A FRAMEWORK FOR TRANSFORMING CORPORATE PURPOSE INTO ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

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Purpose: One of the most powerful and talked about approaches in the management and leadership of modern business today is Organisational Purpose. When placed at the heart of strategy, it is said to increase employee engagement exponentially, resulting in the unlocking of human potential, lighting up passion and enthusiasm within people, and beating the line in financial performance through overservicing and delighting customers, by as much as 42% compared to the stock market. However, as much as Organisational Purpose is heralded as the core motivation behind the sustainable success of any organisation, 90% of these purpose-led strategies fail in implementation. The article investigates this phenomenon.

Theoretical Framework: This study falls within the framework where leadership and strategy implementation meet. One of the most profound gaps identified during the literature reviewed for this article is that the purpose (‘deep self’) of an organisation cannot be defined or even implemented without defining the individual purposes (‘deep self’) of its leadership, in that an organisation can only ever be as conscious as its leader.

Design/methodology/approach: This study, therefore, sets out to create a framework that can guide leaders towards implementing corporate purpose into organisational culture through raising leadership and organisational consciousness and, in doing so, overcoming this persisting barrier to implementation. By choosing Action Design Research as the methodology for this research, the researchers co-create a potential solution with 14 Chief Executive Officers, each a market leader within their diverse industries.

Findings: A solution that suggests that the successful transformation of corporate purpose into organisational culture lies at the intersection of the individual purpose of each executive leader, the purpose of the organisation, and the individual purpose of each of its employees. Against the plethora of existing frameworks, which are by and large said to be unsuccessful in the face of implementation failure, the framework presented as a product of this study offers an alternative solution.

Research, Practical & Social Implications: A practical solution that puts the potential of people at its heart is offered as a framework for implementation.

Originality/Value: The framework is called: ‘The Growing Greatness Implementation Framework’. This presents a new and unique contribution to the current literature about Strategic Business Management.

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UMA ESTRUTURA PARA TRANSFORMAR O PROPÓSITO CORPORATIVO NA CULTURA ORGANIZACIONAL

RESUMO
Propósito: Uma das abordagens mais poderosas e comentadas na gestão e liderança das empresas modernas atualmente é o Propósito Organizacional. Quando colocado no centro da estratégia, diz-se que ele aumenta exponencialmente o envolvimento dos funcionários, resultando na liberação do potencial humano, despertando a paixão e o entusiasmo das pessoas e superando o desempenho financeiro por meio do superatendimento e do encantamento dos clientes, em até 42% em comparação com o mercado de ações. Entretanto, por mais que o Propósito Organizacional seja anunciado como a principal motivação por trás do sucesso sustentável de qualquer organização, 90% dessas estratégias orientadas por propósitos fracassam na implementação. O artigo investiga esse fenômeno.

Estrutura: Este estudo se enquadra na estrutura em que a liderança e a implementação da estratégia se encontram. Uma das lacunas mais profundas identificadas durante a revisão da literatura para este artigo é que o propósito ("eu profundo") de uma organização não pode ser definido ou mesmo implementado sem a definição dos propósitos individuais ("eu profundo") de sua liderança, no sentido de que uma organização só pode ser tão consciente quanto seu líder.

Projeto/Metodologia/Abordagem: Este estudo, portanto, tem como objetivo criar uma estrutura que possa orientar os líderes na implementação do propósito corporativo na cultura organizacional por meio do aumento da liderança e da consciência organizacional e, ao fazê-lo, superar essa barreira persistente à implementação. Ao escolher a Action Design Research como metodologia para esta pesquisa, os pesquisadores cocriaram uma possível solução com 14 diretores executivos, cada um deles líder de mercado em seus diversos setores.

Resultados: Uma solução que sugere que a transformação bem-sucedida do propósito corporativo na cultura organizacional está na interseção do propósito individual de cada líder executivo, do propósito da organização e do propósito individual de cada um de seus funcionários. Contra a infinidade de estruturas existentes, que, em geral, são consideradas malsucedidas diante do fracasso da implementação, a estrutura apresentada como produto deste estudo oferece uma solução alternativa.

Implicações Sociais, Práticas e de Pesquisa: Uma solução prática que coloca o potencial das pessoas em seu centro é oferecida como uma estrutura para implementação.

Originalidade/Valor: A estrutura é denominada: "Estrutura de implementação do Growing Greatness". Ela apresenta uma contribuição nova e exclusiva para a literatura atual sobre Gestão Estratégica de Negócios.


UN MARCO PARA TRANSFORMAR EL PROPÓSITO CORPORATIVO EN CULTURA ORGANIZATIVA

RESUMEN
Propósito: Uno de los enfoques más poderosos y de los que más se habla en la gestión y el liderazgo de la empresa moderna es el propósito organizativo. Cuando se sitúa en el centro de la estrategia, se dice que aumenta exponencialmente el compromiso de los empleados, lo que da como resultado el desbloqueo del potencial humano, encendiendo la pasión y el entusiasmo entre las personas, y superando la línea del rendimiento financiero a través del exceso de servicio y el deleite de los clientes, hasta en un 42% en comparación con el mercado de valores. Sin embargo, por mucho que el propósito organizativo se anuncie como la motivación central del éxito sostenible de cualquier organización, el 90% de estas estrategias orientadas al propósito fracasan en su aplicación. El artículo investiga este fenómeno.

