Thesis Title

The Leadership Discursive Roles in Organizational Strategic Planning Meetings.

This Thesis is submitted following the requirements of the University of Liverpool for the degree of Doctor of Business Administration by

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2023

DEDICATION

Dedicated to THE MEMORIES of my beloved parents Friday Iroegbu and Mercy Chinyerem.

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Acronyms

AR   **Action Research**

COO   **Communicative Constitution of Organizations**

CDA   **Critical Discourse Analysis**

CDS   **Critical Discourse Studies**

CL   **Critical Linguistics**

COP   **Communities of Practice**

CR   **Critical Realism**

DA   **Discourse Analysis**

DHA   **Discourse-Historical Approach**

EAR   **Ethnographic Action Research**

OSOC   **Organizational Sense of Community**

PMC   **Projects Monitoring Committee**

R and D   **Research and Development**

SMME   **Small, Medium and Micro-Enterprise**

SPM   **Strategic Projects Meeting**

ABSTRACT

The action research approach used for this research sought to explain how leadership communicative practices in strategy meetings were utilized to achieve enduring changes that addressed the lingering failures that manifested in poor financial returns and operational deficiencies that caused delays in the timely delivery of strategic projects. Some organizations fell behind and found it difficult to engage in practices that achieve desired strategic outcomes. The research looked at the construction and enactment of strategy through discursive practices because that provided an avenue to investigate human interactions that formed a significant value in the accomplishment of strategic goals.

The research focused on two significant points. First was that leadership discursive practices played pivotal roles in accomplishing organizational changes through relying on the framing messages aspects of organizing that influenced perceptions and behaviours of those they managed and impacted current and future organizational operations. Second was that as the interactive practices occurred in meeting settings, workplace meetings were recognized as constituting significant activities that offered a prime opportunity for change practices within an organizational strategy-making process. The characteristic interactive features and their organizing properties enabled leaders to accomplish desired outcomes. What happened in them mirrored how work was shaped. Hence meetings were used as a barometer for measuring performance and how teams worked to achieve organizational goals through understanding the daily habits and roles of the actors.

So, the leaders were the key actors whose discursive leadership practices in meaning-making and the meaningful engagement of those involved in working through co-construction in meeting processes and practices influencing organizational values and standards that impacted work culture and the systems. The communicative model that achieved the change involved the use of a purposefully planned change strategy steered by leaders who had profound influences and enduring cultural values. The basis for engaging in social practices informed the exploration of how language, in written or/and spoken texts. It also considered the social contexts that influenced the interactions to understand the knowledge created and the discourses associated with them. These suggested that the generation of such natural data from social settings. The rationale for theoretical construction was from a qualitative research approach that could capture what

happened systematically. The communicative practices covered the micro activities of the leaders in meetings and their link to macro-outcomes was based on the theoretical underpinnings of the (CDA). It was a multidisciplinary approach that focused on studying social issues through examining discourses and the contexts that influenced them. It provided the tool used to unpack and address systemic inequalities that aggravated dysfunctional organizational practices that caused difficulties in organizations. The value of language used with social practice gave insights into discourses as forms of social practices that illustrated the role of central actors. The critical stance helped to explain ways that the dominant discourses maintained and legitimized social inequalities. The CDA methodology illustrated the 'how' and 'why' of the linguistic interactions and the discourses surrounding them worked in context. The vigorous assessment of the interactions and heir consequences were tracked. By looking at the utterances and written texts, the happenings and reasons why the particular results occurred, meanings were deduced since the nature of the meeting processes and their characteristic episodic features allowed that.

The set-up activities for the facilitation of interactions described the happenings and explained the meanings of discourse construction, maintenance and the legitimization of the identified issues. The detailed information concerning the numerous verbal and written data that was collected through semi-structured interviews/discussions in one-on-one situations and within focus groups, as well as observations gave detailed impressions and information on organizational values. The systematic analysis offered by using the Discourse Historical Analysis (DHA) an analytical variant of the CDA was considered ideal. The framework examined data in three dimensions and multiple layers of contexts using particular discursive strategies as linguistic resources that served the main goal of enabling the understanding of how actors, especially the leaders, attempted to communicate accurately and effectively to achieve desired goals. The research used five discursive strategies (Re/defining, Equalizing, Simplifying, Legitimating, and Reconciling) that characterized styles that helped the co-construction ideals of discursive leadership to energize the critical mass to respond by behaving as expected. The textual meanings were derived from the understandings associated with the discourses related to the issues being investigated, the discursive strategies and the linguistic means used to explore how the discourses were constructed and maintained across four layers of context.

The research findings helped add voice to the understanding of the essence of meetings since they illustrated how changes in practices occurred and affected values and organizational outcomes. These suggested that understanding the purpose and actions during change processes helped to reveal the correlation between knowledge about issues and social processes. In addition, discursive leadership that focused on framing and organizing skills was considered an effective tool used to change practices in organizations. Their practices had implications for the accomplishment of behavioural outcomes that affected work operations. The leaders achieved the commitment to the purposes of the organization and the process through which the change happened because they skilfully used discursive strategies that promoted inclusivity to gain meaningful engagement of stakeholders. The competence helped them utilize specific efforts that pooled diverse knowledge and created commitment that resolved the financial and operational issues through enhanced strategic plan content and built capacities.

Chapter One

1.1 Background of the Study

1.1.1. Organizational Issue

The strategic planning situation in the organization being investigated, 'Tech' (the pseudonym used throughout this research to ensure alignment with the institution's ethics guidelines to protect the organization and the participants' identities) was problematic. 'Tech' was a medium-sized organization offering services in information technology, training and development, health, and environmental safety to public and business organizations in Nigeria and other West African countries. The challenges presented low financial returns from 2013 and the inability to meet project timelines.

From its inception, there was an increase in the level of business performance. The revenue figures showed $934,300.00 (185m Naira, the Nigerian currency) in 2009 and $1,803,000.00 (357m Naira) in 2012. The customer base grew from 23 to 102 in the same period. The industry rating figures showed an increased market share from three and a half (3.5) per cent to six (6) per cent. After that period, the revenues started dwindling, with an average of six (6) per cent margin for less than $1,200,000.00 in 2013 and down to two (2%) per cent for a revenue of $1,100,000.00 a year later. At that time, the projects' estimated completion rate was less than thirty-five (35) per cent. The conditions required for project success differed based on the perceptions of multiple stakeholders, the ability to meet cost estimates, timeliness of project delivery and the quality of the service were of significant value to top management (Davis, 2014; Turner and Zolin, 2012). These emphasized the importance of both financial returns and the technical competence of those directly involved and the monitoring/feedback process for a project to be successful. By January 2014, the management set up the committee that instituted the restructuring of work processes and procedures resulting in an increased managerial oversight. The goal of the new control measuring was to achieve appropriate resource application using strict instructional processes and monitoring. The effort failed and even exacerbated because the organization still struggled. The management reports showed more damming figures, which was less than one per cent (1%) just before the end of that year and the project milestones were poor. The general trend was the inability to meet

project deadlines, maintain cost targets and budget overruns. The poor financial performance and operational deficiency had implications that threatened the organization's survival. The measures already taken appeared to be a desperate effort focused on task accomplishment and resource management.

The projects were planned and implemented through a strategic process within the three-tier and hierarchical meeting (management, workshop, and project implementation) groups system. The functional roles were specific. The management set the strategic goals of each project with broad-based highlights. The workshop group then developed a comprehensive plan based on structured models and analytical frameworks for implementation by the project group. The meetings were managed by the various chairs who dominated interactions and decision-making processes with minimal input from the members. The challenging situation prompted the management of 'Tech' to initiate a holistic investigation into the practices and the functional responsibility of the strategic projects operations was mine.

1.1.2 Researcher's Role

My tenor as the Head of Operations of 'Tech' commenced in December 2015. Although I was engaged in 'Tech' from July 2015 as the leader of the Research and Development (R and D) unit, the short spell was due to continued issues. I was posted to lead the strategy operations with my routine tasks of reviewing the various meetings' decisions and allocation of resources to support the projects' implementation. I attended the groups' meetings and consistently collated reports (minutes of meetings, decisions, project progression and incidences) for analyses and presentation to the top management (chairman and two directors). The few interim reports that were presented still showed that the challenges persisted. The management formally directed a far-reaching and in-depth to resolve the situation.

I took some specific steps that helped me problematize the issues by deliberately gaining more knowledge. The efforts were ambitious because what I learned from extant studies cut across diverse aspects of organizing in strategic planning. They held several implications for the work systems; the engagement of other experts currently involved; and the application of ideas from my professional and academic experiences. First, the knowledge was valuable and useful in seeking practical solutions to the issues. Strategic planning was a significant organizational activity conducted in strategy meetings. In such sites, the communicative practices were primed and

included the consumption of information used for planning purposes, decision making and the accomplishment of strategic tasks (Asmuß and Oshima, 2018; Balogun et al, 2014; Kwon, Clarke and Wodak, 2013). These suggested the importance of the social aspects that covered the micro-level interactional processes and the practices or the involvement of the various actors in strategy-making processes. The empirical study of Jarzabkowski and Balogun, (2009), though not centred on workplace meetings, explained the importance of the roles of categories of individuals and their influence. The various functions performed also meant that an increasing number of actors desired to be engaged in the process (Stieger et al., 2012; Mantere and Vaara, 2008). Some studies observed that the meeting chairs dominant roles suggested the lack of engagement of the various actors during the process (Angouri and Marra, 2010; Lehmann-Willenbrock, et al, 2017). That lack of engagement prevented the gaining of requisite knowledge that relied on the local expertize.

As the researcher, my role as an agent of change required that I organise planned change in ways that enabled "substantive appreciation of the issues involved" (Greenwood and Levin, 2007, pp. 119). I embarked on that process and my tasks were less daunting because those involved were aware of the situation and shared the common understanding that things needed to be resolved. The general thinking of the rank and file was instructive because they were also conscious of the consequences of not resolving them. A better articulation of the issues meant gaining more knowledge through learning about the concepts and how they related to the organizational situations. One of the new learnings that enabled the local experts to appreciate the issues and refine their understanding was through insights from extant studies.

The other significant resource that I tapped from was my professional and academic experiences. I had valuable professional experiences in addressing the restructuring of work processes and downsizing. I engaged in middle-management duties with other executives in Finance for ten years. I undertook managerial roles in Commerce and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) projects for many years. Specifically, I led teams in community development projects in the deployment of technology systems integration and power solutions in medium-sized enterprises in Nigeria. My learning from academic studies was diverse. The challenges encountered by organizations to change their practices required the understanding of a combination of processes, tools and techniques that were applied to lead to improved organisational success and growth. The meetings offered platforms for the construction and

accomplishment of strategy based on their discursive and orientation practices that span the formulation and implementation processes (Seidl and Guérard, 2015). The continuous changes within the environment point to the essence of understanding the emergent features of the practices. As complex adaptive systems, organizations needed to understand that the strategic planning process evolved through a series of decisions that created a pattern of ways meant to adapt to such situations and struggles to establish viewpoints of the different people involved. Price, Roxburgh and Turnbull (2006) explained that the practical applications in strategizing and organizing created or manipulated situations to achieve favourable organizational outcomes.

The problematizing process enabled me to focus on the practices in 'Tech' as highlighted in Figure 1.1. The communicative roles of the meeting chairs, as leaders, were characterized by instruction-giving and information dissemination that depicted the top-down style.

Figure 1.1. Problem Definition
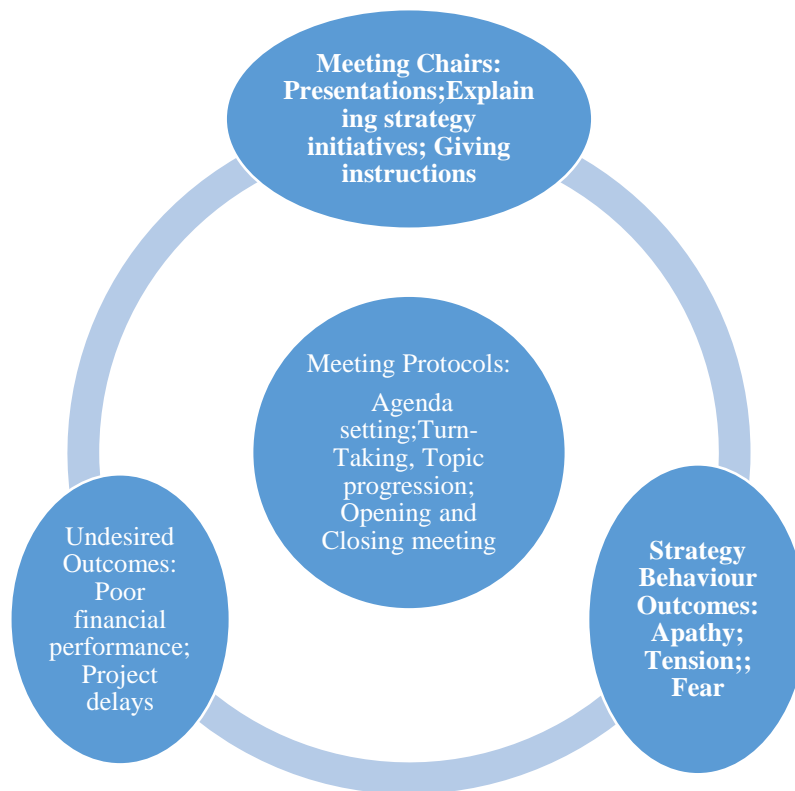
Sources: **Milliken and Morrison (2003); Pinder and Harlos, (2001); Asmuß and Svennevig, (2009); van Dyne, Ang and Botero, (2003)**

The practices followed the rational traditions and neglected the social phenomena such as power and how that reflected what happened in 'Tech.' These highlighted the potential for negative behaviours such as apathy, tension, and fear from the members due to power inequality and the lack of voice. The possible range of defensive behaviours was borne out of resignation from being inactive and uninvolved; out of fear as a form of self-protection (van Dyne, Ang and Botero, 2003). The hierarchical meeting system also gave impetus to the assumption of a social class disparity since the meeting structure regarded the functions at each level as more valuable than those below. This disparity created discrimination resulting in dysfunctional relationships and resistance (Rantakari and Vaara, 2016). These illuminated the fact that the organizational strategic processes centred on understanding the use of leadership discursive practices in meetings to resolve organizational issues.

1.2. Research Focus - Leadership Discursive Roles and Strategic Meetings

The examining of discursive leadership as a form of leadership practice in organizational communication relied on the framing aspects of organizing used by leaders to accomplish organizational tasks. Minei, Eatough and Cohen-Chrash (2018) described it as an interactive tool for effective leadership with a focus on the use of language to make meaning and motivate others to see issues and situations as envisaged. The leaders created meaning and constructed realities to which those they led were expected to respond. Chad (2019) defined it as "a social-influence dialogical process that is grounded in the leader-constituent member flow of meanings", suggesting that the art of framing was of the essence in attaining goals through social interaction. Its important change was based on the communicative practices that enabled the transmission of messages to achieve shifts in current operations and future work through building new organizational values and standards that impacted organizational outcomes.

Strategic planning was one of the most important organizational activities that leaders used to attain goals. The process ensured that steps were taken to formulate and enact desired strategic objectives. The assumption was that getting the activities right gave rise to potential intrinsic values that led to the attainment of organizational success (Greenly, 1996). The realization of strategy objectives related to how the variables connected the strategic planning and performance were managed (Falshaw, Glaister and Tatoglu, 2007). The effort made to create better ways of doing strategy required an intentional change effort that involved envisioning and bringing about

new conditions of practices different from the current state (Ford and Ford, 1995). Those strategizing practices were communicative and involved the micro-activities of actors including leaders and followers, and the contexts that shaped what they did. One of the ways to seek understanding about the activities and how they were used to impact organizational results was by examining details of the actors' interactions as they performed their regular tasks. The practices included a coherent set of distinct social constructions that comprised a set of situated real experiences and workplace behavioural processes embedded in social interactions (Cronin, Weingart and Todorova, 2011). The research drew from the active roles played by leaders. In other words, drawing from the socially defined contexts that influenced those actions meant paying attention to the discursive aspects of strategizing (Balogun et al., 2014; Knights and Morgan 1991). So, exploring the social dynamics of strategic orientations meant studying the leaders' framing and meaning-making practices that occurred within discursive events such as meetings, especially how the social and cultural systems in them were changed and their connection to outcomes.

The investigation of meetings from the discursive perspective was based on their significant influence or impact on organizational life. As aptly stated by Allen et al. (2014, pp. 792) they constituted the "microcosm for the organization itself where the power, structure and function of the organization are manifested, legitimized and perpetuated". They provided useful insights into the general manifestations of knowledge on how organizations functioned (Lehmann-Willenbrock, et al., 2017; Allen et al., 2014; Boden, 1994) and served as a useful tool for understanding decision-making; group formation and cohesion (Tracy and Dimmock, 2004). These were followed up by Allen and Lehmann-Willenbrock (2022, pp. 2) that "meetings are essential to accomplish coordination, collaboration, sense-making, and organizational strategy". Put together, the leadership attributes and functions encompassed all the descriptions and were critical to how people worked to achieve strategic outcomes. These activities were especially relevant in strategic planning practices because they were used to evaluate organizational challenges (Golsorkhi, et al., 2015; Seidl and Guérard, 2015; Vaara and Whittington, 2012; Jarzabkowski and Seidl, 2008). The importance of the meeting experiences was analysed through understanding the linguistic roles of the leaders as critical actors that influenced the discursive practices as they interacted with those they led (Scott et al, 2015). The meeting chairs, who functioned as leaders steered and managed the activities, and played significant roles. The tasks of managing interactions; controlling the flow of information; and maintaining a positive atmosphere were performed through the language-in-

use of leaders as they collaborated with members to accomplish desired organizational results (Fairhurst 2007). Communication was used as a tool by leaders as change agents that designed and managed the change in practices in ways that got the members inspired, and motivated and worked to institutionalize the change.

The general assumptions involved identifying routines, habits and beliefs that needed to be changed and how they were to be transformed to bring about new ways of working that were expected to lead to an anticipated outcome. The basic issues centred on the purpose and the actions needed to resolve the issues. They were conceptualization through three elements:

- strategies devised to achieve the changes in practice.
- leadership role in steering the activities.
- the communicative impact on the organizational culture.

The intended change focused on the use of a valid framework that guided the change, the implementation and management of organisational change and understanding the influence the change was to impact on the values and behaviours of people. At the intersection of these elements were the tasks of discursive leading practices in meetings that allowed for collaborative decisions and actions geared to address the organizational issues.

Their practice required the use of a combination of both transactional and relational techniques suggesting that the leaders participated in social constructions equally set goals and tried to make meaning of what others needed to do. These manifestations were observed through the deployment of specific discursive strategies and their related linguistic and argumentative devices that were connected to outcomes (Wodak, Kwon and Clarke, 2011). The role of language in achieving the changes in practice paid attention to the ability to use linguistic skills to frame strategic issues; the reactions of the meeting members revealed through their functional and social acts that impacted both individual and organizational outcomes. Investigating them helped in understanding the overall behavioural dynamics of team communication and how these were connected with organizational functioning. The way to achieve that was through using a discourse approach of the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA used throughout the research). The theory offered insights into how to interrogate actors' motives and the social conditions that surrounded their practices. The texts from verbal and non-verbal interactions were analysed through a thematic investigation of

interactions on a moment-by-moment basis so that the linguistic constructions revealed all actions; motivations and negotiations (Kwon, Clarke and Wodak, 2013). That helped to understand the leadership roles that purposefully crafted messages that created meaning and helped to galvanize actions. The examination of texts helped to reveal how group processes were dynamically influenced over time. It also illuminated the contextual factors that shaped the interactions, as well as how the interactions influenced the nature of the contexts. By implication, the research aimed to use the strategy meetings that were amenable to social change processes to achieve organizing and socializing accomplishments through the commitment of linguistic resources and actions that linked to organizational outcomes.

1.3. Research Aims, Objectives and Questions

1.3.1. Research Aims and Objectives

The aim of attaining improved organizational conditions in 'Tech' through changes in group and individual practices in meetings was based on the objective of using interactional routines to address organizational issues. So, instituting enduring work practices that enthroned a new culture that recognized the application of collective effort against an entrenched traditional system of top-down style suggested a fundamental re-orientation of the organizational social structure (Vaara, Rantakari and Holstein, 2019). The specific changes were delivered through collective efforts managed and maintained by leaders discursively to new ways of working. They used linguistic resources such as goal-oriented discursive strategies and linguistic realizations to reach meaningful levels of inclusivity to address the issues. The research borrowed from Kwon, Clarke and Wodak's (2013) set of five discursive variables: Equalizing, Simplifying, 'Re/Defining' Legitimating and Reconciling discursive strategies in conjunction with a range of argumentative linguistic devices that explained actions during strategy work. The strategies were distinctively analysed to determine how specific leadership influences helped in attaining the organizational outcomes. These implied that the enriched inputs from diverse experts had a direct link to the strategic plan content and the way work was done. They helped to trace how the discursive practices enhanced the quality of the strategy plan content and enabled the creation of commitment improved the financial outcome and helped to mitigate the operational problems.

1.3.2. Research Questions.

The research questions were:

Question One (1): What role did meetings play in shaping changes in individual and organizational outcomes?

Question Two (2): How did the meeting chairs deploy linguistic resources to achieve inclusiveness?

Question Three (3): Did specific discursive strategies help in the improvements of strategy practices that impacted the organizational issues and outcomes?

Question one was critical. It focused on how the practices in meetings were so crucial that they impacted the organizational social structure and power relations. These meant understanding how changes in practices caused realignments within hierarchical systems, team organization and work procedures. The answers focused on how the social processes and the activities in meetings happened and brought about new ways of working; the redistribution of power; new decision-making processes; and how the organization functioned. That highlighted the significance of the strategy meeting as an essential organizational activity that established workplace behaviour and the capacity to use it to transform practices.

The second question on the discursive practices of meeting leaders focused on the framing of messages in meaning-making and the construction of realities. Further import was that the principles associated with discursive leadership in terms of co-creation were fundamental in planned change situations and the execution of strategy.

Question three was of specific value to the organization because the skilful use of particular linguistic resources determined how the use of strategic and related statements (messages) of the leaders was linked to the goals of improving financial performance and obtaining appropriate operational efficiency.

The significance and prevalence of meetings showed that leadership communicative practices held organizing properties that had a meaningful impact on organizational life. The messages illuminated that leadership discursive roles determined how people worked and that helped to understand the establishment of enduring changes in perceptions and behaviours. The importance

of communicative practices that promoted shared responsibilities and interdependences was used to accomplish a new culture as well as in pursuing problem-solving.

1.4. Research Motivation and Justification

Several factors motivated the research. I was responsible for the accomplishment of project operations. That meant that it was my duty to look for ways to address the management and operational problems. All also shared the potential threat of organizational failure, especially since initial measures taken had failed. Many of the stakeholders understood the situation and supported the use of a robust change effort. The mandate given to me to conduct the change was an opportunity to explore deeply the social processes that impacted the work system and to achieve my academic ambition of obtaining a practice-based doctoral work.

The growing interest and attention towards improving understanding of leadership roles, especially in terms of using discursive resources as a means of mitigating organizational failures meant that an added contribution was valuable. The theoretical linkages between the leadership organizing roles that suggested the creative use of language in such social settings and giving more responsibility to organizational members helped to reset organizational life and obtain positive results. At the same time, the usefulness of meetings as an organizational phenomenon capable of being used to achieve major and strategic outcomes helped to redefine their essence.

The justification highlighted the importance of communications explored by scrutinizing the practices of those involved to enable a better understanding of their activities; how the activities revealed changes that affected the culture; and why the changes occurred. So, communication shaped the perception and actions of individuals and these resonated in organizational outcomes (Balogun et al, 2014). The actions towards the improvement of the project strategic plan content and better operations helped to reverse the decline of revenue figures and the inability to deliver on project timelines. That assisted in the generation of sufficient inputs encouraged commitment of organizational members (Laine and Vaara, 2015) and linked strategizing and organizing to organizational performance (Price, Roxburgh and Turnball, 2006).

1.5. Chapter Summary and Thesis Outline

The organisational issues of low financial performance and project operations failures resulted in the organization's poor financial performance and the inability to meet project timelines. The

leadership discursive roles in strategy meetings served as the appropriate sites where the interactions and decisions were made to facilitate the strategic approach that helped in resolving the issues. The resolution was conceptualized around the social change efforts in the group work practices implicated in the communicative practices. These included the designing of strategies initiation of planned change mechanisms, the leadership roles and the influence on organizational culture. The transformative change was structural and entailed a shift from the functional approach of top-down style to participative practices that impacted power structures and other social processes. The resolution involved the demonstration of the importance of discourse and language and how meanings came about in meetings. The CDA provided theoretical and methodological insights on how to understand and analyse such interactive practices. It provided the lens through which language was examined to make sense of the relationship between the data derived from texts to explain how discourses helped in maintaining and legitimating power imbalances and inadequacies and the social contexts that influenced them. To resolve the social problems, it provided a framework for using discursive strategies to mobilize for change through their competent deployment to achieve inclusivity.

The next chapter reviewed related literature. This demonstrated the level of understanding of the topic and its contexts through the analysis, synthesis and rationalization of extant studies and their significance to the research and the outcomes. A deeper understanding of the social processes in meetings and the relevance of leadership communicative practices helped to understand the research. It presented and discussed the CDA origins and how it demonstrated insights that enabled co-creation activities to address organizational issues. The review of empirical studies revealed the value and opened gaps that the research was set to address. Chapter three explained the philosophical basis of the research and detailed descriptions of the techniques used in the data generation as well as the processes used in the analysis. Chapter four presented the experiences encountered during the research as findings. Chapter five analysed the implications of the findings to the research questions and objectives. The final chapter, six, illustrated the learning outcomes of the research.

Chapter Two

Critical Literature Review

2.1. Literature Review Rationale

One of the reasons why researchers considered literature review an important aspect of a thesis was that they provided the basic and historical information and the current context regarding the debates about issues and questions that related to a topic. The understanding of a research topic suggested that the relevant theories and concepts that underpinned the research and the evidence related to a practical problem were found. Pare et al., (2015) argued that they provided the base for the research work after identifying work done in a subject area and the patterns of knowledge and trends regarding the topic. Gheondea-Eladi, (2015) explained the effort was not the mere work of compiling texts from extant studies, and that it involved a comparative task of explaining the logic and meaning attached to research topics. These suggested that literature reviews were extensive references from a host of relevant and credible sources that related to practical issues confronting organizations.

The research covered the domains of the communicative practices of leaders in meetings and how they utilized discursive tools to achieve strategic changes for better organizational functioning. The evaluation and interpretive analysis enabled me to embark on a critical literature review. That required an evaluation of existing relevant literature to reveal strengths, weaknesses and inconsistencies using appropriate theoretical assumptions or research methods to generate evidence used in the explanation of results. To achieve a credible result, I used the systematic approach initially which helped me to explore current knowledge logically and transparently. The reason I started that way was because of the potential of the approach. It provided valuable insights from a large volume of knowledge to gain relevant information and then the possibility to distil authentic data. I paid attention to the content and the ways they were evaluated by ensuring that current knowledge and how they were obtained was explicit to ascertain the level of accuracy and completeness of the information. Gough, Oliver, and Thomas (2017) explained that the basic processes commenced with identifying relevant research materials from appropriate sources; systematically critiquing them; and synthesising the findings. Accordingly, Hiebl (2021) explained

that the systematic approach had the unique attributes of being comprehensive, structured and transparent. The style was exploratory, and I used keywords to gain general information on the terminologies and the further refined effort targeted distinct elements of the research from eligible studies using multiple databases. I got insights related to the core elements and related them to the topic. I identified variables that were used to explain related theories that underpinned the assumptions of the arguments and further situated my research within appropriate theoretical and methodological frames. The thematic analyses drew the core research themes as 'sign posts' and related them to the topic. That way, the different facets of organizing especially the communicative practices of leaders in strategy meetings were connected to organizational outcomes based on the framing of massages that affected actions. In terms of transparency, I achieved quality through using credible sources to gain authentic evidence. The search strategy of inclusion or exclusion criteria helped to reduce the influence of publication bias such as journal quality and date and justified the selection of specific literature.

The process was thorough and followed strict processes that provided the impetus for a critical literature approach. I carefully collected, checked and (re)analysed information from sources with the understanding that the requirement went beyond gaining comprehensive and quality evidence. The critical evaluation led to unearthing the obvious and the taken-for-granted issues that revealed all kinds of evidence including inconsistencies and contradictions, as well as justifying the theoretical and methodological frames. That meant finding answers to why scholars held certain views. It was that basis that arguments were understood; whether the basis was considered appropriate in terms relating them to the research questions. The assessment provided evaluations and interpretive analyses that allowed for a reflective account of the specifically selected set of studies. These helped to strengthen understanding and knowledge towards the improvement of the topic and constructively inform about issues and new directions in studying them.

2.2. The Review Method

I searched for information from libraries, books, journals, conference papers, and published and unpublished dissertations. The main source was the electronic databases such as EBSCOhost, ScienceDirect, SciELO, and the ProQuest academic online research suites. They provided full-text information that retained high quality, speedily accessible and comprehensive information on older

and recently published literature. Others included the Web of Science (WoS) and the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI).

The effort commenced with the use of keywords. The keywords 'leadership,' 'meetings' and 'strategic planning' produced hundreds of thousands of results. The enormous number of pages available in the different databases were general and not specific to the research. Leadership studies focus on individuals with an emphasis on their traits, attributes, behaviours, position of influence and the situations that influence their practice Collinson, (2014). Meetings looked at their characteristic functions and purposes (Leach et al., 2009; Boden, 1994). Strategic planning was simply assumed to be a process undertaken by organizations of different forms and the activities involved looking at priorities and identifying ways to achieve desired goals.

A few reviews on strategy work explained the essence of strategizing (Burglemann et al, 2018; Vaara and Whittington, 2012). The Academy of Management Annals series of the Academy of Management Journal had valuable information that explained trends and analysed the basic ideas on specific aspects of strategizing. They argued that what influenced strategic outcomes was connected to the roles the actors in them played, especially in aspects of the group processes and the workings of the administrative systems. The units of analysis dealt with situations in which social processes were strategic in terms of inclusivity such as employee engagement. Whittington (2018) explained that the practice perspectives offered important clues on how life tended to work and the doings of strategy. These were based on the traditions of social theory that focused on the essence of the practical local contexts and other micro-level activities. These revealed what happened within and underneath the practices and the fact that they had significant effects.

But the research was not that simplistic. The importance of communication in organizations and how leaders use it to achieve results are the reasons why meetings were an important organizational event where group processes were actualized meaning that they had the potential that enable successful group work activities for organizational functioning. They were important because they were connected to the realization of expected strategic outcomes. In strategy meetings, the social processes involved communicative practices in various forms that impacted human values and actions driven by the organizational leaders whose roles were consequential in constructing, making sense of and enacting strategy (Balogun et al., 2014).

The further purposeful effort refined the keywords to 'workplace meetings' and 'strategic meetings' which were more informative. The literature on workplace meetings emphasized important purposes such as the exchange of information, generation of ideas, socializing, problem-solving and decision-making (Allen et al., 2014; Leach et al., 2009). Tracy and Dimock (2004) gave insights that as much as the purposes were a veritable tool for resolving issues, they could be disruptive since it was possible to use them to create problems and to misinform members. Their structure and social processes manifested in how individuals related and did their work, and so suggested that they influenced the culture of the organization. Strategic meetings served the same purposes, as unique sites for diagnosing and addressing issues and developing new ideas (Seidl and Guérard, 2015); stabilizing organizational strategy (Jarzabkowski and Seidl, 2008); forging common understanding (Kwon, Clarke and Wodak, 2013).

I continued with the focus on leadership communicative practices. Though paradigms in communication (functional, critical, and interpretive) had been researched and documented as avenues through which the role of communication in organizational settings was explored, studies in the discursive dimension of leadership had not received the magnitude of interest, especially in mainstream research sources (Anderson and Mungal, 2015). Clifton (2012); and Fairhurst (2007) advocated the conceptualization of leadership communicative practices that focused on meaning management and recognized the importance of the framing of messages. That involved the use of language to affect the perceptions and behaviour of the people. I used the "snowballing" techniques and personal knowledge of the concepts to develop what was important and linked them to the topic by understanding more about the core research elements. That meant that a transformative change in practice suggested that a structural shift required an understanding of 'change strategies;' 'leadership roles;' and 'organizational culture' and I was able to relate them to the topic variables 'leadership discursive practices' and 'strategy meetings' with specific understanding of strategic planning history and leadership styles. The snowball technique served as the building blocks for ideas that generated further readings and how to conduct the research better (Bailey et al., 1995). I needed to make that effort because the variables were diverse. It also helped to ensure continuous improvement of knowledge and a better understanding of the theoretical connections between the studies and the results obtained. The themes of the research were related to the existing studies and reframed to build new meanings (Silverman, 2003). The process and the refinement of ideas sometimes even resulted in additions and reworking. For instance, the discursive leadership

perspective challenged the traditional top-down style, advancing the notion of co-leadership and recognising that distributed leadership powers and responsibilities were used linguistically in task accomplishment and relationship maintenance. So, the studies identified ideas; discovered patterns; and examined problematic practices that pointed to the issue of lack of participation or lack of voice as a major challenge in strategy work. The process helped to make sense and to achieve the inclusion or exclusion of relevant studies.

