



**DOCTOR OF BUSINESS NOTTINGHAM BUSINESS SCHOOL**

**Doctor of Business Administration**

**DOCUMENT 5**

**Evaluating the Potential Role of Media and Communication in Implementing the  
National Development Strategy in the Context of the Qatar National Vision 2030**

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## Abstract

The current DBA research recognises the importance and contributions of media and communications (M&C) in implementing Family Cohesion and Woman Empowerment (FCWE) as a sector or sub-strategy of the National Development Strategy (NDS) of Qatar. As the current DBA research focuses on the role of media and communication in the success of the FCWE strategy, the present research seeks to bridge a gap related to the role of M&C in Qatar's NDS, specifically its role in raising public awareness, and mainly that of Qatari women. Document 5 seeks to do this by exploring the opinions of key stakeholders of the FCWE strategy, Qatari women.

The research objectives are as follows:

1. Assess the role of M&C in supporting Qatar's FCWE strategy implementations.
2. Find out if planners have involved Qatari women and/or their concerns in planning the family strategy.
3. Find out which M&C channels are preferred by women in Qatari society.
4. Find out if Qatari women have enough awareness and knowledge about NDS and family-related issues.

The research used qualitative methodology by conducting semi-structured interviews. To explore different perspectives regarding role of media and communication in FCWE strategy, interviews were conducted with one group of policy workers, and three groups from women in the general population of different age groups: 18-25, 26-55, and 56 and over. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, interviews were conducted online. Thematic analysis, specifically *priori themes*, was used to analyse data.

Data analysis revealed that women were not sufficiently aware of the FCWE strategy. This indicates that there are problems and weaknesses in the communication of FCWE. It was

found that FCWE strategy was communicated by using traditional communication channels and methods, and that social platforms were not sufficiently utilised. In addition, it was concluded that FCWE strategy was developed with no participation from women. Overall, the analysis showed that women are not involved in making family strategy, and that all women, no matter their age or background, prefer and use different social media platforms as compared to traditional communication and media methods.

Based on the results of the study, it is clear that stakeholders should be involved at all stages of strategy given that ignorance of stakeholder involvement negatively influences the effectiveness of the implementation of strategy. At the same time, M&C strategy should utilise social platforms and be able to cope with advanced technology as this is crucial for its success. Besides, it is not enough to develop excellent strategies; it is more important to communicate them and implement them effectively. Moreover, national culture should be considered in national strategies because ignorance of this reduces the opportunities for strategies to be successful.

Overall, the research contributes to the literature by exploring in-depth the impact of M&C on the success of national strategies in a developing country. The results confirm that stakeholder involvement, communications, social platforms, and a holistic approach to strategies are all crucial for the success of national strategies.

## Contents

Abstract .....	2
Chapter One: Introduction to the Research.....	9
1.1 Background .....	9
Summary of the Whole Research.....	9
1.3 Gap in the Research.....	11
1.4 Aim and Objectives .....	14
1.5 Importance and Contributions of the Research .....	15
1.6 Research Context.....	18
Chapter Two: Literature Review .....	21
2.1 Introduction .....	21
2.3 Qatar National Vision (QNV) & National Development Strategy (NDS) of Qatar	22
2.3.1 Media and Communication Strategy (Role of M&C In Implementing the National Development Strategy) .....	22
2.3.2 Communication Methods and Success of Strategic Communication.....	24
2.3.3 Importance of Feedback from Target Group .....	25
2.4 Strategic Plans and Stakeholder Involvement.....	28
2.4.1 Theory of Stakeholder Involvement .....	28
2.4.2 How to Communicate Strategic Plans to Stakeholders .....	30
2.4.3 Stakeholder Segmentation .....	31
2.5 Social Platforms and Strategic Plans.....	32

2.5.1 Overview of Social Platforms.....	32
2.5.2 Social Platforms and Social Change.....	35
2.5.3 Role of Social Platforms in Strategic Plans.....	36
2.6 Qatari Culture and Role of Qatari Women.....	38
2.6.1 Overview of National Culture .....	38
2.6.2 Theory of National Culture.....	39
2.6.3 Overview of Qatari Culture .....	41
2.7 Role of Women in Qatari Culture .....	44
2.7.1 Historical Overview.....	44
2.7.2 The Current Role of Women in Qatar .....	45
2.7.3 Gender Theory .....	47
2.7.3 Cultural Barriers and Role of Women in Qatar .....	49
2.8 Conceptual Framework.....	52
2.8.1 Overview of the Conceptual Framework.....	52
2.8.2 Justification of the Conceptual Framework.....	53
2.8.3 Overview of the Key Concepts of the Framework.....	55
2.9 Conclusion.....	56
Chapter Three: Research Methodology .....	58
3.1 Introduction .....	58
3.2 Epistemology, Ontology and Axiology.....	59
3.3 Quantitative and Qualitative Methods.....	62

3.4 Deductive, Inductive & Abductive research approaches .....	64
3.5 Research Strategy .....	65
3.6 Research Time Horizon.....	67
3.7 Research Instrument.....	68
3.8 Population and Sampling .....	70
3.9 Data Collection.....	73
3.10 Method of Analysis .....	75
3.11 Reliability and Validity .....	77
3.11 Reflexivity.....	78
3.12 Research Ethics .....	80
Chapter Four: Findings .....	82
4.1 Introduction.....	82
4.2 Analysis of Interviews with Policy Workers.....	83
4.2.1 Research objective: Assess the role of media and communications in supporting Qatar’s new family strategy implementation. ....	83
4.2.2 Find out if planners have involved Qatari women and/or their concerns in planning the family strategy. ....	85
4.2.3 Find out the media and communications channels preferred by women in Qatari society. ....	87
4.2.4 Find out if Qatari women have enough awareness and knowledge about NDS and family-related issues. ....	89

4.3 Analysis of Interviews with General Population.....	90
4.3.1 Characteristics of the Sample .....	90
4.3.2 Find out if Qatari women have enough awareness and knowledge about NDS and family-related issues. ....	91
4.3.3 Find out if planners have involved Qatari women and/or their concerns in planning the family strategy. ....	94
4.3.4 Find out the media and communications channels preferred by women in Qatari society. ....	97
4.3.5 Find out if Qatari women have enough awareness and knowledge about NDS and family-related issues. ....	100
4.4 Findings and Research Objectives .....	108
Chapter Five: Discussion of the Findings .....	111
5.1 Introduction .....	111
5.2 Key Findings .....	111
5.3 Discussions.....	112
Chapter Six: Conclusion and Recommendations.....	119
6.1 Introduction .....	119
6.2 Theoretical Contributions and Discussion .....	119
6.3 Methodological Implications.....	121
6.4 Social Policy Implications.....	122
6.5 Managerial Implications.....	124

6.6 Recommendations .....	125
6.7 Limitations and Future Research.....	126
References.....	129



## Chapter One: Introduction to the Research

### 1.1 Background

The current DBA project recognises the importance and contributions of the family cohesion and woman's empowerment (FCWE) strategy. The FCWE strategy aims to reach several essential outcomes related to social development, strengthening family cohesion, and preservation of traditional values (Qatar General Secretariat for Development Planning, 2008). The current DBA project focuses on the role of media and communication (M&C) in the success of the FCWE strategy. It investigates the main barriers to the involvement of M&C in implementing the FCWE strategy. In so doing, it finds relevant solutions to overcome these obstacles so that the successful implementation of the FCWE strategy can be enhanced. This chapter introduces the research by clarifying the relationship between its chapters and presenting both research objectives and questions. This chapter presents the outputs of the whole DBA project and briefly explains the research context.

### 1.2 Summary of the Whole Research

The Nottingham Business School DBA requires the student to write six distinct documents – a project proposal, a literature review, two preliminary research documents (one quantitative and one qualitative) and then a final thesis for examination. The latter is also supplemented by a sixth, reflective, document. So far, the first four documents have been completed. Document five continues the research journey. It complements previous work through exploring the relationships between Qatari women, the new national FCWE strategy, and the M&C methods used to promote this.

The overall aim of the whole dissertation is to investigate the role of M&C in implementing the FCWE strategy in the context of the Qatar National Vision 2030, the national

development strategy (NDS), and family strategy. In Documents 1, 2, 3 and 4 (hereby referred to as Doc. plus the number), a gap was identified relating to the new national FCWE strategy, and specifically the need to explore relationships between Qatari women, and the M&C methods used to promote this.

