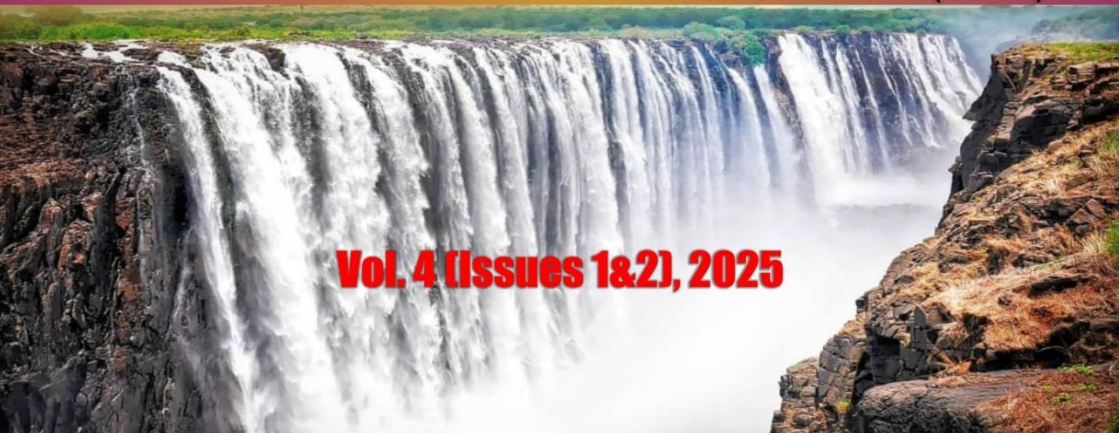




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The Futures - Ezekiel Guti University Journal of Leadership, Governance and Development aims to provide a forum for eldership, development and governance solutions based on a systems approach and thinking.

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Leaders (coming from various circles of life), professional associations, students, researchers and practitioners will be the primary contributors and consumers.

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FUTURES FOCUS-A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF SCENARIO PLANNING, STRATEGIC FORESIGHT AND DYNAMIC CAPABILITIES

LAWRENCE POPERWI¹, THANKS HONDOMA² AND AUGUSTINE MATABA³

Abstract

This study explores the critical capabilities of Scenario Planning and Strategic Foresight, examining their interrelationship with Dynamic Capabilities and their role in enhancing strategic leadership in volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous and disruptive environments. Using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) methodology grounded in the PRISMA framework, the research synthesises existing knowledge, identifies research gaps, and draws robust conclusions from the body of literature on Scenario Planning and Strategic Foresight. The inclusion criterion comprises articles from reputable journals including Scopus indexed journals written in English which covered comprehensively the concepts of Strategic Foresight and Scenario Planning. The exclusion criteria included not accepting any article that was non-English, articles that had insufficient data and articles which had weak methodologies. The findings reveal that Scenario Planning serves as a practical tool within the broader framework of Strategic Foresight, with both concepts complementing each other to enhance organisational resilience and adaptability. The study also identifies essential cognitive paradigms, including future thinking, systems thinking and exponential thinking, which enable effective Strategic Foresight and strategic decision-making. Scenario Planning was shown to foster organisational learning, innovation and strategic agility, while Strategic Foresight empowers leaders to anticipate and shape future opportunities and challenges. The research is limited by its reliance on secondary data, potentially excluding emerging real-world practices. However, the findings provide valuable insights for managers seeking to develop foresight and Scenario Planning capabilities, emphasizing tools like horizon scanning and

¹ Lecturer, Management Sciences, Midlands State University, Zimbabwe (lawrencepoperwi@yahoo.com / poperwil@staff.msu.ac.zw, ORCID ID: 0009-0004-6035-1176).

² Lecturer, Marketing and Information Systems Lecturer, Midlands State University, Zimbabwe (hondomat@staff.msu.ac.zw).

³ Augustine T. Mataba, Management Sciences Lecturer at Midlands State University, Zimbabwe (matabaa@staff.msu.ac.zw).

scenario modelling to improve competitiveness. This study contributes to strategic management literature by elucidating the complementary roles of Scenario Planning and Strategic Foresight in navigating turbulent business environments.

Keywords: Turbulent business environments, VUCA world, prescriptive school of thought, emergence school of thought