Although I used peer-review academic studies because of their high-quality rating, the results were not encouraging. It was important to reconsider the width of the searches. I extended my initial reference lists to the Social Science Research Network Index; Academia Edu, ResearchGate, Google Scholar and others to gain expansive knowledge. These other sources were often referred to as grey literature. A number of them were equally important because they offered valuable ideas although sometimes, they were not regarded as having the same quality as the known peer review journals (Hiebl, 2021). The screening rules and standards were high and were regarded as a precursor to rigour, hence the credibility of the research (van Brocke et al., 2009). However, the dearth of relevant studies suggested that doing an extensive search depended on the inclusion of other databases to ensure the capturing of a sufficient breadth and depth of information. The time limit or range was also an important criterion for the inclusion or exclusion purposes because sometimes concepts changed emphasis or developed over time in extended forms or to propagate different ideas. The scope was enlarged to include 1980 and 2021 to accommodate the vast ideas and more information needed to gain new trends, and understandings.

I summarized them, noting the concepts and how the studies resonated with or if they did not relent to the research. I set out to gain ideas related to the central arguments of the scholars and the theoretical basis that guided their works to follow what made up the evidence that supported their arguments and conclusions. For instance, meetings activities spanned through set-up, facilitation of interactions and decision-making that impacted individual attitudes and the organization (Lehmann-Willenbrock et al., 2017) and these organizing aspects were conducted communicatively (Scott et al., 2015). So, looking at meetings as a standard part of work helped in obtaining many kinds of evidence, they could be used maximally in several ways for the benefit of organizations. Investigating them as stand-alone and as an organizational discursive event meant that what happened in them were instances of language use in social practices. The 'meeting

science' concept had lately attracted much attention and seemed to be relevant. The new concept included analyses from Scott et al., (2015); Olien et al., (2015); Yoerger et al., (2015) shed light on their structure and the social processes that were implicated in communicative interactional activities that influenced values and behaviours and work outcomes. The discursive orientations offered ideas about the construction and enactment of strategic planning (Balogun et al., 2014), especially as the key drivers of social change and custodians of organizational culture. Sauer and Kauffeld, (2015) categorized leadership role as a key in the facilitation of work activities because they had adequate capacity to influence processes and structure meetings to influence organizational outcomes.

The actual synthesis commenced with the questioning of assumptions and relating them to give insights into how assumptions were challenged and their connections to the topic. That aspect was the critical assessment exercise. I identified extant literature and made concrete efforts of reading and note-taking to achieve a critical evaluation of the contents and their appropriateness to the research topic and question(s). I assessed the theoretical underpinnings and methodological frames in the selected studies. The style was argued by Paré et al., (2015) as justified since that meant gathering more detailed methodological analyses of specific studies. That way, patterns within existing propositions; theories and the ways they were studied were revealed. To achieve that I adopted the outline of SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recall, and Review) five-step procedure (Ridley, 2012).

The outline of the assessment questions by Ridley (2012, p. 66):

- *What is the author's central argument or main point?*
- *What conclusions does the author reach?*
- *What evidence does the author put forward in support of his or her arguments and conclusions?*
- *Do you think the evidence is strong enough to support the arguments and conclusions?*
- *Does the author make any unstated assumptions about shared beliefs?*
- *Can these assumptions be challenged?*
- *What is the background context in which the text was written?*

The first three questions were central for surveying systematically as I had done already. The process provided relevant and in-depth information through careful reading and note-taking of the selected literature. As I progressed in reading different aspects and arguments of scholars, I broke

the information down into more manageable chunks to understand the evidence and the conclusions that explained interpretations. The processes happened concurrently and kept me engaged. Though the process was tasking, it was rewarding because the questioning, re-reading and recalling processes produced reliable results for the critical review. Ridley's (2012) questions four to seven were used to review the arguments and conclusions. The general approaches, their relationships with the themes and the evaluations of contextual factors were examined. Sometimes, this evidence and the arguments revealed limitations or contradictions and showed gaps in the knowledge produced.

The questioning appraised the social process within groups using related theoretical ideas and practices and the contexts that influenced the practices. The searches identified Communities of Practice (COP) and the Activity Theory (AT) and used the studies of Hutter, Nketiah and Fuller (2017); and Jarzabkowski and Balogun (2009) respectively. They were important in understanding the importance of collaborative work among multiple actors in the accomplishment of strategic goals. However, they had some deficiencies because they did not explain how the strategic planning process helped to accomplish goals. The CDA theory was identified as more appropriate. So, I explained the historical origin, theoretical background and how it was used. I was a critical evaluation of two studies of empirical studies by Mantere and Vaara (2008); and Kwon, Clarke and Wodak (2013).

2. 3. Core Elements of the Research

2.3.1. Communicative Practices

The communicative practices in organizations were not a core element of the research but it formed the foundation upon which the working on intervention strategies, leadership roles and organizational culture were hinged. The communication provided knowledge and understanding of the direction in terms of the originating sources and reception of messages. It illustrated how ideas were envisioned, constructed and delivered. Though the flow, from sender to receiver emphasised information giving, it was erroneously presumed that the messages sent equated with the message received (Ruben and Stewart, 2016). The discursive aspects of ideas recognized the value of the contents and the contexts in terms of key events, processes, and commitments used to accomplish purposes. The meaning creation aspect was however vital because it recognized the

importance of understanding and acting on messages to achieve their goal. It was key to understanding how communication worked and its link to the achievement of goals. Communication in organizations was not a peripheral human activity. It was about organizing, and communication transformed in and through interconnected practices embodied activities that explained social reality. The messages informed and shaped ideas and behaviour and so influenced organizational life (Ruben and Stewart, 2016).

The meetings' coordination, and political and social integration purposes (Dittrich et al., 2011) were accomplished through communicative practices (Asmuß and Oshima, 2018). The interactional context of strategy making (Cooren et al., 2015; Balogun et al., 2014) highlighted the organizing perspective of communication (Putnam and Nicotera, 2008). The meaning creation aspect that formed the bedrock of discursive leadership was used to promote the involvement of multiple actors characterized by dialogic exchanges, feedback and social integration and actions were taken (Fairhurst, 2009). Since the flow of communication is multi-dimensional, the meeting space normally used for information exchanges, facilitating joint understandings and enhancing opportunities was important for the accomplishment of organizational tasks (Kauffeld and Lehmann-Willenbrock, 2012). These arguments meant that modern organizations relied on what happened in group events such as meetings for the generation of inputs and the development of creative ideas that resolved practical problems and/or sought opportunities for enhanced organizational functioning.

So, the communicative stance had to organize properties that governed the ways people interacted. The actors' attributes and cognitive abilities are related to the role of the actors and the message contents that influence cultural systems. The Communicative Constitution of Organization (CCO) theory helped to highlight and support the reasoning (Putman and Nicotera, 2008). The term CCO was first used by McPhee and Zaug (2000) and subsequently gained recognition by scholars in the study and understanding of organizations and ways that transformed them. Three approaches or schools of thought were identified with CCO: McPhee and Zaug's Four Flows, Luhman's Social Systems and the Montreal School. They all explained that communicative occurrences among interacting members showed that the interconnected processes of communication were constitutive since they enabled people to make sense of situations, tasks and the goals being pursued. The research drew understanding from the Montreal School's ideas premised on the notion that the

interactions produced texts from verbal and non-verbal communications that showed the speaker's utterances and the intended meaning in a particular context. The discursive aspects of leaders, the settings they occurred and the contexts that influenced the practices were important. These suggested that lived experiences interpreted within texts, the interactional practices explained how messages were created, and the contextual conditions that influenced them and sustained the interactions and their outcomes. The communicative events within micro-level features in instances of exchanges concerned the use of language and its material manifestations. That also acknowledged the co-constructive nature of such interactions and the fact that those engagements were continuously negotiated. The experiences in meetings were conceptualized into theoretical arguments that provided insights into the design of meetings, through interactional processes to the production of the enduring individual and organizational effects (Scott et al., 2015).

2.3.2. Strategies Used for Change

Over the years, there have been different kinds of emphasis on how to bring about changes that drove organizations towards planning and implementing changes (Armenakis and Harris, 2002). The action plans designed to achieve the desired goal were aimed at either taking advantage of opportunities or making efforts to resolve difficult situations. These included looking into the intricate efforts aimed at building the capacity for change that went beyond anticipating or responding to organizational issues. The process and factors by which change occurred gained attention because they determined the acceptance of the receiver of the messages and how to generate the changes desired. The change process related to the strategies deployed suggested that the intent and responsibility to ensure success required cognitive skills and the importance of generating the commitment towards the desired end. A valid framework was imperative to guide the planning and implementation of change and Hussain et al. (2018) pointed to the essence of the managers' active involvement as a critical factor since they had the legitimate authority, first-hand experiences of the organizational issues and stake in the success of the efforts.

Buono and Kerber, (2010) looked at three approaches to change; Directed Change; Guiding Change; and Planned Change. The directed and guiding approaches were meant to be specifically controlled although the difference was that the former was defined and followed through, while the later was loosely defined and was managed by the leaders. The option of planned change, which the research was concerned about, was relevant because the basic tenets of deliberately

planning for change with clear goals were often guided by systematic plans and evaluations of implementation. Lewin's Change Model was considered because the process featured an on-going framework. It moved from one stage to another, through a series of pre-determined stages. The three-stage structure included unfreezing; changing (movement); refreezing. The unfreezing involved the preparation in terms of examining the current state and understanding the reasons and needs for the change. The movement represented the actual transition based on concrete actions. Refreezing was the end state that entailed the acceptance of the new situation. The implication was that change happened when a current state of affairs or old behaviours were unlearned, and new practices emerged that eventually became the norm.

The approach focused on the activities that addressed the creation of conditions that enabled the communications of change and those that normally held such responsibilities. The model recognized that the social acts of communicating promoted the credible ideals and routes through which the change messages gained the attention and acceptance of those involved. Armenakis and Harris (2002, pp. 169) stated that "the change message and its communication can serve as to coordinate the three phases by providing the organizing framework for creating readiness and the motivation to adopt and institutionalize change". Hussain et al (2018) explained that organizational phenomena implicated in the change efforts included communication, leadership and social integration.

The process in 'Tech' followed the rational sequence of the developing models by the leaders at the top in what was an information-giving process, although the workshop meeting group meetings were interactive as the members participated in the analytical evaluation of project plans. These conditions affected the work systems and the strategic planning practices. However, the fact that the planned changes were transformative meant that the strategy tended towards the institutionalization of new ways of doing work.

The research was focused on addressing two organizational issues. The records showed that financial returns were well below expectations and poor deliveries in project milestones were observed. So, the feelings of those involved especially in terms of their need for change also depended on the intensity of their anxiety to address and resolve the issues. The readiness was critical and helped to identify what was needed to resolve the situation. The motivation to know better and try out meant that how information was generated and the capacity that enhanced the

process to fruition were essential and required members involved to be part of the development of the implementation.

The nature of the messages and the conditions that the change efforts established worked to address the research questions. The messages and co-creative activities involved enhanced the socioeconomic transformation of the organizational work systems. The activities permeated all strata and ensured that the change in perception and behaviours translated to new behaviours, and new ways of utilizing knowledge and learning. The leadership discursive practices harnessed the creative abilities of members through the pooling of diverse and requisite inputs. Their actions depended on the conditions the leaders created. Certain linguistic constructs allowed or constrained behaviours. First was that the strength or intensity of messages must at least match with the level of feelings of the receivers' impression that change was required. To gain attention, the network of people communicated was validated to understand, accept and enact intended changes based on appropriate actions that resulted in predictable reactions. Second was that the conditions in which the change efforts were likely to thrive, especially in problem-solving required to tap into the creativity of those concerned. The redistribution of responsibilities through co-creational opportunities emphasized the importance of galvanizing talents, creativity and ownership of the change process (Armenakis and Harris, 2009). The leaders' responsibilities were based on their capacity to create readiness for the change and/or the consolidation of the members' mind-sets to willingly pursue the change (Hussain et al., 2018). Also related to the acceptance and willingness for change were members' level of dependency or autonomy on the leaders' roles. A complete reliance on the leaders' abilities and legitimacy meant that the members were ready to be led to function as instructed. The sense or feeling that they possess an independent mind in the judgement of the situation and the ways to address them equally suggested that they felt trusted to deal with issues. These situations required the leadership to use language competently. So, the leaders were tasked with the deployment of the appropriate communicative strategies that showed guidance in creating the vision through diagnosing, planning and implementing the change. They were responsible for motivational and supportive messages that allowed members to act and created social integration that established a new culture.

2.3.3. Organizational Culture

Organizational culture describes the distinctive values and behaviours that define the characteristics of a group. It highlighted that the core values, beliefs, processes and practices were unique to an organization or group of people and were considered valid (Schein, 1990). In organizations, it manifested as shared history through artefacts, exposed values and guided patterns of behaviour. The link to behaviour suggested that efforts towards changes in practices impacted group and organizational processes and behaviours based on how the people understood organizational visions and purposes. It resonated in their roles and responsibilities; power relations and the way people related among themselves; perceived action-guiding information and communicative practices. It was key to characterize a new culture through communicative practices. Because culture sets the context of work and how things are done, the organizational activity that allowed the accomplishment of leadership communicative practices helped in understanding how change was managed (Schnurr and Chan, 2011). The leadership role in crafting messages around the need for change helped to clarify the need for culture change and these influenced follower dispositions and future expectations (Schein, 1990).

From the perspective of meetings as an important organizational activity, it provided ways of understanding how communicative change efforts were driven and their effects on the values and behaviours of people in group settings. Because organizational life was concerned with what happened at work, it consisted of interactions that bear on rational behaviours involving planning, organizing and controlling aspects. Their assessment was not easy because the culture was characterized as multi-dimensional. It took time to become established; was difficult to determine the optimal state; was concerned with subjective beliefs and unconscious assumptions (Furnham and Gunter, 1993). As an organizational phenomenon culture was critical for communication and the accomplishment of outcomes. Its components were considered intangible and barely observable. Underlying these were the behaviours that revolved around power relations and other interdependences that influenced both members and leaders. It made sense and meanings of their roles in tasks accomplishments and social relationships. The processes that enabled the involvement of members contrasted with the top-down leadership style in 'Tech' and that represented a major shift in work relationships. That established the empowerment of members as they participated in decision-making and cross-functional teamwork. The features of the meeting genre depicted distinct communicative patterns of protocols associated with roles and responsibilities within that sociocultural context (Angouri and Marra, 2010; Orlikowski and Yates,

1994). The basic roles in activities such as agenda setting, turn-taking and the decision-making processes clearly illustrated the level of member involvement and possibilities of meaningful engagement. The aspects of leadership discursive practices linked to co-creative activities were also connected to specific ways used to achieve results. The encouragement of organizational voice in 'Tech' meetings had the potential to promote shared understanding about what was strategic and important, decision-making processes and the new ways to work. The social implications were twofold. The top-down management style promoted organizational silence. Organizational silence prevailed because strategic initiatives had previously been decided at the top without input from the lower levels and the meeting chairs dominated interactions in meetings. Pinder and Harlos, (2001) described silence as the situation of holding back opinions and ideas that could have affected, changed or ameliorated organizational circumstances. The acquiescent and quiescent types of silence covered aspects of behavioural, cognitive and emotional manifestations. The acquiescent behaviours were defensive and related to managerial practices and organizational cultures that showed forms of unwillingness to contribute and deviant attitudes such as resignation, and self-protection due to fear and evil intentions (van Dyne, Ang and Botero, 2003). Quiescent silence entailed deliberate, conscious and self-protection choices to withhold information or ideas about identified organizational problems to avoid being penalized or other negative outcomes. To the extent to which leadership behaviour did not promote voice or was not safe to engage members meaningfully, they continued to remain silent (Detert and Burris 2007; Pinder and Harlos, 2001). The second implication was that the enactment of voice platforms associated with discursive practices had their effects. The importance of the discursive aspects around the organization's commonly held beliefs, attitudes and values reflected how they did things together as they designed and implemented major changes. The political and social aspects reflected leadership essential because their central roles shifted from being dominant and hegemonic to that of facilitation (Wodak, 2011). The use of surveys, polls asking for solutions, discussion groups and feedback mechanisms enhanced group processes and showed members' level of engagement. The new culture had the potential for positive socio-economic outcomes. Individual and group development were seen as opportunities for work engagement through a consciously developed interactive system that enabled social integration.

Another vital aspect of silence concerning managerial/leadership behaviour was particularly important for the research. The focus on cross-cultural issues paid attention to the influence of

cultural values because social structures determined the level and manner opinions were expressed in organizations. Chaney and Martin (2013) suggested that different regions had accepted ways of conducting workplace business and emphasized certain norms in employees' relationships. The African culture, unlike the European or American, was characterized as collectivist and authority was so reverenced that respect and seniority were critical factors (Hofstede, 1980). The high-power-distance cultures manifested power asymmetry with the leaders having so much power and controlling vast resources (Botero and Van Dyne, 2009; Hofstede, 1991). The cultural systems valued seniority in terms of age, level of experience and skills highly. The combination of seniority and clannish tendencies were inherent and so embedded in certain cultures within the sub-Sahara region of Africa where 'Tech' operated. Emelifeonwu and Valk (2019) reported the dearth of research on voice and silence in Nigeria, though some earlier studies explained the importance of respect and seniority (Ademola, 2005). The empirical study on multinational telecommunication organizations in Nigeria by Emelifeonwu and Valk (2019) provided insights concerning the clannish tendencies, perceptions of seniority and patterns of communicative behaviours that hindered voice in such organizations. The findings laid credence to the presence of fear of victimization that characterized organizational silence. The power asymmetry prevented the existence of voice or suppressed the desire to speak up.

The changes in organizational culture were made possible through how language was used, especially by leaders to define and shape realities. Their communicative practices were influenced by the dynamic environmental situations that enabled learning and ways of adapting to situations.

2.3.4 Leadership Role

The intersection of the research elements on leadership roles established their significance in resolving organizational issues through planned change. These related to the relational and coordination aspects that entailed the progressive movement from one stage to another, requiring the sequencing of actions from the proper identification of the unsatisfactory state; the preparation of those concerned to understand the issues; the mobilization for actions in the series of events from planning the change to the implementation of change. The dominance of leadership was also imperative.

The roles covered both the transactional and transformational aspects in relationship-based situations. Their task-oriented practices in strategy work were centred on the use of structures to set formal planning and coordinating methods through clear communicative practices that drove efforts towards achieving organizational goals. These required leaders' possession of organizing skills such as coordinating and directing processes that were used to organize activities as members consumed and enacted strategy. The transformational type focused on how leaders were able to encourage and inspire members to develop and create changes that improved work. These goals were achieved through the enactment of relational practices within a process framework. The model emphasises the analysis and management of relationships between the leaders and the members based on forming and maintaining good partnerships through interactive processes. As a frame of reference, the major components included purposefulness; inclusiveness; empowerment and ethical behaviour meant to build commitment from positive inspiration to accomplish goals. Two leadership concepts, Leadership Member Exchange (LMX) and Flexible Leadership Model (FLM) were used to illustrate the relational roles that combined the objectives of achieving organizational outcomes and the improvement of relationships. The LMX focused on the quality of the relationship between the leaders and followers. It was grounded on a two-way relationship and posited the cognition of the leaders and their capacity to achieve change in perceptions, attitudes and behaviours (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995). It had been explained that high-quality LMX was developed for certain reasons. When leaders allowed and valued the contributions of members these had the potential of shared interactional powers and mutual understanding. Being responsive to the needs of members and extending support to them also results in loyalty, trust and affective relationships. These aided the prospects of widening perspectives through the commitment of members to contribute valuable ideas during problem-solving situations as well as achieving shared understanding and social integration. Alternatively, low-quality LMX relationships were associated with limited or minimal exchanges (Anand et al., 2010). The FLM considered that the one effective way of influencing key determinants of organizational functioning, especially financial performance, was through the influence of how tasks were performed based on change-oriented leadership behaviours (Yukl and Lepsinger, 2004). The concept used ideas from several fields such as leadership studies, human resources management, strategic management and organizational change. It emphasized the leadership abilities to be adaptable to situations, requiring the need to achieve organizational effectiveness through framing, leading change processes and

deploying persuasive communication styles. Although it emphasized flexibility that did not restrict leaders to a known style, it recognized that key determinants were the integration of variables with social perceptiveness that promoted efficiency, adaptation, and human capital (Yukl, 2008). They were effective because situations determined the variables appropriate and usually mutually compatible with the aspirations of the multiple actors involved in the change and appropriate for the situation. The concepts related to the social systems such as building support and evaluating role interdependences. So, the recognition of the group's needs and allowing members to work creatively promoted functional accomplishments through the creation of a communicating community that worked collaboratively to achieve the completion of tasks. The shift from leadership domination in decision-making and interactions to a collaborative system reduced leadership decision rights. Mroz, Yoerger and Allen (2018) explained that inclusive strategies changed the practices and members viewed them as satisfying and compatible because their perceptions were valued. The leader's understanding and ability to adapt to the social contexts through the use of the set-up meeting agendas, interactional practices that controlled the flow of information and regulated contributions from members helped to achieve success. So, the leadership roles were not only conducted interactively and in conjunction with the people they led. They were also strategic because of choices on how they framed messages, organized work systems and steered the implementation of change. The research sought to understand how leadership communicative behaviours influenced perceptions and behaviours that created organizational synergies and actions that helped resolve organizational issues.

2. 4. The Research Units of Analyses

2.4.1. Discursive Leadership

The discursive leadership approach emphasises the management of the meaning of organizational events through the use of communication-based tools (Clifton, 2012). It had succeeded in distinguishing itself from the mainstream leadership studies that emphasized the psychological roots that looked at leadership from the roles they performed in framing messages and the manipulation of the structures that influenced their roles and the behaviours of those they led. It provided an understanding of the essence of communication in achieving organizational outcomes since leadership accomplishments were based on interaction with others. The leaders were considered causal agents and were recognized as central figures. The interaction and

communication processes required the exploration of the leader's framing intentions (implicit and explicit) through acts of constructing meanings for social actions that were consequential to organizational outcomes. Fairhurst (2009) argued that the tendency to conceptualize leadership as a social construct was often based on the psychological approaches that focused attention on individuals' personality traits, behavioural/emotional attributes and cognitive processing styles. More recently the level of influence was inclined to look at the communicative aspects that covered most efforts used to achieve organizational purposes. Its frames and how they were used were particularly important to the study and practice of leadership. The theory focused on the linguistic means leaders combined in framing messages through sense-making and engaging in relational aspects that mattered in task accomplishments. The ideology recognized the essence of multiple actors and not the leaders alone. The importance of influence through meaning management meant communication was the vehicle for the enactment of leadership (Fairhurst, 2011). So, it positioned the social and discursive practices, particularly in discursive events, to leadership effectiveness. These were illustrated through understandings the leaders' constructions of meanings and enactments, and their continuous negotiations of ideas and dialogues with multiple actors.

The discursive leadership practices also supported the fact that organizational success through the skilful framing of the leaders was goal-oriented. The response of members was important for the attainment of the desired results. The managing meaning pays attention to distinct values and expectations to work through engagement with the members (Chad, 2019; Clifton, 2012). The leaders considered the importance of things such as creating awareness and motivation for change and that achieving success also depended on how responsive they were in achieving shared values between the social realities of the members and the organizational values. The forging of collective values meant having the capabilities required to achieve changes in the perceptions of the members, especially through creating a collaborative system that ensured co-creation to which both leaders and members responded. These contrasted with the psychological approaches that assumed that individual characteristics were critical to effective leadership without showing how the leadership emerged through social processes.

The discursive leadership process focuses on the possible way of teasing out the micro-processes of doing leadership by recording all interactions and tracing and illustrating the discursive strategies used. These illuminated what was said and how changes occurred through behaviours

within specific contexts and social conditions. The research questions were related because of the organizing aspects of communications within the meeting structures and processes that helped to illustrate how changes in the members' perceptions and behaviours occurred. The leaders' skills and competence were revealed in the way they utilized specific discursive strategies to influence and manage meaning so that members were meaningfully involved in achieving the desired goals. The achievement of a collaborative system that naturally contrasted with a top-down style of leadership pointed to a shift in organizational culture as well as a precondition for the achievement of commitment among members. The resolution of distinct organizational issues was recognized by the research as valuable since organizations faced peculiar issues that confronted them. That reflected how the use of discursive strategies that encouraged co-creation was used to achieve improved financial performance and corrected project delivery delays. The specific linguistic resources that identified particular instances and varying contingencies enabled them to gain insights to make informed decisions that impacted the contents of the strategy plans and helped obtain commitment to achieve the goals.

2.4.2. Strategy Meetings

Allen et al., (2014) argued for more attention to be paid to meetings by researchers and practitioners and provided appropriate ways of classifying the purposes and usefulness. The sixteen-element categorization that related to the research rated the purposes in terms of "to discuss ongoing projects" at 11.6 per cent; "to routinely discuss the state of the business" at 10.8 per cent; "to brainstorm for ideas or solutions" at 3.3 per cent; "to discuss productivity and efficiencies" at 3.7 per cent (Allen et al., 2014, pp. 791). Lehmann-Willenbrock, Allen, and van Vugt (2020, pp. 3) summarized the aspects of meetings' purposes as "solving problems, coordinating actions, building consensus, and negotiating status are some of the daily puzzles that humans face, and in no type of social interaction are these tasks more common today than in team meetings at work". Allen and Lehmann-Willenbrock's (2022) conceptualization of workplace meetings identified five features that made them pervasive and pervaded organizing aspects of organizational work. These included Leading, Interacting, Managing Time, Engaging, and Relating. The review of the numerous studies on meetings showed that the aspects of interacting, engaging and leading represented 35.5%; 21.1%; and 19.1% respectively (Allen and Lehmann-Willenbrock, 2022). These were all-encompassing and were intertwined with the leading functions that covered the

designing or setting-up tasks and the facilitation of group processes. They were useful tools used by managers to resolve challenges, especially through the organizing processes related to problem-solving and decision-making aspects (Lehmann-Willenbrock et al., 2017; Aggerholm and Asmuß, 2016; Leach et al., 2009). These constituted the interacting and engaging aspects of practices in strategy meetings (Jarzabkoski and Seidl, 2008)). The practices were socially inclined interactions and related to how the work was done and accomplished through information sharing and knowledge development. Many empirical studies concerning the development and implementation of organizational strategy were explicit on their functional nature, especially on issues concerning the resolution of organizational issues, shared information, and enhanced group processes (Mroz, Yoerger and Allen, 2018; Kwon, Clarke and Wodak. 2013; Jarzabkowski and Seidl, 2008). They facilitated task performance by providing interactive opportunities for engaging and information exchanges. The empirical study of Jarzabkowski and Seidl, (2008) on strategy work explained that as mechanisms used to understand organizational group phenomena, the opportunities for member knowledge exchanges fostered through participation helped organizational strategy work activities; member/group behaviour; decision making and other group processes. The research looked at the main aspects of workplace meetings as related to strategy meetings. The procedural structures enabled interacting activities that influenced behaviours during action planning and other activities (Kauffeld and Lehmann-Willenbrock, 2012). Yoerger, Crowe, and Allen, (2015) observed that the creation of an enabling environment for collaborative and meaningful engagements were important catalysts for member commitment. Many studies regarded meetings as 'container' platforms or supportive means used to gain insights into important organizational processes (Scott et al., 2015; Tracy and Dimock, 2004; Schwartzman, 1989). However, the research shared the view and desired to see how meeting interactions were crucial to organizational life. The view that the interacting feature enabled them to be used as a means of achieving socialization which produced new values and behaviours was important in looking at their importance (Rogelberg et al. 2006). So, in reality, I sought to contribute to the perspective that meetings on their meetings could shape work that produced impactful outcomes on organizational goals and individual values (Lehmann-Willenbrock, Allen, and van Vugt, 2020; Olien et al., 2015; Svennevig (2012). They argued that they constituted and reconstituted prime activities embedded in the creation of organizational knowledge and values that influenced work. So, their activities cut across several aspects of organizing that drove organizational social and work systems. Hence,

they were more than workplace gatherings because the depth and width of organizational functioning originated and happened in them.

In the quest to explain the ubiquitous nature of meetings, I tried to see that from the meeting science concept. The concept was defined as "the study of the meetings themselves, their outcomes, and other meeting-related phenomena" (Olien et al., 2015, pp. 21). Mroz, Yoerger and Allen (2018) also explained that the concept was context-specific, paying attention to the nature of meetings especially the dynamic context in which the multiple actors operated as a group. Though the application in research was still developing (Lehmann-Willenbrock et al., 2017), how meetings activities were planned, and organized and social contextual factors that influenced the practices had impactful outcomes on individuals, team processes and organizations. The concept was based on a systematic study of the naturally dynamic meeting activities that happened before, during and after; how meetings fit within organizational contexts (Olien et al., 2015). The meetings looked at the pre-meeting factors and design characteristics that included set-up arrangements such as determining the time, duration and participants; ensuring the conduciveness of the venue; and setting ground rules for engagement. These were contextual variables that depended on the meeting purposes and the organization's needs. These included the physical characteristics, though the focus of the research was on structuring the protocols for interactions/engagements. The opportunity to contribute to agenda setting and/or if the agenda had clear goals and was distributed on time with supporting documents to enable them to engage in robust dialogue all depended on the organization's culture and leadership style. A managerialist culture was also likely to encourage instruction-giving and the lack of engagement as a norm. These suggested that when the rules did not permit participation, it was difficult to gain the members' insights and achieve information sharing. In such instances too, the nature of the actual meeting facilitation followed the same pattern, reflected in the leadership interactional styles of dominance, undemocratic behaviour, lack of interpersonal relationships and autocratic decision-making. The after-meeting effects resulted in both proximal and distal outcomes and represented the leadership efforts in addressing immediate objectives and the achievement of long-term goals (Lehmann-Willenbrock et al., 2017). The whole process was significant and meant that they impacted organizational life and the attainment of strategic goals. A further look at the five metaphors associated with meetings and with a direct connection to communicative activities included: 'Stressors,' 'Collaborative Technology,' 'Rituals,' 'Sense making' and 'Interventions' (Scott et al., 2015). The strategy

meetings were described as communication sites where the happenings were "consequential for constructing, making sense of, and communicating strategy (Balogun et al., 2014, pp.175). I focused on the exploration of Collaborative Technology and Interventions because strategy-making involved the collective coordination of important activities that included the articulation of organizational visions that culminated in enacting action plans and implemented them. The two lenses provided a better understanding of the research questions. They helped to comprehend the value of meetings as prime sites for understanding organizational life and how the discursive leadership style helped to address the two organizational issues. The collaborative techniques that covered aspects of the coordination of activities were crucial tools for problem-solving, enacting the mode of interactional practices and managing meanings to establish the importance of utilizing the involvement of multiple actors. The coordination of interdependent tasks through the management of the work procedures, roles and routines highlighted the importance of the organizing properties of work synchronization (Okhuysen and Bechky, 2009). It extended to the essence of ensuring individual, group, and organizational functioning through interactional exchanges and the integration of ideas (Scott et al., 2015). Such activities recognized the central role of leaders in managing meanings and their capacity to provide technical and social support (Sauer and Kauffeld, 2015). The intervention lens explained that meetings were used as a strategic means to resolve organizational issues such as the changing of practices that affected work operations.

They were said to be socially constitutive because the communicative encounters shaped and were influenced by the social world resulting in enduring experiences (Scott et al. 2015). Fairclough (1993) described such discursive events as instances or situations of language-use patterned around social activities that produced and interpreted texts, as well as the institutional and situational circumstances that influenced the texts. The significance of all these was that what happened around meeting events and in them were nested in communicative practices considered essential for understanding how they worked and their value. The leadership discursive roles also entailed the purposeful use of linguistic resources that helped to understand that the interactional processes were used to transform or correct deficiencies in practice. The shift from a mainstream tradition of doing strategy to a collaborative and democratic system illustrated that collaborative processes from the set-up arrangements through the facilitation stage down to the decision-making and implementation promoted the redistribution of roles and dialogic processes and feedback. Such

orientations realigned relationships and enhanced socialization processes and the perceptions and actions of those involved. The new way of doing things empowered members to contribute with commitment and helped to build trust. The change initiatives enabled the leaders to communicate the essence of change and collaborate with members to collectively undertake problem-solving activities that involved idea generation, information-sharing processes and dialoguing (Rogelberg et al., 2006).

The work in strategy also involved the means through which changes were made possible, especially through problem-solving. What occurred in them in terms of both verbal and non-verbal interactions materialized in forms of discursive practices seen as "planned and episodic communicative events" (Seidl and Guérard, 2015, pp. 565). The communicative practices often illustrated the social exchanges and showed how attitudes changed. Allen and Lehmann-Willenbrock (2022) suggested that the episodic nature of meetings made it imperative to explore the dynamic interactive processes to understand insights into behaviours and their linkage to outcomes. As communicative events, the perspective suggested that the expectations of actors and their roles determined how they felt and their actions. The implications of interactional experiences from what happened before, during and after meetings and how they were connected to meeting effectiveness. The understanding of the intricate social dynamics within an episode undertaken by some scholars was valuable. The research sought more understanding beyond the reality that meetings were pervasive and set to unravel more knowledge that they related to other events and institutional contextual factors that influenced individual, group and organizational outcomes. The studies of Clarke, Kwon and Wodak (2012) and Kwon, Clarke and Wodak (2013) represented these. The pattern of behaviours over a period was important in exploring and understanding changes experienced in organizations. The social interactions helped in forming attitudes and enacting actions that contributed to organizational goals (Yoerger, Crowe and Allen, 2015; Meinecke and Lehmann-Willenbrock, 2015). The use of meetings as strategic and rational tools for coordination and problem-solving was essential in strategic planning. The leaders consciously pursued strategies to achieve the desired changes.

