicated that operationalise of digitalisation within the context of motivation to empower the workers through planning, resourcing, and other means to assured of basic operational capability that enhances public service delivery. Therefore, one of the main impacts of digitalisation has been the prompt public service delivery and effective communication among the people within an organisation. Hence, organisations must move towards the idea of modernising management processes and institutions. Majority of the respondents (75%) indicated that within the digitalisation process organisations must set targets of improving public services, as well as upgrading them. In addition, the ability of a strategic leadership is to allocate workers and other resources for optimum public service delivery. Moreover, 25% of the respondents argued that strategic leadership must be an experienced leader and must demonstrated a significant level of competence on the knowledge of the digitalisation process. In this line of thought, 17.5% of the respondents indicated that allocation of resources is based on the specialisations and competencies, also, 15% of the respondents recognises the significant of education and experience on competencies. These factors are significant drivers in the

digitalisation process. Moreover, the allocation of resources for the digitalisation process is based on the strategic thinking of appropriateness, so that leaders can take care of the interests of the numerous issues.

6.11 A Final Word

When I reflect on this research, I realize how it changed me personally. It was a long journey during which I learned many things in terms of researching and assessing data using analytical tools. Before I started the study, I had preconceptions about carrying out the research. However, I realized that it is more difficult, as exemplified by the challenges mentioned earlier. Networking with the supervisory team, colleagues and postgraduate staff helped me to overcome those obstacles. Furthermore, by presenting my papers at BAM conferences twice, I obtained various skills, not only in academic style and publishing skills but also other personal skills, such as improving my presentation, communication, and engagement with the public and networking with the academic and non-academic community.

Furthermore, I have improved my thinking to deal with new phenomena by using research approaches, such as the appropriate method for collecting and analysing data, then providing persuasive arguments by linking theories and data. I have also managed to consider some critical issues like ethics and funding. In addition, I have had experiences and improved my English skills. I have delivered lectures in strategies and modernising the job style for my organisation's staff. Therefore, my organisation nominated me to manage the training activities and contact experts to provide training courses and workshops for employees. I aim to continue researching and pursuing this by publishing in the future, targeting the gaps in the organisational culture and leadership in the Saudi context.

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Appendix 1: Ethic approval

MANCHESTER METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

MEMORANDUM

FACULTY RESEARCH ETHICS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

To: Yosef Alajaji

From: Dr Jane Turner

             Chair Faculty Research Ethics and Governance Committee

Date: 22/08/2022

Subject: Ethics Application

Title: How strategic leaders facilitate public sector digitalisation:

A comparative analysis of two Saudi Arabian ministries

Thank you for your application and submitting the revisions requested by the Scrutinisers.

The Faculty Research Ethics and Governance Committee review process has recommended approval of the above project.

If your research changes you might need to seek ethical approval for the amendments (stating the reference number above)

We wish you every success with your project.

Appendix 2: Interviews Questions

Question	What were the factors that affected management's decision to digitalis in your	What alternatives to digitalisation were considered for improvement?	How did the management evaluate organisational readiness for digitalisation?	How and when was the risk assessment done?	How extensive as the risk management planning and what were the contingencies that the management planned for?	Who participated in risk management planning?	How was the allocation of people and resources during digitalisation taken care off?	Who were the people in charge of people and resource allocation?

	organisation?								

Theme	Anticipating and Readiness for change				Envisioning			Managing resources and people		
Variable 1	Leading digitalisation									
Question	How did the digitalisation project affect the culture of your organisation in terms of how the work is done, bureaucracy, norms and behavi	How effective was the communication between the management and employees befor e, durin g and after	How did digitalisation affect the interpersonal relationships of employees?	How did the management take into consideration the interpersonal relationships of employees during and after digitali	What steps were taken by the management to ensure that the organisation act as a team during digitalisation?	How was the digitalisation project controlled and managed?	How did digitalisation affect the manner in which your organisation is managed?	How extensively did digitalisation affect your organisation structure?	How did the change in organisation structure affect the employees?	How has digitalisation affected the autonomy of employees?

	our of emplo yees etc?	digital isatio n?		sation ?				

Th em e	Leadin g culture	Leadi ng the chang e proce ss	Interpersonal relationships	Team behavi our	Control system	Organisational structures	Pow er dyna mics
Var iab le 2	**Organisational culture**						
Qu esti on	What noticeable changes occurred in your organisation due to digitalisation?	How did strategic leaders contribute to this change?	What were the main KPIs for the digitalisation project?	How was the achievement of KPIs assessed?	Do you have any recommenda tions for the leaders of other public sector organisations , which are planning to undertake digitalisation projects in their organisation?	

Th em e	Objectives achieved (Technology focused culture, Digitalised processes)	KPIs achieved		recommenda tions for the strategic leaders
Var iab le 3	Digitalisation success			