How to Improve Organisational Performance and Sustain Business Continuity in the midst of Challenges?

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of the University of Liverpool for the degree of
Doctor of Business Administration**

By

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Abstract

My research draws on organisational performance to investigate, illustrate and understand lean management with a prime objective of exploring operational agility and supply chain resilience within a specific packaging setting in the manufacturing industry in Saudi Arabia and the wider Gulf Country Council.

The underlying assumption was to comprehend how organisations could enhance performance within the packaging industry struck by supply chain and operational disruption. In particular, how supply chain disturbance affects organisational performance, specifically, a manufacturing organisation within the packaging industry where stakeholders with such an organisation have expectations over results, including monitory and non-monitory terms. The research explored various dimensions, particularly how knowledge creation helps enhance an organisation's performance and how such knowledge could be tested within the workplace practice.

My research further explored organisational performance issues in the context of the underlying categories with the barriers to the operational models, the relationships with the organisational culture and the inefficiency of the decision-making process. My research also delved into understanding how training and development in lean management, specifically within the supply chain resilience and operational agility, could enhance organisational performance. Additionally, there is renewed interest in organisational performance as it is viewed that developing shared goals and open and transparent communication could be utilised to ascertain such influence within every practice towards ideas and factors that impact the needed cultural change in enhancing organisational performance.

As background, most industries, including the packaging industry in Saudi Arabia, are influenced by various internal and external challenges. Many manufacturing sectors, including packaging manufacturers, needed to improve operational efficiency, output volume, and profit earned. Stakeholders, particularly shareholders, are interested in financial results and expect an organisation to carry all responsibilities to mitigate such challenges and deliver consistent performance.

My qualitative research fall under the action-oriented base research involves a deeper understanding of how organisational performance is sustained and influenced within everyday emerged practice with dynamic interaction with various participants, within and outside the organisation, and the extent to which it could be reciprocated in different settings. This involved a deeper understanding and exploration of how dialogue, reflexivity and engagement could be embedded and utilised and encouraged testing in practice through face-to-face and focus group meetings using action research cycles.

The findings revealed how organisational performance is seen as an evolving and developing change process through action research cycles when leanness, agility and resilience are used within a practice, specifically in supply chain and operations, mainly through training and capacity building in lean management. Additionally, organisational performance grew through enhancing open and transparent communication and embedding agile culture among all stakeholders involved in the change process.

My research adds value to practice to construct a more profound understanding better and influence organisational performance about the barriers to the leadership decision-making process, the relationships within the organisational culture and the obstacles to the operational model and lean management process. It extends my understanding of how organisational performance could be reciprocated in different settings within my manufacturing group. The limitation of my research lies in how it could be transported to a broader context, both in the packaging and manufacturing industry, given that my area of exploration is one business unit.

My research findings are approached as a source of managing as an inquiry and an opportunity to engage in further discussions with various stakeholders to show value from a reflexive insider scholar-practitioner perspective. The integration of scholarly practices with my workplace practice impacted interweaving scholarly and practice and demonstrated how scholarly impacted my research and therefore it was realised in the workplace.

Dedication

I dedicate my thesis work to my family and many friends. A special feeling of gratitude for my loving parents, Amtanios and Zarife, whose words of encouragement and love made me feel pampered.

My wife, Pamela, for her support and push for tenacity ring in my ears. My children, Erika and Aiden, are very special and have never left my side.

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Thank you to each participant, each voice, and each idea represented by the participants' openness to such a new method for the change process. The contributions you made are invaluable to the organisation and me.

Special thanks to Dr Ramsey and Dr Reid. Your comments from the first Viva helped me look genuinely into the true purpose of action-oriented base research in producing practical knowledge.

For all of the above, I am grateful.

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List of Abbreviations

AR	-	Action Research
AOBR	-	Action Oriented Base Research
B2B	-	Business-to-Business
B2C	-	Business-to-Consumer
BU	-	Business Unit
CM	-	Computer Integrated Manufacturing
CEO	-	Chief Executive Officer
COGS	-	Cost of Goods Sold
CVP	-	Customer Value Proposition
ED	-	Executive Director
ERP	-	Enterprise resource planning
GCC	-	Gulf Cooperation Council
GESPA	-	General Supply Agency
HR	-	Human Resource
ICT	-	Information and Communication Technology
JIT	-	Just-In-Time
KPI	-	Key Performance Indicator
KSA	-	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
MENA	-	Middle East and North Africa
NITAQAT	-	Nitaqat is a nationalisation program for Saudization.
OFC	-	Organizational family culture
OE	-	Operational Effectiveness
PMS	-	Performance Measurement System (PMS)
PT	-	Pillar Team
QSM	-	Quality System Management
RCA	-	Root Cause Analysis
ROT	-	Resource Orchestration Theory (ROT)
RIT	-	Rapid Improvement Team
SMED	-	Single Minute Exchange of Die
T&D	-	Training and Development
VAT	-	Value added tax
VUCA	-	Acronym for volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity
VSM	-	Value stream mapping
VP	-	Vice-President
WCOM	-	World-class operation management
5'S	-	Housekeeping Methodology by Japanese Operation Management

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1 Chapter 1: Introduction.

1.1 Introduction.

Organisational performance, leanness, and agility (Narasimhan et al., 2008) remain valuable key dimensions for leaders and various stakeholders of any business, whether manufacturing or not, that challenge the organisation's continuity. Organisational performance encompasses the aptitude to respond successfully to supply chain disruption or operational changes in the surrounding business environment (Margherita et al., 2020). This growing critical dimension is due to the incremental complexity and uncertain environment surrounding the supply chain and the subsequently increased chance and likelihood of experiencing disruption within the operation in organisations (Brandon-Jones et al., 2014:55). Consequently, elevating organisational performance remains a vital and crucial objective of any manufacturing business operating in an unpredictable disruption (Water,2020), be it supply chain or operational disruption. Arguably, various capabilities allow organisations to mitigate such supply chain and operations disruption to safeguard organisational performance (Brandon-Jones et al., 2014).

As such, and despite incremental attention from academia and industry leaders, the occurrence of disruptions in the supply chain remains persistently high (Brandon-Jones et al., 2014:55), and so "uncertainty" becomes the only certain element challenging organisational performance (Alvarez & Barney, 2015). Finding convincing and definite answers about organisational performance creates challenging and tedious visibility allowing organisations to look at, investigate and examine tools to mitigate threats in their supply chain to protect and sustain their performance (Brandon-Jones et al., 2014:56). As a result, many organisations continuously work across their supply chain to create both resilience and robustness (Brandon-Jones et al., 2014:56; Brusset & Teller, 2017:1) and embody their ability to return to typical operating performance and enables a disrupted supply chain to reconstruct itself to be stronger than before (Brandon-Jones et al., 2014:56; Brusset & Teller, 2017:1).

The following section will explore the context of the research problem from an action research angle to infuse learning into action and generate actionable knowledge (Coghlan, 2013:6) and seek to change the part that is within reach from action and for action (Dick, 2015).

1.2   The context of the Research study.

My introduction Chapter starts to gain deeper insight into exploring, investigating, comprehending, and improving the needed change in elevating organisational performance. Improving organisational performance is precisely within the context of the packaging field in Saudi Arabia and the wider GCC, particularly addressing leanness, agility, flexibility and resilience. This setting provides the extent of the scope and limitations of the boundaries in which my research is performed, especially during complex and turbulent working environments. The idea that serves as a stimulant and motivation for a needed change is the impulse and spur of the moment in driving such change towards business excellence using action-oriented research as a strategy and a method not only in implementing change (Parkin, 2009) but also to facilitate this change process in leading to practical improvement (Zuber– Skerritt, 2007:420) in the supply chain resilience and operational agility.

The stimulant for the needed changes is derived from my organisation's low performance due to challenges in packaging market dynamics, escalating operational costs and the rippling effect of supply chain disturbance. Like all packaging companies in Saudi Arabia and the GCC, my organisation faced several challenges and failed to maintain stability, continuity and growth. The years 2016 to 2018 witnessed a downtrend in the economic condition of Saudi Arabia due to many difficulties, for example, the slump in crude oil prices (as shown in figure 3) that created a rippling effect among all the non-oil manufacturing industries in terms of business sustainability.
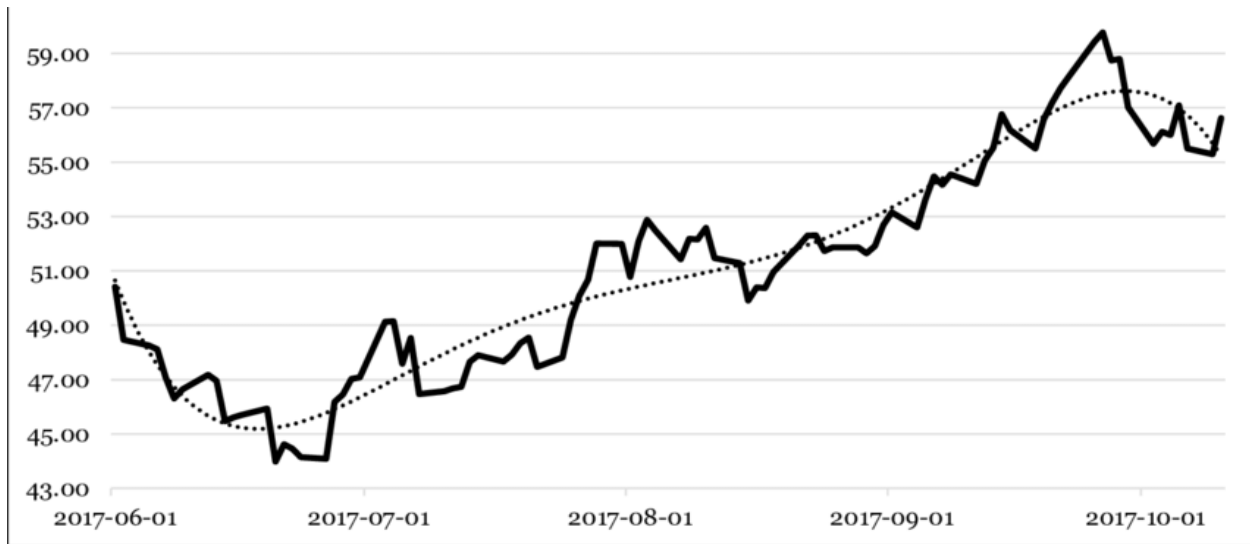
(Figure 3. Brent Index of crude oil prices June-October 2017)

(https://www.researchgate.net/figure/-per-barrel_fig3_320384239)

Also, the downtrend in the economy and the budget deficit in Saudi Arabia during 2017 made the Saudi Arabian government withhold most of the construction and infrastructure-related projects as part of austerity measures. In parallel, the escalation in unemployment among nationals created considerable attention given by the government aiming for Saudization of job vacancies to improve unemployment problems among nationals, thus imposing a new taxation scheme on the expatriates' workforce, pushing one million expatriates to leave Saudi Arabia (Carey, 2018) in 2017 putting 25 to 30 % of private organisations at risk of shutting down should the current Saudi governmental policies don't change in terms of levy fees (AlMaeena:2018). The consumer sentiment in Saudi Arabia is at an all-time low, the cost of living has escalated, job security does not exist, and the estimate from various sources shows that more than 800,000 expatriates left the county between the fourth quarter of 2017 and June 2018 (Ambrose Carey, 2018) as families opt moving back to the native country as they could not manage to escalate the cost of living.

My organisation, a Saudi organisation, operating in the Saudi market, suffered from low performance in the packaging industry. By the end of 2017, it recorded a low profit in 2018, causing losses for the first time since its inception in 1994. Such low organisation performance

caused stakeholders dissatisfaction regarding limited value wealth generation (Hitt et al., 2011:59) and a lower level of financial benefits to stakeholders, questioning the strategic actions on such declining performance and ultimately affecting the stakeholders' expectations (Morrow et al., 2007:282).

My organisation falls within the packaging field and provides packaging services for the Business-to-Business industry. It is assumed that the organistion, with its strategic location in Dammam in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, has a better representation and reach, serving the surrounding countries within a strategic network of interrelated road systems. However, as a non-oil manufacturing organisation, it is essential to consider the needed change(s) that is driven by the outcome of the focus group meetings, and interviews could spill to (1) other departments within my organisation and to (2) other packaging firms operating in Saudi Arabia and the wider GCC and (3) into different settings. Therefore, the importance lies in (1) using action-oriented base research to bring about change in solving my real problem in the supply chain in my organisation (Parkin, 2009) and (2) generating actionable knowledge from such change, which is triggered by the focus group meeting, towards (3) transferring the knowledge to other departments and more significant setting as knowledge spill over (Agrote & Fahrenkopf, 2016:3)within the packaging arena.

My organisation is moderate in size and consists of 500 employees; however, my organisation is a branch of a bigger manufacturing group with 5500 employees. On the other hand, the external participants represent a wider size and consist of 6 large organisations and approximately 10,000 employees, which is situationally relevant to the context of my research. Notwithstanding, the management team at the organisation are working within the internal organisational setting and is considered a rich source of collective knowledge in their field and a true asset not only in knowledge creation but also in the knowledge transfer with the events through which learning from the experience of other (Easterby-Smith et al., 2006:677).

The organisation team comprises of middle managers, senior managers, qualified engineers, team leaders, skilled employees, operators, etc., with qualifications ranging from skilled team members to Masters' studies holders. The departmental intercultural is extraordinarily rich as

employees come from various countries and comprise up to 20 different nationalities. My organisation's setting has always been one of rich diversity, with a high commitment to organisational learning and development. The expatriate workforce consists of around 70% of the total headcount, excluding domestic nationals, and so they depend on the organisation to make an income for living therefore, they tend to rely on the organisation as the only source of income for their living. Particularly during an economic downturn or organisational disturbance, this dependency becomes an organisational responsibility to safeguard the employees during tough situations by protecting them as a kind of parental approach of management protecting employees.

This background of my workplace-based problem is rooted and contextually committed to action-oriented base research for me to work together with the internal and external participants to help them understand and explore how to improve pressing issues in the workplace (Tracy, 2020:56). Therefore, time was exhausted in mobilising the internal and external participants in determining and defining the selection and the degree of participation which in turns offers a rich tool of providing credible and complete accountability of the tacit and implicit knowledge of the focus group team within the context of my organisation.

1.3   Framing the Research Problem.

My action-oriented base research aims to investigate and understand organisational performance and influence improvement by comprehending and investigating leanness and agility guiding principles (Narasimhan et al., 2008) within an established system and controls within the organisation. It delves into whether leanness, agility and resilience bring either performance advantages or disadvantages to the organisation. The disturbance in the Supply chain has gained increasing interest from various organisations and manufacturing factories worldwide in the past decade. The global nature of markets and competition has obliged those organisations to revisit their operation strategy (Gunasekaran & Ngai, 2005:243).

Therefore, the challenge is studying my organisation and having an in-depth understanding of the nature of my organisation's problem. Although the context of the problem evolves around leanness and agility of the supply chain and operation, the context of the issue tends to be

more comprehensive and wicked, especially when the reporting line of two different business units is the same and the business unit objectives of those business units are different. This compass direction loses the strategic planning to manage the strategic direction, so the difficulty is understanding leanness and agility ideas with the practitioner knowledge related to the organisation.

Brandon Jones et al. (2014: 68) notes that visibility capabilities allow organisations to create more significant supply chain resilience and robustness and enable them to understand better the innate weakness and strengths within their systems and procedures. Some organisations have undergone numerous changes in terms of strategies, tactics and operations to meet the changing requirements of the markets in adopting the Build to order process (Gunasekaran & Ngai, 2005:243). Those same companies, like BMW, in the automobile industry have suffered tremendously during turbulent times and moving forward to protect their supply chains from severe and costly disruption (Chopra & Sodhi, 2014:73).

In his book, *Reinventing lean: introducing lean management into the supply chain*, Gerhard Plenert (2010) notes that his book is designed to be a startup focused on discovering the power of leanness in the supply chain shedding in-depth insight into two concepts in management. The first concept is a supply chain management, and the second is lean as a tool to eliminate waste in various resource areas, specifically in the supply chain. Therefore, utilising lean principles provides a more efficient supply chain and is more responsive to the end user and, therefore, more value-added and competitive (Plenert:2010). Delving deeper into end-user satisfaction, Zandi & Tavana (2011) suggest an electronic commerce relationship management application in manufacturing, e-CRM; however, many manufacturing companies need help to identify the most suitable, if does fit, to their need in a rapidly changing environment.

Similarly, Alexander et al. (2014), in their review of sustainable supply chain management decision-making, observe that managers call for SSCM to be translatable into a workable model while acknowledging the inherent uncertainty and complexity in a rapidly changing and volatile business environment. Although the author's operational research highlights the role of values and organisational culture in ethics in the decision-making process, those values enact order and permit an emergent order for complexity and disruption (Alexander et al., 2014). In their

recent review, Alvarez and Barney (2005) note that the costs of organisational change under uncertainty may be too high to enable the exchanges and allow the organisation to progress. The authors go beyond this and conclude that when uncertainty moves into risk, the basic rules of managing an organisation have to change, putting the ability to monitor risk decision-making settings in favour of trust and expertise (Alvarez & Barney, 2005). The skills to manage such a transition necessitates high communication skills, problem-solving techniques, proper engagement, collaborative work, operational know-know and information management from various stakeholders (Koehorst et al., 2021).

Notwithstanding, Fullerton et al. (2014) assert that lean manufacturing has a significant impact on organisational performance. Additionally, the authors note that the change of manufacturing strategy to embracing leanness is associated with incremental operational effectiveness and efficiency that positively impact the organisation's performance (Fullerton et al., 2014). However, when embarrassing this leanness, Plenert (2010) asserts that no two organisations work alike even though they are producing the same product as it is related to management styles, systems and procedures and corporate influences. Conversely, manufacturing firms operating in a rapidly disruptive market embraces the leanness work in cells, like the focus group concept where a decision is based by those teams using action research cycles transforming the organisational structure from a top-down by cells and value stream to improve the performance by focus group empowered teams continuously (Fullerton et al., 2014).

Therefore, operational agility is a continuous improvement option used in organisations to remain competitive and enhance performance and results from four agility categories: enablers, drivers, dimensions, and capabilities (Walter, 2020). Regarding supply chain management, three successful measures contribute to an agile supply chain performance: cycle time performance, OTIF (on time in full), and reduced operation cost (Plenert, 2010). Notwithstanding, (Plenert, 2010) asserts that there remains a gap in knowledge of using lean methodology tools to eliminate waste, resulting in greater throughput, lower cost, higher customer satisfaction, and more content stakeholders.

Therefore, my research seeks to shed deeper insight into organisational performance and delve into the principles of leanness and agility (Narasimhan et al., 2008) in a unique setting within the packaging industry in Saudi Arabia and the wider GCC. As shared earlier and given the challenges in the packaging industry, the implications of my research will be triple folded to my organisation, the packaging industry, and the scholarly community.

1.4   Aim and Objectives of the Research.

As such, my research aims to explore and understand lean management options to improve organisational performance, specifically delve into supply chain resilience and operational agility, and investigate the effect of leanness, agile and resilience strategies. My research further aims to understand and comprehend the relentlessness of risks faced at both the organisational level and across the whole operation (Kleindorfer & Saad, 2005: 65). Accordingly, my interest in researching this area put me in an array of choices with a significant responsibility to seek answers on improving organisational performance and boosting operational excellence that withstands disrupted operations (Kleindorfer & Saad, 2005: 65).

Therefore, my research objective is to engage with internal and external participants and work with them using action research using, interviews and focus group meetings to understand, comprehend and explore organisational performance within my specific industry context in the packaging industry, explicitly exploring supply chain resilience and operational agility within my unique setting to accomplish my action-oriented base research:

- Work collaboratively with all participants to better understand how to enhance organisational performance within the packaging industry in Saudi Arabia and the wider GCC through leanness, agility and resilience.

- Explore organisational performance from a leanness and agility perspective with all participants by drawing on the influence of supply chain and operation (Plenert, 2010) and the impact they have on change and organisational performance by leveraging the interviews and focus group meetings and using action research cycles within my workplace practice.

Thus, my research explores the main research question of "How to improve organisational performance and sustain business continuity in the midst of challenges" particularly:

- How is organisational performance understood and enacted with all participants and various stakeholders, and how this organisational performance could overcome challenges and be sustained over time.?

- What are the driving forces that impact organisational performance, and how could it be improved using leanness and agility?

- How is organisational performance affected by supply chain and operations challenges when they arise at any time?

- To what extent does the impact of managing disruption and ensuring operational continuity influence organisational performance?

The research might have some implications that could be helpful for industries in the packaging field to understand the on-ground situations and in-depth investigation of the appropriate strategy that will help the sector improve organisational performance. With longer paths and shorter speeds (Kleindorfer & Saad, 2005:53), the research might help industrial packaging firms within the packaging industry to understand how to re-engineer and integrate the appropriate management policies of leanness and agility with ongoing risk assessment and cooperation with supply chain partners (Kleindorder & Saad, 2005:54).

As I adjust my position to think of organisational performance from a new concept and a different perspective within the practice, action research offers a paradigm shift in dealing with the change from conventional change management. Changing the organisational performance arena in my mindset by embarrassing leanness and agility (Narasimhan et al., 2008) and engaging in critical thinking allows room for exploring various concepts surrounding the ten dimensions mentioned in the introduction. The exploration and understanding of organisational performance necessitate a synergy, as s scholar-practitioner, between my ability to be critically reflective and the skills I need as a director (Anderson et al., 2016).

1.5 Structure Outline of the Research Study.

The critical literature review in chapter 2 focuses on in-depth academic knowledge creation related to my research area with the ten dimensions mentioned earlier in this chapter's introduction.

While Chapter three discusses my philosophical position using an interpretivism approach, my research methodology and methods formulating my mode of inquiry, my research design using an action research cycle and my reflexivity. Additionally, it explains how action learning cycles support my data analysis for deriving codes and themes. Within this chapter, the data analysis leverages qualitative research outcomes from interviews with external participants and focus group meetings with internal participants.

Chapter 4 investigates the data analysis and evaluation of outcomes and associated in-depth discussion about the progress and summarises the entire pathway travelled to achieve the research objective and the gained experience.

Chapter 5 is the summary and concluding chapter. It provides knowledge creation by leveraging the progress of my research and how this knowledge is created and could be transported to different industrial settings. Additionally, it highlights my reflection on the whole process and provides insights into the overall action-learning pathway and my rich development and growth as a scholar-practitioner.

2 Chapter 2: Literature Review.

2.1 Introduction.

Chapter one presented my research setting in relation to investigating organisational performance within a unique geographical location in Saudi Arabia and the wider GCC. It also highlighted the research aims, objectives, and reasons behind my research inquiries addressing my overall research question to understand why manufacturing companies are increasingly looking at developing their leanness, agility, and resilience (Narasimhan et al., 2008; Fayzi et al., 2016:1), and the level of their operational capabilities (Brusset & Teller, 2016:1). Accordingly, my research area focuses on gaining an in-depth meaning of leanness and agility looking into exploring and comprehending the integration of the supply chain resources, and the relations of the information sharing to create operational capabilities (Brandon-Jones et al., 2014:36). Subsequently having a deeper insight on how those resources are developed over time with my workplace practice in terms of building and operating a resilient supply chain (Brusset & Teller, 2016:2) and effective operational agility (Narasimhan et al., 2005:440).

Arguably, actions taken by leaders in managing the organisation's resources to achieve and maintain the organisation's organic growth (Canes et al., 2017) involve understanding how to use those resources and exploring the reason for mobilising and structuring them (Miao et al., 2017) in a particular setting within the supply chain resources and operational orientation (Chirico et al., 2011). As such, to maximise the potential performance of the organisation (Hughes et al., 2018), exploring solid lean management, such as agility, flexibility and resilience (Reyes et al., 2021:12), can leverage additional supply chain resources to achieve a competitive advantage and ultimately improve organisational performance (Sirmon & Hitt, 2003) in the packaging business. Nevertheless, an organisation that aims to be agile needs to offer support to the workforce and subsequently, this support needs to be integrated and coordinated within the business strategy (Wong et al., 2018) to mobilise entrepreneurial and operational orientation and supply chain resources (Chirico et al., 2011).

Accordingly, this literature review examines a possible conceptual framework of strategy action and performance dimensions (Margharita et al., 2021: 829) as a way that the action-oriented

base research review looks at and brings possible critical factors for improving organisational performance. This Literature Review explores a possible way-forward solution to improve organisational performance and in examining relevant lean management processes for driving improvement in the supply chain (Rossini et al., 2021). The literature review further focuses on the contextual factors surrounding the organisation's performance with the packaging companies in Saudi Arabia and the wider GCC, which are concerned with uncertainty and unpredictability (Margharita et al., 2021: 829). It attempts to bring together various perspectives on managing disruption in supply chains and delve deeper into operational contingencies to avoid discontinuity of supply (Kleindorder & Saad, 2005:54), mainly from negligent practices in the supply chain (Roehrich et al., 2013: 698).

Therefore, the intention is to examine and delve deeper into the suitability of adopting adequate methodology, mechanism or change and explore factors by looking at methods within the organisation to begin creating a positive impact on wealth creation and reduce the worry of various stakeholders about their ability to capture and react to operational changes (Margharita et al., 2021: 829). Notwithstanding, organisations failing to meet their financial commitment usually face not only a lack of trust from investors (Morrow et al., 2007:280) but also, they may reduce their access to their resources as well (Morrow et al., 2007:282). Consequently, the literature review examines the basic principles of leanness and agility and woven them into the ten identified dimensions. Additionally, the literature review attempt to bring each aspect related to the research questions to understand how organisational performance is understood and defined. It brings together an associated literature review activity to understand more through studying the background of leanness and agility and try to investigate a practical approach plan for encouraging the development of both theory and practice and generating actionable knowledge (Coghlan, 2013:56). Finally, the literature review sets a fertile ground for my research methodology and design chapter, including my method of formulating the mode of inquiry.

2.2 Structure of the Literature Review.

This literature review is designed, so that action research brings an in-depth understanding of the possible critical factors for enhancing organisational performance. LR is guided by the formulated research questions to explore success by success in lean management (Rossini et al., 2021) and the importance of leanness and flexibility within the supply chain and various operational orientation (Narasimhan et al., 2008; Fayezi et al., 2016:2).

As such, the organisational performance phenomenon is highly challenged among organisations, and the literature review offers an overarching view of my research question when exploring leanness and agility. LR allows to identify and concentrate on ten focus dimensions and explore more recent developments in the organisational performance literature around lean management, specifically around operational agility and supply chain resilience. Although the ten dimensions will be explored in the next section, scholars and practitioners focus on areas of interest within their lens of exploration. As such, some dimensions surrounding leanness and agility might be left unexplored or less explored, and other dimensions will be further studied and researched. However, my aim is not to reason the complexities of organisational performance within a restraining framework but rather to explore and exploit leanness and agility within the following ten dimensions and shed deeper insight into what is relevant and connected to my workplace practice.

These ten dimensions provides a brief account to demonstrate methodical soundness rather than a thorough explanation of the entire process surrounding (1) Lean management principles; (2) Lean Management and team building; (3) lean management systems to build competitive advantages; (4) Supply Chain Resilience; (5) infusing agility in a fast-changing environment; (6) Agile leadership; (7) Agile Culture; (8) Organisational agility and conflict of interest; (9) Agility and Organisational Change; and (10) Performance Management systems.

As mentioned above, scopes are further studied and researched in line with my inquiry to underpin the themes identified in my questionnaire for narrative-based output. These additional scopes surrounding my literature review are: (1) the economic analysis, (2) market uncertainties, and VUCA factors and (3) sustainable profitability.

Therefore, I have mentioned those three valid scopes and will be reflected in the literature review and the way they contribute to help us understand a more generalised picture surrounding supply chain and operational challenges within a particular context and practice. Within this context, in 2016, 2017 and 2018, ongoing economic challenges emerged, market uncertainties and VUCA factors disrupted the whole supply chain, and operational challenges occurred that challenged organisational profitability.

My organisation was challenged in adapting to those ten dimensions and three scopes due to the complexity and high dynamism (Rashid et al.: 2003:710) within the work culture in this specific work culture area in Saudi Arabia and the wider GCC. Consequently, my organisation could not adapt to the fast economic changes, and decision-making was challenged to manoeuvre through a prevailing volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous environment (Bennett & Lemoine, 2014:311) and therefore profitability was unstainable.

As such, like other packaging organisations, my organisation passed through various challenges In Saudi Arabia as many operational disruptive activities brought many unexpected events during 2016-2017-2018. The challenges remain on how my organisation would be able to handle those disruptive and challenging activities that trigger the complexity of the change process within my organisation to achieve the desired results. So, comprehending the gathered knowledge and trying to understand how to improve performance in these supply chain and operational challenges is the ingredient of focus with various stakeholders to work and communicate with.

Thus, my challenge is engaging with the literature review, making sense of those ten dimensions, and the three scopes and later associating them with the methodology chapter. This enables organisations to explore a multidimensional concept of how organisational performance is understood within the packaging industry leaders and how knowledge is possibly enacted to determine what dimension of leanness and agility is required, given their unique settings and contextual circumstances.

2.2.1 Lean Management Principles.

Lean management principles bring the foundation for undertaking this action research over relevant and practical literature as a guiding tool for dissecting factors and examining how to improve organisational performance. Additionally, it delves into seeking answers to the research questions associated with the organisation's tasks, people, processes, planning, and strategy. Consequently, lean management principles are pivotal in the interconnection between the above ten dimensions of the organisational and operational model, leadership agility, organisational culture, and the strategy within Denning's (2016) Plan-do-check-act principle.

Therefore, the literature dealing with lean and agile manufacturing is discussed as manufacturing paradigms and performance capabilities as systems of practice (Narasimhan et al., 2006:441). An organisation operating within an in-equilibrium market characterized by high-profile events and persistent problems (Tukamuhabwa et al., 2015:3) has raised awareness among practitioners and academia of the need to minimise unavoidable complex events for the organization and, therefore, constructing a more resilient supply chain (Tukamuhabwa et al., 2015:3). The strategic positioning is vital for the organisation through choosing activities that are different (Porter, 1996:10). So, the goal of the lean system is doing more with less time, space, human effort in a highly economical manner (Paranitharan et al., 2011:410).

To successfully implement lean into organisations, proper management and stakeholders, including shareholders, commitment is recommended (Reyes et al., 2021:12). As such, this relates to the organisation's internal operational decisions that compound its vulnerability and complexity to operational disturbance (Tukamuhabwa et al., 2015:3) and their inability of deliver growth jeopardising the continuity of the organisation. Implementing lean management principles seemingly plays an essential aspect as there might be a link, if any, to organisational performance within the supply chain resilience and operational agility. Thus, integrating theory into practice (Coghlan, 2013:56) and finding out possible outcomes and objectives set a platform by understanding how Lean Management Principles present how resources (Sirmon & Hitt, 2003) affect the supply chain strategies to survive (Sirmon et al., 2011).

Arguably, lean management principles explicitly consider the manager's role in structuring a firm's resources, bundling them into capabilities, and, eventually, leveraging those capabilities (Sirmon et al., 2011). Specifically, lean management principles consider the actions taken by a leader in managing the organisation's resources (Hitt et al., 2011) to achieve and maintain the organisation's organic growth (Canes et al., 2017). Experts believe Lean implementation improve flexibility, waste elimination, optimization, process control and people utilisation (Sharma et al. 2016:406). This brings supporting and possible solutions for the dissected interpretation of evidence of the organisation's problem of lack of supply chain resilience and operational agility (Reyes et al., 2021:12).

Notably, any organisation employs skilled employees, but technology quickly depletes these individual skills. Employees must be well-resilient to ensure that organisation design embraces the principles of lean thinking (Fullerton et al., 2014:414). Sánchez and Pérez (2001:1444) indicate that introducing any lean production program aims to increase productivity, reduce lead time and costs, and improve performance. The decision-making process to improve process efficiency and refine the process through proper analysis to constitute integrated supply chain activities contributes to organisational performance (Cochran et al. 2000:1380).

Therefore, the decision-making with productive teams is smoother in infusing the required organisational change into practice and in overcoming the inefficiency in business processes (Comella-Dorda et al., 2019:5). One of the initiatives to drive the changes within the business relationships is by breaking down the operational departmental silos (Cummins, 2017:329) focusing not only on individual practices of the team members but also on the interaction in doing this (Pavlov, 2017: 440). Thus, on the one hand, collaboration is one of the formative elements of a resilient supply chain (Sholten & Schilder, 2015:471), and on the other hand, creating an excellence-oriented culture that has a core role in stimulating an agile mindset (Carvalho et al., 2017:1718). Such agile practices actively support the ongoing cultural transformation and promote adaptive planning and continuous process improvement (Denning, 2016:11). In doing so, organisations can foresee and adapt to supply chain resilience and ultimately tackle the collaborative activities of information-sharing, goal resemblance, joint

decision-making, resources –sharing, collaborative communication and combined knowledge creation among all supply chain stakeholders (Sholten & Schilder, 2015:474).

Implementing Lean management principles is a solution to improve operational resilience, ensure cost control, and improve manufacturing processes (Fullerton et al., 2014:414). Additionally, Denning (2016) considers a practical solution of plan-do-check-act which tackles part of my action research in developing operational management resilience. Further reading of the literature on the application of PDCA and self-reflection, I found that if proven successful, Denning's (2016) methodology could be relevant in building organisational agility and act as a continuous cycle to be spread across the entire functions within the organisation.