2.4.3. Strategic Planning

The research did not intend to understand strategic planning processes. I attempted to explain basics that related to the subject areas through the origin and the organizing aspects concerning

the stretching of projects work of the organization being studied. Stigter and Cooper (2015, pp. 146) defined it as the "process of prioritizing developed strategic objectives and linking them to quantifiable actions, measurements, timings and accountabilities". That meant that the activities constituted a series of practical efforts towards identifying strategic objectives; scanning the environment in pursuit of emerging opportunities and threats; and choosing how best to respond to the organizational challenges. Hence, the process had a far-reaching impact on the organizational structures, procedures, roles and responsibilities. The three major components were: formulation; implementation; and control (Hopkins and Hopkins, 1997).

Some landmark ideas that shaped the evolution and significance of strategic planning included the preceding historical purposes that served military purposes in developing plans, planning the tactics and execution. The activities correlated with the strategic thinking of von Clausewitz, Machiavelli and Sun Tzu in the art of war (Clegg, Jarvis and Pitsis, 2013). Subsequently, the economic reconstruction after the Second World War and the boom in business school education adopted the tenets through works of some influenced philanthropic organizations such as the Rockefeller Foundation and Ford Foundation impacted strategic planning (Stacey, 2011). The post-war era used the ideas in business organizations in a bid to shape and steer intended pathways towards the achievement of future goals. That trend continued to develop and lately, scholars have begun to see if from the social perspective. They tried to make the connection between business and society with primacy given to human actors, their values and practices. Burgelman et al., (2018) reviewed a plethora of studies on strategy, explaining it was seen from the process and practice perspectives. The process that concentrated on the task aspects included actions and systems that led to the achievement of strategic goals, while the practices looked at a variety of strategizing activities (praxis), the roles of actors (practitioners) and the tools used to achieve organizational goals.

The fundamental purpose of creating value with strategic planning over the years rested on leaders' roles which the research was concerned about. They created visions, decided on what was considered strategic and managed tasks for strategy implementation. Stacey (2011, pp. 10) stated that Chief Executive Officers (CEOs), as "industrial statesmen" with long years of experience and functional ability to fix complex problems. Bower et al, (1991) also described them as the master builders in charge.

These assumptions were relevant to the leadership focus of the research. They suggested that strategic planning activities and their success depended on the creative abilities and capabilities of leaders. They also resonated with the possible and inevitable responses of members, especially how the work systems in which leaders had overwhelming influences affected their attitudes and values. The descriptions suited the practices in 'Tech' where the top-down style was known to reify and facilitate domination in decision-making and control. The power inequality, domination and the exclusion of non-managers in decision-making did not encourage democracy, inclusion and employee voice. The practices were task-oriented, and the one-way downward communication provided the impetus for instruction-giving with the potential consequences such as apathy, powerlessness, fear, resistance and low energy (Vaara, Rantakari, and Holstein, 2019; Morrison, 2014; Mantere and Vaara, 2008). Some studies justified managerial dominance, claiming that such leadership roles provided purposeful direction that assured the visibility of controls, speed in decision making and gainful resource allocation. Bryson and Bryson (2009) also explained that making strategic choices on future directions was so important that it required the commitment of valuable time and resources that leaders provided.

Another vital aspect related to the emergent nature of strategic planning. The process happened over time, and it had become imperative to consider the ever-changing environment that posed challenges of volatility and unpredictability for leadership anticipation and response. Mintzberg and Waters (1985) viewed them as the consistent differences between intended action plans and what eventually took place. Kaleta and Witek-Crabb, (2015); and Grant, (2003) explained that globalization; technological advancements and changes in social values contributed to the existence of stiff competition, uncommon opportunities and changes that required adjustments to plans and practices. These factors caused uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity that rendered the traditional model of deliberate strategic planning less relevant. At the same, it elevated the conceptual adaptations of emergence and the expectations of how the complexities were resolved. The trend drew awareness to the focus on the social aspects that were argued as having significant value on the practices of the multiple actors, their actions and the contextual factors that influenced both (Whittington, 2018; Vaara and Whittington, 2012). The inevitable considerations therefore included power relations, plurality of responsibilities and deft use of strategy discourse (Balogun et al. 2014, Wentzel and Koch 2018).

An integrated practice model for strategic planning work included knowing what was done, who played the roles and how practices were set up advocated by Jarzabkowski et al. (2016). These centred on the organizing features intended to understand the motivations behind the leadership communicative efforts in crafting and managing messages to achieve the new practices that linked the micro-level processes and practices to macro-level outcomes. The messages also created clear goals and the road map for actions to achieve the desired state. The practices were moderated by social contextual factors of shared power, suggesting that well-crafted positive and goal-oriented messages fostered socio-cognitive routines necessary for organizational success in group processes. The model was likened to the studies on discursive strategy work during meetings. The studies that covered attributes of the 'what,' 'who' and 'how' were aimed at gaining such knowledge through language use (Redlbacher, 2020; Liu and Maitils, 2014; Kwon, Clarke and Wodak, 2013; Clarke, Kwon and Wodak 2012; Wodak, Kwon and Clarke, 2011). It mattered those discursive events and meetings provided grounds for how language was constructed and interpreted and the social conditions that influenced the interactions. The studies by Kwon, Clarke and Wodak, 2013; Wodak, Kwon and Clarke, 2011) explicitly explained the deliberate use of particular discursive strategies that helped to influence the interactional structures in meetings and the practices that changed perceptions, brought new behaviours, and desired outcomes. They used the theoretical approach of the CDA to understand, analyse and explain them.

2.5. CDA

The CDA theory derived knowledge from language use, both in verbal or written forms, during real instances of social interaction. As the name suggested, it was characterized and drew meanings from theories in critical studies and discourse analysis. Discourses found within language enabled the creation of knowledge because "language is conceived as one element of the social process dialectically interconnected with others" (Fairclough and Graham, 2002, p. 188). The understanding of discursive practices was possible by studying how language functioned with its social context and the meanings attached. The idea was that language use in verbal and non-verbal interactions represented and conveyed beliefs, positions and motivations if they were analysed. The focus on language and discourse emerged mostly in the UK and Australia at the end of the 1970s and was described as representing patterns of experiences that helped people to make sense of what happened around them (Halliday, 1978). An example was the use of grammatical

structures of passive and active voice to study situations helped to build a mental picture of reality since they enabled the interpretations of different ideologies and patterns of experiences.

By the mid-1960s and early 1970s, the growth of new disciplines in the humanities and social sciences included insights from Sociolinguistics, Psychology, Text Linguistics and Anthropology (Wodak and Meyer, 2009). The attention to texts and their written interpretations also boosted the critical development nature of issues paid attention to the manifestations of power within social relationships (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997). Some scholars labelled it as Critical Linguistics (CL) due to the focus on language and discourse. Others preferred to see it as Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) that emphasized the 'critical' roots. The terms 'critical linguistics' and 'critical discourse analysis' (CDA) were used interchangeably, though the CDA was more common (Wodak and Meyer, 2009). The early 1990s saw a renewed interest that birthed the CDA in a new light occurred in Amsterdam. The main drivers were a network of scholars, across disciplines. Some of the prominent ones included van Dijk, Fairclough, Wodak, van Leeuwen, and Kress (Wodak and Meyer, 2001). The multiple backgrounds highlighted only slight differences in their focus and ontological propositions as they looked at organizational phenomena and how to study them. Knowledge creation was through understanding discourses within the content, context and assumptions made about social issues and the differences covered not the notions on discourse; text, social practice and sociological variables (ideology, power and gender) and cultural contexts but how to study them (Wodak and Meyer, 2001).

Discourses were shaped by the practices and the practices in turn were influenced by discourse. To understand the ideology behind discourse and the similarities found in CDA approaches, it was good to first contrast CDA with Discourse Analysis (DA). DA approaches explored different social situations through the description and interpretation of discourse in context without any evaluation of why and how the discourses worked (Rogers, 2004). They became significant in studying organizations by making sense of and understanding issues from text, talk, and context (Alvesson and Karreman, 2000; Fairclough, 2005; Jian, 2011). Wodak (2011, pp. 39) explained that they were understood from two angles, 'discourse' was understood both as 'language in use' and as "patterns and commonalities of knowledge and structures". The first concerned the use of language to convey meanings, and the second involved how to examine the grammatical structures as forms of syntax, semantics and pragmatics and how practices were conducted. Both aspects formed part

of the critical nature of discourse because they created knowledge and were related to the understanding of social practice through its ability to describe, interpret and evaluate social phenomena more deeply. From the critical perspective, the distinguishing feature was the fact that it was used as a basis for social critique. Its roots in Critical Linguistics highlighted the elements of power and ideology that were used to derive social meanings expressed in discourse through analysing the linguistic structures in texts regarding the broad social contexts that influenced them. Several scholars explained that critical studies focused on discovering hidden or not-so-obvious social meanings. According to Fairclough and Wodak, (1997, pp. 272), it emphasized "the substantively linguistic and discursive nature of social relations of power". Van Dijk (1993) also explained that the production and reproduction of unequal power relations were evident in the "structures, strategies or other properties of text and talk that occurred in discursive events. McGregor (2010) argued that exploring language was effective if it was analysed to gain deeper and not the literal sense ascribed to text. Hence, gaining a more productive insight through the interpretation and evaluation of texts based on their historical, social and political conditions. These made sense because the issues or topics considered in organizations were often real and important and discourses were seen as a specific way in which an aspect of social life was represented and understood (Fairclough 2003).

Wodak (2001) explicitly argued that the basic assumptions covered the general principles of CDA that addressed:

- social problems.
- power relations based on discursive practices.
- critical ideologies that studied latent meanings within text and talk.
- how discourses mediated in the connection between society and culture.
- how discourses did ideological work.
- the historical nature of discourse that enabled interpretations and explanations of texts.

In summary, the CDA was used to intervene in socially related challenges faced by organizations especially when addressing how social practices and relationships could be transformed for better outcomes. The investigation of texts produced from interactions looked into common issues such as domination and the need for the emancipation of the oppressed or the alienated. That revealed

how power was exercised and negotiated. It also highlighted the connection between social and cultural structures and processes on one hand and on another hand the properties of text. Van Dijk (2001, pp. 96) stated that CDA "focuses on social problems, and especially on the role of discourse in the production and reproduction of power abuse or domination". The revelations illustrated that language use reproduced and transformed society and culture. The understanding of how discourse worked explained that ideologies represented beliefs that also related to the constructions of society's thoughts and values. The texts illuminated how discourses established and reinforced the nature of social relationships, especially in terms of domination and hegemony. To discover the tendencies, the discourses were analysed in context. Wodak and Meyer, (2001) explained that being issue-focused and socially based, its multidisciplinary nature made it appropriate to explicitly examine the text and talk to make transparent what was often implicit or hidden dominant in discursive practices.

The varied backgrounds that represented slightly different approaches to the CDA were important because some variants presented a better understanding of the different issues that challenged organizations. The two considered were the Socio-Cognitive and Socio-Cultural approaches. Van Dijk's (2001) Socio-Cognitive perspective drew from cognitive science and social psychology with a focus on the interconnections between the micro structures of language used during interactions and the macro structures such as power relations and inequality within social groups. It explained how societal structures affected or were affected by discourse structures based on the theory of social cognition. The two elements were linked because how discourse was produced and the effects in the society depended on the mental models of the interacting participants with their experiences. In other words, their perceptions, behaviours and backgrounds were subjective since their comprehension of discourse was based on what they considered important and how they viewed the realities. van Dijk, (1993, pp. 257) argued that it was important to discover and understand implications behind "socially shared representations of societal arrangements, groups and relations, as well as mental operations such as interpretation, thinking and arguing, inferencing and learning". So, the speakers' beliefs, positions and written words also conveyed meanings and ideas from the text and the societal influences such as power relations that accounted for shared social cognitions. The societal structures related to discourse structures were reflective in actors' behaviours and their minds. These acknowledged the thought that discourse played a vital role in the production and re-enforcement of inequality and other hegemonic tendencies (Wodak and

Reisigl, 2001). So human actors used texts to make sense of their world and to construct social actions and relations as they interacted in their everyday activities. In group settings, it offered an understanding of the significant role of discourse in the (re)production of inequality in ways such as the constraints or promotion of organizational democracy and employee voice.

The Socio-Cultural approach of Fairclough (1993) was rooted in the field of linguistics and paid attention to language use in its social context and the relationship between language use and power. The basic notion was that discourse was viewed as a form of social practice. The assumption that language was socially and ideologically driven correlated with the notion that language use was both socially shaped and socially shaping. People made sense of their world and constructed social actions and how to enact them in their pursuit of everyday tasks and turn texts were positioned and influenced by conventions and ideological understandings. The ideological effects that produced and reproduced power inequalities were seen through the discursive practices of people that manifested in the ways they represented things and positioned themselves. The view that language was a social process focused on leaning. It went beyond conveying meanings to reflecting patterns and social categories and how they were legitimized.

Discourses were analysed from three dimensions of text (spoken or written or images) that constituted the interactions performance of speech acts; a discursive practice that explained the production, consumption and distribution of the text; and a socio-cultural practice. The dimensions helped to explain the relationship between the micro-level activities (discursive practices, events and texts) and wider contextual factors (social and cultural structures and relations) that link them to outcomes at the macro level. The dimensions of analysis that consisted of the description, interpretation and explanation were important for understanding complex social events. The processes of text production and interpretation influenced and were equally shaped by social practice. So, the conditions for the production and interpretations of texts considered the different levels of social organizations, especially in terms of the immediate social environment that affected them; the level of the social institution that constituted a wider level of consideration; and then the societal level are all considered (Fairclough, 2001). Specifically, the description and interpretation were aimed at configuring the discourses and exploration of the discourse in context and the added issue of explanation, which was the hallmark of CDA, enabled the understanding of the 'why' and 'how' discourses worked.

These were important to the research because they revealed the language use and power relations from the different angles and instances or levels in which these occurred. The research covered specifically why and how the social practices in 'Tech' emerged; were constituted; and then transformed. They represented the speaker's ideas, position and motivation. The issues related to planned change in practices enabled me to look out for situations that allowed a range of discourses from spoken or written texts. The presence of multiple actors with their unique ideologies and experiences suggested that "discourse can be interpreted in very different ways, due to the audience and the amount of context information which is included" (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997, p. 278). The evaluation meant that it was important to deconstruct a contradiction or clarification within a text in ways that demonstrated that different meanings caused distinct social actions. I understood how the discursive practices conditioned by situational and historical contexts in strategy meetings reflected the changes that occurred and how they addressed the organizational issues.

The importance of the evaluation led me to combine yet another approach. It was appropriate to use the right variant of CDA to analyse the organizing properties of language, especially through the knowledge of what constituted the language constructions and their mode of transmission. That inferred that the understanding of the dialectical relationship between discursive practices and the fields of action (situations, institutional and social structures) in which they happened was important. A better understanding of the knowledge about how communicative practices impacted organizational life and ways discursive practices were linked to specific organizational outcomes. I used a framework capable of revealing how crafted messages of the leaders and the situational factors mediated constructing realities. The discursive leadership that had both meaning and transmission purposes was meant to illustrate how both leaders and members responded to the problems of the organization under investigation. Johnstone (2008) argued that the CDA aimed to provide insights into people's discursive behaviour and how even the quest for collaborative practices was based on free choice and/or the influence of external socio-political pressures. So that buttressed the significance of meaning-making and collaborative work.

I used the methodological framework of the DHA because it was important to understand the nature of social relations and structures in group interactions. Kwon, Clarke and Wodak (2013, pp. 268) stated that "Not all CDA approaches deal with empirical phenomena at the level of ethnography and naturally occurring conversation". The fragments of texts produced were meant

to understand the actors' understanding of the issues and how they identified them; the institutional influences; and wider cultural and structural contexts that enabled or constrained the perceptions. The context-dependent semiotic practices; relatedness of the three levels of contexts; and the recognition of the validity claim about the likelihood of the actors involved having different points of view all distinguish the framework from others (Reisigl and Wodak, 2009). Wodak (2001) explained that the dialectical relationship between discursive practices and fields of action (situations, institutional and social structures) enabled better understandings because the fields were shaped and influenced by discourses. At the same time discourses on their own affected both discursive and non-discursive social and political processes and actions that manifested as people engaged in interactions.

The DHA enabled a more vigorous assessment of meanings. That happened because it contextualized utterances that were related to forms of discourses; social and institutional reference points; and socio-political contexts, serving purposes such as building support, establishing positions, labelling and intensifying views (Kwon, Clarke and Wodak 2009). Looking at how and why linguistic resources were used was critical enough, but it was contrasted with the contexts in which they were used and their relationships within different texts and discourses. The framework further considered another two layers, the situational and socio-political conditions the interactions were embedded. These were important for understanding planned change driven by leaders who used both interactional structures and the crafting of appropriate language to skilfully accomplish desired goals for changes in work practices.

The DHA framework enabled the achievement of the interrelatedness of text, their context of production, distribution and reception and the wider social contexts that worked at the three levels of discourse as well as the layers of context. These accounted for the synchronic and diachronic connection of discourses concerned with communication. The layers (four) of context are included.

- the immediate
- other texts and discourses that the text drew upon.
- Conditions that influenced text production.
- Wider socio-political formation.

The actual texts represented the immediate interactions that were connected to the knowledge of the world and the text. The intertextuality and interdiscursive aspects explained the linkage between all texts, both past and present and the linkage between discourses. So, relationships between texts, genres and discourses were analysed through the use of discursive strategies to justify or legitimate the discursive practices adopted (Wodak, 2011). Also important were the sociological variables, and situational frames that related to the texts. These were triangulated to see the connections between the discursive and other practices as the changes manifested over time (Wodak, 2001).

The intended plan of practice that the discursive strategies adopted for specific purposes revealed patterns of behaviours from verbal and non-verbal texts based on underlying ideologies. Reisigl and Wodak (2001) explained that studies that utilized texts in that instance were on social issues around racism, ethnicity and national identity. They were often oriented towards referential, predicative, argumentation, perspectivation and mitigation strategies. The socio-cultural goal of the research ushered in a new way of doing strategy work that changed the values and behaviours of members through leadership discursive processes that promoted inclusive practices. The reason for involvement justified acts covered the predication, perspectivation and argumentation aspects. The conscious efforts used to engage meaningfully had psychological and political outcomes in terms of the commitment to the co-ownership of the strategic initiatives and their accomplishments. According to Angouri and Marra, (2010, pp. 616) studying what influenced the practices and how they shaped actions and reactions meant paying "special attention to local discourse practices and variation in the norm". The exploration of the day-to-day activities in strategy work explained that executives utilized a range of discursive rhetoric they use to shape strategic direction (Samra-Fredericks, 2003). It made further sense that other relevant contextual factors that moderated these activities as they occurred were also considered.

The institutionalized protocols of agenda-setting; turn-taking; and topic progression styles were some of the interactive mechanisms that illustrated ways of working and power relations. In that instance, the use of the discursive strategies meant that the speech characteristics as contained in spoken words were examined to understand peoples' expressions, their feelings and how they communicated accurately and effectively. The horizontal structure that promoted democracy equality had the potential of creating a form of association and assimilation that encouraged group

identity and team spirit. I adopted Kwon, Clarke and Wodak's (2013) set of five discursive strategies used to get meeting members to engage and work towards creating common ideas in strategy work. They are outlined in Table 2.1. The strategies consisted of 'Equalizing,' 'Simplifying,' 'Re/Defining,' 'Legitimating' and 'Reconciling' as defined with the possible outcomes highlighted. They explained both the influence processes and the social conditions that shaped them. The linguistic means helped to inspire them to exchange ideas and so could transform work culture achieved through inclusive practices.

Table 2.1 Discursive Strategies

Discourse Strategy	Definition	Possible Outcomes
Equalizing	Encouraging behaviour	Trust and commitment
Simplifying	Reducing complexity	Understanding of issues
Re/defining	Developing and adjusting the view with additional information	The reduction of resistance
Legitimating	Establishing control	The knowledge of knowing why and when to do something.
Reconciling	Aligning views	Emotionalizing the perspective of people

Source: Kwon, Clarke and Wodak (2013

The expressions of the speakers as contained in texts and discourses were implicitly associated with one or a combination of the discursive strategies. The identification necessitated a systematic way of using language to achieve an appropriate interpretive analysis of the speakers' utterances that conveyed possible intended meanings in context (Wodak, 2011). Sometimes certain linguistic devices were used to complement and operationalize the discourses associated with the strategies. According to Clarke, Kwon and Wodak (2012, pp. 462), the "intentions of actors are translated into action through discursive strategies, which are operationalized through linguistic devices". For instance, argumentation rhetoric was used to establish or reinforce the logic that justified the acts of specific actors and their position on things. The argumentations conveyed common sense views or presupposed conclusions. They enabled the understanding of the utterances and how they appealed to the psychological state and actions. Table 2.2 highlighted some argumentative linguistic topoi.

Table 2.2 Linguistic Devices

Topoi	Possible Actions
Burden	Act to reduce
Reality	Action needed to consolidate or reverse
History	Teaches or reminds us to take specific actions
Urgency	Quick reaction
Threat	Avoid or resolve
Salience	Reliving the importance of something and the need to address it

Source: Kwon, Clarke and Wodak (2009)

The CDA provided the theoretical and methodical conditions that were needed to improve human conditions. I did a critical assessment of selected studies to explain how group processes that were inclined to communication and collaboration worked. The first two studies did not use the CDA though they encouraged group outcomes. But how the successes were achieved was not explained. The other two used CDA to explore organizational challenges through social practices.

2.6. Critical Review of Selected Studies

The empirical studies of Hutter, Nketia and Füller (2017); Jarzabkowski and Balogun (2009); Mantere and Vaara (2008); and Kwon, Clarke and Wodak, (2013) were assessed.

Hutter, Nketia and Füller (2017) drew from the concept of Communities of Practice (COP). The concept originated from the learning theory and was based on the formal apprenticeship system. It gained prominence in the 1980s at the Institute for Research on Learning. It was premised on the understanding that the behaviours of the members of communities were bounded by the knowledge people shared; their lived experiences and values; and how they collectively engaged to promote their goals in action. Wenger (1998) outlined three key structural themes: domain (shared understanding and interest in what was important); community (joint activities, interactions and relationships); and practice (shared resources and experiences). The members' behaviours and lived experiences revealed their values and had a direct bearing on outcomes. These showed collective learning and continuous improvement through the cultivation and sustenance of community living in group settings such as meetings.

The focus on achieving an organizational sense of community (OSOC) helped in understanding group processes. The study explained that the data generated from an online open strategic initiative revealed that different forms of participation (ideation, commenting, and evaluating) had distinct results. In specific terms, the ideation process, simply described as the opportunity to submit ideas regarding an issue, had the potential to yield positive emotional connectedness because that created a sense of belonging. The commenting and evaluation had more enduring outcomes because they impacted and sustained engagement. Commenting meant giving explanations or posing questions on ideas such that clarifications and feedback occurred. The dialoguing effects included the recognition of contributions and influence in building relationships, establishing sustainable integration, and learning. The evaluation was more engaging and offered decision-making roles that enhanced commitment towards the community goals. The idea of distinguishing levels of participation in strategy work was illustrated by Vaara, Rantakari and Holstein (2019). These ranged from limited participation through co-creation to deep involvement. The deep involvement was similar to the evaluation process. That suggested that members felt like stakeholders as they worked to define the rules of the process, the content and the targets.

The study demonstrated that social practices were critical in addressing strategic issues. The sense of community was a powerful factor capable of mobilizing emotional energies because the members felt that their ideas and contributions mattered. The commenting and evaluating aspects facilitated information exchanges, equality, shared interest in others' views, self-reflexivity, building convergence and discovering new ways of doing things (Beech, MacIntosh and MacLean, 2010). They were important communicative experiences that impacted individual perceptions/behaviours and group processes since members worked together to develop solutions to problems. The development and implementation of organizational strategy in meetings created generative learning that resulted from sharing experiences and continuous inquiry (Allen et al, 2014).

Jarzabkowski and Balogun's (2009) empirical study explored ways communication-aided participation resulted in effective changes in the formulation and implementation of the strategy in a multinational organization. The study used the Activity Theory of Vygotsky (1978); and Engestrom (2001). It explained that all mental functioning was the product of shared interactions. In that sense, it showed how different perspectives and roles played by varied categories of actors,

spread geographically, were developed and integrated. Theoretically the three nodes within the frameworks: the practical actions; individual actors; and social institutions shaped and were shaped through interactions. The human actors (subject); the tools used by the actors to achieve an object; the object represents the directed action within the community in which interactions happened. The activities were mediated by the symbolic artefacts and instruments that subjects utilized or worked through towards an outcome. Vygotsky (1978) explained that learning or activity was driven by the motivation to achieve a desired goal. The result of interactions that occurred between individual actors within a collective system and achieving the collective agenda depended on the influenced of contextual factors. Engestrom (2001) extended the understanding of change concerning the aspects of scale and form of the activities. The coordination of the web of activities portrayed the continually changing and complex organizing systems from a systemic whole that showed the achievement of shared goals (Jarratt and Stiles, 2012). They highlighted the importance of the multiplicity of factors that mediated how organizations/groups tackled practical challenges.

Johnson and Balogun (2009) further illustrated the existence of sociocultural factors of power relationships and the contestations in power struggles. The struggles to gain positional authority and influence the committee assigned with the responsibility to effect change were apparent. They used their position to advance their political interests. Others, especially those with the resources of experience and intra-organizational powers were not satisfied. These categories of actors used instruments of power that included the legitimate authority to drive the change and the expert knowledge. At the same time, those dispersed across geographical locations resisted because they were on the frontlines and possessed the local knowledge. Their claim to being eligible for the decision-making role was because they had the prerequisite knowledge of the brands, operational expertise and closeness to the market. Another group, with less endowed expert skills, however, reacted differently. They were satisfied with becoming implementers, reasoning that the new opportunity was a positive change in contrast to their previous experiences and the lack of expertise. The study tried to analyse organizations as a system. The methodology illustrated the interventions and conditions that resulted in changes. The categories of actors and how they faced intriguing situations and their behaviours revealed how the actors, interactions and social factors shaped individual/group attitudes, and actions. The dynamics of power and how activities were continually managed also depended on contextual factors.

These studies contributed to the research through the understanding of the importance of interacting activities of actors and in such instances, legitimate power conferred by institutional authority and expertise derived from knowledge and experience were entangled with other social conditions that influenced the social dynamics seen in the changing positions, negotiations and struggles. Specifically, the COP inclusion practices explained that different contexts had particular impacts. The AT tried to explain the importance of dynamism in power relations. The theories demonstrated the essence of micro-processes in group settings; the involvement of multiple actors and that they managed to gain shared commitment to achieving common goals through collective effort. The shared knowledge and social practices were impacted by contextual factors that were enabled by organizational interdependencies and emergence. Although the capturing of collective efforts and understanding issues through shared experiences were related to the research ideas, less attention was paid to how the roles of actors, especially their communicative practices were connected to the results. For instance, the leadership communicative styles that promoted inclusiveness ought to provide the levels and extent of inclusiveness through feedback mechanisms and the social contexts that influenced them at each stage. The lack of illustration of specific exchanges and roles did not allow an understanding of the 'why.' Jarzabkowski et al (2016) argued that the ways leadership influenced and transformed organizational relationships and behaviours went beyond understanding their status, background and capacity. The use of theories that enabled the examination of textual processes that covered a range of linguistic categories that explored lexical choices and argumentative strategies through analysis and interpretation of texts and discourses in systematic ways was important. The use of communication-sensitive theories such as CDA investigated actors' roles in ways that enabled the identification of the discursive strategies used and how they were applied to gain results. Jarzabkowski et al (2016, pp. 249) argued that "without close attention to the situated enactment of practices, observers are liable to overvalue formal practices while undervaluing practice adaptations in context". The local variability and contextual factors combined to make organizations' problems and circumstances distinctive.

I examined the empirical studies of Mantere and Vaara (2008) and Kwon, Clarke and Wodak (2013) that offered explanations based on the CDA. Mantere and Vaara's (2008) study dwelt on the essence of participation strategy work. It examined different discourses that were relevant in understanding participation in twelve organizations from diverse industries. The study covered areas such as the members' conceptions of strategy; perception of strategy work practices in their

organizations; the work environment; and their roles in the process. The thematic analyses did a thorough assessment of the data and their meanings within the areas highlighted. The goal was to understand how strategy processes were made sense of and the roles of human agency. They identified certain discourses that promoted participation; self-actualization; dialogization; and concretization. Others such as mystification, disciplining and technologization were said to have constraining effects. I am concerned with Self-actualization and Dialogization because they relate more to group and interactional processes. Self-actualization occurs when members feel valued. It explained that in a high-level policy-making government organization self-actualization was achieved because the members' self-consciousness and critical thinking were developed. The members were able to use their full potential through meaningful involvement. Communication played a critical role because the formal structure reinforced authority and bureaucracy was discouraged. The members were purposely engaged in idea formulation and strategic enactments. That understanding is related to Dialogization. It focused on the roles and rights of members to engage in organized social dialogue. That indicated the use of robust discussions in aspects such as problem-solving, as well as the two-way flow of communication. One of the organizations, a multinational financial institution practised graduated participation. The top managers were responsible for the formulation, while the middle managers performed the operational and field implementation. That posed an interesting scenario because in 'Tech' the hierarchical system was similar. The social construction studies that helped in understanding the knowledge about human relationships hinged on social exchanges. Beech, MacIntosh and MacLean (2010) argued that organizations benefited from information exchanges because joint decision-making was important in strategy. Heraclueos et al (2018) highlighted the importance of dialogic constructions in strategy work, describing it as a non-hierarchical practice. In practice, the exchanges occurred differently, and they opened or allowed space for ideas generation and collective decision-making. It facilitated strategy generation or implementation that was key in terms of transparency and inclusion (Whittington, Cailluet and Yakis-Douglas, 2011). The leadership role was significant because the process required giving direction, and focus, and ensuring alignment in dialogue sessions in group settings (Hussain et al., 2018).

The constraining factors of mystification, disciplining and technologization were used to restrain participation. Mystification contrasted with arguments put forward on inclusiveness because leaders were assumed to be solely responsible for making critical decisions in organizations. The

practices prioritized authority, exclusive decision-making and employee silence. The discourse was associated with managerial hegemony, control and command rhetoric that led to marginalization and strict controls. These had counter-productive effects (Detert et al, 2007) and tensions linked to resistance (Rantakari and Vaara, 2018; McCabe, 2010; Laine and Vaara, 2007). The consequences interpreted as employee silence led to behaviours that potentially resulted in apathy, fear, and tension. According to Mantere and Vaara (2008, pp. 348), "mystification created specific subject positions for the people involved in strategy processes, leaving the impression of an 'all-knowing leadership' constituted by a few individuals that made strategic decisions. The study of Hardy and Thomas, (2014, pp. 342) described such discourses as being "intensified through material and discursive practices that normalize and extend its reach". The mystification of power had profound effects. It stifled dialogues and feedback and so caused frustration. Some of the questions asked by Mantere and Vaara (2008) that tried to identify the mystification discourse covered; *how the participants understood and perceived strategy*; and *the kinds of strategic practices and functions the members performed*. The study rightly highlighted the importance of discourses and the contexts that influenced them, Insights into the particular discursive processes shaped strategizing and helped in understanding the roles of agency and the contexts in which they happened. However recent discursive studies emphasized examining both the micro-level activities and the macro-level outcomes through diffused practices (Burglemann et al, 2018).

The study has enabled the understanding that certain discourses enabled or constrained participation. However, it was not explicit about how the role of various actors, especially those positioned with legitimate rights to steer the process influenced the interactions. As such, the discursive strategies that illustrated the actual occurrences and how the changes happened were lacking. Hence, the link between practices and outcomes was blurred.

Kwon, Clarke and Wodak (2013) empirical study used the CDA to examine how actors, in one meeting group, engaged and tried to achieve shared understanding to reach a consensus in strategic decisions. Specifically, it showed the discursive leadership role; the meeting as a discursive event with dialogic instances that influenced interactions; the details of linguistic activities; and the interactional dynamism. The strategy development process was collectively mapped, and open to all the members of the board as a group in meeting episodes. Communication played a vital role

in disseminating information about the organization's vision; decision-making to resolve a challenge and charting a new direction for organizational success; creating synergy through collective effort. The meetings were in response to the potential negative effects of environmental changes encountered by the organization.