To carry out the research, the researcher started with Document One (Doc.1). The primary objective of Doc. 1 was to enhance the potential success of the Qatar FCWE strategy through identifying the role of M&C in the implementation process and providing recommendations for the same. The key conclusion of Doc. 1 related to the significant role of communications of strategic plans and development communications, and the need to investigate the role of M&C in implementing the national development strategy in the context of the Qatar National Vision 2030.

Document Two (Doc. 2) contained the literature review and explored theories and models related to the communications of strategic plans and the role of development communications. It also reviewed literature related to the effectiveness of communication methods and strategic communication. The review of the literature helped me to develop the research conceptual framework. The three key concepts in the framework are: M&C strategy, stakeholders, and national culture. The relationship between these concepts is discussed in depth in the literature review (Bryson, 2017).

Document Three (Doc.3) focused on qualitative research. To arrive at a balanced picture of the implementation process of the FCWE strategy and the contribution of M&C to implementation, I had to measure and understand the experience of the two parties involved in that strategy, namely the delivering party or implementing organizations, and the receiving party or target groups and the public at large. I believe this to be a very logical approach that served the purpose of my research. To answer the question of how the

strategy was implemented effectively, it is necessary to explore both the creators and receivers of the communication strategy. Considering that, Doc. 3 presented and discussed the results of the interviews.

Finally, Document Four (Doc. 4) was prepared. The main objective of Doc. 4 was to investigate whether M&C were used in conjunction with development strategy preparation and implementation.

### 1.3 Gap in the Research

Docs. 3 and 4 provided insights into the broad problems related to communications issues regarding the Qatari NDS, but in my capacity as a manager at one of the social work organizations in Qatar, my main concern is for Qatari women. Qatar is relatively patriarchal society, and my wish was to view how the NDS had been communicated to women (AlKhater, 2021).

The main gap which Document 5 (Doc.5) seeks to bridge is related to the role of M&C in the NDS. The specific focus is the role of M&C in raising public awareness, specifically that of Qatari women. Doc. 5 aims to close this gap through exploring the opinions of a key group of stakeholders of the FCWE strategy, Qatari women. There is a crucial need to investigate the opinions of Qatari women regarding communication strategy and the platforms of FCWE strategy.

1. On the one hand, as Qatar continues to experience economic development and progress since gaining independence in 1971, the country has quickly risen to prominence both regionally and internationally to become an economic, political, and cultural powerhouse in the Middle East. With a relatively small local population and substantial revenues generated from having the third-largest proven

natural gas reserves globally, Qatar has one of the world's highest GDPs per capita: at current prices it stood at QR294,586 (USD84,400) in 2020 (The World Bank, 2020). Qatar is becoming more integrated into globalization processes, and more influenced by the West, with Western norms and practices gradually influencing many aspects of life in Qatar (Elshenawy, 2017). Qatar's integrated social policy of the NDS 2011–2016 and 2018-2022 aims to lead to stronger and more sustainable outcomes, including strengthening family cohesion and women's empowerment. This means that Qatari women are key stakeholders and beneficiaries of both NDS and FCWE strategy. On the other hand, the FCWE sector of the social development pillar of the NDS 2011– 2016 and NDS 2018-2022 aims to support a strong family structure that cares for its members and maintains moral and religious values (National Development Strategy, 2011; National Development Strategy, 2018). At the same time, the government continues to show an increased dedication to enhancing women's capabilities and empowering them to participate more fully in the political and economic spheres. Therefore, it is essential to develop effective communication strategies to target Qatari women and enhance the effectiveness of the FCWE strategy.

2. Added to that, the role of Qatari women has changed within recent decades. This is mainly due to political support, social change, and technological development. For example, the number of working women has risen steadily over the past few years, with fully 51% of women in work. At the same time, women in Qatar are free to open and run their own businesses. In fact, 6% of women in the country run their own companies, a percentage that is higher than any other Gulf country (Sergon, 2021). Women in Qatar have the right to own property and land, to enter into

- business contracts, and to control their own income and assets independently of their spouses. They have equal rights of access to education, and the country has a higher proportion of female students than any other country, the ratio of female to male university students being nearly two to one (Sergon, 2021).
3. In addition, Qatar has recently witnessed much social and cultural change, and this has influenced the role and contributions of Qatari women. One study found that Qatari women have availed themselves of the unprecedented opportunities created by the government-sponsored narrative of change (Golkowska, 2017). The study reported that the biggest gains had been made by the younger generation of college-educated females moving into traditionally male-dominated spheres and increasing their visibility in public space. Some of these women appear to seek autonomy through navigating the existing social systems and spaces rather than trying to question or deconstruct them. Thus, they are creating a culturally shaped definition of agency and mobility. Golkowska (2017, p. 34) also noted that “If Qatari women begin to create a third space between Western feminist ideology and traditional female Arab identity, exploration of this process and its affective domain should come from the women themselves.”
  4. It is important to recognise that Qatari society is essentially a highly conservative family-based society where “The family is considered the pillar on which society stands and its fabric is woven” (Golkowska, 2017, p.43). Protecting the family and enhancing its cohesion is written into the Qatari permanent constitution, and it follows that the Qatar National Vision 2030, launched in 2008, also allocated a large space for the family under its social pillar as it emphasised protecting the family and empowering Qatari women in all spheres of life. However, the

enthusiasm of the political leadership in Qatar to preserve a solid family with strong family ties gives rise to potential tension between preserving such values and wider female participation in society. To this end, the leadership had provided all necessary resources to reduce the threat to family cohesion and traditional values presented by a vast and rapid process of modernization and globalization.

#### 1.4 Aim and Objectives

This piece of research has four objectives, all focused on the overall aim of exploring relationships between Qatari women, the new national Qatari family strategy, and the M&C methods used to promote this. Specifically, the objectives of the research are to:

1. Assess the role of M&C in supporting Qatar's FCWE strategy implementations.
2. Find out if planners have involved Qatari women and/or their concerns in planning the family strategy.
3. Find out which M&C channels are preferred by women in Qatari society.
4. Find out if Qatari women have enough awareness and knowledge about NDS and family-related issues.

Relevant literature supports the above objectives. Overall, it is expected that M&C support the national strategies through the involvement of stakeholders, and ease strategy implementation. For example, empirical evidence from rural development projects in Africa and national development plans in South Africa suggests that M&C strategies can potentially play a key role in bringing new and pertinent issues to the attention of politicians and bureaucrats responsible for overseeing the implementation of such plans (Johnson and Flaherty, 2010; Kiregyera, 2015). This illustrates the importance of two-way communication and the central role that a strategic approach to communication can play in such developmental efforts. However, it is important to assess the role of M&C in the case

of the Qatar FCWE strategy. It is also necessary to involve stakeholders in national strategies. Approaches that emphasise the importance of stakeholder involvement can justify it with reference to normative, process-oriented, and outcome-based imperatives (Potschin et al., 2016; Crowther and Seifi, 2017; Schneider and Rist, 2014). The normative dimension suggests that participation is important as an end in itself, whereas process-based arguments are based on the idea that projects and initiatives will garner more trust, confidence and cohesion if stakeholders are engaged, and outcome-based justifications claim that a greater variety of values, priorities, knowledge and evidence will help projects and initiatives achieve more effective outcomes (Potschin et al., 2016, Crowther and Seifi, 2017, Schneider and Rist, 2014). Such genuine forms of involvement that give stakeholders a concrete role in decision-making processes must be distinguished from managed communication efforts that seek to influence and control a message to different stakeholders about decisions that have already been reached and are final.

Hence, it is important to understand stakeholders' preferred M&C channels and platforms. It is also important to select communication methods that suit the stakeholders rather than those responsible for communicating the message and, therefore, engage stakeholders on platforms to which they can relate (Antonaras and Dakolo, 2019; Wilkins, 2012).

### 1.5 Importance and Contributions of the Research

The importance of the current research is clear due to the following points:

1. The Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics (2019) estimated that there are more than 400,000 Qatari women. As this research focuses on the key stakeholders of the FCWE strategy 2011-2016, who are Qatari women, it is essential to investigate their views and opinions regarding the success of the communication of FCWE strategy. This, in return, helps to evaluate the

engagement of Qatari women in FCWE strategy. This is mainly because the importance of including important stakeholders in the strategic management process is critical since the exclusion of primary stakeholders constrains the relevance and anticipated benefits from the strategy (Mangala, 2015), potentially leading to the failure of the whole strategic plan. In other words, despite having a robust strategy formulation process, the lack of effectiveness in implementing the strategies, including communication, hinders the success of national strategies. Considering high rates of failure of strategies, it seems that more attention should be given by executives to implementing the strategy (Carucci, 2017). This research topic can contribute to changing attitudes towards families and women in Qatar and, if the FCWE strategy is implemented successfully, social transformation in the State of Qatar will be streamlined and supported. As a result, such social phenomena as increased level of divorce and the limited participation of women in social and political life can be understood, and a better work-life balance in families achieved (Hvidt, 2012).