Therefore, the core business of the supply chain and its supporting functions relate to the impact of the organisation's performance and to the functions split into both the core supply chain and supporting functions. As such, understanding an agility plan using the PDCA cycle supports my scholar-practitioner role as it involves exploring a plan to connect operational agility with the PDCA cycle where each step is connected with clear objectives, allocation of responsibility, timeframe, and accountability. As such, if agile leadership is required, then agile transition necessitates an in-depth understanding of the planned implementation of the goals, principles, and values of the organisation (Denning, 2016:14). Consequently, this is detailed in the methodology chapter, with a plan-do-check-act process (Denning, 2016) and the Action research cycles of (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014:9). The action research cycles comprise of context and purpose in four basic steps of constructing (basic inputs required for planning /execution), planning action (execution plan), taking action (execution) and evaluating action (results & analysis) (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014:9).

As a means of further dissecting the above lean management principles, ensuring clarity about lean management requirements and the expected team-building role from each stakeholder brings active support to successfully implement required organisational change to achieve my research objective and make vital changes in employees' attitudes (Van der Heijden et al.,2002:45). Therefore, lean management contributes towards reviewing and understating the academic literature and derive from the practical relevance and the extent of academic concept for a clear understanding of the relevant lean management concept. Consequently, creating

academic knowledge, educating, and refreshing basic knowledge of team building is essential learning and development aspect that could potentially trigger initiating needed challenging change in the mindset (Moreira, 2013:8) of those teams as part of change management concepts.

2.2.2   Lean management and Team Building.

When making further exploration, Lean is also about team building, integration, and ownership (Plenert 2010: 148); thus, teams during change bring a fact that the prevailing resistance within the organisation inhibit more resistance looking toward operational models and instability in any organisational culture. Their resistance to applying lean management principles within the organisation may result from various factors, such as:

1- Inadequate qualifications of employees.

2- Employees' personal belief that organisational change and operational agility do not bring any added value.

3- Lean management principles are inefficient and are not being practised.

4- Vacant positions are not adequately filled with qualified personnel.

Debatably, some researchers, e.g. (Rosin et al., 2020:148), poise as the Lean facilitator assigned to organising appropriate teams and later providing them with the necessary guidance and training in the proper tools. As such, the Lean effort can move on with the possible operational resilience and efficiency, focusing on continuous improvement or managed change (Plenert 2010:148). Consequently, the team within the organisation is the one that has to make the right decisions about such changes with an agile process (Rosin et al., 2020: 148).

When making practical and compelling exploration, team building pushes operational effectiveness and brings competitive advantage, including core competence of agile operations. Even though some organisations have had a competitive advantage as a core competency for many years, team behaviour might disrupt all supply chain resilience and operational dynamics (Plenert, 2010). Knowing that Lean works, organisations that look for change management

opportunities and tools that can help their cultures adapt so that the team can succeed in transforming themselves and the operation to Lean (Plenert 2010:149).

Notably, an efficiency-oriented culture brings operational excellence and install the lean management application by infusing and enhancing the available process (Myerson, 2012: 7). An efficient Lean supply chain team improves both the financial and operational aspects of a business and is also used as a competitive tool (Myerson, 2012: 7). Probably, some of the significant barriers to lean strategies in supply chain resilience are cultural change, management commitment, and lack of participation of various stakeholders (Myerson, 2012: 8). Some task-related components for identifying reasons affecting the organisation through non-value-added activities pushes an inability to deliver value to the stakeholder, and so pushes further an in-efficiency in the decision-making process, resistance to identify and execute lean management strategies and failures in unwanted consequences (Birkie et al., 2014:1).

At this stage, Lean is a team-based form of continuous improvement (Myerson, 2012: 2), and it is essential to elevate performance and provides mitigation measures for a performance-driven strategy. Operational strategy and lean management principles execution within the operations is similarly crucial to the teams to explore and focus on a proper strategic approach to execute lean management principles that focus on identifying and eliminating non-value-added activity and building competitive advantage (Myerson, 2012: 2).

2.2.3 Lean Management system to build competitive advantage.

Prior to moving on to another leanness dimension, it is useful to set the stage when exploring strategic positioning. No organisations that operate in a market characterised by uncertainties are immune to threats (Roehrich et al., 2013:698). Strategic positioning is vital in choosing systems such as lean manufacturing systems aiming to produce more with less resource (i.e., time, space, human effort) and giving customers what they require (Paranitharan et al., 2011). As such, in building a competitive advantage, Lean should be thought of as a long-term continuous program for any organisation (Myerson, 2012: 2) with a primary goal of increasing productivity, reducing waste, lead time, and costs, and improving quality. Lean management system aims to eliminate non-value-added activities that jeopardise organisations (Sánchez &

Pérez 2001), and its implementation improves production flexibility, waste reduction, process optimisation, control, and people management (Sharma et al., 2016).

Sharma et al. (2016) suggest eight criteria for implementing lean management and enhancing firm performance:

1. *5S* - Time delay is eliminated, supporting to control non-value-added activities and good housekeeping.
2. *Value stream mapping* – VSM is the Primary tool for eliminating non-value-added activities, cost control, improving process and operation efficiency, and eliminating the conflict of interest as the function and role are clarified.
3. *Just-in-Time (JIT)* – Raw material planning and inventory control to eliminate non-value-added activities.
4. *Single minute exchange of die (SMED)* – Eliminating non-value-added activities cost optimisation and improving operational effectiveness (OE).
5. *Computer integrated manufacturing (CIM)* – Eliminating non-value-added activities and improving operational effectiveness.
6. *Concurrent Engineering* – Cost control resource utilisation and waste control.
7. *Training Competency* – better resource utilisation eliminates the conflict of interest as the role is clarified and continuous improvement.
8. *Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)* – Information flow enhancement, cost control, and on-time delivery performance.

There are many criteria for lean implementation prescribed by Sharma et.al (2016:411) that bring attention while deriving possible implementation plans for manufacturing organisations. Recently emerged paradigms of Lean Management (Shingo 1989; Cochran 1994;) and Business Process Reengineering (Hammer & Champy 1993) call for the adaptation of the production system's structure to become more reactive to a fast-changing environment (Cochran et.al, 2000:1380), infuse agility, increase overall operations effectiveness and enhance organisational performance (Fullerton et al., 2014:415).

2.2.4   Infusing agility in a fast-changing working environment.

In explicating agility, the phrase 'agile' primarily defines organisations that can adjust and execute well in fast-changing environments (Cai et al., 2013; Chen et al., 2015; Dove, 2001; Lu & Ramamurthy, 2011; Mao, Liu, & Zhang, 2015a, 2015b). Dynamic capabilities (Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997), market orientation (Narver & Slater, 1990), strategic flexibility (Hitt, Keats, & Demarie, 1998), and absorptive capacity (Zahra & George, 2003) are critical concepts in the field of management on which the theory of agility may be built upon. Agility is about removing all organisational obstacles to respond quickly and adapt to dynamic market situations with severe competition. As Denning (2016) suggests, organisations implementing agile management practices are more receptive and successful in achieving innovation, excellent responsiveness to customer needs, and enhanced customer experience. Three main findings listed by Denning (2016:12) seemingly encourage leaders to transfer agile practice and culture into the organisation:

1. Agile is primarily a mindset.
2. Agile needs solid inspirational leadership.
3. Big old firms have been able to change.

Therefore, exploring business strategy is essential for achieving a competitive advantage to mitigate the risks and disruptive market dynamics. Porter (1996) suggests that managers must distinguish operational effectiveness from strategy, even though both are essential. Packaging companies operate in a market characterised by hyper-competition where strategic positioning becomes vital through choosing activities that are different from rivals (Porter, 1996).

Nevertheless, additional resources can be leveraged by a solid strategy to achieve a competitive advantage and ultimately improve performance (Sirmon & Hitt, 2003); however, ambiguity always lurks (Drummond, 2002; Canes et al., 2017) and so when the supply chain is challenged, organisations need to focus on increasing performance (Sirmon et al., 2011), and this is where organisations need to be agile through focusing precisely on achieving business excellence and improving operational agility.

According to Morley (2015), human capital is an essential factor that starts from the recruitment stage, hiring the right talent, developing and allocating them to specific jobs to get high performance. That falls under the "talent management umbrella", which is fundamental in improving operational agility (Sharifi & Zhang, 1999). There is adequate literature that reinforces the thought that gaining a competitive advantage through human capital is a practical way for an organisation to sustain its performance by being flexible and dynamic in adopting market changes (Skinner, 2007).

According to Janicijevic (2013), a new organisational structure directs employees to behave in their everyday work with the existing cultural values and norms; if employees respect the new organisational structure, it induces a cognitive agreement state (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). The organisational culture legitimises the behaviour and decisions imposed on employees and management by the organisational structure within the context of valid values and norms of action (Janicijevic, 2013). Luscher & Lewis (2008) did exploratory research on organisational design administered to overlook the existing organisational structure raising the vital need to change short-term competitiveness and long-term survival. Correspondingly, Helfat et al. (2009) suggest that workforce and team leaders must integrate their capabilities with their knowledge and skills in performing tasks at their best within the supply chain functions. Leadership limits organisational resistance, improve supply chain resilience, encourage change, and promote success (Ford & Ford, 2010; Watkins, 2012).

2.2.5   Supply chain resilience.

Supply chain resilience is the capacity to persist, adapt, or transform amid challenges and changes (Wieland & Durach, 2021: 316), so undertaking supply chain resilience (Squire, 2014:55) is of growing importance to both scholars and practitioners due to the developing complex and ambiguous market conditions and increased disruption. Consequently, the need to investigate the relationships between risk and performance with the action research perspective means that an assessment of the degree of resilience of the supply chain is required (Colicchia & Strozzi, 2012:413) in terms of adjustments to capacities of abilities (Ponomarov & Holcomb, 2006:129).

However, each supply chain stakeholder needs to put forward a level of relevance and perspective towards the organisational performance and in setting long-term growth ambitions and performance objectives as an exercise to beat current challenges (Kummerli & Anthony, 2018:6). Those factors like the interest of the level of supply chain stakeholders, the extent of dependency, influence power and contribution towards the supply chain resilience and towards having a solid organisation that could accomplish a long-term performance and operational agility (Collins et al., 2005:4).

In this perspective, it is vital to understand the need to integrate the operational process to win continuously over time (Freeman et al., 2004:365) and reassure that supply chain agility is positively associated with financial performance (Hillman & Seppanen, 2001:128). The willingness to engage along with the relationship towards uncertainty points out the engagement plan to see if the structure affects the degree of uncertainty along with the level of competitiveness (Sirmon et al., 2007:275) within the packaging industry itself, so that concern for profits becomes the results instead the driver (Freeman et al., 2004:364).

Prevailing tough competition for slowly evolving packaging markets make the customer base a buyer's market so additional resources are leveraged by a solid strategy (Sirmon & Hitt, 2003:342) and involves understating the concept of supply chain resilience within the context of global reach, shorter routes and increasing customer demands that causes unwanted operational and financial impact (Ponomarov & Holcomb, 2009: 124). Consequently, organisations need to check if there is a correlation between supply chain resilience and performance management practices and their interaction with the organisation's financial and non-financial performance (Pavlov et al., 2017:431).

Nevertheless, agile organisations are predisposed by a setup of stakeholders and routines that put forward contradicting demands and conflicting standpoints (Annosi et al., 2018:11) and stress a strategic approach to improving "learning in action" (Bailey & Raelin, 2015) and strategic performance management systems (Benson-Armer et al., 2016). Then, organisations need to look at relevant factors that affect performance from a more holistic approach in improving the relationships among strategy, actions, and capabilities (Du et al., 2018) and enhancing the organisation's performance (Chadwick et al., 2015).

Therefore, managerial behaviour and leadership are significant for making systems perform well (Gower, 2013: 80) and leadership specifies that collaboration, cooperation, and innovation must take root in agile thinking (Rigby et al., 2016:42).

2.2.6 Agile Leadership.

Although uncertainty evolved in management research a long time before term agility was even presented (Zhang, 2011:303), agility is a cultural change (Moreira, 2013:8), and organisational expectations can determine how organisations with an agile culture enjoy a considerably higher level of performance (Morley, 2015:35).

Consequently, organisations are concerned with uncertainty and unpredictability (Margherita et al., 2020:829). Creating value for stakeholders is understood through aligning, complementing, and trimming the needed resources and configuring appropriate capabilities (Baert et al., 2016:364). Manufacturing organisations that attempt to be agile and work within an uncertain prevailing situation brings a clear challenge for senior management so that they explore an appropriate strategy and plan to understand better the organisational behaviours within the context of organisations and the people managing those organisations (Rashid et al., 2003:08). Such exploration and understanding relief them from the pressure of their inability to capture and react to external changes (Margherita et al., 2020:829).

The dilemma lies in the consequences of the leaders' decisions that are made (Drummond, 2002:7), so the importance and requirement of the associated decisions need to be carefully planned. This comes along with each relevance and perspective that support developing the expectations for organisational agility as the improvement of agile capabilities begins with the assessment of the organisational environment and the changes occurring within the supply chain process (Margherita et al., 2020:831).

More specifically, leaders who plans for the unpredictable look for stability (Toegel & Barsoux, 2012:52) are themselves responsible for decision-making that holds value maximisation and so pursuing multiple lean management objectives of better quality, lower cycle time, and the best motivation for employees (Rosin et al., 2019:3). In doing so, organisations can reap positive

rewards such as improved reputation (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001), better performance through better analyst recommendations (Luo et al., 2014), and lower capital costs (Cheng et al., 2014).

Arguably, leadership is crucial in decision-making so that organisations perform well, and it has to take root within agile thinking. Promoting an entrepreneurial mindset among the teams to become innovative and create opportunities involves different entrepreneurial actions of effectuation and creativity (Hitt et al., 2011:63). Consequently, applying innovative solutions using leadership agility, as suggested by Saleh & Watson (2017), comes into the picture as a manoeuvring requirement in prevailing uncertain and low-performing packaging markets.

Therefore, agile leadership solves this shortfall by implementing agile methodologies with innovative product development to capture new markets. So, despite facing organisational hurdles, increasing people's confidence and cooperation are an excellent strategic approach (Kim et al., 2017) to infuse agile methodologies. Probably a more decentralised and flatter organisation with a hybrid structure (Collins, 2009) and combining functional and divisional or product-based design (Gothelf, 2014) makes it better using swift decisions (Morley, 2015) and a deeper understanding of the problem.

Arguably, keeping stakeholders engaged about relevant drivers of agility (Margherita et al., 2020:832) impacts the leadership influence on organisational performance. As such, the determinants of factors of change that push manufacturing organisations to adapt and reconfigure their strategies and operations to be agile (Margherita et al., 2020:832) would be the ultimate aim of creating a competitive advantage. Such added value influences the interest level of stakeholders, the extent of dependency, impact power and contribution toward organisational growth and the coordination across activities (Baert et al., 2016:367).

Subsequently, organisations with an agile culture enjoy a considerably higher level of performance (Morley, 2015:35), and the need to associate with each stakeholder to understand their requirements and expectation to enhance the organisation's performance rises. Excellent stakeholder relations enable the organisation to enjoy superior financial performance over a more extended period, and agile culture helps the previous poor performance improve more quickly (Choi & Wang, 2009:895).

2.2.7   Agile Culture.

Debatably, agile culture attracts high-performing people (Morley, 2015:35). Human capital is a significant factor starting from the recruitment stage, hiring the right talent, orientation at the organisation, developing the skill, allocating the talent to the specific job and retaining the high performer. However, to do so, Cadden et al., (2020:3) argues that organisations need to focus on the culture and how their adoption is so that positive operational performance is visible. An organisational culture relevant to embedding lean management favours high-performance results (Cadden et al., 2020:3) in terms of better quality, lower possible costs, best cycle time and high employee engagement and motivation (Rosin et al., 2020:3).

Subsequently, when lean practices benefit from an agile-oriented culture, where roles and procedures are clearly defined, and employees know exactly what is expected of them (Cadden et al., 2020:3), the resistance to identifying lean management strategies prevails in executing lean management. Inefficiency or absence of lean management principles due to the lack of availability of operational models at the organisation is critically important in a global strategic supply chain resilience (Plenert 2010: 2010: 79).

The packaging industry is in trouble externally from competitors outside the borders and internally from a lack of management attention (Skinner, 2007:330). As such, the market volatility scenario intensifies daily in various forms of political, social, trade and economic issues worldwide. This raises the need to combine two concepts of cultural adaptiveness and cultural responsiveness (Briody et al.,2016: 10) to tackle those volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous situations which exploit new opportunities in the Saudi Arabian and the wider GCC marketplace (Hitt et al., 2011:57). Safeguarding manufacturing success and survival are becoming very challenging (Sharifi & Zhang, 1999:7) and exploring talent management need to be considered in unleashing the talent that aims to change the infrastructure and understand how to build a flat structure to meet the impulses of the market (Glenn & Stahl, 2009:12).

Thus, exploring organisation design to overlook the existing supply chain organisational structure raises a vital need to change the system and culture for short-term competitiveness and long-term survival (Luscher & Lewis, 2008:221). The current operation and supply chain

structure offers people with the same competencies to achieve a unique output, thus bringing the possibility of attaining clear goals with a defined purpose that are vigorous to the logistics team in working for the common objectives of the organisation (Waldock, 2015:134).

At this juncture, a rigid and hieratical structure has its short-coming in connection to the slow responsiveness of the team during the process of transforming the organisation to create resilience and robustness in supply chain operation (Brandon-jones, 2014:55). Both the workforce and team leaders need to integrate their capabilities with their knowledge and skills in performing tasks (Helfat et al., 2009:10) within their organisational functions. As such various stakeholders engage and delve into the growing complexity of the existing supply chain complexity and the following increased probability of supply chain disruption (Brandon-jones, 2014:55). Although some managers are empowered to make better and swift decisions (Morley, 2015:35), managers sometimes lack to understand the relationship between specific resources, capabilities and performance in terms of resilience (Brandon-jones, 2014:55) and so affecting other department and the whole performance of the organisation.

Therefore, embedding an agile culture inevitably involves undertaking a microscopic view of the organigram to assess the structural set-up and the bureaucratic processes, if any, those directly related to the customers' base, the product manufacturing and on-time deliveries. A prime focus is to check whether the existing structure provides flexibility for shortening lead time and increasing process output with due consideration of layers and span of control within the relevant function. This reinforces the concept that lifting an organisation in peril requires the willingness to make sacrifices from all team players at all fronts (Kotter, 2012:37). This includes a point of caution when dissecting the interlink between organisational agility and conflict of interest.

2.2.8 Organisational agility and conflict of interest.

As part of an agile organisation's culture build-up, some components are required to infuse organisational change and concepts to improve organisational performance. While conflict of interest arises within the organisation during the adoption of organisational change, organisational commitment is essential to strengthen the relationship between the employees

and the organisation (Rashid et al., 2003:709) and avoid conflict of interest that may arise from the change. Organisational culture and commitment strongly influence organisational performance (Rashid et al., 2003:709).

Therefore, organisational culture impacts organisational performance (Rashid et al., 2003:709) between various levels of organisational structure, revisiting sociocultural system in terms of organisational structure, set strategies, policies, and management processes most probably bring solutions to nullify conflict of interest. According to Janicijevic (2013:41), a new organisational structure directs employees to behave daily with the existing cultural values and norms they respect. As such, implementing a new organisational structure induces a state of cognitive disagreement among employees (Fiske & Taylor, 1991).

Furthermore, Nebojsa & Janicijevic (2013:58) argue that the organisational culture legitimises the behaviour and decisions imposed on employees and management by the organisational structure within the context of valid values and norms of behaviour. This unpleasant and frustrating state occurs when values respected by an individual are not following how an employee is forced to behave (Nebojsa & Janicijevic, 2013:41), which brings a clear connection to the corporate hierarchical set-up bringing dissatisfaction with the business unit organisational structure set-up.

Thus, the wicked problem organisation faces in terms of conflict of interest is a key process involved in decentralising the decision-making activity through the relevant established systems within the operational area and creating comprehensive collaborations among peers representing both technical and organisations perspectives (Cummins. 2017:329). As such, a hierarchical system that resists a decision support system does not help the stakeholders properly judge the decision-making process (Alexander et al., 2014). This necessitates organisational change where the organisational design is a bit hierarchical, consisting of centralised decision-making arrangements. As such, employees become a receiving direction actor to the relevant department managers, making them only an execution force that drives the organisation's performance.

2.2.9   Agility and organisational change.

The worthiness of authority as a primary means of effecting change in an organisation seemingly pays back if the change and resistance to change as handled in a leaderful way (Raelin, 2010:91). Leaderful process as a change agent does not pull the organisation where he or she wants to go, rather than they support and mobilise the members of an organisation to go in the direction members wish to go (Raelin, 2010:91).

There is a big difference in how authority is gained between the Leader and Manager. As we know, organisations have a pyramid type of organisational authority flow. Raelin (2003: 31) seemingly describes the organisation structure, indicating that a flow of authority needs to address how leaders interact with those within their immediate and broader stakeholders. Nevertheless, the top management team might be having difficulty implementing change due to the complexity and dynamism in volatile working conditions (Rashid et al., 2003:710), so many leaderships quality and leadership issues jeopardise organisational performance. The definition of what behaviour constitutes leadership (George et al. 1995:224) clarifies what conduct constitutes leadership in a way that "establishing and communicating vision, inspiring, instilling pride" under a leader-based domain seemingly supports the prime function of a leader within an organisation. Establishing commitment and culture have practical implications for managers and could ultimately improve performance (Rashid et al.,2003:710), so followers in that context will try to understand the importance of change.

Therefore, managers are the drivers of the organisations (Rashid et al., 2003:709) and need to highly understand the relevance of the importance of human and social capital in the creation of a rapport between them (Suseno & Pennington, 2018:84). As such, the change in the business conditions gets affected due to the change in the competitive scenario where the organisational change becomes inevitable (Sturdy et al., 2003:659). Consequently, infusing agility into the organisation inevitably involves undertaking a microscopic view of the organigram to assess the supply chain structural set-up and the processes, those that are directly related to the long-term strategic decisions (Alexander et al., 2014:506). A prime focus on functional areas provides flexibility for improving the process output with due consideration

of layers and span of control within operational structures that are definable and stable (Alexander et al., 2014:506).

Lean management resources (i.e., efficiency, product quality, lead-time) and human resources (i.e., skills, competencies, capabilities) strongly support organisational competitiveness (Pavlov et al., 2017). However, to do so, organisations need to explore a solid performance management system with valid key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that can improve the organisation's performance.

The performance management system is vital to analyse the organisation's failures and develop an action plan to optimise its resources and organise them to achieve a competitive supply chain advantage (Ketchen et al., 2014). Nevertheless, an organisation that aims to be agile needs to support the workforce if they are looking towards improving organisational performance. Subsequently, that needs to be integrated and coordinated within the business strategy (Wong et al., 2018) to mobilise entrepreneurial orientation and supply chain resources (Chirico et al., 2011).

2.2.10 Performance measurement systems and KPI.

Performance measurement systems serve two primary functions: acting as a catalyst to increase organisational performance and ultimately maintaining overall performance (Gunasekaran & Kobu 2007). The research on performance measurement systems spans various fields, such as management (Homburg et al., 2012) and manufacturing (Sted et al., 2006, Bendloy et al.,2007). Much of the literature focuses on design and implementation (Neely 2005), particularly identifying metrics for a performance measurement system (Bourne et al., 2000, Stede et al.2003).

While many researchers have stressed the importance of identifying the best metrics and methods to implement a performance measurement system (Melnyk et al., 2004), there is little evidence that using a performance measurement system leads to productivity gains. While there is a big theory to motivate the relationship between performance measurement systems and an organisation's overall performance, the lack of empirical research has made it difficult to justify increased investment in performance measurement systems (Neely, 2005).

A natural and necessary measure of operational agility is productivity, so the alignment with firms' strategy increases productivity subsequently, Pavlov & Bourne (2011) state that the link between the performance measurement system and its effect on organisational performance has not received enough attention leading to a gap in the literature. Thus, before presenting the empirical results, Pavlov & Bourne (2011) suggest three mechanisms through which PMS can impact productivity.

- First, PMS facilitates firm managers and employees to recognise the current organisational performance and to identify its gap compared to the "target goal." A better understanding of the current status may enable the firm stakeholders to search for more efficient procedural adjustments to meet the target, leading to higher productivity, Kaplan & Norton (1992).

- Second, PMS may also facilitate modification of supply chain processes if any deviation from the standard is detected, where decision-makers may share tacit and explicit knowledge to maintain or improve their performance in operations (Benner & Tushman 2003).

- Third, from Total Quality Management (TQM) literature, firms must coordinate behavioural, tacit, and intangible resources to improve the processes (Powell 1995).

Therefore, PMS, designed to track, visualise, and deliver various aspects of performance, entails using explicit and implicit practices to achieve process improvements or higher efficiency. In this research project, is evolved around the supply chain process improvements. Most studies have assumed a direct relationship between better performance measurement system practices and overall firm performance (Crabtree & DeBusk 2008, Davis & Albright 2004).

In addition to the diversity of measures, how the performance management system is used can impact organisational performance. Generally, performance management systems focus on four main uses: monitoring, focusing attention, strategic decision-making, and legitimisation. The monitoring use of the PMS is a feedback system, keeping managers informed if established goals are being met (Henri, 2006). This is akin to Simons' (1991) conception of diagnostic control. Therefore, using a performance management system in this way allows managers to

see what is going according to plan (and which achievements need to be rewarded) and what is going awry (and needs correction).

2.3   Economic Analysis.

The Gulf Council Countries (GCC) economies in general, and Saudi Arabia in particular, are oil-centred economies this indicates that negative growth in oil creates considerable issues in the economic cycle as the income resources become limited. As such, during 2016-2018, there was a Paradigm shift in oil barrel prices owing to the requirement of income generation and the Saudi government was reluctant to impose tax on income and subsequently, expenditure is met by miscellaneous corporate and state-level tax such as VAT and expat levy. This new trend has basically dented the prime advantage of working in Saudi Arabia, savings due to the tax-free advantage.

Similar to other packaging industries in the non-oil manufacturing field, those areas of challenges are triggered by adding to the internal complexity of the situation some additional factors, such as a highly competitive packaging market, escalating operational and living costs and socio-economic challenges. In 2016 - 2017 - 2018, consumer sentiment in Saudi Arabia was at an all-time low. Expatriates' job security was challenged by localising the job to the nationals where the estimated number from various sources shows that more than 800,000 expatriates left Saudi Arabia in 9 months between 2017 and 2018 (Ambrose, 2018) as more levy fees were imposed on the expatriates putting 25 to 30 % of private organisations at risk of shutting down (Al Maeena:2018).

Therefore, with problems arising with the organisation, some problems were rising around socio-economic issues such as a downtrend in the economic conditions due to the slump in crude oil prices (as shown in figure 1). Such price slump created a rippling effect among all non-oil manufacturing industries, where Saudi Arabia withheld most of the construction and infrastructure-related projects as part of austerity measures. With such economic problems residing around the working environment in Saudi Arabia, it was essential to represent the contextual factors surrounding my action research considering looking at gathering data and shedding light and understanding on how various stakeholders within the packaging and

manufacturing realm managed or failed to overcome ambiguous and challenging situations and investigating what had a positive relationship with the organisational performance (Soo et al., 2002:8).

As such, with the additional impact of Saudisation (nationalising the jobs in the Saudi Arabian economy) and Indirect taxes created a strain on expats middle-income earners who were under the strain of higher rentals, higher school fees, and higher fuel prices. Accordingly, due to the slowdown of the economic system, the expat employees were laid-off and some of them voluntarily left and the expat families are sent back to their home countries. This created massive pressure on reality and as one of the economic outcomes, the demand fell drastically for all types of markets and for example, 25% to 40% loss of rental income. Starting from this point, Saudi Arabia which is basically built with a nascent economy with mega-production capability be it soap, oil, etc has a mega project to cater to a larger audience not only catering to KSA but also with the objective of serving the MENA region. As such the consumer consumption fell drastically both domestically and regionally. As of best-guess estimate, we have seen a fall of 30-35% in terms of consumer consumption.

As such, the current economic downturn was kicking hard on the hyper competition mode and customer behaviour to ensure cash flow through placing short orders from various suppliers to leverage credit payment terms. At the same time, the same market dynamics and economic situation was projected at that time to get more worse as unforeseen aspects of uncertainty would grapple the world and economy related to social, political, technical and economy related factors.

Although external economic forces outside the organisation can impact how the turnaround outcome eventually unfolds, these forces are intermediated by strategic choreography of the organisation (Sheppard & Chowdhury, 2005). Leaders tend to make important decisions predictably, therefore improve the ability to tip the outcome and thus change the way you persuade others (Williams & Miller, 2002). As such the need to overcome various forms of uncertainty arising from innovation contribute to creating new knowledge from both within and outside the organisation and what makes the economy a complex one is when there are multiple models that are not integrated well with each other (Martin, 2013).

At this juncture, soft skills are needed in a highly changing environment such as managing anxiety, emotional intelligence and critical thinking (Saleh & Watson, 2017) where managing VUCA factors and market uncertainties, leaders miss devoting energy and resources to management before the crisis as during it (Glenn & Stahl ,2009).

2.4   Market Uncertainties and VUCA factors.

VUCA challenges and various business uncertainties confronting organisational performance are dynamic and attaining superior performance and gaining substantial competitive advantage is a significant challenge for organisations mostly in an unstable and uncertain business environment (Walter, 2019). By the end of 2017, my organisation moved from a profit-making industry since its inception in 1994 to a highly questionable business industry causing shareholders dissatisfaction in terms of limited growth and lower wealth generation (Hitt et al., 2011:59). This has questioned the strategic directions and actions taken by the organisation on the declining performance and affecting performance expectations in general and the shareholders in specific (Morrow et al., 2007:282).

At this juncture, as I reposition to think of market uncertainties and VUCA factors, I find the application lean management to improve the organisational performance as a part of meeting stakeholder's expectations and improving wealth creation (Hitt et al., 2011:59). Such position offers a paradigmatic shift in thinking and understanding appropriate strategies to manoeuvre through the prevailing VUCA phase, where VUCA is an acronym to volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity are used to describe an environment that challenges the wise judgment and perplexes executives in organisations (Bennett & Lemoine, 2014:311).

I perceived the need to combine cultural adaptiveness and responsiveness (Briody et al., 2016:10) and suggested tackling the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous situation (Bennett & Lemoine, 2014) with valuable research that brings about a change in packaging organisations (Briody et al., 2016:10).

By the same token, having a mindset change, understanding the prevailing VUCA condition is a very important factor by embracing simultaneous process to improving organisational performance. Engaging with various thinking of such a change owing to reduce the uncertainty

leads to better decision making and greater organisational success (Janney & Dess, 2004:60). On the other hand, embracing leanness, agility and resilience as detailed above in the ten dimensions and three scopes and engaging with my questionnaire themes allows a better understanding of of my research in a way not only to understand how to create wealth and meet stakeholder's expectations but also has to engage in multiple thinking on how to create an agile organisation that withstands turbulent markets and creates a better world (Gower, 2013: 80).

This is resounded by the notion that some of the neck-tightening VUCA conditions, both the market and packaging industry are passing through. Therefore, infusing agility into the organisation and understating practical actions directed to improving organisational performance amid an uncertain environment maybe less sufficient by addressing the exploration of organisational design that is administered with the view of overlooking the existing organisational structure raising the vital need to change the structure for short term competitiveness and long term survival (Luscher & Lewis, 2008:221).

As such, the VUCA factors maybe be too challenging for exploring and fully gaining from my concrete experience and action from my observation, questioning and reflection (Cardno & Piggot-Irvine, 1996:20) to understanding how to manoeuvre a VUCA phase. The focus back then during 2017 -2018 was on a well-defined customer portfolio with long-term business association with mutual support to ensure at all times a win-win situation. However, as aftermath of the VUCA effect, the market has become very volatile with limited customer loyalty and intention for associating themselves long-term with packaging suppliers along with surpassing lookout for financial gain in the customer approach prevailing within the market. Therefore, the sales approach works no more and raises the needs to be dynamic with short-term strategic approach manoeuvring with both cost leadership and product differentiation approach by forecasting customer behaviour to boost the probabilistic result (Burns et al., 2016: 100).

Therefore, to understand the VUCA phenomenon better, the factors could be discussed in two aspects, external and internal association with VUCA phenomenon. The external association is

in-terms of Political, Economic, Social, Technological, legal and environmental factors, and internal association is related to factors within the organisation. External factors seemingly indicates that the extent of the VUCA phenomenon associated with wealth creation. The economy factor prevailing in the country since 2017 has a clear negative effect and caused a slowdown of various industries and therefore, from early 2018, the packaging market witnessed slowdown and demand has dropped significantly.

As such, the latest political and social reforming on the progress in Saudi Arabia seemingly nullifies the negative effects of VUCA as the Saudi Government has introduced new rules and regulation to encourage and develop tourism industry that is expected to bring positive economic growth as all the tourism associated industries would be expected to grow during the year 2020.

The internal aspects related to VUCA is in-terms of weakness within the organisation performance indicates that the lower level skill set prevailing among operational employees, who is the frontline brings a negative impact on quality and cost. Therefore, understanding related factors are an important aspect for enhancing skill set. As such, an important aspect of cruising through the VUCA phenomenon is the understanding and exploration of mitigation plan for the VUCA phenomenon through a careful strategic thinking process focussing on sustainable profitability.

2.5   Sustainable profitability.

Acknowledging that uncertainty creates ambiguity, profitability in its simplest norm could be understood as the resources needed in developing and maintaining a competitive edge (Sirmon et al., 2007). As such, pushing the shareholders to align their resource investment choices with their relevant leveraging strategies (Symeonidou & Nicolaou, 2015). Consequently, the resource deployment that lead to profitability and wealth creation (Hughes et al., 2018) remains unclear unless addressing a main topic within the packaging industry related to conflict of interest due to double responsibility.