The organization engaged in aerospace defence systems deliveries and the global trend of government cutting their defence budgets was expected to have negative implications. The uncertainty caused concerns and triggered plans and actions to reposition their operations. The study has been referred to as one of the few efforts that illustrated leadership use of discursive strategies to achieve shared views in meetings (Redlbacher, 2020). The leadership role was conspicuous and the effort of the Managing Director, as the chair, stimulated individuals with different perspectives and diverse functional knowledge to try to arrive at consensus decisions. The board comprised ten (10) executives and they had the responsibility to make strategic decisions. There were meeting episodes in six (6) months that lasted about one hundred hours. The Managing Director explained the situation and outlined an opportunity to acquire a potentially viable business that was expected to defray the consequences of the problem.

The study illustrated the leadership role of the Managing Director as he steered the process and the way the other executives' communicative practices, experiences and behaviours showed the sense-making efforts in creating a reality of the current state as perceived as different from expectations. The effort made to communicate the situation mobilized all the participants and persuaded them to embrace the new strategic directions expected to positively affect the fortunes of the organization.

So, I viewed it from two angles. The first issue under consideration was the creation of an enabling interactive structure that allowed for dialogue through what was referred to as procedural communication. The process functioned as the main organizing tool of a team's discourse towards the accomplishment of a goal (Kauffeld and Lehmann-Willenbrock, 2012). The Managing Director encouraged alternative ideas through debating, acting as both the facilitator who controlled information flow and encouraged contributions from all meeting members. The interactions highlighted typical dialogic experiences in power relations and the flow of information. The leader leveraged authority and expertise to justify and build credibility and viability around the project. He gave an account of the challenges faced by the organization. The

other executives provided technical inputs and other ideas that were important for actions towards addressing the issues raised and the actions needed to achieve the desired outcome. The space allowed robust debates as the executives asked questions and discussed extensively issues covering technical requirements, financial implications and resource utilization. Lehmann-Willenbrock, Allen and Kauffeld (2013) explained how free communication provided effective outcomes that captured the essence of meetings. Further explanation using the act4teams (Kauffeld and Lehmann-Willenbrock, 2012) helped to describe the various aspects of team behaviours. It was a tool that helped in understanding how meetings were made effective based on problem-focused, procedural, action-oriented and socio-emotional behaviours.

The procedural aspect related well with the organizing processes that enabled the members to freely contribute ideas. The members had a clear vision of the issues and the values attached to them (Sauer and Kauffeld, 2015; Angouri and Marra, 2010) and were encouraged to participate fully and purposefully toward a goal (Lehmann-Willenbrock, Allen and Kauffeld, 2013). These also related to action-oriented and socio-emotional behaviours that motivated the members to own the new vision and work towards accomplishing the goals. They created the foundations for proper teamwork and positive attitudes in critical aspects of power relations and decision-making (Schwartzman 1989). The leadership function of the construction and enactment of organizational strategy that required the coordination and management of interactions held implications for the use of meetings to achieve organizational functioning. Allen and Lehmann-Willenbrock (2022, pp. 7) aptly explained that the interactions in meetings enabled "information sharing, knowledge development, and collaborative interactions that may be essential for individual, group/team, and organizational functioning". By way of contrast the scenes of unmanaged activities due to a lack of purposeful structuring of interactions potentially led to poor decision-making social loafing, and ineffective communication (Lehmann-Willenbrock, Allen and Kauffeld, 2013). Hence, the structuring of meetings to produce consensus around the new objective of charting a strategic course meant paying attention to the collaborative practice, coordination of activities and gaining the relational benefits that helped to sustain work lives. The multiple actors contributed diverse ideas by asking questions and giving expert explanations and arguments that added to the quality of decisions.

The attempt to gather the array of ideas and experiences as well as dialogue on them to arrive at a shared decision usually demanded the application of standardized protocols in terms of agendas, interacting procedures and decision-making processes. These scenarios suggested that apart from the guidance and coordinating issues, some forms of tension were experienced due to the divergence of views and the pursuit of political interests. The study recorded these inherent struggles. For instance, the argument that ensued between the Directors of Engineering and Human Resources on one side against the Director of a major programme on the issue of resource sharing across projects. The impasse was resolved by the Managing Director's intervention by using his position to decide the way the resources were to be used.

The second angle was the impact of language use in understanding the value of communication in strategy meetings and how the leader deployed linguistic means that accomplished the goal. The interactive spaces created through the structuring of interactions to be participatory meant that attention was paid to micro-level conversations that enabled the "understanding of the centrality of meetings in organizational life" (Allen and Lehmann-Willenbrock, 2022, pp. 2), especially their essence in charting a new direction (Balogun et al, 2014; Kwon, Clarke and Wodak, 2013). The study allowed the use of language beyond the importance of the meeting structures that were seen as substantive practices that influenced the way the leadership coordinated the meetings. The five micro-level discursive strategies used to understand how they recognized the challenge and made efforts to resolve included: Re/defining, Legitimizing, Simplifying, Equalizing and Reconciling (Kwon, Clarke and Wodak, 2013). The linguistic devices, which were argumentation, helped to operationalize these strategies. They represented words or phrases that created meanings and allowed the understanding of social realities commonly used in particular fields of study. For instance, the language used during strategic planning challenges that called for change required efforts to mitigate such situations. The examples included established meanings related to aspects such as 'burden,' 'urgency' and 'authority.' They were strategically utilized to gain legitimacy and persuasion to achieve the desired goals (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001). The Managing Director's narrative on how the issues were identified and their implications were further conceptualized by the Technical and Manufacturing Directors. The conversations explained the significance of the project, expected milestones and positive projected revenue. The authors identified five substantive episodes that were relevant in advancing their argument. The sense-making ploys helped shape perceptions and subsequently mobilize the group in readiness to act. It could be

argued that the level of engagement and robustness in the dialogues were remarkable and were also possible because the information given was coherence and logical.

I understood the dynamics in such situated episodes and showed that the conversations at the micro-level activities were analysed through the identification and interpretation of words or phrases with established meanings in organizational strategy. Accordingly, Kwon, Clarke and Wodak (2013, pp. 267) stated that they used the "DHA approach to CDA, which provides a comprehensive set of validated linguistic constructs and a detailed context theory that enabled scholars to systematically, and abductively, analyse conversations in terms of context, power, and language". The authors were able to draw upon fragments of conversations within the five selected episodes to explain how the leader informed the other executives about the situation and the need to address the challenge faced by the organization. The discursive accomplishments from language use provided insights into how interactions shaped perceptions and behaviour in various ways; the participants' interactive experiences; and the influence of the wider social influences. The interactions illuminated the essence of framing, especially by the leader, and the collective sense-making efforts that ranged from gathering information about a complex issue, interacting and engaging the whole group members in ways that enabled them to make sense of the situation and subsequently working out the possible actions to address it.

The robust debates enabled all the participants (the Managing Director and the other nine executives) to appreciate the background of the issue and the necessary solutions required to address it. They were all highly placed colleagues and as board members, they were more likely to be colleagues at the same level and had no remarkable differences in their social status. The discursive practices raised consciousness and understanding about the issues at stake and how the members contributed ideas. The group size and composition helped the leader manage discussions and for the participants to discuss freely. The equalization and the redefining strategies helped participation because protocols and power structures were relaxed and the potential for new ideas was created. The power dynamics are reflected through the back-and-forth conversations. These situations were exemplified by how the tone and focus of discussions allowed the discussions on technical, financial and administrative issues. The use of expert power was also observed as the executives explained the complex nature of the project and the need to improve capacity.

The cultural and structural contexts around and within the organization helped to appreciate how the issue was understood. The social structures and cultural norms that discourses occurred in revealed the power relations aspect and the struggles experienced as they tried to form common grounds. The level of familiarity must have been high based on the premise that as board members, they met regularly and at that level, they understood their collective responsibilities. This evidence of free discussions and the infusion of humour among colleagues was evident even when serious technical issues were discussed. Kwon, Clarke and Wodak (2013, pp. 273) stated that the "humorous exchanges of this episode also serve to reinforce and strengthen social bonds between team members by creating a further shared experience".

The impact of the structuring of the interactive processes has been significant in various aspects of organizational life. The strategy of giving equal opportunity to the meeting members to deliberate on the issue and proffer solutions on ways to address it, potentially leading to the sharing of information also ensured the reflexivity and refining of perceptions. The leader facilitated and managed the interactions that enabled them to address the situation. The use of the meeting arena was important because the structures were relaxed for free and wider input.

The role of leadership unearthed how the meetings were coordinated and the language used to intervene in given contexts. The situation helped to relate the research on the importance of leadership discursive practices, especially in terms of how messages were framed to influence perceptions and behaviours that led to changes in the way work was done. The inclination towards inclusion and less hierarchical manifestations gave credence to the essence of employee voice and democracy. The struggles and negotiations resulted in the alignments and realignments of perspectives as issues kept evolving and allowed for collective sense-making in strategy work. These enabled the organization to gain knowledge from diverse inputs to enhance strategic plan contents. These were important factors that had the potential to improve the financial returns. It was also likely that the social integration process helped people work better because they enriched knowledge through the sharing of information and maintained positive working relationships. The CDA aimed to resolve specific practical goals by studying communicative actions by using appropriate goal-oriented discursive strategies in specific contexts that are linked to particular outcomes (Rouleau and Balogun, 2011).

The critical review gave a comprehensive account of the study. However, there were some gaps identified. The study examined data from a homogenous group. The board comprised top management participants within the same social status. In reality, modern work teams usually consist of diverse individuals with varied ideas based on their backgrounds and from different levels of experience. Their different conceptual worlds meant that the study may not reflect adequately the situations in modern organizations. So, reaching common decisions may have been more challenging. Redlbacher (2020) captured the situation by suggesting that the context of group constellation influenced organizational life in varying ways. The multi-system structures in modern organizations are characterized by groups of professionals of different fields and orientations. Another point was that the meeting episodes were concerned with activities concerning strategic development. The enactment aspect was crucial for the accomplishment of the strategy. The importance of meetings in strategy work that spanned the strategic planning process recognized the diversity in knowledge, experience, and responsibilities across different levels. The use of the CDA enabled the researcher and others to comprehend how explanations using accounts in language use resolved issues and organizational outcomes.

Conclusion

The literature review combined the efforts of extensive reading of written studies, and empirical and conceptual papers that initiated a line of investigation to relate the various chosen themes and the selective process of evaluating such studies, using notes taken to understand the research. The multidisciplinary nature covered several fields and the dearth of extant studies led to the use of extensive studies. The result was a diverse pool of information that further allowed for the structuring of the research.

The summaries derived from a range of related studies gave insights into the essence and appropriateness of the theoretical considerations of the research. It required an approach multidisciplinary root that looked at language use as a form of social practice based on an in-built critical stance that illuminated the role of discourses in complex organizational interactions and how power instantiations were linked to outcomes. The CDA approach allowed me to examine the constitutive role that discourses played in the attainment of goals. The critical assessment allowed the selection of a few relevant empirical studies for deeper interrogation of the theoretical assumptions and methodological framework enabling me to understand and situate the research

and to explain how they were used to answer the research questions. So, the empirical works increased the understanding of how meetings were an essential organizational activity that permeated individual perceptions and group processes. They were used to address strategic and problematic situations that needed changes in practices.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

3 1. Introduction

A research methodology described the theory of how the research was undertaken because it highlighted the philosophical underpinnings upon which the research was based. These guided the choices made to follow particular processes to identify philosophical assumptions, and procedures to generate and analyse data that addressed the research issues.

The problems prompted the exploration of how changes in the communicative practices in strategy meeting settings enabled the organization to resolve the problems. That meant capturing actions and observing experiences, perceptions and behaviours of participants in their natural environment to understand their behaviours, why they occurred and their effects. The use of discursive strategies and linguistic resources by leaders that shaped perceptions and behaviours determined the changes in practices and showed how they were able to address the problems. The research was qualitative and made explicit the theoretical considerations of the CDA approach that addressed social problems through the interpretations of the texts produced. These illustrated how discourses were entangled with power relations to influence the practices within a group setting such as meetings. So, the design and collection of relevant data and the steps taken to analyse them were used to answer the research questions.

Section 3.2 explained the strategies that adopted a robust methodology that achieved credible research processes and results. Section 3.3 gave insights into the philosophical foundations with their ontological and epistemological underpinnings. The endeavour was an intellectual effort that identified philosophical traditions that revealed the assumptions and choices I made in establishing the nature of reality and how knowledge was created. These informed the design, the generation of data and the methodological framework. Section 3.4 explained the research approach that explained the mode of reasoning that justified Section 3.5 where the means through which knowledge was developed within a discipline and research orientation was explained. The AR approach was considered a pragmatic and creative process that generated knowledge for qualitative research. Section 3.6 explained the methodological frames that illustrated the plan of action on how the research sought to gain insights into the research questions. Section 3.7 looked at the sample and its special characteristics. The data collection considerations explained the techniques and the instruments used in the generation of data as outlined in Section 3. 8. Section

3.9 illustrated the data analysis frames that justified the collection methods. Section 3.10 considered the validity and rigour associated with the generation of data how they helped in the creation of minimum bias and the limitations experienced while conducting the research.

3.2. Methodological Considerations

The process looked at ways discursive leadership processes were used to achieve practical changes in meeting activities that shaped strategy-making. The practices shaped work systems; and influenced both group processes and individual behaviours (Scott et al., 2015; Olien et al., 2015). The changes affected power relations and work was seen through shaped individual, group/team, and organizational functioning. Question one related to the influence of the practices on perceptions and behaviours that resonated with aspects of organizational life. The second question addressed how the discursive practices that changed the work systems were facilitated through inclusiveness that ensured the generation of diverse inputs that enriched the strategic plan content, as well as created the commitment towards the change process and its outcomes. The actual linking of the micro-level processes with the macro-level outcomes addressed the third question with the skilful deployment of distinct strategies to accomplish particular goals. The methodology helped to achieve them, through a robust methodological approach, the DHA, which examined texts produced systematically to understand how social actions that happened in the meeting events emerged and changed. It enabled more complex understandings of the link between texts and structures in ways that positioned it methodologically as identified and reconstructed and the contexts in which they occurred. The DHA allowed the gaining of deep insights that yielded concrete results from the systematic diagnosis of multi-layered contexts. The used social applications that focused on the "quality of discourses, the context dependence of discourses, and the constructed as well as the constructive character of discourses" (Reisigl, 2017, pp. 49). The multi-layered domains of contexts drew from the micro and macro scales of discursive manifestations and their historical dimensions. The consideration of the discourses related to the immediate and related texts and the effects on or of the institutional structures and broader social conditions. It integrated a large quantity of available knowledge about the historical sources and the background of 'the social and political fields in which discursive events' were embedded (Wodak, 2001, pp. 65) and incorporated the three forms of critique (immanent, socio-diagnostic, and prospective) used to examine discourses (Reisigl and Wodak, 2009).

These suggested that it could draw information from various sources such as interviews, observations and argumentation-analysis from utterances and the positioning of the actors (Forchtner and Tominc, 2012). The effort was essential to explain the basis on which investigations were conducted. The aspect of culture that explained the reproduction of the social order within an organizational setting like in 'Tech' perceived the role of language as a medium of domination and a determinant of the social forces translated into social action. The focus was to understand the role of language in creating reality correlated with the methodological basis that allowed the understanding gaining of knowledge from what was observable as well as embracing the argument that the same knowledge was created and maintained through social interactions.

3.3. Research Paradigm

3.3.1. The Philosophical Paradigms

Research paradigms were often categorized into philosophical aspects of ontology, epistemology, and methodology. My philosophical position helped to explain the reasons why particular steps were taken to obtain consistent and credible results. Ontology explains the nature and characteristics of a reality. Epistemology deals with how to know and understand that reality. These are related because the meaning attached to the reality of an issue is determined to an extent by the ways we try to understand it. Crotty (2003, pp. 3) described epistemology as "a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know". So, the process of gaining epistemological knowledge was related to understanding the theoretical assumptions that helped to make explicit the framing of a research; where and how the right data was obtained; how the data was analysed to determine the integrity of the research.

The philosophical positions followed patterns of beliefs and understandings as categorized by scholars. Guba and Lincoln (1994) classified them as positivism, realism, critical theory, and constructivism; Saunders Lewis, and Thornhill, (2009) as positivism, realism, interpretivism, and pragmatism. Creswell's (2009) grouping was positivism, advocacy/participatory, pragmatism and constructivism. Positivism and social constructionism represented extreme positions. Positivists assumed that the nature of the social world (ontology) existed outside an individual and that understanding what governed the beliefs depended on how objectively the elements of the social world were measured through observed facts (epistemology). The tradition accepted only observable or measurable (empirical) data for analysis because that established absolute truths

about reality. Knowledge was objective and tangible, and these characteristics aligned with scientific methodology and deductive reasoning in research since outcomes were derived from independently tested data. Hatch and Cunliffe, (2006, pp. 328) stated that positivists' perspectives offered epistemological understandings in terms of "empirical adequacy – theories and laws must offer causal explanations and allow predictions about future behaviour; theories are acceptable only when they represent reality accurately and truthfully and researchers must be able to verify the accuracy of the theory and replicate its results through experimentation that provides inductive evidence". These deterministic imperatives had logical implications on the pursuit of how things worked and influenced human experiences because of the causality between work and rational beliefs.

The other extreme, the social constructivists, explained that social reality was neither external nor objective because it was the result of human experiences and events (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2008). It emphasized the interpretivist influences on how meanings or constructions were attached to social interactions. Guba (1990) explained that social reality had multiple interpretations influenced by local and historical contexts that were regarded as either false or correct. The social reality was purely based on human interactions and knowing it was dependent on the meanings created out of experiences and the situations which surrounded them. The school of thought rested on the belief that experiences came about through meaning-making and that reality differed with individuals. Knowledge was created and understood from human experiences, memories and expectations and reality was entwined with its production. So, all research endeavours assumed philosophical foundations that guided ways to understand the reality of an issue and how knowledge was derived from that reality. The aim of providing an account of how creative discursive leadership efforts accomplished enduring changes in practices in strategy meetings did not fit perfectly into any of the paradigms, although there were some similarities in the extreme positions. The reasonable way was to explore language use by leaders in instances where they showed their ability to deploy discursive strategies and linguistic resources to shape perceptions and mobilize members to work as expected. The objective stance made claims of empirical adequacy that showed causality through the explanations on the prediction of human behaviour. Sometimes, the conditions in which they occurred did not represent accurately what was regarded as rational and objective truth. The implications were explained based on the conclusions that certain social structures influenced and shaped behaviour. The leadership role that

was regarded as the most consequential position of influence was in the spotlight. The counter-productive behaviours associated with the top-down style of the leadership style of giving directives (Detert et al, 2007) contrasted with the collaborative practices resulting from inclusive practices. The challenge with the rational evidence was that the empirically observed and measured procedures did not recognize the subjective interpretations that emanated from social experiences.

From the social constructivist perspective that upheld the significance of peoples' experience, it was highly probable that human interactions, as people constructed reality, were influenced by their peculiar backgrounds, values and understandings. That helped to produce practical and credible evidence because practices shaped and were equally influenced by social contexts. The objective possibilities and universal laws that were a pre-condition for intended actions negated the claims of subjectivity as advocated by constructivists because counting on experiences alone made interpretations subjective.

Aligning with any of the extreme perspectives was unrealistic. In reality, as much as certain practices, such as some leadership styles, were predictive of behaviours, the capturing of experiences during interactions was also important for gaining insight into peoples' perceptions and reactions influenced by the broad contexts common within social phenomena. The middle ground position of Critical Realism (CR to be used through the research) aligned with aspects from both perspectives. It held the objectivist view of ontology and the subjectivist view of epistemology that leveraged the tenets of both positivism and constructivism (Danermark et al., 2001).

3.3.2. Critical Realism Paradigm

The CR ontology objectively viewed the world existing independent of people's perceptions, with the assumption that reality was deduced from empirical efforts that were readily observable. It also recognized that part of the world consisted of subjective interpretations that inherently influenced the ways people perceived and experienced things. It acknowledged that the socially constructed knowledge derived from main symbols or language systems was constructed through and within human interactions embedded in subjective interpretations. The empirical results that were termed the truth, were not capable of capturing all reality (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2017; Fleetwood, 2005) and the natural belief that reality was reduced to human knowledge was not acceptable. Put together, CR ideals avoided the determinist claims of positivism and constructivist ideologies on

excessive emphasis on human experiences alone because the knowledge and the ability to understand the nature of realities especially in the social world was limited. An entity can exist without being observed and the knowledge from observations, descriptions, and explanations made were mediated by contextual factors. The social world was the product of social events influenced by contextual factors that had either enabling or constraining effects that included unobservable social conditions or institutional structures (Bhaskar, 1979).

The world was real and differentiated into structured layers. The modes of reality held causal efficacy that supported the ontological claims. That allowed knowledge gained from the effects seen as behaviours in organizations. Fleetwood (2005) argued that the way to categorize that was the prism of critical realism that differentiates modes into materially real; ideally real; artefactually real; and socially real. Materially real entities, such as weather systems, existed independent of what people felt or thought, though they affected the actions of people. The artefactually real referred to physical systems such as computers that equally affected the way people worked. My research was focused on the ideal and socially real. Ideally referred to conceptual entities such as discourse, language, genres, ideas and beliefs that had properties of causal efficacy because relationships existed between the social event and the effect of the event. For instance, strategy meetings followed conventions (agenda-setting, turn-taking) of interactions, the leadership role determined how the strategy was formed, consumed and enacted. The conventions as discourses existed and were independent of the perceptions of how they were used. They held causal efficacy and were generative mechanisms used by leaders in meetings to influence organizational outcomes (Lehmann-Willenbrock et al., 2017). The use of interactional structures as mechanisms for control or co-creation shaped work.

The socially real entities refer to configurations of social structures such as causal mechanisms, practices and rules activated by human activity. They were purely social, without any iota of materiality but dependent on human activity. The social structures necessarily pre-existed individual experiences of them (Bhaskar, 1989). At the same time, Volkoff, Strong and Elmes (2007) explained that CR rightly distinguished structure and agency but in reality, they existed together and were tied to each other. So, agency practices could transform, create emergence or change and the changes to structures post-dated those actions. For instance, the leaders' practices of giving instructions to members were expected to serve as a transmission of information without

allowing feedback. That suggested that reality was both observable and unobservable, indicating that the positivist stance of real things being only observed was challenged. That also meant that human activity was needed to generate mechanisms that had effects though social entities cannot exist independently of them.

These features of CR included the independent reality that explained that knowledge of the world cannot be reduced to human perceptions and experiences only because the nature of reality cannot be thoroughly perceived, and measured by human beings; the differentiation of modes of entities that recognized the existence of types of knowledge because reality happened at various levels; the objects being investigated related to the mechanisms that caused changes in the social structures due to the capacity to generate facilitative or hindrance effects on the practices. The philosophy helped to understand the relationship between observed experiences, events and the mechanisms that propelled behaviours. Sims-Schouten, Riley and Willig (2007, pp. 102) argued that "critical realism combines constructionist and realist positions to argue that while meaning is made in interaction, non-discursive elements also impact that meaning". A further explanation related to understanding that although the language was important, sometimes what activities were designated as such, who was more privileged and why people used particular constructions were not clear (Fleetwood, 2005). Newman (2020, pp. 3) stated that "critical realism can function as a steady foundation from which to conduct discourse analysis and can more practically contribute to the clarity of the findings and outputs of research on discourse". The combination of discourse as social aspects as well as the causal powers of structures and agency were addressed through the theoretical commitments of CDA and the methodological framework of the DHA for the analysis.

So, leadership communicative roles in the constructions and enactments of change impacted practices and outcomes. To that extent, the CR philosophy helped to demonstrate coherence and distinguished the real and social worlds and how to use them to explain human constructs, perceptions and actions. It was important to achieve coherence in the procedures outlined in the methodological overview in section 3.2. The logic of analysis and form of inquiry aligned with the nature of the research questions and objectives and how to achieve rigour through an understanding of the research approach and methods deployed for the data generation.

3.4. Research Approach

The research approach enabled researchers to justify the decisions on the design or strategy of the process the techniques used in data collection and the procedures for analysis. Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2008) explained that a research approach was important because it enabled a researcher to make informed decisions about the research design and the other related issues of using the appropriate techniques to collect data and do the analysis. In general terms, three known designs, quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods were used to describe the process and determine the structure used to implement any research. While the quantitative types emphasized the use of numbers to measure and review data, the qualitative utilized the collection of words or symbols from data generated in natural settings for evaluation. The basis for making the choice depended on the mode of reasoning and inquiry; deductive and inductive. Deductive research was usually quantitative because it involved the development of some hypothesis based on the constructed theory that was subsequently evaluated, although that aligned with the grounded theory approach in qualitative approaches. It adopted a conceptual and theoretical structure at the beginning showing models that guided the truth and subsequently conclusions were derived through a tested and logical set of premises and assumptions that inference particular observations (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016).

In inductive reasoning, the conclusions that served as generalizations were made through observations rather than hypotheses and affirming the theory (Mantere and Ketokivi, 2013). The processes were inclined towards exploring ways of making sense of data to formulate a theory. It offered the benefits of enriched contributions, given the potentiality of participants' involvement in a particular work activity as they identified incidents of importance to them. The researcher could read meanings through patterns that emerged and were flexible enough to modify the structure to suit the topic of concern. It followed the process of exploring for a better understanding of the issues and their nature. Although deductive reasoning was often associated with the quantitative approach as well as the positivism thoughts, inductive reasoning aligned more with interpretivism and qualitative methods that looked at research for theory building. The reasoning for making a choice may be due to other assumptions. Another approach known as abductive reasoning requires the designing to start by collecting data to explore an issue and explain the patterns observed to generate or modify an existing theory to subsequently confirm it through additional data collection. That starting point was through known propositions that were subsequently explored and then used in explaining the correlation between the observations made

and what was derived based on the most plausible explanation (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016).

The research aligned with the retroductive approach. It was often contrasted with both induction and deduction which simply meant moving from data to theory and from theory to data, respectively. The approach moved back and forth from theory to data through reasoning as observations about reality as we identified the circumstances that helped a situation to occur. So, it helped by building models around cognitive aspects in the explanation of observed situations. Wynne and Williams (2012) observed that it was a creative process that recognised multiple explanations of causal mechanisms set within a social structure that helped to understand how interactions were produced from observed events. The main logic behind the reasoning was that explicit tools that applied to relevant knowledge helped to develop new understandings. So those explanations went beyond observable and measurable elements that depicted practices. They identified structure, contexts and the mechanisms that explained them. They were based on probable reasons because the major premise was predicated on evidence through an iterative process that unravelled the conclusions from information known through observations on the issue and knowledge of other claims.

The gaining of information from a range of existing sociological theories and through a systematic process that described and explained experiences resulted in a more credible analysis. It justified the research approach of the CDA and the use of DHA in analysis. The basis of the analysis rested on developing evidence through the research questions, and a constant movement between theory and empirical data. The intentions and purposes suggested that having practical meanings from both historical and socio-political contexts was imperative. Wodak (2011) explained that during communicative events, such as strategic meetings, discursive acts embedded in discourse were deployed synchronically and diachronically. The value given to language was because it not only represented the beliefs and values of strategy actors. It helped in meaning-making by examining the structures of texts and talk. Hence, maintaining a special relationship with other social elements that examined discourses established that social practices influenced and were shaped by interactional processes and social structures (Kwon, Clarke and Wodak, 2013). In giving an account of the texts, interactions and social practices and their relationships with each other and

interpreting the configuration of discourse practices the efforts included the description and interpretation in terms of why and how social practices occurred, changed, and were transformed.

In other words, what was understood included knowing what and how things happened; how consistent or otherwise they occurred; the outcome as compared with what was.

3.5. Research Strategy

3.5.1. The Research Orientation

The strategy of research outlined the general choices made in the selection of the type of study. The design was the qualitative processes that focused on real-world settings derived from data generated from a collection of words, and experiences that helped to develop knowledge. Over the years there have been many, and they continued to evolve (Cresewell, 2009). Some of the most recognised types of qualitative design included Case Studies; Ethnography; Action Research; Grounded Theory; and Narrative Inquiry. In many instances, the strategies provided specific direction for procedures though often related, given the broader philosophical underpinnings that justified the viability and integration of more than one way to conduct research (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). The Case study and Ethnography were also related to the research. Their procedures required in-depth studies. A case study involved an inquiry that explored issues within real-life situations with highlights on the theory surrounding the issues and their practical application (Yin, 2014). The ethnography explored in-depth activities of participants' practice linked to specific organizational action contexts (Yanow, 2012). Geertz (1973, pp. 167) observed that it was an "in-depth and detailed analysis of social phenomena in their historical and cultural context: "to know-a-city-is-to-know-its-streets". It often allowed immersion into organizational practices and lived experiences that were key to first-hand and privileged knowledge about organizational issues as well as an understanding of strategy processes and practices (Mantere, 2008) especially for longitudinal social and organizational processes (Langley et al., 2013). The insights elevated the value of participant observation and captured changes from a dynamic process that occurred from naturally occurring interactions. The process also aligned with the ideologies of ethnography with roots in the field of anthropology because of the emphasis on the study of organisational culture. The main objectives were to describe and interpret the shared and learnt patterns of values such as beliefs and language within a specific culture and context (Crewell, 2013). The behaviours of the individuals within a group system were described so that meaningful

relations, using concepts reflected the knowledge and the patterns of living of those studied in terms of a particular subject area. There are different forms of ethnography, usually field-based and often in day-to-day/face-to-face situations. Myers (2013) argued that such insights into organisational culture incorporated various implicit and tacit components or the often 'taken for granted' assumptions that were not very observable. Tacchi, (2015) explained a more direct aspect, the Ethnographic Action Research (EAR) that combined ethnography, participatory techniques and action cycles. Through social mobilization of joint efforts in immersion, extended involvements and the understanding of local contexts were explored. Based on these qualitative features, the process used an accumulation of descriptive detail to build towards understanding the patterns of behaviours or explanatory theories rather than the quantitative approach that assessed hypotheses derived from existing theories.

The EAR was developed to adapt to local variability, so the process helped to make sense for its use in developmental evaluations. The locally emergent ideas accounted for as participants' learning since planning, taking actions and evaluations helped to modify ideas and easily adapt to new ways of doing things. The Action-Oriented effort of the research followed purposeful and intentional steps that gained basic qualitative and non-numerical data that had the objective of enhancing the development of the researcher and the other participants. Myers (2013) explained that the main aim was to address practical problems to advance scientific knowledge through the immersion of participants involved. They engaged in identifying and understanding the context of the problems and the dilemmas and resolving them.

3.5.2 The AR Cycle

The general direction followed through a planned change process that was cyclic. The application involved stages of steps that did not end because the result of a preceding stage formed the basis of action for the next. It comprised a sequential system of fact-finding; planning; acting; evaluating and subsequent amendment for future actions was relevant since change had become inherent and inevitable due to the unending environmental complexity and dynamism (Dick, 2015; Coghlan and Brannick, 2010). The AR had a variety of forms although the research was inspired by the Classical Lewin's (1947) Three-Step Model of three stages: unfreezing-movement–refreezing as seen in figure 3.1. The model offered a constructive framework that was momentous and transformative, thereby adaptable to the situation in 'Tech.' Hussain et al (2018, pp. 123) reckoned

that the model "mediates implementation and leadership initiatives for change in complex organizations". The transformation from a known current state to a desired future state captured the practical and emergent aspects of strategy making process that stretched over time and the episodic nature of workplace meeting events that linked one to another (Redlbacher, 2020; Hendry and Seidl, 2003).

Figure 3.1. Classical Lewin's Three-Step-Model

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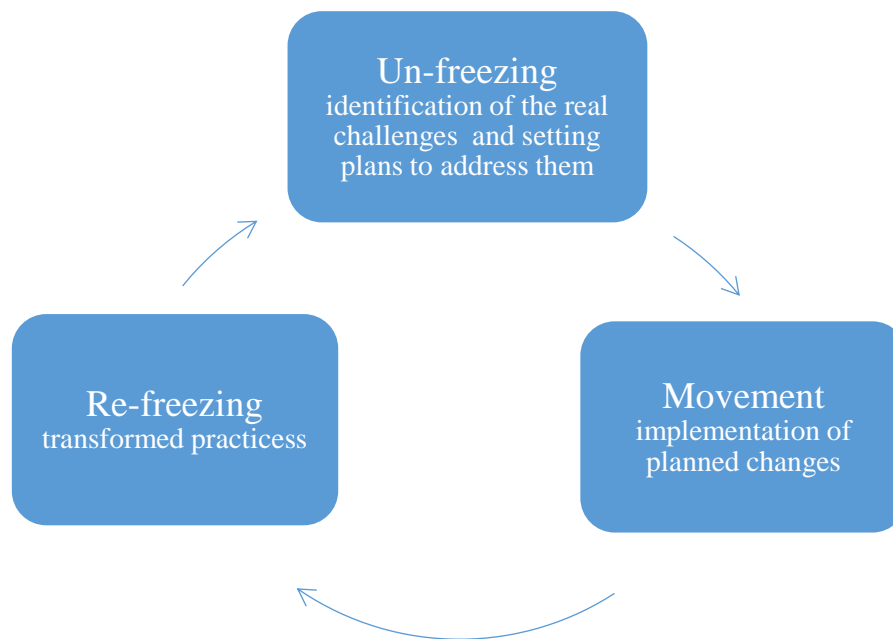
The unfreezing involved the detailed identification of the problematic situation and setting action plans through sensitization and collaboration in articulating the issues and making decisions on how and when to undertake actions to attain the desired goal. The problem orientation created a focus on the nature and depth of the energy used in unearthing issues related to the current

problems. The collaborative effort required ideas sharing the generation of inputs that tried to understand the enormity of an unpleasant situation and the conviction for the desire to seek change. The discursive leadership style that focused on crafting messages was appropriate and provided the social structures for distributed responsibilities that empowered members. The main elements of focus were the level of uncertainty; the competency of the facilitator/leader, coping abilities and support generated to disrupt the status quo (Cummings and Worley, 2003).