INTRODUCTION

Rising environmental uncertainty has brought several challenges to different organisations. The spread of environmental uncertainty in the business environment has been amplified by the advent of globalisation, highly destructive business models and rapid changes in technology (Mohammadi, 2023). This has resulted in increased instability and complexity of the business competitive landscape. Contemporary organisations have to contend with a dynamic, volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous and disruptive (DVUCAD) environment. Ramirez and Wilkinson (2016) coined the acronym TUNA (turbulence, uncertainty, novelty and ambiguity) which suggests that the situation has moved beyond the VUCA world in terms of increasing uncertainty and dynamics in the business environment. Both the DVUCAD and TUNA worlds present unsettling and destabilising conditions to businesses. In essence, companies are being urged to become more vigilant and Strategic Foresight is part of this effort (Day and Schoemaker, 2019). Accordingly, there is dire need to equip contemporary strategic managers with Scenario Planning, Dynamic Capabilities and Strategic Foresight capabilities to make them fit and function effectively in such environments. Developing Dynamic Capabilities in any organisation is one of the most effective ways to cope with the ever-changing conditions (Mohammadi, 2023). Therefore, this article seeks to bring to the table knowledge which can help corporate executives attain the critical capabilities of Scenario Planning and Strategic Foresight. Once equipped with such knowledge, the strategic leaders should be in a position to stay ahead of competition in the market place since well executed Scenario Planning and Strategic Foresight leads to firm competitiveness. It is against this backdrop that this study intends: to differentiate Scenario Planning from Strategic Foresight; to examine the Strategic Foresight, Scenario Planning and Dynamic Capabilities nexus and to demonstrate the efficacy of Scenario Planning and Strategic Foresight in the strategic management of organisations.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The article is underpinned by two schools of thought which feature prominently in the field of strategic management. The schools of thought or perspectives are the Prescriptive School and the Emergent School of Thought. The theory of strategic management presents two perspectives or schools of thought to the development of strategy, namely the Prescriptive and Emergent schools of thought. Moreover, the Dynamic Capabilities theory and systems thinking will be used as part of the theoretical framework for the study. Scenario Planning and Strategic Foresight are key Dynamic Capabilities that every contemporary corporate executive must possess to be effective on the job.

THE PRESCRIPTIVE SCHOOL OF THOUGHT

The Prescriptive School of Thought in strategic management posits that strategy formulation is a formal, linear and intellectual process. This approach involves clearly defined stages, beginning with an analysis of the environment and resources, followed by the formulation of vision, mission and objectives, and culminating in the rational choice and execution of strategic options. It assumes a stable and predictable business environment, which allows for a structured and systematic process. This school remains highly relevant in contemporary Strategic Planning, where its emphasis on clarity and coherence supports organisations in defining and aligning their strategic objectives (Chermack *et al.*, 2020).

Despite its strengths, the approach is often criticised for its inherent rigidity and assumption of environmental stability, which can limit adaptability in volatile markets. Modern businesses face Dynamic Challenges that require flexible and innovative approaches, which the Prescriptive School may fail to accommodate. For instance, its focus on a pre-determined process can hinder rapid responses to unforeseen disruptions. This limitation has spurred the development of alternative strategic frameworks that priorities adaptability and emergent strategies (Mohammadi, 2023).

The continued relevance of the Prescriptive School is evident in its application to structured Strategic Planning processes across diverse organisations. By providing a systematic framework, it ensures that strategic objectives are well-defined and aligned with organisational goals. This

structured methodology is often integrated into Scenario Planning and Strategic Foresight practices to balance clarity with adaptability. Organisations use prescriptive frameworks to establish a foundation for evaluating potential scenarios and refining their strategies (Mortlock and Seversky, 2023).

The Prescriptive School of Thought provides a rational and methodical approach to strategy formulation. Its limitations in dynamic and unpredictable environments highlight the need for complementary frameworks. Organisations can maximise their strategic effectiveness by integrating the prescriptive approach with adaptive methodologies, allowing them to address complex and evolving challenges effectively (Heidebrecht, 2022).

THE EMERGENT SCHOOL OF THOUGHT

The Emergent School of thought in strategic management emphasizes the unpredictability of the future, challenging the prescriptive approach that assumes a stable environment. This perspective posits that strategy evolves organically as internal and external conditions change over time, enabling organisations to remain flexible and adaptive. Unlike the linear processes of the Prescriptive School, emergent strategies are developed through iterative learning and responses to real-time circumstances, making them well-suited for dynamic environments (Strelkovskii *et al.*, 2020).

Proponents of the Emergent School argue that in volatile, uncertain and complex scenarios, fixed strategies often become obsolete. as such, organisations must embrace flexibility, allowing strategy to develop as a process rather than a pre-determined outcome. This adaptability ensures that strategic decisions are responsive to environmental shifts, helping organisations maintain relevance and competitiveness in fast-changing markets. For example, the dynamic alignment of resources to match evolving demands reflects the core principles of the emergent strategy approach (Dankova *et al.*, 2023).

Furthermore, the Emergent School highlights the importance of fostering a culture of learning and experimentation within organisations. Continuous

feedback loops and collaboration across various levels of the organisation enable the identification of strategic opportunities and threats as they arise. This participative approach ensures that strategies align with both internal capabilities and external challenges faced by the organisation (Krabokoukis and Kantianis, 2024).

The Emergent School provides a vital counterpoint to the prescriptive approach, emphasizing adaptability, learning and iterative development. By accommodating the complexities and uncertainties of modern business environments, emergent strategies empower organisations to navigate unpredictable scenarios effectively. This approach underscores the necessity for Dynamic Capabilities, promoting resilience and long-term sustainability in strategic management (Jackson, 2024).

CONCEPTUALISATION OF SCENARIO PLANNING AND STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

This section develops the concepts of Scenario Planning and Strategic Foresight so that the reader can easily follow the ensuing discussion.