As noted by Teece et., al (2016:30), the greater the uncertainty within business dynamics and the greater the necessity for organizational agility, the more acute strategy, entrepreneurial

drive, and strong dynamic capabilities grow into organisation profitable growth. As mentioned earlier, Lean Management focuses on reducing the cost of operation and waste level and deprioritize other activities (Comella-Dorda et.al, 2019:3) owning to my function in co-ordinating resources (technological, human, financial, etc.) scientifically to generate a maximum of added value and ultimately create wealth (Ferrary, 2008:33).

At this juncture, making stakeholders unsecured would bring its risk in terms of performance and engagement (Burns et al., 2016, Saleh & Watson, 2017). Instead, they need to continue to be valuable and capable of creating competitive advances and be challenging to imitate (Srimon et al., 2003). Thus, an organisation creates value for all its stakeholders to ensure the stakeholders' engagement which, in turn, brings confidence upon the organisation and motivating all employees toward organisational excellence.

As Sirmon et al. (2007) suggested, success can only be found when an organisation creates sustainability in a good environment, but for that, an organisation needs to have a solid organisational structure and positive organisational culture. Nevertheless, to sustain profit, organisations look at their established organisational design once hierarchical, consisting of centralised decision-making arrangements and create comprehensive collaborations among peers representing both technical and organizations perspectives (Cummins. 2017:329). As such, bringing the possibility of achieving clear goals with a defined purpose that are vigorous to the team in working for the common objectives of the organisation (Waldock, 2015:134). Consequently, achieving competitive advantage is a primary path to outperform the prevailing intense competition (Porter, 1996), where a company can outperform rivals only if it can establish a difference that it can preserve. It must deliver more excellent value to customers, create comparable value at a lower cost, or do both.

Sustaining profitability is linked with sustaining and continuously creating a competitive advantage (Porter,) in being:

- Cost Leader (Increasing profits by reducing costs while charging industry-average prices).
- Differentiation (pursuing strategic differentiation within a focused market).

Achieving both strategies is possible by analysing key strengths and weaknesses related to the organisation (internal) and opportunities and threats (external). The management strategy has to be split into management objectives by setting metrics and action plans for achieving those objectives (either quantitative and qualitative). Once the management objectives have been set, the organisational structure is further needed to be fine-tuned in terms of decision rights, information, and motivators (Nelson et al. 2008).

Drawing on Aigbedo (2004), Burgess et al. (2006), Alexander et al. (2014), Birkie et al. (2014), Brandon-Jones et al. (2014), and Brusset & Teller (2017) on supply chain management, capabilities, risk and unravelling operational resilience, various stakeholders can begin to promote change (Ronen, 2020). This raises the need to combine two concepts of cultural agility and responsiveness (Briody et al.,2016: 10) to tackle complex and ambiguous situations and identify and exploit new opportunities (Hitt et al., 2011:57) in the Saudi Arabian and the wider GCC marketplace.

Thus, chapter three focuses on my research methodology and design, considering my scholar-practitioner perspective and reflexivity that is appropriate for investigating organisational performance through the lens of leanness and agility, addressing the questions posed earlier. It further delve into the philosophical approach, the methods formulating the mode of inquiry, the qualitative framework, and the data collection and analysis process.

3 Chapter 3: Research Methodology and Design.

3.1 Introduction.

This chapter lays out a comprehensive strategy associated with the literature review to explore my research problem and the related research questions. Additionally, it digs into the philosophical position, specifying the notion of ontology and epistemology, the methodology for formulating the mode of inquiry, the action research cycles, the data collection process, and the insider research account addressing reflexivity as a scholar-practitioner. Additionally, this chapter exhibits how the core action research works in cycles and explains how the various phases of the dimensions are enacted within the scope of my research, focusing on the organisation's performance and sustainability during challenges, specifically the examination of the leanness within the operational agility and supply chain resilience. Consequently, it also look at mobilising the internal and external participants, defining and selecting the participants, the participant's selection, how they were approached, the interview process, the data analysis and the development of data structures.

Therefore, my philosophical position within the research onion (Anderson et al.,2006; Bradbury-Huang & Reason, 2007; Saunders, 2008) assists my understanding of this research in delving and having a deeper insight to comprehend better the disruptive environment surrounding packaging companies. It further allows the audience to make sense of the community of scholars and the applied practical research in reports and recommendations (Coghlan & Casey, 2001:678). Taking this position, the methodology of my action-oriented base research guides me in exploring a leanness and agility framework to generating actionable knowledge that is tested in the workplace (Mumford,1996:6) by integrating both theory and practice (Raelin, 2000:280; Coghlan, 2013:56). As such, this allows the audience to understand how I view the world of action research as a strategy for implementing change (Parkin, 2009). Additionally, this helps the audience understand how crucial the supply chain is in delivering an impactful improvement in the organisational performance and how operational agility is vital to solve my specific organisational performance problem (Parkin, 2009:21) of the supply chain disturbance and operational orientation.

Subsequently, action-oriented research tries to find answers to the research questions of how, what, why, and to what extent the supply chain disruption might affect the operational dynamics and the organisational performance using action research cycles (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014:11). Action research cycles are the series of actions associated with the spiral cycle of constructing, planning action and taking action (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014:11).

The data collection is discussed in detail, including semi-structured interviews of external participants, focus group meetings of internal participants, sampling size and participants' choice of internal participants and the ethical consideration of choosing the internal participants. Moreover, the mode of inquiry is explored deeper through an interpretivism approach to see how action research as a change strategy assists in overcoming various forms of uncertainty arising from supply chain disturbance and contribution to creating new knowledge within and outside the organisation.

3.2   Philosophical Position: Interpretivism approach.

The nature of reality (Ontology) draws on the overall consideration of a socially constructed reality (Koshy et al., 2010:14) that may change (Saunders et al., 2009) through the interpretations of the researcher's experiences and communication. It is argued that each story, from each internal or external participant, has a different social reality with various points of view based on personal accounts within their environment (Saunders et al., 2009; Koshy et al., 2010). As such, and to make sense of these socially constructed realities, I explored my philosophical position within the interpretivism approach to have a deeper meaning to illuminate the components of the internal and external participants' social reality (Koshy et al., 2010), which supposedly draws a broader picture to the organisational performance with numerous realities and various point of views (Saunders et al., 2009; Creswell, 2014). The inference taken at this point is that organisational performance is explored with the participants having multiple views and various realities. Thus, the reality of the organisational performance is enacted through power relations, trust and risk, structures and mechanisms and social ties (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008).

Equivalent to the anthology, the enacted knowledge (epistemology) presents a view of justification for what is assimilated as adequate knowledge (Saunders et al., 2009; Koshy et al., 2010). What people say and do, the subjective data, and how I interpret such knowledge are very important in my stance on knowledge creation (Saunders et al., 2009; Koshy et al., 2010; Creswell, 2014). As Creswell (2014) explains, there are various types of research design; however, my view for this research is interpretivism (Saunders et al.,2009), considering that my research topic comes from a problem-centred and real-world practice-oriented (Creswell, 2014) with in-depth investigations (Saunders et al., 2009) performed through a qualitative inquiry research approach. My epistemological stance then focuses on the reality in the real practical world (Cunliffe, 2008), inquiring why the supply chain disturbance is happening, to what extent the impact of operational orientation and how I can improve the organisational performance. As such, qualitative methods used with the interpretivism approach are based on the belief that knowledge is subjective, socially constructed, and affected by cultural and social interactions (Cunliffe, 2008; Koshy et al., 2010).

Within this worldview, I gathered data while retaining my objectivity (Koshy et al., 2010), influencing my understanding and perceptions in developing a better image of the world (Cunliffe, 2008) on how to act on reality as a scholar-practitioner from the basis of knowledge and the assumption of the social world that consists of self-contained individual actors (Cunliffe, 2008). As such, the Interpretivism approach entails a normative approach to knowledge generation (Burgess & Singh, 2006). In many interpretivist approaches, thematic orientations emphasise the structural and social contexts affecting participants' experiences and enabling knowledge creation through engagement between the researcher and both internal and external participants disclosing the meanings that are socially constructed (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Cunliffe, 2008; Kiger & Varpio, 2020). As such, the philosophical stance and epistemological position are interpretivisms premised on the experiences of the participants working with a practical socially constructed system, operating close to the data, entrenching the whole process, ascertaining what knowledge is known through subjective experiences of all the stakeholders (Cunliffe, 2008, Creswell, 2014; Kiger & Varpio, 2020).

Therefore, my understanding is founded on those self-contained actors getting very close to the data in a subjective manner (Cunliffe, 2008; Saunder et al., 2009; Koshy et al., 2010). Consequently, such interpretation ascertains what the participants know and are experienced to uncover the reality in this complex world, a world when multiple supply chain models are not integrated well with each other (Martin, 2013), a world that we live in foreseeing the future of organisations will quite likely be unlike anything we have experienced in our economic history (LeBaron, 2010).

Zuber –Skerritt (2007:425) notes that the quality of action research is broadly related to the researcher's engagement in improving their practice through change and development and their contribution to knowledge in both practical relevance and scientific rigour (Coghlan, 2010). Additionally, he put forward that using action-oriented research allows for solving a real complex problem in the workplace. As such, my research design widely opts for qualitative inquiry in the primary data collection. Thus, the action-oriented base research is associated with a first-person practice insider perspective (Coghlan, 2013) that enables the audience of this research to grow their interest to lessen distance with every internal and external participant who comes across during this research journey.

Engaging with various participants in researching organisational performance in the interpretivism paradigm is educative and empowering (Koshy et al., 2010). The potential is to add value to the situated problem in the practical field to uncover significant issues of leanness and agility (Tracy et al., 2019). Employing qualitative research allows for investigating and exploring action and structure and examining important dragging issues around disruption and interference (Tracy et al., 2019). Good qualitative scholarship is rigorous, practical and exciting (Tracy et al., 2019), involving an approach in which problem identification, evaluation, planning, and action are interlinked (Koshy et al., 2010).

Debatably, knowledge is progressed through research and reflection (Koshy et al., 2010), as such, the significance of researching organisational performance within the leanness and agility approach contributes to supporting any manufacturing industry through this research. It would support the packaging industry to a large extent with this change model in integrating scholarship into practice and generating actionable knowledge (Coghlan, 2013:1). Additionally,

researching in this context provides an opportunity to see what participants do rather than what people say (Tracy et al., 2019), explores how people understand the world, their society and its institutions (Tracy et al., 2019).

Therefore, given that my research induces action-oriented base research, it is drawn that the framework shares a common nature of reality or being and my view regarding what constitutes adequate knowledge with the interpretive stance as an insider scholar-practitioner action researcher (Saunders et al., 2009; Creswell, 2014; Coghlan, 2010). My lens of interpretivism perception represents a rich experience of more than two decades in the packaging industry, sharing the focal problem of investigation (Zuber –Skerritt, 2007:425), highlighting the social realities that are shaped in everyday interaction (Cunliffe, 2008;124).

As an insider researcher using qualitative approach is a cornerstone to share the knowledge generated with both practitioners and the academic world. As such, the enacted knowledge on supply chain resilience and operational agility is explored in double folds, one is working with various participants and comprehending the gaps in applying lean management methodologies. The other fold is working with other stakeholders on using my research methodology as a learning platform to bridge the competencies gap, like organisational maturity within the team and exploring the formulation of my methods of inquiry to adapt to leanness, agility and resilience. As such, the concept of interpretivism within the action research explores how much meaning the scientific rigour of the supply chain and operations is efficient enough to deliver an impactful, practical improvement on my workplace practice (Saunders et al., 2009; Creswell, 2014; Coghlan, 2010).

The point is made on action oriented base research as a change methodology to resolve my workplace-based problem from a reflective perspective focusing on actions, real events, thoughts, conflicts and feelings of both the researcher and the participants (Dick, 2015). Interpretivism research explores how action research pursues action in terms of change and understanding simultaneously (Dick, 2015). It works collaboratively with others on the research methodology to achieve organisational and personal change (Brydon-Miller et al., 2014:14).

3.3   Research Methodology.

My research actively comprises qualitative research methodology that provides the theoretical foundation for the data collection depending on the nature of investigation towards the research question by addressing the main research question and the sub-questions in chapter one. Qualitative research is rich and holistic as it provides a deep understanding of the situation that goes beyond a snapshot of the research problem (Tracy et al., 2019). Consequently, it focuses on the lived experience. It honours the participants' viewpoints, stories, and local meanings in explaining, illuminating and exploring the quantitative data and preserving the occurrence of a socially bound reality (Cunliffe, 2008; Tracy et al.,2019).

Moreover, exploring leanness, agility, and resilience relates to knowledge creation to find relevant scholarly impact. Thus, the associated evidence underlines the scholarly impact on organisational performance and specifically within the supply chain disturbance and the reason for deriving the operation orientation using action-oriented research outcomes, illustrating how many interpretations are plausible (Tracy et al., 2019). Accordingly, my methodology provides a comprehensive mode of managing by inquiry and a strategy to improve workplace base practice, compelling how participants and various stakeholders are more scholarly excited and morally significant than others (Tracy et al., 2019). As such, action-oriented research is my research strategy and a method of implementing change (Parkin, 2009), and it is seen as inseparable from change management. It facilitates the change process, leading to practical improvement and development (Zuber–Skerritt, 2007:420), where this change made its impact and is realised as an outcome of my research. Therefore, my interpretation of action research is that it offers that strategy to overcome various forms of uncertainty arising from supply chain disturbance and contribute to creating new knowledge within and outside the organisation.

Therefore, action-oriented research is an appropriate methodology (Beart et al., 2007) that is carefully designed, clarified, reasoned, warranted, and justified methodology (Zuber-Skerrit & Fletcher, 2007) that promotes implementing change (Parkin, 2009) and tries to find answers for wicked problems in organisations (Zuber-Skerrit & Fletcher, 2007). The reflective perspective process promotes focusing on the participants' actions, events, thoughts, problems, dilemmas,

and social feelings within the research process (Ronen, 2020). It allows the qualitative data derived from the research to be used and learning to occur through both action and reflection (Beard et al., 2007). Taking such a stance contributes to both the knowledge created from both practical relevance and scientific rigour (Zuber-Skerrit & Fletcher, 2007) and, above all, identifying the gap using cycles of reflections on thinking and doing, monitoring this gap between the academic field and practical relevance culture (Ronen, 2020). Elaborating further, action research is described as a research methodology that pursues action, which is change, and research, which is understanding, that goes congruently simultaneously (Dick, 2015).

Such action-oriented research methodology contributes to providing not only relevant support but also validation which is well contested with the use of the literature review in methodology and content that is aligned to my research topic (Zuber-Skerrit & Fletcher, 2007) in both operationalising the concept of performance measurement value (Naslund et al., 2006) and action research (Moss et al., 2007). It seeks to collaborate and bring together action, reflection, practice, and theory in the quest for practical and actionable solutions to workplace-based problems (Reason et al., 2001). Consequently, the context of my action research is aligned with promoting organisational change (Ronen, 2020) by creating a more profound knowledge and understanding of lean management, supply chain resilience and operational agility to improve organisational performance. To achieve that, Naslund et al. (2006) look at the concept of value within the organisation by employing interviews, observations, and internal studies as ways of collaborating towards improving organisational performance with the teams to overcome any resistance to change.

Nevertheless, Moss et al. (2007) describe how action-oriented research creates an improved performance measurement system for any organisation that solves real complex problems (Zuber-Skerrit & Fletcher, 2007). Additionally, previous research has indicated that the diversity of measures in a performance management system can impact organisational performance (Lillis, 2002; Van der Stede et al., 2006). Paying attention to a broader array of measures can provide richer information to act upon, allowing for more exploration when changes need to be made. In addition, keeping track of only a few measures, particularly financial ones, can lead to dysfunctional behaviour (Lillis, 2002; Van der Stede et al., 2006). Conversely, paying attention

to only a few measures signals that those are essential to the organisation. Paying attention to only financial measures can lead to situations in which managers are prepared to do anything to raise those short-term figures, which is unlikely to benefit the organisation in the long term (Lillis, 2002; Van der Stede et al., 2006).

Therefore, my research aims to investigate new information with greater measurement diversity to mitigate this behavioural dysfunction (Lillis, 2002). Arguably leaders miss devoting energy and resources to management before the crisis as during it (Glenn & Stahl,2009) when managing in tough times, so leaders within the packaging industry could rely on an action-oriented base approach whereby one mainly influences others voluntarily to the realisation and attainment of an organisation's goals, objectives, and aspirations (Cole, 2005).

As means of picking an appropriate methodology, (Naslund et al., 2006) shed light on a research-oriented base model researching a leader in the packaging supply business by providing tools to change the employee outlook from a functional-oriented mindset set into a process and values-oriented mind-sets. This helps to explore a change process to remove cultural and structural barriers and facilitate the employees' interactions for organisational learning and change (Naslund et al., 2006). Therefore, it answers many questions about achieving my final destination that could benefit the whole industry and build on a change management approach (Doherty & Manfredi, 2006) and my observation, questioning and reflection (Cardno & Piggot-Irvine, 1996:20). Subsequently, the notion then is not just about organisations who tend to make essential decisions predictably and to improve the ability to tip the outcome (Williams & Miller, 2002), but perhaps going beyond the boundaries in raising the need in creating knowledge to continuously interpret altering conditions (Saleh & Watson, 2017) with multiple situations where uncertain situations arise. As such, those uncertainties that prevail in the market at any time might relay many challenges and unforeseen problems for manufacturing organisations in a world of multiple complexities where globalisation, deregulation, and new actors (Kaplan, 2008) changed the marketplace in many significant respects (Denning, 2016).

Several methods are used in my research, such as questionnaires, focus groups, interviews, and observations where the researcher controls data gathering (Dick, 2015). Consequently, based

on the narrative research approach, the qualitative data inquiry results in informal interviews with industrial leaders outside the organisation, both within Saudi Arabia and the wider GCC. My interview activity focused on gathering complete information from the participants' journey to overcome the identified supply chain challenges and their gained experience to learn, explore, and understand how to apply and implement the methods together with the stakeholders (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014). Therefore, my action-based research is designed to find answers on how to achieve this change with an approach to change what is grounded in action research (Schein, 2010; Coghlan & Brannick, 2014:78). The design involves building participation from the internal and external participants and commitment to the project and working with colleagues and peers to understand why change within the organisation is needed (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014:78).

The importance lies not only in the action research methodology but also in interpreting this action research in offering a robust and vigorous process of endorsing agile and continuous learning and enacting change (Greenwood & Levin, 2007). Moreover, learning requires an enhanced level of competencies from the people; therefore, organisations build competency models that include competencies, work values and time applications to portray the behaviours required to be successful at each level of cultural change (Huges et al., 2014:1139).

At this juncture, my overarching aim is to produce knowledge, help the outside world (Coghlan, 2001), and demonstrate my research in action. Consequently, the process of action research methodology in pursuing change and understating (Dick, 2015) involves action research cycles of diagnosing the problem, planning, taking and evaluating actions (Coghlan & Brannick, 2001) using a spiral process that alternates between action and critical reflection of interconnected analysis (Coghlan, 2001, Coghlan & Brannick, 2001; Dick, 2015; Doherty & Manfredi, 2005). Such an integral part of analysis interconnection translates that a change at one level triggers a blockchain of change at another level (Coghlan, 2001, Coghlan & Brannick, 2001; Dick, 2015) and therefore moving from participants to the teams to the organisation level to the group level to the packing field level, and ultimately to the outside world of the manufacturing industry.

3.4   Action Research Cycles.

The term action research early notion initiated the conceptual thinking working together to diagnose and intervene to solve a problem (Shein, 1999; Greenwood & Levin, 2007; Coghlan & Brannick, 2010). The idea of diagnosis and intervention, which was the founding principle of Kurt Lewin's (1890-1947), concept, became the cornerstone of the term action research (Schein, 1999; Greenwood & Levin,2007; Adams & McNicholas,2007). Action research is broadly defined as social research carried out by a team that encompasses a professional action researcher and the members of an organisation, community and shareholders seeking to change and improve the participants' situation (greenwood & Levin, 2007:3).

As such, action research cycles typically works through a cyclical four steps process, the first step is constructing (basic inputs required for planning /execution), the second step is planning action (execution plan), the third is taking action (execution), the fourth is evaluating action (results & analysis) (Adams &McNicholas,2007; Coghlan & Brannick, 2014). Each activity comprises small steps of the activity, and each activity follows the stated action research cycle given by Coghlan & Brannick (2014:9), as shown below in figure 2.

Ref: Coghlan & Brannick, 2014
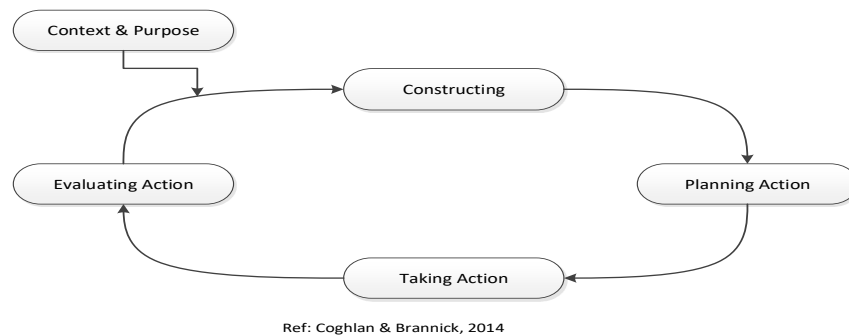
(Figure 2. AR Cycle (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014))

Therefore, each action comprises the above action research cycle, and the series of actions associated with execution activities comprises the spiral of the research cycle as given by Coghlan & Brannick (2014:11). However, the completion and initiation of another action cycle may be simultaneous (independent), or upon completion of one cycle, another cycle would start (dependent) depending on the nature and the understanding of my execution plan from the spiral of AR cycles (Coghlan & Brannick,2014).

Additionally, action research comprises data, feeding data back to the practitioner, then analysing these data, and planning activities based on the data collected as an approach to problem-solving (Adams &McNicholas,2007). Therefore, action research cycles are repeated until satisfactory outcomes are reached (Adams &McNicholas,2007) and therefore are considered an approach to problem-solving that motivates the research questions (Moss et al., 2007). AR cycles consider the application of real findings and experimentation as well as real problems with practical relevance demanding action and solutions from the researcher (Adams &McNicholas,2007) and discovering what is good in establishing a system that might become a model (Calabrese, 2006) and could work for the whole packaging industry.

Therefore, to establish my scholar-practitioner position, I used the action research cycles to acquire new knowledge and elevate my learning and understanding of the impact of supply chain resilience and operational agility on organisational performance. Such a stance requires confronting the status quo (Argyris,1995), raising the need for the created knowledge to be incorporated, and learning to happen between the why, what, how and to what extent of knowing and doing things (Naslund et al., 2006:304). As a supporting point, it reinforces my insider scholar-practitioner role to understand, create and deliver value through a possible change in internal process and the stakeholders' mindset involved in that change.

3.4.1 Core Action Cycle in tandem.

This section briefly overviews the relationship between my action research and the action research cycles working in tandem. The action research cycles are endorsed with the context of organisational performance and lean management with the supply chain resilience and operational agility from both practical relevance and scientific rigour (Coglan, 2013) incorporating the elements of planning and designing the research. The incorporation of the literature review along with the methodology, describing the research processing, and engaging with modes of analysis of coding and generating themes, my reflexivity, the plausible outcome and the suggestion for the scholarly to the packaging industry knowledge transfer (Cunliffe, 2008; Agrawal, 2001).

As Dick (2015) describes, Action Research is a family of research methods and approaches that pursue change and understanding by using a cyclical process that alternates between action and critical reflection. In the later cycles of action research, the pursuit of action and research is achieved by refining data collection methods and interpreting the data generated from previous action research cycles (Dick, 2015).

Therefore, my action research cycles (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014:9) in constructing, planning, executing, taking action and evaluating action sets the foundation to transfer the knowledge created (Coghlan & Brannick) in an emergent process which takes shape as understanding grows (Dick, 2015). Additionally, it consisted of many action research cycles that work in tandem to explore and tackle different issues related to organisational performance. Collecting these action research cycles drove me to find answers to my research question. Each cycle contains the context and purpose for which the individual action cycle is initiated, with a clear definition of the purpose to be achieved based on data collection. Upon defining the context and purpose, the relevant organisational issue is addressed based on data collection under constructing steps to plan further action. While each action comprises the above action research cycle, the series of actions associated with execution activities comprises the spiral of the research cycle as given by Coghlan & Brannick (2014:11). However, the completion and initiation of another action cycle may be simultaneous (independent), or upon completion of one cycle, another cycle would start (dependent) depending on the nature and the understanding of my execution plan from the spiral of AR cycles given in below diagram 5:
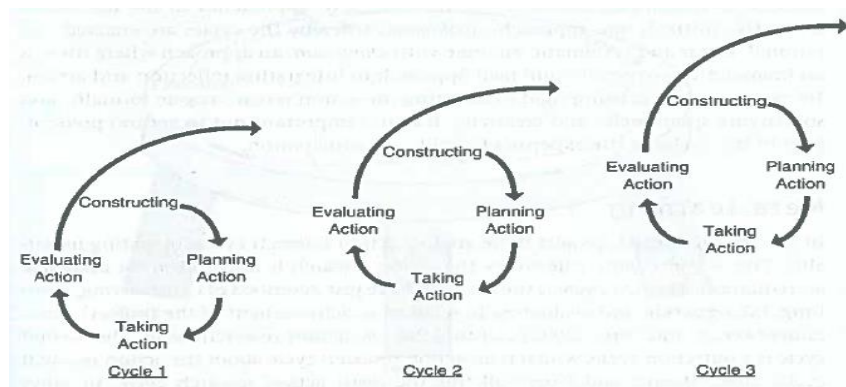
Figure 1.3   Spiral of Action Research Cycles

(Figure 5 – Spiral of Action Research Cycle (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014))

So, my learning gained a deeper operational level and broadened understanding of the organisation (Naslund et al., 2006). I decided to engage deeper with the focus group meetings and conveyed to the team the importance of collaboration (Dick, 2015) and how and why organisational change is necessary to solve the organisational problem and ultimately enhance its performance. My current executive activity primly involved working swiftly around the leadership qualities of employees to be enablers employees for the ongoing transformation as this increases team productivity (Rigby et al., 2016:43) and raises exciting possibilities (Rigby et al., 2016:42). I also explained to the team the action learning cycles as a framework. I made them realise that they are an essential part of the organisation. I count them as potential enablers towards the ongoing transformation and a cornerstone in manoeuvring throughout this research journey.

3.4.2   Creating Action outcomes.

An overview is outlined of how the core action research cycles are enacted from the interviews. The work commenced with the focus group team, which set out some rules of the working framework outlining the five-step model of pre-step of context and purpose, constructing, planning, action, taking action and evaluating action to generate the action research cycles (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010).

Therefore, the AR is applied in multi-phases that consist of AR cycles (context & purpose, constructing, planning action, taking action and evaluating action) (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010). Each AR activity defines the purpose, action plan, timeframe and expected results. Therefore, the internal participants' involvement was essential to ensuring active participation by constituting the focus group. The focus group collaborates with experienced and committed multidisciplinary employees relevant to the supply chain improvement list that would propel the organisation to enhance performance in terms of cost and efficiency. So, the data collection is taken at the end of each AR cycle to verify and validate the improvement.

Consequently, I have researched the main criteria based on my interaction with the managers and team leaders associated with the organisation's operation to see how we could explore a practical plan and discover resources (Small & Downey,1996: 628) working around the action research cycles. At this point, knowing my strengths and limits in using both practical knowledge and scientific rigour to reframe the understating of both researcher and organisational roles (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014). Knowledge creation necessitates improving organisational performance and cruising through the clutches of the market downtrend with a primary focus on developing reflexive inquiries into the take-for-granted assumption (Coglan, 2013:3) in my organisation and therefore limits the improvement of the organisational performance.

Therefore, working with action research in multi-phases, considering the AR cycles (Coghlan & Brannick 2014:9), is essential regarding context and purpose, constructing, planning action, taking action and evaluating action. As such, attempting to position myself as a scholar-practitioner was difficult and required a deeper reflection on my organisational practice, working from an insider action research position. Consequently, to deepen reflection on my insider role, I constructed the required AR activity put forward by Greenwood & Levin's (2007) prescription for three essential elements of action, research and participation.

Therefore, various participation from various stakeholders duly reinforced through leadership and delegation, putting forward leanness, agility and flexibility as aspects leveraged from employee participation aiming at improving organisational performance. As such, working with action research cycles is essential to determining the level of participation, and that guides me to find out possibilities and allows me to gather information to understand and investigate plausible solutions for enhancing organisational performance. Therefore, the scholar-practitioner approach to generating actionable knowledge (Coghlan, 2013:6) creates various capabilities that ultimately lead to a pile of new knowledge. The reciprocity between theory (Researcher) and practice (Researched) is with collaborative dialogue and reflection on the reflexivity of practice for all stakeholders involved in my research (Robertson, 2000:324)

3.5   Reflexivity.

Reflexivity is an integral part of action research (Robertson, 2000:320), and to be reflexive is to have a continuous conversation about the practical experience while simultaneously living in the moment (Coghlan,2013:3), so reflexivity becomes a continuous journey of self-analysis and self-awareness (Coghlan,2013:3). So, it is broadly understood by drawing on (Brannick & Coghlan's, 2007:60) definition as an essential tool which I employed as a resource of mitigating potential issues among the stakeholders and between "the researcher and the object of research" (Coghlan, 2007; Coghlan, 2013).

My interpretation of reflexivity in my specific research is having a deep understanding and clarity of my biases, such as the organisational design, which consists of centralised decision-making. My interpretation went further in my responses to the conflict of interest and how to use the knowledge, without biases and prejudice, in understating the situation from various stakeholders' perspectives. I extended this further to have reflexivity act as a compass in understanding my action research, guide me in considering different conditions more, and engage in active learning and learning in action (Coghlan, 2013).

As mentioned in the preceding dialogue, the application of scholastic application and plans, those in connection to incorporating reflexivity in practice, are essential in providing different concepts of views for contributing to operational agility. Therefore, integrating reflexivity into my research has more to do with my value addition and value creation skills as an insider researcher to differentiate the vital, the basic, and the preferred (Hughes et al., 2018:1140) category in the incorporation of reflexivity within my practice and exploring the value chain within the packaging industry.

Therefore, to be reflexive, or incorporating reflexivity into my research, has more to do with my involvement in my organisation in carrying out my action research and how this serves the packaging industry. Reflexivity is a crucial construct for understanding my research (Alvesson et al., 2008) and goes beyond just thinking about what to do while researching. It is more directed towards generating new knowledge and achieving organisational excellence and competitive advantage across the entire value chain to determine what position or role play and fresh

insights are needed within the organisation to support the supply chain resilience and operational agility. I would extend this further to illustrate the type of creativity, association and contribution, including reflexivity within a practical framework that is entirely self-thought classification and based on my acquired experience over three decades in the packaging business.

Deriving from Koch & Harrington's (1998:883) practice that suggests reflexivity towards making a research product more believable or plausible, my reflexivity would move towards the notion of generating fresh insight with a is efficient guidance on how to identify a workable process, activities, and functions across the organisation. With reflexivity, constantly working in a state of inquiry and contributing to the effective cultural change of becoming an agile organisation necessitates creativity and assessing my practice and research process holistically (Koch & Harrington, 1998:883).

Cunliffe (2008:132) argues that we constantly create meaning, sense and selves as we deal with others; thus, we need to surface and articulate how we create such meanings reflexively. Research and learning as a reflective process (Cunliffe, 2008:126) encompass an openness to actively question my thinking, take for granted biases and assumptions about the conflict of interest, and engage in a critical examination within myself, my work environment, the notion of bureaucracy and the way creating sustainable and new ideas, review my existing learning and seeking to apply innovative solutions using leadership agility (Saleh & Watson, 2017:710).

However, one of the challenges of many leaders, including myself, operating within the scholar-practitioner arena is converting the meaning of the research experience and learning into action (Coghlan, 2013). Both research and learning intention offers insights into how we convey the meanings of the experience and thus shape this experience in communication, aiming to become more thoughtful, careful and reflexive about how this knowledge is constructed (Cunliffe, 128-133).

Consequently, the responsibility placed on my shoulder as a scholar-practitioner is immense in integrating the workplace change processes with economic development (Totterdill & Fricke, 2004). So, the responsibility extends beyond integrating the workplace change processes to

being reflexive, transparent, and accountable in establishing trustworthiness (Koch & Harrington, 1998:885) with the internal and external participants carrying out a clear objective towards self-learning in action, learning to reflect in deep inquiry about the assumptions, the deep search (Coghlan, 2013:3) with self-definition purpose, action plan, timeframe, and expected results.

3.6   Insider action researcher and role duality.

My position is identified as an insider action researcher (Coghlan, 203), grounded on the fundamental pragmatic philosophical positions set out earlier. Within this context of insider action research has its dynamics (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010) as real events which need to be managed (Coghlan, 2013:3), there may be areas where there is a need to enhance the process and the operating speed, elimination of bottlenecks and streamlining resources of the organisation both in tangible and intangible manners.

As an insider action researcher, I performed an Actor role (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014:20) to undertake action focusing on systems, processes and culture. My attempt to improve my efforts involved either study exploration, brainstorming, analysing, or planning and coordinating activities depending upon the nature of the required issue. I shed light on the concept of the ladder of interference and general empirical method to understand the actual scenario from data analysis (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014:32). I planned each action based on the data to consider the organisational experience and appropriate reasoning by each individual or team involved with operational activities.

