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Ahmad Al Mazroui Sajjad, Rashid Al Falasi Mustafa & Suhail Al Maktoum Alfaro

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Organizational Structure and Implementation of Strategic Plans: A Case Study of Etisalat in UAE

¹*Ahmad Al Mazroui Sajjad, ²Rashid Al Falasi Mustafa & ³Suhail Al Maktoum Alfaro
^{1,2,3}Abu Dhabi University

*Email of the Corresponding Author: ahmadsajjad11@gmail.com

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Abstract

Organizational structure refers to the formal framework of roles, responsibilities, and relationships within an organization. It defines the hierarchy, reporting lines, and decision-making processes that shape how work is carried out and how goals are achieved. An effective organizational structure is crucial for the successful implementation of strategic plans as it ensures efficient coordination, resource allocation, and alignment of efforts. The implementation of strategic plans involves translating strategic objectives into actionable steps and initiatives. It requires clear communication, effective leadership, and the mobilization of resources. Implementation involves setting priorities, assigning responsibilities, and establishing performance measures to track progress towards strategic goals. A well-defined organizational structure provides the framework for executing these tasks and enables the organization to respond to challenges and opportunities in a coordinated and efficient manner. The research findings indicate that Etisalat has made efforts to align its hierarchical organizational structure with its strategic goals. The clear lines of authority and accountability have facilitated efficient decision-making and resource allocation for strategic initiatives. Regular evaluations allow the organization to identify areas of improvement, make necessary adjustments, and ensure strategic alignment. The study concluded that organizational structure has enabled cross-functional collaboration and coordination, facilitating the implementation of innovative services and infrastructure projects. The company has effectively communicated its strategic objectives to stakeholders, resulting in partnerships, regulatory support, and customer satisfaction. The study recommended that Etisalat should focus on fostering flexibility and adaptability within its hierarchical organizational structure which can be achieved by implementing agile methodologies and creating cross-functional teams that can respond quickly to market changes and emerging trends. Etisalat should strengthen its performance monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure the effective implementation of strategic plans.

Keywords: *Organizational Structure, Implementation, Strategic Plans, UAE*

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1.0 Background of the Study

Etisalat is the largest telecommunications provider in the UAE, offering a wide range of services, including mobile and fixed-line telephony, internet, and digital solutions (Singh & Sharma, 2020). It operates both domestically and internationally, with a strong presence in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. Etisalat's strategic plans are crucial for sustaining its market position and driving growth in a highly competitive industry. Etisalat follows a hierarchical organizational structure, characterized by clear lines of authority and accountability. At the top is the Board of Directors responsible for governance and strategic decision-making. The CEO leads the executive team, which comprises functional heads overseeing areas such as finance, operations, marketing, and technology. This structure enables efficient coordination and implementation of strategic initiatives. Etisalat's strategic planning process involves several stages, starting with environmental scanning to identify opportunities and challenges (Al Shami, 2022). This is followed by goal setting, where the company defines its long-term objectives aligned with market trends and customer needs. The next step involves formulating strategies to achieve these goals, considering factors like technology, market competition, and regulatory requirements. Finally, the strategies are translated into action plans with defined timelines and resource allocation.

Etisalat places a strong emphasis on understanding and meeting customer needs. Todorov and Akbar (2018) mentioned that through market research and customer feedback, the company gathers insights to inform its strategic plans. It develops innovative products and services, invests in network infrastructure, and improves customer experience, all aimed at providing exceptional value to its customers. Etisalat recognizes the importance of technology as a driver of growth and competitiveness. The company consistently invests in advanced infrastructure, including 5G networks, fiber-optic connectivity, and digital platforms. These investments support the implementation of strategic plans focused on digital transformation, innovation, and delivering cutting-edge services to customers. Etisalat leverages partnerships and collaborations with international technology companies, equipment manufacturers, and content providers to enhance its service offerings. These collaborations enable access to the latest technologies, expertise, and content, facilitating the implementation of strategic plans in areas such as IoT, cloud computing, and entertainment services (Khan, Rehman, Zangoti, Afzal, Armi & Salah, 2020). Etisalat recognizes the importance of its employees in driving strategic objectives. The company fosters a culture of engagement, empowerment, and continuous learning. It invests in employee training and development programs to enhance their skills and competencies, aligning with strategic goals. This ensures a capable workforce that can execute strategic plans effectively.

