Implementing Strategic Change as a Team Manager: Maintaining and Disrupting Institutions Simultaneously

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i.   Abstract

Strategy is often seen as an activity undertaken by senior managers. Often overlooked is the impact strategic change has on the customer facing team managers. This study focuses on strategic implementation activities by team managers in the New Zealand telecommunications industry and reviews their lived experiences through the theoretical lens of institutional work, a theory which takes an institutional view of activities that create, maintain, and disrupt institutions. Participants were interviewed about implementation activities and findings developed using a qualitative interpretative approach. Institutional work is found to be performed at all three categories simultaneously by managers. A conceptual model is provided that contrasts the interaction of organisational complexity against institutional work classes of Adaptation, Translation, Orientation, and Integration.

ii.   Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signed: Date: 30/07/2022

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1 Introduction

Strategy is a combined group of decisions about the direction of an organisation, and how it is to succeed, that are agreed by senior management (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985). It informs further decisions that are translated into actions as they descend the hierarchical chain within the organisation (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985). The dominant approach to strategy involves organisations fulfilling two important aspects of the strategy equation, conceptualisation, and implementation. Conceptualisation is the creative and analytical process where senior executives gather ideas, attempt to predict their future organisational environment, and then construct a plan to best position the organisation within that environment. More significantly for organisations, however, is that to keep up with changing technologies, changing markets, competition and an increasingly discerning customer, organisations must continuously make changes within their operating models and products just to survive (Pisano, 2015). This is a constant, endless pursuit that, inevitably, will require change and then more change into the future (Pettigrew, 1977). In traditional, hierarchical organisations, implementation requires the planning phase to be systematically translated into actions that are passed down through the hierarchy to functional teams, each action being broken into smaller 'bites' that can realistically be achieved. These are coordinated in a defined order, across multiple departments and sections of an organisation to achieve a status known as realised strategy (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985).

Executing strategic change is not easy. There is a perception that most organisational implementation projects fail to be fully realised (Hughes, 2011). While it may seem to the casual observer that a significant percentage do not meet their stated objectives, the true success rate remains inconclusive (Hughes, 2011; Balogun, 2003). Further, organisations through the development over time of hierarchies and institutions, have a cultural and operational inertia within their environments that cannot simply be altered and realigned with the issuing of an email or memorandum. Because of this, academics have expended an enormous amount of effort and consideration into developing theories on how to develop and execute strategies, but also on the nature of the organisation itself. Most literature focuses on strategic change as it pertains to senior management. This would seem natural given that strategy is a central focus for senior managers, but the role of organisational actors outside of the executive must also be factored in (Schühly, 2022).

Organisations are collections of institutionalised norms, practices, assumptions, and behaviors – some codified as formal rules and processes, others informal. The mechanism by which such formal and informal institutions are maintained or changed can be conceptualised as 'institutional work' (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006) – the intentional actions of actors to modify or maintain institutions.

Organisations within the telecommunications industry are reliant on technology and have seen rapid developments in recent years which have greatly impacted society. Intense industry competition and increased customer expectations have driven telecommunication companies to constantly review their product offerings (McKinsey & Company, 2018) and this has only been exacerbated by the recent lockdowns brought on by COVID 19 (McKinsey & Company, 2022) meaning that keeping pace with the changes is challenging (Miyazaki & Giraldo, 2015; Ojha et al., 2021). Examples of products and services available for customers include broadband internet access, fixed-line and mobile phone services, Information Communication Technology (ICT) Services, Virtual Private Network (IP-VPN) data services and Over-The-Top services (OTT) such as streaming, Internet of Things (IoT) capabilities, Security and cloud services and Data Centre management (Marketline Industry Profile, 2022). As well as technical challenges, there are regulatory (Commerce Commission oversight, Telecommunications Act 2001), competitive and environmental challenges for telecommunications companies such as multimedia streaming agreements designed to make product bundles attractive to customers, or wholesale agreements between companies allowing for fair competition, all of which require high degrees of innovation within the industry. Consequently, telecommunications companies become complex, jargon rich, acronym heavy organisational environments where change is constant (Miyazaki & Giraldo, 2015). The team managers who work in these companies all must be able to quickly adapt to change (Ojha et al., 2021). It is this constant change that makes these managers an excellent group to study to see how strategic change is handled in such a high-pace environment. Team managers in the context of this study represent those people in the first tier of management within an organisation, and most likely obtained their first role through promotion from a team leader role. They often represent the face of the organisation to the customer, and therefore are the people managers responsible for customer outcomes. They do not have a high degree of delegated financial authority and are not likely to be actively involved in strategic direction planning yet are expected to perform the actions that breathe life into new strategy initiatives and make them successful (Bryant & Stensaker, 2011). When undertaking strategic change, front-line team managers must engage in institutional work aimed at maintaining some dimensions of existing institutional arrangements to ensure organisational continuity. Conversely, these team managers must also engage in institutional work to disrupt, modify, and embed new institutional arrangements. Hence this study will adopt this conceptualization of strategy implementation as institutional work, specifically from the perspective of team managers who are responsible for achieving both change and maintaining organisational continuity.

This study seeks to understand the team manager perspective when faced with implementing strategic change. Business literature largely overlooks this collective of managers particularly regarding how they work to deliver strategic change in complex organisations. This study attempts to address this gap by looking at the lived experiences of team managers in New Zealand telecommunications

organisations as they have led their teams through strategic change implementations. The study is focused on practical actions team managers perform and asks the question

"What actions do team managers take to implement new strategy in the New Zealand telecommunications industry?"

As the study is concerned with the experiences and actions of those charged with managing teams through change initiatives, a qualitative interpretative methodology was adopted to gather and analyse data. Qualitative data was obtained using semi-structured interviews, a form of interviewing that allows for a greater degree of flexibility when examining issues that arise through the discussion (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Lowe, 2008). Drawing on participants from across the industry, interviews focused on strategic implementations the participants have personally experienced over the course of their careers. Upon gathering the data, an abductive approach was used to compare the data against the theoretical lens of Institutional work, a theory which proposes that institutions within organisations are deliberately created, maintained, or disrupted by actors within the organisation (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006).

The rest of the dissertation is structured in the following way. Chapter two will contain a Literature Review regarding institutional work and look at how it has been interpreted and applied. Chapter three will discuss the methodology used in this study and this will be followed by Chapter four, which will discuss findings of the research after a brief look at the telecommunications industry in New Zealand. Chapter five will discuss findings and chapter six will provide concluding comments and provide some ideas on ways to advance future research efforts.

2 Literature Review

To understand how strategy implementation can be influenced by actors other than those developing the strategy itself, it is worth reviewing some of theoretical concepts underlying institutional work. This section commences with a quick review of strategy theory. Then, it investigates how institutional work theory developed and some of the key insights that arose along the way. The study looks at institutions, what they are, how they form, and their importance, before looking at the concepts of legitimacy and agency and their effects on institutions. The chapter ends by exploring how institutional work has been applied in the literature.

2.1 Strategy

Strategy is the pursuit of an end objective through the process of planning and problem solving (Farjoun, 2002; Porter, 2014; Reeves et al., 2015). Originally conceived for the attainment of political and military objectives (Schühly, 2022), strategy has only relatively recently (post World War I) become a formal set of activities in organisational contexts as competitive pressures, technological advancements and globalisation have revolutionised industries making effective strategy an essential component to organisational success (Farjoun, 2002; Helfat et al., 2007; Reeves et al., 2015; Schühly, 2022). Scholars have for years been investigating components of strategy to find the most effective approach (Farjoun, 2002; Hodgkinson & Healey, 2011). Consequently, there is a vast amount of published literature relating to organisational strategy including (but not limited to) strategy formulation, strategic management, and strategy implementation (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985; Farjoun, 2002; Porter, 2014; Pisano, 2015).

In the 1960s the Strategy-Structure Paradigm came to light. This thinking aligned organisational strategy with the organisational structure and operational processes, where the strategy was a long-term direction striving towards an agreed objective and the structure equated to the way the organisation was designed and operated (Chandler, 1962; Schühly, 2022). By the 1970s, academic thinking around strategy began delineating between strategy formulation and strategy implementation. Formulation was still about assessing the external business environment and contrasting it with the internal strengths of the organisation to achieve a business direction and develop achievable goals. Implementation on the other hand was about breaking down that vision into practical actions that could be passed down to middle management who would be responsible to move the organisation towards to desired goals (Schühly, 2022). The concept of strategic management evolved in the late 1970s and attempted to link the separated strategy components as a comprehensive whole, focusing on ongoing strategic review to develop and maintain competitive advantage (Porter, 2014; Denrell et al., 2015). Increasing complexity in the external business environment drove organisations to

increase their use of strategic management ideas (Schühly, 2022). The three most significant strategic management ideas to have emerged are the Resource Based View (Barney, 1991) or RBV (where the difference in strategy between organisations is driven by their respective internal strengths and available resources), the Institution Based View (Powell & DiMaggio, 1983) or IBV (where strategy is driven by the institutional context in which the organisation sits) and the Market Based View or MBV (where the difference in strategy is driven by the external environment) (Schühly, 2022). More recently the RBV has been expanded into Dynamic Capabilities Theory (Teece et al., 1997) which holds that to maintain competitive advantage in a dynamic organisational environment, an organisation must develop adaptable capabilities, it must have the ability to build, deflect or redeploy organisational resources rapidly to meet challenges within the environment (Teece et al., 1997: Schühly, 2022).

2.2   Institutions

Institutions are commonly considered simply to be large organisations with significant social reach, such as hospitals or large corporations (Meyer & Rowan, 1991). However, this is a simplistic perspective as institutions are far more deeply embedded within society. Institutions are the formal and informal rules, norms, expectations, and practices that guide people's day-to-day lives (Meyer & Rowan, 1991; Glyn, 2017). Institutions develop from socially defined rules, an accepted way of behaving or achieving an outcome (Meyer & Rowan, 1991). Institutions are socially constructed from both conceptual and tangible components. They aid organisation and structure of societal life and give structure and meaning to ways of doing things. Over time, and through repeated use and modification, these social structures gain acceptance to the point where anyone wishing to perform an action will have those actions guided by the institutionalized behaviour formed around that social activity (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006; Glyn, 2017). The process by which institutions gain this widespread acceptance is known as institutionalisation (Jepperson, 1991). Because institutions are formed organically, and gain universal acceptance within the social context, institutions are generally thought of as being strong, long-lasting, and resistant to change (Meyer & Rowan, 1991; Battilana & D'Aunno, 2009). Within institutions sit institutional actors who, through their activities, generate and maintain the institutions. They achieve this by using agreed norms as well as following institutional processes which help determine the steps to be taken, and in which sequence, to achieve the desired result (Hargrave & Van de Ven, 2009).

Along with expected organisational outputs such as products and services, the standardisation of work practices creates additional outputs such as professions, boundaries, and formalised procedures (Meyer & Rowan, 1991). These additional outputs reinforce the institutionalisation of the organisation or fields involved in the work and increase the institutional effect (Meyer & Rowan, 1991). Because an institution is the product of an accepted way of 'doing' agreed upon by actors over time and is generally accepted as the best way of doing things, Meyer and Rowan (1991), found that many

organisations end up being more influenced by the ideas behind institutions and the legitimacy this generates, then by the practical needs of the work they do.