Therefore, from a practical relevance point of view, at some point throughout the data collection, I worked a day in and day out, exhausted, tired, demotivated and angry just because I wanted to get results sooner and before the data were gathered. Within this context, the position I took of an insider researcher and a scholar-practitioner is defined as an individual who is undertaking the research with my organisation and practically leading the company (Coghlan, 2001; Brannick & Coghlan, 2007; Coghlan & Brannick, 2010; Coghlan, 2013).

This dual scholar-practitioner role, particularly the insider action researcher, is a massive concept of self-awareness to drive organisational change (Coghlan,2013:3). As an insider action

researcher, I assume some areas need more leadership and understanding, more precisely among the managerial layer, to understand the application of scholastic predictions and pragmatic proposed plans in connection to organisational politics. As such, few employees connected with the purpose of my insider action role and its dynamics (Coghlan, 2001; Coghlan & Brannick, 2010; Coghlan, 2013).

Moreover, Coghlan & Brannick (2010) note that the researcher's role is wearing two hats, one of the employees inside the organisation and the other as the researcher. This role duality presents issues given that pre-existing relations already exist with the internal participants in my research and raises some conflict to position as I am the Executive director. For instance, during the focused group meeting, it was recognised that tensions existed in that internal participants were reserved at the beginning and did not want to discuss issues openly. Nevertheless, I minimised any risk and effectively mitigated emerging concerns by choosing the managers and pillars that do not directly report to me and have dual reporting. For instance, all managers, such as Human resources, IT, continuous improvement, and accounting, have functional reporting to me and technical functions to the relative departments.

3.7   Mobilising the internal and external participants.

A crucial principle of action research is ensuring that the researcher and all participants within the organisation have a clear and specific direction of what is to take place (Mumford, 2001). Therefore, in my efforts to bring out planned changes within my organisation, the participants developed an understanding of the context of my action-oriented research in determining why supply chain resilience and operational agility are essential and the associated economic, political, social and technical forces that drives the need for such change (Coughlan & Coghlan, 2002).

Having identified the research topic and got the approval of my organisation and the Ethics committee approval, I moved forward with the research agenda, and I engaged with both internal and external participants. My worry, in principle, was mainly with the internal participants with the dual role of Executive Director and academic researcher. However, this

was mitigated, given the pre-existing relationship with my peers and colleagues. My only minor limitation is that the action research model in my insider action research is rooted in the data collection process, which might lead to role conflict (Coghlan & Brannick 2010), and this is entrusted by breaking down the interaction into step-by-step activity to build trust and confidence in my ability and capabilities by setting an emergent change process (Dick, 2015) that is beneficial for all the stakeholders involved in the change process.

As action-oriented research aims to take action and create knowledge about that action (Coughlan & Coghlan, 2002), a focus group team was formed to investigate organisational performance, further explore leanness, and understand supply chain resilience and operational agility. The team consisted of seven senior managers and five pillars, not managers but in leading roles in their departments, who are front liners employees. The internal participants are encouraged by assuring them of the common and shared social space (Burns et al., 2012:3) and that their involvement does not relate to job performance and/or any associated financial benefits. The seven managers selected are decided based on two criteria, they have either dual reporting, or they are not my direct reports. For example, the Finance and administration manager has a juridical role that reports directly to the general control and the president of the division, the management system manager has dual reporting, he covers four other affiliates and technically reports to the strategy and continuous improvement director, the IT manager also reports administratively to the research and practice to the IT division director. And the other criterion is the second line of reporting, for example, the production manager and maintenance, who are not my direct report but report to the operation manager, who in his turn reports to me.

I am aware of the need to tackle the organisational performance from a progressive, innovative, and interpretive approach rather than the traditional management approach, which is characterised by efforts to understand the complexity of the business world and add meaning to strategies and actionable knowledge (Gummesson, 2013). Therefore, the internal participant's team selection was necessary in sharing information and later analysing the data collaboratively to facilitate my action-oriented approach (Cardno & Piggot-Irvine, Coughlan & Coghlan, 2002). The rationale for mobilising the participants lies in their collaboration as they

know the organisation best, know what is best suited to work and know who will be required to implement needed actions and follow through with the steps taken (Adams & McNicholas, 2007).

Hence, twelve employees formed the focus group team, excluding me, where the participants' involvement with collaboration in the analysis is critical (Adams & McNicholas, 2007). The first focus group meeting was held after my ethical approval. During the initial meeting, I took the role of a scholar-practitioner part I recognised that my insider action research (Coghlan, 203) has its dynamics (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010) as actual events need to be managed (Coghlan, 2013:3) within my position to have a safe environment where all participants can express their views about the organisation freely and share information. I also made sure that all views were properly reflected objectively so that the research achieves its purpose and benefit would be not only my organisation but the whole packaging industry.

During the initial meeting, I also explained to them that my research primarily focuses on gaining a deeper insight into lean management and finding a practical framework and a change plan for achieving operational agility and supply chain resilience for my organisation and the overall packaging industry. Therefore, the aspect of my research is a reflection on my learning on how to improve organisational performance along the enacting from the data analysis that might bring inferences on an organisational agility plan, factual aspects for knowledge creation and, most important, part of self-learning to enhance the application of the scholar-practitioner experience (Coghlan & Brannick,2014: 171).

Therefore, consideration is given to my dual positionality in the social process of collaborative learning. The internal participants and I worked on establishing a partnership and readiness for them to collaborate towards common interests and goals (Small, 2005: 939; Calabrese, 2006:275). My purpose of the method of inquiry, which is action-oriented based research, is to bring change in the fundamental practical element of the supply chain and operation and solve a real workplace-based problem (Parkin, 2009:20; Koshy et al., 2010:20) that is affecting not only the organisation's performance but also affecting the well-being and work security of the employees.

As such Action-oriented base research approach works as a driving force to enable both practitioners and researchers to collaborate with the participants to improve the real world of practice (Koshy et al., 2010:20). Consequently, I worked with a group of employees, internal participants, to draw on their experience, point of view and frustration and collaborate and raise my commitment and put relationships and communal well-being at the top of my priorities (Tracy, 2019:245). Additionally, action-oriented base research is contextually bound in relation to collaboration, involvement and improvement within the locality participation (Parkin 2009:20) to explore the problem's situation from various perspectives, draw on the change plan, and gain a more comprehensive understanding. Moreover, since organisations are comprised of people, they operate on bonded relationships between and among all employees (Calabrese, 2006:275). And since AR is about improving the workplace-based practice environment through social change, these operations become part of the social ecosystem (Calabrese, 2006:275). Notwithstanding, an essential point of reflection by Calabrese (2006:275), who put forward that in the social ecosystem, there are webs of connectivity through which the participants become more willing to collaborate towards common goals in an environment where they don't feel threatened or embarrassed (Calabrese, 2006:275). As Burns et al. (2016:203) echoed, the participants' enrolment process grows out of deep social roots, especially under disturbance and uncertainty. Such enrolment under such circumstances of low performance under uncertainty helped me build trust with the internal participants and assisted me in how the focused group meeting are formed, evolved and ultimately how they performed (Burns et al., 2016:203). Therefore, there is a need to have an awareness of the social capital as two-way traffic and the relationship between and among the participants rooted in trust and based on a shared value (Calabrese, 2006:275) within operations that are part of the social ecosystem within which the organisation operates (Calabrese, 2006:275).

I am mindful of what I learned when looking at my role from a different perspective, I learned of the profound efforts needed for the participants' admission of the reality of change as the change I proposed resonated with the participants themselves (Ronen, 2020:7). This transformation of developing a new paradigm to match the reality influenced the participants' behaviour in forming the focus group meetings as they collaborated with their colleagues in

problem-solving and showed appreciation and empathy for their abilities, capabilities, and difficulties in such a transformation (Ronen, 2020:6).

The concept of action-oriented based research and the principles of effective action research were discussed, which also involved the complexity of multiple activities during the research process (Adams & McNicholas, 2007). Although much of the underlying philosophy of action-oriented based research was seen as an alienated concept, all participants are familiar with decision-making and problem-solving ideas. The nature of collaboration can involve various aspects of knowledge production. The knowledge gained through the participants' lived experiences primarily aims to empower them to produce associated knowledge in their field and ultimately benefit them directly or indirectly in short and the long term (Reason & Bradbury, 2001).

Mesmerised by the notion of infusing such change into practice, various employees are involved in my research study to understand better why organisational change is needed and how to enhance performance. Some of the internal participants are aware that change reinforces the profit & loss statement of the organisation and improves the organisational performance. The focus group team dug into areas such as why I and not the other manager and how we plan to collaborate. I explained to them that the pre-step stage of my data collection is drawn from (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010) notion of interpretation of the workplace problem with the specific context and purpose that occurred in the organisation between the years 2016 and 2018 with prevailing and pressing issues where the organisation profit is wiped off and turned from a profit-making organisation to a loss-making organisation.

Therefore, discussions evolved on factors surrounding my research's purpose and the anticipated outcomes of the focused group meeting that generates the input of needed data for lean management, including principles, team building, (Dick, 2015) and the systems to build competitive advantages. Consequently, I have also explained that my approach will further dwell on the supply chain resilience and the agile framework, including leadership, conflict of interest, and organisational change, which is easier to achieve when all the participants affected by the change are involved (Dick, 2015) and they all contribute to business excellence.

Additionally, a gentlemen's agreement was sought, and it was agreed and discussed that whatever was discussed in the group would remain within the group setting. It would be treated like the musketeers' motto that one for all and all for one, ensuring unity, and the direct quote from the participants remained anonymous. The interviews were conducted in a private space, and all participants approved of the location and place where they felt comfortable performing the interview and the focus group meeting. No data was published to identify managers and team leaders from within the organisation directly. Direct quotes for those participants remain anonymized.

Also, no Data was published for external participants, and direct quotes from respondents from packaging industry leaders remained anonymous. They were referred to as a generic participant in the research report. Publication of those quotes is restricted by the researcher and is limited to the research reporting system only and was not transferred to any third party or no publication using mass media tools.

As such, the participant's freedom and views were respected throughout the research activity. The participants were given ten days to decide if he is willing to participate. During the meeting, each participant received Participant Information Sheet with all details about this research and its objectives. The researcher's contact information was provided to reach me either through mobile or e-mail in case the participants have any concerns or withdrawal from support. The participants signed an Informed consent form, which included once again the main characteristics of the research and how the information is anonymous and just for internal use of the research. The Participant information sheet and the Informed consent form are based on the University of Liverpool official forms in English.

The potential benefit of all participants is clarified, and the main benefit is (1) recognition of experience and professionalism achieved by the participants in their relevant field of work and (2) transferring /exchanging information by the participant is viewed as valuable experience exchange that would support the organisation for achieving business excellence and as well, supports this research study with knowledge creation in transferring the change framework to a different setting. Therefore, transferring and exchanging information by the participants is

viewed as a valuable experience exchange that would support the packaging industry in discovering business excellence and creating knowledge for building supply chain resilience and operational agility in organisations.

Consequently, it was decided that we meet at the beginning of the week on Sunday and later at the end of the week on each Thursday to allow reaching a working methodology to meet our objective, so the research is broken down into stages of data collection involving focused group meetings with the internal participants, and so working with action research in multi-phases, considering the AR cycles (Coghlan & Brannick 2014:9) is essential in terms of context and purpose, constructing, planning action, taking action and evaluating action. Thus, the agenda included a guide for our inquiry and actions taken in the first meeting to agree on the framework of Action Research that had AR cycles and focused on various dimensions across lean management, specifically supply chain resilience and operation agility related to the manufacturing and packaging industries.

3.7.1 Defining the participation and selection of internal and external participants.

Each selected participant has been adequately clarified that their participation is completely voluntary; the participant's involvement does not relate to the job performance as the participant has the right not to participate if he/she does not wish to be associated and does not relate to any financial benefits associated with their job. The data collection activity is performed within the University of Liverpool ethics committee guidelines related to my research and interviews involving human participants and data collection. From this notion, I am aware of how learning in action propose a more morally and socially responsible practices (Cunliffe, 2008:135) with all the stakeholders involved at the organisation to ensure and adopt an ethical system that promotes the common good and thus fosters long term sustainability (Allio, 2011:6)

Therefore, where decision-makers cannot predict or plan the possible outcome, risk and uncertainty exist about whether or not an opportunity exists (Burns et al., 2016). Consequently, I was very close to the participants and promoted freedom of participation (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010). I understood the soft skills in a highly changing environment, such as managing

anxiety, emotional intelligence and critical thinking (Saleh & Watson, 2017). A basic, core principle of action research is that people matter, their selection matter and their voluntary participation matters (Coghlan & Brannick,2014; Creswell, 2014, Tracy, 2019). Therefore, my recruitment of participants started with personal phone calls and in-person invitations to all participants specifying my research study objectives, risk and burdens and confirming that interviews are strictly confidential and completely voluntary.

As such, for internal participants, the risk was reduced by encouraging the participant that their involvement is entirely voluntary. The researcher's main objective is to drive out the fear in the participant that their involvement does not relate to job performance and any associated financial benefits. It was clear that participation in the interview does not necessarily bring improved association with the researcher as part of minimizing the coerced effect.

Additionally, for External participants, I have ensured the engagement of all stakeholders associated with this research by explaining the importance of achieving success for the organisation and the packaging industry. I did my level best for the research process to be unbiased for the benefit of all stakeholders involved in further explaining to all stakeholders the implications and the process of the research and how participants are approached and interviews to be conducted in a private space with written consent approval. Consequently, I have recruited six external participants whereby, four leaders from Saudi Arabia and two from the wider Gulf Council countries (GCC – Kuwait, Bahrain, UAE, Oman, Qatar) who have direct experience in the packaging industry in the area for more than ten years. Out of the six external participants, one is a major raw material supplier based in Saudi Arabia, one is a signification supplier in the GCC, and the remaining four are key players in the packaging industry. Some industry leaders are part of the supply chain as they are suppliers to the industry, others are packaging manufacturers other than our core business, and others are main competitors.

At this point, deep and thorough consideration was given to diluting a minimal potential risk represented by a cautious factor from industry leaders in providing information that could be interpreted as seeking competition intelligence from them to losing their competitive advantage if disclosing any of their organisational strategies. However, there was a case of anti-

dumping measures raised by the raw material suppliers in the GCC. This case made my research more meaningful as all external participants showed a high interest in exploring the supply chain challenges of the packaging industry. The external participants have high collaboration on addressing possible ways to mitigate these challenges, as they were aware that this would benefit the whole supply chain of the packaging industry in Saudi Arabia and the AGCC.

Additionally, the quality of my action research is related to my engagement with various stakeholders in improving the practice of the supply chain through change and development. (Zuber –Skerritt, 2007:425) not only of the process and procedures but the full change parameters needed to improve organisational performance, profit level and stakeholders' confidence. Notwithstanding that an important area of planning action inhabited within the organisation setting and raised questions about the status of participation and the degree of my research methodology in allowing me to remain focused on the problem and whether this allows the organisation to take immediate remedial action or not (Adams & McNicholas, 2007). This depicted much discussion among all the stakeholders on the degree of participation and effectiveness of action research in the involvement of the dual imperatives of problem-solving and research (McKay & Marshall, 2001). The change process becomes my main focus (Naslund, 2002) to focus on genuine participation with internal and external participants to reflect and improve on their work and situations (Fletcher, 2007).

Therefore, the concept of defining the selection and participation of the participants, the problem solving and answering questions in decision-making (Fletcher, 2007) within the organisational context was an essential matter to avoiding complex power-sharing and the relative suspension of a hierarchical manner of working in a conscious move towards social democracy (Fletcher, 2007) ensuring the quality of participation, the relationship in action learning and reflecting on the value of the practical outcome (Bradbury & Reason, 2001:449).

3.7.2 Sampling strategy and sample size.

The sampling strategy draws on Creswell's (2013) purposeful sampling principles for internal and external participants. The external participants are leaders in the packaging field and possess in-depth knowledge of the manufacturing industries. They have experiences in Saudi

Arabia and the wider GCC, have leaders in their organisations, and can address my research question and sub-questions. Four of the six external participants reside and work in Saudi Arabia, one in Bahrain, and one in the United Arab Emirates.

Age		Job Category		Gender	
20-35		Senior Executive		Male	
35-45		Manager		Female	
45-55		Assistant Manager			
>55		Team leader		**Job Function**	
				Managerial	
Level of Education		**Experience with Easternpak**		Operational	
		< 1 to 2 years months		Administration	
Certificate/Diploma					
Graduate		2 years - 4 yrs		**Familiarity with Easternpak's operational activities**	
		4 yr - 6 yrs		Basic (not involved directly but aware of operational activities)	
Post Graduate					
		6 yrs - 8 yrs		Medium (Weekly / Monthly involvement)	
		> 8 yrs		Advanced (Daily hands-on experience as part of an operational team)	

(Figure 4. Internal participants criteria)

The internal participants were detailed in an earlier section of this chapter in mobilising the internal and external participants. Nevertheless, the internal participants consisted of seven senior managers and five pillars, not managers but in leading roles in their departments, who are front liners employees.

3.7.1 Inclusion criteria.

The inclusion criteria and rationale for both internal and external participants are placed in the appendix 4 and 7 of the interview questionnaires as follows:

Criteria	Justification
Age	To add richness to understanding executive maturity level.
Level of education	Ensuring various levels of education.
Length of time working with the organisation	Inclusion criteria considered different years of experience, however, excluded experience less than two years so that the focus group team is acquainted to the business context.
Gender	Unfortunately, at that time, all the participants were of the male gender, and I was unable to ensure equal representation.
Job Function	Assist in exploring organisational performance and lean management within the supply chain and operation from managerial, operational and/or administrative perspectives.
Familiarity with the operational activities	Justification for selection may help in exploring engagement and familiarity with the operational activities and their relations with the change process.

(Table 1. Internal participants inclusion criteria and justification)

As such, the data was collected by conducting semi-structured and informal interviews, and primary data was gathered within the organisation from where the interviewee hails. For this purpose, a comprehensive interview form (refer to appendix 4 and 7) was prepared to conduct interviews and observations to collate information that supported me in developing pragmatic steps as part of the action research.

Therefore, my goal was to select a sample comprising subjective inclusion criteria for the internal participants, however, from various departments and those with deep-rooted experience and roles relevant to exploring my research questions. Some groups of managers were excluded from my research as they are my direct reports. Arguably, their participation would have brought the same outcome and high resistance to any sort of change.

The literature from Tracy (2020:138) reveals that it is critically important that the quality of sample size is more important than quantity for qualitative research; however, it suggests that 5 to 8 interviews are academically valuable. Tracy (2020:138) argues that each one-hour interview equates to 15 total research hours devoted to planning, scheduling, conducting, organising, analysing and transcribing, making it possible for various parameters to be included in coding and theme generation. There I have decided that 6 external participants and 12 internal participants would be an adequate number and a decent sample size that would be able to explore and investigate relevant emerging themes from the data (Creswell, 2014) and later relates the questions and data analysis with the corresponding literature.

Interviewing is not a tiny task (Tracy, 2020), it is time-consuming, and the research hours after that and the interpretation of data are even exhausting, and application of this concept depends on the richness of the valuable, or not, data gathered from each participant, especially that I used manual coding with no access to software or research help in transcribing and analysing the data (Tracy, 2020). So, the themes that emerged from the codes used in the full 18 interviews have provided a comprehensive and appropriate thematic representation of the supply chain and operation where no additional data is required.

3.7.2   The Interviews process.

Given that my research aims to produce valuable and rigorous research, Coghlan & Brannick (2010:146) put forward that the heart of action research is the ability to narrate a good story and reflect on the entire research experience. As such, narratives, by their intrinsic characteristics, are constructive for documenting my action research experiences and learning that has taken place with both the internal and external participants (Greenwood & Levin, 2007). Using this narrative approach with the external participants and with the group-focused meeting, the audience are able to get an insider view of my experience and relate, when possible, to the outcome of research and the results of data analysis, in-depth discussions, detailed explanations, reflection, and failures and successes, of what I have encountered during the interviews with the internal and external participants (Greenwood & Levin, 2007) as per the timetable shared in appendix 1.

At this juncture, the audience can then evaluate the reliability, validity, and rigour of my research outcomes, highlight beneficial practical and actionable knowledge outcomes from the practical relevance experience of both external and internal participants and my reflexivity throughout the whole research journey (Greenwood & Levin, 2007; Cunliffe, 2008; Coghlan, 2010 Coghlan & Brannick, 2010). The undertaken qualitative interviews yielded important information and thought processes as part of manoeuvring through the uncertain phase actively shared by all participants, along with a few prescribed codes and themes as an engagement with my action research cycle under "Taking Action" concerning the interpretation of the likely results of my qualitative research activity that includes arranging the data collected and undertaking data analysis for knowledge creation to work out a change action plan (Creswell,2013: 179-211).

Therefore, the primary goal of interviews was to reach rich data from all the questions tackling all attributes and challenges explored as per James et al. (2008:69) in data collection directly from words from the participants, whether in the one-on-one interview or the focus group interviews. The information from the interviews was captured through field notes, interviews, and observational protocols are adequately stored as field notes and transcriptions (Creswell, 2013). The interviews are governed by Greenwood & Levin (2007: 214) through the conversion of people involved in research for interaction and later converted as co-researcher for getting more attention and detailed feedback through collaborative relationships. In both phases, the recording of the interview using an appropriate method, as Creswell (2013:262) describes, is to explain the narrative point of view and systematically record the information and collected data (Creswell, 2013:262).

During the first semi-structured or informal interview with the external participants, I relied on the questionnaire in Appendix seven. I focused on narrative inquiry concepts to explore individual leaders' experiences. The drafted questionnaire was a guideline for performing my semi-structured and open-ended interviews. Though all questions are addressed adequately, the leaders are asked in a different order to ensure a smooth exchange of information and discussion that happened to be more fluid with more interaction with the participants. All interviews and meetings were conducted face to face, which created further engagement in

discussion, capturing the participants' facial expressions and allowing me to be submerged in the whole process and become part of it. Worth mentioning that the initial interviews were very tough and lengthy in time as participants kept on giving detailed descriptions of unfolding events that they have encountered during their practical work and living experience. All of them rejected the idea of an audio recorder, and the notion created high resistance and hesitancy he working culture is still somehow conservative.

Consequently, I drew from the process of (James et al., 2008) in the process of qualitative data collection in (a) discussing what we know and understand, (b) gathering the data to confirm or deny that understanding, and (c) analysing the data shortly after data collection. This allowed me to further engage in being an objective listener and engage in dialogue upon shooting appropriate questions, making the participant choose the way and method of addressing my question to tap the entire experience and knowledge of the individual (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). Whenever needed, I ensured the participants' feedback carried adequate supporting data as part of a valid exchange of information, as collecting appropriate data would be significant input for the entire knowledge creation upon completion of this interview stage.

The transcription process was lengthy and time-consuming as there was no audio recording. I had to transcribe latterly and verbatim for words and their reoccurrences, then cluster all the keywords on the blackboard and try to connect the dots. On average, the external participants' interviews took five hours interviewing each participant and between 20 and 25 hours (one week) to transcribe the data. As for the internal participants, it was even more lengthy as it was scheduled, followed up and then rescheduled to review and ensure that the whole meaning of the interviews was captured with their correct meaning. There were some odd, funny and sad moments where some interviewees were surprised that I was surprised with the outcome and therefore kept on trusting the process, and there was a solid commitment to achieving my research objective.

Notwithstanding the broad scope of data collection, both with the internal and external participants, the results could not be achieved in the short term. In my quest, the data collection period took over two years, starting in 2018 and ending in January 2020. Considering

the broad scope in exploring, understating, and improving the overall organisational performance, this time frame was eventually needed to understand better the ten dimensions mentioned earlier and the knowledge created and later tested in the workplace using the action research cycles in tandem.

3.8 Data Analysis and coding.

The following part sets out how to convert the available data are in-terms of text into a meaningful outcome of data analysis (Creswell, 2013: 179-211) in an iterative process that converges on the way to a better understanding of what happens (Dick, 2015). Therefore, as, completing the transcript work and enhancing the data into a readable and understandable pattern, interpretation activity works in tandem for making sense of the data and abstracting the meaning of the data organised (Creswell 2013:187). The marginal notes and summary of field notes and observations of own views made out during data collection are used for separating and classifying the data into specific codes, reducing the data into meaningful segments, and assigning names for the segments that would support more straightforward interpretation (2013:180).

As such, coding is an active process of capturing and identifying data as belonging to or representing something or a phenomenon that may be a concept, notion, belief, action, topic, theme, cultural practice or affiliation (Tracy, 2019: 189). Thus, the data analysis is an iterative process alternating between emergent and readings of the data (Tracey, 2019) occurring simultaneously in the data gathering stage and then broken down into codes as a first attempt to classify the data in a meaningful pattern. Narrowing down the data transfer benefit the packaging industry mainly through the transfer of alternative interpretation of resilience to the organisation (Wieland & Durach, 2000:315-316) and transferring best practices and explaining the risk mitigation plans of such practices (Wieland & Durach, 2000:315-316) through drafting a transcript work of converting the raw form into a well readable format using marginal notes and enrolling a summary of field notes (Creswell, 2013:181).

Therefore, the rationale for obtained codes are reduced, summarised and unified into a set of a theme to show the overall process, advocate the development of the codes, and test the

reliability of the codes in practice (Fereday & Muir-Cocharne, 2006: 85-86). Representing qualitative data is a method of inquiry (Tracy, 2019:270) and a reflexive process, and so analysing the data of my work base problem as an iterative approach (Tracy, 2019:184) using a hybrid method of thematic analysis integrating data-driven codes with the scientific rigour in the process of coding in the search and identification of themes (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006:80).

The codes are derived from the participants' interviews and focus group meetings to describe their experience using a manual coding visual display board (Saunders et al., 2009; Creswell:2014; Tracy, 2019). The coding process started by displaying raw data with a wide white display board, then marking up the text with post notes, highlighters, and markers and then cutting, pasting and clustering together the data on the whiteboard. I then reviewed the transcripts from the field notes and interviews, aiming to generate up to forty categories to make sense of the data and then cluster those categories into themes.

The data was classified and broken down into different chunks of data from the remarks and significance quotes and transferred into a matrix on an Excel file associated with the ten dimensions mentioned in the introduction of this chapter. Excel is selected due to its practicality and my ability and experience of posting the data and later analysing it and counting the occurrences of the vivo codes (Saunders et al.2019: Tracey: 2019) in using the language and terms of both the internal and external participants. As this process continued, a cross-referencing system was built. If portions of data are clustered under a specified category, the objective is to look for common traits, side battlefields, perceptions and the real problem being worked out and associated together.

As the process continued, I started visualising and expecting broad themes to surface and looking for overarching themes associated with my research questions and sub-questions. The meaning of such concepts started bringing the notion of overarching themes. It allowed me to associate with the critical literature already discussed on lean management, specifically in the context of supply chain resilience and operational agility (Tracy, 2019: 189).

Repeating this process and allocating the active coding process in capturing and identifying the concept, notion, belief, action, topics, and affiliation (Tracy, 2019: 189) was time-consuming and tiring. However, it was meaningful to formulate and check the interpretation of the meaning and to show sincerity, credibility, resonance (Tracy, 2019: 230) towards the audience and significant contribution (Tracy, 2019: 230) towards my organisation.

Consequently, the codes can represent either information that I expected to find before the study, surprising information that I didn't expect, or conceptual and exciting information to the researcher and various stakeholders (Creswell, 2013:184). Therefore, the data collected as field notes during the semi-structured interview from the external and internal participants were converted into transcripts and descriptions to formulate appropriate codes leveraging prefigured codes prepared during the literature review and acquiring the codes based on the outcomes from the used questionnaire. As such, I attempted to formulate and develop codes using short descriptions to unify the resulting observations, field notes, experience learned from action research and feedback for those used to gather information. The derived codes were later converged to unify as a theme to generate a spectrum using codes and themes to represent the data outcomes and further derive an action plan based on the theme (Cresswell, 2013). The themes, also called categories, are broad units of information that consist of several codes clustered to form a common idea (Creswell, 2013:186).

At this point, the coding and themes development are carefully taken to relate my progress and data analysis using a diagram representation using Fereday & Muir-Cocharne (2006). Therefore, summarising each piece of data is enhanced into a readable and understandable pattern; interpretation activity is undertaken to make sense of the data and abstract out the meaning of the data (Creswell 2013:187).

Consequently, this further shaped the codes into themes for combining the obtained codes into a specific set of themes, so the set of themes forms more meaning toward getting a set of shared ideas (Creswell, 2013:185). Nevertheless, the codes received are reduced, summarized and unified into a set of a theme to ultimately infuse them (Creswell, 2013:185) and further

highlight the similarities and differences between various groups of data, indicating areas of consensus and differences in the research question (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006: 89).

3.8.1 Focusing on the data analysis and developing a code manual.

As I moved on with the data analysis, I focused more on developing a systematic codebook or code manual (Tracy, 2019: 230; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006:84) in displaying the key codes, definitions and interpretation of data helping me in getting my head around the notes and quotes from the interviews and the focused group meetings. This consisted of clustering and compiling the list of main (Creswell, 2013; Coghlan & Brannick,2014) depicted in the matrix and the content, accurately reflecting events during the interview and the focused group meetings. For my research, codes were written and identified as per table 3:

Descriptive codes		
Supply Chain disturbance	**High-cost effect of Raw material and scarcity of raw material**	**High Overhead cost and Operational inefficiency**
Lack of technical competency to identify non-value-added activities	Inefficient hierarchical/organisational structure	Resistance to change
Inefficient centralised functions at corporate office	Inefficient Material requirement planning	Inactive application of lean management
		Inexperienced leadership
Conflict of interdepartmental interest due to lack of synergy	Inefficient succession planning	Lack of succession planning
	Lack of excellence in raw material management	
Measurement of market dynamics to formulate value creation through innovation	Conflict of interest within senior management	Lack of problem solving methods

Organizational structure conflict of interest within the organization	Inefficiency in raw material planning	Overhead Cost Control
Resistance to change	inefficient raw material Hedging	Root cause analysis techniques
Lack of sustained competitive advantage	Raw Material Supplier diversification	High dependence on contractual employees
		Lack of agile operation
Lack of contingency planning	Unbalanced Procurement System	Absence talent management development
Business development strategies not executed		Absence of technical competencies
Lack of agility in supply chain activities	Inexperience low skilled workforce	
Lack of proactive change management	Shortage of total workforce	Inefficiency of lean management principles
Inadequate resource utilisation	Lack of proper equipment infrastructure	

(Table 3. Table of descriptive codes)

As I moved on with the data analysis, the process of coding involved aggregating the text into small categories seeking evidence of the code from different field notes and then assigning a label for the code (Creswell, 2013:184), winnowing the data and developing a short list of tentative codes that match text segments (Creswell, 2013:184).

3.8.2 Development of Data Structures.

The interviews and the data interpretation shed light into a readable and understandable pattern, interpretation activity for making sense of the data and abstracting out the meaning of the data organised (Creswell 2013:187). Arguably, Coghlan & Brannick (2014:171) state that the aspect of an AR dissertation is a reflection on own learning and accordingly, the data analysis

structure formulated above would possibly bring inferences on an organisational improvement plan, factual aspects for knowledge creation and a most crucial aspect of self-learning to enhance the application of the scholar-practitioner experience (Coghlan, 2013:3).

The narrative process of the participants interweaves with their experience and gives deeper insights on action-oriented research, a change agent approach guiding us to find out possibilities and allowing us to gather information to find out possible solutions for our complex business-related problems (Coghlan, 2013:6). The focus is to describe and understand a planned change management activity to successfully guide the organisation to benefit from the change process and to improve the quality and effectiveness of a well-defined process (Grubb, 2008:2). Therefore, I explored Beckhard's framework in (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014:79), which consists of four phases: (1) Determining the need for change, (2) Defining the future state, (3) assessing the present to determine the work to be done and (4) managing the transition. Consequently, adherence to the above four steps is an influential element in the process of transition from the current state to the desired state using the change process methodology given by (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014:83).

4 Chapter 4: Evaluation of Outcomes.

4.1 Introduction.

This chapter is built within the overall action-oriented base research framework and strategy to show the themes that arose and the outcomes from the interviews and focus group meetings derived from the modes and methodology of the research analysis. As such, the data analysis is discussed by exhibiting relevant issues that have emerged during the interviews and interacting with the collaborative participants. The research findings are grouped into themes focusing on the organisation's performance and sustainability during operational challenges, explicitly examining leanness within operational agility and supply chain resilience.

The literature review is represented with an overview of the analysis associated with the literature review and leanness key findings. As such, the results section is embedded within the overall approach discussed in previous chapters, where outcomes of interviews with all participants will be shared, and data analysis from various stakeholders will be discussed.

4.2 Introducing the nature of the organisational issue.

As stated in the introduction Chapter, manufacturing organisations endeavour to improve operational performance in the face of operational challenges where supply chain resilience remains a critical operational challenge affecting organisational performance (Altay & Ramirez, 2010). These growing concerns and ongoing interest in supply chain resilience and operation agility are due to the incremental complexity and uncertain working environment surrounding the supply chain and operations in organisations (Brandon-Jones et al., 2014:55).