The change or movement stage was the implementation. Some of the strategies deployed in the leadership discursive practices included dialoguing and power-sharing (democracy and equality). The expectations were the achievement of convergence of results from diverse input into decision-making learning and commitment. These implied an improved professionalism in strategic planning (Whittington, Cailluet1 and Yakis-Douglas, 2011). The refreezing step was crucial because it brought to reality the nature, level of the actual change and the internalizations. The new behavioural patterns were reinforced and institutionalized. The actions underscored the concepts such as organizing, communicating, and leading practices were important considerations that justified the methodological process. The key goal in the achievement of change was seen from shifts in the behaviour or attitude and the commitment to the process (Cummings and Worley, 2003).

3.5.3. Justification for the CDA

The processes of mutual critical and evaluative reflection were the hallmarks of AR that promoted examining and questioning our assumptions and practice, as well as the essence of looking back in terms of the process and the results were valuable for gaining knowledge (McNiff, 2013). The data generated from their experiences of living and learning led to the emergence of new understandings. These were laudable but lacked methodological frames that explained the particular roles played by actors and how they arrived at results (Frydaki, and Katsarou, 2013). Research results were more valuable for practice and knowledge if they showed how contextual factors influenced the results. The approach hardly reported how the collaboration process resulted in shared decisions or the dialogic practices that reinforced reflection which was a crucial aspect of critical thinking. The prescribed action on how to address specific organizational problems was difficult to achieve. The process of intervening in the social and historical processes of everyday life through the reconstruction of organizational practice and institutional settings made it

complex. The solutions needed context-specific investigations were possible with the CDA (Wodak and Meyer, 2001). The description and explanation of spoken and written texts creatively generated, described, interpreted and analysed data. It placed discourse in context through multiple levels of contexts that advanced research on strategy and discourse (Balogun et al, 2014).

3.6. Research Sample

3.6.1. Strategic Planning in Tech

'Tech' offered services in information technology; training and development; health and safety were strategically construction and enacted through a typical hierarchical system. The leaders in meeting groups directed activities and monopolized the pre-meeting preparations; actual interactional activities; the decisions.

Figure 3.2 Meeting Objectives and Functions

Management	Workshop	Project Groups
• Provided a broad view of the projects initatives and expected achievements through the demostration of financial, technical and growth explanations	• Conceptualized the project (Break-down of activities, requirements and schedules) • Identified the tools and techniques used and assessd opportunities and limitations (internal and external constraints, legal) • Estblished activities in a carefully mapped plan with accurate timelines and milestones.	• Communicated project objectives and explained tasks as assigned to implementers and the expected outcomes • Prepared status reports, worksheet and the incidences management

.

The communication style was information dissemination and instruction-giving, though the workshop group engaged in robust dialoguing and questioning during the strategy development.

Figure 3.2 outlined the meeting groups' functions that were statutorily regarded as comprising three components of the strategic planning process, formulation, development and implementation (Hopkins and Hopkins, 1997). The management group decided on the projects to be undertaken and the workshop group conceptualized the project with details of the actions to be taken. The project groups worked out the schedules and engaged in the implementation. They also enacted monitoring processes using a reporting system that evaluated project progress and critical incidences.

The centralized decision-making at the top impeded collaborative efforts as well as dialogic engagements. The leadership exclusion consequences resulted in the lack of consultation and openness in information exchanges and so suggested that members could not work effectively as a group (Morrison, 2014). The dominance of interactive practices had the potential to breed defensive and attitudinal behaviours such as fear, apathy, withholding of ideas and resistance (Brinsfield, 2013; van Dyne, Ang and Botero, 2003; Pinder and Harlos, 2001). There was a possibility that the lack of voice contributed to the consistent posting of low financial returns and the problematic execution of projects threatened organizational survival. Consequently, the management's assessment and the logical ideas behind that meant involving those engaged in the construction and enactment of strategy required a holistic effort to address the situation. Accordingly, Nordqvist and Melin, (2008, pp. 326) described them as strategic planning champions (SPCs) "who introduce, promote and guide the strategic planning process in an organisation". So, understanding the project aims and being part of the decision processes were important for the commitment to effectively implement projects to worthwhile outcomes.

3.6.3. Meeting Structure

The management meeting comprised five participants and the chairman presided. The others were the three executive directors and the researcher as seen in Figure 3.3a. The political significance of the management group meant that strategies were initiated at the top level. The assumption was that they had the experience and competence to harness expert knowledge to confront competition and achieve growth prospects. It was argued that experience and capabilities in networking contributed to organizational performance (Greenly, 1994).

The meeting sessions often lasted two hours and were held in the chairman's conference room and commenced late in the day (3 p.m.) due to the chairman's busy schedule. He prepared and

communicated the initiatives during presentations. Occasionally, he invited a non-executive board member. The research did not account for the two periods of the non-executive board member's appearances because they were too brief (not more than fifteen minutes) and without contributions.

Figure 3.3a. Management Meeting.
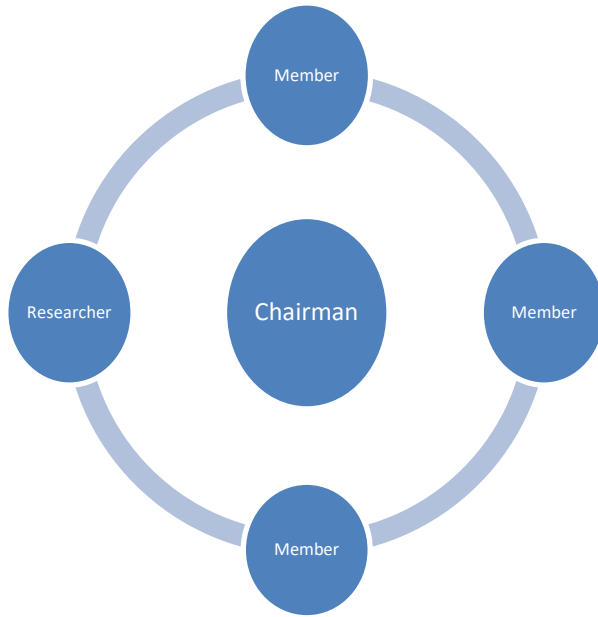
They were just observers during the two specific occasions (when the ground rules for the new engagement were explained by the researcher and the deliberation on the project's group progress report that resulted in the reorganization of the meetings' structure).

The workshop group tasks as highlighted in the figure included the use of analytical models for the assessment of organizational capacity, constraints, technical requirements and competition. The analyses offered detailed financial resource usage, action plans and timelines. The group had experts who developed and presented analyses that were robustly debated before the final documentation was produced. The workshop group had four members and a chair. The meeting sessions usually lasted for two and a half hours. The experts made extensive presentations to support their analysis and the physical arrangement in Figure 3.3b.

Figure 3.3b. Workshop Meeting
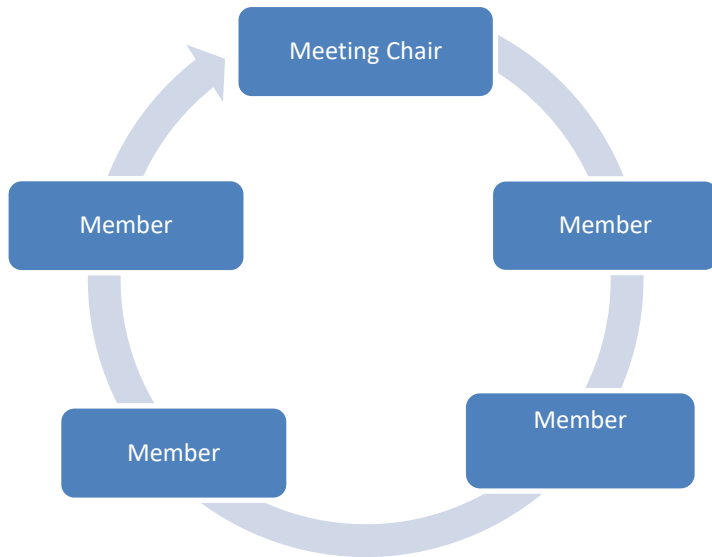
Figure 3.3c. Project Team Meeting
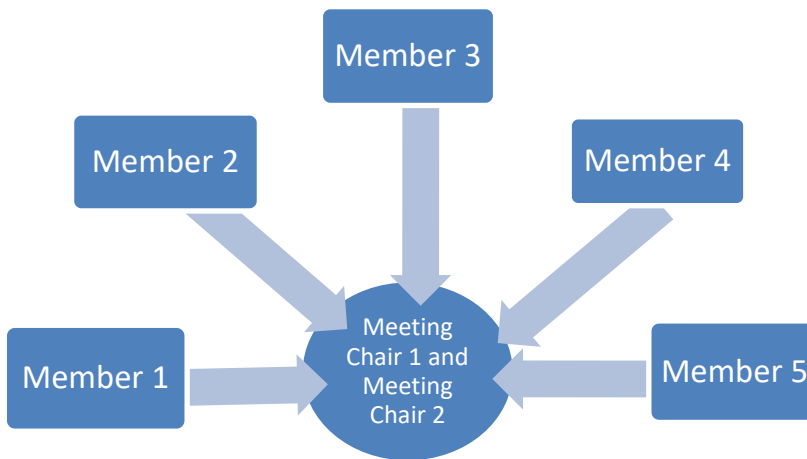
The two project groups were regarded as one administratively as shown in Figure 3.3c. They were broadly classified as either technical or training and development, with two (2) chairs and five (5) members. The tasks conducted in line with figure 3.2 were critical for the strategic implementations.

3.6.4. Group Classification

Table 3.1 outlined the sample of seventeen (17) participants (four in the management meeting including the researcher; five in the workshop group; seven in the projects meeting). The sample was categorized into four meeting chairs; twelve members; and the researcher.

Table 3.1. Sample

	Group	Number		Group	Number
	Management	5		Meeting Chairs	4
	Workshop	5		Members	12
	Projects	7		Researcher	1
Total		17			17

3.6.5. Sample Characteristics

The five executives in the management group possessed many years of professional experience from diverse backgrounds. The chairman had about forty years of work experience in financial services, consulting, and manufacturing. He had led teams in consulting and manufacturing at various times for over twenty-five years and the researcher collaborated with him as a junior colleague twenty years earlier. His social status was also impressive, having had longstanding memberships of several elite social groups and held national-level appointments. His rich networking skills and connections were valuable in winning contracts.

The other three members (one female and two males) had experiences in engineering, safety, environment, and finance, respectively. The female had an engineering background with more than forty years of experience. She retired after more than thirty years from a government communications agency after pioneering work in establishing broadcast stations. One of the males had an engineering and environmental safety background with more than thirty years of experience in the oil and gas industry. The other had twenty years of experience in banking and finance and had worked in 'Tech' from the inception. He helped to nurture the organization during the teething period. His role was vital because he understood the history of the organization, and the challenges

and performed special assignments for the chairman. The fifth member, the researcher had experiences spanning banking, manufacturing, and IT for about thirty years.

The experienced individuals had heterogeneous characteristics, especially in aspects of executive experiences (age, tenure, functional background, and education). The characteristics did not prevent the domination of the chairman. That could be explained or attributed to the executive psychological orientation of the need for achievement. Finklstein et al (2009) explained that such tendencies were seen as motivators or desires to initiate structures and see them through. That suggested the tendency or zeal to own, fully be engaged and desire to take credit for successes. Another was that many members had other relationships with the chairman. So chief executives were sometimes attracted to seek and engage individuals because socialization occurred easily due to previous connections.

The workshop group chair had led teams in IT and engineering tasks in telecommunications. His experiences of over twenty-five years spanned financial consultancy and a stinct in communications. His background was crucial, and he had versatile skills. The other four members (one female and three males) had backgrounds in engineering, finance, management studies and IT. They possessed diverse skills and had an average of fifteen to eighteen years of experience and consulting. They possessed higher degrees and certifications that enhanced their expertise and cognate experience in project work. Some of the critical success factors in project development require the ability and competencies to articulate strategic initiatives and align the vision, values and work project development tasks appropriately (Bryson, Crosby and Bryson, 2009). These impacted work structures, procedures and roles for successful implementation.

The project group was male-dominated and performed the project implementation. The two chairs had twenty- and sixteen-year experiences in technology applications, training, and development, respectively. They were proven operational experts with the skills and drive to push issues forward to get work done. The technically inclined chair worked previously in the manufacturing and IT departments in the oil and gas industry. The members all had MBAs with various backgrounds in engineering and development studies, considered crucial for project work. The five members were younger, with less tenure and experience of ten years of experiences except one with twelve years and a background in IT. They all had MBAs with various backgrounds in engineering and development studies, considered crucial for project work. Though the young professionals had

fewer years of experience than their chairs, they possessed modern technical knowledge and were vibrant and ambitious, with the tendency to seek autonomy and the development of their skills. However, the two chairs made more of the implementation decisions through the instructions-giving communication styles.

The characteristics justified the use of qualitative approaches that targeted specific groups, events, or processes and followed the purposeful selection of those with the appropriate experiences. That was crucial in achieving an in-depth understanding of the patterns of behaviour relevant to the research purpose. The case study feature confined the research to the issues peculiar to my organization. The size of just seventeen participants covered the various meeting groups that knew the research issues and had a stake in the outcome. The point was that the width of the sample was crucial as long as it was representative enough to allow for the identification of consistent patterns of behaviour. The homogeneous feature meant that the percipients had similar experiences as they performed their basic functions. That suggested the advantage of maximizing the advantage of intensity in getting in-depth knowledge in situations such as gaining insights into patterns of behaviours. Although it potentially reduced variation since most of the participants had the same experiences, heterogeneity across the teams in terms of their unique functions and the categorizations of leaders and members within the groups created a social divide that influenced their psychological make-up (values and cognitions) and experiences (tenure and functional backgrounds). The social structure provided the representativeness that presented a full character of patterns of role differentiation and illustrated a formal demarcation of functions and standards of operations. There were three significant implications. First, the mix and categorization meant that multiple knowledge systems and perspectives helped in gaining a diversity of ideas that helped to aggregate a variety of views (Mack and Szulanski, 2017) and was important for the collaborative process (Jarzabkowski and Balogun, 2009). The second was that the categorization enabled the differentiation in analysing social variables such as age, social status, and functional backgrounds. It was good to understand how these social and group variables shaped organizing, imposed constraints and empowered or restricted voice (Resende and Silva, 2015). The third was that though the sample size was small, the intensity required was based on the requirements of the CDA that recognized the importance of patterns of language. (Kwon, Clarke and Wodak, 2013). The focus on textual materials warranted the search for sufficient detail from the discursive event such as meetings.

3.7. Data Collection

The qualitative processes were more flexible, and the techniques involved the identification of credible sources of data and the retrieval in various forms such as words, images and observations. The data was derived from recordings in diary logs made during discussions/interviews; field notes from observations in focus groups; transcribed data from audio recordings through vignettes that depicted excerpts of interactions; and data retrieved from existing documents. The criteria used to select the various techniques were critical since much of the data depended on subjective accounts of participants and the researcher. That claim was because the interactions and observations were impressions made although the secondary sources from documents complemented them and helped participants to understand and make sense of the situation. The activity chart outlined in Table 3.2 illustrated the three-stage process, based on Lewin (1951) and showed the different types of activities that occurred during the process.

The discussions/interviews remained one of the commonest sources because the first-hand responses of participants went on all through the process. During the initial period of the unfreezing stage, I undertook informal and impromptu discussions at different times within small group settings. Although some of the conversations took place before the formal approval of the research, the main goal was to gain insights into the perceptions and experiences of the organizational issues. A handful of discussions served that purpose as well as enabling them to understand the main tenets of the AR process. It was used for sensitization of some potential participants. They occurred in various places such as pre-meeting talks, cafeterias, and social gatherings. The discussions highlighted in Figure 4.1 did not constitute all the discussions. However, I selected a number of them that covered the aims. I did not keep a verbatim record of the timelines since the discussions were informal and self-moving. The field notes that covered the conversations were reflective accounts made out of the impromptu situation. The mix of distinct categories of individuals and spontaneity made it a useful tool because the true accounts showed that all were concerned about the situation and were candid about the need for change. The periods of active discussions were not specific and planned. So, they ranged from twenty minutes to two hours during the social gatherings. I also used the time to explain the theory and the process of the AR orientation because it was a unique approach that most of us were not familiar with. The main theme of transforming practices for change that also involved close collaboration was novel and interesting because it

allowed all to be at the same level as participants. Hence it was community-based and empowering (Dick, 2015; Coghlan and Brannick, 2010). The significant value of that was profound because it placed the understanding of the local knowledge; how they understood the issue; and the contexts around them information was intended to help explain the dynamics and changes that occurred since their ideas before the process and refinements were recorded.

Unlike the informal conversations that were unplanned and lasted within different time frames, the formal unstructured interviews were scheduled and usually lasted about fifty (50) minutes per session and all sixteen participants were interviewed. The opportunity to have one-on-one conversations in their various offices enabled me to freely ask salient questions. At that time, the 'storytelling approach' gave the participants ample time to express themselves freely (Mantere and Vaara, 2008; Laine and Vaara, 2007). They gave detailed accounts of experiences and insights that characterized qualitative research as open-ended and unhindered (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2008; Creswell, 2009). The in-depth knowledge gained provided opportunities to understand their values, feelings and motivations. It gave voice to those who were previously marginalized and was good for me to examine beyond their expressions through their bodily reactions. It was crucial because the opportunities for self-expressions held tremendous advantages in gaining insights into the actual thoughts of participants. Some common themes were used as a guide in asking questions to understand the perceptions and the experiences of participants. They included the practices before the change; their concerns; and how they understood the issue. They were important in discerning their ideas about the situation and the readiness for change. Others are related to the expected benefit. The aspect was relevant in terms of determining how they conducted the process; and their level of desire to achieve an organizational outcome. The semi-structured type played a valuable role in constructing reality or producing empirical material (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2017). The advantages of the technique notwithstanding, alternative views were that sometimes, it was tricky to balance between being intrusive and getting deep knowledge (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2008). It was fundamental for the research as it guaranteed a wide application as a tool that aided data "construction" in qualitative research and social science research had been documented, but it had a flaw. Czarniawska (2004) explained that with over three decades of practical experience, the exercises were mutually beneficial because they had experiences that allowed people to express themselves in ways that relieved their impressions. Against the backdrop of a situation of attempting to interrogate to gain information

from the interviewee, their predispositions were important. However, the information gathered reflected the constructions of their subjective realities (Czarniawska, 2004). Alvesson (2004) also questioned the relationship between language, data, and reality, arguing that the accounts represented as language use may not completely mirror or represent reality because the responses constituted only the realities of those involved.

I used the diary logs arranged in a six-column format to derive data from the formal interviews. The columns contained the questions I posed to the participants and the verbatim records of their responses in columns one and two, respectively. My reflections and the reasons behind them are contained in the third column. I identified their main points that related to the organizational issues. These reflections were written out soon after the discussions in order not to lose memories of what happened and not to allow my subjective impressions to creep into my reflections since after-thought views were overtime. The reflections were expected to complement the responses and help to identify and resolve contradictions. The fourth column was an attempt to reconstruct the data by summarizing them and relating them to the research questions. I made conscious efforts to understand the essence of the responses. It was vital for understanding and categorizing them into themes for analysis in the fifth column. However, the initial plan was to have five columns. The sixth column was added because I needed to capture the dynamics of the process since there were instances for the refinement of ideas and modifications of perceptions, especially in subsequent interactions.

The interviews that took place during the unfreezing stage were valuable because the communication shaped identities, ideas and activities. The deeply embedded culture that spanned the spheres of power, task and organizational procedures and rules was paid attention to. The key characteristics of the process and how they felt their contributions were also valued. The questions related to the study of Mantere and Vaara (2008) highlighted the kinds of discourses that facilitated or impeded participation in strategy processes. The questions concerned the participants' roles; their conception of strategy; perceptions about the practices; and the working environment. I tried to make sense of the discussions, as well as the evaluation of the participants' demeanour during the discussions. The other one-on-one interview sessions, though fewer, occurred beyond the unfreezing stage. They occurred for different reasons. The discussions ranged from follow-up on happenings during the meetings. There were also routine checks that I made concerning how the

participants coped with the process. These were critical because they were meant to address any emergent issues and the issues concerning the participants' situations and factors meant to keep them also tuned to the process (Kelly, 2005). Such sessions helped to establish mutual trust and build respectful relationships that enhanced practices (Arcidiacono et al, 2017).

The Focus Group interactions were constant because most of the interactions happened in group settings and were observed in all the meeting episodes and recorded in field notes. It was different from the interviews where the researcher and the participants relived experiences. The data collected during those meeting interactions covered part of the unfreezing stage and all through the movement stages. The impressions and accounts of participants complemented the field notes because they constituted the researcher's "personalized seeing, hearing, and experiencing in specific social settings" (van Maanen, 2011, pp. 222). These were critical aspects of the research because the information gained formed details of what was observed, including the unspoken reactions and digressions that occurred during discussions. They showed the participants' behaviours and experiences and provided details important for understanding the research issues and the contexts surrounding them (Kruger, and Casey, 2009). According to Jarzabkowski, Bednarek and Lê, 2014, pp. 276) "the quality of a field note does not depend on accurate representation of conversational sequences; rather, it must reproduce the sensation of being there, capture the nuances of the moment, and render these meaningful". The field notes were crucial for the development and description of a research plot and contexts for analysis. These were significant because the ethnographic evidence did not only serve as aide memoirs. "Rather, they contain the researcher's lived experience of a particular moment—such as the atmosphere of a room—which is not easily captured in recordings" (Jarzabkowski, Bednarek and Lê, 2014, pp. 276).

The main features were the conversational processes and the structures that were meant to produce joint accounts of data. Though I considered the initial conversations that occurred in unplanned group sets as some form of focus group, it was important to consider the two features as important. The participants understood the reality and the enormity of the issues. I tried to gauge their dispositions though the main goal was to sensitize them to understanding the issues better. The formal meeting episodes spanned through the episodes that laid out the ground rules of engagement during the unfreezing stage to the last meeting that related to the environmental assessment task. I

facilitated the meetings of the groups at the unfreezing stage. The new rules provided the opportunity for democracy and equality. The dialogic nature empowered the participants to take part in the planning and decision-making process in their meetings. The subsequent meetings were managed by the meeting chairs (the normal three-tier meeting structure changed to a two-tier facilitated by the chairman). The setting of the ground rules was significant because it helped to lessen the possible influence of the moderator. The establishment of a democratic platform also helped to disperse leadership domination. So, both the conversation process and the level of inclusivity were key aspects of the focus group. The technique was characterized as a planned set of conversations concerning a topic by a small number of people. They enjoyed a permissive atmosphere that helped in achieve common purposes and problem-solving. These were possible because the open-response format had synergistic effects that enabled the generation of rich data and an easy flow of ideas (Piercy et al, 2011). The group size, ease of discussions and the use of people involved in a particular issue helped facilitators to manage interactions and to gain in-depth data. The language use was important because information was easily conveyed and was used to achieve functionality and actions. So, the structure of the practices gave insights into the nature of and how ideas were generation to allow diverse perspectives; the level of dialogic encounters; and learning. Although these features were viewed positively, it had a challenge. The purposive nature and the fact that it was usually moderated meant that the facilitator's subjective influences were possible. Such interactions made during normal conversations in a workplace group setup and those about a research process may differ due to the controlled setups, and so may not have the same effect.

The audio-recording tool was another valuable technique used to capture all utterances rapidly during the episodes. That was helpful especially as I sometimes fell behind in getting verbatim notes. It was not initially requested because of the specific requirements to maintain a level of confidentiality. After the first meeting concerning the decisions on the rules of engagement, the recording responsibility shared between me, and a nominee proved challenging. It was decided that an audio device was important to gain the full conversations. Though it could generate large volumes of data, somehow it was cumbersome because it required special care to ensure that only the required details were retrieved. It complemented the gaps in my field notes and most importantly it was useful for the presentation of vignettes that formed an important tool for the research analysis. The vignettes were critical presentation instruments that utilized selected

excerpts that conveyed experiences and exact words. They were considered as selected incidents or moments of value that helped me understand the history, and dynamics of behaviours and helped show links to concepts (Cunliffe, 2011). These contained specific speeches that had distinctive value to the process and detailed interactions between participants in the strategy meetings. They provided vivid and authentic evidence for specific emotions and life-world encounters and their dynamics (Jarzabkowski, Bednarek and Le, 2014). Because they put the reader in the thick of happenings as interactions occurred, they were relevant for research within meetings. Vignettes helped in the understanding of how discourses influenced the text produced as a result of interactions and the contexts that shaped them (Clarke, Kwon and Wodak, 2012). The CDA approaches encouraged intervention in co-construction and schemes that required learning from situations in the environment such as discursive leadership roles. Often described as composite narratives, they portrayed the experiences of multiple participants across settings (Jarzabkowski, Bednarek and Le, 2014). And so were suited because several meetings of different categories of actors performed varied tasks during the stretch of the strategic planning process. They helped in constructing findings, characterizing actors and illuminating the significance of social dynamics. Some of the significant points of reference included the fact that they revealed patterns of behaviours across multiple observations during discursive events They illuminated the situations and related the interactions with the research questions. I explored that because it allowed me to relate theoretical concepts with practice. Hence connecting the link between data and findings. For instance, the heavy influence of power and culture explained the relevance of the speeches of the leaders. The increases in the pressure for change manifested in the meanings drawn from the speeches. They reiterated the purpose of the new way of working as well as the assurance that the process was worthwhile.

The retrieval of secondary data from documents constituted another important way to derive information. They were constantly used through the stages to the end of the process. The sources consisted of data from internal documents (previous minutes of meetings, official electronic mail, management accounts, organizational memos) and external documents (annual reports, industry news releases and scholarly materials). They provided credible data used during the interviews and meeting episodes to convey information and aid a better understanding of the organizational issues. The management accounts of several years gave good examples of the poor financial

returns that continued to get worse. The minutes of meetings reports showed the series of lack of prompt response when project technical incidences occurred.

All these provided an extensive discursive database. They were presented to give meaningful ideas that helped in examining discourses and how discursive practices were used to understand the value of strategic meeting interactions. The chart in Table 3.2 showed two months, the real situation was that the project time ended. However, the process continued due to constant changes in the environment.

Table 3.2. The Activity Chart

Research Stage	Methodology	Text Output	Time - Hours/Days (Approximate)
Refreezing	Discussions/ interviews and meeting events Document Analysis	Diary Logs, Field Notes	30-50 hours/42 days (Approximated because they constituted informal, formal and follow-up interviews)
Movement	Observations; audio records	Field notes and transcribed audio scripts	6 months
Refreezing	Analytical Model (Discourse Historical Approach	Observation Field notes/Transcribed data/Reflective notes.	2 months

3.8. Data Analysis

Creswell (2009, pp. 183) stated that it "involves preparing the data for analysis, conducting different analyses, moving deeper and deeper into understanding the data (some qualitative researchers like to think of this as peeling back the layers of an onion), representing the data, and making an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data". That highlighted that the critical elements included arranging, reflecting, questioning and making notes that enabled data

presentation and analysis. The tables and diagrams summarized the arranged information in meaningful forms. The theoretical base of the CDA focused on the practical resolution of social problems, especially the exposition of power relations that were adjudged to have hidden undertones that revealed such social challenges. The DHA framework provided the means for looking at meanings attached to the discourses found in the language use that allowed or restrained access during the discursive event (meeting interactions) and the power struggles among the actors in the same instances. So, it focused on the language found in the discourses and discursive practices that surround and connect discursive events. The layers of contexts in which they were considered allowed for the integration and triangulation of knowledge "about historical sources and the background of the social and political fields within which discursive events are embedded" (Kwon, Clarke and Wodak, 2009, pp. 278). The retroductive approach enabled the constant back-and-forth movement between theory and empirical data. I had to read and re-read the data to form new insights about existing phenomena so that ideas were refined, and the research themes kept being reviewed.

The analysis was done in two stages. The initial focus was to discover how the texts showed peoples' values and what the regarded as important concerning the organization and the issues that plagued it. I read the data several times in search of the general sense of what the participants were thinking to establish meanings. The informal discussions, the verbatim records in the diary logs and documents formed critical sources for that purpose. The readings meant imagining what the participants understood about the issues, their real concerns and the messages they tried to convey. These were related to whether the issues carried enough weight to warrant their quest to resolve them. The perceptions of strategy and its making produced some results. The participants all desired a change in the practice. The members of the management group, all the participants in the workshop and the two chairs of the projects group were not satisfied. The desired to be more involved in deciding strategic initiatives because they believed they were qualified to make strategic decisions. More intriguing was their belief that strategic decisions were the exclusive turf of experts who possessed the prerequisites in terms of education, experience and skills. The younger and more vibrant members with a smaller number of years of experience, though equally educated and in the projects group, yearned for more involvement. They believed that their knowledge was critical for a change in the fortunes of 'Tech.' The summaries from the informal conversations and the reflections in the diary log after the first set of the semi-structured interviews

indicated that progress was possible through an inclusive strategy process, though some did not believe in total inclusivity. These gave rise to the follow-up interviews and revealed a general discontent with the dominant top-down leadership style. It relegated the first impressions of two workshop participants (the chair and the financial analyst) that the situation was caused by the lack of commitment to the projects' implementation. The other discourse from the same group that the previous control measures were not given enough time to check the organizational situation was also not argued further.

The situation brought to light the important contexts identified as power relations and illustrated the patterns, similarities and power relation issues found in the discourses within the texts. They showed the perceptions of people within a culture of managerial dominance. Such data provided information on the values placed on the issues and how the strategy practice in the meetings had significant effects on organizational life. Understanding the complex contents of organizational life meant identifying that language constructions revealed possibilities and evidence of what prevailed. I problematized the organizational issues by creating provisional ideas or incidences that based on the hegemonic signifiers such as a top-down style of leadership there were possibilities of lack of choice and co-creation. The domination and reduced communication to mere instruction-giving compelled deference behaviours. These perceptions had a significant impact on people's values and practices. A change could be through discursive leadership practices that recognise multiple elements in decision-making have the potential for a different outcome. The data produced were subjected to a dialectical process of understanding how language use shaped and was influenced to show changes in peoples' perspectives and behaviour as connections that offered opportunities for the desired change.

The second stage was directed at the second and third questions of the research. That involved the integration of the different constructions to advance some new meanings that supported the emergence of discourse. From the categorizations of the themes and the regularities around them. The meanings adduced to power relations situations explicitly used the various discursive strategies to identify the nature of inclusivity as they related to the constructions. I read deeper 'between the lines' to check for the vocabulary and the rhetoric. The discursive constructions introduced ideas and thoughts to support arguments regarding the practices as the aim was to resolve the organizational issues. I used both linguistic resources to examine how strategy work

was influenced by discourses and the outcomes of the behaviours during the meetings. The texts and the contexts that influenced them were important for the explanation of how organizational actors interacted (Cooren, 2006). Understanding the empirical phenomenon that illustrated the relationship between the intent and action of participants helped to analyse their underlying agendas and values and what they did. The role of discourse in the production and reproduction of power (van Dijk, 2001). It described and interpreted discourse in a context that illuminated why and how discourses worked. The different backgrounds of the participants and the increasing need to gain more robust insights meant that the infusion of education, experience and modern ideologies in leadership called for diffusion across organizations.

The ethnographic and case study features that encouraged looking into the research set-up and the characteristics of the participants helped the qualitative research to go deep to build additional layers into social situations that were often complex.

3.9. Criticality in the Analysis - CDA

The theorization of the CDA highlighted the fact that discourses were historical regarding the contexts in which they happened (Glynos and Howath, 2018). The attention paid to the knowledge produced, critiquing and the challenging of assumptions that brought about changes helped to understand the criticality of the CDA.

The CDA produced knowledge by explaining ways language was linked to society through the researcher's interpretations of what occurred and why they did. The illustrations of the relationship between events and the situations that produced texts allowed the researcher to 'turn back' to make sense of and interpret the data collected using varied techniques. These related to the researcher's way of capturing the nature of reality and knowledge and more importantly, the complex, interactional and emergent nature of the researcher's own social experience. The reflexive actions included examining the details that included the taken-for-granted actions, language and all other things they were engaged in organizing activities. They used the opportunities to deconstruct their constructions of realities and knowledge (Cunliffe, 2011). Being reflective was based on the deconstructionist and constructionist perspectives that opened up opportunities that enabled the understanding of the issues, the contexts that influenced them and social practices as they related to philosophical assumptions and the sense made of the researcher's experience. The variability in

reflexivity that emerged from multiple actors and sources helped to explore different shades of information and traced practices at both the micro and macro scales over time and different levels of contexts. Also closely related was the premise of the thick description-like approach. Geertz (1973) posited that recognizing symbols and contexts and how they were representative of the interpretations of multiple actors meant undertaking deep exploration beyond surface behaviours. The CDA, through its variant the DHA was able to tease meanings attached to texts that went beyond face value because layers of contexts helped in establishing the rigor of the research.