Marco Teórico: Este estudio se inscribe en el marco en el que confluyen el liderazgo y la aplicación de estrategias. Una de las lagunas más profundas identificadas en la bibliografía revisada para este artículo es que el propósito ("yo profundo") de una organización no puede definirse, ni siquiera aplicarse, sin definir los propósitos individuales ("yo profundo") de sus líderes, en el sentido de que una organización sólo puede ser tan consciente como lo sea su líder.

Diseño/Metodología/Enfoque: Este estudio, por lo tanto, se propone crear un marco que pueda guiar a los líderes hacia la implementación del propósito corporativo en la cultura organizativa a través del aumento de la conciencia de liderazgo y organizativa y, al hacerlo, superar esta persistente barrera para la implementación. Al elegir como metodología la investigación de diseño de acción, los investigadores crearon conjuntamente una posible solución con 14 directores ejecutivos, cada uno de ellos líder del mercado en sus respectivos sectores.

Resultados: Una solución que sugiere que el éxito de la transformación del propósito corporativo en cultura organizativa se encuentra en la intersección del propósito individual de cada líder ejecutivo, el propósito de la organización y el propósito individual de cada uno de sus empleados. Frente a la pléyora de marcos existentes, de...
1 INTRODUCTION

The roots of Strategic Management can be found in the seminal publications of Chandler (1962), Ansoff (1965), and Andrews (1971). Since then, the discipline’s progress towards maturity has seen the study of ‘best practices in the 1960s give way to a variety of topics such as strategic leadership, internalisation, cooperation between firms, market strategies, product strategies, and the relationship between a firm’s strategy and its corporate social responsibility (Hoskisson et al., 1999). Today, Strategic Management is heralded as the core motivation behind the sustainable success of organisations. However, despite this belief, one of the discipline's unresolved challenges is that up to 90% of organisational strategies fail, with fewer than 15% claiming successful implementation (Kihara, 2017). Therefore, the ongoing improvement ascertained within the academic field of Strategic Management is countered by a persisting lack of implementation phenomena within the real world, which calls for a definitive solution.
Figure 1

Evolution of Strategic Management Research

(Guerras-Martín et al., 2014)

Although there is agreement on the critical part Strategic Management plays in the journey towards achieving organisational success, the academic path to find the correct space within which the right solution may be found is not quite clear. The reason for this unclarity is due to the multidisciplinary and eclectic nature of Strategic Management, in that it spans the interests of researchers across many different fields, including economics, management, organisational theory, psychology and sociology. Towards finding the right area of focus, the researchers looked at a study by Guerras-Martín, Madhok and Montoro-Sánchez (2014), which aimed to make sense of this diversity of factors by classifying historical research according to two criteria: The criterion between investigating an organisation by looking at internal factors versus observing external factors within which an organisation operates; and the criterion between investigating an organisation as a whole at a macro level or, conversely, looking at the behaviour of individuals within an organisation, at a micro level. According to their study, certain periods have shown a widespread preference for either of these specific tensions within the field, which they likened to a dual pendulum. At any given time, the focal thrust of each pendulum is either on macro or micro level issues or on internal or external issues. Figure 1 above shows how these two pendulums have been swinging concurrently throughout the discipline’s evolution, arranging the main approaches and theories involved in strategic management into four quadrants throughout its history.
Although Strategic Management research has put more focus on internal factors over the course of the past 26 years, with research papers on the subject increasing from 9% to 38% of the total, research in the area of external factors still accounts for a significant 34% of all papers (Furrer et al., 2008). This data indicates that research is unlikely to turn its focus away from either internal or external factors, but are likely to seek new ideas and approaches to explore by focusing more on the micro side of organisational strategy. These new organisational strategy developments include combining the opportunity-seeking behaviour of entrepreneurship with Strategic Management, referred to as the Austrian Entrepreneurship-based View (Ireland et al., 2003) and a new emerging theory called Behavioural Strategy. This new line of research aims to apply psychology and organisational behaviour to Strategic Management, focusing on individual and group behaviour through the realistic assumptions of human emotions, cognition, and social behaviour (Powell et al., 2011). It places strategic emphasis on the internal aspects of an organisation, with a keen focus on the influence of the individual on its sustainable success.

In this article, the researchers will propose a framework to address this failure to implement strategy, not only by focusing our research on the overlap between the swings of the two pendulums within the micro internal quadrant of Strategic Management, called Behavioural Strategy but also by linking business strategy to one of the most used business jargon of our modern time: purpose (Malnight et al., 2019; Cote, 2020; Fisch & Solomon, 2021).

2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Almost sixty years after Strategic Management became part of leadership consciousness, most domestic and international organisations find themselves in the difficult position of having to wage tough competitive battles within a complex and uncertain global economy. Conditions have been made even more challenging by the COVID-19 pandemic, testing the ability of organisations to be agile, adapt, and find new ways to become sustainable by redefining their business models (Worley & Jules, 2020). To successfully navigate these pressures calls for a new approach that would allow for the cultivation of a higher purpose and to build healthy organisational cultures that can sustain the dual pressure to innovate and the pressure to produce (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018). However, in this volatile world, the overriding narrative as to the ‘greater purpose’ of business remains firmly in the camp of ‘the most influential economist of the 20th century’, Milton Friedman, who stated in September
1970 that the only duty of a corporation is to maximise profits at all costs for the benefit of its shareholders (Friedman, 1970). To this day, Friedman’s view is supported by academic literature about Strategic Management, as evidenced in the literature reviewed for this study, with the overriding narrative as to the purpose of Strategic Management remaining that of being the financial focus.