CONCEPTUALISATION OF SCENARIO PLANNING

Scenario Planning is a valuable strategic tool that allows organisations to create flexible, long-term plans in the face of uncertainty. Despite its widespread application, there is no universally agreed definition of the term, making it somewhat elusive. Scenario Planning is often characterised as a process for constructing alternative narratives of the future, based on current trends and events. These scenarios are not predictions but, rather, plausible stories that encompass a range of possibilities. By considering both expected and unexpected outcomes, organisations can broaden their strategic thinking and prepare for a variety of potential futures (Chermack *et al.*, 2020).

One of the key features of Scenario Planning is its ability to challenge the conventional way of thinking within organisations. By questioning the assumptions of a business-as-usual mindset, decision-makers can explore unconventional ideas and gain a deeper understanding of uncertainties that may shape their industry. Schwartz (1996), in his book *The Art of the Long*

View, emphasizes that the true test of a scenario lies not in its ability to predict the future, but in its capacity to help organisations learn and adapt. This adaptability is critical in an ever-changing world, as it enables organisations to remain resilient and responsive to emerging challenges.

Scenario Planning also develops two essential organisational capabilities: anticipatory and generative skills. Anticipatory skills allow organisations to recognise early signals of change and adjust their strategies accordingly. These skills are vital for navigating dynamic environments, as they help organisations remain agile and forward-looking. Generative skills, on the other hand, empower organisations to shape their desired futures actively. These capabilities foster a proactive mindset, enabling organisations to go beyond merely reacting to changes instead of creating opportunities to achieve their strategic goals (Wilson, 2017). The process of Scenario Planning relies heavily on collaboration and knowledge sharing among stakeholders. This approach ensures that diverse perspectives are considered, resulting in comprehensive and robust scenarios. Through the integration of various viewpoints, organisations can construct scenarios that are systematic, coherent and plausible. This collaborative effort enables decision-makers to better understand the interplay of forces driving the future and make informed strategic choices. Scenario Planning thus becomes a tool not only for navigating uncertainty but also for fostering resilience and adaptability in complex environments (Chermack *et al.*, 2020).

CONCEPTUALISATION OF STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

Strategic Foresight refers to the ability to anticipate, plan for, and shape the future by combining a mindset focused on possibilities with systematic methodologies. It involves understanding that future outcomes are influenced by choices made in the present, emphasizing the proactive role decision-makers play in shaping outcomes. This concept is rooted in the belief that foresight is both a perspective and a practice, as articulated by Carleton, Cockayne, and Tahvanainen (2013). By adopting Strategic Foresight, organisations can develop a forward-looking vision and effectively navigate the uncertainties of the future.

In a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environment, Strategic Foresight provides a framework to deal with unpredictable

developments. The emphasis is not on predicting a single likely outcome, but on envisioning multiple alternative scenarios. This approach ensures that organisations remain prepared and capable of adapting to various possible futures. According to Heidebrecht (2022), Strategic Foresight is a systematic process designed to help organisations anticipate changes and stay resilient in the face of uncertainty. This adaptability allows businesses to proactively shape strategies that can accommodate a range of potential outcomes.

The Strategic Foresight model, developed by William Cockayne and Tamara Carleton, provides a structured approach to this process. The model comprises five phases: perspective, opportunity, solution, team and vision. These phases aim to identify and evaluate emerging technologies, anticipate the future needs of customers and address complex challenges with creativity and efficiency. By systematically applying this framework, organisations can stay ahead of industry trends and prepare for shifts in the market environment (Carleton *et al.*, 2013). This model demonstrates the value of a structured yet flexible approach to foresight in decision-making and innovation.

A critical distinction must be made between strategic foresight and prediction. While prediction seeks to remove uncertainty by forecasting specific outcomes based on probabilities, Strategic Foresight embraces ambiguity and prepares organisations for a range of possible futures. This perspective allows decision-makers to remain flexible and adapt to unexpected changes, rather than being confined to a single forecast path. As Heidebrecht (2022) notes, Strategic Foresight is not about eliminating uncertainty, but about empowering organisations to respond effectively to it, ensuring resilience and informed decision-making in dynamic environments.

METHODOLOGY

This research adopts the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, grounded in the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework, to ensure methodological rigour and comprehensive coverage of the subject matter. The SLR methodology is particularly well-suited for synthesising existing knowledge, identifying

research gaps and drawing robust conclusions from a body of literature. By systematically gathering, appraising and analyzing academic and practitioner sources, this approach ensures that research findings are both reliable and replicable. The PRISMA framework, a globally recognised standard for conducting systematic reviews, provides clear guidelines for documenting the process, from the initial search strategy to the final selection of studies for inclusion. This structured methodology enhances transparency and minimises bias, ensuring that the findings contribute meaningfully to the academic discourse and provide a strong foundation for future research. The systematic review process entails developing the protocol, search and screen criteria, analysis phase and, lastly, the write-up stage.