The aspect of critiquing related to the understanding of work. It meant having a better understanding of the issues than the literary meanings, suggesting that the data collected was examined thoroughly from different perspectives. Wodak and Meyer (2001) explained that the DHA was used in the historical properties concerning the research themes since they were connected diachronically and synchronically with other communicative events. The framework specifically tried to give a new perspective by looking at how meaning and action performed in organizations were shaped discursively through power relations and ideology. In that form, the discursive manifestations across four heuristics 'levels of context' and various kinds of texts were integrated. "The DHA enables the systematic, explicit and transparent (thus reproductive) analysis of the historical dimension of discursive practices by exploring how particular genres of discourse are subject to change over time, and also by integrating social theories to explain the context" (Wodak, 2011, pp. 628).

The feature of allowing multiple insights helped to explain the critical stance on inclusion and the emancipatory imagery of the CDA. The power in discourse was sometimes illustrated through the discursive struggles that related to having different interpretations based on the positional interests of actors that were complicated due to the inclusive practices among them. The practice challenged the assumption that strategy work decision-making distorted power relations. The known discourses surrounding strategy work were that it was exclusively a managerial role promoted and re-produced in non-egalitarian structures that encouraged inequality. As a practice, it enabled social change the CDA was aimed at addressing such power inequality (Wodak and Meyer, 2001). The need to focus on voice, democracy and equality gave credence to the explanations about power inequality, fairness, and the need for dialogic encounters. The reflective notes helped in the deconstruction for further understanding of the contexts that influenced the values and behaviour.

The notes captured bodily expressions and possible emotional attachment helped through studying the reflective notes. The CDA lacked explicit standard models of analysis (Phillips et al., 2008). Hence, it was important to develop innovative data analysis techniques that incorporated critical frames "rooted in 'critical theory' and oriented towards critiquing, challenging and changing society" (Clarke, Kwon and Wodak, 2012, pp. 458). The associations with various concepts some of which were Foucault's (1972) theory of ideology, Bakhtin's (1986) genre theory and the fact that discourse could be interpreted in different ways, depending on the audience and the contextual data (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997) might have been responsible for a lack of clear-cut standard or delimited method of analysis.

3.10. Validity, Rigor, and Limitations in the Research Process

The validity and rigour of the research were crucial because they related to the credibility of the results. The level of accuracy was fundamental because the results were expected to be truly representative of reality and adhere to acceptable scientific standards (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2008). The acceptable quality of research depended on how objective and truly representative researchers provided generalized conclusions. The various types of validity included construct validity (use of the appropriate measures to conduct the research); internal validity (established causal relationships of variables); external validity (generalizability of research findings); and reliability (the research approach used was consistent within fields of research). These meant that the procedures and approaches used led to the generation of relevant and reliable data.

The AR orientation demonstrated credibility based on the adoption of the positivist inclination towards the objective stance of scientific methodology. The problem-solving approach followed a systematic process of problem identification through an initial fact-finding that articulated the issues and the theoretical concepts that surrounded them (Coghlan and Brannick, 2010). The collaborative feature focused on human involvement and the construction of meanings through questioning assumptions and obtaining first-hand experiences based on knowledge and expertise. The understanding of the issues and the commitment to resolving them were through gaining accurate information and constructions of true meanings (Fairclough, 1992).

Though the qualitative approach encouraged subjective interpretations the use of a robust critical discourse analytical frame helped to capture all actions. The accuracy was justified by capturing the socially situated practices (social actions and interactions) produced using different collection techniques enabling the triangulation of data that justified the building of coherent themes. The rigorous analysis of the dynamic events required the use of a reliable methodology such as the CDA that recognized the interrogation of texts from natural settings and the influence of social, political, and cultural factors, especially power relations (Gee, 2005). The pursuit of that goal meant using the DHA form of CDA that used linguistic resources to frame and control communicative practices based on the understanding of the historical dimensions of social practices within multiple layers of context. The systematic analysis used some of the discursive strategies in microanalysis such as nomination, predication and argumentation as modes of building meanings and how the situated meanings were used to predict outcomes.

The researcher's role as an insider and the management staff in charge of the strategic planning had the advantage of pre-understanding the system and its culture. The organizational struggles due to incessant poor financial performance and projects' operational deficiencies were a serious threat shared by many. That meant participants were on the same page and had the desire for the change. Cunliffe and Karunanayake's (2013) topology of hyphen-spaces of 'insiderness-outsideness' underscored the situation. Being an integral part of the organization and responsible for the operations of strategic planning qualified me as an insider. However, being a member of the management that naturally dominated strategic decision-making and the perception that change agents challenged the status quo made me an outsider. These outsider positions enabled me to have their positive side because that helped me maintain a level of neutrality and the consciousness to do things right.

The ethical considerations covered some procedural issues. The participants formally accepted their role through a signed consent letter. It was explained that their involvement was voluntary and that they were not obligated to do so because they were free to withdraw at any time for any reason. They were fully informed of the objectives of the research and given assurances on both the confidentiality of their opinions and the understanding that they were protected from any form of psychological or physical harm.

The limitations of the research were obvious. The time spent in the field did not seem adequate to generate long-standing data that addressed organizational culture within eighteen months. The full effects of cultural change normally take a long period because "culture was usually fairly stable and rooted, it is difficult, although possible, to change" (Kulvinskienė and Šeimienė, 2009, pp. 30). But that was ameliorated through the learning implication. The opportunity and grounds for dialogue encouraged participants to own the research and work to achieve the goals. The supportive role of management in driving change is enormous because from different angles such as the visionary function of creating change strategies; and empowerment by enacting supportive styles and structures that inspire employees to engage in positive attitudes (Heracleous et al., 2018).

The essence of generalization in research was based on making findings valuable for management knowledge and practice. The replication of results was a general challenge in qualitative research (Gibbs 2007). For modern organizations what defines them is their size, the industry they belong to, their location and how they adapted to changes in their environment. So, they were confronted with distinct issues and so perfect replications were hardly realistic. The research tried a problem-oriented CDA approach that documented and explained the research procedure.

Conclusion

The ontological and epistemological assumptions were based on the Critical Realism. These gave insights into what the research desired to achieve and how to proceed to accomplish that. The overall approach was qualitative to satisfy the objective of generating knowledge based on the experiences of participants in their natural settings (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2008). The effort required in-depth and up-close formats that made it possible to interact directly through conversations and observations within a small sample of participants over time (Creswell, 2009). These specific ways of developing knowledge in research held similarities with the AR orientation of the process pursued change in my organization through the improvement of practice. The AR emphasized the use of practitioners' knowledge through democratically formulated consensus that produces practical changes with empowerment effects (Winter and Munn-Giddings, 2001).

The orientation enabled me to use the CDA theoretical commitments to discourse as an element of social process that helped to explain and interpret the meaning of how the organizations worked,

especially in the establishment and representation of institutional values. The focus on what to achieve and how to get about that relied on how the data generated used language forms in texts produced during the process to analyse the solution. Its greatest value rested with the "use in a social context and a stronger attention to the responsiveness to discourse" (Alvesson and Karreman, 2011, pp. 1141). That meant that undertaking intervention processes in a talk and texted based process that investigated discursive practices used appropriate empirical research strategies, interpretive systems and analytical frames.

Chapter 4

Findings

4.1 Introduction

The findings presented the data generated for the research goals. The objective was to help resolve the dwindling financial performance and the operational challenges experienced in the project's delivery. A brief recall of the old practice in 'Tech' highlighted aspects of the previous activities. The practices formed the backbone of cultural systems that looked at the social practices in strategy that were assumed to have been responsible for the situation. The transformation from the top-down style that encouraged domination to a collaborative system that ensured democratic practices on equal footing was undertaken given the resolution of the organizational problems.

The CDA methodology was used for the achievement of the desired results through the exploration of language use. The use of communicative practices influenced organizational life because discursive leadership roles helped the members, individually and as group members, to make sense of their tasks, the challenges they faced and the opportunities around them. These suggested that members' perceptions and behaviour influenced practices in terms of how they worked and the work systems to produce outcomes. So, the ways to organize work, communicate and build collective effort in pursuit of organizational outcomes were anchored on the leadership communicative roles. The meetings were discursive events for the communicative accomplishment of strategy practices and processes (Cooren et al., 2015). The data examined included the texts associated with the data generated from how texts were produced and used and the broader social contexts that influenced the practice (Fairclough 1995). These illustrated how change was achieved through the adoption of discursive practices to purposefully engage members in ways that mobilized their collective energies; the coordination of work; and group cohesiveness.

The chapter covered distinct parts; an overview of the organization and the practices in section 4.2. The focus on the activities that covered the stages of the planned actions were highlighted in Sections 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5. These involved outline how actions were used to address the questions and the operationalization of the discursive tools that produced results. The insights showed that the understanding of participation was important in resolving the issues in 'Tech because the gains from a more diverse knowledge resulted in the enhancement of the strategic plan content and the creation of commitments.

4.2. Overview of Strategy Practice in 'Tech'

The strategic planning process in 'Tech' was structured within three hierarchical layers of meetings (management, workshop and project implementation) that performed the functional roles of formulation and execution. The fundamental aspects were that:

- The strategic project initiatives were decided at the top. The workshop meeting conceptualized strategic project planning with the use of models and analytical frameworks for implementation by the project group.

- The meeting chairs dominated meeting interactions and decision making which manifested in interactional asymmetry (Asmuß and Svennevig, 2009)

- The third feature was that of inequality based on the perception that the strategy process was structured hierarchically and in an order of importance.

The chairman alone decided on strategic initiatives and transmitted the documents to the workshop group to analyse and develop models for implementation. The chairs at the project levels made the major decisions. They dominated practices, designed schedules and apportioned workloads to the members for the actual implementation.

The norm of exclusivity did not exist at the workshop group level and that was exceptional because the strategy development plan involved robust debates among the experts in different fields. The overall perceptions among those I interviewed were based on the ideology that leaders were the main drivers of strategy and problem-solving. These practices illuminated the role of politics and the dominant discourse on the cognitive superiority of the leaders. The assumptions were that they legitimately held formal authority and some studies argued that power on a team was related to organizational performance (Anderson and Brown, 2010). Under their position, the leaders were more knowledgeable based on seniority, expertise, and experience. The practice was neither democratic nor collaborative. The leaders communicated by giving instructions and expecting compliance.

The research viewed that both micro and macro power were seen in the day-to-day relationships in terms of decision-making and the control of activities. The task systems institutionalized power and the structures encouraged traditional ideas that promoted and justified managerial dominance. Tost, Gino and Larrick, (2013) explained that sometimes asymmetry power influences team

interactions and decision-making processes with negative consequences on team performance. Strategic planning practices were also rife with domination (Whittington, Cailluet, and. Yakis-Douglas, 2011) and often leadership actions were regarded as uncontested forms of influence from the top (Collinson and Tourish, 2015). The top-down one-way downward communication; and control of decision-making were all structural barriers that stifled collaboration and the free contribution of those marginalized. The imposition of initiatives, centralization and employee silence manifested in negative emotions and behaviours such as fear, apathy, frustration and unwillingness (Morrisson, 2014) as problematized in Figure 1.1. The stratified social structure of meetings created an organizational reality of superiority and inferiority. The tasks at the top functioned as being more valued than those below them creating social segregation. Such hegemonic situations created tension and resistance resulting in the unwillingness to put enough energy and the feeling of oppression (Rankatari and Vaara, 2016). The practices influenced the use of meeting protocols to aid interactions for both task-oriented and socially constructed purposes that helped to achieve organizational goals. Several scholars have advocated that strategy work is more rewarding with the inclusion of all concerned (Balogun et al., 2015; Raelin, 2016). That perspective favoured the more realistic macro power that looked at the use of language through the influence of discourse.

Lewin's (1951) model of Unfreezing-Moving-Refreezing was adopted to resolve the issues. The planned change through planned phases of interventions. Some other scholars who studied change in organizations included Kotter (1995); Armenakis, Harris, and Field (1999). Kotter (1995) recommended eight steps. The important ones included the creation of a sense of urgency; visioning, in terms of developing ideas and solutions; communication of the vision; and empowering actions that removed structural restrictions on policies and procedures. The plan clearly described careful work and diligence in stated paths to achieve success. Armenakis, Harris, and Field (1999) had five components that included looking for the discrepancy that qualified a change; understanding the organizational capability to achieve the change; assessing if the change was beneficial; ensuring that those concerned were part of the effort; the appropriateness of the change for the organization. These were accomplished through the use of distinctive communicative practices that delivered convincing messages and contextual factors. Some scholars have argued for plurality in performing leadership roles in strategy work (Balogun et al.,

2015; Raelin, 2016). A more realistic macro power looked at the use of language through the influence of discourse.

4.3. Unfreezing

Lewin (1947) argued that the driving force for organizational change was human behaviour. To achieve that required making efforts to understand people's perceptions and their readiness to amend their attitudes. The main activities occurred during the initial informal group discussions the one-on-one interviews with the sixteen participants and the follow-up discussions.

4.3.1. Informal Discussions

Figure 4.2 shows several informal discussions written down in notes soon after they occurred. The accounts presented represented a handful and they were representative of categories of participants and offered knowledgeable insight regarding the organizational issues. I used a manual assessment to pick out the events. The need for change was obvious. The data showed that the members were troubled about the situation and understood the consequences if the situation continued. The first, event #1, revealed that those at the highest level were concerned about the problem and the fact that the situation had deteriorated even after the enactment of more control measures was worrisome. Event #2 summed up the psychological mind-set of a member at the lower level. That provided insight into the level of awareness, apprehensions and the readiness for change. The opinion on power relationships and passion was revealing. The workshop members in event #3 believed that the problems related to project implementation and that monitoring was supposed to be their turf. They were also not satisfied with the imposition of strategic initiatives from the top because they believed that they had the intellectual capacity to make such important decisions. The project group chair in event #4 was passionate about the situation and felt disappointed or even frustrated that their exclusion in decisions concerning strategic initiatives was bad enough. He insinuated that the additional control measure was a waste of time for those regarded as implementers. *To him, operational governance required special skills and was important for strategic implementation. He mentioned that those in his team were naturally level-headed and always ready to listen and take instructions. The researcher said that looking inwards into what one does to find out more especially those issues that are not readily visible was important.* These summed up his level of concern and willingness to seek a resolution. I used the occasion of the

need for change to introduce and highlight the intervention features and benefits of AR. I explained that the approach was novel and capable of achieving the desired change. The personal benefits related to improved practice through empowered voice and learning (Dick, 2015). I explained that it was a practical way of solving problems.

Figure 4.1. Informal Conversations

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">**Informal Conversations**</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">**EVENT #1**

Waiting for the commencement of the management meeting</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">*Participants - Three (3).*
Researcher (prospecting); Director;
Management Meeting member
Topic: Issues concerning project
failures.

The Director worried that despite the control measure, there seemed to be no change. The management meeting member clarified that there needed to be a change. The fact that the measures did not make an impact and suspected that there seemed to be a negative feeling of apathy among the implementers. The expectations were that things might even get worse. The executive director suggested a look at training sessions where the organization's vision and values were explained and the need to look beyond the situation.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">**EVENT #2**

Conferment of a Traditional Honour on the Chairman</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">*Participants - Two (2).*
Researcher and Project Group
Member
Topic(s): (a) The situation in 'Tech'
(b) The research (proposed)

The member had significant expertise and experience. He had been in the organization from its inception and developed himself through various training and scholarship pursuits. He had a strong personality and enjoyed the respect of both members and the project group meeting chairs.

He was worried that the financial returns kept getting worse. The organizational situation was not encouraging and there seemed to be a lot of operational difficulties. The member attributed that the situation is bad enough because they cannot exercise any form of self-discovery and try to find solutions to emergent</td></tr>
</table>

issues. The time it normally takes to make a report on an issue and transmit it to the manager was too long to respond to emergencies. There was a feeling of frustration.

The researcher explained the basic elements and sent him electronic papers on AR. The explanation highlighted the benefits of inclusion, improvement of practice and analytical skills through learning. He asked for a copy of excerpts on the Action Research methodology. The member wondered if that could happen because meeting chairs might feel worried that their power over members would diminish. The researcher said that the process worked in organizations and should work here.

EVENT #3

Lunch Time Conversations

Participants: Four (4)
Researcher, Chair Workshop Group
and two (2) members of the workshop
meeting
Topic(s)   (1) The organizational
situation
(2) Competition and Market Risks
(3) National Economic Outlook
(4) The Project (Proposed)

The notes made concerned (1) and (4)

The chair has been a vocal personality on the negative trend and championed the use of structural control measures for project implementation and to check cost inefficiencies. He was adamant about the failure of the control management, advocating continued close monitoring and daily reporting. The members shared the opinion that the national economy is not as bad as it seemed. One said that competitors were finding new ways to get around things. They said that not being involved in the scheme of things was to the detriment of the organization based on the wealth of expertise and experiences. They felt that their exposure to gathering inputs from inside and from the external environment meant that they were the 'brain box' of the organization. Their knowledge was good enough for strategic formulation and implementation.

The researcher's contribution was that the strategic planning process needed to be viewed instead of fragmenting it into formulation and implementation. The two were not separate. The stratification sometimes made people assume that the big decisions at the formulation. As such implementation suffered because it was regarded as being a less important task. The chair said that his committee examined various aspects before concluding that the problem was because they were not involved in the formulation and that with a good control measure that adhered to strict compliance, the organization was going to get on track again.

The researcher tried to explain that deep involvement was the most critical issue. The research was not necessarily meant to seek answers to the situation. It regarded all tasks, thinking, analyses, initiating and developing models of operation as important as the execution. That way, the people's expertise was recognized and used to seek the solutions to practical problems as they understood them.

EVENT #4
Office of the Project Manager

Participants: Two (2) Researcher, One of the Project Group chairs
Topic(s)   (1) The situation
*   (2) Execution Challenges*
*   (3) The Research (proposed)*

The project chair was visibly worried about the situation and more so there was nothing to show that things were getting better. The control measures put in place seemed like a waste of time and resources. The researcher did not want to say much at that initial meeting because there seemed to be so much to be said. He wondered whether using control instruments was considered an impediment. To him, operational governance required special skills and was important for strategic implementation. He mentioned that those in his team were naturally level-headed and always ready to listen and take instructions. The researcher said that looking inwards into what one does to find out more especially those issues that are not readily visible was important. The research being proposed was intended to do things collectively, especially for implementation. The new research theme is collaboration. The orientation included planning and acting to achieve better understanding through learning and greeted commitment towards achieving desirable outcomes. The process helped in the improvement of practices through skills development and added knowledge and was important in ensuring the capacity to learn more; instil self-regulation; and develop insightful reasoning.

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4.3.2. Formal Interviews

The results from the initial formal interviews and the follow-up discussions are highlighted in Table 4.2a and Table 4.2b. The questions were related to the participants' perceptions and understanding of strategic planning; the roles they played; how they viewed the practice ant the work environment; and their expectations.

They all acknowledged the importance of strategic planning to the functioning of the organizations. The management meeting member and the Director went to the extent of proffering solutions; the workshop members felt their contributions were important in the whole process; one of the project group chairs was worried that the measures taken had not yielded good results. The

most important discourses were that the process was a strategy that required expert knowledge and experience and that the organization's survival was at stake. Both the highly positioned and others believed that they had the educational background for that.

The current practice and the key characteristics of the process did not sit well with many. The centralized system showed through the chairman's view that strategic planning was a 'stake' activity that required a top management role. The members at the management meeting, all participants at the workshop meeting and the projects level chairs felt that they did not contribute enough because they were not involved in choosing the projects to undertake. Specifically, one of the workshop group members referred to the group as the '*brain box*' of the organization and added that it should be their responsibility to conceptualize and monitor the enactment of the projects. The project group meeting chairs made their claim based on their educational backgrounds and long experiences in project execution. One said, '*there was no need to distinguish the formulation from the implementation.*'

Those in the lowest position, project group members felt that they were far removed from the system and hardly related their contributions. They suffered from two angles. The not involved in deciding strategic projects and they suffered from the corporate culture that reinforced the hegemonic tendencies of their chairs. I asked about how they perceived the strategic planning process; I received intense responses ranging from being surprised at my question; detachment in terms of being insulated from organizational challenges; emotional expressions of frustration and fear. As the encounters progressed, they expressed themselves more freely and passionately. They said their inputs were hardly linked to the project outcome. They maintained that they worked in isolation because they were only handed down instructions on what to do without knowing why.

Table 4.2a. Summary of Results on First Set of Interviews

Key Issues	Chairman	Meeting Chairs	All Meeting Members
The importance of the issue	The situation needed to be resolved.	The issue had significant consequences that must be resolved	The situation was bad, and the resolution was capable of affecting the organization's progress

The understanding of strategy and how it was currently practised	The stakes were high. The management needed to be involved in major decision-making	It was regarded as an important managerial responsibility. But the major decision was handed down	It required logical and fact-based information. The leaders made the decisions
The roles played and the kind of practices	Made strategic decisions and approved the allocation of resources	The workshop group collectively developed strategic models and plans for project implementation	Management group members played passive roles in listening. The project group members conducted directives for implementation. The situation was unacceptable. They showed some form of frustration, reiterating the need for change
The level of contributions and expected changes to resolve the situation.	The need for continued involvement in the formulation and implementation. The likelihood that collaboration would change the situation	Strategy development was key. Change in practices that involved them in major decisions has ford potential positive results	The members of the management and project groups hardly recognized their relevance and desired a collegiate system for renewed effort

Many of them wondered how they were expected to undertake project implementation without playing any role in designing their tasks and without room to give feedback on their experiences. There was a particular complaint regarding the way incidence reports were constructed and reacted to. I deduced that they were frustrated and eager to undertake a process that would bring change and good fortunes to them and the organization. According to Ansoff and McDonnell (1990) strategic planning activities needed to permeate all levels because concentrating decisions at the top produced unworkable solutions. Bryson, Crosby and Bryson (2009) also contended that the experiences and the fulfilment of stakeholder expectations were important factors in achieving strategic goals. The perception was that imposing strategic initiatives was not proper, especially where there were individuals with requisite knowledge and capacity. It was also important to look

at the sociological aspects that reinforced social inequality. The frustrations and alienation made those not involved feel less valued.

I did a set of follow-up interviews with all the sixteen participants. The main reasons were that there was a consensus that change was inevitable and there was a divergence in the quest for an inclusive system. The management group members and the workshop group (meeting chair and the members) felt they had the required expertise and experience to be part of the decision-making and monitoring tasks in project implementation. The workshop group believed that the implementation lacked proper understanding and posed a major impediment to project success. They opined that the control measures were proper and would have checked such anomalies. The project group chairs were on the same page with the other executives based on their expertise and experience. The project members understood their deficiency in not having long experiences, but they felt their education and knowledge were enough to make logical analyses and be involved in the major decision-making. Table 4.2b summarises the responses of participants. They were necessary because though the initial discussions were extensive and lasted for about fifty minutes, the need to resolve how the change was expected to take shape and the overall benefits to both the individuals and the organization was important. I needed to see the effect of the views on all of them. I distributed the summaries to their offices and booked the follow-up interviews at their convenience. The distribution to each of them was accompanied by a pack of documents like annual reports of 'Tech' and industry bulletins, and some related studies. The objective was for them to reflect on their own about the thought processes of other participants. I tried to bring to their consciousness the way others perceived the issues; and how strongly they felt about them. The follow-up lasted between ten to fifteen minutes. They needed to learn more and deeper about the issues and the gravity of not reaching a consensus and doing something concrete to avert organizational failure. The views of others mattered because strategic planning comprised several activities that involved many from the development to the implementation. The acceptance of change increased the chances for change and decreased the pressure on those who insisted on their rights to monopolize the change process. The practices in meetings were considered important in organizational life because they formed a major activity that determined organizational functioning (Scott et al., 2015; Kauffeld and Lehmann-Willenbrock, 2012). These were useful because sensitization was essential for changing perceptions, especially where the motivation and readiness to change were already established.

Table 4.2b Refined Summary of the Follow-up Interviews

Key Issues	Chairman	Meeting Chairs	Meeting Members (Followers)
The importance of the organizational issues.	The issues were understood better through learning more.	Viewed the issue as critical and learned more about others' views	There was an urgent need to address the issue.
How strategy work is expected to be done.	Acknowledged inclusiveness. The experience of others was credible.	The importance of including expert knowledge and the need to work collaboratively	A collegiate structure empowered all.
The anticipated roles.	The widening of decision-making space to gain insights from diverse sources.	The inclusion in major decisions and monitoring of strategy	Active participation in the process
The importance of gaining more insight	Ensured the improvement of competences.	Improved learning and gaining of local knowledge of members	Motivated to seek innovative ways to achieve goals.

The need to understand other people's views made sense to all that there was a need to compromise and do the important things. The acceptance of change encouraged them to begin to behave in new ways. Pressure driven by fear or threat of failure might have played a role in the convergence of ideas. Whittington (2018) offered a broad understanding of the features of great strategies and how they were often made more related to social practices surrounding strategy work. The work-life issues recognized the need to pay attention to behaviours and actions from even the peripheries. So, performance was determined by how leadership was "highly sensitive to context and look out for hidden pockets of expertise" (Whittington, 2018, pp. 345).

Two related points emerged from here. First was that the practical and interlinked nature of strategizing/organising laid credence to a change from the perception that strategic planning was the exclusive function or legitimate responsibility of managers. Whittington et al., (2006) called for the understanding of the everyday practical skills that shaped work and the material they used. The second issue concerned communication because it covered the way strategy was constructed and executed. The aspects of communication and the management of social structures gave life to how the strategy worked.

Figure 4.2. Unfreezing

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                    ┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
                    │                  Unfreezing                      │
                    │                                                  │
                    │  Sensitization through communication that the    │
                    │  current state needed change to get to a desired │
                    │  state                                           │
                    └─────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          │                               │
                          ▼                               ▼
    ┌──────────────────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────────────────┐
    │       Leadership Role        │      │           Member             │
    │                              │      │                              │
    │  Providing support           │◄────►│  Involvement in              │
    │  (emotional, task            │      │  understanding the           │
    │  and political)              │      │  situation and desiring      │
    │                              │      │  the change.                 │
    └──────────────────────────────┘      └──────────────────────────────┘
                          │                               │
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         ┌───────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
         │                       Results                         │
         │                                                       │
         │  Participation led to diverse inputs for              │
         │  decision-making.                                     │
         │                                                       │
         │  Commitment to the process and the outcome            │
         │                                                       │
         │  Empowerment in authority and responsibility          │
         └───────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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The role of communication in organizing was critical (Putnam and Nicotera, 2008; Cooren et al., 2015). The setting of the rules and guidelines for the enactment of the new practices had four major elements that influenced the implementation including power relations, information sharing/communicative practice, knowledge creation and skills development (Hussain et al., 2018). So how groups arranged their activities (structures) and behaviours (decision-making and mechanisms) impacted outcomes based on how leaders played their roles (Keyton, et al, 2013).

Figure 4.2 summarises the unfreezing stage of the process. The communication and sharing of facts and experiences aided individual learning and the motivation to work towards the change. The leaders crafted messages and involved members in ways that produced diverse inputs. It empowered members whose meaningful engagement developed into a culture of commitment to goals. The leaders were the change agents who infused changes that impacted both the tasks and the social dimensions of work (Hussain et al., 2018). The result manifested in the acceptance to unlearn old behaviours and to adopt new behaviours. The enactment of a process that involved all

participants with their contributions meant that members' involvement became effective through empowering their authority and responsibility (Mathieu et al., 2006).

4.4. Movement

4.4.1. The Changing/Implementation Process

Figure 4.3 shows the actual implementation process that marked the transformation from the status quo towards the new state. The change from a transactional system to a more relational way of working was aimed at having enduring effects on perceptions and behaviours.

I will summarize what emerged as a change in power imbalances through the enactment of collaborative work. Armenakis and Harris (2003) argued that three elements were vital and included active participation, effective communication, and the management of internal and external information. The influence of leadership was critical because it provided the structures or supportive climates that sustained the change. Learning and improved practice were facilitated through critical thinking and commitment.

Figure 4.3. Movement (Implementation)

Changing
Transiting or moving marked by implementing change through actions to get to a desired state

Leadership Role		Member
Setting guidelines for work. Managing and coordinating activities. Sustaining momentum and support in problem-solving and helping to form social alliances	⟷	Sharing information for task accomplishment and decision-making Contributing to problem-solving

Results

Elimination of resistance and uncertainty

Learning

Commitment to the process and the outcome

Empowerment in authority and responsibility

4.3.2. Meeting One

I moderated the first set of meetings in all the groups. I recorded experiences using observational field notes. It was difficult to achieve verbatim records because I controlled the flow of interactions and at the same time jotted down points and subsequently reworked them manually. Though there was an element of sensitization associated with the meeting, it was an implementation action. The major goal was the setting of guidelines and rules of practice in the meetings. The rules established democratic and equality tenets that covered the pre-meeting and the facilitation activities. That was a shift from the practice of instruction-giving and information dissemination style meeting chairs at the management and project levels. The previous was described as the "classical and most pervasive view of communication suggests that the process involves a sender who transmits the message to a receiver, who in turn translates, interprets, and acts on that message" (Ruben and Gigliotti, 2016, pp. 3). It was expected that the message input was equal to the output. That informed the relevance of the traditional leadership theories and the neglect of the alternative views that the human elements were critical to social behaviours. The new ways were expected to promote the building of ideas collectively, information sharing, ensuring a positive group mood and team learning.

The meeting had the focus group features in terms of the small number of individuals with similar functional responsibilities based on experiences, knowledge, and purpose. Kruger and Casey (2009) highlighted that because the interactions were usually done in conducive environments and they deliberated on a specific topic of interest, they connected well based on the eagerness to work collaboratively. The first new guidelines changed the agenda-setting process. The chairs were expected to list the items and send them to members twenty-four hours before the meetings. The participants were already aware of the issues before the meeting, and they tried to understand the issues. The items were subjected to modification and ratification after debate and voting at the beginning of the meeting. The measures promoted dialogues, information exchange and improved capacity. The second was that the meeting interactions were made to manifest transparent turn-taking and topic progression because the process allowed for taking turns based on the sitting arrangement. The orderliness also allowed every member to speak. The subject matter was discussed before moving to the next. These motivated members to contribute ideas. The third had to do with the minutes of the meeting. A member of the meeting group was nominated to take notes for the organization's internal documentation. I was also meant to take notes. The challenges experienced due to disruptions in conversations and trying to capture some points led to a fourth decision. The meetings decided to include audio recordings to enable the capturing of all the details.

The modes of operation were so important to the research because they signalled real changes in the social structure of 'Tech.' There was a shift from a hierarchical to a horizontal system that facilitated collaborative communicative practices that were essential to organizational functioning (Rogelberg et al., 2006; Kauffeld and Lehman-Wilenbrock, 2012). The perceptions about procedural instruments being used to organize functional interactions were rightly utilized for problem-solving that involved dialogues and feedback mechanisms in action planning and execution.

4.3.3. Meeting Two

The meeting two episodes in all the meetings had two agendas. The first was the meeting chairs' addresses that reaffirmed the management's support for the new change process. Their address of the chairman and one of the chairs in the project meeting reiterated the gravity of the situation and the essence of joint activity to ensure the success of the process. The second agenda item concerned

an ongoing project. Figure 4.4a. (Vignette 1) was the excerpt from the management meeting that included the other meeting chairs (workshop, and the two project groups chairs). Figure 4.4b. (Vignette 2) was the address of one of the project group chairs in a joint session of the sub-groups.

Both illustrated the essence of power relations and persuasive communication. They deployed various strategies to achieve the goal of change. They captured the importance of the change for the individuals and the organization. Ruben and Gigliotti (2016) argued that the influence of members individually and as a group manifested in how they make sense of the dynamics of social life. The language-use depicted transparency by admitting that things were not good and then giving assurances that collective efforts would achieve success. These were supportive attitudes that helped to eliminate doubts, encouraged exchanges, and established a commitment to the change. The addresses of both the chairman and one of the project meeting chairs were encouraging and supportive. That was in line with the view that motivating language, an oral-communicative strategy achieved positive task performance and other organizational system results (Mayfield, Mayfield, Sharbrough III, 2015). They used goal-oriented discursive strategies to influence behaviours. The collectivist culture prevalent in Africa included relational aspects of desired social harmony (Hofstede, 1980). One of the project group members commented, that *engaging us well will give us confidence to think and work, but we are looked at as different and not valued*. The impression is that he was talking for himself and on behalf of others. Apart from providing an understanding of the organizational goals through adequate information and reducing the feelings of uncertainty Armnakis and Harris (2002, pp.169) explained that messages that conveyed change and the assurance that peoples' views were important sent positive "sentiments that determine reactions to the change". The collegiate structure in practice was important for generating diverse knowledge that potentially informed an enriched content of the process and the plan.