2. Secondly, the current research contributes to evaluating the success of communication strategy and the platforms of FCWE strategy from the perspective of Qatari women. It will help to identify to what degree the FCWE strategy was communicated effectively to stakeholders. Bryson (2017) emphasised that communication is a necessity in national strategies and that organizations and governments should include communication strategies as part of the planning process: “Particularly when large changes are involved, people must be given opportunities to develop shared meanings and appreciations that will further the implementation of change goals” (Bryson, 2017, p. 308). The focus on M&C has



been selected because different media sources and channels of information can alter public opinion and attitudes effectively. Furthermore, it is assumed in this study that Qatari media should be a major stakeholder in designing and implementing the family sector strategy to enlighten Qatari society about family issues and tensions, and to establish channels of communication with Qatari families targeted by the FCWE Strategy. The media should also be included in the NDS as a powerful component of strategy implementation because many practical steps related to this strategy refer to Qatari media (Al Naimi et al., 2012). It follows that the effectiveness of the media in strategy implementation should be investigated for several reasons. Firstly, media integrate different spheres of civil life because of the crosscutting streams of information. Secondly, public sources of information can be used for more convenient sharing of strategic objectives, performance indicators and change-related values in the transformation process (Khalif and Al-Kuwari, 2012).

3. Thirdly, the current research investigates the communication platforms preferred by Qatari women, and this will help to evaluate whether Qatari women can cope with advanced technology and use social networks. This will also help to compare women's use of social networks in other areas. It is not simply a matter of using social networks, but also a matter of social change. The issues of race, gender, and social class affect how communication platforms are used even though they are less centralised ways of communicating with local communities. This can be part of what is referred to as the 'Matthew Effect' in the context of social media usage for purposes of achieving the objectives of national development strategies (Kempe et al, 2011). The Matthew effect is often linked to the idea that the rich get richer and

the poor get poorer. In essence, this refers to a common concept that those who already have status are often placed in situations where they gain more, and those that do not have status typically struggle to achieve more (Merton, 1968).

4. One of the major themes that will be identified in this research is the fact that this is Qatar's first experience of a major national development project and that the relationship between the project and an independent M&C strategy was impacted to a significant extent by this fact. Because the country is new to development of this nature, the research questions take on an added significance because of the ability to learn from the design of the NDS and the first phase of implementation. There is a clear lack of research in this area because the NDS is in the early phases of implementation and, as a result, few independent research studies have been conducted. This is particularly the case in relation to the role of M&C and, therefore, this study will contribute to knowledge about an area in which there is currently a paucity of understanding and research and provide recommendations. The research can help to identify problems with the current approach towards the use of M&C and point to the ways in which they can be used in the future to advance the aims and goals of the NDS.

## 1.6 Research Context

This study was conducted in the context of the socio-cultural system of the State of Qatar, with focus on its family development strategy and how the Supreme Council for Family Affairs (SCFA) prepared and implemented that strategy. Since NDS and FCWE strategies are middle range plans designed for modernizing Qatari society and its economy, and to bring about cultural change, the next section will review the relevant literature in terms of analyzing the significance and failures of FCWE implementation. Details about The State

of Qatar, The Qatar National Vision 2030, National Development Strategy (NDS) and Family Cohesion and Women Empowerment (FCWE) were provided in previous documents, mainly in Doc. 4.

Overall, the Qatar National Vision 2030 (QNV) is a development plan constructed by the General Secretariat for Development Planning (now known as the Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics) that seeks to transform Qatari society ( Qatar General Secretariat for Development Planning, 2018; Sillitoe, 2014). Its core aims are to develop Qatar into an advanced society, to facilitate sustainability, and to elevate the standard of living for Qatar's population (Government Communications Office, 2019). It establishes four pillars through which to facilitate these core aims: human development, social development, economic development, and environmental development (Government Communications Office, 2019). When the QNV was devised, it was envisioned that the development would be realised through a step-by-step strategy that seeks to turn each goal of the QNV into reality, and the National Development Strategy (NDS) 2011-2016 was the first part of this process (Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics, 2019). The achievement of Qatar's economic, social, cultural, and environmental goals is currently in its second phase and operating under the auspices of the National Development Strategy 2018-2022 (Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics, 2019). Considering that the QNV emphasised the need for strong and cohesive families, providing care for all their members, and increasing women's capacity to influence social processes, family and female roles are of great interest for the future social development of the State of Qatar. The Supreme Council for Family Affairs (2010) developed the focused and revised Family Cohesion and Women's Empowerment Sector Strategy, through teams of experts in strategic planning and family affairs. In the words of HE Sheikha Hessa bint Hamad Al-

Thani, President, Supreme Council for Family Affairs Chair: “The National Family Strategy is based on the principles and foundations of the Qatari society, framed within Arab and Islamic traditions and values. It is committed to achieving the aspirations of Qatari families and maintaining our distinctive cultural identity” (NDS Executive Group for Caring and Cohesive Society, FCWE, 2011, p.2).

## Chapter Two: Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction

This literature review will evaluate the potential role that a M&C strategy can play in implementing the FCWE strategy in the context of the QNV 2030 policy initiative. It will consider factors that impact on the development and implementation of a M&C strategy, including stakeholder involvement, the role of social media platforms, the impact of gender and gender role theory, Qatari national culture, as well as the role of women in Qatari society and the cultural barriers that they face. Important gaps in the literature will be identified that require further research, and a conceptual model will be developed that outlines the different elements of composing and implementing a M&C strategy in the context of the QNV 2030.

### **2.2 Overview of the Literature Review**

The literature review focuses on three key issues: NDS & FCWE strategy, stakeholder involvement, gender and gender role theory, and national culture. The literature reviews NDS & FCWE strategy and discusses the importance of M&C for national strategy. Then it moves to stakeholder involvement through discussing the theory of stakeholder involvement and segmentation of stakeholders. The literature then moves to social platforms and their role in national strategies. Finally, issues related to national culture in Qatar are discussed. Based on that, a conceptual framework is developed and justified.

Strategic plans and stakeholder engagement overlap with Qatari national culture to a significant extent, and the QNV and NDS overlap with the role of women. This shows that bearing cultural dimensions and the role of women in mind when planning a M&C strategy is vital, but also that these plans are needed to facilitate greater involvement of women and certain cultural changes in a reciprocal relationship. The reasons why this is the case and

the importance of developing plans, being aware of culture and the inclusion of women, will be discussed in detail throughout the literature review.

### 2.3 Qatar National Vision (QNV) & National Development Strategy (NDS) of Qatar

#### **2.3.1 Media and Communication Strategy (Role of M&C In Implementing the National Development Strategy)**

There is a clear lack of research in relation to the role of communication in implementing the NDS. This is due in no small part to the lack of a development of an independent M&C strategy by the Qatari government for the NDS. There are many potential explanatory factors for this, including the fact that this is Qatar's first experience of a major national development project, a lack of buy-in amongst senior policymakers in relation to the benefits of an independent communication strategy, a lack of knowledge of who to target with communication, and a lack of expert staff and knowledge in this area. According to Freedom House (2021), Qatar's hereditary emir holds all executive and legislative authority, and ultimately controls the judiciary as well. Political parties are not permitted, and the only elections are for an advisory municipal council. While Qatari citizens are among the wealthiest in the world, much of the population consists of non-citizens with no political rights, few civil liberties, and limited access to economic opportunity. The result was that a comprehensive communication strategy could not be devised for the NDS.

It is instructive to consider the role of M&C strategies in contexts outside Qatar in order to consider the empirical evidence of how they can contribute towards national development plans. The field of public relations development illustrates how governmental and public relations agencies can disseminate information about national plans and develop a two-way process of communication with stakeholders (Reddi, 2009). There is wide spread consensus that communication and engagement at grass roots level is vital in implementing

such national plans and visions (Gupta, 1999; United Nations Development Program, 2009; Bowles, 2000). For example, empirical evidence from rural development projects in Africa, and national development plans in South Africa, suggests that M&C strategies can potentially play a key role in bringing new and pertinent issues to the attention of politicians and bureaucrats responsible for overseeing the implementation of the plans (Johnson and Flaherty, 2010; Kiregyera, 2015). This illustrates the importance of two-way communication and the central role that a strategic approach to communication can play in such developmental efforts.