Therefore, my research provides insights for improving organisational performance during challenges and sheds light on resilience, agility and flexibility as an operational capability that enables the disrupted supply chain to reconstruct itself (Narasimhan et al., 2006; Brusset & Teller, 2017). As such, the notion, relevance and understating in implementing leanness, resilience and agility have become more necessary than ever before (Narasimhan et al., 2006), highlighting the practices, resources and processes within the organisational control (Brusset & Teller, 2017). Manufacturing companies involved in a fast-changing and highly competitive

marketplace have adopted lean management principles; in doing so, they rearrange and regroup collaborative cells and value streams to improve the quality, versatility and customers' response time of the manufacturing processes (Fullerton et al., 2014). This helps motivates various stakeholders to enhance integration capabilities and thus achieve higher operational resilience (Brusset & Teller, 2017).

Equally important are some external factors surrounding the economy where the organisation operates, which added another dimension of pressure to the interpretation that influenced the supply chain and operational activities. This has been detailed in chapter four, clarifying that the negative oil growth creates a significant economic issue. When income resources become limited, organisations become under tremendous pressure to reduce operational costs. Associating this with some other manufacturing industries, such as the automobile and electronics industry (Wieland & Durach, 2010), they perform so many forms of cost control to compete in hyper-competition mode, lean management methodologies and supply chain management are vital in reducing cycle time and increasing response time to the customer base and enhance retention (Plenert, 2010).

As such, several vital measures identify a successful supply chain dealing internationally with various stakeholders, cycle time performance, on-time performance, customer satisfaction and optimising the operating cost (Plenert, 2010). Therefore, a practical methodology for improving operation agility and supply chain process efficiency is explored under the organisation's strategic intention within lean management and organisational performance. An example of such methodology is supply chain management (SCM) which integrates networks of international companies with a platform allowing them to collaborate on optimising performance (Plenert, 2010).

4.3   Thematic analysis and emerging themes.

My action-oriented research is based on the proposition to simultaneously bring meaningful change and understanding (Dick, 2015) in answering many questions for achieving my final destination of generating actionable knowledge (Coghlan, 2013). The proposed change benefits other packaging industries from my scholar-practitioner role in both action and research from

my observation, questioning and reflection (Cardno & Piggot-Irvine, 1996:20; Dick, 2015). Accordingly, my scholar-practitioner role reduces the tension between knowledge generated through academic scholarship and how this knowledge is effectively tested and transferred through practice, where sometimes this transfer is difficult to achieve (Agrote et al., 2000).

Accordingly, it highlights various aspects and tools that leverage the value of my research question and underlying sub-questions. However, as an aspirant researcher nurtured by the University of Liverpool DBA curriculum, I can see how the practical aspects underlying my action research assist in such knowledge transfer setting out my reflection and approach throughout this chapter. The knowledge transfer has the potential to inspire sustainable and actionable outcomes. However, some of the actionable outcomes might be controversial due to the instability in the organisational culture that arises from a conflict of interest within the context of a wicked problem, the strategic response is raised through the conflicts in frames, and the determined actions decide the triumph over others (Kaplan: 2008).

Additionally, through inquiring with the participants about our workplace-based problem, we were building what the innate issues were using the most widely accepted framework detailed in Kiger & Varpio (2020) for conducting thematic analysis within a six-step process: (1) familiarising ourselves with the data, (2) generating of initial codes, (3) searching for themes (4) reviewing those themes, then (5) defining and naming themes and (6) producing the outcome report. As such, further investigation into our organisational context was crossed checked with secondary data available and detailed in the appendix and as shown appendix two as internal management documents, records of minutes of meetings, management review reports, customer and supplier surveys, and yearly business plan preparation meetings.

Consequently, the next phase details some of the gathered data through focus group and interview meetings in my efforts to gain a more prosperous organisational contextual deep investigation of people's experiences and the meanings people attach to those experiences using thematic analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2017).

Equally important, thematic analysis is a practical, accessible and flexible method for identifying, analysing and interpreting themes in the qualitative realm (Braun & Clarke, 2012;

Clarke & Braun, 2017). Codes detailed in chapter four are the minor units of analysis with exciting features and are used as building blocks for my themes which are shared code and patterns of meaning (Clarke & Braun, 2017). Consequently, thematic analysis is flexible with the size of the research study set, analysing the qualitative methods and formulating the mode of inquiry with interviews and focus group meetings. As such, thematic analysis organises the data and describes them in rich detail, constitutes a meaning with my data set and represents some level of patterned response in connection with the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Clarke et al., 2015; Clarke & Braun, 2017; Terry et al., 2017; Braun & Clarke, 2021).

Therefore, a key realised learning is to generate the themes against the literature and further dwell on the reasons for a specific trait, side battlefields, wrong perceptions and the like (Clarke & Braun, 2017). The challenge for me at this stage is with the parts that bring out a problem, followed by an investigation on a solution-driven and outcome-oriented view. So, my challenge was to look backwards to the root cause of the problem and not frontward on how to envision each situation in the future. As such, chapter five findings put forward a helicopter view on the exploration and visualisation of the organisation performance realm and the relations as presented in previous chapters to understand the relations clearly, dependencies and impacts as shown in the below-connected figures 6 and 7 of thematic analysis to ensure the trustworthiness of both the findings and the interpretations (Kiger & Varpio, 2020).
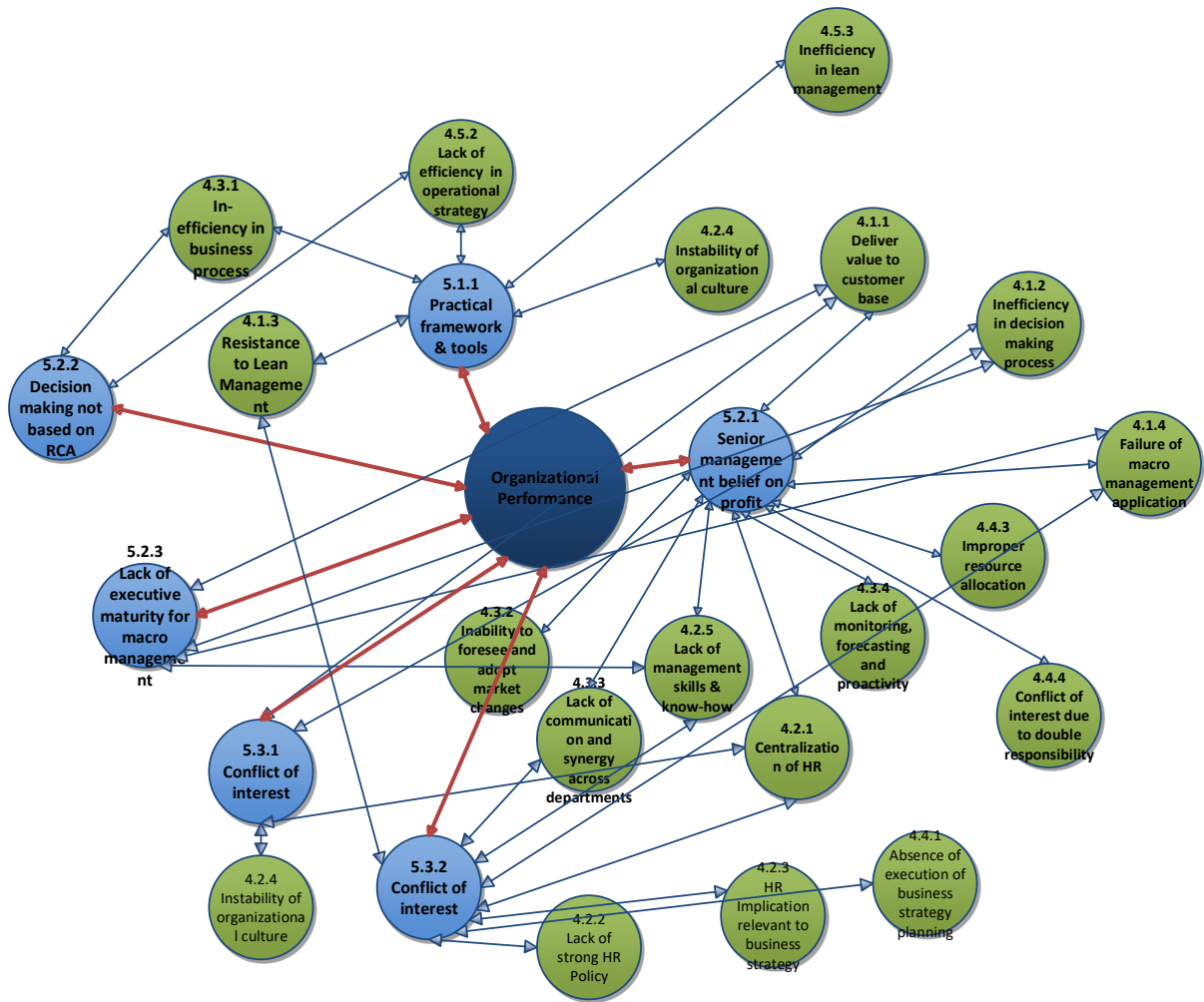
(Figure 6. Thematic relations analysis image)

(Figure 7. Thematic relations analysis image)

That said, the below table 6 shows the categories, emerging themes and frequency from the evaluation of the outcome and interview analysis. Those themes provide not only a thematic framework for organising and reporting my analytic evaluation of the outcome but also for identifying exciting key features guided by the research question and evolved in connection with the literature review (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Clarke et al., 2015; Clarke & Braun, 2017; Terry et al., 2017; Braun & Clarke, 2021).

Categories	Emerging Themes	Frequency
Barriers with the leadership decision-making process	Inability to deliver and pass the value to the customer base	2
	Bureaucratic Structural Barrier: Inefficiency in the decision-making process	**14**
	Roles and responsibility: Conflict of interest	**22**
	Diminishing Leadership: Failure of management style application	1
Relationships within the organisational culture	**Centralisation of HR activities at the corporate head office level - Hierarchical system**	**22**
	HR implications relevant to the set operation strategy	3
	Cultural Barrier: Instability/Barrier to adapting an organisational change culture	**23**
	Lack of management skills and lack of know-how/how- Lack of competencies	7
Barriers to the operational model and lean management process	Inefficiency in the business process	1
	Lack of communication and synergy across departmental managers	**21**
	Lack of monitoring, forecasting and proactivity	6
	Absence of execution of the business plan and three years of strategic planning	1
	Absence of scenario planning and mitigation risk planning	5
	No Collaboration: Improper resource allocation that is tied up with the corporate office	3
	No mitigation measures in place for performance-driven strategy	4
	Lack of effective operational strategy	1
	Broken linkage and lack of synergy between corporate strategy and business unit strategy	1
	Resistance to identifying and executing lean management strategies	**16**

(Table 6. Emerging themes)

As such, throughout the evaluation of the outcomes, the flexibility of the thematic analysis has evolved throughout coding and theme development and allowed to identify patterns about the participants' lived experiences, various perspectives, rich practices, social behaviour seeking an in-depth understanding of what participants think, feel or do (Cunliffe, 2008; Braun & Clarke, 2012; Clarke et al., 2015; Clarke & Braun, 2017; Terry et al., 2017; Braun & Clarke, 2021). Accordingly, themes highlighted in bold have more occurrences and will be discussed in detail throughout this chapter with the interpretation of critical key findings.

4.4   Key Findings – General Overview of ideas that influenced my research.

The key findings of my research are clustered by themes that emerged during the data collection stage, as shown in table 6. those themes are followed by an overview of the participants' interpretation and data analysis. They are classified and represented in categories, emerging themes according to the frequency of these themes following the interview analysis. Emerging themes highlighted in bold are the most prominent concerns of internal and external participants and will be discussed in detail in the following section.

The idea that influenced my research here is how to work collaboratively with the participants, make a change, and manage the conflict (Anderson et al.,2006:170). Listening, influencing, decision-making, collaborating, and managing conflicts (Ronen, 2020) are all essential attributes of working with various stakeholders and finding a space to reflect critically on the process so the conflict-of-interest topic doesn't become controversial and lead to conflict by itself, so I had to be sensitive to the climate within the organisation (Anderson et al.,2006).

I was always encouraged by collaborative learning with the focus group team in combining the advantage of the academic culture with the culture of practice (Ronen, 2020). My research, experience, emotions and reflections have led to a deep investigation of problem-solving ideas for organisational performance not only from the content of problem-based learning but also to make sense of success in any daily situation based on the motivation to act out of mutual appreciation (Ronen, 2020). Moreover, to gain a holistic perspective on the three categories, further reflective application of my insider research and my scholar-practitioner position, my

analysis is evident in accounts of a continuous process of action inquiry collaborating with various stakeholders, not only participants, rather than bounded data-driven decision making (Ronen, 2020; Spencer et al., 2022). The mechanism of interweaving scholarship and practice offers a complementary mechanism for realising the scholarly impact, and my assumptions are investigated and realised with the collaboration of participants and translated into my workplace to incorporate teaching as well as research about organisational performance (Ronen, 2020; Spencer et al., 2022). Such interweaving contributes to the nature of the scholarly impact and the findings of the qualitative research output effect on my workplace practice. This enabled me to become a scholar-practitioner and led to a scholarly impact on the mode of work and on (Ronen, 2020; Spencer et al., 2022) on organisational performance incorporating shared views or shared outcome expectations, strategy-driven Training and Development, and open and transparent and transparent communication across the entire hierarchy layer within the organisation.

Equally important, my scholar-practitioner position allowed me to draw on my workplace practice fostering impact on the organisational performance context and detailing the impact of leanness and flexibility within an agile culture and agile leadership. Therefore, the findings from the interviews are clustered by themes alongside the following categories: (1) Barriers with the leadership decision-making process, (2) Relationships within the organisational culture and (3) Barriers to the operational model and lean management process. Consequently, the ideas that influenced my research illustrated a wholesome overview of improving organisational performance within the above three categories and the subsequent six emerging themes.

4.4.1   Barriers to the leadership decision-making process.

Organisational agility is the capability of surviving and prospering in a disruptive operation and coping with unexpected changes, necessitating not only reacting quickly to the disruption but also effectively to market changes (Cho et al., 1998; Sharifi & Zhang,1999; Zhang, 2011). An agile culture could swiftly reconfigure the supply chain and operation processes to mitigate the risk of unexpected change (Gunasekaran & Ngai, 2005; Gunasekaran & Kobu, 2007). As such organisational leadership can proactively investigate the impulses of the market, optimise the cost of goods and respond to the changes promptly in an attempt to exploit new opportunities

and sustain organisational performance (Zhang & Sharifi, 2000; Lu & Ramamurthy, 2011; Walter, 2020).

Therefore, the barrier that limits organisational agility lies in the decision-making process and the conflict of interest that hamper the accuracy of the rational decision-making process (Anderson et al.,2006:149). This creates bureaucracy in the management layer in reporting two contradicting units and is a highly controversial issue, as shown in the below quote:

> *"The VP position brought an immense conflict of bringing unnecessary raw material for the organisation and thus whipping the operations in terms of efficiency and in being innovative as the business process of unrelated quality of raw material created hiccups in operation."*

Notwithstanding, the motivation of the decision-maker is to reduce the ambiguity surrounding uncertain circumstances in the supply chain and operations, yet the extent to which the strategies to reduce ambiguity will succeed is an open question (Kuechel et al., 2016). Additionally, the centralised functional supports delivered by the corporate office act as another barrier as it witnessed mismatching and de-synchronisation in terms of conflict of interest toward the strategic intention. Centralised decision-making for raw material purchasing shows consequences in the decision tree with options that lead to others and influence diagrams showing dependency or indecency in decision-making (Alexander et al., 2014). Agile culture reinforces operational agility and drives the capacity of the organisation to efficiently and effectively redeploy its resources to create value and protect its processes and continuity from internal higher-risk activities such as conflict of interest and inefficiency in the decision-making process (Zang & Sharifi, 2007; Treece et al., 2016; Walter, 2020).

4.4.2 Relationships within the organisational culture.

Drawing on the literature on agile culture, the research findings contributed to a better understanding of the nature and type of organisational culture and the association with employees' commitment and the effect on performance (Rashid et al., 2003) and interconnected nature, if any, between power and authority (Cunliffe, 2008). Although the subject of trust and power was softly mentioned through the focus group meetings through the

lens of organisational culture, I had to find enough space to generate actionable knowledge with less controversial subjects (Anderson et al., 2006) and explore the implications of those above within the current organisational culture.

As such, organisational culture attracts the attention of many leaders due to its possible effects on the organisation's success (Rashid et al., 2003). An unstable organisational culture is one of the problems that limit synergies across the organisation, such as interdepartmental human capital and communication activities. This suggests that organisational culture influences the success of the organisational goals and objectives. A way forward to mitigate the problem is the commitment and collaboration of the stakeholders involved within the organisation in successfully implementing an agile culture (Rashid et al., 2003).

In the context of in-depth interviews, the results demonstrate that the organisation seems to inhibit various reasons for having poor interpersonal and interdepartmental synergy (Rashid et al., 2003) along with the individual's contribution. Organisational culture and stakeholders' commitment has an immense influence and undeniable importance on organisational performance (Rashid et al., 2003), yet this has influenced my work with the potential implications for various stakeholders in reviewing the continuous development programmes and training needs. Such difficulties with the management development programmes do not match the expected employees' commitment. They create interpersonal communication layers among the senior management where there is a mismatch between the business unit commitment and the Head Office corporate culture (Rashid et al., 2003).

A bureaucratic culture does not generate and stimulate the needed level of employees' commitment to the organisation (Rashid et al., 2003). It, therefore, enhances the inability to deliver value to various stakeholders and thus brings conflicting results on whether the organisation can sustain market share during supply chain challenges. The affective commitment and the emotional attachment of the internal participants towards the organisation, specifically regarding values (Rashid et al., 2003). The non-value-added activities within the organisation in terms of activities and processes brought a bewildering variety of impacts on the organisational growth and performance.

Specifically, what needs to be done is to focus on corporate culture with three dimensions: strategic, operational and functional agility (Zandi & Tavana, 2011). More important is how various stakeholders perceive organisational performance and to what extent corporate culture affects organisational commitment (Rashid et al., 2003). So, too many layers in decision-making infused through multi-level hierarchy within organisational structure consume more time, reduce productivity and jeopardise being agile in operation and business functions.

Likewise, the ideas that influenced my research reveal that the lack of leaders' competency working within various organisational challenges brought another aspect of hindrance in terms of communication. The lack of competency impacted being innovative and efficient regarding operational value delivery and created further barriers to the organisational model and lean management process.

4.4.3 Barriers to organisational model and lean management process.

Drawing on the literature review, leanness and building an agile team proved to be a tool that facilitates building competitive advantage along with the identification and elimination of waste, and so utilising lean principles provides a supply chain that is more efficient and more responsive and customer-centric (Plenert, 2010). The more waste is eliminated, the better the value-added time resulting in a more efficient throughput, increased operational capability, lower cost and reduced cycle times (Plenert, 2010).

As such, the factors contributing to the lack of innovative and efficient business processes are internal and external factors relevant to business, operations and resources, jeopardising the organisation's growth and performance. Brusset & Teller (2017); Wieland & Durach (2021) suggests that the challenge lies in relating resilience to the ability of a broken system to bounce back and the organisational capacity to adapt and transform. Additionally , lean must be adopted as a whole business strategy rather than a standalone activity to reach its potential (Fullerton et al., 2014). As such, resistance to changing leaders' mindset hampers performance intensively as the variability in the process times, delivery lead time, and demand levels create buffering costs (Narasimhan et al., 2006).

Therefore, lean management principles eliminate waste, reduce variability and exchange expensive inventory buffers for less expensive ones, such as capacity (Narasimhan et al., 2006). In doing so, leanness eliminates non-value-added activities and improves performance in cost efficiency, cost control and reliability (Narasimhan et al., 2006). The improvements are derived from greater resource productivity and deployment of lean management principles leading to lower overhead costs, lower inventories and more effective cycle and throughput times (Narasimhan et al., 2006).

Correspondingly, this is congruent with themes associated with the literature on organisational agility and conflict of interest as a root cause of operational effectiveness that jeopardises delivering value to all the stakeholders in terms of operational culture, system, and functions. Congruent with themes in the literature review on lean management principles, from manufacturing paradigms and performance capabilities (Narasimhan et al., 2006), supply chain management requires infusing agility in a fast-changing environment and a coordinated and integrated planning process (Lalmazlumiam et al., 2016). As such, the organisation's operation requires changes in monitoring systemised processes by applying of lean management processes and value engineering to build a competitive advantage.

The power to investigate how to deter various barriers requires best practices in managing disruption to emerge, and this includes proposed directions, necessary conditions and actions for effective implementation of leanness, agility and flexibility in the workplace practice (Kleindorfer & Saad, 2005). As such operational resilience provides an integrative view of rich and diverse resilience perspectives on operation and supply chain, considering account building, reconfiguring, sensing, enhancing and sustaining relationships with the lean thinking management paradigm (Birkie et al., 2014).

As such, the following part investigates an overview of the participants and the following methods for getting answers to my research question and sub-questions.

4.5 Overview of participants: Questions and answers.

In this section, I intend to fill the existing gap through testing within my organisation and bring it to my research for reference. I intend to provide insights for industry leaders in executive roles responsible for business strategy formulation and accountable for stakeholders' confidence. Following is a brief discussion of the questions and thoughts that needed answering and clustered in (1) absence in agile culture, (2) miscommunication and lack of transparency and (3) inefficiency in the training and development strategy.

4.5.1 Absence of Agile Culture.

Disconnection between employees' knowledge, experiences, and competencies and organisational development perspectives.

The centralisation of HR activities at the corporate head office level is not aligned with the current economic ties, and the human capital lack of communication and synergy across departmental managers hampers achieving organisational resilience toward performance sustainability and creating opportunities that require value-added types of entrepreneurial actions of agile effectuation and creativity (Hitt et al., 2011). Applying leanness and agility action means transforming human capital into more vital and committed asset by unleashing their talents. Embedding agility into organisations undoubtedly includes talent management practices, as each employee's performance will be the best while they are kept in their strength zone. However, it will be stretching its capabilities to undertake more role-play towards achieving organisational excellence to ensure competitive advantage within the market to outperform the competition.

The outdated reward system pushes inefficiency of the business process, such as the inefficiency in applying lean management in overhead cost control hinders undertaking resource orchestration pragmatically to control overheads count, including wages and benefits of employees at all levels. Agility and organisational change are just starting in the organisation by identifying bottlenecks within the entire value stream and tackling the inefficiency in the decision-making process.

A highly resilient organisation towards all those capabilities to investigate long-term plans and increased focus on a short-term strategic approach enhances the progress for sustaining organisational performance (Briody et al.,2016). Some successes and failures could be placed in a framework that shows what works and how agile culture works for the overall cultural environment surrounding the Saudi Arabian market (Briody et al.,2016).

The application of creativity (Hitt et al., 2011) is possible as an established business development function caters to the creative solution for tapping market opportunities. However, the workforce available within the packaging industry is carefully analysed to reshuffle the workforce with a prime focus that people's talent matches the job requirement. The effectiveness of output is good enough if the talent matches job requirements. As such, having an efficient HR policy and precisely an effective reward system positively affect future growth and thus alters organisational performance.

- For this, a competency evaluation (360-degree evaluation) is crucially needed with the main objective of high HR implications relevant to the business strategy. The 360 degree exposes each employee to a 360-degree capability evaluation, including the self-evaluation, to ensure a professional approach for the gap measurement in terms of existing capability vs current /future job role required to be carried out. Such a practice helps to assess the need and analyse the people.

- As part of optimising the workforce, talent identification and practice would enhance multi-skilled job activities that capable employees would perform to optimise the manpower within the organisation. The targeted manpower identified would be either used for other job roles or transfer and thus work out training requirements (capability gap), succession plan and identifying the new talent within the existing workforce that is pushing instability in the organisational culture.

- Investigating a zero-tolerance for quality parameters at production focusing on lean operation, resulting in minimal waste and overhead so that the entire operational functions, such as maintenance, purchasing, production, and material handling, operate at lower cost with the highest efficiency. This has brought data analysis as a cornerstone

to carefully plan and formulate a lean strategy for the operation, highlighting and addressing the resistance to applying lean management principles.

5- An adequate qualification of employees.

6- Their personal belief that agility brings value addition to the business.

7- Efficiency in lean management principles.

8- Filling the vacant positions with qualified personnel on the front line to carry over consultant's requirements.

The gap observed in competency relevant to someone's current position provides the need-based training plans for the positions, mainly those directly related to the value creation activity across the whole value chain process.

4.5.2 Miscommunication and lack of transparency.

Missing communication feedback loops are driven through a hierarchy with unclear motivation and engagement.

Drawing on the literature review on agility and infusing agility in a fast-changing environment, stakeholders can engage in an inquiry on the mutual concern of action and inquiry (Raelin & Coghlan, 2006). Such engagement provides confidence by fulfilling stakeholders' expectations by creating value, managing the change within the work environment, and engaging deeper and more critically in various levels of learning (Raelin & Coghlan, 2006).

As such, the data interpretation activity unveiled missing feedback loops between the organisation and stakeholders. The missing feedback stems from suppliers in terms of an absence of a system to assure supplier payment and business association during a supply chain disturbance, which creates a hiccup in the supplier-buyer association. The Data collection shed light on the communication dysfunction where the hierarchical top-down communication and decision-making system seemingly consumes considerable time, undermining the importance /urgency of the activities to be completed. As such, investigating practical working problems necessitates collaboration with and between practitioners and stakeholders, knowledge

becomes socially accountable and involves a greater level of transparency and communication among all the stakeholders (Anderson et al., 2015)

The Lack of synergy and trust between employees, functions and departments brings a chaotic situation within the organisation. This seemingly uncovers the requirement at the organisation for striking synergy between various stakeholders. This goes in line with the modern manufacturing requirements of the packaging industry in understanding and conferring on a plan for infusing agility and enabling production through automation systems and price/cut consideration, expanding and boarding customer choice, value addition and integration in achieving manufacturing excellence in synergy (Margherita et al., 2020).

Correspondingly, the data revealed that unclear individual motivations (Hitt et al., 2011) bring a mishmash between strategic management and entrepreneurial qualities. The interviews and data collection showed that the personnel involved in the formulation and execution of strategy fell short of the conflict of interest due to double responsibilities and got conflicting results in understanding the turbulence in the market.

Arguably, agile organisations are predisposed by stakeholders and routines that put forward contradicting demands and conflicting standpoints (Annosi et al., 2018), so creating differentiation becomes very difficult in such a prevailing situation due to the instability of organisational culture. Correspondingly, the following are some of the answers and appropriate methods underscored through my research findings.

- The need to explore, infuse and change the current hierarchical channel to a fluid structure that enables appropriate support to enhance performance.

- Comprehending the importance of critical constructive dialogue.

- Enacting proactive, agile leanness activities.

- Exploring how to solve the conflict of interest due to double responsibilities.

- To encourage the formation of an autonomous and collaborative team such as Rapid Improvement Team (RIT), Pillar Team (PT), and World-class operation management (WCOM) team.

The decision-making with the teams where the organisational culture fails to support a critical constructive dialogue hinders the required organisational change into practice and in overcoming the inefficient business planning processes (Comella-Dorda et al., 2019). The inability to adapt to market changes limits the business strategy planning activity, which comprises detailed operational, sales, human resources, and financial plans, which are essential strategic priorities in planning, training and development in designing both the communication and organisational architecture for ongoing supply chain disruption and emergency response to crisis management (Kleindorfer & Saad, 2005).

4.5.3 Inefficiencies in the Training and Development Strategy.

Weakness in HR policy with no use of self, peer or group evaluations and development perspectives.

The lack of management skills and know-how related to technical competencies is addressed to understand the correlation between technical competency and the weakness of HR and T&D policy. As such, it is relatively important for HR employees to experience learning in action and see it as a vital aspect to integrate academic studies with experience in practical applications where the competency and skills are fundamental to the research since stakeholders involved are expected to use them in the research arena (Coghlan, 2001, Coghlan 2006).

The data revealed that organisations operating in a rapidly changing and disturbed supply chain environment and highly competitive markets have adopted the continuous improvement lean mindset and worked to improve quality, reduce waste and increase customer retention (Fullerton et al., 2014). The process re-engineering activity and best practices such as six sigma methods, value engineering lean management and 5 S methodologies and activities are necessary elements in the business process and operational strategy.

In addition, the lack of training and development with operations strategy hampers operational effectiveness in terms of cost reduction and efficiency enhancement. Strategically, operational leaders assume that their main aspect of leadership is achieving a higher production volume. However, the data reveals a total absence of training and development for risk mitigation planning as part of risk management. This lack of training and development in business

planning hampers the organisation's performance during uncertainty. The following are some ideas to enhance the training and development perspectives:

- Infusing training and development strategy detailing how the operation has to operate through setting short & long-term goals at the operational level.

- Identifying and exploring practical approaches and a response framework in future as such as scenario and crisis planning, as part of risk mitigation.

The data revealed that low performance is associated with time management across the operational process due to a lack of training and development strategy. The efficiency of processes is not sustained and driving the organisation to low effectiveness of available resources the interpretation of my operational leaders' lack of organisational maturity as they emphasise production volume only and not on the training and development strategy is one of the critical problems related to low performance.

4.6 Interpretation and research findings.

The following part tackles the findings related to the six major emerging themes from the ground finding and related practice. The literature governs my Interview questions, and the identified themes captured and represented patterned responses and meaning with the data set connected with my research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2017). Accordingly, the ten dimensions mentioned in earlier sections are explored and summarised in three categories: an organisational and operational model, leadership, change organisational culture, and strategy are the reasons behind the ten dimensions specified in an earlier section of this research.

4.6.1 Theme – Bureaucratic Structural Barrier: Inefficiency in the decision-making process.

Various stakeholders were asked to reflect on their experience with the decision-making process, and the data revealed that there are too many layers in the decision-making process activities. Executive Director (ED), Vice president (BU and corporate office) and the president

(Corporate office) and third-party player (procurement division owned by the president) are all involved with the decision-making process, as the following quotes show.

> *Quote: "Too many authorities involved creates confusion and conflict of interest in-terms exerting pressure on business unit for making to accept raw material not directly required for process requirements those are in need with reference to orders in hand "(Interview 3 – Focus Group Meeting)*

Additionally, the data revealed the gap between how the conflict of interest is conceptualised as a bureaucratic, structural barrier between the executive management when compared to various stakeholders, as shown in the following quote:

> *Quote" Decision-making on the executive part should be agile enough to create competitive advantage and reduce the layers of approvals" (Interviewee 1 – External Participant)*

Furthermore, a lack of an ICT system or a supply chain platform jeopardises having a and ultimately does not meet the plant requirements and later jeopardises fulfilling the customers' demand to forecast that accelerates the supply chain disturbance.

The raw material is the heart of the operation, and it is our bread and butter, and everyone wants to get involved and try to give input and have their pie of influence, as seen from the following.

> *Quote: "Since cost of raw material is highly significant to the total cost (60-65% of total cost) and highly significant to the profitability, there are too many corporate senior management involvements, including one of the president. The involvement brings non-value added activity that adds pressure and time consuming to the business unit employees". (Interview 3 – Focus Group Meeting)*

So, in the case of raw material procurement, the data reveals two issues: one is the lack of one internally mentioned above with the lack of an ERP system, and the second is that too many layers are involved in the decision making is time-consuming. Every time a decision is made, the

business unit employees suffer as it they do some unnecessarily bureaucratic protocols resulting in more time wastage and non-value-added activities resulting in the following quotes:

Quote: There are non-value activities created with the process itself because there are unnecessary ordering material types that are not needed by the operation and orders by the corporate office. This creates more unnecessary work from the material handling department to unload and store unnecessary material. (Interview 4 – Focus Group Meeting)

As such, the centralised decision-making at the corporate head office level, along with the conflict of interest of the VP, jeopardises the raw material resource procurement and is the cause of the many layers of decision-making. The VP role with both the third-party procurement division and the business unit creates business interruption since sometimes the quantities ordered are not needed by the Business Unit and it is purchased to generate profit for the third-party procurement division, as shown in the below quote:

Quote" Decision-making on the executive part should be agile enough to create competitive advantage and reduce the layers of approvals" (Interview 3 – Focus Group Meeting)

Conversely, although the middle managers are aware of the importance of the decision-making process, they have not come across practical experience when dealing with senior executives and lack the development to cope with the decision-making level and thus unable to anticipate the changes that are needed and outside factors force them to improve internal processes.

4.6.2   Theme – Roles and Responsibility: conflict of interest.

The data showed a conflict of interest due to double responsibilities, as the VP is responsible for two business units. This brought a strategic mismatch between those two units, as shown below quotes:

Quote:" Strategic intention of acquiring cost leadership only clearly on the cornerstone of corporate strategy and however, the differentiation is not clearly worked out and in addition, the double role of the VP creates a problem of positioning the organisation

within the packaging industry not clear to enhance wealth creation and market share."
(Interview 4 – Focus Group Meeting)

The quote shows a conflict of interest that leads to reduced competitive advantage in the organisation and the ability to create wealth for all the stakeholders and is unable to deliver value to its customer base better than what the competition is offering.

Additionally, the data shows that there is an improper resource allocation that is tied up with the corporate office and visible with reliance on one major internal domestic supplier for the supply of raw material without diversifying the sources of raw material internationally. There is no diversification of man raw material suppliers, and reliance on one major local supplier led to the scarcity of raw materials. Thus, due to the nature of the paper packaging industry, the leadership had an excellent relationship with the local suppliers, and when the crisis of shortage of paper happened, the local supplier fell short on cash to buy in his turn paper scrap and ended up with short of supply.

Also, the leadership, mainly the VP, was buying from the same overseas supplier due to low offered prices and low quality and fell short of qualifying overseas paper suppliers. Even if we identified and sourced new suppliers, the organisation procedure states that suppliers must be qualified in quality and run ability. So, when the scarcity happened, we were forced to buy at extremely high prices to satisfy our customer base.