PROTOCOL

The research procedure encompassed a fundamental inquiry: "How are the three concepts, Scenario Planning, Strategic Foresight and Dynamic Capabilities linked?" The inclusion and exclusion criteria were developed. Published articles from reputable and high-impact journals, including *Wiley Online Library*, *Sustainability*, *Elsevier*, the *Journal of Business Review*, the *Journal of Business and Social Science* and *Front Psychology*. Key search phrases for this study were 'Strategic Foresight', 'Scenario Planning' and 'Dynamic Capabilities' in relation to business entities in turbulent VUCA environments. Original research articles from any part of the world were eligible on condition that they were written in the English language. In this study, both qualitative and quantitative studies were eligible. The information from the journal articles was only considered suitable only if it helped in answering the key question. Conversely, journal articles that were not useful in answering the fundamental question were excluded from the review. Database search provided 220 records. Of the 220 records screened, 120 were excluded for the following reasons: 65 were due to duplicate investigations, 15 were not related to the research objectives, 15 had no abstracts, while 25 did not meet the expected scientific rigour. This means 100 reports were available for retrieval. However, 20 reports could not be retrieved since they were not accessible due to their strict requirement for payment first before access. Resultantly, 80 reports were assessed for eligibility, of which 50 reports were excluded for the following reasons: 15 for non-English language, 25 had insufficient data, while 10 had old data.

Ultimately, only 30 studies were included in the systematic review. Figure 1, being the PRISMA flow chart, captures the salient features of the process.

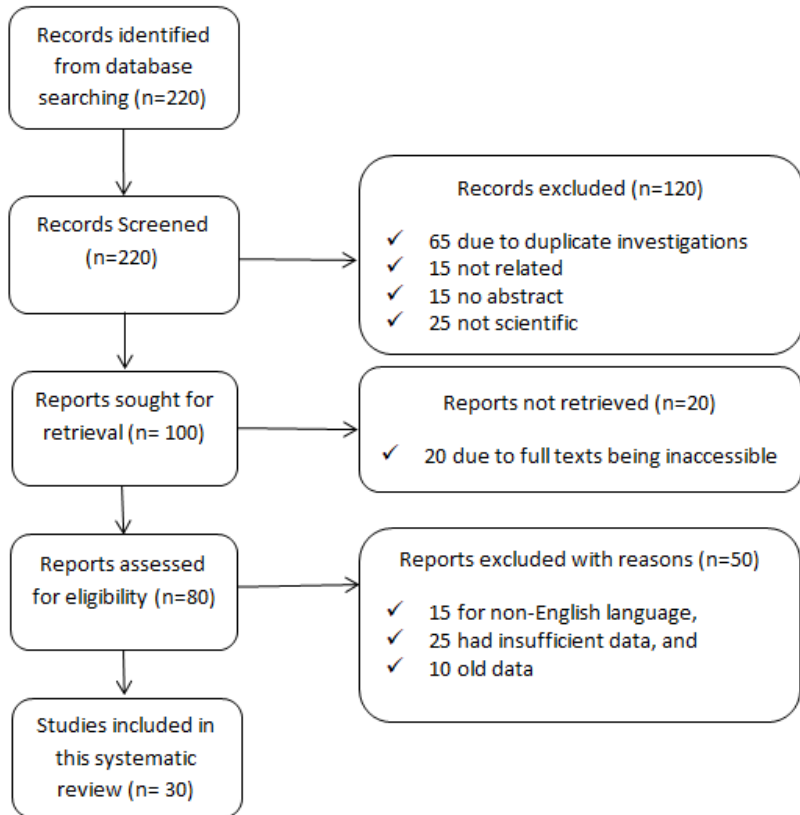


Figure 1: PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram showing the source selection process from literature databases

SEARCH STRATEGY

Search strategy refers to an organised combination of keywords, phrases and limiters used to search a database. In this study, the key terms are Scenario Planning, uncertainty, risk, Strategic Foresight, Dynamic Capability.

SEARCH AND SCREEN CRITERIA

In order to find relevant material, the research used tertiary literature sources such as online databases, general internet searching, library

browsing, and the retrieval of cited books and journal articles. The study used full-text online databases, abstracting and indexing databases, and indexes to conduct a literature search using tertiary literature sources, as recommended by Saunders *et al.* (2012). The literature was screened through the use of a practical screen, which evaluated factors such as scope, depth, years searched, language used, context, sample, treatments and outcomes. Important literature for answering the research question was also identified using a methodological quality screen. Research quality was screened by examining its conception, sampling, data collection, interventions, data analysis, and findings and drawing appropriate conclusions. A total of 30 articles from reputable journals were used in this study.

ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS OF RELEVANT RESEARCH STUDIES

The study dissected each study into component pieces, including the following: research question or purpose; study environment; data collection techniques; sample size, frame and demographics; important findings and review questions. Important details like these were noted on the data collection form. In order to answer the targeted review questions, data from the data extraction forms was analysed and combined.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviewed literature covering the evolution of Scenario Planning and Strategic Foresight, steps in Scenario Planning, steps in Strategic Foresight, the applications and benefits of Scenario Planning and Strategic Foresight to corporates, the thinking required in Scenario Planning and Strategic Foresight in relation to Strategic Planning.