That said, those few organisations who have moved a purpose greater than profit from the periphery to the core of their strategies have deepened ties with all stakeholders, managing to stay more relevant in a rapidly changing world while generating sustained profitable growth, outperforming the stock market by as much as 42% (MEED, 2021). This minority of C-level executives who have reshaped their unique value proposition by putting purpose at the centre of their organisational strategy have enabled their organisations to redefine their playing fields and, in doing so, overcome the challenge of declining growth and profitability as a by-product of a more meaningful business strategy (Malnight et al., 2019). Empirical research claims that as purpose emerges, it develops a shared sense of strategy, ensuring that the organisational strategy is more widely understood (Henderson, 2020).

This strategic narrative surrounding greater organisational purpose beyond profit gained momentum in 2018 when Larry Fink, the Chief Executive Officer of Black Rock, the world’s largest shareholder and asset manager, issued a letter to CEOs proclaiming that organisations had an obligation to make a positive contribution to society through having a greater purpose, and such purpose should not be the sole pursuit of profits but rather the animating force for achieving them (Fink, 2018). Following his lead, the most influential American-based association of corporate chief executives, the Business Roundtable (BRT), in a revolutionary strategic move, made international headlines when it announced a revision of its conception of corporate purpose on August 19, 2019. Within this revision, 183 CEOs, including leaders from Apple to Walmart, committed to leading their companies to move away from explicitly embracing the primacy of Shareholder Maximisation to a purpose in service of all stakeholders (Harrison et al., 2020), publicly rebuking Milton Friedman’s worldview that has been guiding business decisions behind closed doors for decades (Gartenberg & Serafeim, 2019). Notwithstanding this milestone, a 2020 study by Lucian Bebchuk and Roberto Tallarita from Harvard Law School concluded that these top CEOs did not live up to the promises made in the Roundtable letter, reasoning that if the signatories were indeed committed to a significant shift in the behaviour, several important corporate documents of those organisations would have needed to be revised (Colvin, 2021). This failure to deliver at the highest level of business indicates a
persistent gap between intention and action, aligning sharply with the same strategic implementation challenge.

No matter the number of implementation processes and change models that exist, the lack of implementation phenomena persists (Alkaabi et al., 2023). This begs the question of what framework will ultimately enable leaders to entrench purpose into the cultures of their organisations to deliver on their words.

3 LITERATURE REVIEW

When purpose is placed at the heart of organisational strategy, businesses stay more relevant in a rapidly changing world while generating sustained profitable growth, outperforming the stock market by as much as 42% (MEED, 2021). However, evidence shows that over 90% of organisational purposes and strategies fail during implementation (Kihara, 2017). Therefore, the literature reviewed for this study set out to provide a broader context to this lack of implementation phenomena by taking a closer look at the fields of organisational strategy, corporate purpose, and leadership. By linking these three areas, we showed a gap in the current body of research and, in doing so, offered in-depth justification for this study.

First and foremost, a significant and relevant body of literature about the field of Strategic Management was reviewed at the outset of this article to gain a better understanding of the subject. Within the body of knowledge reviewed, we found a fair number of frameworks and models that support the formulation and implementation of organisational strategy. However, not only are most of these processes designed with the singular objective of maximising financial return, but various themes that act as barriers to the implementation of strategy were also identified (Mintzberg, 1994; Tarhini et al., 2015; Rani, 2019; Tawse & Tabesh, 2021; Onyegbula et al., 2023). Within the literature relating to organisational strategy, we also identified a strong link between organisational purpose and business strategy, with strong evidence showing that when the purpose is placed at the core of business strategy, organisations can grow exponentially (Malnight et al., 2019; Cote, 2020; Henderson, 2020).

Due to this link between business strategy and organisational purpose, we chose to investigate the subject of purpose in all of its dimensions. Empirical evidence shows that organisational purpose delivers profits significantly outperforming the stock markets (Sisodia et al., 2007; Gartenberg et al., 2016; MEED, 2021). However, more than profit delivery, purpose produces seven times more resilient people within a VUCA world, unlocking
exponential human potential (Marais & Govender, 2022; Alwedyan et al., 2023)). Purpose also creates a strong sense of identity, alignment, and focus, leading to higher engagement and more innovation, growth, and long-term sustainability (Hollensbe et al., 2014; Mercer, 2018; Gartenberg et al., 2019; Porter et al., 2019; BountiXP, 2020; Halpern et al., 2020; Weinberger, 2020). A significant insight from the literature was the concept of using one word at the core of the purpose of a brand, as supported by authors Al Ries and Laura Ries in their book ‘The 22 Immutable Laws of Branding’, where they argue that a brand should own one word in the minds of all stakeholders (Ries & Ries, 2009). The idea is further supported by Britton, Page, and Gordon, who state in their book ‘Life Word: Discover Your One Word to Leave a Legacy’, that the opportunity to live an inspired life ultimately comes down to one word. Even Steve Jobs, known for his prolific marketing skills, believed that for organisations to create salience in a noisy world, it must be clear on the one thing that leaders want people to know about their organisations and that an organisation’s one word is, therefore, the ultimate value that sets it apart from all others (Carmichael, 2017). Based on this simplified approach, one of the most powerful benefits of purpose beyond profit is that it can help organisations face the challenges imposed upon them in a post-COVID-19 world. Challenges such as the need for flexibility and adaptability, the attraction and retention of talent, how to promote the wellbeing of employees and motivate them, creating collaborative relationships with various stakeholders, delivering at a high level to their customers, keeping people at the centre of decisions, including, and embracing ethics while integrating the needs of society, while remaining financially sustainable (Van Tuin et al., 2020; Lleo et al., 2021).