There was no independent media plan that accompanied the NDS. The idea of a media strategy is only referred to implicitly and sporadically in a variety of different documents. The NDS 2011-2016 document discussed implementing media awareness campaigns for nutrition and physical activity programmes in relation to family cohesion and the role of women in Qatari society (NDS, 2011). However, there is clear evidence that such media campaigns, as well as a wider media strategy, was not adequately implemented because the second NDS explicitly states that “a main target is more clear and transparent communications with different stakeholders including the public” (NDS, 2018, p.146).

From a theoretical perspective, strategic communication revolves around the purposeful communication of a particular mission by an organisation (Hallahan et al., 2007; Steyn, 2004; Lewis, 2019). This means that successful strategic communication is a proactive rather than a reactive process in which rigorous research is conducted in order to define strategic outcomes (Hallahan et al., 2007; Steyn, 2004; Lewis, 2019). Viewing it as a scientifically managed organisational problem-solving process is helpful and this can be seen as encompassing four core steps: a definition of the problem and an analysis of the

situation, planning and programming, taking action and communicating, and evaluation by assessing the outcome (Cutlip et al., 2006; Moss and DeSanto, 2012; Grunig, 2006).

Scoular (2021) claims that it is not enough to set high quality strategic plans, rather that it is important to communicate these plans effectively, and to make sure that the plans are shared by stakeholders. Blomquist (2021) argues that stakeholders should be involved from the beginning of strategic planning process. Overall, communications should be a critical element of national strategies.

### **2.3.2 Communication Methods and Success of Strategic Communication**

Fundamentally the success of strategic communication in relation to the QNV and NDS must revolve around the joint construction of meaning (Littlejohn et al., 2016). This type of approach recognises the extent to which different stakeholders hold different views and conceptions of the design and implementation of the QNV and NDS, but it seeks to engage with and embrace these disparate sets of meanings to develop a common way forward (Littlejohn et al., 2016). The methods and vehicles by which messages are communicated to various stakeholder groups is critical in this process. The decision about which communication methods to select must be based upon rigorous research and analysis. This will help to identify what communication methods different stakeholders use in their daily lives, how they relate to these communication methods, how they influence these stakeholder groups, and what strategies can be devised in order to frame the message that the Qatari government is seeking to communicate (Ozuem, 2016; Bowen, 2014).

In this context, having a firm evidential grasp on the preferred communications methods of women is critical, both in general terms and in relation to the specific context of Qatar. The evidence strongly suggests that women, particularly younger women, prefer using the Internet, and social media especially, in order to communicate (McDonald and Cater-Steel,



2016, Kramarae and Spender, 2004). Both email and social media platforms such as Facebook are popular communication choices for women, (McDonald and Cater-Steel, 2016; Kramarae and Spender, 2004). It has been argued that the reason why women tend to prefer, and be more active on, social media platforms is because it is consistent with their gender roles, which places a greater onus on reciprocity and social ties (Cunnane and Corcoran, 2018; Lindsey, 2015). The evidence in Qatar is consistent with the findings of how women communicate overall, with 47% of women in Qatar spending more than seven hours a week online, and 68% of women having a Facebook account (French and Runyard, 2011). The innovative use of social media by women in Qatar and extensive platforms and linkages of social media in the country mean that this should be considered as the primary preferred method of communication for women in Qatar (French and Runyard, 2011).

### **2.3.3 Importance of Feedback from Target Group**

Feedback from the target group and its integration into a strategic communication framework can help to increase transparency, trust, the commitment of stakeholders to a project or initiative, and the selection of the most appropriate communication methods to reach the target audience (Hülsmann and Pfeffermann, 2011; Ero-Verzosa and Garcia, 2009). In the case of the QNV and NDS, the importance of reaching women through strategic communication will be emphasised in this literature review and it will be suggested that integrating feedback will not only help to further the aims of these initiatives in a range of ways, but that it will also help to ameliorate and avoid confusion, misunderstandings, and unnecessary delays.

There has been considerable research conducted into the importance of feedback from target groups and some of the key empirical findings are that interaction can help in relation to exchange of ideas, creativity, dialogue, innovation, and knowledge transfer (Hülsmann

and Pfeffermann, 2011; Holtzhausen and Zerfass, 2014). Feedback from stakeholders helps to create value, then competitive advantage. Therefore, policy makers should improve their relationships with stakeholders and encourage the implementation of practices and policies that consider stakeholders' influence on the strategic direction of national plans (Stocker, 2020).

In the context of national planning and national development plans, garnering feedback from target groups and integrating demands from the population in the planning process can help not only to satisfy the target group, but it can also build confidence for greater involvement in the future, as well as the overall legitimacy of the national development initiative in question (Ero-Verzosa and Garcia, 2009; Paul, 2011; IMF, 2014). By integrating feedback from the target group within monitoring and evaluative frameworks through quarterly feedback reports and annual consolidation efforts, a range of benefits can be secured (IMF, 2014). These include being able to measure progress, identify where problems exist and what successes have been achieved, and being able to ascertain how implementation compares with designs constructed during the planning phase (IMF, 2014).

#### *2.3.4 Barriers to Communicating Strategic Plans*

Barriers in relation to communicating strategic plans can include information asymmetry, information bottlenecks, the selection of inefficient communication methods, a lack of expertise at constructing a message that resonates, and cultural as well as gender barriers (Paul, 2011; O'Toole, 2012). Barriers to effective communication are particularly relevant in relation to the QNV and NDS, and the targeting of women and the cultural dimensions of communicating to this group in Qatari society will be discussed further in later parts of this literature review.

In addition to these barriers, there are several other barriers in relation to communicating strategic plans that need to be considered, including a lack of involvement of target groups, unsuitable communication methods, and discrimination against women. In relation to the QNV and NDS, the lack of involvement and engagement amongst women would clearly represent a major barrier, lowering the two-way exchange of ideas and perceived legitimacy amongst the target group (Bensley and Brookins-Fisher, 2009; Holtzhausen and Zerfass, 2014). Another potential barrier is unsuitable communication methods, and this refers not only to the extent to which targeting women on platforms that they largely do not frequent is inappropriate, but also to the type of message that is conveyed. In the context of Qatar, it is clear that cultural assumptions and gender stereotypes need to be borne in mind when communicating with women and, therefore, targeting women in a way that will make them uncomfortable or engaging them in a way that is contrary to the dictates of Qatari culture will create a significant barrier (Smith and Emerald, 2014; Arbuthnot, 2017). The conservative and patriarchal context of Qatar's culture will need to be respected, therefore, when communicating with women. Finally, discrimination against women can also represent a significant barrier to communicating strategic plans. In relation to the QNV and NDS, discrimination against women relating, for example, to access to communication methods, the types of message that are conveyed or the type of engagement that is encouraged and sanctioned, is particularly problematic (Marsh, 2017; Krolokke and Sorensen, 2006). One of the main reasons why this is the case is because if the target group is discriminated against, then the legitimacy of the overall national plan itself is called into question by the target group, which will lower buy-in from the target group as well as meaningful engagement (Marsh, 2017; Krolokke and Sorensen, 2006).

Overall, barriers to communicating strategic plans are many. For example, Isfahani (2020) highlighted the following barriers: weak leadership and management, in-effective planning, inappropriate organizational culture, insufficient organizational learning, lack of justification for strategic planning, incompetence in the strategic planning team, an inappropriate strategic planning model, lack of teamwork morale, poor communication and coordination, inadequate education and training, lack of resources, and lack of monitoring and evaluation were the main challenges of strategic planning.

## 2.4 Strategic Plans and Stakeholder Involvement

### **2.4.1 Theory of Stakeholder Involvement**

The Theory of Stakeholder Involvement is considered appropriate for this thesis for several reasons. This theory focuses on the significant role of stakeholder involvement in strategies. In other words, as women are key stakeholders of FCWE strategy, they should be involved. At the same time, stakeholder theory considers the interests of all parties involved in a strategy, so this idea typically works. This approach recognises that engaged and driven stakeholders could yield greater strategy outcomes and assist the strategy in achieving more ambitious objectives. To create more competent national strategies, the stakeholder analysis method is urgently needed (Potschin et al., 2016).