EVOLUTION OF SCENARIO PLANNING AND STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

Strategic Foresight refers to the ability to anticipate, plan for, and shape the future by combining a mindset focused on possibilities with systematic methodologies. It involves understanding that future outcomes are influenced by choices made in the present, emphasizing the pro-active role decision-makers play in shaping outcomes. This concept is rooted in the belief that foresight is both a perspective and a practice, as articulated by Carleton, Cockayne, and Tahvanainen (2013). By adopting Strategic Foresight, organisations can develop a forward-looking vision and effectively navigate the uncertainties of the future.

In a VUCA environment, Strategic Foresight provides a framework to deal with unpredictable developments. The emphasis is not on predicting a single likely outcome, but on envisioning multiple alternative scenarios. This approach ensures that organisations remain prepared and capable of adapting to various possible futures. According to Heidebrecht (2022), Strategic Foresight is a systematic process designed to help organisations anticipate changes and stay resilient in the face of uncertainty. This adaptability allows businesses to proactively shape strategies that can accommodate a range of potential outcomes.

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT, SCENARIO PLANNING AND STRATEGIC PLANNING CLARIFIED

Strategic Foresight is the process of exploring possible futures, analysing and interpreting signals of change and developing a set of responses that prepare a business to remain competitive in the long run. As businesses face the challenge of predictability, Strategic Foresight becomes essential in contemporary businesses for several reasons:

Uncertainty in the business environment-The business environment is becoming more complex, volatile and unpredictable, making it difficult for businesses to predict what the future holds. Strategic Foresight enables businesses to explore different possible scenarios, consider potential impact of external factors and identify emerging trends.

Identifying opportunities-Strategic Foresight helps to identify new opportunities that may arise in future, especially those that other companies may not have considered. By assessing emerging trends and signals of change, businesses can develop strategies to exploit new opportunities, which, in turn, fosters growth and improves competitiveness.

Developing effective strategies-Traditional Strategic Planning is often reactive, assessing past and current conditions to formulate strategies. In contrast, Strategic Foresight considers possible future scenarios, understands emerging trends and signals of change, and develops proactive strategies to prepare the business for future eventualities.

Future proofing the business-Strategic Foresight allows businesses to adapt to change and be more resilient in the face of unexpected events. By anticipating possible futures, businesses can create contingency plans and be better prepared to respond to change when it occurs.

In conclusion, Strategic Foresight plays a vital role in contemporary businesses, especially when faced with the inevitable challenge of predictability. With businesses facing an uncertain environment, Strategic

Foresight helps to identify opportunities, develop effective strategies, and future proofing the business. It is an essential tool for any business that wants to remain competitive in the long run. It is crucial to note that the starting point for Strategic Planning is the question, ‘Where we are now and what we know?’ to ‘How we get where we want to be if status quo remains?’. Suffice to point out that the first question relates to assessment of current realities, whereas the second question pertains to the strategies required to get to the intended state, assuming a stable business environment. On the other hand, the starting point for Scenario Planning is, ‘Where we are now and what we know?’ to ‘How we will react in a variety of possible futures?’ Scenario Planning envisions a multiplicity of likely futures and, therefore, attempts to put in place strategies that can match the possible futures in advance.

TYPES OF CULTURE AND THINKING REQUIRED IN SCENARIO PLANNING AND STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

The cultivation of Scenario Planning and Strategic Foresight relies heavily on fostering certain types of thinking and organisational culture that encourage proactive and innovative approaches. Woeffray and Carvalho (2023) emphasize three critical types of thinking for Strategic Foresight: future thinking, systems thinking, and exponential thinking. Future thinking helps individuals envision a spectrum of possible futures, enabling them to anticipate and prepare for various changes. Systems thinking provides a holistic view of interconnected systems, allowing organisations to identify patterns and interdependencies that shape strategic outcomes. Meanwhile, Jackson (2024) highlights exponential thinking, which focuses on understanding the disruptive potential of rapidly advancing technologies and their impact on traditional business models. Together, these thinking paradigms encourage a forward-looking mind-set and foster organisational resilience, enabling firms to adapt and thrive in uncertain and complex environments.

STEPS INVOLVED IN SCENARIO PLANNING AND STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

The process of Scenario Planning and Strategic Foresight involves a series of well-defined stages designed to guide organisations in systematically exploring and preparing for potential futures. These stages provide a structured framework, ensuring that Scenario Planning and Strategic Foresight are not chaotic but, rather, deliberate and logical management activities. According to Ramirez and Wilkinson (2016), the critical steps in

Scenario Planning typically include defining the scope and objectives, identifying key drivers of change, constructing plausible scenarios, and deriving actionable insights. Similarly, Groves *et al.* (2023) emphasize that the foresight process incorporates iterative stages of exploration, analysis, and synthesis, aimed at refining strategic options and enhancing decision-making. Understanding these phases is essential for individuals and organisations seeking to improve the quality and competitiveness of their strategies. By following a clear and orderly process, decision-makers can uncover hidden opportunities, prepare for uncertainties and develop adaptive strategies that align with both current realities and future possibilities.