However, notwithstanding the proven power of purpose, like strategy, purpose continues to fail at implementation. This phenomenon continues to persist against various prescribed models and tools specifically designed for implementing purpose into the culture of organisations. These include Craig and Snook’s Purpose-to-Impact Plan (2014), Ray, Bastons and Sotok’s 3D Model of Purpose (2019), and McKinsey’s 5P Framework (Leape et al., 2020). Even leading organisational change models reviewed for this study, including the McKinsey 7S Model, the Nudge Theory, the Satir Change Model, Lewin’s Change Management Model, the ADKAR Change Management Model, and Kotter’s 8-Step Change Model, are shown in a study by Towers Watson to fail 75% of the time (Lipman, 2013). For any real chance of success, the literature revealed a need for an executive leader with a genuinely rolled-up-sleeves high level of commitment who understands the imperative to change within their inner being (Lipman, 2013).
Informed by this insight gathered from the second section of our literature review, we set out in the third section to gain a deeper understanding across various leadership styles, to further identify which style could best suit the particular leader that not only understands the need for change within an ever-changing world but one who will also have the capability to lead on purpose naturally. Based on our research, we identified Conscious Leadership as the leadership best positioned to entrench corporate purpose into organisational culture (Van Niekerk & Van Niekerk, 2013; Carson, 2016; Kubatova & Krocil, 2022; Marinčič & Marič, 2018).

Ultimately, what mattered most was finding an insight that would truly differentiate a new framework from all others towards the potential delivery of a meaningful result within the real business world. To this end, two profound insights emerged from the literature relating to organisational purpose and organisational leadership: Firstly, from the body of work by Sripada (2016) in section two, we learnt that the purpose (‘deep self’) of an organisation cannot be defined or even implemented, in the absence of defining the individual purposes (‘deep self’) of its leadership. Secondly, from the work of Marinčič and Marič (2018), we learned that an organisation can only ever be as conscious as its leader. Through unearthing these insights and overlaying them over the current existing implementation frameworks and change models, it emerged that as far as an immense amount of emphasis has been placed on the need for organisations to become more conscious, hardly any emphasis has been put on the importance of leaders to become conscious first. These gaps in existing research informed the identification of the research problem statement for this study, summarised as follows:

Leaders fail to implement their organisation’s purpose statement and successfully transform it into the cultures of their businesses due to a lack of personal consciousness at an executive leadership level.

This article, therefore, set out to investigate this phenomenon and find a framework that can guide leaders towards implementing corporate purpose into organisational culture through raising leadership and organisational consciousness. To do so, the following overarching research question was proposed:

How can executive leaders raise their consciousness, and that of their organisations, to better facilitate and implement the steps needed to transform corporate purpose into organisational culture?

In addition to this question, the insight from the literature led to four sub-questions, which focused the inquiry on key aspects relevant to the central question, which have yet not been covered by existing research. These sub-questions are: What level of consciousness does
the organisation operate at? What level of consciousness does the CEO operate at? What level of consciousness does the executive leadership team operate at? Moreover, what steps can be taken to transform corporate purpose into organisational culture?

4 METHODOLOGY

Towards finding a solution beyond the academic domain, one that is applicable and relevant to the business world, we chose to locate the research within the Interpretivist paradigm, generating data by getting into the minds of the participants, interpreting their thinking and the meaning they are making from their business context (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Because we will construct meaning from data informed by the participants, using our thinking, cognitive processing, and real-life experiences, this study will assume a subjectivist epistemology and a relativist ontology (Chalmers et al., 2005). By choosing the interpretivist paradigm, the researchers will generate theory from real-life occurrences by investigating behaviours, responses, processes, and the meanings embedded in each, hence uncovering the essence of the participants’ experience and context. From all the methodologies best suited to the Interpretivist paradigm, we have chosen Action Design Research as the focused methodology.