> *Quote:" The leadership was chasing the local supplier to deliver the goods as the material planning requirements, however the supplier was sending whatever they are producing and it was needed for the operation and due to the situation we were forced to receive whatever they are producing and with high prices and different specifications"*
> *(Interview 4 – Focus Group Meeting)*

The quote shows that the conflict of interest triggered by the position of VP brought a strategic mismatch between business units, jeopardising the raw material resource advantage to keep the growth, safeguard the customer base, and capture price-sensitive customers. The quote shows the strategic intention as well of acquiring cost leadership.

More internal participants made associations with the inefficiency in the business process, as could be observed with the Vice President being responsible for two different operations and the conflict of interest hindering one of the operations. The organisation is a manufacturing facility, and the same owner and the same decision-maker, the president of both divisions, own the Supply Agency. The following quote exemplifies this:

> Quote: "VP trying to satisfy the owner with preferential treatment for one of the business unit and VP was relying on low price and high volume with various suppliers irrespective of operational needs where the decision was not with ED and it was with the VP" (Interview 4 – Focus Group Meeting)

The quote shows that the VP handles two Business Units, the manufacturing facility and the procurement agency aiming the raw material procurement. The organisation uses the raw material the procurement agency procures to produce its finished goods. So, the profit maximisation of the supply agency means supplying more material to the organisation, which is usually unnecessary. The organisation ends with piles of stock accommodated in the warehouse and turns into slow-moving stocks as they are not delivered per the planning department requirements.

4.6.3 Theme - Hierarchical system: Centralisation of HR activities.

The research findings revealed that there is an apparent poor and inefficient succession planning to the fact that all HR activities are centralised in the corporate office, which is negatively affecting the succession planning, and this could be observed with the lack of a head of the personnel and HR department (Vacant) pushing that all HR activities are centralised at the corporate office level.

Also, succession planning is related to corporate HR policy as the organisation has a significant negative impact due to a lack of solid HR policies and implications relevant to setting a business strategy shown in the following quote.

> Quote: "the succession planning and clarity of next ladder of move brings commitment among middle managers, and our organisation has failed to bring succession plan that brings significant power-politics within the organisational culture."

The lack of solid and efficient HR policies at the organisation seems to jeopardise the effective synergy and contribution in enhancing the employees' creativity and innovation when not provided with proper training. For example, when the business development crew and the structural designers are given enough training, it enhances their creativity in product development and structural designs, which might lead to either innovation in new products or creativity in new designs.

In addition, the business unit level business strategy needs to discuss the relevant HR implications effectively and requires constant support and alteration from the corporate level. I mean here that the HR analyst at the corporate level is aware of the methodology of performing HR implication; however unable to coach the Business Unit and is incapable of understanding the HR implication related to the Saudi working environment.

The corporate office needs to actively work on pragmatic HR implications. The HR corporate office is not developing the training needs based on the developed strategies. It cannot convert the business unit strategic thrust and KPI into HR implications', and in its turn, these HR implications are not converted into a training identification plan.

The training requirements are not connected to the talent management process, where each department is supposed to have a skill matrix. To exemplify this, the technician at the maintenance department might be good at doing well in troubleshooting and greasing and unskilled with repairing and fixing the machine, and the skilled matrix will show this.

Lack of succession planning creates power politics within the organisation because middle management leaders start seeking higher positions, especially when I was promoted from General manager to Executive director. Middle-level managers were under the impression to get senior executives that would get this position as preferential treatment irrespective of their performance and leadership skills.

> *"The successors for the two managers who left the organisation, the logistics manager and Personnel manager, were not allocated and the replacement were not effective enough and their profile jeopardised the performance, and moreover the ultimate*

manager of the department lacks technical competencies in warehouse management and material planning functionality"(Interview 5 – Focus Group Meeting)

This quote shows that the lack of succession planning created hurdles in many departments for instance, the logistics manager, who was experienced enough to lead the department, left the organisation, and his manager, who is the customer service and logistics manager, was not competent enough to perform his tasks ending up with the subordinates to perform and highly skilled job with a low competency level of the employees.

Additionally, there is a lack of solid and efficient HR policies, as presented in the personnel and HR manager vacancy who left the company. There was poor and inefficient succession planning, and the HR manager could not replace another employee due to the lack of needed competency within the organisation.

Quote:" The centralisation of HR activities pushed the business unit to be reluctant in human capital development along with the oblivious deficiency with lack of training and presence of HR policies".(Interview 5 – Focus Group Meeting)

The quote shows that the vacancy in the position of Personnel and HR managers created a vacuum and weakened robust and efficient policies to be in place. This is associated with the corporate office centralising all HR activities and thus relying on them to streamline all HR activities.

Conversely, the data revealed an apparent implication resulting from a lack of HR policies on the business strategy. It is visible in the absence of human capital training and improved HR policies, which is seen with the material handling department, where the workforce progress is not undertaken for managing raw materials and warehouse management functions.

Quote:" The department manager is not experienced enough in the field and therefore the development activity was jeopardised by lack of leadership at the executional level and the new logistics manager does not clearly workout the development on filling the gap".(Interview 5 – Focus Group Meeting)

The quote shows that the logistics and customer manager is not skilled and trained enough in logistics and supply chain. Once the logistics manager left the company, he could not fill in his place, and workflow started deteriorating.

Additionally, the data revealed a need for robust and efficient HR policies, identifying one of the broken points under human capital development as there was no synchronised HR implication developed by the corporate HR department in coordination with the business unit's HR. The geographical and cultural-based consideration was not given during HR implication workouts while analysing the operational strategies for each function.

4.6.4 Theme – Cultural Barrier: Inability to adapt an organisational change culture.

The data revealed that there appears to be instability in the organisational culture that affects its performance within the organisational structure and where there is a lack of harmony with the peer group to admit their weakness and disagreements. This is visible between various departments with unresolved "politics, " affecting alignment and synergy towards the organisational objectives. Each department leader has different objectives and constantly contradicts each other, personally and professionally.

Although the leadership is infusing many strategies, there is a lack of execution as the prevailing Middle-level leaders are reluctant to change and follow the set strategic leadership where it aims to infuse agility to uproot the non-value-added activities and processes within the business operation as shown below quote:

> *Quote:" The problem seems to be with the executive director working hard to instil the strategy and the middle management lacks the competency to execute them".*
> *(Interview 2 – Focus Group Meeting)*

The quote shows that middle management is not qualified enough to work within their capabilities. Managers probably lack the skills to work under turbulent times and rely on the importance of problem-solving that is needed.

The data also revealed that an unstable organisational culture had been identified as one of the problems in bringing synergy across the organisation, such as interdepartmental human capital

and communication activities. Each function focused on its set KPI achievement instead of supporting overall synergy that would bring positive organisational culture aligned toward business growth and overcoming dynamic market factors imposed on the organisation.

> *Quote: "We were doing extremely well with pay rise every year and everyone was happy, we lost focus on all good practices"*

The quote shows that all the teams were relaxed and unprepared. Senior leadership fell short in generating a profit and creating value for retaining the customers due to a lack of competitive advantage, where they lost the ability to make profit and value addition.

> *Quote: "everyone come to Saudi Arabia to work because it is tax free, and all the perception changed when levy fees imposed on the family dependents"*

> *Quote: "historically there was no sudden changes in rules and regulations and mainly taxations and all came at once and all the population are not prepared for such changes"*

The quotes show that all the employees were facing difficulties in coping with the new dynamics of the new rules and regulations in terms of taxation, challenges and changes in rules and regulations. Most middle-level employees send their families to their home origin.

Additionally, the leadership lacks technical competencies in running their department under uncertainties, and they delegate the tasks before mastering them mainly in the supply chain and operation, as shown in the below quote:

> *Quote: "departmental managers are having difficulties in the execution of their tasks in their functional area/process where results count at the end of the month. This is a complete failure since results showed a total opposite direction. (Interview 2 – Focus Group Meeting)*

Also, there is a struggle to capture the operation manager/general manager position, which is vacant at the moment. Some managers act as if they are deserved to be promoted, and it seems to be a rat race for a promotion that brings division and favouritism this goes back to the lack of a precise succession planning established and well communicated to all employees.

The analysed data showed that a failure at the execution level brings lesser value delivered to the stakeholders and reveals that the politics within the organisation negatively affects the results, drives a conflict of interest among the middle management, and creates cultural barriers to enhancing organisational performance.

Additionally, the data suggested that there is a lack of time management skills and lack know-how that could be visible with the availability of an inexperienced workforce that is observed in the material handling department with the shortage of workforce in place than the previous year that causes operating in high stress and low performance.

> *Quote "There is lack of suitable replacement for the personnel who left the department and were not replaced. Such as logistics manager, team leader who left the company and were not replaced with adequate competent personnel in place." (Interview 2 – Focus Group Meeting)*

The quote shows that less qualified personnel were delegated the responsibility of managing the functions, and most importantly, the manager leading the material handling department lacks the expertise to manage complicated and intense material transactions as a previous experience"

> *Quote: "The overall production process by the production has dropped significantly, and the old clamps were lashed from the operation, and the high cost was restricting us to purchase new one with this created risk of over usage of equipment causing more wear and tear." (Interview 2 – Focus Group Meeting)*

The lack of know-how is another critical problem within the operation, as middle management leaders are unaware of how to ensure and keep the process as nimble as possible.

Some of the participants highlighted the fact that there is an inability to foresee and adapt to organisational changes. The plant is set up and geared towards higher volumes, so we made Capital Expenditures of 30 million US $ in 2014, 2015 and 2016 to automate the plant. The plant's leadership and the production team leaders took a long time to adjust, comply and anticipate the market changes to understand the business dynamics and requirements changes needed to satisfy customers' needs.

Quote" we are on the verge of becoming one of the largest packaging factories under one roof and it is almost fully automated line in Saudi Arabia and this created problem in the mind of the operational employees creating resistance to change that is holding the organisation to move with the needed innovative and efficient process and obviously falls behind with the process efficiency and waste control methodologies and its impact on the performance" (Interview 3 – Focus Group Meeting)

The quote shows that there is no active process sustained throughout the year and purely dedicated measurement of the market changes as well. There is no clear system in place and a lack of accountability to monitor, measure, and anticipate the market changes and how to implement them internally since the plant's setup and operational process is not equipped and ready to cope with the changes, for example, running short-run orders.

The set-up and operational process in the plant are not equipped and ready to cope with the changes. For example, running short-run orders and volume is given first preference since it is widely believed that higher volume brings higher volume, good contribution, and higher efficiency within the operation.

Quote: "The prevailing challenges in Saudi Arabia needs active and regular market overview throughout the year to monitor the changes that are happening and anticipate the needed requirements and actions plan. (Interview 4 – Focus Group Meeting)

Quote: "Although we have Lean management and six sigma in place, the process is geared with the investment made on the automation process to run long-run long and short-run orders as we were not expecting that drop in volume and didn't plan for it. (Interview 4 – Focus Group Meeting)

The quote shows resistance to change from the leadership of the plant as it is easier for them to produce economies of scale orders which are long-run orders with lesser setups, as opposed to short-run short orders with a higher number of setups. This shows that the plant management needs more workforce that we have a shortage because short-run orders take time to be produced and don't yield the needed volume in terms of tonnage (output measurements in metric tons), whereas the leadership is currently attached to volume-oriented

performance only and efficiency-based approach is not under the limelight. Only volume achievement is considered as a merit. Therefore, short-run orders are not preferred in production, and prime preferences are only given for high tonnage-yielding orders.

On the raw material part, the logistics department is not performing proactive forecasting in raw material requirement planning in a supply chain changing environment. At the same time, senior leadership fell short of hedging and forecasting raw materials beyond the 3 months of normal forecasting.

> Quote" lack of competency on the leadership of customer service and logistics department and not aligned with raw material planning requirements. Also, the leadership not experienced how supply chain works under volatile conditions." (Interview 2 – Focus Group Meeting).

The quote shows that the new title given to the logistics and customer service manager is used only as a title. This was the leadership need to take responsibility for such a promotion and that the customer service and logistics department lacked technical know-how for a highly competent supply chain activity.

The quote also shows that there is no proactive material requirement planning in place to leverage the raw material price movement combined with a lack of competency within the raw material and planning department and a lack of visibility from the sales department about the sales forecasting coupled with the lack of active market monitoring related to paper procurement is in total absence.

4.6.5   Theme - lack of communication and synergy across departmental managers.

The data revealed that there is an apparent lack of communication and synergy across departmental managers, and this is visible when in communication with the rest of the teams, the middle management seems to have a lack of commitment to cascade to their subordinates and at some points passing the ball from one court to another without performing the tasks assigned to each department. So instead of initiating a positive change, there was resistance to change between managers and at the same time, there was no transformation or transition

period, or unit/department put in place to equip, educate and train all the team to adapt to the new changes inside the plant.

> *Quote: "Recruitment department did not support the needed change and recruit highly skilled employees to move parallel with the investments that was made in machineries and Investment need to be both in machines and in people" (Interview 2 – Focus Group Meeting)*

The quote shows that the recruitment process not moving in parallel with the long-term strategic intention of the business unit, and it was not capturing the employees' qualifications and experience.

Additionally, the data shows a conflict of interest and communication problem with the Quality System management reporting to the plant management. The efficiency-oriented culture brings operational excellence and install the lean management application in infusing and enhancing the available process.

> *Quote: There was a vacancy in the leadership in the QSM department (Quality and system management) that lead to Low quality standards not meeting customers' expectations and ultimately leading to low volume intake. When this vacancy was in place the QSM team leader was reporting to the plant manager whereas the team leader should have been reporting to the Executive director until this position was filled" (Interview 2 – Focus Group Meeting)*

The quote means that as per quality management systems principles, there is a compromise when the production and quality system managers report to the plant management. They comprise highlighted since the quality management system KPI difference in content and process from the production manager, the first wants to issue high NCR (Non-conformity reports) and the production manager wants to produce a higher level of production.

> *Quote: "Also the lack of efficiency brings the efficiency-oriented culture brings operational excellence and install the lean management application in infusing and enhancing the available process"(Interview 2 – Focus Group Meeting)*

The quote means that there was a conflict of interest when the plant manager took over the QSM department and pointed the finger at me for not taking immediate action to fill that vacancy and making the department reports to you as per the organisational chart and good international practices".

> *Quote: "we didn't deliver consistent product quality in line with customers' expectations due to conflict of interest of the reporting hierarchy of QSM department" (Interview 2 – Focus Group Meeting)*

The quote means that if we continue providing low-quality standards and not meeting customers' expectations, we will end up with no customers and ruin the reputation we have built over the past two decades.

> *Quote" the middle-level leaders are unaware of the importance and the power of executing a strategy as probably they have not come across an academic study and or practical experience in a real and practical situation before". (Interview 5 – Focus Group Meeting)*

The quote shows that the leadership lacks learning and development to cope with the decision-making level and is thus unable to anticipate the changes that are needed. Outside factors force them to improve internal processes.

> *Quote: "departmental managers are having difficulties in the execution aiming to remove and eliminate non-value added activities in their functional area/process to ensure an agile process takes place and to meet the market dynamics and adopt to the needed changes to thrive the competition." (Interview 2 – Focus Group Meeting)*

The quote shows that leadership is having difficulties spotting non-value-added activities that the staff engages in. This is related to a competency factor of the leader in spotting the activities of monitoring, guiding and later evaluating the extent of those non-value-added activities.

4.6.6 Theme - Resistance to identifying and executing lean management strategies.

The data revealed that there is an apparent resistance to identify and execute needed strategies set by the organisation and as observed in the plant by (1) Inactive application of lean management principles by the leadership team and methodology to control operational cost and due to (2) the leadership firmly don't believe that change is needed to instil technological advancements within the operation.

The inactive application of lean management principles appears to be a result of inadequate qualifications of employees who could not understand the underlying needs for the needed change of a workable application of lean management along with their personal belief that this change does not bring any added value as shown in the following quotes:

> *Quote: "The lack of application of lean management is entirely a leadership issue related to the execution and by doing so the middle management not taking initiation and focus for a proper strategic approach to execute lean management approach." (Interview 6 – Focus Group Meeting)*

> *Quote:" The resistance to change brought high non-value activities to remain in place like high delivery lead time and high operational waste. "(Interview 2 – Focus Group Meeting)*

The two quotes show that the middle managers lack training and development along with low experience in the field of waste management as the production leadership always asks for more workforce requirements due to a lack of automation within the operation.

Inadequate training and development can also be seen with highly skilled employees who have been in the organisation for more than two decades and resist the needed change by not accepting any change whatsoever, including introducing lean management principles, and as shown by the following quote.

> *Quote" exponential changes and particularly the technological lack professional handling within the organisation with lack of HR best practices. (Interview 2 – Focus Group Meeting)*

The quote shows that on the plant side not accepting technological advancements, and on the leadership side, there is some illusion that change is not needed, and there is an inefficiency in lean management principles, which are not being practised inside the plant.

Additionally, the data revealed that low-efficiency enhancement and operational cost reduction are not visible through the proper application of the value engineering concept. On the leadership part, there is no adequate qualified personnel available on the front line to carrying over the consultant's requirements, and the middle manager's commitment is not adequate to sustain poor execution of lean management principles to achieve cost reduction.

> Quote: "The economic downtrend from year 2016 caused the packaging market demand to collapse and therefore, the low volume did not permit the organisation to infuse qualified new blood into operation. On the other hand, the depleted, aged employees were leaving leveraging the organisation's golden handshake strategy and however, the vacant positions were not adequately filled with qualified personnel" (Interview 2 – Focus Group Meeting)

The quote shows that some skilled employees left the organisation, and there was no new hire recruited who is knowledgeable in the field with good experience and technical competencies.

For the case of executive leadership, the data revealed that the leadership focus was mainly on generating profit before 2017 rather than formulating scenario planning that could be used to operate in a changing environment coupled with a lack of vision on the need to have contingency risk plan within the organisation to operate under changing environment in Saudi Arabia in terms of new taxation and levy fees.

Additionally, the data shows that there are no mitigation measures in place, and it is visible in the presence of the deficiency in the leadership technical competency and lack of precise talent management for allocating human capital to ensure "the right person for the right job" is in place.

> Quote: "Such absent in latent development hinders organisational competitiveness and results in requirement of more workforce /overtime hours / temporary employees." (Interview 2 – Focus Group Meeting)

The quote shows, for example, that in the shipping department, the leadership is forced to hire more people for a specific job. In contrast, if I have competent and experienced and knowledgeable employees, then I will not need to perform specific tasks with a higher number of employees.

Conversely, some participants emphasised the lack of an effective operational strategy and as visible in the low performance across the entire business process, notably in the customer service department and mainly with the leadership in that department that is offering services that negatively affect the level of our customer's satisfaction.

> *Quote: "There is a lack of agility and alignment to create value to the customers resulting in volume drop due to the lack of effective operational strategy focusing on resource utilisation to bring resource utilisation as a competitive advantage." (Interview 3 – Focus Group Meeting).*

The quote shows a need for an operational strategy leading to an extended lead-time for customer enquiry processing, hindering quick submission of price quotes. This is causing order processing inaccuracy and high lead time for order processing. There are also no mitigation measures since the organisation was doing well and making good profits. The following quote shows that the leadership needs to prepare to operate in a changing environment.

> *Quote "There is a pure lack of business strategy planning to combine both resource and talent management to create value and capture higher market share" (Interview 2 – Focus Group Meeting).*

Additionally, the same participants emphasised on the lack of time management and anticipated priority setting by the middle management that is affecting the execution of timely orders and inaccuracy of orders processing and all activities related to the commercial part of the customer service-related activities.

> *Quote:" time management and priority setting not in place because that is lack of know-how coupled with low competency traits about managing high level-based job and lack of application of scientific-based approach and management including lack of technical capabilities"(Interview 5 – Focus Group Meeting).*

The lack of know-how in the above quote results from leaders being usually developed without scientific, managerial theories and practices related to academic merit and background.

Drawing on the research findings and experience investigating performance, leanness, agility, and resilience are key elements to overcoming challenges and improving performance in today's rapidly changing environment.

5 Chapter 5: Conclusion.

5.1 Introduction.

This chapter explores discussions and understanding surrounding my investigations and interpretations of all participants within my explorations of my research findings, involving the integration of scholarship and practice of lean management prerequisite to contribute to professional knowledge in the field of supply chain resilience and operational agility, whilst developing learners as insightful and reflexive professional on how to improve organisational performance and draw on an increased sense of ethics and guidance towards questioning the taken-for-granted aspects of organisational phenomena (Coghlan 2007; Anderson et al., 2015).

This Chapter will focus on using myself, as an insider scholar-practitioner, in addressing the overarching question, my own pathway in this research, my reflexivity and the development of my research and the implications of my research findings. It is seen as a summary of my DBA journey that is considered an award for a scholar-practitioner interested in researching practice within the context of organisational performance to create new knowledge, understanding, and insights about improving organisational performance (Coghlan 2007; Anderson et al., 2015).

Additionally, in this chapter, I will bring forward ideas on reflexivity mentioned in Chapter Three that played an essential role in my inquiry about the assumptions surrounding my action research practice (Coghlan, 2010; Coghlan, 2013). I will also bring forward ideas on reflexivity brought by (Etherington, 2004; Cunliffe, 2008; Robertson, 2010; Coghlan, 2010; Coghlan 2013, and Anderson et al., 2015) to compare and contrast my engagement in self-learning in action helps with the knowledge transfer within the organisation and among other packing industries.

The notion of having reflexive participants is consistent with my research findings in that it is asking stakeholders, mainly shareholders, to be open, within the action research remit, to new and alternative ideas and views. Arguably, there are ongoing tensions between various stakeholders, particularly the shareholders, on concluding the research as one of my recommendations suggests tackling a change within the conflict of interest in decision-making. I have tried at the same time to stay open and reflexive for a better understating of the shareholders' point of view in shelving this suggestion. I tried my best to stay objective in knowledge creation. My DBA journey has always been centred on bringing ideas about change (Anderson et al., 2015) to my organisation and the packaging industry. I intend to employ reflexivity as an essential tool and a resource for mitigating potential issues among the stakeholders and elaborate on the potential implications for the owners when tackling barriers to the contribution of practice (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007).

5.2 Using myself in my research as an Insider Action Researcher.

As an insider action researcher, playing a dual role as both practitioner and scholar, it was always my intent to investigate my research problem and contribute to generating knowledge and improving practice through change and development in both practical relevance and scientific rigour (Zuber –Skerritt,2007; Coghlan, 2010). Most noteworthy, using action-oriented research as a change agent allowed shedding light on ideas and new pathways to solving my real complex problem in the workplace, including changes from inefficiencies in the training and development strategies, communication and transparency issues, and organisational culture. Such an action-oriented base research framework drew on the shared nature of reality regarding what constitutes adequate knowledge in my everyday interaction with my interpretive stance as an insider scholar-practitioner action researcher (Cunliffe, 2008; Saunders et al., 2009; Creswell, 2014; Coghlan, 2010).

Addressing my overarching organisational question, in which ideas of lean management principles are applied in practice to improve organisational performance, specifically when delving into supply chain resilience and operational agility, was achieved through action

research cycles derived from participants' interviews and focus group meetings. Actionable knowledge was brought to the front line from my research findings aligned with my research objectives addressing the main question. The sub-questions and research outcomes showed reception from my organisation to the operational factors affecting the organisational performance. Those factors affecting organisational performance include, and not limited to, inheriting issues with missing feedback loops and stakeholder engagement, communication is driven through hierarchy, unclear individual motivations, bureaucracy, hierarchical structure in decision-making, weakness in HR and T&D, absence of best practice examples, conflict of interest and disconnection between a deeply personal knowledge, experiences, and competencies (Anderson et al., 2015:105).

It was crucial to keep an open dialogue with various stakeholders, mainly the shareholders, to allow daily operations to continue and for continuous dialogue to show them respect and understanding (Cunliffe, 2008). In addition, the concept of ontology, the assumptions of the nature of social reality and the role that stakeholders play in that reality, along with the concept of epistemology, not only with the nature and purpose of knowledge but also what good knowledge is viewed in the future concerning my reflexivity with the open dialogue (Anderson et al., 2015; Coghlan, 2013; Coghlan 2010; Cunliffe, 2008; Robertson, 2010).

This reflects my learning that challenged my assumptions, attitudes, and existing organisational relationships (Anderson et al., 2015). Enhancing organisational performance in some ways that speed up the process can be done by implementing an agile culture that attracts high-performing people (Morley, 2015). Also, through organising the human capital starting from the recruitment stage, hiring the right talent, onboarding, developing the skill, allocating the talent to the specific job and retraining the high performance. The actions presented above bring action-oriented based research as a widely opted and practised change methodology within the industry rather than just within academia (Coghlan, 2010).

5.3   My own pathway.

From the beginning of my DBA journey, I intended to investigate new ideas, understand my research problem, and explore how to generate actionable knowledge and apply it to my

workplace. My action-oriented research enabled my scholar-practitioner position to investigate the context of organisational performance further. It is not always so easy and straightforward to make accurate sense of things (Drummond, 2002:13), particularly regarding a disrupted operation.

Action-oriented research has influenced my own pathway development (Etherington, 2004) and taught me various valuable lessons as it is subversive in examining everything. It enhanced my listening skills, emphasised my questioning ability, fostered courage to face organisational politics, motivated my action to improve organisational performance, incited and supported my reflection on learning in action and endorsed participation from various stakeholders (Coghlan, 2010; Coghlan, 2007).

Likewise, the participants and I benefited as we interacted with the research area in personal, organisational and shared learning (Bourner & Simpson, 2005) throughout the focus group meetings. The journey was challenging but rewarding and exposed us to a different way of thinking and working. It created the space to think critically (Raelin & Coghlan, 2006) about advancing knowledge of practice, personal and professional development and a direct contribution to professional practice within our organisation (Bourner & Simpson, 2005).

My research pathway was challenging and rewarding, simultaneously with my duality as a scholar-practitioner. The journey was initially challenging, tricky and confusing due to adapting to a new paradigm and mindset towards working with a new and unconventional change approach in managing my role duality and organisational politics (Coghlan, 2007; Coghlan & Coghlan Brannick, 2014). This was rewarding as well as together, the participants and I were able to encounter the dual role conflict with openness rather than restrictiveness (Coghlan, 2007) as the topics of organisational performance supersede restrictiveness in discussing the barriers with the leadership decision-making process, the relationships within the organisational culture and the barriers to the operational model and lean management process. The ultimate reward was also when my research became a crucial element in my contribution to practice in my workplace and different settings within the packaging industry in Saudi Arabia.

The most challenging issue in my pathway was managing organisational politics in two folds, as detailed in the two emergent themes: the inefficiency in the decision-making process and the conflict of interest with the roles and responsibilities. So, with my preunderstanding of my organisation's power structure and politics, I could work in multiple directions and ways that are in keeping with the general internal political conditions of the organisation without compromising either my research study or even my own career (Coghlan, 2007).

Additionally, I faced more challenges in preunderstanding my role duality as a scholar and a practitioner and with organisational politics (Coghlan, 2007). This was primarily because the idea of my growth, evaluation and development as a scholar starts by reflecting on when I first joined the organisation up to the time I started my DBA journey, I excitedly signed on for a job in Saudi Arabia directly after finishing my undergraduate degree with the underlying premise that every graduate leaves Lebanon to seek for a better opportunity somewhere else in the world and me, it was Saudi Arabia, and I am still with the same packaging company that I joined in 1994.

Therefore, with almost three decades working with the same organisation, my preunderstanding of the knowledge, insights and experience within the organisation was influenced and built on more than twenty years before engaging with my research programme (Gummesson, 2000; Coghlan, 2007; Coghlan & Brannick 2014) and to the lived experience of so many years in my organisation. So, over the years, I have recognised my organisation's everyday life (Coghlan, 2007) and explored the non-value-added activities that employees spend time doing and talking about. I have learned what legitimate and taboo to speak about (Coghlan, 2007) among various stakeholders is and what occupies their minds, their pain and sorrow, their happiness and challenges, and their families back home in their home countries. My pathway has influenced how I understand the significant events in the organisation and how the conflict of interest and the bureaucratic work is a taboo for them and a red line they cannot cross.

However, I had to be cautious in my assumptions with such preunderstanding as too much of being close to the data might mislead me into thinking I knew all the answers. Additionally, I

now view things differently and become more open to my current thinking with alternative re-framing (Coghlan, 2007). Although I am the Executive director and have access to almost all functional and hierarchical boundaries, I was afraid I get denied deeper access which might or might not be denied for an outsider auditor, such as a third-party consultant.

Reflecting on my research pathway as a scholar-practitioner, I view organisational performance differently. I view things differently when stepping back from my experience and my preunderstanding to process the experience's meaning to interpret and plan further understanding in the future (Coghlan, 2007). In reflection, the rules and the level of engagement with my research about organisational performance were immense in terms of everyday work practice, looking for fresh perspectives, and becoming open to discovering the unknown (Raelin & Coghlan, 2006). Additionally, I now value the relationship with employees and stakeholders I did not associate with, changing the pre-existing relationships with them and becoming more involved with the organisational setting more broadly (Raelin & Coghlan, 2006; Coghlan, 2007).

Additionally, as derived from Coghlan (2007), the participation in interviews and the meetings were used to my benefit as a researcher to recognise these preunderstandings in asking questions throughout the focus group meetings as I have used all this internal information to obtain richer data and direct my questions in a way without them being aware of my knowledge in an attempt for them to engage freely and without creating unnecessary pressure on the participants. Additionally, this was a good point to reflect on when recognising the hierarchical and bureaucratic system doesn't facilitate creating enough space (Raelin & Coghlan, 2006) to express one opinion without being governed by a regulated environment when addressing topics related to change within the organisation.

5.4   Reflexivity and Reliability.

Before starting the DBA program, I did not know precisely the meaning of that word, the first time the term reflexivity attracted my attention was in one of the residency courses when one of my colleagues brought up the term and continuously spoke about his self-awareness. As an integral part of action research (Robertson, 2000). As shared in chapter three, reflexivity is a

continuous journey of self-analysis and self-awareness (Coghlan,2013:3 in having a constant conversation about living within the practical experience and using the knowledge to inform our actions, understanding and communications within the social and cultural context where we live and work (Etherington, 2004; Brannick & Coghlan, 2007; Coghlan,2013).

As such, reflexive methodologies are close to the mind and hearts of the practitioners who value using themselves in their practice area of investigation. So those practitioners value transparency in their relationships with various stakeholders (Etherington, 2004:16). As a personal reflection, reflexivity might act as Yin and Yang, it allowed me to view the struggle and the link between the inefficiency in decision-making. It allowed me to review my actions throughout the action research and consider various expressions within a pragmatic approach.

Most remarkable, as a practitioner, is how I think about my practice in stepping back and considering my position as a researcher, investigating my research question and the participants that are parts of my research and my focused lens on "what I see" and "how can I know" (Anderson et al., 2015). This was difficult for me at first. However, my reflexivity shaped my research context in having a deep understanding and clarity of my own biases, such as the organisational design, which consists of centralised decision-making and conflict of interest. However, those situations remained an issue with my organisation's senior management on how to use the knowledge to understand my action research in considering various situations and how I see myself as a researcher and separate from my organisational issue being studied (Anderson et al., 2015).

Consequently, this allows me to open up with one of the owners, who is my new direct report at the moment, and discuss with him self-analysis and self-awareness (Coghlan,2013) and the challenges for the organisation in enhancing the organisational performance based on my entire journey over the past eight years. It also allowed me to consider with him various options to bring knowledge creation for enhancing organisational performance, particularly how I understand and integrate scholarship into my research and gained experience that was positively used as a guidance and possible way of thinking for any organisational strategic business planning process.

Therefore, it was somehow easy and challenging at the same time about my organisation's response to my recommendation, at the beginning, it was hard for them to understand my neutral observation as a scholar-practitioner and how the object of "reality" exists independently of their perceptions (Anderson et al., Coghlan, 2013; Coghlan 2010; Cunliffe, 2008). Therefore, it was essential to address the overarching question with my new report of which action-oriented based research could be applied to the workplace using action cycles.

I am concluding my research by narrating my progress from a scholar-practitioner experience. More recently, reflexivity with my action-oriented based research became a large enduring factor in my practical life. It has opened doors and windows of opportunities and contributed to instilling new ideas on agile culture, shared outcome expectations, strategy-driven training and development, precise communication and transparency across the entire hierarchy layer within the organisation. Those were derived as essential concepts and tools from my role duality as a researcher and practitioner to understand better the reflexivity position that embodies my self-awareness (Parkin, 2009). Each participant, each voice, each idea and the reality of the participants were represented by the participants' openness to the new methods for the change process (Parkin, 2009).

Consequently, while narrating all the sweat and tears, time and efforts and thoroughness to my practice, reflexivity presented a way of thinking and a mode of working that can serve as a basis not only for improving my practice but also promoting the common good (Cunliffe, 2008, Antonacopoulou, 2019). This was presented with a wide range of participants' engagement in investigating scientific rigour associated with narrating a good story, my reflection on my story, and the extrapolation of practical knowledge from such reflection (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010; Tracy, 2019).

Robertson (2000) suggests that in coming to such self-awareness, critical questions need to be asked and equally answered to achieve reflexivity. Those questions on how this research has transformed me? Has it become part of my daily work? Has it differed my reflexivity and self-awareness as a researcher? Critical inquiry, which achieves reflexivity, is a mutually beneficial for the research and the researcher's development and self-awareness (Robertson, 2000).

The first time my research submission, I presented my research and the gathered data as a rushed practitioner from a narrow perspective rather than a researcher who wanted to rush things and finish them. Now I recognise this was research to its fullest potential (Etherington, 2004). At this stage, only when I was fuelled and energised with passion and recalled the reason for joining the DBA programme in the first place and how important it was for the participants and me to continue this journey as I am not a quitter and recalled how creating a group of voices of the employees to tell stories full and rich in the process of becoming a reflexive researcher (Etherington, 2004) and contribute to the success of my research.