According to stakeholder theory, a strategy is not an isolated entity but rather a component of a wider social body (Freeman & Mcvea,2001). Other than planners, policy makers have obligations to other individuals and organizations. This also affects institutions such as the government, which affects the nation and its people in turn. Futhremore, big business has a significant impact on the economies of many different nations (Crowther and Seifi, 2017), so ppeople who are not formally associated with the strategy in any other manner are

impacted by this. For instance, in the family strategies, the absence of stakeholders in the acceptability of the approach leads to implementation failure.

In general, it is vital to distinguish between genuine stakeholder engagement and processes of communication with stakeholders, particularly in an overall study that seeks to analyse the role of M&C in relation to the QNV and NDS. Approaches that emphasise the importance of stakeholder involvement can be justified with reference to normative, process-oriented, and outcome-based imperatives (Potschin et al., 2016; Crowther and Seifi, 2017; Schneider and Rist, 2014). The normative dimension suggests that it is important to involve stakeholders without seeking benefits, and that it is an ethical obligation of organizations to involve stakeholders (Hendricks, 2020). Process-based arguments rest on the idea that projects and initiatives will have more trust, confidence and cohesion if stakeholders are engaged, and outcome-based justifications claim that a greater variety of values, priorities, knowledge and evidence will help the project and initiative to be more effective in relation to its outcomes (Potschin et al., 2016; Crowther and Seifi, 2017; Schneider and Rist, 2014). Such genuine forms of stakeholder involvement that entail a concrete role in decision-making processes must be distinguished from managed communication efforts that seek to influence and control a message to different stakeholders about decisions that have already been reached and are final. In relation to the QNV and NDS, there will clearly be a mixture of both these fundamental approaches, but this literature review suggests that greater stakeholder involvement is likely to benefit the QNV and NDS in important ways.

In this context, there is clearly a substantial onus upon involving women as one of the core stakeholder groups. The challenges and barriers that exist in involving women in a conservative religious and cultural setting such as Qatar will be addressed in other sections

of the literature review, but it is worth noting the empirical evidence of the benefits that such involvement can confer. In many Middle Eastern countries, the evidence suggests that policymaking tends to be highly male-dominated and male-oriented, but this can actually be to the detriment of both men and women in relation to inclusion and stakeholder involvement (OECD, 2014). Lowering the barriers to entry for women who are willing, but not able, to participate is crucial and increasing the appeal of such involvement through a strategic communication approach is also vital (OECD, 2014). This can improve the transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of policymaking and leads to far better results in terms of gender sensitivity (OECD, 2014).

In both the QNV and NDS, the role of stakeholder involvement in strategic plans revolves at its core around whether to pursue an open or closed approach or a hybrid of these two approaches. It is likely that, in a country such as Qatar which tends to adopt a more closed approach towards government and governance, stakeholder involvement in important national projects will face significant limitations. For these reasons, a hybrid model is possibly most relevant for the Qatari context, in which some initial decisions are decided on in a closed style, but where stakeholder involvement becomes progressively more visible. By gradually incorporating key stakeholders as various iterations of the NDS move forward in future years, it will be possible to broaden support for policy and initiatives, avoid conflicts, and generate local support for implementation of strategic plans (UN, 2002; Wamsler, 2017; Bendell, 2017).

#### **2.4.2 How to Communicate Strategic Plans to Stakeholders**

The approach for communicating strategic plans to stakeholders in relation to the QNV and NDS should rely on several core principles, including transparency, suitability, a constructive attitude, and integrating feedback. The importance of transparency is

consistently emphasised in the literature because an honest representation of a programme or initiative is positively correlated with increased comprehension, engagement and trust amongst stakeholders (Kim, 2014; Schnackenberg and Tomlinson, 2016; Pérez, 2015). It is also important to select communication methods that suit the stakeholders rather than those responsible for communicating the message, thus engaging stakeholders on platforms to which they can relate (Antonaras and Dekoulou, 2019; Wilkins, 2012). A constructive, collaborative and open attitude is also required in order to find out why stakeholders feel a certain way about a certain project or initiative, rather than adopting a closed or hostile perspective towards their views in which there may be a lack of willingness to understand the underlying motivations and feelings of the key stakeholder groups (Turner, 2016; Hermarij, 2016). Finally, it is vital to be open to receiving feedback and have processes to act on it, as well as giving feedback to stakeholders (Colleoni, 2013; Kerzner, 2019; Trapp, 2014). It allows a dual process to be built in which the organisation and stakeholders can hold each other accountable through tangible sets of commitments, and engage in constant dialogue to further improve on, and refine, aims and goals (Colleoni, 2013; Kerzner, 2019; Trapp, 2014).

### **2.4.3 Stakeholder Segmentation**

In terms of stakeholder segmentation, it is helpful from a theoretical perspective to distinguish between customers, providers, influencers, and governance (Smith et al., 2014). It is also useful to consider each one of these categories as being porous, meaning that one stakeholder can span multiple domains and that they can cross from one to another throughout the course of a project or initiative (Smith et al., 2014). This type of approach helps to define stakeholders, recognise the multiplicity of roles that they can play in relation to the QNV and NDS, and show how their roles can evolve throughout the process.

Regarding the QNV and NDS, government agencies would be classified fluidly under the provider, influencer, and governance categories. Industry would straddle the provider and governance categories whereas NGOs would operate across the influencer and governance boundaries. Stakeholders across academia who contribute to the project would fall under the influencer category and, finally ordinary citizens, if engaged to an adequate extent, would fall under the customer and influencer categories, as well as potentially having a role to play in governance. Conceptualising stakeholder segmentation in this manner, therefore, helps not only to identify relevant stakeholders, but to also acknowledge the multiplicity of fluid roles that they can play in the process of implementing the QNV and NDS.

There are many ways to involve stakeholders in national strategic plans, and one of the keyways is related to social media. Therefore, the next section discusses the role of social platforms in stakeholder involvement.

## 2.5 Social Platforms and Strategic Plans

### **2.5.1 Overview of Social Platforms**

As the newest development in communication technology, social media has completely changed how individuals communicate with one another. It has been confirmed that half of all people on the planet use social media (Dias,2023). Adding to that, social media communication has become an essential part of the world today. Social media is truly a new way of communication, and the amazing aspect of this new way of communication is that it allows us to connect virtually anywhere in the world. The medium provides us with images, rich text content, videos, and audio twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week (Steckman and Andrews, 2017).



Social media, with its ever-widening variety of content, very frequently transforms into a palace for viewpoints and expressions. Furthermore, social media is a channel for reporting issues to the authorities, service providers, and other parties. Social media, as a public forum, facilitates the sharing of ideas and information on topics pertaining to the public, shaping public opinion, and keeping an eye on the government (Asri, 2021). Accordingly, the government must change to satisfy the public's expectations for a contemporary, transparent, and technologically efficient government sector. Several government organizations already have social media profiles that they use for outreach, information sharing, branding, and boosting community involvement.

While the government faces numerous obstacles relating to the quick changes in this growing space, its social media communication plan offers many chances for the government to create and strengthen relationships with society and its residents.

This is highlighted in a study by Yousefinaghani et al. (2021) on how public opinions were aired on Twitter. Additionally, the government's use of social media can improve transparency, accountability, and legitimacy.

The successful implementation of social media usage in government, along with other technological, informational, and communicational uses, necessitates multiple approaches: formulating a plan for utilizing social media, assessing whether a social media policy is necessary, and creating online strategies, as well as consistent social media analytics. According to Mergel (2016), there are three basic approaches to incorporating social media into government operations:

1. Representation through push-forward informational initiatives that rely on publicly available information and official publications, including press releases, pronouncements made in public, and the widespread distribution of official data.
2. Participation which consists of receiving updates from users and subscribing to office or agency accounts on social media.
3. Networks where the government observes, and records user comments and information posted on social media in a passive manner.

In recent years, social media has proliferated and become ubiquitous, and there are now a wide range of freely available platforms and methods through which to engage stakeholders including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, blogs, Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp and LinkedIn groups amongst others (Butterworth and Wildschut, 2017; Steckman and Andrews, 2017). These platforms allow users, content creators, and viewers to share videos, pictures and messages instantly from any location (Butterworth and Wildschut, 2017; Steckman and Andrews, 2017). In Qatar, Internet infrastructure is relatively advanced with 2.2 million Internet users and 97.4% of the population having Internet access (Kern and Mishra, 2019).