For an institution to arise, it must satisfy two basic conditions (Jepperson, 1991). Firstly, it must have legitimacy, and secondly, it must solve the issue at hand. As more actors interact with an emerging institution to resolve issues, the more acceptance the method develops as solutions are found, making it more efficient (Jepperson, 1991). The more successful the method becomes, the more acceptance it garners increasing its legitimacy and ultimately, if it continues to succeed, the method will become institutionalised and will be considered the correct solution to future issues or needs (Jepperson, 1991). The association of institutions with organisations is, like strategy above, a relatively recent occurrence. Originally, institutions were related more closely with political or civic activities (Scott, 2014) with the observance of religious customs being an example of institutionalised practices (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006). Whilst institutions are resilient and can be long lasting, they need deliberate action by actors to establish and maintain them. Institutions are affected by entropy, without regular maintenance and strengthening, they can break down. Thus, making change requires intentional action by those dissatisfied with the institution (Battilana & D'Aunno, 2009).

2.2.1 Legitimacy
Organisational legitimacy is a founding concept in organisational theory (Bitektine, 2011) and is developed through the alignment of culturally accepted values and norms of an institution and of those evaluating the institution (Suchman, 1995; Deephouse et al., 2017). Legitimacy is sought by organisations to generate goodwill amongst stakeholders as well as to distinguish the organisation within its chosen field and confer gravitas to its operations and decisions (Bitektine & Haack, 2015). There are several definitions of legitimacy as relating to organisations, however this study will defer to Suchman's interpretation. Suchman (1995) defined legitimacy as "a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions" (p574). The key idea being that legitimacy is socially constructed and is given to an organisation both by individuals as well as by larger social groups. It can be extremely resilient if an organisation has had a long history but depending on its actions and how those actions are interpreted by society, it can quickly become brittle if the organisation is seen to fall outside societal norms for lengthy periods, or through illegal activity (Suchman, 1995). As legitimacy is subjective, based upon a stakeholder perspective, there have been varying types of legitimacy identified by researchers. These variations depend on factors such as who is evaluating, what aspect of the organisation they consider most valuable, how evaluators interpret organisational features (Bitektine & Haack, 2015), how beneficial organisational features or practices are deemed to be to evaluators and whether the organisation adheres to societal and legal norms and requirements (Bitektine, 2011).

Different types of organisations seek varying types of legitimacy. For instance, a small organisation such as a corner store, reselling products already known to the consumer, needs a relatively low level of legitimacy instead relying on location and convenience to draw its customers. Conversely, a financial organisation investing money on behalf of clients will require significant legitimacy before clients trust them to handle their affairs (Suchman, 1995). Because building legitimacy is not easy, new entrants to a field frequently emulate the operating practices of the established incumbents hoping to obtain reflected legitimacy (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). This in turn further reinforces the institutional norms of the field and contributes to increased isomorphism within the sector (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Isomorphism manifests as increasing similarity of differing organisations within a field or industry competing under the same conditions (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). However, an organisation that has built legitimacy over time will garner a more positive reaction from stakeholders and, because of its success, is likely to have greater resources to reinforce this sentiment (Suchman, 1995). An example of resources could be a large marketing department with substantial budget or sponsorship activities that promote goodwill in the community.

Legitimacy is constructed through legitimation, a process by which an evaluator determines if organisational legitimacy exists or not (Bitektine, 2011). Organisations actively seek legitimation and deploy legitimation activities such as advertising and the promotion of social benefit by the organisation. (Golant & Sillince, 2007). As legitimacy affects stakeholders, legitimation occurs within organisations as well externally to them. When deploying new strategies, new legitimation efforts need to be undertaken by those promoting the change to generate the needed acceptance and buy-in from others to promote their deployment. Suchman (1995) recognised this and noted that leadership teams actively develop and deploy legitimation activities within their organisational contexts. But Suchman was also of the opinion that unless managers genuinely believe their own message, they will struggle to build legitimacy. This is an important point to note when considering the success of strategic implementation from the perspective of team managers.

2.2.2 Agency
In addition to legitimacy, another bedrock concept within Organisation Studies relates to the question of agency within institutions. Battilana & D'Aunno (2009) define agency as "...an actor's engagement with the social world that, through the interplay of habit, imagination, and judgment, can both reproduce and transform an environment's structures" (p46). In terms of institutions, both formal and informal, this means that when a person acts within the confines of that institution, their very act must influence it. Early neo-institutionalists believed that the amount of agency available to actors was limited, as the institution itself - by the very nature of its self-replicability and resistance to change - would exert significant influence on the actors through their need for personal legitimation within the institution (Battilana & D'Aunno, 2009). As researchers started looking into institutional evolution,

change and deinstitutionalisation (Oliver, 1991), a tension between institutional and agential influence became apparent. This became known as the 'paradox of embedded agency' (Battilana & D'Aunno, 2009), and it sought to unravel how those whose actions are in concert with an institution are then able to change it. A possible answer to this came from analysis of the relationship between individuals and the institution itself. Battilana & D'Aunno (2009) take a relational perspective on agency, arguing that whilst institutions affect the actors within them, the actors also affect the institutions they relate with. In their definition, they envisaged actors who considered historical events, could imagine how the future would look whilst being able to consider cotemporally occurring events and make decisions based upon them, what they term the 'three dimensions of agency" (p47). They are known as iteration, projection, and practical evaluation (Battilana & D'Aunno, 2009; Raviola & Norbäck 2013; Smets & Jarzabkowski, 2013; Baker & Nenonen, 2020).

Unsurprisingly, there are different perspectives on Agency that have been proposed in the literature. Välikangas & Carlsen (2020), focused on 'minor rebellion' as a vehicle for agency theory advancement. Minor rebellion is a politically motivated attempt to change the agency dynamic by those within an institutional field who feel alienated from the mainstream and is characterised by the lack of a long-term outcome, rather it is concerned about producing results in a more immediate term. In other words, it's a way for actors to show agency to the larger group whilst not attempting to destroy the institution. Minor rebellion differs from the notion of Institutional Entrepreneur (IE) in that it embraces ulterior forms of engagement with the institution it is interacting with. Agency in this interpretation is intentional. The very act of resistance and rebellion - wanting to be different from the established and more powerful institution- is a motivating factor and gives the actors both a shared sense of community as well as individual distinction within the institutional field. This leads to Agencement, which is the collective form of agency (Raviola & Norbäck, 2013).

Smets & Jarzabkowski (2013) consider the literature as being too skewed towards projective agency, and the role of the IE within it. In their case study, they use a practice theory lens and contend that actual efforts in everyday work have enough effect to drive change. This alone doesn't remove intent from the agency debate, but it does distinguish it from a projective bent as the agents are solving real-time issues to achieve their desired outcomes. They call for more study on lived experiences by those trying to understand complexity and change within their organisational environments, and this is one of the things this study attempts to address. Regarding the concept of intention, Linneberg, et al. (2021), refute Smets and Jarzabkowski's (2013) assertion that people exhibit agency in their daily work routines without having a clear intention as a step too far, as it would make all efforts by actors to be institutional work. They insist that actors must be aware that they are initiating (potential) change by their interactions in their field and environment (Linneberg, et al., 2021). For the purposes of this study, the intention to do institutional work is considered an essential element when implementing strategic change.

2.3 Institutional Work

Institutional Work is a theory developed by Thomas B Lawrence and Roy Suddaby (2006), that focuses on the actions of people associated with an organisation or institution and how those actions affect the way the institution is created, maintained, or disrupted (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006). Institutional work considers the relationship between two or more actors and how they conflict, compromise, and resolve tension to move towards goals (Lawrence, et al., 2011). In doing so, Institutional Work embraces the totality of the institution, not just the institutional hero actor (or institutional entrepreneur) and involves the competing forces in play (Lawrence, Suddaby & Lawrence, et al., 2011). Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) cite articles such as DiMaggio's (1988) essay on 'Interest and agency in Institutional theory', Oliver's 1991 discussion of strategic responses to institutional processes, and Oliver's 1992 account of deinstitutionalization as providing the theoretical basis for institutional work, as these articles brought the concept of individual and collective agency to institutional theory. Early thoughts on agency focused on the efforts of one actor known as the institutional entrepreneur (IE). According to DiMaggio (1988), the IE brought influence, resources, and charisma to bear to legitimate or delegitimate an institution (DiMaggio, 1988; Fligstein, 1997; Beckert, 1999; Garud et al., 2007). More recent work has demonstrated that this isn't necessarily the case (Empson et al., 2013; Raviola & Norback, 2013).

The theory attempts to explain the tension arising from the seeming paradox of actor autonomy and the institutional control exerted upon them as they grapple with overcoming barriers to progress within organisational life which Battilana and D'Aunno (2009) referred to as the paradox of embedded agency. Being relatively recent, there are a smaller number of research projects associated with the theory, however this is growing all the time and it is worth looking at how the theory is being used in the literature. This section will review some of the studies published using Institutional Work and investigate some of the themes that have arisen based on the research.

Hargrave and Van de Ven (2009) theorised on organisational contradictions and the use of institutional work to resolve them. By using Institutional Work, they asserted that contradictions are a significant source of innovation through the tensions and conflicts that inevitably arise. In making this assertion, they recognised that institutional actors comprise both entrepreneurial and stabilist roles regardless of whether they are attempting to change or maintain institutions. They argued that each role has some element of the other within it, especially stabilism where there is a need to "...disrupt disruptors..." (p120). More recently, Song (2021) reviewed the actions of a group of men interested in preventing specific breeds of birds from the threat of extinction of their attractive plumage. This made them desirable for women's hats. By using historical process analysis, and contextually seated in

institutional work undertaken to establish the first American bird conservation movement between 1887 and 1920 (Song, 2021), they focused on the impact of the 'norm-majority' (p.496) defined as a collection of individuals who share a righteous interest in the contesting of the status quo along institutional lines. For the subjects to achieve their aim, advocates for plumage free garments sought support from women with an environmental conscience. They achieved this through such support, however women found this movement useful for advancing female social advancement. This breached normative values within the homosocial institution forcing a reaction amongst the norm-majority which reduced the effectiveness of the new women's institutional work (Song, 2021). Song's key finding is that successful Institutional Work may not achieve the desired result. Successfully maintaining an institution does not mean that it will not be undermined. They very act of maintaining may do that through the reaction from the norm-majority. The same can be said for both creating and disrupting institutions.

When exploring institutional change at a field level, Currie et al. (2012), examined how medical professionals reacted to a proposed significant change in their fields by a central controlling body such as a government agency. The study reviewed an initiative designed to move genetic services away from a professionally driven discipline to a more customer driven system and the Institutional Work used by all parties to influence the overall outcome. This presented a significant threat to the institution of professional geneticists, so the study focused on the trials that were rolled out at the three levels of healthcare (Primary – General Practitioner (GP), Secondary - general hospitals and tertiary - specialist and research hospitals) (Currie et al., 2012). GPs were ultimately not included in the new programme other than for referral purposes. Reasons for this were twofold; firstly, geneticists did not consider a family GP to have the requisite knowledge and experience necessary (valorizing and demonizing) and secondly, GPs did not wish to do the 'dog's body work' thereby impacting and tainting the GP professional Institution (again, valorizing and demonizing). Consequently, institutions were maintained at this level. Specialists, however, who embraced the change had the opposite effect. They built significant support throughout their institution by the way they interpreted the initiative, actively using Institutional Work concepts to their advantage through theorizing the purpose of the initiative; defining the new field boundaries to be used; educating the new workforce to a standard they found acceptable (standardization being essential in the professions not just for consistency of effort but also for its regulating power over non-professionals (Slager et al., (2012)); constructing normative networks within the profession; building legitimacy, and thus gaining acceptance amongst peers and abutting professions (Currie et al., 2012). Once the defining and educating was completed, policing reinforced authority back into the professional institutional (Currie et al., 2012). Ultimately, Currie et al. (2012) noted that 'risk' is a powerful determinant for maintaining institutions within the health professions, it is using this idea that change occurs gradually and not rapidly.