METHODS USED IN SCENARIO PLANNING AND STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

This section explores popular methods utilised in Scenario Planning and Strategic Foresight, emphasizing their distinct yet interconnected roles in strategic management. Scenario Planning and Strategic Foresight, though closely linked, represent different aspects of strategic thinking. Scenario Planning focuses primarily on creating and exploring multiple plausible futures, enabling organisations to consider a variety of outcomes and develop robust strategies. On the other hand, Strategic Foresight encompasses a broader set of tools and methodologies designed to anticipate and prepare for future uncertainties. As noted by Grove, Clouse and Xu (2023), two of the most effective methods in Strategic Foresight are Horizon Scanning and Scenario Planning. Horizon scanning involves systematically identifying emerging trends, technologies and signals of change that could impact an organisation's future. Similarly, Schoemaker *et al.* (2020) highlight that Scenario Planning extends these insights by creating detailed, plausible futures that allow decision-makers to test and refine their strategies. Together, these methods enable organisations to navigate uncertainty with greater clarity and confidence, laying the groundwork for adaptive and forward-looking strategies.

APPLICATION AND BENEFITS OF SCENARIO PLANNING AND STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

Scenario Planning offers a wide range of applications and benefits that make it an invaluable tool for corporate executives navigating the complexities of modern business environments. Mortlock and Osiyevskyy (2023) identify Scenario Planning serves as a framework for addressing key strategic challenges through its eight core applications. These include risk identification, which helps organisations recognise potential threats and

prepare mitigation strategies and assessing uncertainty, which enables leaders to better understand and anticipate the unpredictable elements of their operating environments. Scenario Planning also fosters organisational learning by encouraging teams to think beyond immediate priorities and engage in long-term, systemic thinking. Additionally, it supports options analysis, where decision-makers evaluate various pathways and strategy validation where scenarios are used to test the robustness of existing plans. These applications extend to facilitating complex decision-making, promoting strategic nimbleness and driving innovation by challenging conventional thinking and encouraging creative problem-solving. The ability of Scenario Planning to integrate such diverse applications underscores its role as a critical capability for corporate executives.

In addition to its specific applications, the broader benefits of Scenario Planning lie in its capacity to enhance Strategic Foresight. Grove *et al.* (2023) suggest Strategic Foresight leverages Scenario Planning to explore emerging challenges and opportunities, empowering decision-makers to act decisively in uncertain contexts. This process enables organisations to anticipate shifts in markets, technologies and competitive landscapes, ensuring they remain agile and responsive. Moreover, Scenario Planning contributes to building organisational resilience by preparing leaders for multiple possible futures, reducing the risks associated with over-reliance on a single strategy. By fostering a culture of adaptability and innovation, Scenario Planning positions organisations to seize opportunities and navigate uncertainties effectively. Through the integration of insights from academic and practitioner literature, as Mortlock and Osiyevskyy (2023) highlight, Scenario Planning equips executives with the tools needed to ensure strategic competitiveness and sustainability in rapidly evolving environments.

THE NEXUS BETWEEN SCENARIO PLANNING AND STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

This section explores the relationship between Strategic Foresight and Scenario Planning, emphasizing their integration within Strategic Planning frameworks. Strategic Foresight is a broad approach aimed at preparing for and shaping future uncertainties by identifying trends, assessing potential disruptions and anticipating changes that could influence an organisation. It encourages proactive thinking and helps decision-makers broaden their perspectives. Scenario Planning, as a specialised tool within this framework, operationalises foresight principles by constructing structured narratives

about potential futures. These narratives allow organisations to test strategies against diverse conditions, demonstrating how Strategic Foresight and Scenario Planning, though distinct, are inherently interconnected (Woeffray and Carvalho, 2023).

Scenario Planning plays a pivotal role in strategic foresight by converting insights into actionable strategies. It builds on foresight's identification of key drivers of change, creating coherent and plausible stories that illustrate how different futures might unfold. Unlike predictions, these scenarios explore a range of possibilities, helping leaders navigate uncertainties effectively. By offering a structured way to examine future scenarios, organisations can identify weaknesses in their current strategies, uncover new opportunities, and prepare for unexpected challenges. This approach, as noted by Schoemaker *et al.* (2020), ensures that strategic decisions are robust and adaptable across multiple potential outcomes.

The complementary nature of Strategic Foresight and Scenario Planning lies in their shared goal of enhancing organisational adaptability and resilience. Strategic Foresight provides the intellectual framework for long-term thinking, enabling organisations to identify emerging trends and disruptions. Scenario Planning complements this by turning abstract foresight insights into detailed scenarios that help leaders make informed decisions. Together, they allow organisations to align their strategies with potential future realities while remaining flexible to respond to changing circumstances. Groves *et al.* (2023) argue that this integration enables organisations to adopt forward-looking, proactive strategies that maintain their competitive edge in dynamic environments.

Mastering both Strategic Foresight and Scenario Planning is crucial for leaders aiming to build robust and competitive strategies. Strategic Foresight fosters a mind-set of anticipation, ensuring organisations are prepared for uncertainties and equipped to shape their future. Scenario Planning, meanwhile, provides the tactical tools for testing assumptions and refining strategies to address multiple potential futures. The combination of these methodologies not only enhances Strategic Planning processes but also promotes a culture of adaptability and innovation, empowering organisations to thrive in complex and uncertain environments (Mortlock and Osiyevskyy, 2023).