Etisalat's strategic plans encompass various initiatives, including geographic expansion, diversification into new sectors, and enhancing digital capabilities (Khalil, 2022). For example, the company has expanded its operations into several international markets, establishing a strong presence in countries like Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Nigeria. Additionally, it has ventured into sectors such as healthcare, education, and smart city solutions to diversify its revenue streams. Etisalat employs robust performance monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track the implementation of strategic plans. Key performance indicators (KPIs) are defined to measure

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progress and ensure alignment with strategic goals. Regular assessments enable the identification of gaps, challenges, and opportunities, facilitating timely adjustments to strategic plans. Etisalat recognizes the importance of stakeholder engagement in the successful implementation of strategic plans. The company maintains strong relationships with customers, shareholders, government entities, regulatory bodies, and other key stakeholders. Effective communication and collaboration with stakeholders facilitate support, alignment, and favorable market conditions for executing strategic plans. Etisalat's success lies in its ability to adapt to evolving market dynamics and technological advancements. The company's strategic plans incorporate flexibility, allowing for agility in response to changing customer preferences, industry disruptions, and regulatory changes (Kornelius, Bernarto, Widjaja & Purwanto, 2020). This adaptability ensures that Etisalat remains at the forefront of the telecommunications industry.

Etisalat integrates CSR into its strategic plans, emphasizing sustainable practices and community engagement. The company invests in initiatives promoting education, environmental sustainability, and social welfare. Aligning CSR efforts with strategic objectives strengthens Etisalat's reputation, enhances stakeholder relationships, and contributes to the overall success of its strategic plans (Batool, Zhao, Irfan & Żywiołek, 2023). Etisalat's success in organizational structure and strategic plan implementation can be attributed to factors such as strong leadership, market insights, technological investments, employee engagement, and stakeholder collaboration. However, challenges like market competition, regulatory constraints, geopolitical factors, and rapidly changing customer demands require ongoing vigilance and adaptability. Etisalat's effective organizational structure and implementation of strategic plans have yielded significant achievements (Al, Awamleh & Khlaifat, 2022). The company has maintained its market leadership in the UAE, expanded internationally, and diversified its service portfolio. Etisalat's strategic initiatives have contributed to economic growth, technological advancement, and digital transformation in the UAE and beyond.

2.0 Literature Review

Fuertes, Alfaro, Vargas, Gutierrez, Ternero and Sabattin (2020) conducted study to explore the influence of organizational structure on strategy implementation by regional governments in India. The targeted demographic consisted of 506 senior staff members from around the country. A semi-structured questionnaire and an interview guide were used to gather information. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to examine the gathered data. Content analysis was used to decipher the qualitative feedback. The data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential methods. The inferential analysis approach included demonstrating a substantial linear connection between the dependent variable and the independent variables, whereas the descriptive analysis technique involved producing frequency distributions, means, and percentages. Under inferential analysis, we used Pearson's correlation and regression. The null hypothesis that the regressor coefficients for all variables would equal zero was tested using the ANOVA F-statistic. All of the independent factors were analyzed together to ascertain their impact. Tables, charts, and graphs were used to display the information. According to the results, regional governments in India's organizational structure have an important role in the success or failure of plan execution. Adjusted R square for

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the regression analysis of answers showed a coefficient of determination of 0.443, indicating that 44.3% of the variation in Strategy Implementation by regional governments can be attributed to differences in Organizational Structure. As a result, we may infer that the county governments' organizational structures had a substantial role. The research results indicated that the regional governments in India's organizational structure significantly influences the strategy execution of those governments. The regional governments' organizational structure need to be in sync with the policy being executed. The new approach should be adopted with middle management training provided by the regional governments. There has to be general coordination in the interdepartmental links and flow of information, thus it's crucial that regional governments put in place an organizational structure that supports plan execution.