Action Design Research (ADR), as presented in the seminal paper by Sein, Henfridsson, Purao, Rossi, and Lindgren (2011), provides a structured and insightful process model that combines both the activities of Design Science Research (DSR) (Hevner et al., 2004) and Action Research (AR) (Susman & Evered, 1978). It is a growing model evolving to meet the ongoing demands of an ever-changing and challenging research environment. ADR, as a term, was first coined in 1944 by MIT Professor Kurt Lewin and is a research method designed to conduct research and solve a given issue simultaneously. For this reason, ADR involves both the researcher and participants in a very participatory way and deals with two seemingly disparate challenges. Firstly, it deals with a problematic situation encountered within an organisational setting; secondly, it constructs and evaluates an artefact that will address the problem typified by the encountered situation. The responses demanded by these two challenges result in a method that evaluates and builds an artefact that delivers on the theoretical intent of researchers and the influence of people who have lived experiences within the given situation. ADR, therefore, is a research method which aims to solve a practical problem through collaboration between researchers and participants who are leading practitioners (Collatto et al., 2018).
One of the key conditions for generating high-quality theory is to ensure that all the participants or the body of research are selected strategically (Flyvbjerg, 2006). By strategically choosing our participants, we aimed to increase the potential of generating theoretical propositions that are consistent with the emphasis on testable theory within mainstream deductive research (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). According to Patton (2002), purposeful sampling is a non-random method of sampling where the researcher selects a sample from which the most can be learned. Purposeful sampling is also the most common sampling strategy for inductive, qualitative research, enabling the researcher to select ‘information-rich’ participants from whom a great variation of value and core experiences can be captured about a shared phenomenon. Data saturation is achieved when no new information can be obtained through more interviews or when no new categories or codes emerge from the data collected (Fusch & Ness, 2015). According to Hennink and Kaiser (2022), qualitative studies can reach saturation at a relatively small sample size of between 9 and 17 interviews. Consequently, the subjects in this research are all selected because of their relevance to the purpose of this research: a diverse group of executive leaders, representative of 14 purpose-driven organisations spanning nine major sectors, including five South African public entities, seven private for-profit South African Organisations, one South African non-profit Organisation, and one European-based private for-profit Organisation. At the time of research, every one of them was a respected captain of market-leading organisations, ranging in scale from smaller businesses of 100 people to medium enterprises of 400 people to large corporations of 32 000 people. From their minds, we mined invaluable insights unearthed by the 27 questions of our open-ended qualitative interviews, each question inextricably linked to either one of the sub-questions.

In the end, ADR requires a contribution that proposes a solution for a specific real-world problem through the building of an artefact (Haj-Bolouri et al., 2018), which, in terms of this study, was a tangible framework that aimed to assist in the implementation of organisational purpose into the fabric of organisational culture. To this end, the study followed the four stages of the ADR process model as shown in Figure 2 below: formulation of the problem, intervening and evaluating the problem, reflecting and learning from various collaborative interactions, and finally, formulating the learning into a concrete solution. While the first three stages form an iterative cycle, the fourth stage is an outcome of these iterative stages, where the learning is formalised into a result. It is important to note that although this body of research closely followed the technical steps of ADR, it was more community-based, focusing on a network of similar individuals and compiling learning from iterated feedback cycles.
Given that this study was conducted within the interpretivist epistemological paradigm, it was inductive by nature and, for this reason, consistent with a qualitative approach to data collection (Yin, 2018). By conducting semi-structured interviews containing mainly open-ended questions, we gained in-depth data from participants' perspectives, making it an effective tool for interpretive research (Quinlan et al., 2018). For this study in particular, we also used a particular type of in-depth interview, namely the intensive interview, which is consistent with the social-constructionist perspective, wherein both the participant and the researcher actively share the interview space. In this style of interview, the researcher is invited to take on a more conversational role by asking open-ended questions, actively engaging in the conversation, following their intuition, and, in doing so, stimulating each of the participants to explore the deeper meanings of their experiences (Gubrium & Koro-Ljungberg, 2005).

For data analysis, an inductive approach primarily demanded the in-depth reading of data from interviews to obtain themes and concepts about a phenomenon we were trying to solve. The inductive approach further aimed to create a clear link between the objective of the research and the raw data and how such links could fulfil the overall objective of the research by developing a theory based on the experiences and processes revealed by the data (Jebreen, 2021), rather than testing a hypothesis. To analyse the qualitative data, rather than following a linear approach, we moved in analytic circles, called the Data Analysis Spiral (Creswell &

(Collatto et al, 2018)
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Creswell, 2018). Due to the high volume of data, an essential part of the data analysis process is to create themes and categories. All interviews were transcribed, after which a thematic analysis was conducted to identify broad patterns and themes. These patterns and themes acted as theoretical orientations, which directed the process and helped define the analytic priorities (Yin, 2018). To ensure rigour during the data analysis process, we sorted the data about key parts of the research in a hierarchical structure of categories and sub-categories. To identify these common categories and themes and the relationships between them, we also followed techniques such as word and phrase repetitions and primary and secondary data comparisons (Claasen, 2019). Once we completed all categories and themes, we visualised the data to develop our interpretations towards the conclusion, which we then used to inform the creation of a framework to implement organisational purpose into organisational culture.

Lastly, we purposefully couched this study within a largely post-modernist worldview by writing it in the first person. Not only is this acceptable practice for this kind of research, but it also brings immediacy to the expanding theoretical sensitivity and journey of the author.
5 RESULTS AND FINDINGS

We primarily worked inductively for most of the data analysis process, allowing the theory to emerge from the data (Patton, 2002). However, according to Creswell (2014), deductive logic can further enable the researcher to go beyond inductive reasoning since it does not only accommodate human experiences. For this reason, we also followed a secondary deductive approach to validate specific propositions that were uncovered in the literature. Based on this approach, we structured our results and findings in three phases, moving from a secondary deductive approach in Phase One to a primary inductive approach in Phase Two to presenting a summary of key findings in Phase Three.