Therefore, this reflexivity ignited and fuelled my research again, and this journey became the most rewarding experience ever in knowledge learned I cherished how this knowledge is transferred to practice. I now look genuinely into the primary purpose of action research in producing practical knowledge in the field of organisational performance and the collaboration of various stakeholders to enhance not only their involvement in the generation of knowledge but also their actions in day-to-day work so that not only the organisational performance improves but their wellbeing improves in parallel from a social constructionist approach (Coghlan, 2007; Cunliffe, 2008).

Since then, and from the notion of Coghlan (2007) in generating actionable knowledge, I have changed in that my views and approaches to my earlier bias of conflict of interest and inefficiency in the decision-making process and that action research are a human activity which draws on different forms of knowing. I now look at contradictions in researching the actions in my everyday life, I challenge the changing nature of the familiar situation at work and take into consideration what is said and what is to be said (Coghlan, 2007). I look for changes and contradictions to emerge and am willing now to challenge the status quo from a participative perspective challenging my premises of the current belief system (Raelin & Coghlan, 2006). I have recognised my initial reluctance to address the owners as my initial approach was based on inherited assumptions and experiences with other owners within the organisation.

Therefore, assessment tasks must include taken-for-granted assumptions and challenges in practice to achieve the learning outcome of reflexivity and capacity for engagement (Soh et al.,

2022). In other words, it means going beyond the regular testing of factual knowledge and analytical ability to work with real practice problems, which construct the basis for practising reflexivity (Soh et al., 2022). Equally, using reflexivity in my research has meant I had to find ways of being openly creative to generate new ideas (Etherington, 2004) to enhance organisational performance. Therefore, as an outcome of my reflexivity in my action-oriented research, the new president/owner of the B2B division requested a review of the entire business process of 10 manufacturing facilities and all of them in the packaging industry (www.napconational.com). This resulted in introducing WCOM (lean management program) for all those affiliated packaging facilities. Equally, this is a big step toward contributing actionable knowledge for workplace practice improvements from a comprehensive understanding of how organisational performance could be sustained and replicated in different settings within other packaging industries.

Such contribution to actionable knowledge has already impacted the manufacturing field, specifically within my organisation and group setting, as they are all manufacturing facilities within the packaging industry within the specific context in Saudi and the wider GCC. Such a contribution made its impact by actively engaging in reflexivity (Coghlan, 2010; Coghlan, 2013) as an integral part of my action-oriented base research (Robertson, 2000) in having a continuous conversation about the practical experience while simultaneously living in the moment (Coghlan,2013).

5.5 Development of my research.

At the heart of my research is making knowledge generation valuable for scholarship and practice. My research was set out with a primary objective to investigate the practical field of organisational performance and understand how to bring (1) change and (2) make a contribution to both scholarship and professional knowledge (Anderson et al., 2015).

As shared earlier in the introduction of this chapter and in detailing my pathway, my DBA journey was continuous in bringing ideas about change (Anderson et al., 2015) and making an impact and a contribution of a processual view of the interweaving of scholarship and practice (Spencer et al., 2021). Leveraging on the knowledge created and the DBA program thus far in

integrating scholarly into my practice, the impact was visible as detailed in the next part with my action plan and specific intervention in my workplace by illustrating the capabilities that enabled such interweaving to unfold, and in turn, impacts have emerged (Spencer et al., 2022).

My developed action-oriented base research has already made its impact as the new president of my B2B division has requested a review of all the packaging facilities to introduce a new lean management program. This is a big step toward contributing actionable knowledge for workplace practice improvements from a comprehensive understanding of how organisational performance could be sustained and replicated in different settings within other packaging industries. However, what made it possible is the scholarly management practice of realising such scholarly impact (Spencer et al., 2022) that enabled me to enact actionable knowledge within my management practice, characterised by the orientation to my organisational problem, my research inquiry, the continuous engagement in the focus group meeting and my critical reflection (Rigg et al., 2021).

The conceptualisation of interweaving scholarly and practice led me to a new understanding of my scholar-practitioner role to integrate such scholarship with the practice rather than the dual framing of scholarship plus practice (Rigg et al., 2021; Spencer et al., 2022). This step was very crucial for me and as my organisation has recognised my work and committed to taking proper steps towards the importance of the application of action-oriented base research to generate knowledge and enhance organisational performance not only in the context of lean management within the supply chain and operation but also in the overall process.

When I opted for action-oriented base research as my research methodology to achieve the objectives of my DBA research, I tackled it from an insider perspective and, as an insider scholar-practitioner (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014), made an impact on common practical issues of concern. Therefore, what made an even deeper impact is the development of reflexivity and reliability, as detailed earlier in this chapter which formed a pedagogical basis (Rigg et al., 2021) for my DBA pathway. This seemingly made me value and link the organisation's purpose and human responsibility (Freeman et al., 2004:364) to transfer my research outcomes to other industrial settings and engage various stakeholders. As such, such value and positionality in

researching my organisational problem from an insider research and dual-scholar practitioner necessitate a high level of reflexivity and self-awareness that challenged not only my thinking but the status quo and red lines of my organisation.

At this juncture, my doctoral journey with the scholar-practitioner exploration faced ongoing frustrations as I wanted to know how to support and work hard to lift my organisation from the neck-tightening conditions the market and packaging industry are passing through. My scholar-practitioner journey was fundamental through reflection on my own experience over two decades to understand operational action learning and learning in action where I struggled to understand what and how to keep a higher-level organisational performance (Coghlan, 2006; Morley, 2015:35) and failed to predict uncertainty that leads to better decision making and tremendous organisational success (Janney & Dess, 2004:60). My motive for joining the DBA program is triple fold, it is deep personal development experience (Anderson et al., 2015:105) , making a powerful impact and improvement (Anderson et all., 2015) to my practice in organisational performance, and inspiring employees around me, mainly those employees who left their families back home and wanted to make a change to their lives and their families lives. Therefore the ongoing obstacles I faced as a practitioner fuelled and energised me more to carry on with the DBA program to realise the scholarly impact (Spencer et al., 2022) as I was challenged to consider scholarship, critical reflexivity, practice, and managing as enquiry with the centre of my organisational problem in a way interweaving offers a means to better understand the scholar-practitioner role through regular literature usage and drawing inspiration from the seemingly obscure (Spencer et al., 2022). I am continuously challenged to consider how to recognise and translate my action-oriented research and my whole DBA journey within the organisational context on how my action-oriented research would bring change to the organisation and uplift organisational performance.

The first article I read before engaging with the DBA programme was for Dr Lisa Anderson (n.d), detailing how the Doctor of Business Administration programme emphasises workplace-based research and producing actionable knowledge in one's organisational context and corporate environment. Therefore, I further engaged in extensive reading on the process of the BDA and the details of action-oriented base research, actionable knowledge, reflexivity, and how it

enhances an individual's skills that apply to practice (Gill, 2009). The significance of the DBA programme in the settings above is that the potential of action-oriented base research intertwines theoretical, practical, cognitive and affective features that contributed to my professional development (Ronen, 2020; Spencer et al., 2021) and affected my engagement with the research and the development of a questioning approach to both practice and the research (Rigg et al., 2021).

Reflection
Professional development

Cognition → **Theory**

Discourse group

Action Research

Motivation
Ambiguity tolerance

Practice **Affect**

Interaction
Sharing
Involvement
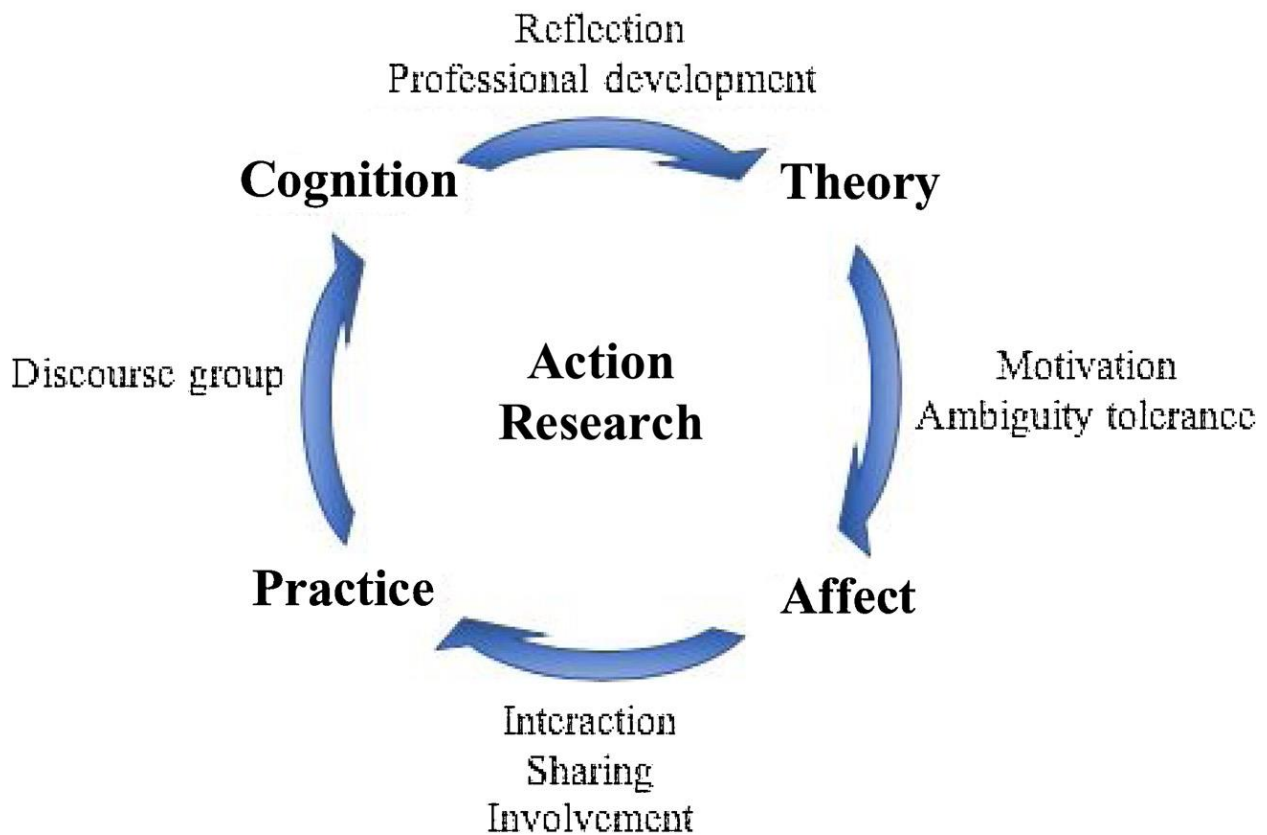
(Fig 8. Action research intertwines cognition, affect, theory and practice features(Ronen, 2020)

Additionally, there has been an increased interest from my side as an insider researcher in gaining an insider view that employing a qualitative research approach may allow organisational performance to be explored and later replicated in different settings (Coghlan, 2007). It is acknowledged that by leveraging the rich multilateral nature of action research principles, my research went beyond qualitative methods in profoundly understanding my

exploration of supply chain resilience and operational agility, considering the ten focused dimensions detailed in the organisational performance literature review.

An epistemological assumption of my action research is to bring about organisational change (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010), which is relevant to my work base practice and associated with the literature review and data findings to see what would happen for organisational performance when those ten dimensions are applied to lean management in practical life. Consequently, it went beyond the practice salutation, encouraging reflective and critical thinking (Lester, 2004) in assessing organisational culture, outcome expectations, training and capacity building, organisational development perspectives and the connection between personal knowledge, experiences, and competencies. This has provided genuine benefits in improving both the quality and the nature of practical outcomes on my research topic and even having a longer-term impact on my professional practice (Lester, 2004).

The underlying assumption is that action research is part of a broader task of expanding the boundaries of knowledge (Ronen, 2020) and creating actionable knowledge that is both a valuable and meaningful change process not only to my workplace practice but it goes beyond to different settings. Therefore, when my formal doctor journey comes to a natural end with the university of Liverpool, I plan to continue my scholar-practitioner journey as long as I keep engaging with practice either in preparation for the next stage or possibly to further engage in some form of spreading the knowledge to different settings before retirement (Lester, 2004). Far too often, my research seems to be associated with rounding off a career (Lester, 2004) encounter with a rich journey as a scholar-practitioner combining academic and practical knowledge with the applicability of what transpires in action learning with my practice as a process of increasing self-awareness that strengthens my confidence and the stakeholders that are involved in the overall change process (Ronen, 2020).

At the beginning of my action-oriented based research, the road was a little bit bumpy among the participants and stakeholders, including myself, as this proposed change framework of action-oriented base research was new to everyone thus, it was a bit alarming and troubling, and I had to small steps for adaptation of the participants as they needed some time to adapt

to the idea of reflexivity and action research cycles mode of work. Data was gathered through informal interviews and focus group meetings. Those ten dimensions were later constructed to explore the six emerging themes that evolved to which organisational performance context influences how those themes are enacted, understood and tested through action research cycles under the change framework of action-oriented based research. Those emerging themes are (1) Bureaucratic Structural Barrier: Inefficiency in the decision-making process, (2) Roles and responsibility: Conflict of interest, (3) Centralisation of HR activities at the corporate head office level - Hierarchical system, (4) Cultural Barrier: Instability/Barrier to adapting an organisational change culture, (5) Lack of communication and synergy and (6) Lack of communication and synergy.

Thus, as an attempt to show value from a scholarship and practitioner perspective, the idea of interweaving scholarship and practice makes sense (Raelin, 2011; Ronen, 2020; Rigg et al., 2021, Spencer et al., 2022) as to how my research underwent from the data collection process to stakeholders' reflection cycles and resulting in the interweaving of cognitive, affective, theoretical and practical features (Ronen, 2020). Using the interweaving concepts draws on the premise of my development as a reflexive insider researcher (Coghlan, 2019), and it changed me as a person. In the simplest form, I started approaching peers and meeting with questions. Therefore, integrating scholarly practices with my workplace practice made its impact, threaded and enabled through reflexivity and management as an inquiry to interweave scholarly and practice. It demonstrated how scholarly impacted and therefore realised (Spencer et al., 2022) in my specific context of enhancing organisational performance.

Arguably, working with the true spirit of the University of Liverpool doctoral programme provides a form of engaged scholarship for reflective scholar-practitioners (Spencer et al., 2022) with a management education that combines research with professional development and knowledge that brings about a change in management practice (Anderson et al., 2016). From this position, my engagement with the DBA programme interweaved with my management education stance, combining my action-oriented research with my professional development and allowing me to deal with an ambiguous situation (Spencer et al., 2022) that may arise during practice at any period.

Consequently, narrating my story, exploring the change process, inspiring the next generation in my workplace and producing knowledge learned that took place in the DBA programme interweaved into my daily practice to coach this new generation in synthesising and integrating the entire research experience (Greenwood & Levin, 2007; Coghlan & Brannick, 2010; Spencer et al., 2022). Using this approach, the stakeholders were able to live the whole experience and journey with me, narrate the failures and successes, provide reflexivity and highlight practical and actionable knowledge from the learned experience (Greenwood & Levin, 2007; Coghlan & Brannick, 2010; Spencer et al., 2022). Consequently, while narrating all the sweat and tears, time and efforts and thoroughness to my practice, reflexivity presented a way of thinking and a mode of working that can serve as a basis not only for improving my practice but also promoting the common good (Cunliffe, 2008, Antonacopoulou, 2019). This was presented with a wide range of participants' engagement in investigating scientific rigour associated with narrating a good story, my reflection on my story, and the extrapolation of practical knowledge from such reflection (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010; Tracy, 2019).

5.6 limitations of my research.

My work towards my organisational problem is more complex as I handled more issues by focusing on organisational performance improvement. The knowledge was generated by gaining deeper insights from the participants' views, practical relevance, and the meaning they attach to their experiences, thoughts, actions and values (Cunliffe, 2008). Equally, the findings have significant implications, and limitations as not every packaging firm, situation, or enquiry will unfold as my own has done. However, my research findings have some important and valuable factors which could be used in other manufacturing settings where those manufacturing organisations are undergoing similar, if not equal, types of the change process collaboratively and reflectively (Anderson et al., 2015).

The implications of my research findings from a practitioner's point of view is that the knowledge created was enacted on my action-oriented based approach, which is a new approach in the workplace and situation-specific (Anderson et al., 2015). Therefore, it is essential to have this helpful knowledge spill over to another setting for practice improvement

as an extrapolation from my local setting to a more general setting in the packaging industry, and an even bigger setting to the manufacturing industry is relatively essential (Anderson et al., 2015).

Additionally, the limitation of my research lies in how the research could be transported to a broader context, both in the packaging and manufacturing industry (Anderson et al., 2015), as the owners have reservations about the publication upon completion of my thesis. My research was grounded on an interpretive approach exploring the overall consideration of a socially constructed reality (Koshy et al., 2010:14) that changes (Saunders et al., 2009) _through the interpretations of various experiences and communication among the stakeholders. Those social realities have been explored and currently have a broader picture and implications for organisational performance with those social realities (Saunders et al., 2009; Creswell, 2014; Koshy et al., 2010).

Therefore, in my research context, action research focused on my research in action rather than research about action (Coghlan & Holian, 2015). The central idea is that my action research and the study of organisational performance involved those who experience those issues directly within the organisation, and it was contextually bound (Coghlan & Holian, 2015; Anderson et al., 2015). However, it reflects the limitations of my research to return to the field of exploration should I move to another position within the group as my next move might be VP of sales and business development, which is another arena and different from the operation or if my current report, who is one of the owners, changes again. This might limit me to returning to the field of exploration and further testing and investigation about the validity and reliability of my research findings.

5.7   Action plan and specific intervention in the workplace.

As a result of my research and various meetings with the shareholders and senior executives, and mainly my new report, and when presented with him the subsequent analysis and the importance of embracing change, the action plan was presented explicitly in practice incorporating the following:

1. A review of the training and development program resulted in an overall restructuring of the training concept system, incorporating a pull system instead of a push system. This means that based on the 360 multi-rater feedback, the employee can request the training needs by pulling it from the offered courses in contrast to an earlier procedure where managers ask training needs for their team members.

2. The organisation underwent an operational audit, specifically on the supply chain and other operational and services departments, which resulted in the introduction of a third-party consultant working with me and the associated stakeholders on lean management. The program is called world-class operation management (WCOM). WCOM program is enacted based on identifying training needs for competency build-up based on Training and Development needs.

3. A review of Human resources resulted in the introduction of 360-degree multi-rater feedback that stems invariably from employee evaluation in the organisation leveraging these human resources tools for competency gap identification. 360-degree evaluation includes self-evaluation, peer group, reporting personnel and others involved in the day-to-day aspect with the relevant individual to identify the right competency that a specific designation/position requires and then connect the gap through training identification.

4. A review of the organisational development program led to the introduction of succession planning as employees are kept on the right path about their next move in the organisational ladder. Succession planning defines how an individual moves ahead in the organisational ladder as she/he acquires experience and competency over time. Once the succession plan and 360-degree platform were introduced, it terminated the rat race among peers to capture senior management's attention. The outcome of these initiatives was the base for employees to be qualified for the following position.

5. A review of job descriptions, organisation structure and hierarchy, resulting in an overall restructuring of the hierarchy challenging the inherent fears of change and confronting the internal power politics that have been partially solved since conducting this

research. The internal power politics is solved by partly rotating the middle managers within the organisation and partly within the group that belongs to, creating a flat organisation. The fear of organisational change and not conforming and protecting a bureaucratic system pushed me to open up with one of the owners and convinced him within this active change process, building participation for change and pursuing this change rationally and logically (Coghlan, 2007). However, this was in early 2022 and not at the beginning of my research project. This even pushed the owner to be active with the change process and actively involved in recruiting support and reducing resistance to organisational change (Coghlan, 2007).

6. On another fold, the broken linkage, lack of synergy, and inefficiency in decision-making between the corporate office and the business unit were not fixed, and my request to review and decentralise the raw material resource allocation tied up with the corporate office was shelved. However, this changed to a large extent in mid-2022 when my reporting changed to the new owner. The decentralisation scenario bridged the gap to a large extent that existed between corporate and business units in terms of the decision-making process and gave me the freedom to a large extent and the opportunity to perform in the relevant supply chain and related operations.

7. The assistance of the new owner was sought to address the instability in the organisational culture and involved the organisation's extensive strategic efforts toward the centralisation issues of decision-making affecting the improper resource allocation tied up to the corporate office. This resulted in flexibility to mitigate such risk with a strategic entrepreneurship approach.

The above highlights some of the specific actions already put into practice in my workplace, becoming an ongoing practice in my organisation.

5.8   Conclusion and the Learning experience.

This whole DBA journey has changed me as a person as I take the time now to learn more and dig deeper into topics and problems that arise from practice. Such problems surrounding topics inferred from the empirical evidences with the key findings of (1) Absence of Agile culture, (2)

miscommunication and lack of transparency, (3) Inefficiencies in the Training and Development Strategy , the overview of the participants and the interpretation of the data and research findings. Through that, I learned how to develop essential qualities to structure a conceptual understanding for leanness, agility, and resilience within a practice through (1) working towards common view along with enhancing open and transparent communication, (2) training and capacity building, and (3) embedding agile culture in the organisation that are presented in action plan and specific intervention in the workplace.

5.8.1 Working towards common view:

The evidence out of data collection revealed that common view is one of the vital factors that link organisations with sustainable profitability particularly during Market Uncertainties and VUCA environment. Those factors such as:

1- No shared view factor during uncertain period characterized by no shared expectations on operational outcome.
2- Absence of best practices infused into the organisational process.
3- Outdated reward system is not aligned with the current economic times.
4- Disconnection between individual knowledge, experiences, and competence in organisational development perspective.

As such, the data analysis revealed that any organisation to succeed and sustain performance, strong internal communication and synergy among people and process outcome is vital, where information is actively shared, and actions are executed to achieve organisation's goals. As such the internal communication among peer group is not effective due to the fact of conflict of interest and lack of synergy among employees. One of the reason the horizontal communication not effective pertains individual middle management leader to gain power and thus, jeopardizing the awareness of decisions across middle management. The middle management leaders holding key information created hype that he/she gets ahead in the organisational hierarchy added to the fact that there was no succession plan existed to clarify the middle management personnel about his/her next succession.

Additionally, the lack of synergy among middle management leaders contributed toward no shared view as individual leader seemingly had hidden agenda and therefore incites lack of synergy gets deep rooted through power politics, where leaders tends to become power-houses through gathering support from peer group and down the line of the organistaional structure. Thus, checking on power politics becomes important evidence from this data analysis and therefore, the lack of succession plan fuels power politics.

5.8.2 Training and Capacity Building

The collected evidence from the interviews brought some understanding that clear strategic intention of training and capacity building of any organisation is vital and directly linked to the success of the strategic business planning. The factors exhibited from the entire functions of strategic business planning comprising strategic intention and strategic intelligence considers the scopes to cruise through uncertain and turbulent times in a determined way to sustain organisational performance.

The key findings and the overview of the participants, highlighted the hiccups within T&D strategy development that lack of competency gap available to the development soft-skills, technical skills and functional skills development requirements to bring operational effectiveness as shown in the below evidences:

1- Inefficiencies in the T&D Strategy.

2- Weaknesses in HR T&D policy.

3- Lack of knowledge, experiences, and competences.

4- No / Low use of self, peer or group evaluations and development perspectives.

The packaging industry market is so complex and ambiguous where customer bargaining power tends to be higher and this compels any packaging manufacturer to carefully workout various strategy to gain competitive advantage within the market either through Cost leadership or Differentiation of service or combination of both. The data shed light on the fact that achieving core-competency for operational excellence invariably contributed by a systematic HR strategy

planning comprising a well-defined training and development policy building upon communication and transparency issues.

5.8.3 Communication and Transparency Issues.

The data analysis and the overview of the participants brought evidence about the lack of communication and synergy across departmental managers that affects organisational performance and the inefficiency in the business process. I recall one of the participants emphasized on the importance of effective communication and particularly insisted that quality of communication infused in the organisation indicates the quality of culture and professionalism. However, and as discussed earlier in interpretation of my research findings, the power politics that exists within employees brings invisible division among people including the supporting individual group's leader. Therefore, this brings invisible boundary where communication between two layers is not taken seriously irrespective of weightage of the matter toward organisational performance.

One of the participants shared that the organisation clearly struggles in the internal communication including both formal and informal. While pondering on stakeholders, the issue seemingly bit different and the missing factor under stakeholder communication is synergy. The low-level synergy exists between corporate management and business unit management, where corporate senior management staff approach business unit staffs to perform more and they attach volume produced and profit made is the major indication of successful performance. However, sustaining the performance including profit is a major factor to be considered as part of strategic intention. Therefore, the conflict that existing between various stakeholders was evident in the overview of the participants and key findings such as:

1- Missing feedback loops and stakeholder engagement.
2- Communication driven through hierarchy.
3- Unclear individual motivations.
4- Limited use of ICT based communication and collaboration tools get all stakeholders on board.
5- Organisational culture failing to support a critical constructive dialogue.

In this way, my research offers a sense of wisdom or a way of thinking, working and generating knowledge on organisational performance on the existing body aggregately within the workplace. My research contributes to the practice as proposed not only by the research findings but also with the interpretation of this research findings and the overview of the participants.

Therefore, I learned how to clearly articulate better the organisational issue I have presented as shown in table 6 (Emerging Themes) explaining the three key findings of the (1) the barriers to the leadership decision making process (2) the relationship within the organisational culture and (3) the barriers to organisational model and lean management process and associating them with the emerging themes with high occurrences. Those emerging themes are (1) Bureaucratic Structural Barrier: Inefficiency in the decision-making process, (2) Roles and responsibility: Conflict of interest, (3) Centralisation of HR activities at the corporate head office level - Hierarchical system, (4) Cultural Barrier: Instability/Barrier to adapting an organisational change culture, (5) Lack of communication and synergy and (6) Lack of communication and synergy.

Nonetheless, there are more details, and there is more development, there is refinement in a more structured manner regarding leanness, agility, and resilience with a more profound understanding of the organisational issue, associated with the overview of the participants, within the practice. There is more enhancement in the way the data is presented in highlighting the collaboration, and engagement within a practice. There is more refinement on how I look through organisational issue with a deeper sense of analytics and self-reflection in enhancing my learning efforts. I have matured as a practitioner and the way I thought about my practice in stepping back and considering my position as a researcher how I look at things differently, especially my biases, experiences, and pre-understandings of the issues at hand (Saunders et al., 2009; Coghlan & Brannick, 2010; Creswell, 2014; Tracy:2019).

I now have an even deeper and thorough understanding of the nature of the literature review that influences organisational performance in conjunction with the data through the empirical evidence and the overview of participants with not only (1) the absence of agile culture, but

also with (2) the barriers in miscommunication, lack of transparency and (3) the inefficiencies in the training and development strategies.

At this notion, I recognised that my research is to its fullest potential and now I know that this required a deeper understanding of the situation that had to do with economic analysis, uncertainties and VUCA challenges. This fuelled and energised my passion, and I recalled the reason for joining the DBA programme in the first place and how important it is for me to complete this journey and recalled how creating a group of voices of the employees to tell stories full and rich in the process of becoming a reflexive researcher and this has contributed to the success of my research and the powerful impact on my practice.

5.9 Reflections on the learning experience.

I have reworked this progressive work with a much more engaged understanding of the writing process and a much sense of the importance around how to pay attention to becoming specific and becoming more structured and more developed in my writing, being more attentive to offering a greater level of insights and details in developing a clear and focused scope in how I thought about the use of this progressive work. Accordingly, I now have this opportunity that made me learn, grow, and nurture my essential qualities to delve into the practical aspects of the most crucial self-learning experience and enhance my refined knowledge within such a scholar-practitioner and researching professional experience.

As such, my critical writing skills have matured, my engagement in critical thinking has elevated, and my ability to have grown and gone through this progressive work, my recognition of having to place greater emphasis on myself as a writer and as a researching professional (Bourner et al., 2001). The refined narrative that tells the audience a much more engaged story makes this progressive thesis stronger because I have matured into the skills I needed to write this version.

Therefore, as a practitioner, the whole DBA journey has given me this opportunity to look at myself as a writer and as a researcher, building upon the progressive work and allowing me time and space to consider more significant details; it has allowed me to reengage with that space, to do it with a greater sense of openness, to engage better with practice. The DBA journey has allowed me to take action on real workplace issues set in this context, as shared

earlier, using extant and explicit knowledge of organisational performance coupled with questioning insight and insider researcher access (Coughlan, 2007). My earlier versions have got me to this point; they were the basis of my thinking and enabled me to develop this progressive piece of research. The original work was a vehicle and driving motive, the driving force for launching me further down the road where I first met you. As a practitioner, it has allowed me to look at myself as a writer and researching professional (Bourner et al., 2001), building upon the original thesis and allowing me more time and space to consider more significant details. This research did influence practice; this research outcome has worked in my practice and has helped in my practice in terms of offering solutions or better ways of working on the organisational issue I presented.

Accordingly, I developed the foundation stones in my earlier work; however, I realised that I needed to do more, and this new progressive version, the renewed version of this thesis, is that evidence of the skills I nurtured in this original work and exemplifying those skills in practice. It is a reinforced and progressive thesis, a learning developed skill; I needed more time and extra skills to help engage better with this work. Doing something the first time, I was hesitant, wobbly, and all over the place; now, I am more familiar with this progressive work. I learned more from Dr Higgins; I understood myself better, am more familiar and prepared, and am a different character doing this task. From the guidance I received from Dr Ramsey and Dr Reid, from the examiners'' report, from my experience of the first viva and the second viva, and from listening to the conversation of the first and second viva, there were interesting points you raised so thank you again for adding this critical eye and being a critical friend in giving me this exuberant opportunity that allowed me to build upon my original work and produce this piece of progressive work to its fullest potential.

Additionally, I learned and realised the greater level of insight I needed to give to some of the more recent literature and theoretical ground and the influence that had on practice. I now have a greater insight into the basis of the literature review; I now have a better understanding in terms of the way to use literature in practice in terms of developing and addressing specific issues of relevant lean manufacturing literature review that fits in the organisational decision-

making process. My understanding implies how important to look for how theory serves practice and knowledge serves action (Antonacopoulou, 2007).

In the original thesis, I have listed many theories, such as stakeholders' management theory, resource orchestration theory, contingency theory and various leadership theories. I have now become more refined in leanness, resilience, and agility. So, becoming refined is a reflection of my own insight into the realisation of the data sources I had and how those data sources were better reflected in the particular theoretical domains that I now focused on, such as leanness, agility, and resilience, in comparison to the numerous theoretical domains I had listed in my original thesis. Additionally, during the second viva, Dr Ramesy and Dr Reid shed light to justify sharpening this final version focusing on the additional three scopes that were brought back from the initial thesis. So I became specific and focused on three additional scopes, ((1) economic analysis, (2) market uncertainties and VUCA factors, (3) sustainable profitability) which helped me expedite and show the importance of what I have articulated in the questionnaire for narrative based out (table 4 in the original thesis) and the influence that had on practice and the organisational issue. Those additional three scopes were not reflected initially, and now they are brought back to help us, from the previously developed version, gain clarity from the excellent version I created and build upon the progressive work in adding this development.

As such, the learning experience is all about offering a greater level of insight and details now, and it is about having the capacity and space to reengage in a matter it is much more sensitive and much more aware of the contribution of the development of a thoughtful practice (Anderson et al., 2015). After all, learning is all about building upon knowledge, building upon experience, and using those past experiences to enhance further and further refine to explore my research further. As such, I gained confidence as a writer and researcher in terms of what I was doing and trying to achieve. These values are now more enhanced in this renewed and progressive work that I did not place much in the original work.

Nevertheless, I offered greater clarification of the nature and purpose of the data; I offered better insight into how this data has been developed, how the data was collected, and how that

data was analysed. I offered these clarifications on how that data was developed and enhanced to offer better insight into the practical work it did in terms of practice. This data influenced my practice; it has worked and helped in my practice by offering solutions or better ways of working on the organisational issue I presented. I learned how to narrate a story and how to shape it better. That has been influenced by a more terrific refinement of specific theories that has allowed me to articulate the real influence this data has had on the organisation's practice and my understanding of the practice of my organisational performance.

At the same notion, the data was always there, and it is the same data from the original thesis; what I learned is how to alter the layout of the room so that certain aspects are exposed better than they were in the previous work and to show the influence that is really made. It is a developmental process; I have gone out, ran the marathon initially, did not do exactly what I wanted to do and came back a year later. I learned how to pace myself better, how to push myself in different places, and how to take moments of rest.

Tough, it is like a jeweller (practitioner) that has an unpolished Gem (Data); the Gem needs polishing, refinement, design, and skills to shape it and turn it to what is needed to become a worthy Gem; the Gem is still the same however, it is articulated differently, more profound, time spent on it to make it what it is today. It is a matter of thinking in a more detailed and polished manner. As you write, rewrite, polish, and come from different angles, it becomes notably better until you reach its fullest potential.

Nevertheless, in earlier stages, I needed to learn how to articulate and communicate the impact of the data on the organisational issue; I needed to shape it properly. In this progressive version, the influence and impact of the data are refined in offering solutions or better ways of working and in being very specific about what happened. In earlier stages, I did not really know how to do that, I was trying to do it. However, I feel like I have found a voice now to explore and talk in greater detail about the influences this had, whereas before, I was a bit constrained, hesitant, and wobbly. I have now used that in a much more productive way to offer space, to create a voice for myself and the organisational issue coupled with the theoretical domains and three additional scopes I have refined from the literature review chapter.