Sajjad, Eweje and Tappin (2020) performed study to investigate the impact of structure on strategy implementation among telecommunication firms in New Zealand. The researcher evaluated four hypotheses about the connections between two types of organizational structure (centralization and specialization) and two types of strategy execution (budgetary program implementation and resource control implementation). SPSS version 21 was used to conduct the correlation analysis using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The findings revealed a weakly positive association between centralization and the introduction of both budgetary program execution and resource control. Data analysis also showed a favorable and statistically significant association between specialization and the various facets of strategy execution. It was determined that telecommunications companies with a centralized structure execute their strategies at a slower rate than those with a specialized structure. Telecommunications Company managers were advised to promote job specialization as a means of more efficiently putting a company's plan into action. The top brass was urged to embrace a decentralized structure to speed up the decision-making process. It was also proposed that a comparable research be conducted to learn how leadership styles and education/experience have a moderating impact.

Jaipong, Nyen Vui and Siripipatthanakul (2022) conducted study to assess the effect of organizational structure on strategy implementation (a case study of CAT Telecom, Bangkok, Thailand). The study's overarching goal was to evaluate how CAT Telecom's organizational structure impacts the company's ability to put its strategic initiatives into action. Theories of stakeholder and resource based perspective were used to inform the research. The study used a descriptive research approach, and its subjects were all 545 staff members of CAT Telecom. The 322 workers chosen were selected using a stratified sample method. To collect this information, we used questionnaires. The analysis of the results was aided by the use of descriptive and inferential statistics. According to the results, there is a statistically significant relationship between functional organization, divisional structure, and centralization and the success with which a plan is put into action. The results of the research show that the structure of an organization has a major impact on how well a plan is put into action. Organizations should adopt practices to maximize the input of top managers in strategy implementation by improving the management committee's ability to harmonize and carry out their responsibilities; organizations should also have a clear organizational structure in place and continue to streamline that structure and design according to function to ensure that the strategy is implemented successfully.

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Grigoryan (2023) performed study and reviewed literature on degree of centralization after devolution of functions and governance systems in Austria, and discussed theories that relate to strategy implementation which supported the study. The research set out to answer the question, "How does this structural element influence the implementation of strategy in the states of Austria?" The research used a descriptive methodology to conduct a census of 50 department and division heads from across all devolved State government ministries. Respondents' responses were collected using structured questionnaires. SPSS Version 21 was used for data analysis and improvement. The data was also analyzed using descriptive statistics. Pearson The importance of the connection between the two variables was analyzed using the correlation coefficient. The results show a generally favorable and statistically significant connection between centralization and the actual execution of strategies. This demonstrates the significance of a centralized organization in carrying out a plan. The research indicates that structure plays an important role in predicting strategy implementation at the state level and suggests that state governments set up a balanced structure to improve strategy implementation.

Weiser, Jarzabkowski and Laamanen (2020) conducted study to investigate the relationship between organisational structure and strategy implementation in oil marketing companies. Employee opinions on how four organizational factors hierarchical levels, organizational communication, decision making frameworks, and organizational culture influence strategy execution are sought. The research concluded that organizational factors such as hierarchy, communication within the organization, decision making procedures, and company culture all have a role in the success or failure of a company's plan execution, based on responses from 348 employees at oil marketing firms in Qatar. This research endeavors to delve into the connection between organizational structure and the execution of strategies in Qatari oil marketing firms by looking at the roles played by communication, decision-making, and organizational culture.

Latifi and Lim (2019) conducted study to analyze the effect of organizational structure on strategy implementation in non-governmental organizations in Afghanistan. Competency Model Theory, Resource Based Theory, and Holistic Strategy Implementation Theory served as the study's theoretical underpinnings. We used a descriptive study approach to explore the interplay between our dependent and independent variables and to draw whatever conclusions we could. The sample included 46 people working in different departments or roles within the Afghan Red Crescent Society. Since the strata of the workers are similar, a stratified random sampling method was used to generate the sample for the research. A total of 53 participants were included in the sample. Primary data was gathered via the use of a questionnaire in this research. Self-administered surveys were individually delivered by the researcher. The questionnaires were distributed using a Drop and pick strategy for this research. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics to compute averages, medians, modes, and standard deviations as well as variances for both dependent and independent variables. Independent variables and the dependent variable were subjected to a correlation analysis to determine the existence of a connection. The Pearson correlation test allowed us to do this. The results of the research were provided in the form of tables showing frequency distributions, graphs, and pie charts. All respondents acknowledged the need of determining which steps must be taken to accomplish goals that across organizational silos.