Other authors consider institutional work studies overlook the role of the individual. For example, when considering relationships between different types of actors within professional fields, Empson, et al. (2013), ran a qualitative study investigating dyadic relationships between law firm partners and professional managers (non-law qualified) in nineteen London companies and how they formed dyads and performed institutional work together. They identified that Law Partners recognised that the considerable workload of management administration was negatively impacting on the amount of time available for revenue creation. Bringing in professional, non-legal trained managers, both allowed partners to focus more on revenue generation and reduced operating costs overall. Ultimately, this changed the traditional partner run arrangement leading to a sedimented partnership (p838) (Empson, et al., 2013). In rationalising their study, Empson, et al. (2013) claim that most institutional work studies overstate the institution's influence in moderating the behaviour of those individuals, yet simultaneously promote the impact of an IE. How can it be that most individuals barely make an impact where others in the same field can influence significant change? The answer they suggest is through strategic partnerships, or dyads in this instance. institutional work is theoretically divided into three discrete phases, creation, maintenance, and disruption. In reality, these three phases are enacted concurrently by those initiating change (Empson, et al., 2013). Rather than individuals driving institutional work processes, multiple individual actors may be required to carry institutional work through to fruition. Through the combined use of social position, formal authority, social capital and expertise, institutional work efforts are more likely to succeed (Empson, et al., 2013). Change, however, must be done at an appropriate pace, too fast and the partners will push back to reinforce traditional work practices thus undoing the institutional work being undertaken (Empson, et al., 2013).

Field and boundary institutional work is not limited to traditional professions. Extending the idea of professional boundaries Thompson (2018) attempted to integrate business history with Neo-Institutionalism theory using a historic example, that of record pooling. The study looked at how record pooling (the practice of a collective group of performing DJs (not radio), were able to get official access to new, promotional music from record companies, for which the DJs would provide feedback on audience reactions prior to release) came about in New York in 1975. The author imagined institutional work as being a combination of boundary work (where boundaries are consciously created, maintained, or destroyed) and practice work (the same but for practices) and stated that institutional work is intentional and required collaborative action by those attempting to create, maintain or disrupt those institutions. Thompson (2018) identifies boundaries as the edges of social or professional classifications and practices as the socially endorsed methods of doing. This made the institutions more than large companies; they were social norms so well established that they did not require a moment's thought.

Some studies look to peripheral actors and their roles in changing institutions. Marti and Fernandez (2013) conducted a review of previously completed studies "by philosophers, historians and

sociologists" (p1198) to investigate institutional work conducted at the fringes that could potentially impact institutions and the actors within them. They focused on oppression, the institutional work used to implement it, and how oppressed peoples could use institutional work to escape it. Oppression is deliberate, focused, and institutionalised. Because of its institutionalised nature, it requires actors to create, maintain and disrupt the institutional environment. Oppressors are always involved in this effort, but interestingly, often the oppressed themselves are also drawn into perpetuating the oppressive system. This can be seen through tacit acceptance of characterisations and classifications put forward by the oppressors that separate out populations of people (Marti & Fernandez, 2013). An example in this article is the research of family histories to classify individuals based on ethnicity, and some of those people challenging their classification by writing the oppressors asking to be moved to another class. The authors postulate that this action reinforces the system being put in place by accepting that classifications exist. To oppress people, you must first create distance between the oppressing entity and those to be subjugated. Marti and Fernandez (2013) argue that this is achieved by performing the following institutional work. Authorisation, routinisation and division of labour, euphemisms, and camouflage language. Authorisation shifts responsibility away from the actor, allowing the actor to rationalize doubts about any ethical or moral objections they might have otherwise had. Routinisation involves subdividing a larger task into smaller, seemingly unrelated pieces and normalising them through repetition. Division of labour involves moving those subdivided tasks amongst several people thereby breaking up the continuity and therefore overall visibility of the end goal. Euphemisms and Camouflage language are used to frame the larger task in a particular context, one chosen by the interested party or authority and distract those performing the task away from actual events. Resistance to oppressive behaviour is influenced by the context of the oppression itself (Marti & Fernandez, 2013) and can take many forms, such as passive to active writing, forming interest groups, playing dumb or challenging authority. Marti and Fernandez (2013) argue is that whatever the form of resistance used, it is usually framed by the form of oppression being exercised.

The effect of emotions in institutional change has also drawn the attention of researchers. Moisander et al. (2016), conducted a study aiming to demonstrate how emotions affect the institutional work done by those with power to achieve a result in the wider environment. In this case they examined Finnish attempts to build support for joining the Economic Monetary Union (EMU) within the European Union (EU). They interpreted institutional work as constituting deliberate acts taken to continue and strengthen institutional and socially defined relations and norms that both encouraged and restricted those conducting the institutional work. They defined emotions as "social and intersubjective constructions" (p966) and were most interested in emotions associated with "culture, cognition, social order and moral reflection" (p966) as these are linked to institutional work. They classified emotions in two broad categories, affective emotions – love, hate, trust, respect - largely binary emotions associated with people, places, ideas and things, and moral emotions – such as pride,

shame, moral concern – which are not as polarising but represent concerns with ethical, moral and justice issues. Because people all have these emotions, they become part of the way people interact in the institutional work practice (Moisander, et al., 2016). Emotions influence judgements and test loyalties when faced with institutional change (Moisander, et al., 2016,). Therefore, when institutional work is to be used, it is perhaps not surprising that emotional work (EW) is deployed to influence the outcome. It can be deployed both in favour of change as well as against, it is the use of institutional power and Institutional Politics (Moisander, et al., 2016). The authors argue that EW is a powerful construct that can significantly influence the success or failure of institutional work.

Extending the work investigating emotions in institutional work, Wright, et al. (2017) ran a single case study investigating moral emotions as they effected the practice of professional specialists in a medical environment (hospital). While institutionalism was the theoretical lens here, specifically Scott's Institutional Pillars (Normative in this case), institutional work was used to investigate how professions are maintained in a context of specialist overlaps or conflicts. According to Wright, et al. (2017), Moral Emotions are "emotions linked to the interests or welfare either of society as a whole or at least of persons other than the judge or agent" (p202). In this context Wright, et al. (2017) are referring to specialists within professions that place the interest of the patient before that of the specialist. Emotions are elicited when there are difficulties in obtaining the correct outcomes. Reasons for this include overlapping interests between separate specialty areas within an organisation (for example the interaction between a general medicine specialist and an orthopedic specialist regrading a broken hip presented to the emergency department). This in turn affects the optimal use of organisational resources. Specialists resist involvement until referrals are received, due to this resource availability. A second reason for moral emotion elicitation related to organisational profitability structures or practices limiting involvement to strict criteria, the focus on cost meaning that specialists were constrained in the ability to make certain referrals unless there was an explicit need, causing some practitioners concern about patient welfare (Wright, et al., 2017).

Moving away from emotions directly, Linneberg, et al. (2021), published a study done using exemplar methodology that looked at empathic approaches to institutional work. The authors focused on a single case study only as they felt the subject represented an ideal (exemplar) for the topic at hand. Empathy is distinguished from sympathy as empathy represents an understanding of the feelings of others, whereas with sympathy a person feels for others without fully having that understanding. The authors focused the study on the CEO of the chosen organisation, their interest being in how this person could perform institutional work within their field, given the company was a big supporter of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. Linneberg, et al. (2021) took the position that institutional work can only being performed if the person doing it is aware that they are trying to do it. Actors must be aware that they are initiating (potential) change by their interactions in their field and environment (Linneberg, et al., 2021). Further, Linneberg, et al., (2021) postulated a Symbolic

Interactionalist view of action, or "institutional work as a collective / collaborative form of agency" (p46). This requires 'Social Skill' and in turn means one's ability to convince or persuade others to work together to achieve a communally beneficial outcome. This is distinct from the entrepreneur who is self-motivated (Linneberg, et al., 2021). This is an attempt to illustrate how an IE can elicit the assistance of others to advance their objectives via the use of institutional work and proposes that emotion is a powerful driver in institutions (Linneberg, et al., 2021). If an IE can tap into this, they can create their desired change both by affect and through logical reasoning (Linneberg, et al., 2021).

2.4   Summary & Research Gap

As described above, institutional perspective is a well-studied area of the wider strategic management literature, which is used to help describe the influence of the institutional environment on a firm's strategic actions. It is also well understood that within organisations, various actors take on the work of carrying out the institutional responses.

Kuyvenhoven and Buss (2011), identify three main perspectives of strategy involvement, the implementer, the integrator, and the active participant. The implementer role is close to the traditional, hierarchical perspective and is that of a middle manager who is either passively or completely uninvolved in the development of strategy and acts only as the connection between the customer facing units and the senior managers at the top of the organisation. Similarly, the integrator view also sees middle management as linking between differing levels in organisations, however this view accepts that strategy formulation can be influenced by a two-way conversation feeding back through the hierarchical highway. The active participant perspective sees middle management as influencing strategy dynamically through everyday activities and decisions, however the middle manager's understanding of intended strategy is important. Balogun (2003) is cited as a promoter of this perspective (Kuyvenhoven & Buss, 2011).

It is well understood that middle managers represent the management layer between the operational teams and the senior management team at the top of the organisation (Kuyvenhoven & Buss, 2011). Operational team managers, those representing the first tier of management (including team leaders) do not fit comfortably within the Kuyvenhoven and Buss (2011) models above. However, what is less well understood is the institutional work performed by lower-level managers within a rapidly changing organizational context.

In large, complex organisations such as those within the telecommunications industry, where there are multiple layers of management, rapidly changing and complex technologies (with the extensive use of industry specific jargon), extensive product catalogues and complex organisational interactions and relationships, it may not be possible to have organisationally broad input during strategic planning phases. The everyday operational needs of the organisation must be fulfilled, and this imperative distinguishes the team manager from middle management roles. Whilst team managers do not fit into the traditional middle management strategy role, they still perform a crucial function within the implementation phase, whereby they need to disestablish existing, redundant, institutionalised operations and actions, and establish new ways of operating. Often, they need to maintain old and new simultaneously, through a phased change. Regardless of the strategy, and how it has been developed, what is essential is that team managers bring the change into production. Institutional work is a good fit for reviewing the actions of team managers as it is interested in deliberate action undertaken by individuals in changing environments. This perspective is not widely researched, which presents a gap in the literature that this study attempts to address.

Institutional work represents an attempt to move away from the concept of the all-powerful IE and give voice back to those actors who work within institutional environments (Raviola & Norbäck, 2013). However, a common theme throughout has been that studies almost exclusively are directed towards those with power in some form (Slager, et al., 2012; Marti & Fernandez, 2013; Moisander, et al., 2016; Linneberg, et al., 2021). Very few studies look to those who are significantly constrained by the institutions and the institutional fields they hold membership of. Furthermore, while the idea of the IE persists, there are studies (Empson, et al., 2013; Linneberg, et al., 2021) arguing that IEs alone cannot bring about change, they must build consensus and support to drive that change through.