RESULTS

OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE INTEGRATION

The results of the systematic literature review, conducted under the PRISMA framework, reveals 30 rigorously selected studies that collectively explore the intricate relationship among Scenario Planning, Strategic Foresight and Dynamic Capabilities. These studies, derived from globally recognised journals, highlight how Scenario Planning and Strategic Foresight operate as complementary tools within the broader strategic management discourse. The literature consistently emphasizes the increasing need for organisations to embrace strategic adaptability in volatile and unpredictable environments. This section encapsulates key findings that emerged from these scholarly contributions, focusing on conceptual clarity, theoretical convergence and practical applications.

DIFFERENTIATION AND INTERRELATIONSHIP OF CORE CONCEPTS

One key result was the clear conceptual demarcation between Scenario Planning and Strategic Foresight, although both are frequently intertwined in practice. Scenario Planning emerged as a structured, narrative-based tool used to imagine and prepare for multiple plausible futures, whereas Strategic Foresight is broader, focusing on systemic trend analysis and anticipatory strategy formulation. Despite their differences, the review finds a profound synergy between the two; Scenario Planning operationalises Strategic Foresight insights, thereby bridging long-term vision with near-term action. This finding confirms that organisations seeking to develop Dynamic Capabilities must leverage both tools in an integrated and iterative manner to remain competitive.

ROLE OF THINKING PARADIGMS AND ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Another major theme was the identification of essential cognitive paradigms that enhance Strategic Foresight and Scenario Planning effectiveness. The review highlights future thinking, systems thinking and exponential thinking as foundational capabilities that foster proactive and resilient decision-making. These thinking models empower leaders to recognise emerging signals, interdependencies and technological disruptions. Moreover, the reviewed literature emphasizes the importance of an open learning-oriented organisational culture that supports collaboration and cross-functional engagement. Such environments enable the co-creation of

strategic narratives and ensure the relevance of foresight activities to organisational contexts.

STRATEGIC APPLICATIONS AND BENEFITS FOR ORGANISATIONS

The systematic review underscored numerous practical benefits of Scenario Planning and Strategic Foresight. Organisations that applied these tools were better positioned to anticipate risks, seize emerging opportunities and validate or challenge current strategies. Scenario Planning was particularly valued for its ability to improve decision-making under uncertainty, facilitate innovation and promote strategic agility. On the other hand, Strategic Foresight provided the macro-analytical lens necessary for long-term visioning. Together, they supported dynamic resource alignment and strategic renewal, both of which are vital for navigating the demands of rapidly evolving markets and industries.

SYNTHESIS: A NEXUS FOR COMPETITIVE STRATEGY

Ultimately, the findings illuminate a strong nexus between Scenario Planning, Strategic Foresight and Dynamic Capabilities as enablers of strategic leadership in turbulent environments. When used in tandem, these concepts form a cohesive framework that transforms uncertainty into a competitive advantage. They enable firms to sense and respond to change, realign resources proactively and cultivate an anticipatory mind-set across leadership levels. This synthesis confirms the value of embedding these capabilities within corporate strategy to future-proof organisations. The results of this review thus advocate for a paradigm shift where foresight-driven planning becomes central to strategic management practices.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

ALIGNMENT OF SCENARIO PLANNING AND STRATEGIC FORESIGHT WITH DYNAMIC CAPABILITIES

The results indicate that Scenario Planning and Strategic Foresight are integral to enhancing an organisation's Dynamic Capabilities, particularly in turbulent environments. The Dynamic Capabilities Theory, as articulated by Teece *et al.* (1997), emphasizes sensing, seizing and transforming in response to environmental shifts. Scenario Planning aids in the sensing function by constructing diverse futures, enabling firms to detect emerging trends and risks (Ramirez and Wilkinson, 2016). Strategic Foresight enhances seizing and transforming by guiding long-term planning and

enabling organisations to pivot effectively when conditions change (Heidebrecht, 2022). Together, these tools fortify organisational adaptability, ensuring that firms remain competitive amidst disruption (Shiferaw and Kero, 2024).

COMPLEMENTARITY AND INTEGRATION OF CONCEPTS

A recurring theme in the literature is the complementary relationship between Scenario Planning and Strategic Foresight. Scenario Planning provides structured frameworks to explore "what-if" scenarios, while Strategic Foresight offers a broader approach to understanding systemic changes over time (Chermack *et al.*, 2020). Groves *et al.* (2023) emphasize that integrating these tools allows organisations to move beyond reactive strategies, fostering agility through iterative planning cycles. The synergy between these concepts is critical: Strategic Foresight identifies change drivers and Scenario Planning operationalises them, producing actionable strategies (Schoemaker *et al.*, 2020). This integrated approach aligns with the need for organisations to remain both visionary and practical in strategy formulation.