In the first Phase of the findings, we endeavoured to validate Sub-question One, which aimed to address Research Issue One, which was to investigate the organisation's consciousness through general awareness of the purpose statement and the level to which the purpose is delivered. Research Issue One, in turn, was founded on Proposition One, which assumed that purpose is embedded deeper into the culture of organisations where there is a higher awareness of the purpose statement and where there is more evidence that purpose is translated into action. From the deductive analysis of the data about the consciousness of the chosen sample of organisations, six out of 14 organisations were perceived as High or Medium-High in terms of organisational consciousness, based on awareness of purpose across its websites, PR articles, and the input of both the Receptionists and the PAs to the CEOs. In comparison, eight out of 14 participating organisations were perceived as either medium, low-medium, or low in terms of organisational consciousness using the same methodology. The analysed data was linked to the insight from the extant literature, in that the more explicit the understanding and expression of the purpose of an organisation, the higher the level of consciousness of the organisation (Rey et al., 2019).

Sub-question Two aimed to address Research Issue Two, which was to investigate the consciousness of the organisation's Chief Executive through ascertaining an understanding of personal purpose and various other key qualitative questions based on insights gathered from the literature review about Conscious Leadership. Research Issue Two, in turn, was founded on Proposition Two, which assumed that purpose is embedded deeper into the culture of organisations where there is a higher awareness of personal purpose at a Chief Executive level. Regarding Sub-Question Two, nine of the 14 participants were perceived as Medium-High or High regarding their awareness of personal consciousness, while five participants were perceived as either Medium, Low-Medium, or Low. By comparing the data relevant to the perceived
consciousness of each of the chosen organisations to the data related to the perceived consciousness of their CEOs, it clearly emerged that the higher the perceived individual consciousness of the leader, the higher the perceived consciousness of the organisation they lead.

At this stage of the analysis, it was surmised that purpose is embedded deeper into the culture of organisations where there is a higher awareness of the purpose statement and where there is more evidence that purpose is turned into action. The data further showed that the higher the consciousness of the leader of an organisation, the more the organisation's purpose is likely to be embedded into the organisation's culture. However, if this was indeed true, then why would the top five most conscious leaders and organisations from this study, according to the data, still show a significant gap between commitment to delivering on purpose and understanding of purpose and the actual implementation of purpose throughout the culture of their organisations? This critical question was the perfect segue into Research Sub-Question Three, which aimed to address Research Issue Three, which was designed to investigate the consciousness of the Executive Team and their alignment with the purpose of the organisation. Research Issue Three, in turn, was founded on Proposition Three, which assumed that purpose is embedded deeper into the culture of organisations where there is a higher alignment to the organisational purpose at an executive level. For this part of the analysis about Sub-Question Three, we chose to only look at the top five participants perceived as most conscious, as their data showed a clear gap between the perceived consciousness of their organisations and implementation. If it is indeed true that an organisation can only be as conscious as its leader (Marinčič & Marič, 2018), then consideration should be given to the entire executive leadership team, beyond the responsibility of only the Chief Executive Officer. This part of the data analysis showed a clear correlation between a higher level of executive alignment to purpose and a higher level of delivering on purpose. Conversely, the same was seen with a lower level of executive alignment, correlating to a lower level of delivery against the organisational purpose statement. If executive alignment is key to the implementation of purpose into the culture, how then does a leader raise the consciousness of their leadership team within the context of this persisting failure of implementation? Through key questions from our open-ended qualitative questionnaire, we mined the minds of the executive participants for insights as to how the inner consciousness of their executive teams could be raised in terms of their organisational purpose, and in doing so, identified eight themes across all interviews which could lead to higher executive consciousness and alignment, namely: Breakthrough Conversations, Safe and Trusting Environment, Consistent

Through our process of data analysis, we were able to show that Proposition One was indeed true and, in doing so, build on the extant literature of Rey, Bastons and Sotok (2019), as evidenced in the literature. We also analysed the data about the perceived consciousness of each of the respective leaders, finding Proposition Two to most likely be true, and thus building on empirical evidence from the literature, that the primary motivation of Conscious Leaders is their search for more meaning to life (Kubatova & Krocil, 2022), thus tirelessly working towards a positive outcome that serves a greater organisational purpose (Ward & Haase, 2016). These two sets of data about Proposition One and Proposition Two also validated the gap identified by the work of Dejan Marinčič and Miha Marič (2018) to some degree, in that an organisation can only ever be as conscious as its leader. Further to this, we analysed the data about the consciousness of the executive leadership teams as perceived by their leader, finding them mostly lacking in a deeper understanding of their organisational purposes, and in doing so, showing that Proposition Three is also likely to be true, affirming the second gap as identified by the work of Sripada (2016), that the purpose of an organisation cannot be defined or even implemented, in the absence of defining the individual purposes of its leadership team. We also analysed data about the insight that purpose adds value to overall business objectives and culture, confirming the extant literature concerning this subject, including that of Sisodia, Wolfe and Sheth (2007), Mercer (2018) and Weinberger (2020).