This study, contained herein, makes contributions to the literature as it investigates how actors weave change into continuity using institutional work to build the consensus needed to change behaviours so that strategic vision can be realised. The goal for team managers is to maintain institutional productivity whilst embracing institutional creation and disruption simultaneously (Balogan, 2013). To this end, this study looks at actions taken by team managers during strategic change in the organizational context. It seeks to understand what actions team managers take to maintain operations under one strategic model whilst implementing other operations using another strategic model. Furthermore, whilst team managers do not have much input into the strategic initiatives themselves, having been made at a more senior level, they provide guidance for their teams in terms of practical solutions (Woiceshyn et al., 2020). How they go about this is not widely covered in the extant literature and is something that this study will contribute to.

3 Methodology

The previous section reviewed institutional work literature and identified the research gap this study will attempt to address. This section reviews the methodology used in this study. The section begins with the philosophical perspective before moving into Ontologies and Epistemologies, Methodology and Paradigm. This is followed by a brief review of ethics in this research before moving into the method employed for data gathering and analysis.

3.1 Philosophical Perspective

More so than quantitative research, qualitative research involves direct communication between the researcher and the subject providing the responses that will form the data (Daymon & Holloway, 2010). This is necessary because qualitative research derives meaning from the stories or experiences of others. To understand the data generated, researchers then need to cast a critical eye and ask questions about it (Willig, 2013). This project is interested in the lived experience of team managers as they navigate their way through the implementation of strategic change, and the actions they must take to manage the seemingly paradoxical position of maintaining operations in one model whilst enacting operations in another. To capture these experiences within the organizational context meant that a qualitative research methodology was adopted as this is an excellent theory building approach as it is specifically concerned with finding meaning (Willig, 2017), as opposed to looking at numbers and calculating trends. This is particularly useful when the research subject is exploratory with a lack of extant literature. The following sections in this chapter further detail the approach taken and provide a brief look into theoretical literature.

3.1.1 Ontology and Epistemology

Ontology is a broad category of examination of that which constitutes reality (Duberley, et al., 2012; Gray, 2014). In its simplest form, it subdivides into two categories; Realism, which states that reality exists outside of any social construct independently of the observer, and Relativism which states that rather than being independent of social construct reality exists only as a social construct based on the observer (Gray, 2014). Closely related to Ontology is Epistemology which is aligned not with the nature of reality but the nature of knowledge, what knowledge is and how can it be understood (Crotty, 1998). In broad terms, the main three epistemologies are Objectivist - in which knowledge exists apart from any awareness of it, constructionist – holds that knowledge must be interpreted and constructed by an observer, and subjectivist - which holds that knowledge is assigned to an object or phenomenon without the observer having interacted with it (Crotty, 1998).

3.1.2   Methodology and Paradigm

Use of this philosophical base aids the researcher to identify an appropriate methodology which in turn will inform the overall paradigm to be used in the study. Methodology stands between their philosophical position and the actual method/s they ultimately use to collect data and is usually determined through consideration of the research question along with how findings are to be used (Mills, 2014). By determining the best approach for answering that question there is a good chance that the appropriate paradigm that best guides the research will be apparent (Mills, 2014; Kankam, 2019). Paradigms represent a collective understanding of the way knowledge is interpreted and understood. The choice of paradigm brings together the overall thinking regarding ontology, epistemology and methodology as well as providing a context for how data is observed, collected, and analyzed (Kankam, 2019).

To investigate just how new strategic objectives and plans were perceived by team managers, how they were translated from the conceptual and realised into practical initiatives in an environment where stopping operations to reset to a new strategy are not an option, and where a new operational initiative was to merge over the incumbent operation, an interpretivist / pragmatist paradigm was adopted. Interpretivism is rooted in the social perceptions of the subjects under study. It seeks understanding of the socially constructed world (Crotty, 1998; Kankam, 2019) and relies on data being generated by the subjects as they are already embedded in the contextual environment. Their experiences need to be gathered and understood, allowing theory to be inductively created (looking from a perspective of a small data set and inferring causation within a broader context) (Kankam, 2019). Context and meaning are the key contributors with understanding and theories the key output of the paradigm (Kankam, 2019).

Pragmatism moves between contextual perception and generalised theory using abductive reasoning (Kankam, 2019), with abduction assessing data and generating new ideas through interpretation and meaning within the data (Reichertz, 2014). Pragmatism holds that the research question is central to all, what and how the research question is constructed will lead to the best methods for data gathering regardless of that method's traditional paradigmic association (Scott, 2016). The objective is practicality. Theories are useful only in how they relate to actions, although those theories need to be broad enough to cover large datasets if needed (Scott, 2016). Societal context is an important part of pragmatism (social, political, historical) (Scott, 2016). Often pragmatism is associated with mixed methods of inquiry, however this study only used qualitative methods.

3.2   Ethics

Ethical research is not solely about knowledge creation, it is also about how the research is conducted (Holt, 2012). By its very nature, qualitative research requires a more direct connection between the

researcher and the subject providing the responses that will form the data than does quantitative research (Daymon & Holloway, 2010). As a result of this contact, relationships are established, and trust is built. Because of this it is essential that ethical behaviours are followed through the course of the research (Daymon & Holloway, 2010).

To ensure this study was conducted in an ethical manner, Ethics Application 21/144 was submitted to the AUT Ethics Committee (AUTEC) with approval being granted on July 15, 2021. A key consideration of the ethics committee related to the lack of approval of any organisation within the Telecommunications Industry in New Zealand. In response the researcher noted that the study was organisationally agnostic (that is, not focused on any particular organisation), issues to be discussed would have relevance in any of the organisations and would not cause any individual, professional, or reputational harm. Ethics board approvals can never ensure that the behaviour of the researcher is truly ethical, it is incumbent on the researcher/s themselves to demonstrate that they have met the ethical standard (Daymon & Holloway, 2010). To ensure this was clearly demonstrated, the AUTEC committee were provided participant information sheets, invitation email templates and consent forms (participants were advised they could withdraw should they wish), as well as the interview protocol to be followed once interviewing commenced (see Appendix for these documents).

3.3 Methods

The research design required gaining access or permission to interview participants, through a purposive sampling method, whereby participants are selected based on a set of characteristics which render them appropriate for the study (Emmel, 2013). The criteria applied were:

> Participants must have been working in the New Zealand telecommunications industry or have been recently employed at the time of interviewing
>
> Participants must have been acting in a team manager role or role directly impacting front-line team members during strategic change initiatives
>
> Participants must have been involved in at least one strategic change implementation to completion

Typically, gaining access involves obtaining permission from an organisation to interview / observe employees as participants (Cunliffe & Alcadipani, 2016). However, as organisational authorisation was not sought another strategy was needed, something more creative. Cunliffe and Alcadipani (2016) allude to researchers using their professional or personal contacts to achieve access to participant groups, even using cold calling when necessary to get the ball rolling. Considering this, potential participants were selected by the researcher using personal industry contacts and cold-calling invitations sent to them through the online professional social networking application LinkedIn. The initial approach was a templated email inviting interest and those who expressed interest were sent

further details before an interview date was set. This included an overview of the study and the option of having a written copy of the interview transcript provided to them upon completion of the interview. Also included in this pack was a form asking for consent for interviews to be recorded for transcription and analysis. This was reaffirmed in each interview where participants were asked directly if they consented to interviews being recorded for transcription, coding, and analysis. Once they stated that they assented, the interview proceeded. All participants agreed to this question. To ensure confidentiality, participants were assigned a participant number (Pnn). Table 3.1 provides an overview of participants, the types of roles they have performed and the length of service in the industry. Any statements or information that could be used to identify respondents was removed from the transcripts and subsequent quotations used in the analysis.

As interviews were to be used, the interview format and style needed to be decided. The decision was to be between fully structured or semi structured interviews. Structured interviews follow a pre-determined set of questions to cover the topic of the research and get the necessary response from the subject. Rigidly structured interviews rely on each interview having the same questions asked in the same way, with no room for deviation to explore a related topic. Semi-structured interviews are more

Participant	Roles	Experience (Years)	Multiple Telecommunication Organisations?
P01	Operational/leadership/Management	17	Yes
P02	Specialist/Leadership/Management	10	Yes
P03	Operational/Management	13	Yes
P04	Operational/Management	32	Yes
P05	Specialist/Management	15	Yes
P06	Operational/Specialist/Management	20	Yes
P07	Operational/Management	17	Yes
Total		**124**	

Table 3.1 Study Participant Profiles

relaxed, allowing the interviewer and the interviewee to have some latitude in the discussion whilst still maintaining the needed structure to cover all the essential points (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). It

was felt that as the purpose of the interviews were to discuss individual experiences, semi-structured interviews would be the more appropriate data gathering method for this study.

Using institutional work theory (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006) as a guiding principle, an interview protocol was developed which focused on experiences that potential applicants were likely to have had in their roles as frontline Team Leaders / Managers. Ultimately, seven participants agreed to participate in the interviews. Most participants had worked for more than one company in their Telecommunication careers.

A relational interaction approach was adopted as the researcher and participant had mutual industry knowledge and there was confidence in the motivation of the research (Cunliffe & Alcadipani, 2016). This allowed for the tone of interviews to be conversational and was encouraged to set participants at ease, allowing them to relate their experiences. The interview protocol was generally adhered to, however, where topics of interest arose, the discussion was allowed to move off the immediate topic for a short while before being brought back. Interviews had to be conducted virtually using Zoom due to Auckland's COVID-19 alert levels at the time. Interviews were arranged by the researcher directly with participants and were scheduled at a time that was convenient to the interviewee and conducted online using the Zoom application. All interviews were recorded for subsequent transcription and analysis. All interviewees were asked prior to conclusion if they wished for the transcript to be forwarded to them for review, two respondents requested this. Participants related experiences of strategic change experienced in several different companies involved in the New Zealand Telecommunications Industry.

At the conclusion of interviews, the transcription process was undertaken. This was done initially by uploading the interview into the researchers Otter.ai application. Once completed, the transcript was saved on a secure drive. Comparison of written transcripts against the audio recordings of the interviews were made to ensure accuracy. Only after completing this phase of the process were transcripts submitted to respondents for their input. No additional feedback from respondents was received.

Initial coding was done using an open coding method often used to generate conceptualisation around data points. They were based on the data from the interviews (in vivo). Some responses received only one code, whereas others up to five depending on the response type. This produced just under six hundred initial codes, so work on rationalising this first phase of coding commenced. After reviewing all the data, these concepts (single code) and categories - grouping of single codes, a concept of higher order (Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019) - started developing. Similar codes were then collated under either a category or a concept (Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019). This activity allowed for the development of themes to emerge. These emergent themes were then viewed against the theoretical lens of institutional work to produce the results which are to be discussed in the next chapter.

This chapter has discussed the methodology adopted by this study and covered the ethics approval process that was followed. The next chapter will commence with an overview of the research context, and this will be followed by the findings generated.

4 Findings

4.1 Research Context

4.1.1 Telecommunications In New Zealand

This section covers Telecommunications in New Zealand and is intended to provide some context regarding how the industry has developed over time. It will cover key milestones in the growth of the industry with a historical bent. It is not intended to focus on any organisation, rather it is to show in broad terms key developments that brought the industry to this point.