Qatar is ranked second in the Middle East after Saudi Arabia in terms of internet coverage and proliferation (Steckman and Andrews, 2017). By 2013, 67% of Qatari citizens using the internet were involved on social networking sites, spending an average of 3.9 hours per day on these applications (Steckman and Andrews, 2017). The same study found that 65% of Qatari citizens use Facebook, 65% use Twitter and 47% use Instagram, and a further interesting finding was that 94% of Qatari citizens employ Arabic when accessing the Internet although 56% are also capable of engaging with the Internet and social media in English (Steckman and Andrews, 2017). It is likely that Qatar scores highly in relation to

social media usage in the Middle East due to the wealth of the country, but these findings are also quite representative of the Middle East region as a whole, where there has been a general proliferation of blogs, Facebook pages, likes, tweets and hashtags in recent years (Steckman and Andrews, 2017; Iosifidis and Wheeler, 2016). At the beginning of 2023, 2.68 million people in Qatar were using the internet, with a 99.0% internet penetration rate. In January 2023, 2.62 million people in Qatar used social media, making up 96.7 percent of the country's total population. In early 2023, there were 4.89 million active mobile phone connections in Qatar, which translates to 180.9 % of the country's entire population (Data Reporter, 2024).

### **2.5.2 Social Platforms and Social Change**

The role of social media in promoting social change is often heralded in the literature, primarily due to the potential that it offers as a less centralised form of communication (Segeberg and Bennett, 2011; Fuchs, 2017; Khan, 2017; Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2017). It is important to recognise that social media platforms can be an important vehicle for social change by contesting institutional and hierarchical approaches to communication and by encouraging more participatory discursive practises that are pluralistic and fluid in nature (Langmia et al., 2013; Verhulsdonck, 2013; Howley, 2009). However, it should also be noted that not only are there inherent problems when seeking to use social platforms for social change, but also that the specific context of Qatar has restrictions in place regarding the use of social media that could undermine these platforms as vehicles for social change. Qatar was ranked 125 out of 180 in the 2018 World Press Freedom Index, and online content that is offensive to Islam, pornographic, violates privacy, or is factually inaccurate is prohibited by law (Kern and Mishra, 2019). The privacy aspect is particularly problematic because posting on social media about a person or their family without consent

is against the law, and this could potentially stifle the ability of social media to serve as a vehicle for social change (Kern and Mishra, 2019).

However, there are also wider concerns about how social media infrastructures are used, which suggests that, without adequate stakeholder engagement, they can become more centralised, top-down, exclusive “noticeboard” style platforms (Robinson et al., 2016, p.94). It is also not clear whether social media is sufficiently sensitive to issues of race, class and gender, and research in relation to national development objectives in Brazil and Jamaica, for example, shows that women of lower socio-economic backgrounds, in particular, are difficult to reach and often excluded from social media campaigns (Robinson et al., 2016). This suggests that a series of accumulated disadvantages could undermine the role that women can play in relation to the QNV and NDS although the fact that 97.4% of the population have access to the internet in Qatar could help to ameliorate this concern somewhat. However, if poor women in Qatar have inadequate experience of social media or tend not to use these platforms for other reasons, then this could become a potential barrier to the use of social media as an agent for social change. Some studies have found a relationship between poverty and lack of social media use. The increase in the level of poverty limits the ability to use technology and this, therefore, limits the speed of digital transformation in society (Faster Capital, 2024; Dzator, 2023).

### **2.5.3 Role of Social Platforms in Strategic Plans**

Due to the ubiquitous presence of social media platforms and a consistently growing user base, it is increasingly clear that strategic communication plans that seek to actively engage stakeholders in a reciprocal fashion require the integration of a social media strategy under the rubric of an overarching strategic plan (Macnamara and Zerfass, 2012; Baptista et al., 2017; Lasserre, 2017). In relation to the QNV and NDS and the realization of the objectives

of the FCWE strategy, it is clearly necessary to understand the ways in which women as the key stakeholder group relate to social media platforms in Qatar. A recent survey conducted by Northwestern University in Qatar (NU-Q) suggests that women are using social media more proactively than men in Qatar (Varghese, 2018). It found that more women produce content, perceive the internet as a tool for political influence, and use it as a tool for career-building than men (Varghese, 2018). This evidence suggests that there is an even greater onus on integrating social media platforms under the auspices of an overall strategic plan to target women effectively and to communicate messages relating to family cohesion, social development, and the preservation of traditional values. The NDS 2018-2022 document only refers to social media on four occasions and only articulates a vague notion of “using social media to create interaction” without either targeting this specifically at women, or providing an indication of how these fit into an overall strategic plan or what methods and approaches might be used (NDS, 2018, p.273).

It is likely that a targeting of the most dominant social media platforms is appropriate, using Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Facebook and Twitter are most likely to be useful on an interactive paradigm where a reciprocal relationship between government agencies and female stakeholders can be established. YouTube could be utilised to provide videos for viewers that not only emphasise the positive effects of the FCWE strategy, but also communicate to a female audience how to participate. The use of female role models and interviews with them is critical in this process, showing women in Qatar that genuine engagement and participation is possible. This should be geared towards women from disadvantaged backgrounds and should use role models from this socio-economic stratum in order to boost participation and engagement from the segment of the population that is most at risk of being ignored or undervalued in relation to the FCWE strategy. Some

communication on traditional media platforms, such as television, with instructions for how to get involved on social media would also be helpful to ameliorate pre-existing accumulated disadvantages faced by this part of the population. By adopting this type of strategy, the methods with which to target women who are already predisposed to using social media more actively than men become clear and the role within the overall strategy of boosting participation from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds becomes evident. This helps to define the overall strategy more clearly and moves the onus away from the vague pronouncements that feature in the NDS 2018-2022 document.

## 2.6 Qatari Culture and Role of Qatari Women

### **2.6.1 Overview of National Culture**

Culture can be defined as the socially transmitted norms, beliefs, values and behaviour patterns of a particular community which, in the case of a nation, can be referred to as the national culture (Vance and Paik, 2014). In this sense, a national culture can be understood as being part of an imagined community that revolves around a socially constructed entity in the form of the state and exists only in the minds of the members of that community (Anderson, 2006). This leads to the development of norms, values, and beliefs within that community, which can be used on a comparative basis to analyse differences and similarities between national cultures.

Understanding national culture on this basis leads to a clear definition of national culture. National culture can be defined as “the set of values, beliefs, behaviours, attitudes and norms that are shared by members of a sovereign nation and are transmitted over time within this collective” (Bik, 2010. p. 67). It is national culture, defined and practised in this manner, that distinguishes one collective from another collective and makes that particular

collective unique (Bik, 2010). In other words, it is what makes one national culture distinct and different from another.

### **2.6.2 Theories of National Culture**

Various models exist for how and why people in different parts of the world think and act differently. The following part describes those that are among the best known.

Hall (1976), a pioneer in the field of intercultural communication, is particularly known for his work on Chronemics. This refers to the use of time in different cultures. Hall classified cultures into monochronic cultures (which focus on doing one thing at a time and value punctuality) and polychronic cultures (which are comfortable doing multiple things at once and time may be more flexible). Hall (1976) also distinguished between cultures where communication is highly context-dependent (high context) and cultures where explicit verbal communication is key (low context). This may affect the way information is communicated and interpreted.

Trompenaars (1993), another influential figure in cross-cultural communication, is known for his framework that divides cultural differences into seven major dimensions, each represented as a continuum: universalism vs. particularism, individualism vs. collectivism, neutral vs. affective, achievement vs. attribution, specific vs. diffuse, sequential vs. synchronic, and internal vs. external (control).

Schwartz's (1994) research in cross-cultural communication focuses on values and provides a framework for understanding how cultural values influence people's motivations, goals, and priorities. Schwartz (1994) distinguished between different sets of contrasting cultural values: autonomy vs. inclusiveness, hierarchy vs. egalitarianism, and dominance vs. harmony.

Finally, Hofstede's model of national culture is built on a set of indicators that he believes distinguish national culture, including power distance, individualism vs. collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity vs. femininity, long-term orientation vs. short-term normative orientation, and indulgence vs. restraint (Hofstede, 2019a).

In a comparison of different models, Adamovic (2023) says that although these perspectives are structurally different, there is much overlap between them and that, though not perfect, the Hofstede model appears to have a high level of validity. According to Zhou and Kwan (2020), Hofstede's model has proved the most influential of all the various models – to a large extent also as a result of its simplicity and ease of understanding – and up to 2018 (when their analysis took place) its use had continued to grow steadily, especially since the millennium. Breuer et al (2018) suggests that Hofstede's dimensions have become the standard tool for measuring and comparing cultural differences and evaluating cultural traits. Arab countries (such as Qatar) are generally viewed as high context (see, for example, Kittler et al., 2011) but this is only one feature of their culture. Thus, based on the fact that Hofstede has proved useful and popular in many studies, the section below uses that model to shed further light on Qatari national culture.