Building on insight from their book ‘Life Word: Discover Your One Word to Leave a Legacy’, where Britton, Page, and Gordon (2016) state that the opportunity to live an inspired life ultimately comes down to one word: one of the key questions of the qualitative questionnaire was designed to ascertain how many leaders from our chosen sample were able to condense the purpose of their organisations into one word. Once each participant gave us one word, we posed an additional question relating to the full purpose statement of their organisation in order to compare the precision of their statement with the purpose statement we have taken from each of their websites, and in doing so, determine each leader’s consciousness of their organisation’s purpose. The data collected from these questions showed that 14 out of 14 participants could easily state the one word their organisations stand for. Furthermore, fourteen out of fourteen participants could also state their organisational purpose, as per the statements of purpose on their websites. Of particular interest was the strong link between the
root word and the purpose statement of 11 out of the 14 organisations, in that 11 of the full purpose statements included the root word as identified by each participant.

As a final effort to gain valuable insight towards delivering the ultimate purpose of this study, we then set out to analyse the fourth set of data relating to Research Sub-Question Four: What steps can be taken to transform corporate purpose into organisational culture? This question was designed to validate Proposition Four specifically, which assumed that purpose is embedded deeper into the culture of organisations where there is a systematic approach that uses various methods, rituals, and routines. To probe this proposition, seven key questions were created as part of our open-ended qualitative questionnaire, enabling us to develop ideas from the data and, in doing so, establish four key themes, namely Communication, Rituals, Measurement, and Game-Changers. Within each theme, we further identified various categories by meticulously grouping key phrases and repetitions (Claasen, 2019). In doing so, we could present the frequency at which each concept was mentioned, as well as the number of participants who agreed that each concept was likely to add value as a potential tool in implementing business purpose into organisational culture. Through this systematic approach, we were able to highlight the themes and categories that could hold the most potential for our artefact, as summarised in Figure 3.

**Figure 3**

*Summation of Themes and Categories*
By distilling the findings, we were further able to identify key blocks that stand in the way of implementing each of our four propositions, as identified in the literature. In doing so, 18 key insights emerged through the ADR process, forming the foundation of our implementation model towards overcoming the persisting implementation hurdle (Figure 4).

**Figure 4**

*The 18 Foundational Principles of the Growing Greatness Implementation Framework*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. The purpose statement of an organisation should be built upon the foundation of one root word.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. The purpose statement of an organisation should aim to include both the ‘why’ and the ‘how’ to lead to a higher level of clarity and active implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The Virtues Cycle is a powerful tool to implement purpose into culture, as there is no hierarchy between the key pillars of the business, creating a natural flow throughout.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The purpose statement of a human being should be built upon the foundation of one root word.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The purpose statement of a human being should aim to include both the ‘why’ and the ‘how’ to lead to a higher level of clarity and active implementation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. The leadership of an organisation should attend Leadership Programmes that focuses on spiritual intelligence and the raising of inner consciousness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The leadership of an organisation should invest in coaches that focus on spiritual intelligence and the raising of inner consciousness of their people.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. The leadership of an organisation and its people should read spiritual literature, engage with a spiritual teacher, and meditate where possible (Kendall, 2018).</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Honest conversations within a safe and trusting environment can lead to small breakthroughs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. The purpose of an organisation should have specifically linked Purpose Pillars, each measured with the same vigour as the financial pillar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. The Purpose Pillars of an organisation should be visualised using The Virtues Cycle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Each of an organisation’s Purpose Pillars should have a set of Key Purpose Indicators (KPIs) that are each highly measurable, and therefore delivered upon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. The monthly board meetings of the organisation should be presented in order of the flow of the Virtues Cycle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. To drive a daily culture of purpose, Recurring Rituals is recommended as a new theme, which includes Language, Meetings, Training, Responsibility, and Purpose Advocates.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. The term Purpose Advocates is inspired by the insight that systemic change can be created through pockets of advocates across the business.</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. A safe working environment is critical for embedding purpose deeper into the culture and acts as an invisible glove that holds all actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. A key ingredient for a safe working environment is embracing the uniqueness of people and allowing them to fail forward.</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. The most important leadership behaviour required for a safe working environment is a high level of vulnerability.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
6 SUMMARY, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