COGNITIVE PARADIGMS AND THEIR IMPACT ON STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

The findings also reveal the centrality of cognitive paradigms future thinking, systems thinking and exponential thinking in enhancing leadership effectiveness in scenario planning and foresight. Future thinking enables leaders to anticipate diverse outcomes, while systems thinking allows them to perceive interrelated elements within complex systems (Woeffray and Carvalho, 2023). Exponential thinking equips organisations to handle rapid technological change, a growing factor in strategic disruption (Jackson, 2024). Day and Schoemaker (2019) note that Strategic Foresight must be underpinned by such cognitive tools to be fully effective. These paradigms cultivate a proactive mind-set, fostering strategic agility and robust decision-making at leadership levels (Mortlock and Osiyevskyy, 2023).

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND COLLABORATION AS ENABLERS

Another significant outcome is the importance of fostering an organisational culture that supports learning, innovation and collaborative engagement. Scenario Planning and Strategic Foresight thrive in environments where diverse perspectives are valued and where iterative learning processes are institutionalised (Martini and Aminah, 2024). Mohammadi (2023)

highlights that a participatory culture enhances foresight effectiveness by ensuring alignment between internal capabilities and external challenges. Cross-functional collaboration, including involvement from external stakeholders, enriches scenario development and increases strategic relevance (Chermack *et al.*, 2020). The findings suggest that without a supportive culture, even the most sophisticated Strategic Foresight processes may fail to yield actionable insights.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Practically, the review confirms that Scenario Planning and Strategic Foresight are vital tools for organisations aiming to thrive in complex and uncertain environments. They provide a foundation for future-proofing business strategies, identifying emerging risks and capitalising on latent opportunities (Van *et al.*, 2024). Scenario Planning enables firms to test the robustness of their strategies under various conditions, while Strategic Foresight offers the strategic vision necessary to guide long-term investments (Groves *et al.*, 2023). These tools not only support strategic decision-making, but also promote innovation, resilience and sustained competitiveness (Mortlock and Osiyevskyy, 2023). Their integration into strategic management practices is thus essential for navigating today's dynamic markets.

CONCLUSION

This study systematically reviews the literature on Scenario Planning and Strategic Foresight, emphasizing their critical role in helping organisations navigate uncertainty and make robust strategic decisions. These tools are indispensable for fostering competitiveness and resilience in dynamic global environments. Strategic Foresight offers a broad framework for anticipating and shaping future developments, while Scenario Planning translates foresight insights into actionable, detailed narratives of plausible futures. Their distinct yet complementary nature enables organisations to identify trends, assess uncertainties and test strategies against diverse potential outcomes. The integration of these concepts enhances strategic robustness, positioning firms to adapt to volatility and seize emerging opportunities. Moreover, the effectiveness of these tools is amplified by fostering cognitive paradigms such as future thinking, systems thinking and exponential thinking, alongside a collaborative, knowledge-sharing culture. Together, they drive innovation and adaptability, ensuring long-term organisational success. Ultimately, this study underscores the value of embedding Scenario

Planning and Strategic Foresight into Strategic Planning processes and highlights their relevance across various industries, encouraging further exploration of their tailored applications.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To promote capability development in Scenario Planning and Strategic Foresight, managers must first cultivate a culture of strategic thinking within their organisations. This involves encouraging an environment where employees at all levels are engaged in identifying emerging trends, assessing uncertainties and envisioning possible futures. Managers should provide training in critical thinking paradigms such as systems thinking, future thinking and exponential thinking, as these skills are essential for effective Scenario Planning and foresight. Integrating these capabilities into organisational learning programmes will enable firms to enhance their ability to anticipate and adapt to changes in dynamic environments.

Second, organisations should invest in tools and technologies that support Strategic Foresight and Scenario Planning. Advanced analytics, artificial intelligence and horizon scanning software can provide managers with the data-driven insights needed to identify potential risks and opportunities. By leveraging these tools, firms can develop more accurate and comprehensive scenarios, facilitating better decision-making. Managers should also establish dedicated teams or units focused on Strategic Foresight and Scenario Planning to ensure these activities are systematically incorporated into the Strategic Planning process. This institutional commitment will enhance the organisation's agility and long-term competitiveness.

Third, fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing is vital for improving Scenario Planning and Strategic Foresight capabilities. Managers should create platforms for cross-functional teams to engage in scenario development, encouraging diverse perspectives and expertise. Workshops, brainstorming sessions and strategic retreats can provide valuable opportunities for generating innovative scenarios and actionable strategies. Engaging external stakeholders, such as industry experts, academic researchers and consultants, can also bring fresh insights and expand the organisation's foresight capabilities. Collaboration ensures that Scenario Planning is not limited to internal viewpoints but benefits from a broader understanding of global trends and developments.

Lastly, managers should align Scenario Planning and Strategic Foresight activities with organisational goals and leadership development. These activities should be integrated into the firm's strategic leadership framework, empowering leaders to make informed and proactive decisions. Providing on-going education in Strategic Foresight for senior leadership teams will ensure that these methodologies are embedded in the organisation's DNA. By aligning foresight with leadership development, managers can build an organisation that is not only resilient to change but also capable of shaping its future trajectory with confidence and purpose.

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