Power distance focuses on hierarchies and distributions of power within cultures whereas individualism versus collectivism assesses whether culture prizes individualism or a more collective societal emphasis (Harris et al., 2003). Uncertainty avoidance analyses how comfortable different cultures are with uncertainty, and masculinity versus femininity seeks to identify the role of gender within a culture (Frey et al., 1999). Finally, long term orientation versus short term normative orientation examines the role that tradition plays within a culture, and indulgence versus restraint seeks to ascertain the extent to which the



pursuit of pleasure and hedonism is part of a culture or whether a more restrained outlook is adopted (Hofstede, 2019a).

It is, therefore, important to apply the theoretical concepts related to national culture to the Qatari context.

### **2.6.3 Overview of Qatari Culture**

To fully understand the nature of Qatari culture, it is necessary to contextualise it within the history of Qatar to understand the range of influences that have impacted on its formation. One element that is consistently emphasised in the literature is the extent to which a distinct Bedouin culture has exerted a profound influence over the formation of Qatari culture (Fromherz, 2017; Cavendish, 2006). This means that traditional aspects of Bedouin culture continue to be emphasised in Qatari culture and the handing down of literary forms such as songs, storytelling, and poetry to future generations is an integral part of this culture (Fromherz, 2017; Cavendish, 2006). In terms of values and norms, the traditional Bedouin culture stresses the importance of principles such as honesty, solidarity, modesty, courtesy, consultation, obedience to seniors, and trusting others (Budhwar and Mellahi, 2016). While modern and more individualistic values have increasingly encroached on Qatari culture, it is fair to argue that, as a result of the Bedouin legacy, the culture of Qatar is still largely defined by a collectivist mindset in which the wellbeing of groups, communities, and the nation of Qatar takes precedence over the concerns of individuals (Budhwar and Mellahi, 2016).

However, it is important to recognise that, despite the central role that Bedouin culture occupies within Qatar, the cultural context has undergone significant evolutions over the past few decades, and several aspects have been responsible for important changes. There is a growing expatriate population in Qatar, and Indian, Pakistani and Iranian expatriates,

in particular, have brought their own cultural influences, especially through the dissemination of their official languages of Urdu and Farsi (Cavendish, 2006). There is also a smaller Western expatriate population in Qatar, the majority of which resides in Doha and is predominantly composed of British individuals (Mallakh, 2015). This means that Qatari culture is quite diverse in character, and that it is subject to an array of Middle Eastern, Asian, and Western influences.

Using Hofstede's model to explore Qatari culture shows that it has a high score in relation to power distance and uncertainty avoidance (93 and 80 out of 100 respectively), a medium score for masculinity vs. femininity (55), and a low score for individualism vs. collectivism (25) (Hofstede Insights, 2019b). In terms of long term vs. short term normative orientation and indulgence vs. restraint, there are currently no data or scores available in relation to Qatar (Hofstede Insights, 2019b). The evidence suggests, therefore, that Qatari culture is defined by hierarchy, the centralisation of power, and the expectation that subordinates obey the instructions of their superiors (Hofstede Insights, 2019b). It can also be said that Qatar's culture is characterised by a high preference for avoiding unpredictability, which means that there is little tolerance for new or unorthodox ideas (Hofstede Insights, 2019b). Qatar shows a moderate tendency towards a masculine society in which the emphasis is on equity, competition and performance, and Qatar's low score in relation to individualism vs. collectivism means that it can be characterised as a collectivist society (Hofstede Insights, 2019b). Qatari culture is defined by close long-term commitments to being a member of a group and family, and extended family relationships are prized in an environment where individuals take their responsibilities towards other group members very seriously (Hofstede Insights, 2019b).

It is important to assess the implications of these findings for the role of a M&C strategy in relation to the QNV, NDS, and the FCWE strategy, an area that is so far unexplored in the literature. Qatari culture poses major challenges for the effective design and implementation of such a strategy, particularly if a stakeholder perspective is adopted. The extent to which power is centralised, hierarchical relations are entrenched, and subordinates are expected to obey their superiors means that reaching out to build consensus and trust among a broader selection of stakeholders is opposed to the imperatives of Qatari culture. It also suggests that there is potentially a lack of concern among those in power about how their decisions are perceived by the wider population, and the lack of development in relation to a coherent and comprehensive M&C strategy in relation to QNV, NDS, and the FCWE strategy seems to be consistent with this line of thought. This fundamental challenge is compounded further by a high preference for uncertainty avoidance, which is particularly problematic when considering the role of social media. Qatari society is, in general, predisposed towards stifling innovation, and avoiding novel approaches means that understanding and articulating a clear role for social media in the communication and media strategy is likely to be a significant challenge. The current lack of integration of social media into this overall strategic framework also seems to be consistent with the Hofstede model.

The role of social media is also arguably problematic when the slight masculine leaning of Qatari culture is taken into consideration because, as the evidence above demonstrated, women are far more active and engaged on social media than men in Qatar. This means that in conjunction with high-power distance and uncertainty avoidance scores, even if a more comprehensive and coherent social media strategy is developed that is integrated into the QNV, NDS and the FCWE strategy, it is likely that it will have more of a male-

orientation bias. This is because men occupy a more dominant position in the centralised power in Qatar, and levels of innovation are low, which means that it is questionable whether women will be effectively targeted via social media in such a cultural and institutional framework. For this reason, it is crucial that women are encouraged to play a leading role in the design of such strategies and that they are clearly represented in institutions which devise social media strategies aimed at women. The fact that Qatar is a collectivist culture has more ambiguous implications in terms of the QNV, NDS, and the FCWE strategy. It could suggest that people in Qatar will struggle to build relationships as stakeholders outside their family and extended family setting, but it could also mean that a collective effort driven by the government can be consistent with the imperatives of Qatari culture. It does mean, however, that the promotion of family values and the role of women in society that is a core part of the FCWE strategy is likely to resonate to a significant degree due to the cultural emphasis of the country.

## **2.7 Role of Women in Qatari Culture**

### **2.7.1 Historical Overview**

The role of women in Qatar has historically been affected to a great extent by the Wahhabi doctrine of Islam that is practised in the country (Bennett, 2010; Bahry and Marr, 2005; Baskan and Wright, 2011). This strict, even extreme interpretation of Islam stretches back to the teachings of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, who became increasingly influential in Najd area in Saudi Arabia during the eighteenth century (Kadhim, 2013). This meant that the role of women was historically to be confined to the home and to take care of the family in Qatar, and that women had only a limited role in business or family decision-making (Rishi, 2015). Qatari women are expected to dress in a conservative manner and,

for example, require the permission of their male guardian to receive what would be considered to be a basic privilege in the West, such as a driving licence (Janin and Kahlmeyer, 2015). However, though it is clear that the role of sharia law in Qatar has historically restricted women's rights and freedoms, there is also evidence to suggest that Qatar is more liberal in comparison to other Wahhabi states such as Saudi Arabia (Janin and Kahlmeyer, 2015). Women in Qatar are allowed to work in public spaces, vote and run in elections, and they can adopt a more relaxed dress code in comparison to women in Saudi Arabia (Kadhim, 2013).

### **2.7.2 The Current Role of Women in Qatar**

Over recent decades, the transformation of the role of women in Qatari society has been significant and, consequently, it is possible to see substantial reform and changes when compared to their historical role within society. Qatar has been one of the leading countries in the region in relation to the political rights of women, even if the region continues to lag behind the rest of the world (Kaim, 2016; Qatar-America Institute, 2017). Women were granted the right to vote in 1999 and also the right to run for office, with Sheika Al Mahmoud becoming the first cabinet minister in Qatar in 2003 (Brewer et al., 2007; Qatar-America Institute, 2017). The political leadership in Qatar has also been instrumental in furthering the educational and career opportunities of women, which has resulted in women playing an increasingly prominent role in economic life and in the development sphere (Kadhim, 2013; The Peninsula, 2018). The Qatari government has consistently legislated in favour of gender equality, preventing discrimination in the job market, moving towards the equalisation of wages, and ensuring that women receive equal training and job opportunities through the Human Resources Law (The Peninsula, 2018). Qatari law also

permits women to represent themselves in court proceedings, and the country appointed its first female judge in 2010 (Qatar-America Institute, 2017).