4.1.1.1 Early days

Telecommunications in NZ have their origins in the 1860s. The first telegraph connection in New Zealand was established in 1862 between Lyttleton and Christchurch by the Canterbury Provincial Government. Further lines were developed throughout the South Island with the connection across the Cook Strait being completed in 1866. Development of regional Telegraph services in the North Island took longer with the telegraph line from the south finally connecting Auckland in 1872 (Wilson, n.d.; Inland Telecommunications, 1966).

The NZ government nationalised building and maintaining of local exchanges from the outset (as opposed to international examples such as Australia), allowing it to set standards ensuring consistency of service and accessibility to the public (Wilson, n.d.; Inland Telecommunications, 1966). In 1877 the first telephones arrived, and the first Telephone Exchanges were commissioned in 1881 in Auckland and Christchurch, with Dunedin and Wellington following two years later (Inland Telecommunications, 1966; Wilson, n.d.). Also in 1881, the Postal and Telegraph Service (P&T) was established. This was later renamed the Post Office in 1959 and in time it included personal banking services (Wilson, n.d.; Inland Telecommunications, 1966). The state-maintained ownership of the industry for the next century. In 1987 the government broke the three services into distinct State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) as New Zealand Post, Postbank, and Telecom (Wilson, n.d.; King, 2007). Initially, each service remained under government ownership but with a new mandate to operate under a corporate profit model (king, 2007). In 1990 Telecom was sold by the Government to a consortium consisting of US companies Ameritech and Bell Atlantic as well as New Zealand interests Fay Richwhite Holdings and Freightways Holdings for NZ$4.25 billion (Wilson, n.d.; King, 2007).

In 2001 the Telecommunications Act was enacted creating the office of the Telecommunications Commissioner (Newman, 2012). This still runs through the Commerce Commission, who define their role as being to "ensure fixed-line (broadband) and mobile markets are competitive through regulation of wholesale telecommunication services and our monitoring of how the retail market is performing." (https://comcom.govt.nz/regulated-industries/telecommunications - retrieved 11/01/2022) (Commerce

Commission - retrieved 11/01/2022). The purpose being to ensure competition thrives and customers benefit as a result (Commerce Commission, n.d.).

In 2006, Local Loop Unbundling (LLU) was announced by the government. Competing service providers were allowed to access the last mile copper network component and Operational Separation (Op Sep) was imposed upon Telecom. Op Sep allowed Telecom to remain one listed company but required it to split into three operational arms. This was a significant catalyst to the development of today's market (Newman, 2012). The government's intention to force Op Sep on Telecom became public when an internal government memo was leaked. This became a major story in the media and forced the government to issue their policy earlier than intended (Young, 2006; Beehive.govt.nz, 2006).

Upon winning the 2008 election, the new National government established Crown Fibre Holdings (CFH) in 2009, a government owned entity tasked with delivering a new fibre access network (Ultra-Fast Broadband, UFB) (Milner, 2020). Crucially, successful applicants were not permitted to be owned by a Retail Service Provider (RSP) (Milner, 2020). This had profound implications as it meant that to participate, Telecom would be forced to structurally separate from its network arm Chorus. Telecom achieved separation in 2011 (Spark NZ, n.d.). The newly independent Chorus succeeded with several tenders, especially with the large Auckland Contestable Area (CA) (Milner, 2020).

Because UFB deployment was focused on Fibre-To-The-Premise (FTTP) or urban connectivity, the government created an additional broadband rollout for rural regions, the Rural Broadband Initiative (RBI) commencing in 2010 (Treloar, 2012; Milner, 2020). Recognising that deploying fibre past every dwelling in rural New Zealand would be prohibitively expensive, the focus here was to deploy Fibre-To-The-Node (FTTN) retaining the existing last mile copper connectivity. This would lift broadband speeds for rural residential and commercial users to at least 5 Megabits per second (Mbps) and rural schools to at least 100Mbps (Treloar, 2012), a considerable improvement (Milner, 2020).
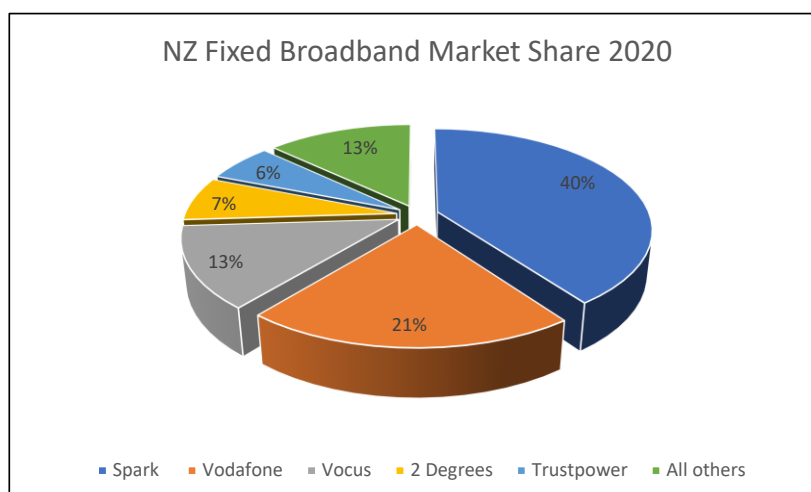

Figure 4.1: Broadband Market Share 2020

Source: Commerce Commission

4.1.1.2 The Modern Market

As part of their industry oversight, the Commerce Commission report on Market Share for Telecommunications services in New Zealand. They break market share into two main components, Fixed Broadband and Mobile. Market shares according to the 2020 report are shown in figure 4.1 (broadband market share by company) and figure 4.2 (mobile market by company).
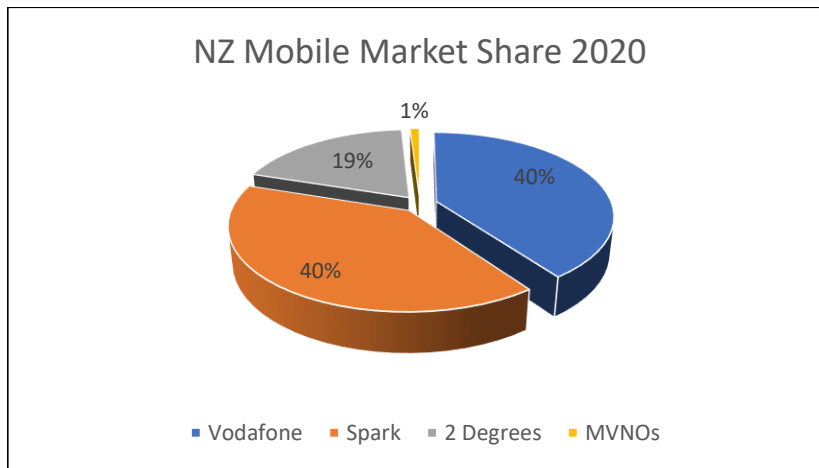

Figure 4.2: Mobile Market Share 2020

Source: Commerce Commission

Today's market consists of eighty-two network operator's telecommunication providers, IT, Streaming and media companies (mbie.govt.nz, retrieved 21/07/22). Services offered include landline and mobile telephony, Fixed wire and mobile internet connectivity and streaming. Small and big data transmission and cloud services, data-center hosting, broadcasting network design and support as well as national and international connectivity and switching (Marketline Industry Profile, 2022). As of 2021 the total number of people employed in New Zealand telcos were just under 11000 and the number in ISPs was just over 3000 (stats.govt.nz, n.d). Totals and trends since 2000 are shown in

figure 4.3 below. Dependence on Telecommunication services in New Zealand is greater than ever. The advent of video streaming has increased demand for bandwidth delivery and the recent COVID-19 lockdowns placed an even greater demand on services delivered to the home as a large population were working from home. This demand has fueled competitive growth, particularly in the home broadband sector, with the market entrance of non-traditional telecommunication providers such as SKY TV.

4.2 Summary

This section covered key moments in the development of telecommunications in New Zealand. It was intended to provide some context on the industry and its development along with its current status. This section highlighted that this industry has changed significantly from a government owned monopoly to one with eighty-two listed providers all competing in a limited market.
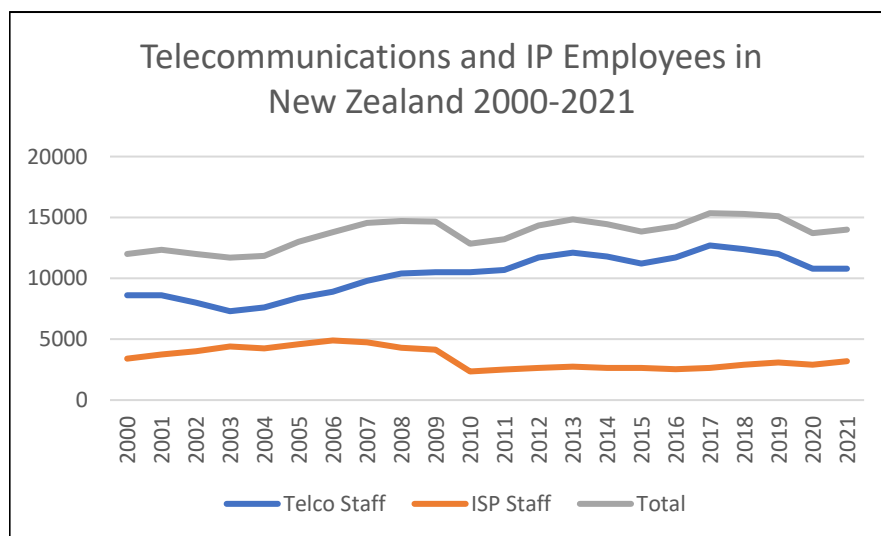

Figure 4.3: Industry Employee Numbers Since 2000

Source: Statistics NZ

4.3 Interview Responses

In a customer facing, operational environment implementation of new strategy requires phasing in as existing functions affected by the change are adjusted or replaced. It mostly falls to team managers to control work outputs whilst implementing the new strategy to ensure that disruption to customers is kept to a minimum (Balogan, 2003). For team managers to effectively do this, they need to take actions to ensure they can facilitate their direct reports successful transition to the new environment (Balogan, 2003).

The most common theme arising from interviews involved the emotional responses to strategic change. All managers mentioned some variation of needing to manage the response from team members when faced with the uncertainty of upcoming strategic change. Common responses involved increased workloads or possible redundancies, meaning considerable time needed to be spent by the managers either discussing changes to be implemented, or interfacing with higher management levels to get responses to questions they could not answer themselves.

Emotional responses were not merely expressed by operational team members. Some respondents alluded to effects on colleagues being just as great as for the teams themselves. Responses from a manager's wider management team included defensive behaviours and strong push back to the managers attempting implementation:

> *A lot of them had so much pushback, they just didn't think like that. They listened to their people and pushed back. You know, it was all, it was all just complaints. Why are we doing this waste of time? – P07*

Defensive responses such as this from a manager's peers would be dressed up in terms of defense of their teams:

> *I didn't get a lot of pushbacks from the team as such. I did get frustrations from the managers. So, the team was fine. It was the managers that couldn't cope. The managers themselves, were like, we don't want to push our teams so hard. We don't like to do what you're asking them to do, we need more people. I'm not going to punish my team for not being able to achieve the targets that you've set or the goal that you've set – P06*

A few respondents commented on some change implementation as not having support of their wider management team:

> *I also had shock at the number of managers who also, were outwardly looking at other options as well. Not all the management in the change was on board with the change either. - P02*

Team manager responses strongly demonstrated a personal commitment to successfully implementing change within their teams.