Figure 4.4a Vignette # 1

'*Good day, colleagues. We have been seeking ways to find a solution to meet our project goals and you are all aware of how badly we need to change the situation. We recounted reasons for the situation during our previous meetings here and elsewhere and pointed to some which were controllable and others which have affected our industry in general. We did not rest there. …. We had taken some structural measures to address the situation with no appreciable impact. You all have been supportive, contributing immensely to organizational change and development efforts…. This new attempt though primarily meant to fulfil an academic objective would have profound results. I say this because I have done an extensive study of the themes and with my experience in organizations, the human element of organizing remains the threshold of the maximum value for success…. We need to learn more about how our activities generate possibilities that impact the work we do. What I mean is that we need to pay attention to how our efforts help to meet project expectations and at the same time appropriate the same to our level of success in terms of being competitive and gaining capacity. We need to incorporate the new objective of getting every-one-on-board in our normal strategy work to ensure cooperative arrangement where we jointly create objectives and work towards achieving them.*'

Figure 4.4b. Vignette # 2

'*Good morning, ladies, and gentlemen. Today is an important day because it marks the beginning of a process where you all are expected to contribute to the meeting deliberations. My colleague and I are particularly thrilled that you are going to be more involved in scheduling and planning specification requirements for project implementation; management and selection of resources; and assessing contents of skill competencies improvements…. We have not managed the changes that come with the realities of uncertainty in project implementation. However, the latest management attitude has been helpful because the level of collective engagement in developing strategy and problem analysis would enable more realistic options valuation. We believe that the practical issue of assigning more conceivable details based on information from what is considered the downstream issues would enable decision-making that directly affects our customers. …. We will get better by being directly involved.*'

The second agenda item was the evaluation of the ongoing IT Project. The project was for the installation of high-end power solutions equipment, provision of IT infrastructure and their network connections in ten (six regional and four operational) offices of a government agency that regulated electrification in the country. The discussion was based on a letter from the government

agency (customer) to scale down the project following the effects of the global economic recession. The directive was that each group should look at the documents and make recommendations on the way forward. The customer had requested a reduction of the scope of the project to the range of fifty-five to seventy per cent (55% -70%). The meeting groups met and produced different proposals. The reports resulted from joint efforts and knowledge sharing at various levels. The reports were highlighted in Figure 4.5a, Figure 4.5b and Figure 4.5c.

The management report in Figure 4.5a recommended a reduction to six (6) regional offices which represented fifty-seven per cent (57%) compared to the original scope. The cost and benefit implications were not stated as part of the deliberations. The workshop meeting (Figure 4.5b) recommended the implementation of six offices (three regional and three operational). That information relied on the previous progress report prepared two weeks earlier. The installation of power solutions equipment and the IT infrastructure (including network cabling) had been completed to a level of thirty-eight per cent (38%). The estimated completion for the three (3) regional offices was seventy per cent (70%) completed. The three (3) operational offices were fifty per cent (50%) completed. The combination represented a fifty-five per cent (55%) reduction in the contract value. That matched with the new scope, though the estimated profit margin was three per cent (3%). The project group report was the most recent. They obtained up-to-date information presented in Figure 4.5c and recommended three (3) regional and four (4) operational offices. It indicated that work had been completed in three (3) regional offices in contrast to the workshop group report of seventy per cent (70%). The regional offices served administrative functions with fewer operational facilities and the installation of high-end power-solution equipment and IT infrastructure, and their network connections were ready. The decommissioning work on previous infrastructure in three operational offices had just been completed. What was required to complete the network connections in the three operational offices and the fourth one required only a few days to be completed and the work materials were already available. The completion of work in the three (3) regional and four (4) operational offices when completed guaranteed a fifty per cent (50%) revenue since payments were tied to operational returns. At that level, the project was sixty-five per cent (65%) of the original scope and the profit margin was estimated at seven per cent (7%). The emphasis on the operational facilities would lessen the risk of payment delays because part of the contract requirements was a direct charge on the agency revenue.

Figure 4.5a I T Project Process Report - Management Meeting

Project: Original Scope

IT Systems Integration of regional (six) and (four) operational offices.

Contract Details:

Design and Implementation of IT Infrastructure

Networking and Cabling in work stations

Providing Power Solution (Installation of Power Equipments)

Project Assessment

The economic situation prompted the scaling down of the project limiting the implementation to six regional offices.

Recomendation
 Project to be scaled down to six (6) regional representing fifty seven percent (57%) of the original scope.

Figure 4.5b IT Project Progress Report - Workshop Meeting

Project: Original Scope

IT Systems Integration of regional (six) and city (four) operational offices.

Contract Details:

Design and Implementation of IT Infrastructure

Networking and Cabling for work stations.

Providing Power Solution (Installation of Power Equipments)

Project Assessment

Recommendation:

Workshop meeting: Insallation of high-end power solution equipment, roll-out of IT infrastructure and the network connections completion level thirty-eight percent (38%) of overall project. Decision to be scaled down to three (3) regional and three (3) operational offices representing fifty five percent (55%) of the original scope.

Figure 4.5c IT Project Progress Report – Project Group Meeting

Project: Original Scope	**Project Assessment**	**Recommendation**
IT Systems Integration of regional (six) and city (four) operational offices. Contract Details: Design and Implementation and Installation of Infrastructure. Networking and Cabling for work stations. Providing Power Solution (Audit and Installation of Power Equipments)	Mnagement meeting :The economic situation prompted the scaling down of the project limiting the implementation to the six regional offices (representing fifty seven percent (57%) of the original scope). Workshop meeting: Insallation of high-end power solution equipment, roll-out of IT infrastructure and the network connections completion level thirty-eight percent (38%) . Decision to be scaled down to three (3) regional and three (3) operational offices representing fifty five percent (55%) of the original scope.	Power solution equipment installed capacity at seventy percent (70%) and hundred percent (100%) cabling and intergration infrastructure in three (3) regional offices. Decommissioning of previous infrastructure completed in three operational centres which serve as major business hubs for agro-allied manufacturing and oil and gas industrial zoness. Project sixty-five percent (65%) of original scope. Fifty percent (50%) balance of project payment dependent on revenues generated by the agency from the operational offices at seven percent (7%)profit.

The board studied the reports and adopted the project group findings and recommendations. It was a well-articulated report. It was obvious that reports of the management and workshop groups lacked sufficient information for decision-making. They showed a lack of coordination and the need for uniform evaluation. The activities around such a fleeting task of project work involved close monitoring, especially repeated evaluation. Even the report ought to be an attempt to gain the latest progress situation. These suggested the lack of coordinating mechanisms required through collaborative organizational work (Jarzabkowski, Lê and Feldman, 2012). The three-tier meeting structure was reconstituted into two groups, the Strategic Projects Meeting (SPM) and the Projects Monitoring Committee (PMC). The chairman was the facilitator of both, and the ground rules remained.

4.3.4 Meeting Three

The third meeting was designated as the first SPM and had one agenda. The purpose was to develop a new project, an environmental assessment of a new cement manufacturing plant. Vignettes #3 (three) and #4 (four) were presented separately, though the interactions belonged to the same meeting moderated by the chairman. The reason for the separation was because vignette #3 related

to the issue of the IT project. Vignette #4 was concerned with a fresh project that was being initiated. Both showed distinct features of leadership discursive roles.

Figure 4.6. Vignette #3

Participant	Remarks
CHAIRMAN	*Now we have seen that this report recommends a reduction to just implementation in only the seven (7) offices which comes down to accommodating about sixty-five per cent (65%) of the original scope. I hope that you (The project meeting chair for IT) ensured that the underneath of every stone was searched. What I am saying is simple. Knowing that we are hardly recouping all our investment so far, there is no doubt that we are going to try to derive as many benefits as possible. Please involve your team to get more details about the resources used. Whatever is not deployed yet should be identified and put to effective use. How about subsequent projects shortly?*
PROJECT MEETING CHAIR	*Yes, sir. I have already informed the supervisor to do a physical check and provide details of the inventory. The analysis would include equipment at the sites, in our warehouses and others in transit that were already shipped by our suppliers. As you mentioned we also need materials for our routine maintenance and the turn-around maintenance agreements due in two months.*
CHAIRMAN	*I agree. The analysis is crucial. We must check and make sure that all the available equipment will be used. We could also explore the possibility of shipping back those we are not sure will be deployed soon. I do not want us to face the risk of having obsolete equipment, remember? Nobody knows when the economy will pick up again. Though the project owners suggest they are willing to renegotiate. But who knows? The level of uncertainty is high. The oil prices are still low, and with the predictions, I do not see a substantial increase in trade based on the figures we read. I do not want to raise my hopes about the future revenues of the government. Who knows? You never can say when that will happen. Those government officials have a way of setting priorities, especially before a general election. I suggest that we try to capture all the potentially idle equipment and ship it back to our suppliers. I understand there is still a window left for that since most of them were negotiated less than four months ago.*
Researcher	*Please I have an observation to make. To my knowledge, the report available was based on their recent assessments. I agree that an up-to-date review was appropriate. The Project chief has a lot of experience in IT systems/infrastructure deployment. This execution is not new to him. The site engineers have been working in the regional offices and have simultaneously worked in operational offices close to those locations. The report should give more details not summaries because IT resources are needed for different purposes.*

PROJECT MEETING CHAIR	*I suggest that the financial analysis is also important for the assignment. We will continue to assess our financial exposure based on present costs. The supervisor will join in because of his familiarity with the work plan and the work achieved. It is critical in some instances to define the level-to-scale deployment to achieve equipment functionality.*
CHAIRMAN	*I believe you can hold virtual meetings that should help to consult with site engineers.*
WORKSHOP MEETING CHAIR	*We had a review session and we analysed extensively the financial implications. That report should be ready on time tomorrow. We may need to incorporate it into the detailed report.*
CHAIRMAN	*But your report is based on the data which the monitoring group also used? Well, get all the details that will do the job. Wherever you can get to help, I do not have any problem with that.*
CHAIRMAN	*I advise that the report should be ready in a few days. It will be better to have it early enough in two or three days. The financial implications depend on what happened at the sites.*

The chairman asked questions and influenced the direction of conversations. In vignette #3, he gave updates on the IT project and instructions concerning inventory audits to determine how to utilize unused resources. The coordination and management of the floor and the direction of discussions showed that the turn-taking routine was not adhered to. The re-utilization of the equipment, preparation of the report on the inventory and instructions on how to go about the tasks were such examples. He asked questions and gave directives to relevant participants based on their areas of expertise. While that was not as democratic as was envisaged, the engagement enabled learning and improved the thinking capacity of participants. The performative power of discourse using rhetorical means to seek actions was prominent because he skilfully combined the argumentation topoi in terms of reality, urgency and salience to enable the members to understand the uncertainty associated with the project in the future and the need to assess the situation with the equipment to ensure that the organization did not incur unnecessary losses with redundant materials. That suggested a mixture of positive and negative attributes that justified the context and were intended to get the members to act to address the situation (Kwon, Clarke and Wodak, 2009). There were no guarantees that the project was going to be renegotiated, and the fear of experiencing loss was allayed because some equipment would be utilized for maintenance functions, and others shipped back to the suppliers. Based on the highlights of the interactions and the patterns of behaviours the conversations showed the use of both the task-related and the socioemotional interacting systems. The elements of planning, distribution of tasks and

information exchanges were connected to the acceptance of the need to work and signs of solidarity in cooperation coexisted to ensure that the task was accomplished and, in the building, an effective team cohesion (Keyton and Beck, 2009).

Figure 4.7. Vignette #4

Meeting deliberations on analysis of the Environmental Impact Assessment Project.	
Participant	*Remarks*
CHAIRMAN	*We are yet into another phase in the quest to change how we have been doing business. I believe we can call it a rebirth because we are beginning to understand what we did and seeking a way forward to do much better things. We are pleased with the urgent attention given to the IT Project report. It was submitted to the agency before the deadline. This morning we made the presentation and the information I received some minutes ago was good. This is encouraging. They expressed satisfaction with the progress and the completion schedule. The test runs of the equipment are ongoing though I understand from the discussions with our site engineers that the majority of them have been concluded without incidents. The government officials assured us of their continued partnership in the future. We are encouraged to strive to continuously improve on providing excellent solutions and delivery services.* *The project we are about to consider is owned by an existing customer and this is a testimony of our ability to deliver functional projects. The customer [….] is diversifying into cement production and construction. …..* *We are required to provide a comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment of the project, taking cognisance of the ecological risks and health hazards for both the workers there and the people living in nearby communities. It is also important to attach the financial implications….* *Our agenda has just one item. Can we still debate on the items? I doubt it.*
MANAGEMENT MEETING MEMBER	*Thank you chair for the address. We feel good that we are focusing on the courses of action that would improve services. We need to build on what we have and generate services that compete well in the industry. If we need an answer to your question on debating the item on the agenda, my answer will be that we go ahead with the discussions on the project without further delay.*
RESEARCHER	*Rules are made for man to follow. But the same man knows that the goal is to channel effort to achieve them. Let us make beneficial use of our time.*

CHAIRMAN	*I hope we are not turning our floor into conversations on philosophical debates. Let us allow our engineers to reason along with us…. [laughter]*
PROJECTS GROUP HEAD	*Yes, as engineers, we need some of these wise sayings. We need to look more into the human side of things. Dealing with figures all day may render our minds mechanistic or should I say freeze our senses[laughter].*
PROJECT GROUP MEMBER	*Site engineers get so involved in human interactions too. Our researcher is human [laughter].*
WORKSHOP GROUP MEMBER	*We need this presentation. Remember that this is our first test in EIA. We are now getting involved in reviewing and utilizing the environmental information needed before project implementation.*
CHAIRMAN	*Good. I gave the brief to the head of the project technical section and his team to prepare a detailed document. That should help us understand what the project is all about and why we need to embark on it. Before the presentation, we expect some wise sayings to help us understand. Is that not the trend? [laughter]*
PROJECT GROUP HEAD	*The presentation is in three parts. I will first take care of the objectives and description of the project and the environmental effects on both the community and the people who would potentially work there. The second will be managed by [….] the Project Member in the technical group. I mean the site supervisor who would analyse the environmental safeguards including the design siting and layout. The economic and technical viability that will enable our customer's decision-making. Then I will summarize the data concerning the financial and technical resource requirement. I will conclude with the significance of the project to our organization. I will begin without any further comments.*

Vignette #4 was based on the development of an environmental impact assessment analysis. The customer needed to build a cement factory and so required the analysis report to obtain government approval. The detailed inputs covered the resource requirements, actions, timelines, and worksheets. The chairman had informed and discussed with a few members who had the prerequisite expertise in the fields of health safety, environment, and finance. They provided an interim report based on the technical and financial implications. The analysis was circulated as the agenda to all participants seventy-two hours before the SPM meeting. The main task interactions were performed through the chairman's leadership efforts in task assignments and coordination. The use of expertise resources to prepare the report for presentation ensured the generation of the appropriate inputs for discussions. Hautz, Seidl and Whittington (2017) argued that though the

trend was to open up spaces for inclusivity in contemporary strategy practices to all those concerned with the activities, the reality was that it had the potential to affect the speed and flexibility in the decision-making process. Another core component of strategic decision-making is related to the quality of inputs. Garbuio, Lovallo and Sibony (2015) argued that how the experienced members engaged in articulating the assumptions underlying fact-based predictions was determined by their level of expertise. It was pointed out that the task required specialized knowledge and that it was the first time the organization performed such a functional task.

The meeting (#4) was primarily task-based. The chairman continued to utilize his position to control the conversations and to give directives. The facilitation process explicitly revealed the argumentative nature of the strategies deployed especially in terms of information transmission, instruction giving, and the persuasive tones used. He did not have to resort to the protocol of putting the agenda item up for debate or voting. The presentation of the plan was better managed by those with expert knowledge and experience because it was a problem-solving function (Angouri and Bargiela-Chiappini, 2011). He asked questions and demanded responses from specific participants. The participants' reactions were observed they enthusiastically answered his questions and gave their own opinions. The interactions were perceived as positive, showing an acceptance of the messages. The behaviour observed during strategy-making processes revealed the participants' perceptions of strategy and how they feel it ought to be practised (Beck and Keyton, 2009). The process depicted a measure of the productive culture of inclusivity because those who contributed did so freely and the others learned (Holmes, Schnurr and Marra, 2007).

In between the task talks were multiple instances of positive relational codes. The expression of reservations about the uncertainties concerning the IT project was not repeated. Rather, he sounded reassuring with the progress made, the customers' expression of satisfaction and the promise of future patronage. An existing customer and participants promoted the new project were '*encouraged to strive continuously.'* The tasks and supportive behaviours attested to the overlapping nature of the task and the socioemotional communications made sense of the social reality in the environment. The general interactions were conducted in a free-flowing manner that had humorous instances. The displays of emotions were situated contributions to discourse that were interpreted as predictive of group outcomes (Liu and Maitlis, 2014). The friendly and positive emotions showed repeated teasing and laughter showed a conducive climate for socialization

(Lehmann-Willenbrock et al., 2020). The new ways of doing strategy resonated with the development of a collaborative system with full political support. The actual changes reflected the new culture that needed to be consolidated for a sustainable practice as expected in the refreezing stage.

4.5. Refreezing

The refreezing stage elements resulted from the impact of a sustained momentum of the new behaviour. The fact that it had become reinforced also suggested that there was a belief that the change was the right thing to do. The benefits derived by both individuals and the organization were reflected in the institutionalization of the new routines. Hussain et al., (2018, pp. 125) summarized the progressive nature as "the motivating change and creating a visual show to the unfreezing or current state of the organization is being considered for change, developing political support and managing the transition shows the moving stage of change and sustaining momentum shows the implementation and refreezing state of the change". The main changes manifested in organizational culture and work practices. The scenic moments that I considered significant were the follow-up interviews; the change in the rules of interactions; and the restructuring of the meeting structure. Meetings three and four showed that the new practice had taken root. It was evolving as situations demanded. The chairman adjusted and adapted the collaborative practices. The co-construction in strategy work showed the importance of experts with the requisite knowledge and experience.

Conclusions

The findings chronicled the events that happened from the beginning to the end of the project. It covered the informal conversations that took place before the formal approval of the research. That showed the issue was already a matter being discussed and the worrisome situation was enough to alarm both the leaders and the members. The formal approval was captured in detail, though it was the events of significant value that were summarized. The findings traced the changes in attitudes and behaviours. All the happenings had both obvious and not-so-visible outcomes.

Chapter Five

Discussions

5.1 Introduction

The discussions were concrete attempts to interpret the research findings and to explain the significance of the results. The outcomes revealed the emergence of new insights. 'Tech' had experienced consistent poor financial performance and the inability to meet operational project timelines. These threatened the survival of the organization. A previous effort instituted to resolve

the situation through the application of strict control measures in the implementation practices was not successful. The situation continued to get worse and needed to be reversed. The research followed a path that did not merely focus on the processes that were thought to generate actions that were linked to performance. A more in-depth investigation into the thinking and doing of strategy. A distinctively practical approach that studied the way practitioners did it. The interest followed in the social and organization practices around strategy was communicative since strategizing was constructed and accomplished through talk, spoken or written. The perspective provided insights into the processes involved in the organizing aspects and the practices that characterized what those involved did. The constitutive roles of discourses needed to be understood by exploring the discursive aspects of strategy and strategizing from a critical angle. I attempted to pursue that by considering three components such as the coherent plans put in place to achieve; the leading roles; and the influence of and on the organizational culture. These were implicated in the communicative practices' roles played by the leaders, the central actors that steered and managed strategy and the organizational contexts, and meetings, which represented discursive events where instances of the social practices that connected the micro-level activities to the macro-outcomes already identified in the organization.

The findings highlighted what occurred, especially seen through the leadership discursive practices that were aimed at effecting changes in the strategic meetings operations to achieve enduring outcomes. The organizational issues were addressed by exploring and understanding the research questions that delved into the significance of meetings as an organizational phenomenon that offered a veritable gateway to changes in organizational practices because they were "essential to accomplish coordination, collaboration, sense-making, and organizational strategy" (Allen and Lehmann-Willenbrock, 2022, pp. 2). It offered a strategic opportunity for organizational purposes to be achieved that primed them as primarily designed to promote decision-making, information sharing and problem-solving (Allen et al., 2014; Angouri and Bargiela-Chiappini, 2011; Leach et al., 2009), group and organizational functioning (Scott et al., 2015), leadership effectiveness (Lehmann-Willenbrock et al., 2017). Questions two and three related to meetings operations in terms of leadership effectiveness offered insights into how as an everyday tool the communicative practices were used to accomplish work, especially in a project-driven organization such as 'Tech.' As important discursive sites, the style and competence of the meeting leaders influenced members' views and behaviours that influenced change processes and the results desired by the

organization (Mroz Yoerger and Allen, 2018; Sauer and Kauffeld, 2015; Kwon, Clarke and Wodak, 2013). The change efforts anchored on the discursive leadership roles were critical to the realization of the research goals since their discursive practices facilitated the sharing of ideas and coordination of work that enhanced collective efforts necessary for the attainment of such strategic goals. The second aspect of the research was that understanding the roles they played meant exploring the skilful ways they crafted purposeful messages as discursive strategies that influenced the values and behaviours of those, they worked with to resolve those issues.

The findings were based on the change in practices that shifted from the top-down one-way communicative style towards collaborative efforts that enabled the generation of wide inputs that improved the strategic plan content and at the same time had an empowering influence that created the commitment to work to achieve strategic goals and sustained the change efforts (Laine and Vaara, 2015). The model used was Lewin's Three-Stage Model of Unfreezing, Moving and Refreezing served as primarily the plots that revealed the main events of the process. The sequence illustrated the impact of behavioural change in obtaining significant organizational results and that the results were a function of environmental conditions. The introduction relieved the challenges faced by the organization and the quest to resolve them. The rest specifically interpreted and analysed the findings as outlined in Chapter Four, based on the stages of Lewin's Three-Stage change model (1947). The last section concluded the discussions.

5.2. Analysis - Unfreezing

5.2.1. Informal Conversations and One-on-One Interviews

The unofficial encounters showed that the potential participants fully understood the gravity of the problem and the passion across the categories suggested their readiness for the change. The two semi-structured interview sessions had significant implications. The questions on how they perceived strategy; the practice; and their level of contributions illustrated their understanding of strategy, its practices and their psychological state. They attached significant importance to strategic planning as an important management tool for guiding business operations. The conversations did not demonstrate passive behaviours. The discussants were forthright and freely expressed. The aspect of strategic readiness was critical because it focused on behaviour.

Armenakis et al., (1999) explained that five key change beliefs underlined the change recipients' motives to support change. They included discrepancy; appropriateness; efficacy; principal support; and valence. The discrepancy element refers to the belief of an existing anomaly in a situation that requires to be changed. The aspect of appropriateness was concerned with the notion that the anticipated changes were the correct ones. The elements of efficacy and principal were crucial aspects in this research. Efficacy was valuable because those involved had the prerequisite ability and skill and the organization itself had the resources and structure to manage complex projects. The principal support and valence were related and considered important because the commitment of those seen as the major decision-makers was expected to have a noteworthy influence on the members. These had the potential to motivate members to belief in the benefits of the change. These factors combined to give meaning to the situation of 'Tech.' Though the participants had diverse levels of functional responsibilities and levels of authority and social status, they all had enough knowledge to understand the situation and the consequences of not addressing the issues. The awareness and readiness for a change were important and the effort was transformative. The movement from a dominant leadership style to the discursive leadership style that functioned democratically needed some mental adjustments and real actions. The changes in the meeting structure and the protocols of communication were instructive. The decision-making process changed, and decision rights were affected. The real movement commenced after the report on the new rules of interactions was approved by the management. That ratification legitimated the process and potentially contributed to the change process and sustained it. These suggested that freedom within the environment created supportive environments for building knowledge, questioning assumptions, and refining perspectives (Marshall and Rossman, 2006). The key thing was the openness that showed transparency and accountability.

The importance of strategy stemmed from the stance it set organizational objectives and planning that helped in directing efforts towards the attainment of goals. That was shared by scholars Ansoff et al., (2001); and Hopkins and Hopkins (1994) account for an association between strategic planning and organizational performance, suggesting that organizations ought to engage in the process and that those that took it seriously were more likely to outperform others that did not. Although some other studies argued specifically that there were no concrete and direct links between them, arguing that the mediating influences needed to be given attention before gaining

an accurate relationship (Greenly, 1994), it was assumed that it was a tool used to improve organizational effectiveness.

The practice was perceived as a high-level task. The decisions were imposed from the top. Those within the workshop level and the project group leaders desired to be part of the formulation decision because they believed that they possessed the capacity for the tasks. The project group members also expected that their knowledge level qualified them for such important roles and contributions. According to one of them, t*hough we are mere implementers regarded as less important even as they occupied the frontline position*. The emerging meanings from diverse sources helped to situate their positions. The responses highlighted the importance of leadership role and their responsibilities. That was based on the general ideas about leadership, about individuals with strong personalities, with the ability and skill to conceptualize organizational objectives. The discursive role of the leader in mobilizing the collective energies and ensuring the coordination of the change looked at the: understanding of the issues and their importance; organizational structures that facilitated or restrained collective practices; and the characteristic composition of those involved in the change.

The leaders had the authority to mobilize others to achieve goals. These attributes mattered since they could achieve strategic thinking and were authorized to manage resources (Anderson and Brown, 2010). The institutional structures that translated to functional responsibilities and governance. The structures were manipulated in ways that meeting chairs dominated meeting interactions and decision-making added to the challenge of the functional distinctions to create a psychological feeling of worthlessness. The maze of alienation resulted from the communication style of top-down one-way and downward flow that the leaders used in the dissemination of information by giving instructions and directives, hence discouraging dialogic and inclusive practices. The empirical study by Mirabeau, Maguire and Hardy (2017) supported some of the points raised because it argued that there was evidence that unrealized strategy included limited participation and dialogue; lack of opened-ended planning across multiple levels; and how the manager consumed the strategy. These were related to the factor of voice efficacy, that is, the implementers' perceptions emanated from the lack of participation in the decision-making process (Van Dyne et al., 2003), and the negative emotions portrayed by defensive behaviours such as apathy, frustration, and stress (Brinsfield, 2013; Pinder and Harlos, 2001).

The composition explained why group variables influenced behaviour. Finkelstein et al., (2009) three conceptual elements of a top management team such as composition, structure and process were used. The varied collective characteristics of those involved shown in section 3.5.2 illustrated that groups of individuals with similar experiences belonged together. The likelihood was that they shared the same values, cognitive bases, personality traits, and experiences. The psychological properties related to the types of responses. Those at the workshop and project-level meeting chairs supported the enactment of the control measures and believed that the problem stemmed from inadequate implementation efforts. The idea of self-preservation behaviour is related to the psychological concept of attribution theory used by social actors to blame others. They believed that their high-level analytical skills put them in good stead to claim that they ought to be involved in the entire process. From the perspective of the chairman and the knowledge about his background, experience, and network capacity his actions in solely deciding the strategic initiatives were explained. Sometimes the need for achievement, which directly applied to personality characteristics, could drive organizational structures that favoured centralization because of the desire to control and take credit. That suggested reasons for monopolizing strategic formulation. The pattern of ideas tallied with the opinions concerning the blaming of the problem on implementation. Jarzabkowski and Balogun (2009) opined that different perceptions and interests were possible based on the different organizational roles played by categories of actors. The pervading inequalities irked the members of the project group, and their responses were particularly important. They were at the frontlines as project implementers, though less experienced. Yet they were young, well-educated, motivated, and believed in their ability to contribute meaningfully through the process. The level of confidence meant that they could challenge the system. The claims were not out of place because several studies had advocated the engagement of members in the process as a way of ensuring impactful outcomes (Mack and Szulanski, 2017; Whittington, et al., 2006; Ketokivi and Castaner, 2004).

The deadlock in not forming a common ground led to the second interview. The follow-up conversations showed how understanding other people's views helped to reframe values and behaviours. The analysis was critical because of the remarkable implications. In retrospect, the reality was that 'Tech' kept struggling and was in danger of failing. But like what is obtained in organizations, categories of individuals did not give the factual issues much thought before then. They were more interested in their positional power (Jarzabkowski and Balogun, 2009). The first

interview was misunderstood for the normal rhetoric that strategic outcomes were determined by excellent plans. They reasoned that giving them the opportunity the monitor the implementation was just needed to make a successful realization of strategic goals (Mack and Szulanski, 2017). These intersecting failures were possible because they misread the perceptions that others possessed intellectual skill and equally played important roles; the distraction from the control measures that they felt ought to have checked the situation. The complexity needed thoughtfulness to find a way to move the process forward. That critical incident served as a 'Bumpy Moment' that required people to reflect on and resolve specific issues. I realized that however hard I tried to plan and hoped that the interviews helped to obtain rich and meaningful experiences, the responses made things more complex. Consequently, the real revelation was that people began to rethink their values and that there was a chance of getting things right. The values and behaviours changed due to learning from document analysis (management accounts of previous years), related studies and understanding the feelings of others (summaries of the first interviews). Learning more meant making efforts to understand that the management reports showed continuous dwindling of fortunes; and that the concepts and theories surrounding the issues emphasized how individuals most affected by the change were suited to deal with it and need to change the organizational culture. The scholarly works of Balogun et al, 2015; Kwon, Clarke and Wodak, 2013; Jarzabkowski and Balogun 2009; explicitly advocated collaborative practices in strategy work. Table 4.2b highlights the new frames of understanding. They learned that the process was an effective way to seek a solution. The summaries of responses of the categories of participants revealed the possible influence of new thinking and the readiness to change.

Question One: *What role did meetings play in shaping changes in individual and organizational outcomes? It* related to education and communication provided for the emotional support and the incentives that influenced members' feelings towards achieving a shift in behaviour or attitude. That was the basis for understanding how the meeting practices impacted organizational life. The meeting phenomenon was expected to have attributes that accomplished important organizational roles. There was no doubt about the pervasiveness of meetings as an organizational activity. Yoerger, Crowe and Allen, (2015); Allen et al., (2014); and Rogelberg et al., (2006) argued that they were major activities that influenced organizational life and deserved the prime attention of researchers and practitioners. Schwartzman (1986) had long advised that scholars needed to explore its influential role more extensively. Lehmann-Willenbrock and Allen, (2020) explained

that in the United States of America, there are as many as fifty-five (55) million meetings every single workday, with the managers spending around twenty-three hours a week and employees about six hours per week. These figures kept increasing despite the global pandemic, COVID-19, which restricted traditional one-on-one in-person group gatherings but enhanced the virtual meeting space (Evans, 2020). The reason for the importance was that their primary purposes were designed to promote information sharing, enhance problem-solving, and build team cohesion (Leach et al., 2009). Because they represented a unique workplace dynamic, these functional activities shaped the team and organizational outcomes, hence managers relied on them to achieve goals (Kaufeld and Lehmann-Willenbrock, 2012).

The perceptions of organizational life related to the practices that influenced work systems and how work was done. Some of the explicit aspects of problem-solving and decision-making processes that occurred from the set-up, facilitation of interactions and decision-making helped in shaping organizational structures and processes. These were facilitated through the message-oriented content of meetings (Scott et al., 2015) that justified the reference to meetings as discursive events that impacted social structures and practices (Tracy and Dimmock, 2004; Fairclogh, 1993). The unfreezing model that was shown in Figure 4.2 captured the importance of communication and how the role of leaders and the involvement of members in collaborative practices combined in pursuit of gaining wider inputs and creating commitment towards achieving the change. Organizational life is related to issues concerning how individuals work together and the efforts put in to accomplish tasks. In terms of strategy work the practices illustrated how the values and culture within work systems. It suggested that the way meetings were organized and managed and the roles of principal actors involved reflected in organizational life. The organizational culture that constrained co-creation, collaborative practices and voice carried with it the baggage of not gaining member feedback, insights from experiences, withholding information and outright frustration (Bransfield, 2009; Van Dyne, Ang and Botero, 2003). The unlearning of the old ways and the adoption of new thinking were implicated with the influence of the social structures. The importance of power relations and the interdependences that existed shaped by structural mechanisms enabled inclusivity. The results were considered an important aspect of the research. That was considered a function of deep reflection on the merits of reasoning with others. The perceptions had shifted, and they felt it was imperative to change the practices and become more inclusive. I adopted the phrase Scenic Moments from Cunliffe and Eriksen

(2011, pp.1444) because "that shaped a context for working out differences and creating a path through the organizational landscape". It not only served as an important stimulus for progress, but it was also a turning point that resolved an internal conflict between those who would have felt let down because of the loss of decision rights and others empowered to feel legitimately favoured. The unfreezing offered an ethnographic analysis in terms of the foundation of how changes granulated from a current state through a transition of unlearning that constituted a state of neutrality before the internalization of new behaviours (Hussain et al., 2018).