At the heart of the challenge that this study aimed to solve is the radical decline in the average lifespan of organisations from 67 years in the 1920s to 15 years in 2015 (Mauboussin et al., 2017; Hillenbrand et al., 2019; Viguerie et al., 2021). Notwithstanding an overwhelming body of research confirming that organisations can overcome this challenge of declining business sustainability by placing purpose at the core of its strategy (Malnight et al., 2019). Nine out of every ten of these purpose-driven organisational strategies fail, with the majority claiming unsuccessful implementation (Kihara, 2017). Even more alarming is that models and tools specifically designed for the implementation of corporate purpose into organisational culture are by and large said to be unsuccessful, including the likes of Craig and Snook’s Purpose-to-Impact Plan (2014), Ray, Bastons and Sotok’s 3D Model of Purpose (2019), and McKinsey’s 5P Framework (Leape et al., 2020). Through synthesising the extant literature from various scholars across the fields of Strategic Management, Corporate Purpose, and Leadership, a gap in the current literature emerged in that the purpose (‘deep self’) of an organisation cannot be defined or even implemented in the absence of defining the individual purposes (‘deep self’) of its leadership first (Sripada, 2016). This insight is supported by the statement that an organisation can only be as conscious as its leader (Marinčič & Marič, 2018). This gap in the existing body of knowledge about the persisting lack of strategic implementation is profound, as none of the current implementation frameworks includes any aspect of leadership consciousness and personal purpose. This key insight to our study motivated us to focus our efforts on the micro-internal quadrant of Strategic Management, namely Behavioural Strategy, which looks at individual and group behaviour through the realistic assumptions of human emotions, cognition, and social behaviour (Powell et al., 2011). In doing so, Behavioural Strategy emphasises the internal aspects of an organisation, with a keen focus on the influence of the individual on the sustainable success of their business. The gap in the current literature ultimately inspired our overarching research question, which delivered four propositions we used as a golden thread throughout the Intervention, Reflection, and Formalisation parts of the Action Design Research Process.

The analysis indicated that all four research propositions for this study were most likely true. However, the purpose of the study was not to validate or de-validate set research propositions. To deliver on the ultimate purpose of this study, we specifically chose Participatory Action Research as the methodology, as it requires that the academic contribution
Marais, P., & Schutte, F. (2024)
A FRAMEWORK FOR TRANSFORMING CORPORATE PURPOSE INTO ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

will be a solution for a particular real-world problem through the building of an artefact (Haj-Bolouri et al., 2018), co-created by both the participators and the researcher. Towards such a solution, the data analysed produced 18 key findings, all of which were invaluable in creating the ‘Growing Greatness Implementation Framework’. The framework holds an authentic love for people as its truth. It presupposes that when an organisation hires an individual, it hires far more than just a set of knowledge and skills, but rather a source of unlimited potential, which lies dormant within the undiscovered personal purpose of each of these individuals (Rey et al., 2019). Foundational also to the model is the insight that an organisation can only ever be as conscious as its executive leadership (Marinčič & Marič, 2018), and as such, leaders should be conscious of their own individual purpose first. The framework operates from the inside out, with purpose at its core, surrounded by two virtuous cycles. The first pillar of the inner cycle places people at the heart of the business. Through a diverse and inclusive culture, all people are guided to discover their personal purpose within the greater organisational purpose, and in doing so, they are enabled to be the best version of themselves within the organisation. The second pillar focuses on the product or service of the organisation, with the belief that the more the organisation develops its people, not just on a skills level but more so on an emotional and spiritual level, the more exceptional their output. Pillar three focuses on the growth and development of clients, while pillar four focuses on profit as a measurable by-product of delivery according to the first three pillars. Pillar five focuses on the measured value that the organisation has within its greater community, country, or the world at large. The inner virtues cycle is supported by an outer circle of recurring rituals, which guide daily actions that are expected to transform corporate purpose into the culture of the organisation.
Marais, P., & Schutte, F. (2024) 
A FRAMEWORK FOR TRANSFORMING CORPORATE PURPOSE INTO ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Figure 5
The Growing Greatness Implementation Framework

Source: Authors (2024)

While the study has cast a light on previously unexplored ways to improve the implementation rate of corporate purpose into organisational culture, it had several limitations
that opened doors to further research and opportunities. Firstly, the sample of participants in the study included 11 Caucasian males, 1 African male, 1 Indian male, and 1 Caucasian female, and since we believe diversity to be the cornerstone of creativity, we acknowledge that a more diverse sample could only have impacted the outcome of our study positively. That said, of the three most conscious leaders, one was female. This begs the question of whether female executive leaders are potentially more conscious and open to alternative ways of leading organisations than their male counterparts, opening the opportunity for inquiry through further research. Secondly, the area of Conscious Leadership, Conscious Companies, and a deeper understanding of organisational and personal purpose is a new field with limited research published, which means that this study could be considered experimental. Being aware of both these limitations, we did, however, make a concerted effort to identify only the highest calibre of leaders for this study, in doing so, ensuring good content validity and reliability. In the end, one of our greatest challenges was ascertaining the inner consciousness of each of our participants. In her in-depth research of human awareness, organisational psychologist Tasha Eurich found that although most people believe that they are self-aware, only 10% to 15% of the people she has studied fit the criteria (Eurich, 2018). Based on this statistic, it would be acceptable to assume that at most two of the fourteen leaders participating in this study are at an above-average level of individual consciousness. Notwithstanding our best efforts to find a way in which to determine the level of consciousness of both the leaders and their organisations, one of our greatest struggles throughout our study was to find an acceptable academic measure to do so. This limitation, therefore, opens a line of inquiry into ways in which the consciousness of leaders can be measured, especially in the context of the newest leadership style: Conscious Leadership. A final key challenge that all participants struggled to articulate was how the consciousness of both leaders and people can be raised. More research is therefore required to investigate ways in which human consciousness can be raised and, in doing so, create a more sustainable approach to leading organisations.

In conclusion, the irony of this study, given the implementation challenges it hopes to solve, is that the recommended framework will only ever stand a chance to prove its value if implemented.

REFERENCES