Responses regarding team manger input regarding planned change demonstrated varying experiences ranging from:

> *We weren't sort of given much background on any of the changes, you were just asked to implement them – P04,*

to:

> *Most of the strategic changes came through managerial meetings. So, we had our monthly manager meetings, and that's how things were translated. We did have the high level of stuff that was communicated via the exec leaders and the CEO doing videos and road shows and things like that, as a part of the bigger strategy changes. But then obviously, the translation of that into what it meant on the ground level came through the managerial meetings – P03.*

The approach taken by middle management, and the time available to them prior to implementation, impacted on team manager responses in their team interactions in terms of making sense of upcoming changes, and being able to obtain team buy-in allowing them to achieve the desired outcome.

Perhaps because of this, communicating effectively was another recurring theme. Respondents identified that they spent a substantial portion of their time instructing, explaining, and supporting team members to ensure they have clarity in their roles and responsibilities:

> *I've got them on a regular team meeting that I have every Wednesday, and just advise them what was happening, I try to be as transparent as possible, and tell them reasons why. P01*

> *How do I then translate this to make more sense to them in the language that they would understand? Because a big barrier that has been around these things is the wording and the phrasing of things. They use all this corporate kind of language, which at the end of the day doesn't quite translate into something for someone actually doing the work. – P03.*

Respondents acknowledged that communication was not just to their teams, they stated that all other operational teams that they interacted with needed proactive engagement and communication to successfully implement change:

> *What I needed to do was get into those areas and get talking and working with those areas and their managers just to sell our value. – P04*

This seems to be true of middle management as well:

> *You present back the fact that while I'm implementing this, we have to allow for time for people to adjust to things, which means that it's going to impact our BAU – P03*

For all these areas, translation into language suitable for the audience was important to manage complexity. By their nature, telecommunications companies are jam packed with jargon and technological abbreviations and acronyms. Managing complexity is a constant challenge. To ensure that new strategy could be implemented within an existing team, several respondents noted that gaining additional resources was problematic given the complexity of the operating environment:

> *Getting temps into our roles is pretty hard because they don't know very much. The knowledge gap is really huge. – P04.*

Dealing with complexity would mean that team managers frequently considered functionally splitting their existing operational resources to allow for the new strategy to be implemented and developed to a point where it could supersede existing practice. One respondent spoke of having half of their team working on a new initiative, whilst the other half were still applying the original process:

> *The way I sold it to them was that they were just as important to the guys working on the shiny stuff. Because without them, they wouldn't have the capacity to work on the new stuff. – P04.*

Another spoke of breaking the team into smaller groups to allow for new team members to be brought into the new strategy. They would:

> *(I) break them up into groups, and basically put on a mini team lead, and each of those three or four groups to train those certain amount of people – P01.*

Once these sub teams were established, they would then lean on the subject matter experts within that group to develop the necessary operational collateral to bring others into the workflow once implementation was concluded:

> *When you roll out a change and you've got key people that are like the super users, the people that are experienced, you go to them for questions and that kind of stuff, eventually, you build a repository of knowledge that you're able to publish somewhere, and people can look it up and go, these are the processes, and that information is really quick and easy to find. – P06.*

All respondents identified that bringing strategic change into operational environments is demanding, energy sapping and stressful:

> *Definitely the stress levels go up, that's for sure. And, you know, managing my team's activity to make sure we ensure we deliver to our customer, and then also providing support you can get, you can certainly get, you know, conflicting priorities. – P01*

Responses to questions over operational details having been considered in the strategy design drew similar responses from the respondents. The experience was that they would get informed about impending change with an overview of what was happening and then be given the implementation task to work through:

> *...we're being told, that's the project scope. That's how we're going to approach it. But you guys make it happen – P05*

and:

> *We didn't have a lot of input, that decision was already made. The information was cascaded via the management structure, down to me as a team manager. We were told what the aim was, and then it was up to me to do the actual hands on how it would work daily. Any issues that came apparent, I would have to escalate if I couldn't resolve them myself. But basically, told here's what you need to do, go away and do it. – P01.*

Managing relationships with the team whilst meeting the operational and strategic requirements of the organisation also needs to be understood. Respondents were clear that they strongly advocated for their teams at any opportunity, and that they spent considerable effort building trust amongst their

people. Organisational changes therefore were likely to affect this relationship and therefore were another aspect of implementation requiring cognisance:

> *It is a challenge. Absolutely. Because you do absolutely build relationships with your team. And if there's any changes to your team, it definitely can affect you on a personal level. There's a fine balance between keeping professional working relationships and building friendships with your team. That's definitely a big challenge. I guess what makes a good manager is being able to keep a fair and level and reasonable balance between those two things. – P01*

All the respondents had extensive experience within the telecommunications industry and so were asked about their thoughts on how successful they found the implementation of the strategic changes they were discussing. These responses below represent the general theme:

> *All the strategies and implementations that I've been through is about the relationship of the people first. You know, the strategy is one thing, but you can't force something on someone who haven't taken the time to understand that someone. So, at first take the time to understand that person, what their role is what they do – P07.*

> *To a degree 80, 80 per cent? Yeah, there was some things that I think, was a missed opportunity. But in general, I think it brought different units together – P05*

> *Not many (successful Implementations). And I'm being brutally honest. And the ones that I have seen be successful are the ones which have given themselves the time and reiterated the change over time...the leadership teams or the exec teams might, might have spent hours and hours coming up with what they've come up with. But they forget that other people need (that) exact amount of time, hours, and hours, to actually get their head around something that they've only just now understood. So, it's I think it's that disconnect that that really sort of leads to things not working or not, or not being implemented as successfully. – P03*

> *That is the challenge. You know, the day to day. How do you translate that into the operational stuff, which they probably don't think about? Or they don't consult in the beginning. It's not until the end until you hit roadblocks that they go, oh, we've had a roadblock. And what do we do now? or we didn't think of that - P01.*

These responses give voice to a disconnect between those who develop strategy and those who get the job of implementing it. The final statement below expresses how much of a sink-or-swim culture still exists within the industry regarding entry point management roles:

> *The average team leader's the last person that they give a lot of coaching and guidance to. You know, sort of middle management layers, tiers tend to get sort of left behind when it comes to training opportunities, to learning. You're just expected to learn yourself and be self-driven to go and teach yourself – P01.*

This chapter has looked at responses participants made throughout the interviews. Most participants agreed that implementations they have been involved with tend to be incomplete or partially successful. All participants talked about emotional effects placed both on themselves and their teams, and they all reflected that they placed significant effort into communicating, guiding, and supporting their teams through changes. There was also a shared sense that whilst they had some senior

management support, often in the form of external consultants, they had to develop the operational requirements largely by themselves to support the implementation and build the capability in their teams. The next chapter will discuss the findings and the actions team managers take to ensure they implement strategies effectively.

5 Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The previous section explained the participant designations allocated and gave a brief overview of backgrounds and experience and then reviewed the findings from the interviews. In this section the findings are discussed against the theoretical background. In addition to simply gathering these experiences, the intention of the study is to view them through the theoretical lens of institutional work (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006) to see how they respond with intentional actions to the strategic changes they are required to implement. Institutional work has been selected as the theoretical lens as it has in its foundations several concepts which are important in operational environments: Institutions, intentionality, agency, and legitimacy. Institutions are those practices that are unquestioned by all participants within a given field such as a hierarchical chain-of-command or decision-making process (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Within this, institutional work focuses specifically on institutional formation, adaptation and disruption and the ways that these stages interact with each other (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006; Lawrence, et al., 2011). Intentionality and Agency are crucial to institutional work, as the relationship between the actor (team manager) and the institution they are acting within is the source of intentionality through the need drive to a result within the constraints of the institution (Beckert, 1999; Linneberg, et al., 2021). Legitimacy is the final essential component, influencing others to put their efforts behind implementation or obtaining buy-in. In operational teams, legitimacy is often not derived from decisions of upper management, as it is conferred by the evaluators of the strategy, the team (Bitektine & Haack, 2015). Respondents illustrated ways in which they have gone to the teams they need buy-in from and worked to earn legitimacy to the strategy they are promoting. Throughout the interviews respondents reflected on the ways in which they dealt with the implementation of strategy within their own environments. The most common themes arising from the interviews related to emotional responses, a need for support to both understand the changes being made, and ways to actually implement them, communications strategies both to middle management, the team manager's peers, and their teams, advocacy of and loyalty to their teams, and the challenge of managing the complexity between implementing new strategic initiatives whilst maintaining existing operations. Additionally, already complex processes, systems, and interactions would be further increased when new systems were introduced, or new external relationships / suppliers established as these added challenges to be worked through and resolved. This study proposes that as environmental complexity increases, it constrains the ability to implement strategic change. In response, team managers use four classes of institutional work as they move through the implementation phase from intended strategy to realised strategy. Those four classes of institutional

work being adaptation, translation, translation, and orientation. The following section will discuss complexity followed by the four classes of institutional work in turn.

5.2 Complexity

Organisational complexity develops over time from multiple factors - levels of hierarchy, staff numbers, industry type, interrelationships between internal and external stakeholders - complexity derives from the number of components and interactions an organisation has (Pereira et al., 2021). The telecommunications industry is a complex mix of interactions between business groups and organisations, multiple products and technologies and the pace of change all combined. This points to complexity as a moderating influence on implementation.

As the number of individuals or groups within the organisation affected by the implementation increases, the more complex the implementation becomes through the necessity of each affected group being required to make decisions relating to the implementation (Leonard-Barton, 1988). As their respective units become bound by these decisions, remedial actions to unforeseen instances by team managers that could otherwise be undertaken to resolve issues will now be constrained by the implementation (Leonard-Barton, 1988). For instance, if computer systems in an organisation cannot cope with the new requirements of one unit, but perform exceptionally for another unit, then the unit negatively impacted will need to construct a method to work around that issue constraining the effectiveness of that change in that area.

However, because complexity is a moderating influence on implementation, it is the significant driver of institutional work behaviours. Beckert (1999), proposed that strategic agency increased when organisational uncertainty was at a high level. This meant that an IE had conditions allowing for them to initiate institutional change. In a similar way, this study shows that whilst organizational complexity is a moderator of implementation, it is also a driver of institutional work and innovation. Beckert argued that high degrees of certainty in organizational life led to high degrees of institutionalisation, with those institutions being extremely stable and long lasting (Beckert, 1999). Through the dependence on rapidly advancing technologies, as well as the complex layers of service and product portfolios that exist in the telecommunications industry, the interconnectedness of organisations in their relationships with each other, complexity develops that must be overcome to succeed. This means that actors throughout these organisations need to continually develop innovative strategies and solutions to be competitive. Institutional work is the means by which this is achieved, as it not a concept that exists solely at organisational level, it exists and permeates through the entire organisation and is a combined effort. For example, team managers raised issues about the availability of skilled staff and resources during strategy implementation. In several instances, the managers redirected resources within their team, conscious of the overall outcome needed. By doing this they are demonstrating intentionality, agency, and actions which affect the existing institutions and change

them. Lawrence, et al. (2011), discussed the need to bring individuals back into institutional theory, the institutional work of team managers in the face of complexity, and the moderating effect it has on implementation is an example of how to do that.

5.3 Adaptation, Translation, Orientation, Integration

When presented with strategic change team managers perform various forms of institutional work. This study contributes to the institutional work literature by showing four classes of institutional work as Adaptation, Translation, Orientation, and Integration.