Throughout my journey, I became more critical of the importance of my action-oriented research method as a workable strategy for implementing change. Consequently, I learned that Action Research is conducive to helping form some solution to the organisational issue on hand through the intervention process. As there is no recipe for becoming a scholar-practitioner, it is a process of learning and becoming (Anderson et al., 2015; 105).

In earlier stages, I needed to learn how to articulate and communicate the impact of action-oriented base research on action learning (Bradbury & Reason, 2001:449; Ronen, 2020). I needed to learn how to articulate the methods as I was all over the place. As such, I learned and explored how the data has influenced not only my practice/my organisation but also the practice within my affiliated manufacturing industry group. Therefore, my ability to use the data to offer more influence on practice has increased. I became more structured using such data in my workplace to tackle real problems to improve and impact my practice. Such engagement and maturity helped me collaborate with many stakeholders more proactively to offer a larger space and drive continuous improvement. They contributed to something helpful to me as a person, to the stakeholders, to the organisation, and in totality, to the community.

At this notion, I found a genuine voice within this progressive work to explore and talk in greater detail about the influences this had on practice. I became that researching professional in my organisation who asks searching and provocative questions that make various stakeholders look at themselves and their work differently (Anderson et al., 2015:140). My questions now come from the "ebb and flow" of practice and theory and are underpinned by values of care and practicability (Anderson et al., 2015) that are reflected not only in practice but also in overcoming a real societal, organisational problem to enhancing the lives of the employees, and their families, as a more comprehensive number of employees employed in Saudi Arabia comes from far east countries and depends a lot on the organisation for their wellbeing.

The learning and development that have happened is massively transformative in terms of the level of insight I have gone through in this progressive thesis compared to those initial phases. I had the time and space and became more thoughtful, careful, and reflexive about how this

knowledge is constructed and transported into different settings. I had this time and space to convert the meaning of the research experience and learning into action and practice (Ronen, 2020; Rigg et al., 2021; Spencer et al., 2022).

As such, I looked and still looking at things with a more profound sense of analytics and self-reflection and enhanced my learning efforts as a researching professional (Bourner et al., 2001) for positive contributions in practice. I now look at things differently or more profoundly than I thought (especially my biases, experiences, and pre-understanding of the pressing issues). I managed better with a shift in language from certainty to collaborative inquiry (Tracy, 2019). I found myself with increased openness, more wisdom, and more profound empathy (Ronen, 2020:6). This orientation from certainty to inquiry pointed out my development, as a researcher and as a writer, of a questioning approach to both practice and research (Ronen, 2020; Rigg et al., 2021; Spencer et al., 2022).

Notwithstanding, I understood myself better as a researching professional (Bourner et al., 2001) working with the action research framework building upon the original work allowing me more time and space to consider more excellent details with the idea of duality and reflexivity as a process of exposing and questioning my ways of doing (Hibbert et al., 2010), an idea that is brought from the scholarly world to the practical world. Initially, I had a bit more time and space to engage further on how to develop a meaningful collaborative working environment, and now I gained a renewed understanding of applying the scholar-practitioner experience. My developed skills allowed me to facilitate further participation to bring change in my organisation and the ability for various stakeholders to further participate with additional interaction with action learning.

As such, I now have this opportunity that made me learn, grow, and nurture my essential qualities to delve into the practical aspects of the most crucial self-learning experience and enhance my refined knowledge within such a scholar-practitioner experience. Such enhanced learning experiences are realised by enhancing my practitioner's capabilities to mobilise the academic literature in my everyday practice. Such a mature scholar-practitioner experience lies

in how scholarly impact is realised in my workplace (Ronen, 2020; Rigg et al., 2021; Spencer et al., 2022).

Nonetheless, the learning experience allowed me to have a strong sense of self and to see how I am further viewed as a professional researcher engaging in action research (Anderson et al., 2015). I am also viewed practising reflection to tackle pressing workplace issues, working on a state of inquiry, not certainty (Coghlan, 2007; Anderson et al., 2015, Ronen, 2020; Rigg et al., 2021; Spencer et al., 2022), and as a traveller moving through various situations and explored issues from different angles. The extra time and space allowed me to see how I am portrayed as a designer, marathon runner, and jeweller who explored issues, interpreted various situations and pieces together, and discovered a richer and more diverse picture full of deep self-analysis and self-awareness.

The improvements drove a better understanding and deeper learning with my action-oriented research in further development improvement in leanness, agility, and resilience. Those developments drove better interaction and further collaboration among all the stakeholders, explaining in further detail to the reader what action research is, what I am trying to do with action research and how my action research helped me in addressing change and therefore brought improvements and sustainable profitability. Specifically, the audience better understands the economic situation, how we maintain sustainable profitability, how we make sense of the importance of market uncertainties and VUCA factors, and how we can practically understand those three scopes in improving the overall organisational performance moving forward. Action research contributed to developing the DBA thesis by addressing participatory, collaborative, and action research cycles to produce new actionable knowledge. Through that, I learned the importance of developing a solid change methodology with action research to achieve organisational, personal, and societal change that assisted in overcoming various problems and contributed to management knowledge and the practice in general (Anderson et al., 2015:126).

As such, I needed more time to open my eyes and not become too determined in my decision-making and seek appreciation and collaboration of what is taking place in practice. I learned

that learning is a continuous process and that people are at the heart of dealings with working relationships. How I engaged with people was a keystone and a stepping stone to achieving progress, exploring problems, and achieving this learning experience in a more structured, engaged, and mature mode.

Now I have the experience and still nurturing this experience, this direction to change things in practice and the understanding of going deeper, wiser into some topics and mobilising academic literature review in my everyday practice learning what works and what does not work by trying things out (Antonacopoulou, 2007). On the other hand, from this position and a broader research context, my engagement with the action research interweaved with my management education stance, combined my action-oriented research with my professional development and allowed me to learn how to deal with an ambiguous situation that may arise during practice in any period in time.

Therefore, my increased use of action-oriented research over the past period led to a more functional, practical, and broader acceptance from various stakeholders, including the shareholders of my organisation. Therefore, my journey and DBA pathway were not only about the generation of original research but also about how the scholarly worked out for me in my daily practice and the potential the DBA had to impact my management profession (Anderson et al., 2015:107). It is about how scholarly teaching and learning activity is realised and impacted my workplace and provided a comprehensive account of the skillset required for continuing professional development in knowledge and intellectual abilities, professional effectiveness, research governance and organisational performance, stakeholders' engagement, peers influence, practice impact and give value to the problems of living (Anderson et al., 2015).

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Semi-Structured Interview Schedules

Participants	Designation of the Interviewee	Job Role	Location	Date of the Interview	Duration of the Interview (minutes)
1	Chief Executive	Focus on various packaging manufacturers specializing corrugated carton industry	Dammam	March 04, 2019	360 Min (5 hrs) in person + 180 Min (3 hrs) in their organization interacting with Management Staff
2	Operation Manager –	Entrepreneur specialized in Packaging Industry – Training, consultancy, and certification	Dammam	March 12, 2019	240 Min (4 hrs)
3	President -	Founder of leading packaging company	Bahrain	March 18, 2019	480 Min (8 hrs) + 720 Min (12 hrs) in their organization interacting with Management Staff
4	Director	Focusing on the corrugated packaging industry	Dubai	April 10, 2019	300 min (5hrs)
5	CEO	Operational consultant and freelancer for packaging and food industry	Riyadh	April 25, 2019	240 Min (4 hrs)
6	President –	Leading packaging group	Dammam	May 06, 2019	240 Min (4 hrs) + 720 Min (12 hrs) interacting with senior management @ corporate office
7	Easternpak Managers (Total - 07)	Management Systems Manager (1), Business Development Manager (2), Company Sales Manager (3), Plant Manager (4), Maintenance Manager (5), Production manager (6) and Accounting Manager (07).	Dammam	May 15, 2019 to May 30, 2019	Average 2 hrs / person
8	Easternpak Pillar staffs (Total - 05)	Production Unit Head (1), Management Systems Specialist (2), Production Team Leader (3), Safety Officer (4) and Dispatching officer (5)	Dammam	June 05, 2019 to June 19, 2019	Average 1.5 hrs / person

Appendix 2 Sources of Secondary Data

Document No	Document Name	Description and Purpose
1	Group Focused Meetings minutes 2019 to 2021	Recapturing lost customers, increasing customer volume through closing gaps of unmet business, Low Sales in Volume, Deficiency in Sales performance resulting in unmet budgeted volume, Analysing and workout way forward for change in customer behaviour, balancing customer portfolio in terms of product lines, customer value creation activities, New prospects to gain.
2	Focused Group Meetings Quality Express Unit (QUEUE) meet – Minutes of Meeting Jan 2019-Dec 2021	The Quality Express Unit (abbreviated as "QUEUE") is derived within an organisational context as part of resource orchestration to enhance Easternpak's performance in delivering value to customers and consists of the "Focused Group", where the concept is derived from research methodologies widely practised through the focused group. By adopting the Focused Group concept, a multi-disciplinary team formulated represented pillar staff from each product realisation process (entire product manufacturing and dispatching).
3	Monthly management meeting minutes – 2019 and 2021	Respond to short and medium-term issues to ensure the right business and management activity approach to ensure proper progress through realising set KPIs. Referred to the MOM for reference purposes.
4	Management Review Meeting (MRM) – Jan 2019 to Dec 2021	Established process management, optimisation of cost and progress towards achieving operational cost optimisation discussed to check and finetune progress. I referred to the Minutes of meetings from Jan 2019 to Dec 2021 for departmental and individual Key Performance Index (KPI) results.
5	Sales Meeting	Focus on progress regarding setting sales strategy, responding to short-term and long-term sales strategies and aligning the sales force to achieve management targets and ensure customer satisfaction & market position.
6	The Yearly Business Plan preparation Meeting (BPPD) - MOM	Company goals formulation through departmental SWOT analysis through senior management with department managers to set action plans and objectives for departments and management. I referred to the year 2018 onward for understanding the gaps between strategies & goals set and the extent to which they were achieved.
7	Eco-political report – The year 2018 to the Year 2022 for Saudi Arabia and Middle East countries – Copy right Corporate office	The Eco political assessment reports are prepared by the corporate marketing and development department using tools like PESTLE, referring to various sources to analyse the external environment. I referred to this report to get data related to the corrugated market, external environment details.

Appendix 3 Participant Information Sheet (External Participants)

1. **How to build organizational agility to overcome identified challenges and improve financial performance in the packaging industry in Saudi Arabia?**

2. **Version Number 3. February 12, 2019.**

3. **Invitation Paragraph for External Participants**

My name is Gaby Kaddissi, and I am a doctoral student at the University of Liverpool. At the same time I am an Executive director at Napco National and leading the corrugated packaging branch, Easternpak, located in Saudi Arabia and serving the Saudi Market and AGCC, Jordan and Iraq. Thank you for your time and efforts. Kindly be noted that you are being invited to explore the challenges of the packaging industry in Saudi Arabia and the Arab Gulf Countries Council and to see how to mitigate these challenges to improve financial performance and overcome defined challenges.

Before you decide whether to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and feel free to ask me if you would like more information or if there is anything that you do not understand. Please also feel free to discuss this with your friends, relatives, colleagues, and GP if you wish. I would like to stress that you do not have to accept this invitation and should only agree to take part if you want to.

4. **What is the research about?**

The research is about infusing agility in the organization to improve organizational financial performance and regain stakeholders' confidence by addressing the challenges facing the packaging industry in Saudi Arabia and the Arab Gulf Countries Council.

The overall packaging industry is suffering from lower demand and higher installed capacity creating a perplex situation for the packaging industry. Also, Saudi Arabia and surrounding counties are currently witnessing a dip in its economy due to various internal and external factors due to prevailing conditions.

Your insights are valued.

5. **Why have I been chosen to take part?**

I wish to have your insights since you are in a decision making role and mostly responsible for the improved performance of your organization. You are a well-experienced executive who achieved the

zest of your career witnessing the internal environment at your organization and the external operating conditions in Saudi Arabia.

6. Do I have to take part?

Participation is completely voluntary, and you are free to withdraw your participation at any time, without explanation, and without incurring a disadvantage.

Your participation is entirely voluntary your involvement does not relate to job performance and any associated financial benefits. Your participation in the interview does not necessarily bring an improved association with the researcher.

The consent form will be sought before starting any association with you.

7. What will happen if I take part? The time commitment for participation?

In case you agree to take part of the research, I will perform an interview with you to have your insights on how to overcome the critical and uncertain situation in the packaging industry and if you have successfully managed to improve performance at your organization. The interview will be conducted in a private place, and you will approve the location and or place that you are comfortable to perform the interview.

I am planning to undertake ethnography based qualitative research study to interpret the underlying pattern from the interview to get inspired by your experience and create knowledge that will enrich my research study. Later I will integrate the information gained from the interview to combine it with other views from the packaging industry and come up with some solutions and processes that could be applied to enhance the financial performance of the organization and infuse business excellence as well.

The time commitment for participation is up to 2 hours for the interview and will have various range of questions regarding the defined challenges of the packaging industry in Saudi Arabia and your insightful views how to build organizational agility and mitigate those identified challenges.

8. How will my data be used?

The University processes personal data as part of its research and teaching activities in accordance with the lawful basis of 'public task', and in accordance with the University's purpose of "advancing education, learning and research for the public benefit.

Under UK data protection legislation, the University acts as the Data Controller for personal data collected as part of the University's research. The [Principal Investigator / Supervisor] acts as the Data Processor for this study, and any queries relating to the handling of your personal data can be sent to Dr. Lorenzo Lucianetti at Lorenzo.lucianetti@online.liverpool.ac.uk

For further information on how your data will be used can be found in the table below.

How will my data be collected?	Interview transcript and /or Audio/Visio recording
How will my data be stored?	The transcript will be kept in safe in my house and the soft copy on an external hard disk supported by a password.
How long will my data be stored for?	Data to be stored for a minimum of five years.
What measures are in place to protect the security and confidentiality of my data?	An alpha numeric security password of 8 digits and another password and finger prints for the safe at home.
Will my data be anonymised?	Yes
How will my data be used?	It will be used through anonymized quotes unless you approve to reference part of your quotes in the research.
Who will have access to my data?	The researcher and the research supervisor only.
Will my data be archived for use in other research projects in the future?	No
How will my data be destroyed?	The digital files will be deleted and transcripts will be shredded after 5 years. The true name of your organization and your full details will remain confidential at all times.

The true name of your organization and your full details will remain confidential at all times. The participants' name, addresses and organizational details will remain confidential and shall not be disclosed at any period. In the case of referring quotes from any of the participants, the researcher will seek a written consent form to reference quotes in the research otherwise the quotes will remain generic and anonymized.

9. **Expenses and / or payments**

There is no expenses that might be available (for travel, refreshments etc.) and any **reimbursement** that participants may be eligible for.

10. Are there any risks in taking part? And are there any conflict of interest?

There are no anticipated risks or hazards of involvement in the research for research participants forecasted. Research participant's main objective would be sharing their thought and experience only, and there will be no physical activity assigned to research participants. A minimal risk might be shaped in the form of diplomatic answers mainly from all respondents satisfy the researcher's need.

The minimal risks are described and dealt with in a fully acknowledged matter especially that you have a high interest of exploring the defined challenges of the packaging industry and what are a possible way forward in mitigating these challenges as this will benefit the whole supply chain of the packaging industry in Saudi Arabia and the AGCC.

The conflict of interest is nullified by taking your pre-approval and your consent on the subject. The researcher will assure to feedback the result if any process from their ideas is adopted as this will benefit the whole packaging industry so that no competitive advantage is used against any of the participants' organizations. As both, a researcher at the University of Liverpool and executive director at Easternpak, I am looking forward to integrate your practical relevance in the packaging industry with my scientific rigor in order to come up with new knowledge on how to infuse agility in organization to improve organizational financial performance and regain stakeholders' confidence in the packaging industry in Saudi Arabia and the AGCC.

The researcher, at any given point, will not raise any conflict of interest in the process of performing this research. Should you think there is any sort of conflict of interests, you may contact the researcher, withdraw from the research interview and/or submit a complaint directly to the ethics committee at *ethics@liv.ac.uk* stating the conflict of interest and the name of the researcher.

11. Are there any benefits in taking part?

The main benefit is recognition of experience and professionalism achieved by the participant in their relevant field of work. Transferring and exchanging information by the participant would be viewed as valuable experience exchange that would support the organization for achieving business excellence and as well supports this research study in knowledge creation for building agility in organization.

12. What will happen to the results of the study?

Since the study attempts to improve organizational performance, the approach to be taken in infusing organizational agility including aspects of transformation into agile organization could be published and transferred to any party for academic purpose only.

13. What will happen if I want to stop taking part?

The participant can withdraw their participation in the study at any time, without explanation.

14. What if I am unhappy or if there is a problem?

In case you are unhappy or there is a problem, you may contact the Committee on Research Ethics complaints procedure as follows:

"If you are unhappy, or if there is a problem, please feel free to let us know by contacting [Gaby Kaddissi ID H00019448] and we will try to help. If you remain unhappy or have a complaint which you feel you cannot come to us with then you should contact the Research Ethics and Integrity Office at ethics@liv.ac.uk. When contacting the Research Ethics and Integrity Office, please provide details of the name or description of the study (so that it can be identified), the researcher(s) involved, and the details of the complaint you wish to make.

The University strives to maintain the highest standards of rigour in the processing of your data. However, if you have any concerns about the way in which the University processes your personal data, it is important that you are aware of your right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office by calling 0303 123 1113.""

15. Who can I contact if I have further questions?

If you have any further questions. Please ask me.

Gaby Kaddissi

Easternpak – Dammam Second Industrial city

P.O. Box 9942 Dammam 31423 Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Gaby.elkaddissi@online.liverpool.ac.uk

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Thank you for time and efforts.

Appendix 4 Participant Information Sheet (Internal Participants)

16. **How to build organizational agility to overcome identified challenges and improve financial performance in the packaging industry in Saudi Arabia?**

17. **Version Number 3. February 12, 2019.**

18. **Invitation Paragraph for Internal Participants.**

My name is Gaby Kaddissi, and I am a doctoral student at the University of Liverpool. Thank you for your time and efforts. Kindly be noted that you are being invited to explore the challenges of the packaging industry in Saudi Arabia and the Arab Gulf Countries Council and to see how to mitigate these challenges to improve financial performance and overcome defined challenges.

Before you decide whether to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is performed and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and feel free to ask me if you would like more information or if there is anything that you do not understand. Please also feel free to discuss this with your friends, relatives, colleagues, and GP if you wish. I would like to stress that you do not have to accept this invitation and should only agree to take part if you want to.

19. **What is the research about?**

The research is about infusing agility in the organization to improve organizational financial performance and regain stakeholders' confidence by addressing the challenges facing the packaging industry in Saudi Arabia and the Arab Gulf Countries Council.

The overall packaging industry is suffering from lower demand and higher installed capacity creating a perplex situation for the packaging industry. Also, Saudi Arabia and surrounding counties are currently witnessing a dip in its economy due to various internal and external factors due to prevailing conditions.

Your insights are valued.

20. **Why have I been chosen to take part?**

You have more than ten years of experience at the organization and your knowledge will be an added value to the research since you have experienced the changes with and within the organization and worked through a period with two former leaders that led this organization through good and trying times in the packaging industry.

The decision to invite you is due to your involvement on management level decision making including strategy development and execution that made you a true asset focusing on improving stakeholders' confidence that has an impact on the financial performance of the organization. Your level of engagement for achieving organizational business excellence is valued.

21. Do I have to take part?

Participation is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw your participation at any time, without explanation, and without incurring a disadvantage.

Your participation is entirely voluntary your involvement does not relate to job performance and any associated financial benefits. Your participation in the interview does not necessarily bring improved association with the researcher.

I have deliberately not invited my direct reports to reduce any conflict of interest, and this is the reason you are being invited with the fact that you, either have dual reporting, or you have a second line of reporting.

The consent form will be sought before starting any association with you.

22. What will happen if I take part? The time commitment for participation?

In case you agree to take part in the research, I will perform an interview with you to have your insights on how you have experienced business excellence with the two former executives of the organization, the present performance to increase efficiency and profitability, and what do you recommend the organization shall undertake to overcome the current situation.

I am planning to undertake ethnography based qualitative research study to interpret the underlying pattern from the interview to get inspired by your experience and create knowledge that will enrich my

research study. Later I will integrate the information gained from the interview to combine it with other views from the packaging industry and come up with some solutions and processes that could be applied to enhance the financial performance of the organization and infuse business excellence as well.

The time commitment for participation is up to 2 hours for the interview and will have various range of questions regarding the defined challenges of the packaging industry in Saudi Arabia and your insightful views how to build organizational agility and mitigate those identified challenges. The interview will be conducted in a private place, and you will approve the location and or place that you are comfortable to perform the interview.

23. How will my data be used?

The University processes personal data as part of its research and teaching activities in accordance with the lawful basis of 'public task', and in accordance with the University's purpose of "advancing education, learning and research for the public benefit.

Under UK data protection legislation, the University acts as the Data Controller for personal data collected as part of the University's research. The [Principal Investigator / Supervisor] acts as the Data Processor for this study, and any queries relating to the handling of your personal data can be sent to Dr. Lorenzo Lucianetti at Lorenzo.lucianetti@online.liverpool.ac.uk

For further information on how your data will be used can be found in the table below.

How will my data be collected?	Interview transcript and /or Audio/Visio recording
How will my data be stored?	The transcript will be kept in safe in my house and the soft copy on an external hard disk supported by a password.
How long will my data be stored for?	Data to be stored for a minimum of five years.
What measures are in place to protect the security and confidentiality of my data?	An alpha numeric security password of 8 digits and another password and finger prints for the safe at home.
Will my data be anonymised?	Yes
How will my data be used?	It will be used through anonymized quotes unless you approve to reference part of your quotes in the research.

Who will have access to my data?	The researcher and the research supervisor only.
Will my data be archived for use in other research projects in the future?	No
How will my data be destroyed?	The digital files will be deleted and transcripts will be shredded after 5 years. The true name of your organization and your full details will remain confidential at all times.

The true name of your organization and your full details will remain confidential at all times. The participants' name, addresses and organizational details will remain confidential and shall not be disclosed at any period. In the case of referring quotes from any of the participants, the researcher will seek a written consent form to reference quotes in the research otherwise the quotes will remain generic.

24. Expenses and / or payments

There are no expenses that might be available (for travel, refreshments etc.) and any **reimbursement** that participants may be eligible for.

25. Are there any risks in taking part? And are there any conflict of interest?

There is no anticipated risks or hazards of involvement in the research as you will be sharing your thoughts and experience only, and there is no physical activity assigned to the participant. A minimal risk might appear in the form of diplomatic answers from the participants which I will be privileged if not applicable. This is entirely voluntary, and your involvement does not relate to your job performance and any associated financial benefits. Your consent is needed before the start of the association that will bring improved relationship with the research as part of minimizing the coerced effect.

This research is a separate action performed by the researcher and has no link with his role at the organization. The researcher, at any given point, will not raise any conflict of interest in the process of performing this research. The researcher will and shall not generate any conflict of interest based on my role and authority in the organization. No conflict of interest will be generated by the research content or the researcher whether in the form of criticizing strategies and decisions taken in the past or avoiding any peer group rivalry. Rest assure that the participation is totally voluntary.

Should you think there is any sort of conflict of interests, you may contact the researcher, withdraw from the research interview and/or submit a complaint directly to the ethics committee at *ethics@liv.ac.uk* stating the conflict of interest and the name of the researcher.

26. Are there any benefits in taking part?

The main benefit is recognition of experience and professionalism achieved by the participant in their relevant field of work. Transferring and exchanging information by the participant would be viewed as valuable experience exchange that would support the organization for achieving business excellence and as well supports this research study in knowledge creation for building agility in organizations.

27. What will happen to the results of the study?

Since the study attempts to improve organizational performance, the approach to be taken in infusing organizational agility including aspects of transformation into an agile organization could be published and transferred to any party for academic purpose only.

28. What will happen if I want to stop taking part?

The participant can withdraw their participation in the study at any time, without explanation.

29. What if I am unhappy or if there is a problem?

In case you are unhappy or there is a problem, you may contact the Committee on Research Ethics complaints procedure as follows:

"If you are unhappy, or if there is a problem, please feel free to let us know by contacting [Gaby Kaddissi ID H00019448] and we will try to help. If you remain unhappy or have a complaint which you feel you cannot come to us with then you should contact the Research Ethics and Integrity Office at ethics@liv.ac.uk. When contacting the Research Ethics and Integrity Office, please provide details of the name or description of the study (so that it can be identified), the researcher(s) involved, and the details of the complaint you wish to make.

The University strives to maintain the highest standards of rigour in the processing of your data. However, if you have any concerns about the way in which the University processes your personal data, it is important that you are aware of your right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office by calling 0303 123 1113.""

30. Who can I contact if I have further questions?

If you have any further questions, please ask me.

Gaby Kaddissi

Easternpak – Dammam Second Industrial city

P.O. Box 9942 Dammam 31423 Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Gaby.elkaddissi@online.liverpool.ac.uk

+966503885369

Thank you for time and efforts.

Appendix 5 Participant Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

Participant consent form

Version number & date: version 1, January 16, 2019

Research ethics approval number:

Title of the research project: How to build organizational agility to overcome identified challenges and improve financial performance within the packaging industry in Saudi Arabia?

Name of researcher(s): Gaby Kaddissi

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and have understood the information sheet dated January, 16, 2019 for the above study, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that taking part in the study involves meeting participants in person, interviewing them and recording the interview when needed.

3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to stop taking part and can withdraw from the study at any time without giving any reason and without my rights being affected. In addition, I understand that I am free to decline to answer any particular question or questions.

4. I understand that I can ask for access to the information I provide and I can request the destruction of that information if I wish at any time prior to publication. I understand that following publication I will no longer be able to request access to or withdrawal of the information I provide.

5. I understand that the information I provide will be held securely and in line with data protection requirements at the University of Liverpool until it is fully anonymised and then deposited in the archive for sharing and use by other authorised researchers to support other research in the future.

6. I understand that signed consent forms and original audio/video recording and questionnaires will be retained locked in a safe at my house and the researcher is the only person who has access to data until five years of research completion.

7. I agree to take part in the above study.

_____   _____   _____

Participant name   Date   Signature

_____   _____   _____

Name of person taking consent   Date   Signature

Principal Investigator   **Student Investigator**

[**Name**]   [Gaby Kaddissi]

[**Work address**]   [P.O. Box 9942 Dammam 31423]

[**Work telephone**]   [00966503885369]

[**Work email**]   [gaby.elkaddissi@online.liverpool.ac.uk]

Appendix 6 Interview Questions (External Participants)

How to Improve Organisational Performance and Sustain Business Continuity in the midst of Challenges?

A Research By

Gaby Amtanios El Kaddissi

Research Stage: Data Collection – One on one semi Structured Interview

Interview
Reference# :   Date: Time:

Leader's Name
(optional):

Leader's position: Whom the leader reports:

Q Number	Question	Notes
Market & Business performance Analysis		
Q1	How do you see Saudi Arabian market since the year 2017 related to your business?	
Q2	What is your comment on Saudi Arabian market behaviour since 2017 related to your business?	
Q3	How do you see the packaging industry performance in Saudi Arabia and the GCC during Challenging times since 2017?	
Q4	How do you see the B2B market in terms of demand-Supply in Saudi	

	Arabia since 2017?	
Q5	How do you see the oil price fluctuation influencing over B2B market in general since 2017?	
Q6	How do you see government restructuring policies affect market demand since 2017-2018?	
Q7	Brief how do you foresee consumer spending in Saudi Arabian market?	
Economy Analysis		
Q8	What is the pattern you observed in Saudi Arabia and the GCC economy since 2016?	
Q9	When do you foresee the economy will improve and how?	
Q10	What has been your export pattern since the year 2016?	
Market Uncertainties & VUCA factors		
Q11	How far are you acquainted with the VUCA factor, and are you convinced the VUCA phenomenon influences your market?	
Q12	List market uncertainties and VUCA factors your business faced?	
How do we overcome uncertain and challenging phases to sustain profitability? Focus on internal factors within the organisation		
Q13	How do you see the wealth creation pattern of your organisation?	
Q14	Could you shed light on uncertainties/challenges influencing organisational performance in monitory & non-	

	monitory terms?	
Q15	How do you see the prevailing market uncertainty influence your business planning (including financial planning)?	
Q16	What are the variables impact organisational performance?	
16.1	How do you see a drop in sales volume?	
16.2	How do you see high overhead costs in terms of contributing factors?	
16.3	How do you approach overhead & Operational cost reduction?	
16.4	Which factors do you think are vital for ensuring sustained raw material availability?	
Q16	Describe how you undertake strategic planning to overcome uncertainty & VUCA factors?	
Q17	List any methodology/principle/ operational model/ policy that you adopted as a saviour to navigate as a way forward?	
17.1	Is restructuring an organisation an unavoidable way forward for enhancing performance?	
Q18	How do you see the importance of value creation toward customer retention as part of organisation performance?	
Q19	How did you manage stakeholder expectations amid VUCA phase?	
Q20	How does your stakeholder commitment influence your leadership style in a changing environment?	

Q21	How do you see agility? Do you see an organisation being agile would bring any positive impact?	
Q22	How do stakeholders support the change management environment?	
Q23	In your opinion, what are the requirement(s) an organisation shall consider to be an agile organisation?	
Q24	Did you adopt agile methodology in your organisation (or) have you got an agile transformation experience?	
Q25	What is your guide to my attempt to transform my organisation as being agile in terms of tooling and coaching needed to be considered to support Agile adoption?	
25.1	How do you see the role of culture in influencing agility and organisational performance?	
Q26	Can you share how the operations in your organisation are structured for supporting change?	
Q27	How did you handle the stress of organisational change during the VUCA phase?	
Q28	Do you have anyone in your network who worked with the agile transformation (in-case if the interviewee does not have experience)	
Q29	Could you shed light on leadership style vs Organisational performance?	

Q30	What types of leadership styles do you see may enhance performance in the midst of challenges?	
Q31	How do you see the business sustainability in terms of: People, process and strategy?	
Q32	What are the underlying factors that cruise sustained business continuity?	

Appendix 7 Interview Questions (Internal Participants)

A Research By

Gaby Amtanios El Kaddissi

Research Stage: Data Collection – One on one semi Structured Interview

Interview Questions – Internal Participants

Age	
20-35	
35-45	
45-55	
>55	

Job Category	
Senior Executive	
Manager	
Assistant Manager	
Team leader	

Gender	
Male	
Female	

Level of Education	
Certificate/Diploma	
Graduate	
Postgraduate	

Experience with Easternpak	
< 1 to 2 years mnths	
2 years - 4 yrs	
4 yr - 6 yrs	
6 yrs - 8 yrs	
> 8 yrs	

Job Function	
Managerial	
Operational	
Administration	

Familiarity with Easternpak's operational activities	
Basic (not involved directly but aware of operational activities)	
Medium (Weekly / Monthly involvement)	
Advanced (Daily hands-on experience as part of an operational team)	

Name of the Participant (Optional): …………………………………………………………

PhD		6 yrs - 8 yrs		**Easternpak's operational activities**	
		8 yrs – 10 yrs		Basic (not involved directly but aware of operational activities)	
		> 10 yrs		Medium (Weekly / Monthly involvement)	
				Advanced (Dailly hands on experience as part of operational team)	

Familiarity with Easternpak's customers and associated market	
Basic (not involved directly, however aware)	
Medium (not involved directly, however periodically involved as part of job role)	
Advanced (hands on experience with market and customers)	

Thesis Title

How to Improve Organisational Performance and Sustain Business Continuity in the midst of Challenges?

Interview Questions

1. Have you recognised an organisation undergoing trouble? If so, what are they? If not, what are the factors you believe so?

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....
....

2. How do you define an organisation's performance? Please Elaborate

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....

3. How far are organisational performance, profit, and purpose of the organisation related to each other? Elaborate with an example.

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....

3.1 How do you define an organisation's stakeholders, and what are their usual expectations?

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....

3.2 As an employee, what do you expect from this organisation and how far are your expectations met?

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....

4. What factors do you see affecting organisational performance (in line with the definition given #2), and do you see any future challenges to our organisation?

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4.1 Can you segregate your defined factors (Q4) into External and Internal?

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4.2 Can you elaborate on internal factors those you see affecting performance?

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5. How would you classify the internal factors and prioritise them to be elevated to improve organisational performance?

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6. How do you see Operational performance contributes to the organisation's performance?

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7. If you believe operational performance contributes, what are the issues within operations that seemingly jeopardise organisational performance? Describe a practical experience you came across.

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8. How do you see customer requirements and customer behaviour over the past 5 years (elaborate on from your practical instance)?

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9. What do you think about organisational agility in general?

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9.1 Elaborate on its relevance for Easternpak and to what extent you see our organisation is agile?

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………

9.2 What are the factors/bottlenecks hindering our organisation from being agile? Elaborate from a practical aspect.

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………

10. How do you see the Focused group meeting activities and elaborate its relevance toward organisational performance?

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11. Describe the importance of leadership for cruising through challenges in an organisational context.

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………………………………………………

11.1 Did you ever look for specific leadership traits to overcome challenges?

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11.2 Describe how leaders handle the current challenges

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………

12. Do you think an organisation need an operational model to manoeuvre external challenges?

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13. How do you describe organisation challenges to be dissected to derive an action plan?

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14. Any other comments of the participant?

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………

For additional comments

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………
………
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