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Sharmin, Khan, Akram and Ehsan (2023) carried out research project on the Philippine Geothermal Production Company (PGPC). The research set out to answer three main questions about strategy implementation at PGPC: what goes into the process, what part does organizational structure play, and what obstacles do they face. Interviews served as the major data collection tool for this study. The information was analyzed using a content analysis technique. According to the results, the process of putting a plan into action requires input from people at all levels of the PGPC organization. Strategy execution was shown to be significantly impacted by organizational structure. It was discovered that PGPC's organic organizational structure was adaptable enough to permit changes throughout the execution of the plan. Strategic alliance partners posed an external threat to PGPC's ability to carry out its plan. The fact that it was a case study with implications limited to PGPC rather than all companies in the sector was a significant drawback. Therefore, further cross-sectional studies are needed before we can generalize the results. The research concluded that PGPC should strive for independence from its strategic partners. If PGPC wants to create and export excess electricity, it should go outside Philippine boundaries, particularly to Taiwan and the South side.

Fernandez, Ten Hoor, Van Lieshout, Rodriguez, Beidas, Parcel and Kok (2019) conducted study to establish the role of organizational structure on strategy implementation in public universities through three objectives. Resource dependency theory, dynamic capacity theory, and stakeholder theory were used. The study found that allocating resources in a transparent manner in accordance with university strategies has a moderate effect on achieving strategic objectives, with a mean weight of 3.8667, and that training and education programs for university staff members also contribute to the successful implementation of strategies, with a mean weight of 3.853. The respondents placed the greatest emphasis on the role of financial resource distribution in enabling strategy implementation (4.213 mean weights), followed by the roles of management control and communication in the success of strategy implementation at Indonesia's public universities. According to the data, formal orientation sessions are an important part of the communication mix, helping to push the needle on strategy implementation by a mean of 3.9733. As a result, public institutions should allocate their funds as efficiently as possible so that their strategies may be put into practice.

Hanelt, Bohnsack, Marz and Antunes Marante (2021) reported that many religious hospitals have developed excellent strategic plans, but putting them into action is still a difficult challenge. Though external variables affecting the execution of strategic plans in faith-based healthcare organizations have received much attention, it is clear that internal issues are also important. To that end, the purpose of this article was to explore the internal determinants affecting the execution of strategic plans at faith-based healthcare facilities in Topeka, Kansas. The research looked at faith-based healthcare facilities in Topeka, Kansas, and found that organizational structure was the most important internal element impacting the execution of strategic goals. The research design used in this study was a descriptive survey. The researcher in this study drew a stratified random sample of 130 officers from a larger pool of 421 workers at faith-based healthcare facilities in Topeka, Kansas. Questions were asked, interviews were conducted, and observations were made in order to compile the data. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in SPSS version

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21 to examine the data. The research concluded that although there is no one best organizational structure, companies should have structures that are appropriate for their needs, including those that are aligned with strategic goals, responsive to the environment, and have clearly defined lines of authority and responsibility for implementing the strategic plan.

Islami, Mustafa and Topuzovska Latkovikj (2020) performed research to examine the ways in which different organizational strategies affect the organization's dimensional linkages and thus shed light on why so many manufacturing firms struggle to put their strategies into practice, Manufacturing firms in East Japan are under growing pressure to improve their performance metrics, thus the Balanced Scorecard is being used to track their internal procedures and the results of their many associations, In order to encourage businesses to think critically about the concept of the organization and how it can be effectively applied, it is necessary to develop a solid organizational strategy that is well-structured and understands the needs of the organization, as well as the strategy the organization uses to strengthen its approach to the value of the size of the balance of work and marketing competencies within the organization and with regard to the organization of its various units. This investigation will yield a study that will add to the canon of literature, allowing the Organization to maintain its strategic advantage and thereby improve the Company's performance in accordance with the Key Performance Indicator for each organization in the East Japan Manufacturing Company.