5.3.1 Adaptation

Adaptation is the first class of implementation related institutional work. It is based on the understanding that change is required to support a new strategy being put in place. It encompasses the very early stages of strategic change; being notified by higher management, digesting the information provided, realising the impacts and their significance in a Team Manager's area. Early formation of ideas to support the change are developed in this phase along with discussions involving peers and supervisors about the new strategic requirements and making decisions over where the changes are to be made within their existing operating environment. Actions being undertaken in this class will include political activities (advocacy) as people grapple with the threats and opportunities developing from the impending changes. This will lead onto (defining) work, to establish parameters and boundaries. It must be noted that both advocating and defining are done in the context of operational change coming out of strategic implementation. This differs from the type of advocating and defining at the higher management level in that they are concerned with practical actions.

Vesting may be used by higher management to ensure less popular aspects of the strategy are included (such as requiring a higher level of administration in order to meet an improved standard) and this could be used in conjunction with disrupting aspects such as sanctions (performance reporting), or disassociating moral foundations (basing the new standard on societal change such as improving inclusiveness and pointing out how old practice did not reflect this moral obligation to the desired extent). By understanding the need for each action, the actions that are taken are deliberate, with defined purpose which constitute institutional work (Raviola & Norback, 2013).

Adaptation also incorporates a political (advocating) aspect at the operational level whereby role boundaries may be reset or changed. This could impact the Team Manager's peers, so it is important that advocation for the team be undertaken as illustrated by P04 below:

> *It was more of a power play rather than agendas. Because it was a new product, different areas were trying to get tasks that they thought would sit in their areas better than where they were currently sitting.*

This type of political activity between peers as they sort out the new landscape represents institutional work of advocacy and defining. The first stage of this is to define the new condition in terms

favourable to the interested team and then justify that definition using already established field boundaries and skill sets. This sort of approach has been seen in professions where the concept of risk is leveraged for professionals to maintain control over certain activities (Currie, et al., 2012).

5.3.2 Translation

To implement strategy successfully, it is essential for managers to interpret strategic change from the perspective of their field and authority, as it will fall on them to understand the implications for this area as well as be able to express the change effectively to those who report to them (Bryant & Stensaker, 2011). If the consequence of the implementation is that customer facing teams will be enacting new behaviours, then their understanding of and ability to successfully enact the change is essential (Woiceshyn, et al., 2019). This introduces the second class of institutional work, Translation from the conceptual to practical. This must be undertaken in two different ways, the first being purely a language translation. Translation in this context is concerned with changing the language into operational terms designed to improve the team's overall comprehension of upcoming change, giving the Team Manager the best opportunity to develop buy-in prior to implementation. Second, the team manager will perform institutional work through persuasion and logic to generate buy-in (such as changing normative associations, undermining assumptions, and beliefs) (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006). Logical arguments are used to change normative associations, as well as disruptive methods such as undermining assumptions and beliefs in the existing strategy to assist with the creating institutional work. Further, operational teams use technical language relevant to the industry (jargon) when determining how to proceed with an operation. So purely in terms of the translation from conceptual idea to practical action the Team Manager needs to establish what new actions are required upon implementation. For example, a new and complex product may be developed and be ready to launch, however the design of that product will need to be deconstructed into step-by-step instructions that can be disseminated to a large audience to enable it to be meaningful for those tasked with deploying and supporting it. The team managers ensure this happens.

5.3.3 Orientation

Orientation institutional work involves the team making sense of events. Formal and informal peer discussions will be frequent as the team make sense of the upcoming changes. It is in this phase that Team Managers will need to provide practical and emotional support for team members as well as deciding who is best positioned to champion the upcoming change within the team (if needed). Respondents to this study frequently spoke of splitting their teams to operate under the existing strategy whilst simultaneously implementing the new strategy. It is in this phase that decisions around how that is to be structured will be made by the Team Manager.

Later in this phase the Team Manager will begin developing new processes using their strategy champions, they will review team structure (if required), and assist those who require support. The Team Manager is theorising (abstract concepts are being developed into practical actions with tangible outcomes), educating (identifying and developing champions to the new strategy to develop those actions), changing normative associations and constructing identities around new associations and building legitimacy for the new strategy though active engagement.

5.3.4   Integration

Integration institutional work means that strategy is actively being implemented, processes are routinised collateral is developed, old methods and collateral or equipment is disestablished. If a result of the change is that roles are to be disestablished, this is completed allowing for the team to settle back into a business-as-usual environment. Team managers are also policing through oversight of the implementation activities and reporting through higher management of their progress, and they are embedding the new strategy and routinising the developing processes. This may mark the end of implementation; however, this is where the maintenance of new institutions and process institutional work commences. Embedding and routinising practices is the key activity along with educating new people to firmly establish the newly institutionalised behaviours. Furthermore, the disestablishment of old practices is reinforced through institutional work Policing activities and active discouragement of the old practices.

A conceptual model of how Complexity, Adaptation, Translation, Orientation, and Integration relate can be seen below in Figure 5.1.
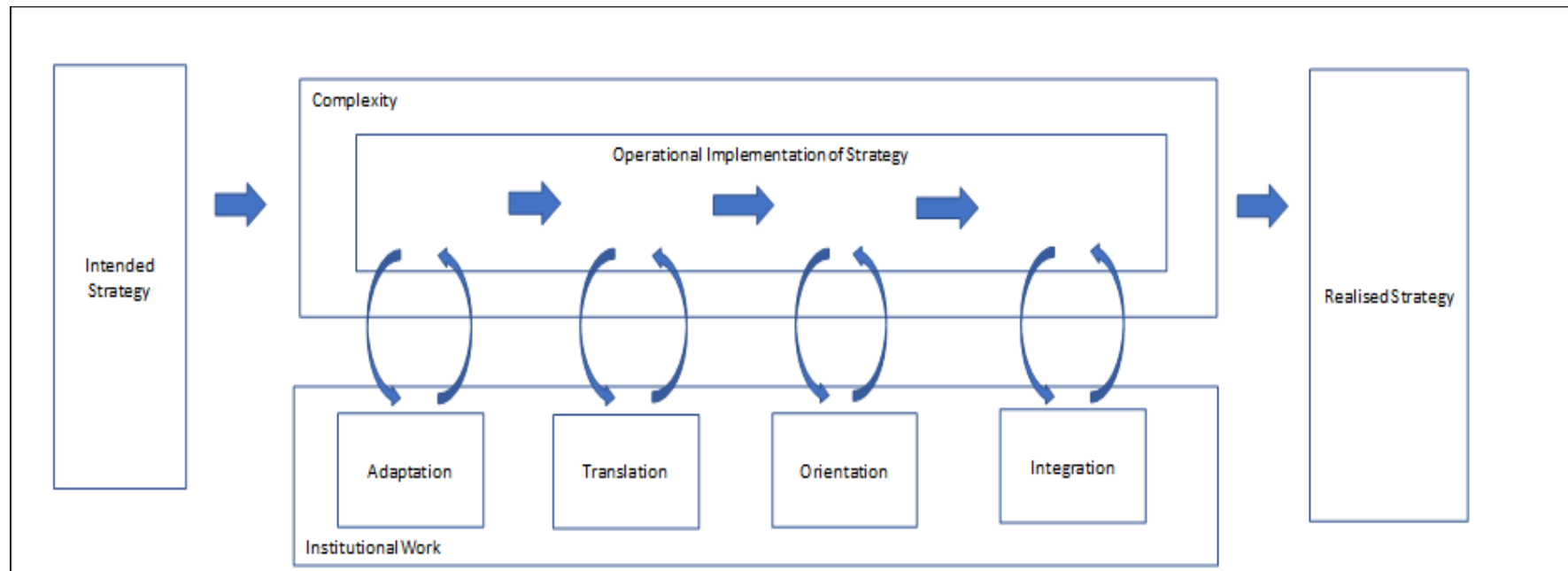
Figure 5.1 A Conceptual Model of institutional work in Strategy Implementation

6 Conclusion

This study has sought to investigate the lived experiences of team managers when new strategy is implemented in the telecommunications industry in New Zealand. The first chapter contained an introduction into the motivation behind the study and presented the research question

What actions do team managers take to implement new strategy in the New Zealand telecommunications industry?

The second chapter reviewed the theoretical perspectives surrounding institutional work providing a review of the theory itself as well as its foundational principles. The chapter concluded with a review of institutional work literature. Chapter three reviewed the methodology used in this study, as well as the process undertaken to ensure the study was ethically conducted. Chapter four contained a contextual review of the New Zealand telecommunications industry, where it came from and how it formed into its current state, before covering the findings from the interviews. Chapter five discussed the findings comparing them to the literature and proposed the implementation stages of adaptation, translation, orientation, and integration. The idea of complexity being a moderating influence on implementation and a driver of institutional work was also introduced.

7 Key Theoretical and Practical Contributions

This study generates practical implications for managers and makes two theoretical contributions.

First, this study proposes that organizational complexity is both a moderating factor for implementation as well as being a driver for institutional work. The moderating aspect occurs through its constraint on activities and outcomes, however complexity challenges actors attempting to implement strategy and pushes them to innovate to find solutions to those constraints. In particular, it drives institutional work behaviours from team managers to develop those solutions and bring them to bear on the constraints which, when successful, become embedded and eventually institutionalised.

Second, this study shows that institutional work during implementation evolves from four classes of institutional work, adaptation, translation, orientation, and integration. Adaptation represents conceptualizing the nature of the change, its impact and potential outcome. This class focuses on changing mindsets, absorbing information with sometimes very short lead times, making sense of how a proposed change is going to affect the operation, and the people when implemented. Translation is focused on communication and information management in that it involves passing strategic concepts along allowing them to be developed into practical actions (such as being able to answer the question 'which key do I press?'). Concepts need to be expressed to stakeholders in their own language to be

comprehensible. This is a critical skill. Orientation is a class of institutional work that is both a supporting class and an action class in that it requires the assisting of stakeholders to come to terms with implementation in whatever lead time there is. Developing and distributing training, systems brought online, equipment readied for distribution, documentation written and placed in virtual repositories for access. Enthusiasm and buy-in with stakeholders are the key elements in this class of institutional work. Integration is the class of institutional work where implementation is underway moving the change from an the abstract/conceptual domain to a deliverable operational outcome. Customer outcomes are now affected by the implementation of the strategy. Reinforcement of change becomes a requirement, maintenance and improvement cycles enacted. Reinstitutionalisation of practices occurs through this class of institutional work.

Practical implications for managers include developing the ability to grasp strategic concepts and be able to effectively direct concepts to their team. Senior management can facilitate the development of team managers to improve competencies in this area by providing more exposure to their environments or through developing training initiatives for this purpose. Team managers need to be able to translate operational terms back to middle management in more conceptual language to fully facilitate the exchange of information. By making the strategic change understandable to the operational team members, issues such as resistance and uniformed comment can be minimised. Implementation lead times need to account for the four classes of institutional work to allow implementation to flow smoothly. Further there is a need for team managers to engage with the industry, to be conversant with the jargon and the technology. A certain level of political awareness would aid in identifying opportunities along with building relationships within the context of the industry.