5.3. Analysis - Movement

5.3.1 Meeting One

The meeting one influenced institutional and social factors. The meeting set ground rules and new process guidelines that actualized the change and removed the institutional constraints to usher new attitudes and behaviours. I facilitated the meetings at the various levels. The key argument of the Force Field Analysis model was that changes identified and accepted for adoption were interpreted through a change agent capable of providing the perspective of what was needed. Though the participants recognized my position as the researcher, the main boost was the management directive that backed the new practice. The episode solidified the acceptance of the change since the platform represented a concrete attempt to establish the new practice of embracing collaboration on an equal basis and dialoguing. These were essential for democratic norms that facilitated information sharing, joint decision-making processes and other courses of action (Kwon, Clarke and Wodak, 2013; Fenton and Langley, 2011). Heracleaous et al., (2018); Realin (2013) also argued that dialogue was a reflexive process that generated self-consciousness. The phenomenon of reflexivity was a central feature in interactions and subjectivity in CDA. As an aspect of discursive systems linguistic, cognitive and social dimensions helped in understanding contextual realities. How people rationalized their discursive world with meanings helped them develop political and social awareness (Zienkowski, 2017). The highly placed organizational officials that placed a premium on their abilities and experience and the fact that the others charged with the responsibility to implement projects, a 'lesser' task, were made to interpret the interpretative behaviour of others. As such, through self-knowledge and self-monitoring, they tried to understand others' viewpoints and at the same time allowed that to influence their sense of self.

These suggested the development of critical and self-critical questioning and the understanding of issues through the diversity of opinions; independent generation of ideas; and accurate aggregation of ideas (Stieger et al., 2012). I identified the establishment of discursive strategies of equalizing and re/defining with the relaxing of the formal meeting protocols and power structures as well as the enthronement of facilitation of free expressions that facilitated ongoing information exchanges. That further contributed to the research question one in creating a wave of new values based on the enduring new practices of equality and the cultivation of attitudes that recognized others' views as people fostered convergence.

5.3.2 Meeting Two

The second meeting activities were outlined in vignette #1 and vignette #2 shown in Figure 4.4a and Figure 4.4b. Meeting two commenced with events occurring in the movement stage. The discursive efforts of the leader were key and manifested in the purposeful communicative engagement with the members; the coordination of work; and group cohesiveness. Armenakis, Harris and Mossholder, (1993) identified three essential communicative strategies, persuasive language, management of information (internal and external) and active participation used to effectively tackle change in organizations. These were communicative and cognitive processes in nature, and they had consequential effects. The framing of messages was key in constructing realities through meaningful assimilation that created new values and behaviours.

The hallmark of the movement stage was that progression manifested as an acceptance of the change and the participants also became supporters. The elements of Appropriateness and Principal Support that reflected the belief in the change and the commitment of the management (Armenakis, Harris and Field, 1999) combined to enhance the acceptance of the change process. Because they adopted new ways of engaging in the process and were also involved in the actual effort used to resolve the organizational issues, they were regarded as supporters. The transition implied that aspects of appropriateness were addressed, and the issues of need and acceptance were established.

My main intention in using the vignettes was to gain insights into how the meeting episodes were strategically used to establish workplace behaviour that transformed practices. The discursive leadership roles heavily leaned towards co-creation which was fundamental in the planned change situations. The ideas associated with co-creation included collaboration; joint contribution;

participation; and inclusivity. Some scholars have tried to differentiate between participation and inclusiveness with explanations that the former related to ensuring wider inputs from diverse individuals to achieve a better strategy and the later was about creating and sustaining a community of interacting stakeholders to attain a set strategic goal (Quick and Feldman, 2011). They shared the same objectives because stakeholders were engaged. Jarzabkowski and Balogun, (2009); and Mantere and Vaara, (2008) conducted empirical studies that encompassed aspects of both as participation. The excerpts in the vignettes helped to synthesize the various metaphors into a set of meta-constructions that answered research question two: *How did the meeting chairs deploy linguistic resources to achieve inclusiveness?*

Active participation was key because successive and deep involvement in planning and doing strategy work led to self-discovery and the sharing of knowledge helped in building skills and a better understanding of tasks (Armenakis and Harris, 2002). Hence, the collaborative effort in ideas sharing and the quest to generate inputs did not only seek to understand the enormity of the tough situation and convince individuals. The process entailed the use of established critical assessment methodologies. The speech by the chairman embodied the importance of the situation and elaborated on the unprecedented new order. The presence of the other members at the management meeting, the new members of the workshop and the project group chairs signalled the acceptance of the widening of the scope of decision-making on strategic initiatives. The essence of the outline was based on the argument of Armenakis, Harris and Mossholder (1993) that active participation as a communicative strategy capitalized on self-discovery and vicarious (continuous) learning. When it was combined with management support, it created a genuine feeling of partnership. Alas, et al., (2007) explained that employee readiness was reflected in the attitudes and behaviour of the individuals through their commitment to the change and the outcomes. The involvement of the participants in organizational change was likely to generate positive feelings.

The ways and means these were used depended on the deployment of linguistic constructs to achieve the research goal and address the organizational issues. The use of the rhetorical argumentation tropes (salience, urgency and reality) was aimed at achieving specific goals of information sharing, coordination of work and the accomplishment of social attachments. The overall organization of activities to accomplish these aspects required the roles of leaders in communication. Research question two attempted to use leadership competence to understand how it was addressed. Rouleau and Balogun, (2011, pp. 964) argued that discursive competence was a

key determinant of effective participation in strategy processes because "the ability to craft and share a message that is meaningful, engaging, and compelling" mattered. The intelligent use of linguistic techniques such as argumentation and persuasion in communicative styles was crucial. These had the potential for effective outcomes. The analysis was typical of DHA which captured and traced on-going interactions in meetings systematically as they unfolded and the levels of contexts in which they occurred (Wodak, 2011). Their effectiveness was deduced from how substantive changes had taken place. The skills were shown as shifts in strategizing and organizing occurred through discourse and how this facilitated participation (Kwon, Clarke and Wodak, 2013). The negotiations that were the distinct categories, especially the meeting chairs giving up their decision rights unfolded through the activities in the process.

The vignettes represented excerpts from the leadership speeches. The constructions of analogies and metaphors in framing processes were important. The speech by the project group chair commenced with greetings and the reference of participants as '*colleagues*. The positive words of affinity gave the impression of kinship, friendship, and partnership, creating happiness in the feelings of the recipients and helping to achieve good interpersonal relationships (Cornelissen et al., 2015). The motivating language conveyed by the leaders' ideas of the organizational visions and related values achieved social action had potential outcomes of improved commitment to the change efforts and organizational performance (Mayfield, Mayfield, and Sharbrough III, 2015). The speakers (project group chair and the chairman) had many talking points. These were expected to instil in them the consciousness of knowing the seriousness of the problems and the energy to act to resolve them. The encouraging words from the project group chair, '*you all have been supportive*' were followed by the assurances that the process was the right step to take. He recounted the potential benefits that included '*getting everybody on board.'* He touched on the importance of the process that recognized their abilities and contributions. The use of positive words helped in the creation of a community spirit and a shared mindset that had the potential of channelling the energies to accomplish goals. From the recall of the difficult situation; the importance of stemming the tide; and the importance of a successful intervention, the chairman drew attention to the topoi of salience, burden, urgency, and reality. He captured all these in the statement, *my colleague and I are particularly thrilled that you are going to be more involved in scheduling and planning specification requirements for project implementation; management and selection of resources; and assessing contents of skill competencies improvements.* He recognized

their rich background, abilities and experience. He affirmed that their skill set was important for decisions capable of benefiting the organization. Hence the idea that the "significance of cognitive and communication processes in influencing change in organizations" was apt (Muthusamy, 2019, pp. 118). By looking into forms of strategizing, the overarching interest in the performative power of discourse" (Balogun et al., 2014, p. 177) explained that words, in their subtle and unobtrusive form or in ways that were described as positive messages were used to enact discursive practices. They were meant to create meanings around subjects and objects in the strategy process using a range of discursive strategies and linguistic devices that enabled the sharing of views on strategic issues.

5.3.3 Meeting Two Task Accomplishment

The task of the evaluation of the ongoing IT Project was the second agenda issue in meeting two. It required the presentation of the progress report collectively worked on by the various groups based on the adoption of the democratic style of governance that promoted employee voice.

The summary is in Table 5.1 showing that the project group presented the most up-to-date and detailed information. By implication, there was evidence that they had the skill to apply critical thinking and were well-positioned as frontline strategists to present credible information. In contrast, the reports of both the workshop and management groups relied on outdated information. That being 'far away' and not having a structure that monitored implementation sufficiently was an issue. It was a problem-solving situation that had been regarded as important (Ketokivi and Castaner, 2004). The implementation of projects required the integration of operational tasks and agency practices into broader social factors that required special attention to planning and coordination.

Table 5.1 Summary of IT Project Progress Reports.

Meeting Level	Original Project Details – IT Infrastructure in 6 Regional and 4 Operational locations	Scope	Cost/Benefit Implications (13%)	Remarks
Management	Reduction to 6 Regional Locations.	57%	N/A	Relied on the report from the monitoring committee routine

				report prepared two weeks earlier.
Workshop	Reduction to 3 Regional and 3 Operational Locations	55%	3%	Cost/Benefit analysis based on project situation days earlier.
Project	Reduction to 3 Regional and 4 Operational Locations	65%	7%	The report considered the present milestones covered and a comparative projection expected to maximize efficiency.

The big issue was the emergent nature of the process that resulted in the restructuring of the meeting from a three-tier structure to two groups, the Strategic Projects Meeting (SPM) and the Projects Monitoring Committee (PMC). There was a need to restructure to entrench coordinating mechanisms that there guided by standardized rules and a good reporting system (Jarzabkowski, Lê and Feldman, 2012).

The process did not capture the interactions as the various groups met and worked in their various operational and field offices. The task accomplishments focused on the output of interactions and not on the actual happenings during the interactions. The underlying assumption was the legitimating discursive strategy manifested because they cooperated and exercised control over their responsibility. The project group work suggested that the reconciling strategy played a critical role because gaining all the insights from the project sites irrespective of their positions to accomplish the task. In many instances, such situations may realistically demand the integration of the reports. However, the comprehensive work that included the cost and benefits analysis, the scope of work done, and equipment requirements was comprehensive and more relevant. The meeting's three conversations formed part of the progression of the IT project. The DHA was noted to have the ability to integrate other social approaches that were concerned with social structures

such as power, sense and communicative practices. The restructuring of the meetings further de-emphasized the power relations. The various levels of meetings were eliminated, and the meeting chairs lost their positional rights as facilitators.

5.3.4. Meeting Three

The chairman presided at the meeting. Vignette #3 showed how the chairman exchanged information concerning the IT project implementation. In the same meeting, the facilitation of a new project was shown as excerpts in vignette #4. Three power perspectives; physical, psychological, and social were important. He was the chair of both meetings, and his presence was key in getting the participants' attention and viewpoints. He asked questions and influenced the direction of conversations. The rhetoric applied was aimed at mobilizing collective energy and the expectations for positive change results. The chairman utilized a combination of the topic of reality, burden, and urgency to explain the real situation that warranted a potential surplus of idle equipment in vignette #3. His statement, *hardly recouping all our investment so far, there is no doubt that we are going to try to derive as many benefits as possible. Please involve your team to get more details about the resources used.* All highlighted the gravity of the situation. If nothing was done, there was the possibility of a further drain on the already low revenue projections. The burden of having wastages promptly checked was highlighted in his statements "*Knowing that we are hardly recouping all our investment so far, there is no doubt that we are going to try to derive as many benefits as possible. Please involve your team to get more details about the resources used. Whatever is not deployed yet should be identified and put to good use*." The rapid rate of technological advancement had its drawbacks. Often such equipment was rendered obsolete in a short period due to the rapid innovations. There was a need to consider the inventory analysis to mitigate the financial risks. But the fact that he gave directives concerning the suppliers and timelines for reporting had its merits. He attached importance to financial returns. The chairman's communicative messages were illocutionary. They carried the meanings of urgency and the need for action. These were performative words conveyed with the intention and expectation of compliance. The participation, in a way, did not follow the normal format of the democratic process such as turn-taking and dialoguing. But he made up for that deficiency with encouraging remarks on the positive feedback on the status of the IT Project. These impacted the psychology and social aspects. The prompt preparation of the report before deadlines was evidence that people

were motivated to put extra energy and commitment to work (Muthusamy, 2019). In addition to the messages of hope, it was pragmatic in the sense that there was no point in debating a one-item agenda and the subject matter was a specialized area in that the organization did not have any prior experience. He also gave instructions on how the inventory should be dealt with. The utterances elicited responses from the research and workshop chair at this stage. It must also be noted that using the words 'management group,' 'workshop group' and 'projects group' was to identify the categories of the participants.

Vignette #4 which was task-oriented showed that the pattern of communication and governance continued. The interactions illustrated the activities regarding the presentation of the environmental impact assessment report. The task started before the meeting with the team of experts assigned to prepare an initial report.

The discussions here were meant to address the organizational issues, especially through focusing on the particular practices that resulted in not just gaining wider inputs that enhanced the strategic plan content. It was also important to address the research question three. The interpretation of the relationship between the intents and actions of actors through the linguistic concepts of discursive strategies and linguistic devices showed an understanding of distinct goal-oriented discursive strategies deployed and how they were operationalized by the rhetoric to resolve the research issues. As such, being an object of inquiry meant that meeting activities impacted social structures and culture and that they held implications for work and performance outcomes. The use of structural measures did not produce any positive outcome in 'Tech.' Martin and Eisenhardt's (2010) study revealed that organizations that alienated their rank and file by imposing strategy decisions from headquarters were not doing well in realizing struggles. Some of the reasons given by Mirabeau, Maguire and Hardy (2018) for instances of the unrealized strategy included limited participation and dialogue; lack of open-ended planning across multiple levels; how the manager consumed the strategy. Question three was specific because inclusive practices did not have blanket effects specific strategies were linked to particular outcomes. Rather, local contexts and variability are impacted distinctively (Huatz Seidl, and Whittington, 2017). These resonated with the suggestions that there were causal effects from how strategic planning was done and at the same time human experiences were crucial in such practices. Hutter, Nketia and Fuller (2017) explained that there were forms of participation that achieved various types of outcomes. The

activities enumerated were ideation, commenting and evaluation. The process of contributing ideas was not as vital as commenting and evaluating because their study demonstrated that they were a precondition for understanding the strategy and the issues surrounding it, as well as creating commitment towards the goal of achieving the objectives. Accordingly, they argued that it resulted in "a better understanding and implementation of those strategies and enhanced organizational learning due to employees' increased sense of community and stronger organizational commitment" (Hutter, Nketia and Fuller, 2017, pp. 355).

Another aspect of the discussion related to the understanding that leaders consciously and deliberately worked towards improving or addressing the perceived deficiencies by enacting structures that created an environment for working together (Ford and Ford, 1995). There were social contexts that influenced the texts and the practices revealed perceptions, interests, and motivations of such individuals (McGregor, 2010). The underlying meanings held implications for power relations, cognitive processes and discourse structures. The relationship between the speaker, the chairman, and the others mattered and can further explain that the context was crucial in communication. The chairman used his position to give out the assignment of strategic development to members with the requisite knowledge and skills. Their efforts were to gather information and analyse the new project. Garbuio, Lovallo and Sibony (2015) studied how participation in decision-making was made effective. They explained that engaging experts in the robust analysis was as important as the strategic conversations on those decisions. The knowledge sharing was resourceful because the experts were able to expand the knowledge of others. It was pragmatic in the sense that tabling it in a meeting for voting and allowing every member to debate was a waste of time and resources. Not all members had the very skills needed. Time and money were also considered by not allowing the generation of ideas open to all. The overall access to the creative potential and organizational knowledge was critical. The situation required specialized knowledge given that eventually, the others learned during the dialogue sessions.

The third prominent aspect of the discussion was linked to how a sense of shared responsibility improved the quality of work from creative contributions and improved learning (Luedicke, et al, 2017). The community spirit enhanced cooperation and commitment and was related to relational tenets (Whittington, Cailluet, and. Yakis-Douglas, 2011). The humorous exchanges started with a spontaneous interjection from the researcher on abandoning the procedure of debating the agenda

item when a serious matter such as the task of strategic conceptualization analysis was instructive. There was potential for positivity. It suggested a growing sense of community that pervaded due to inclusivity (Holmes Schnurr and Marra, 2007). The exchanges were a distraction, but they showed a level of harmony within the organization. The exchanges provided an understanding that the relational context had become a good facilitator of social processes (Jarzabkowski and Le, 2016). The chairman's response added humour though his action was pragmatic. According to Liu and Maitils (2014, pp.224), positive emotional dynamics facilitate "non-defensive interaction that led to further positive emotion". That level of interaction showed significant social integration which enhanced participation. Although a humour single function carried only attractive results, there could be a repulsive side to it.

5.4. Analysis - Refreezing

The equalizing strategy that encouraged inclusivity instilled a sense of ownership of the project and helped give a positive reaction showing the level of enthusiasm and hope from the meanings constructed around the IT project. That aligned with the level of importance the more experienced participants (members of the management meeting, the workshop group and the chairs of the project groups) attached to being part of the decision-making. In addition, implementers felt that their capabilities were recognized. The inclusion or empowering practices often blurred the lines that segregated leaders and followers (Collinson, 2006) and built a proactive followership schema (Carsten et al, 2010). Modern practices promoted the assumption that richer insights are derived from diversity and collective accountability and that facilitated creative behaviour. The idea of moving away from the traditional top-down approach or at best the entity perspective which looked at leadership as individually constituted to one that recognized the network of exchanges (Cunliffe and Ericksen, 2012) was important for social action. Dobusch, Dobusch, and Müller-Seitz (2019) observed that communicative structures influenced collaborative and co-creative practices that enabled participants to engage in beneficial social activities.

Strategy work held social aspects that were context-sensitive. The discursive processes that focus on the human interactions' imperative (Clarke, Kwon and Wodak, 2012). Placing the events within a wider socio-political context and the historical conditions in which they were embedded provided insight into the dynamics that showed the refinement of views. That perspective was tied to the chairman's efforts and was key to the research. His messages were intentional, and creative and had the legitimate authority to mobilize members for action and establish a sustainable culture. He

communicated the true situation of the problem and explained how to mitigate the problems encouragingly. He maintained a futuristic stance of success by asserting that the new way of doing things would have a significant outcome and was reassuring with great expectations. These enabled reciprocal experiences that reinforced positive attitudes and appropriately created a climate for present and future empowerment to act proactive acts (Collinson, 2006).

Conclusion

The discussions were related to the research questions and showed that the process was regarded as a success. The early struggles with understanding the situation were addressed through discussions and interactions. The reflections on relevant studies and the fact that others had a right to be involved refined perceptions and behaviours. The leadership input was in ensuring that using discursive practices resulted in actions towards the desired goals.

Chapter Six

Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

The concluding chapter provided insights into how the research issues that represented practical challenges to my organization, 'Tech,' were addressed. The actual problems were typical because organizations sometimes fell short of realizing the strategic goals they embarked on. The organization had continued to experience low financial returns and operational delays in project delivery deadlines. Even a previous control measure aimed at mitigating the problems did not work out successfully. The management thereafter instituted a holistic and deliberate process that resulted in gathering ideas from experts, extant studies and personal experiences (work and academic) to take actions capable of stemming the tide through achieving changes that improved practice. For such endeavours to accomplish enduring outcomes, there was the expectation that the work systems would be modified through changing practices that were likely to lead to new values and behaviours.

The chapter highlighted my experience in doing the research and the learning outcomes in section 6.2. The experiences were remarkable because they were connected to the significance of the research for practice and management knowledge. Section 6.3 highlighted the findings that justified the research contributions and Section 4 focused on the relevance of strategy meetings as discursive events and the discursive leadership practices in offering an understanding of their strategic usefulness in diagnosing and seeking organizational solutions. Section 6.5 illustrated the research limitations and suggestions for future research.

6.2. The Research Reflections and Learning

I had the responsibility of steering the organization's projects and ensuring the delivery of cost-effective and good-quality projects. The objective of changing practices through a deliberately planned change process involved both the leaders and implementers in the drive to understand and pursue the change by making deliberate efforts. That placed me in a position where I learned about my leadership and reflected on my practice and personal growth.

At the time I undertook the assignment, I had some years of work and academic experience. The current practical situation occurred as I was also completing my doctoral course that involved AR. So, I needed to mobilize others to ensure that they understood the organization's situation and the consequences of not attempting to resolve it. The process held three clear aspects of importance that included articulating how the research challenged my assumptions and attitudes; the improvement of my managerial skills that influenced organizational practices and relationships; how to link the scholarly context, which focused on knowledge generated to social changes, to the emergence of the new things learned.

In the initial stage, I experienced forms of anxiety and self-doubt. The anxiety emanated from questions on the 'what ifs' in terms of whether the participants were receptive and if they viewed the issue as important. Even if they understood and appreciated the implications, whether they desired to participate; whether the initial acceptance was genuine and the capacity to last through the stages were also key. I had nagging moments concerning whether I was knowledgeable enough to conduct the project. There needed to be demonstrable skills and abilities to engage participants to remain interested throughout the process to achieve credible outcomes. The initial impromptu conversations offered some respite. They showed a high level of awareness and the readiness to seek solutions through the potential participants. As the process commenced and the interviews were done, more details emerged about the participants' views. Although the power relations held complicated implications based on the existing norms of the rational approach to strategy making, the categories that represented those with cognate backgrounds and experience desired more engagement in decision-making and project implementation. The less experienced viewed their high level of educational knowledge as adequate and were also eager to contribute more to an inclusive platform. The desires looked similar. But the goals were divergent. The more experienced participants continued with the belief in the traditional approach that still restricted the others. I had to look for ways to bring every participant to a consensus through the use of a strategy that revealed the thoughts of others along with the 'gloomy' financial report that they already knew about. These showed the reality that the situation could get worse than anticipated. The reflective process ensured a sense that allowed self-knowledge and self-monitoring to understand the situation and refine their values. My assumptions were based on studies that opening up the strategy space was important because of the obvious benefits from idea generation from diverse sources that helped to enrich decision-making quality and that it enhanced

implementation due to the increased commitment of the participants (Mack and Szulanski, 2017; Laine and Vaara, 2015; Ketokivi and Castaner, 2004). So, leading through devising a democratic style did not always result in optimal results. Hautz, Seidl and Whittington (2017) emphasized that there were dilemmas in looking at participation as having a blanket result because contexts in which inclusivity thrived differed. I reasoned that as long as the discursive practice was considered important for concrete performance outcomes, the process would produce distinctive ways that considered the contingent factors that helped to take action to reach the desired end.

The in-depth investigation into the thinking and doing of strategy helped to understand intricacies within the practices and the fact that the appropriate use of different strategy tools or strategies revealed the motivations in the social actions. The status of the chairman enabled by his pragmatic style helped him use a less democratic style of asking questions and giving instructions in the interpretation of strategy work and information to still contribute effectively. The vignettes #3 and #4 illustrated that other factors, not necessarily with absolute democratic tenet, worked. The collective characteristics of the chairman's values, personalities, and experiences had a psychological effect on the participants. He considered the particularities of the process and the efficient use of resources. He saved time by not discussing a one-item agenda. There was no point leaving the interactive floor open for discussions when the subject was a highly technical area. The dilemmas of opening up also played a part here.

I now appreciate the argument of Hutter, Nketia and Fuller (2017) concerning the positive effect of participation in empowering strategy workers and creating a community of committed groups to strategy goals, but that it depended on the form of participation. I understood that the shift from a top-down leadership style to a democratic style that restructured power relations and distributed power had implications for the loss of the decision rights of the meeting chairs and was important in achieving strategic results. My scholarly perspective has been enriched because I now understand and have unlearned such previous insights. The observations by Salovaara and Bathurst (2016) that hierarchy persisted and that the expectations of the contexts determined what happened.

My intellectual and communication (written and oral) skills have impacted my professional practice. I had been engaged in research work during previous work situations, especially during restructuring work processes and academic research. These followed the quantitative strategies.

The project required that I use the qualitative process through the AR orientation The immersion enabled me to develop and internalize what I leaned for an enduring personal development. The combination of practice and scholarship enabled me to inquire into the real practical organizational problems and gain more ideas about the concepts and theoretical considerations concerning the issues to enable me to investigate them. It was key that I learned that discursive leadership was a veritable style that improved leadership practice. The use of discursive leadership practices in one of the pervasive organizational phenomena, meetings as discursive events, were considered to be instances of social practices that thrived in micro-level activities that were connected to macro-level outcomes. So apart from trying to gain new knowledge on the research strategy, I had to manage the process. Through the refreezing stage, part of the sessions was spent studying extant literature and explaining the AR process as a new and novel process. The sensitization included understanding their roles and getting them to buy into the process. I did that during the informal conversations (in events #2, #3 and #4), the first set of interviews and the reflective process that gave rise to the second set of interviews. That was particularly key in improving my understanding of how to facilitate meetings better and manage forms of work in social structures, decision making and participation that impacted group processes. The facilitation of the various episodes in meeting one was instructive. I organized the process of setting ground rules for interactions. The process considered the various voices of participants and I learned that it was best to develop lines of action that connected with other peoples' ideas on issues of importance to them.

I tried to conceptualize, design and implement the process collaboratively with those involved in strategy work. The basis from which I needed to work though I understood that my research strategy was qualitative since I needed to generate natural data through various means such as interviews and observations. These challenged my thinking as I considered the choice of appropriate theoretical and methodological techniques that enabled the generation and analysis of the data that justified credible results. These explained the learnings I experienced and how they were applied. The AR process seemed comprehensive because it set out to identify and understand the issues as well as plan the interventions and evaluate the actions and results. To account for multiple actors' discursive practices and the context related to the social conditions in which they occurred, the CDA was considered more fruitful for understanding the role of discourses in texts (Clarke, Kwon and Wodak, 2012). Unlike the AR that could capture all the textual productions, the CDA went further in examining linguistically the 'what,' 'how' and 'why' that shaped

relationships of power, knowledge generation processes and social conditions that achieve change (Frydaki and Katsarou, 2013). I drew from the contextual knowledge and social theories to interpret events in line with the socio-diagnostic critique feature of the DHA to look at how to persuade people to make meaning of situations and interpret them (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001).

The process equally helped in improving my communication skills as I made field and reflective notes from the observations during the meetings and my impressions after the various conversations and interviews. It was a bit difficult, in terms of time constraints and expertise, at the beginning. I had to make notes soon after the interactions at the initial conversations. I tried to achieve that soon after the episodes in order not to allow my subjective impressions to take precedence over what was said and their bodily expressions. I improved my skills with time, and I used a lot of abbreviations. I developed better social skills such as active listening and the capacity for self-direction as I tried to reason and make meaning without being judgemental. The follow-up interviews were not pre-planned. After the first set of interviews, I realised the complexity of harmonizing the reasons for seeking inclusion in the strategy planning decision-making. They were diverse, based on self-preservation. I referred to the empirical study of Jarzabkowski and Balogun (2009, pp.1255) that "varying interests of actors in different business units, integration will only arise from active negotiations and compromises between these actors". The process had to proceed, and I had to think deeply to get them to realize that the organizational issues were important though I also considered their human conditions were crucial to them. So, I gambled with the situation by giving them summaries of the views of others and other documents such as the management reports they were already aware of and extant studies to bring to their consciousness the need to understand that their perceptions needed to be refined. I was unsure of their reactions. However, I had learned to be more patient in allowing things to play out without being anxious or working on preconceived notions as I was able to see more from a wider perspective than before.

6.3. Research Findings

The main research question was based on how important meeting processes and practices were to help in understanding the strategic opportunities they provided in instigating changes in the values and behaviours that impacted them and the work systems. That established the role of meetings in organizations. Few studies have highlighted this point because the usual studies looked at them as mere platforms that were used to investigate group and organizational processes (Scott et al., 2015;

Olien et al., 2015). The collaborative practices facilitated by the discursive roles of the leaders suggested that shared experiences resulted in ideas generation and testing of such ideas. The concept of dialoguing was at the centre of shared experiences. The various interactions between me and the other participants and interactions in the meeting highlighted that. According to Heracleaous et al., (2018); and Raelin (2013) dialogue is a reflexive process that generates self-consciousness and learning. The conditions did not only allow for the accomplishment of ongoing information exchanges, joint problem-solving activities and equality, the result was the cultivation of attitudes that recognized others' views, self-reflexivity and building convergence. These had a profound impact on their values and ways of working.

The second question dealt with how the leadership discursive practices promoted working together were achieved using interactional structures and through framing messages that achieved sense-making and social action. The questions were related since the new culture of working and the systems were the result of the shaped perceptions and goal-oriented practices that inspired people to be engaged meaningfully and to remain committed to achieving the desired goals. The leadership influence on the social structures facilitated inclusive practices in co-creation. These guided behaviours and processes impacted the ways the team communicated; commitment to work; the power relations. The participants in the project group were encouraged to work purposefully and with commitment because the felt that their contribution was worthwhile. Consequently, the prompt reporting and the level of engagement encouraged the ownership of the process and its outcomes. The third question is related to specific discursive strategies and their distinct impact on the issues. The relationship between the intents and actions of actors through the linguistic concepts of discursive strategies and linguistic devices meant that contextual factors interfaced with the local variability to impact distinctively (Huatz, Seidl and Whittington, 2017). Instituting democracy and equality was good for the morale and commitment of the organizational members in task accomplishments. However, the attainment of better financial performance and operational successes was achieved through meaningful engagement of the people involved and the pragmatic use of messages that instigated actions and emotional commitment.

The research contributed to knowledge and practice in a few ways, especially through the findings. Olien et al., (2015, pp. 21) stated that "meeting science is the conceptual, intellectual, and practical activity used to systematically study what goes on before, during, and after a meeting." That meant

that the research added voice to the ubiquitous nature of meetings. The era of studying them as mere tools used to understand organizational or group processes needed to shift towards looking into how they formed a major organizational phenomenon used to understand major activities in organizational studies, including the resolution of organizational problems.

The findings interrogated the top-down approach of strategy-making with the specific aim of seeking a solution to leadership domination of strategy. The discursive leadership practices helped open the space for practitioners to participate fully in the development and enactment of strategy by stakeholders (Balogun et al, 2015; Jarzabkowski and Balogun, 2009; Mantere and Vaara, 2008). The competent use of goal-oriented discursive strategies worked singly or in combinations simultaneously to achieve specific organizational goals.

6.3. The Relevance of the Research

The investigation of the work and performance of strategy practitioners drew from social aspects that related to the communicative or discursive practices in strategizing. The processes and practice focused on the ways they engaged and obtained a commitment to address low financial performance and operational deficiency. The situation meant looking at three variables that provided an understanding of how it was done. These included the articulation of the strategies used to purposefully design the change process; the key communicative roles required to manage and achieve the desired end; and the effective use of the communicative practices that impacted new belief systems and behaviours. These suggested that the task of looking into the purpose of the change and the responsibility of giving direction were critical in the research. The leadership process influenced how work was done especially through members' performance (Alvesson and Jonsson, 2016). On that basis, the leadership approach in which language, self-awareness, and behaviour are linked was implicated. The discursive practices especially were made as social constructions helped in understanding the dynamics of groups in social settings (Cronin et al., 2011). The discursive leadership justifiably drove social actions that helped to understand that improved leadership processes enhanced organizational practices. That happened through shifting focus from the individual traits and competencies of a few individuals to the diffused leadership form that embraced the social and cultural systems that enabled the meaningful engagement of stakeholders. The issue of inclusivity which was a hallmark of discursive leadership was brought to the fore. That helped to consider how collective effort in strategy work was important in

generating diverse inputs for better decisions that contributed to better strategic plan content and at the same time infused stakeholders' empowerment that created commitment to the process and its outcomes.

The leadership communicative practices in discursive settings, and meetings, illustrated that instances of social practices allowed the constructions of human interactions that dealt with organizational issues. The knowledge formed a significant organizational social activity resulting in improved individual and group conditions. The research threw more light on roles that were consequential for constructing, making sense of, and communicating strategy (Balogun et al., 2014). The research needed to confirm them as having a profound impact on the way people worked. So, meetings have been confirmed relevant in and of themselves in understanding core organizational features with practical implications on organizational life (Allen and Lehmann-Willenbrock, 2022; Lehmann-Willenbrock, et al., 2017; Scott et al., 2015; Schwartzman, 1986). These happenings represented strategic opportunities to change organizational practices.

The platforms derived deep and rich accounts that were used to explain leadership discursive practices in change circumstances. The model I used was the theory and methodology of the CDA known to use language to understand and analyse discursive practices. The framework was appropriate because it investigated how people rationalized and engaged with others on issues as part of their discursive world with meanings. It vigorously assessed the interactions of people, focusing on the text produced, the contexts in which they occurred and the social contexts that influenced them. Because these opened up complex and practical issues within organizations, they challenged reductionism and inequalities. The research findings illustrated the essence of collaborative work and its benefits. There was also the fact that contingent factors influenced the outcomes.

6.5. The Research Limitations and Suggestions on Future Investigations

I faced dilemmas ranging from the long-standing relationship with the chairman and the dual role as an insider. These had worked positively, especially in terms of having access to information and getting into discussions with all the participants from time to time. But the drawbacks were obvious. The relationships led to all kinds of nervous situations that questioned my ability to undertake the process adequately. It also allowed me to create a 'distance' with the various groups

of participants. The period of the research may not have been long enough to establish the cultural changes that occurred. The assumption was based on the argument that changes in social practices normally took a long time to crystallise into a credible pattern that was consistent (Robbins and Judge, 2008).

There was a need to do further research on not just driving movements towards higher levels of stakeholder engagements in strategy work, but a more focused investigation on particular ways of resolving specific organizational issues. Organizations experience challenges that are peculiar to them and require different kinds of tools and tactics to address them.

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