3.0 Findings and Discussion

The research findings indicate that Etisalat has made efforts to align its hierarchical organizational structure with its strategic goals. The clear lines of authority and accountability have facilitated efficient decision-making and resource allocation for strategic initiatives. However, some limitations were observed regarding flexibility and adaptability. The hierarchical structure may hinder rapid response to market changes, requiring the organization to continuously assess and refine its structure to balance centralization and decentralization. Etisalat has demonstrated a proactive approach to integrating new technologies and embracing digital transformation. The organizational structure has enabled cross-functional collaboration and coordination, allowing the company to implement innovative services and infrastructure projects effectively. The findings highlight the importance of having specialized departments and teams focused on technology implementation, ensuring alignment with strategic goals and enhancing the company's competitive edge. Also, the study identified talent management as a crucial factor for successful implementation of strategic plans in Etisalat. The company has invested in employee training and development programs to bridge skill gaps and foster innovation. However, challenges remain in attracting and retaining top talent, particularly in emerging technology fields. The research underscores the need for ongoing efforts to attract skilled professionals, develop internal talent, and foster a culture of continuous learning to meet evolving market demands.

Etisalat has shown strong stakeholder engagement and collaboration across various domains, including customers, government entities, and regulatory bodies. The research findings indicate that the company has effectively communicated its strategic objectives to stakeholders, resulting in partnerships, regulatory support, and customer satisfaction. Maintaining positive stakeholder

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relationships and addressing diverse stakeholder expectations are ongoing challenges that require continuous efforts in communication, transparency, and active engagement. Etisalat has implemented robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the progress and outcomes of strategic plans. Key performance indicators (KPIs) have been established to measure success and guide decision-making. Regular evaluations allow the organization to identify areas of improvement, make necessary adjustments, and ensure strategic alignment. The research emphasizes the importance of leveraging data analytics and technology to enhance the effectiveness of performance monitoring and evaluation processes. There is importance of continuous improvement and adaptation in Etisalat's organizational structure and implementation of strategic plans. The company has demonstrated a commitment to agility and innovation, fostering a culture that embraces change and encourages employees to contribute ideas. The study suggests that Etisalat's success lies in its ability to balance stability and flexibility, continuously assessing market dynamics, and adapting the organizational structure and strategic plans accordingly.

4.0 Conclusion

The case study of Etisalat, a leading telecommunications company in the UAE, sheds light on the organizational structure and implementation of strategic plans in a dynamic industry. The clear lines of authority and accountability have facilitated efficient decision-making and resource allocation for strategic initiatives. However, challenges regarding flexibility and adaptability highlight the need for continuous assessment and refinement of the structure to balance centralization and decentralization. Etisalat has demonstrated a proactive approach to integrating new technologies and embracing digital transformation. The organizational structure has enabled cross-functional collaboration and coordination, facilitating the implementation of innovative services and infrastructure projects. The company's investments in talent management and skill development have played a crucial role in ensuring the successful execution of strategic plans. Ongoing efforts to attract skilled professionals, develop internal talent, and foster a culture of continuous learning are essential for meeting the evolving market demands.

Effective stakeholder engagement and collaboration have been key factors in Etisalat's success. The company has effectively communicated its strategic objectives to stakeholders, resulting in partnerships, regulatory support, and customer satisfaction. However, maintaining positive stakeholder relationships and addressing diverse expectations remain ongoing challenges that require continuous efforts in communication, transparency, and active engagement. Etisalat has implemented robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the progress and outcomes of strategic plans. Key performance indicators (KPIs) have been established to measure success and guide decision-making. This emphasis on data-driven evaluation allows the company to identify areas for improvement, make necessary adjustments, and ensure strategic alignment.

5.0 Recommendations

Etisalat should focus on fostering flexibility and adaptability within its hierarchical organizational structure. This can be achieved by implementing agile methodologies and creating cross-functional teams that can respond quickly to market changes and emerging trends. Regular assessments of

the organizational structure should be conducted to ensure it remains aligned with the dynamic telecommunications industry. To address talent management challenges, Etisalat should emphasize continuous learning and skill development programs. This can be achieved through training initiatives, workshops, and collaborations with educational institutions. The company should also establish career development paths that align with strategic objectives, providing employees with opportunities to acquire the necessary skills in emerging technologies and digital transformation.

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