7.1   Limitations and Future Research Directions

Whilst it is hoped that this study provokes some thought, it is recognised that there are limitations to it that can be discussed here. First, the sample size is very small. Only seven respondents were interviewed and although they covered many of the major players in the industry, a greater sample size would likely provide more insights into the approaches team managers bring to strategy implementations. Second, being organizationally agnostic (not focused on a particular organisation) within the industry in New Zealand, has provided some insight into the ways team managers cope with strategic change, it has removed the opportunity to review specific examples of strategy implementation. This study also generates future research opportunities. First, it would be interesting to perform a case study on a particular change within an organisational context or compare several case studies from multiple organisations to develop learnings more thoroughly. Second, it would be useful to test the proposal of complexity as a moderating influence on implementation and driver of

institutional work to identify further the relationship of those dynamics. Finally, it would be very interesting to investigate strategic change from the perspective of the operational teams themselves.

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Appendix i - Institutional Work Terms

Creating Institutions	
Advocacy	*Attempts to define fields and associate those fields to desired norms.*
Defining	*Attempts to formalise rules of association, field boundaries, set standards and skill set requirements.*
Vesting	*Sets out responsibility for particular actions within a field and responsibilities.*
Constructing Identities	*Relates to the relationship between the actor and the newly defined and vested field.*
Changing Normative Associations	*The work done that facilitates a mind shift away from established practice and re-linking mentally with a new practice / norm / field.*
Constructing Normative Networks	*Occurs between organisations that creates new institutions independently of the desires of those organisations.*
Mimicry	*Where those wanting to create new institutions take some form from an existing institution and replicate it in the new form.*
Theorizing	*Logical or abstract concepts get fleshed out and named allowing them to become part of the new lexicon.*
Educating	*The instruction of those new to the institution.*

Maintaining Institutions	
Enabling	*Creates the clarity within the organisation to assign rules to specific areas and provide the resources to reduce internal conflicts.*
Policing	*Enforcement of rules through audit, compunction, and oversight.*
Deterring	*Establishing consequences for non-compliance with the goal of not needing to enforce because actors are put off by the deterrence.*
Valorising and Demonising	*Uses exaggeration or a high degree of emphasis over either positive or negative elements of fundamental institutional principles in public fora to stress a desired point.*
Mythologizing	*Creates legend using the history of an institution. This generally will overlook any negative aspects of the institutional backstory.*
Embedding and Routinisation	*Based creation of repetitive routine actions combined with a high degree of ceremony designed to give the actions meaning and legitimacy.*

Disrupting Institutions	
Disconnecting Sanctions	*Done using legislative bodies and the courts where previous rewards or sanctions for using institution are removed.*
Disassociating Moral Foundations	*Undermines the moral base of an institution, it is a cultural or social phenomenon and occurs over time.*
Undermining Assumptions and Beliefs	*Like above but not morally related, this is all about undermining assumptions and beliefs directly related to the institution itself.*

Table 1. Institutional Work, Terms and Meanings

Source: Adapted from Lawrence and Suddaby (2006)

Appendix ii - Participant Consent Form

Consent Form

Project title:　　　　The success and failure of strategy implementation processes: An institutional perspective

Project Supervisor:　Dr Jonathan Baker, jonathan.baker@aut.ac.nz, 09 921 9999 ext 7977

Researcher:　　　　Graeme Hand, grahan95@autuni.ac.nz

○　　I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated dd mmmm yyyy.

○　　I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.

○　　I understand that notes will be taken during the interview and that the interview will be recorded and transcribed.

○　　I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.

○　　I understand that if I withdraw from the study then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.

○　　I agree to take part in this research.

○　　I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes○　　No○

Participant's signature:　　...…………………………………………………

Participant's name:　　　...…………………………………………………

Participant's Contact Details:

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Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 15 July 2021 AUTEC Reference number 21/144

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

Appendix iii - Ethics Approval

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

Auckland University of Technology
D-88, Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1142, NZ
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316
E: ethics@aut.ac.nz
www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics

15 July 2021

Jonathan Baker
Faculty of Business Economics and Law

Dear Jonathan

Re Ethics Application: 21/144 The success and failure of strategy implementation processes: An institutional perspective

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC).

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 14 July 2024.

Non-Standard Conditions of Approval

1. Inclusion in the Information Sheet of the entire withdrawal statement from the current exemplar which can be found on the Research Ethics website at http://aut.ac.nz/researchethics.

Non-standard conditions must be completed before commencing your study. Non-standard conditions do not need to be submitted to or reviewed by AUTEC before commencing your study.

Standard Conditions of Approval

1. The research is to be undertaken in accordance with the Auckland University of Technology Code of Conduct for Research and as approved by AUTEC in this application.
2. A progress report is due annually on the anniversary of the approval date, using the EA2 form.
3. A final report is due at the expiration of the approval period, or, upon completion of project, using the EA3 form.
4. Any amendments to the project must be approved by AUTEC prior to being implemented. Amendments can be requested using the EA2 form.
5. Any serious or unexpected adverse events must be reported to AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.
6. Any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should also be reported to the AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.
7. It is your responsibility to ensure that the spelling and grammar of documents being provided to participants or external organisations is of a high standard and that all the dates on the documents are updated.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. You are responsible for obtaining management approval for access for your research from any institution or organisation at which your research is being conducted and you need to meet all ethical, legal, public health, and locality obligations or requirements for the jurisdictions in which the research is being undertaken.

Please quote the application number and title on all future correspondence related to this project.

For any enquiries please contact ethics@aut.ac.nz. The forms mentioned above are available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics

(This is a computer-generated letter for which no signature is required)

The AUTEC Secretariat
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: graeme.hand@xtra.co.nz

Appendix iv – Interview Protocol

Interview protocol: The success and failure of strategy implementation processes: An institutional perspective. Ethics Application 21/144

INTRODUCTION: Thank you for joining me today to discuss your experiences. My name is Graeme Hand. I am a student at AUT in Auckland completing my master's degree in management studies. This study is looking at strategy implementation at the team manager level. We are interested to explore the experiences of front-line managers when new strategy is implemented in a telecommunications firm.

RESEARCH BACKGROUND: For this discussion, I would like to ask you questions about a period when you, as a team manager, were required to implement strategy with your team because of a strategic change from higher up the management chain.

INTERVIEW RECORDING: To allow for transcription of this interview I am recording it. If you wish me to stop the recording at any time, or end the interview, please just let me know.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. Can you tell me about your background and roles in the telecommunications industry?
2. Thinking of a time when you were leading a customer facing team, can you tell me about a specific instance when you were required to implement strategic change with your team based on a change in organizational strategy?
3. Prior to implementing the change, how well formed do you think the strategy was?
4. How did you inform your team about the new strategy and what changes would occur?
5. Tell me about how the team reacted and what you did to manage their reactions?
6. How did you think you would implement the required change?
7. Tell me about the process of actually implementing the change?
8. How did the changes affect your team's everyday work and your everyday work?
9. Once implemented, how were the changes reinforced/maintained/changed?
10. How successful was the change in the end?

INTERVIEW SUMMARY:

This interview will be transcribed for analysis, once transcription is completed, I can email you a copy of it for you to review, would you like me to do that?

Once again, thank you for participating in this research. You have my contact information, if you can think of anyone who would be suitable for this research and who would be interested in participating, I would appreciate it if you could pass my details on and ask them to contact me.

This concludes the interview. Thank you again for your time.

Appendix v – Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

Date Information Sheet Produced:

22 April 2021

The success and failure of strategy implementation processes: An institutional perspective.

An Invitation

Hello. My name is Graeme Hand, and I am the principal researcher in this study. The purpose of this research is to look at strategic change in the New Zealand Telecommunications Industry from the perspective of the front-line Manager or team leader. The research project forms the final part of my master's degree in Business Studies (MBus). I would like to invite you to be a participant.

What is the purpose of this research?

This study is designed to view the experiences of front-line managers and leaders as they manage the implementation of strategic change within their teams. The New Zealand Telecommunications Industry is constantly evolving so is an excellent context for this research. The findings of this research will be used in my master's dissertation.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You have been identified either because I have worked with/for you in the past, or because you have been recommended to me by another participant. You are being invited because you currently, or have previously, held a front-line management / Team Leader role within the industry and have first-hand experience of strategy implementation at the organisation / customer interface.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You can withdraw from the study at any time up until data coding has commenced. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then all information regarding your participation will be removed and destroyed. To agree to the research just complete the attached Consent Form and return the researcher (grahan95@autuni.ac.nz).

What will happen in this research?

Participants in this study will be to take part in an interview of between 30 and 60 minutes that will be recorded for later transcription and analysis. The interviews will be conducted via Zoom. Consequently, participants will need to be able to access this online application. You can choose not to answer any question. Once the interview is completed, you can request to view the interview transcription to check for accuracy. We ask that any corrections or clarifications be presented back within two weeks of receiving the transcript to allow for data coding to commence.

What are the discomforts and risks?

Aside from the time investment involved in participating in this research, it is anticipated there are no psychological or physical risks associated with participating in this research. Any risks associated with the sharing of commercially sensitive information are fully in your control and are entirely your responsibility.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

As per normal business practice, you are encouraged to protect all information and intellectual property that you consider to be commercially sensitive.

What are the benefits?

There are several benefits to this research. Firstly, it is intended that the results of this research will fill a gap in current business research regarding customer facing business groups and how they deal with significant change in the operating environment. Secondly, it is intended that senior managers will gain insight into the impact decisions they take have at the front line of the company. Thirdly, this research will have a distinctly New Zealand twist to it

and it is hoped this will be of interest to industry prompting further research. Finally, successful completion of this will allow for me to graduate with my master's degree (MBus).

How will my privacy be protected?

The identity of participants agreeing to participate in this research project will remain confidential to the researchers and your identity will not be disclosed to any third parties. To ensure confidentiality is maintained, any identifying information such as the names of an organisation or person will be replaced with a numbered coding system for the collection and storage of data.

Data arising from this research will exist in three electronic formats: (1) notes taken during interviews and documented in Word format, (2) digital audio recordings of interviews, and (3) transcripts of interviews.

All electronic data arising from the project will be stored in a secure and password protected computer accessible only to the researchers. All data will be retained electronically by the researchers for a period of 6 years after completion of the research (expected completion: 30 December 2021). Following expiration of this period, data files will be permanently deleted from electronic storage. Any hard copies of data created for incidental use by the researchers during the research process will be shredded upon completion of the research project. Should the researchers use the services of a professional transcriber to transcribe interview recordings, the transcriber will first be required to sign a confidentiality agreement.

Primary data arising from this research will not be disclosed by the researcher to any third parties except when expressly required by law. The data will not be made publicly available, although small excerpts (i.e., quotes) may be incorporated into academic paper(s). However, all quotes will be used in an anonymous and non-identifiable manner. This will be achieved by employing letters of the Greek alphabet as a substitute. For example:

"*Alpha* mentioned the importance of trade secrets when protecting intellectual property related to manufacturing processes".

What are the costs of participating in this research?

Participants will be required to join a Zoom call for an interview of approximately 30-60 minutes.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

Please respond to this invitation within one month.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

A summary of findings will be produced at the conclusion of the study. You have the option to receive a copy of this summary. If you wish to have the copy emailed to you, please indicate so on your consent form.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Dr Jonathan Baker, jonathan.baker@aut.ac.nz, 09 921 9999 ext. 7977

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEC, *ethics@aut.ac.nz* , (+649) 921 9999 ext. 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

Graeme Hand, grahan95@autuni.ac.nz

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Dr Jonathan Baker, jonathan.baker@aut.ac.nz, 09 921 9999 ext. 7977

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 15 July 2021, AUTEC Reference number 21/144