The role played by young women in Qatar deserves attention because Qatar currently has a higher proportion of female students than any other country in the world, where they outnumber men by two to one (Qatar-America Institute, 2017). The fact that more women are achieving undergraduate and post-graduate qualifications means that they will be able to fill important posts in the government and in the private sector in future years, and this will continue to narrow the gender gap in the country (Kirkpatrick, 2016). The Ministry of Education, which was led by the first female cabinet minister in 2015, has been pivotal in this regard, offering many career opportunities to women and paving the way for further reform in an area where women have been provided with greater representation (Brewer et al., 2007). The increasingly important role of women in Qatar is apparent in the QNV, NDS, and in the FCWE strategy because it discusses the importance of increasing the entrepreneurial contribution of women in the private sector, empowerment in public and private life, and the greater development of civil society and educational organisations aimed at promoting women as role models and professionals (OECD, 2012; Government Communications Office, 2019). The Qatar Foundation, aimed at reforming the country's science, arts and language teachings, is an example of one such influential civil society organisation (Fromherz, 2017). Political and social changes, therefore, appear to be transforming the role that women play within Qatari society. Technological innovations have also played a role and the evidence outlined above that women in Qatar are heavy users of social media suggests that they are also being empowered on this front.

### **2.7.3 Gender Theory**

Feminist theory in communication encompasses a wide range of research fields, including liberal/mainstream feminism, radical feminism, socialist feminism, and Marxist feminism (Rakaw, 2017). Feminist theories in communication can explain representations of power, show how discourse patterns relate to general power relations, and describe possible strategies for reducing gendered power in communication.

Many scholars (see for example Dow & Condit, 2006) argue that to be considered a feminist, theory and other scholarship must be related to contributing to the larger goal of justice from a gender perspective. Dow & Condit (2006) also argue that feminist theory in communication must, at best, address how gender and power interact with other textual elements such as race, sexuality, and class, and how gender power inequalities are related to class, race, sexuality, and other categories (including religion and ethnicity), suggesting that it should explain how these power relations intersect.

In communication-related fields, research has revealed wide disparities in message content depending on the gender of the sender, listener, or subject of a given communication instance or text (Taylor, 2015). The goal of feminist theories of gendered content in news reports and other mainstream media products is often to identify and explain the power dynamics that underpin these gendered patterns of representation. According to feminist theorists, many gender differences stem from cultural devaluation of women (Golkowska, 2014).

Social role theory can help us understand the role of women in Qatar. According to Eagly's (1987) social role theory, the typical gender division of labour in each society is the source of commonly held gender stereotypes. In Western countries, where men are often assigned

paid positions of power and status and women are assigned nurturing roles, stereotypes have been fostered that men have agency and women have agency and communality (Wahl, 2023). Because of the gendered division of labour, men and women have different skills. Gender stereotypes positively influence behaviour through the expectations members have for each other's behaviour when they stand out in a group due to mixed gender membership, challenges, and culturally relevant locations (Kim, 2020).

Gender stereotypes do not influence group members' behaviour when they play social roles more closely related to the setting than to their gender, such as supervisors and employees in the workplace (Hoover, 2019). Because of gender-specific skills, men and women may behave slightly differently even in situations where gender preconceptions do not dominate behaviour (Hoffman, 2019).

A broad application of social role theory to interactions in all settings can take into account both supportive and emotional behaviours (also called socioemotional behaviours), and assertive power-related behaviours (Rucker, 2018). However, this idea does not provide much clarity or detail. According to the hypothesis, in identical situations, women generally act more communally and less instrumentally than men (Newman, 2020).

Kinship has a significant impact on social structure throughout the Arab world, especially in the Arab Gulf countries (Al-Naqib, 1996). Kinship networks have a significant impact on people and civilizations. The region has a long history of tribal organisation, where the family is the main glue that binds the members of the group together (Fromherz, 2012). At least 3,000 years have passed since the founding of tribal organisations, and people continue to trace their ancestry back to their grandfathers. Every tribe has a unique lineage thus, under the kinship system, individuals identify with their grandfathers, who play a



central role in society, and the tribe is connected to their grandfather's lineage (Al-Hidari, 2003). In this way, people classify themselves according to their role in the kinship structure. Men, with the grandfather at the top, are the source of social identity and social definition with respect to other tribes, and men are given the power to control the behaviour and attitudes of women in the family, especially within the kin group (Salzman, 2008). In kin group relationships, men are assigned specific roles based on their position within the group, with men focusing on family, and women on productivity and childcare (Al-Hidari 2003). This division of gender roles has created a culture in which women are viewed as male seed carriers. This structure elevates the status of men within the kinship system, and women are important to the status of the kin group only through their ability to improve the status of the tribe through marriage (Stephens, 2023).

In tribal groups, social roles are clearly identified by gender and the status of men and women in the kinship structure. Eventually, gendered role divisions gave rise to patriarchy, which continues to shape the boundaries of women's status within and outside the family unit in Arab society (Al-Hidari, 2003; Sharabi, 1993). Furthermore, in the kinship structure, the distribution of family responsibilities is necessarily hierarchical, as men are heads of households and women are subordinate possessions (Barakat, 1998, 1999). Because the system is based on kinship, all social roles are gendered and based on social status within the kin group.

### **2.7.3 Cultural Barriers and Role of Women in Qatar**

Empirical evidence in the workplace, particularly in male-dominated industries, suggests that stereotyping, cultural norms and a lack of female representation continue to pose significant impediments to women entering the job market in such industries in Qatar (Auer et al., 2018; Musaiger et al., 2013; Golkowska, 2014; Eslami et al., 2015). Gender

stereotyping, either overt or subtle in nature, when baked into the social and cultural norms of a society can oppress women by fostering the belief that gender is an indicator of inferior ability (Auer et al., 2018; Musaiger et al., 2013; Golkowska, 2014; Eslami et al., 2015; Mustapha and Mills, 2015). The fact that the mainstream media tend to predominantly depict women in stereotypical roles and rarely venture into exploring the problems of, and restrictions placed on, women's lives in Qatar is also particularly unhelpful (Kelly and Breslin, 2010). This entrenches gender stereotypes and can impact upon the aspirations of younger women if they are consistently exposed to these types of depictions of their gender and gender roles.

In terms of cultural norms, the role of the family still exercises a dominant influence upon the lives of Qatari women (Harp et al., 2018, Harkness & Super, 2002, Hassan, 2018). Cultural norms related to privacy and cultural-religious modesty restrict the ways in which women can dress and how they can be depicted in the media, and women's careers are affected to a large extent by the importance attached to starting a family (Harp et al., 2018, Kelly and Breslin, 2010). Despite the fact that there has been a significant improvement in female employment, particularly in certain sectors such as education, women continue to be generally under-represented in the workforce and cultural norms play a significant part in this (Joseph, 2018; Williams and Zenger, 2012). Conservative elements of Qatari society argue that mixed working environments contravene sharia law and are religiously forbidden (haram), and tribal and cultural norms emphasise that men are breadwinners and, therefore, women could bring shame on their families by working (Joseph, 2018). There is also evidence that female empowerment predominantly manifests itself in the middle and upper classes in Qatar, and that lower socio-economic strata are sticking more rigidly to established cultural norms (Harp et al., 2018).

For these reasons, it suggests that, in Qatar, providing the vote for women and legislation to enable them to participate in the workplace must not be viewed in a cultural vacuum as cultural norms can counteract progress to a considerable extent in this regard. If the space and legislation is available for young women, particularly from lower socio-economic strata, to engage in education and the workplace to a greater extent, but gender stereotyping and cultural norms mean that they lack motivation, or their families prohibit them from exercising their newfound freedom, then the role that women can play in Qatar will continue to face limits.

However, certain parts of the literature in this field also express cautious optimism. Golkowska (2017) claims that women have latched onto the government-sponsored narrative of change in Qatar and, consequently, young college-educated women have benefited. These women have tended to accept the cultural and social limitations that they have encountered and moved forward to construct a third-way model of a gendered space that exists between Western feminist ideology and traditional interpretations of Arab female identity (Golkowska, 2017). The autonomy that these women have generated, therefore, comes from navigating existing social and cultural systems rather than by attempting to resist or deconstruct these systems (Golkowska, 2017). This idea of changing social and cultural norms via practice, which the empirical evidence suggests that young college-educated women are increasingly engaged in, provides some scope for optimism in relation to the cultural barriers that women face in Qatar.

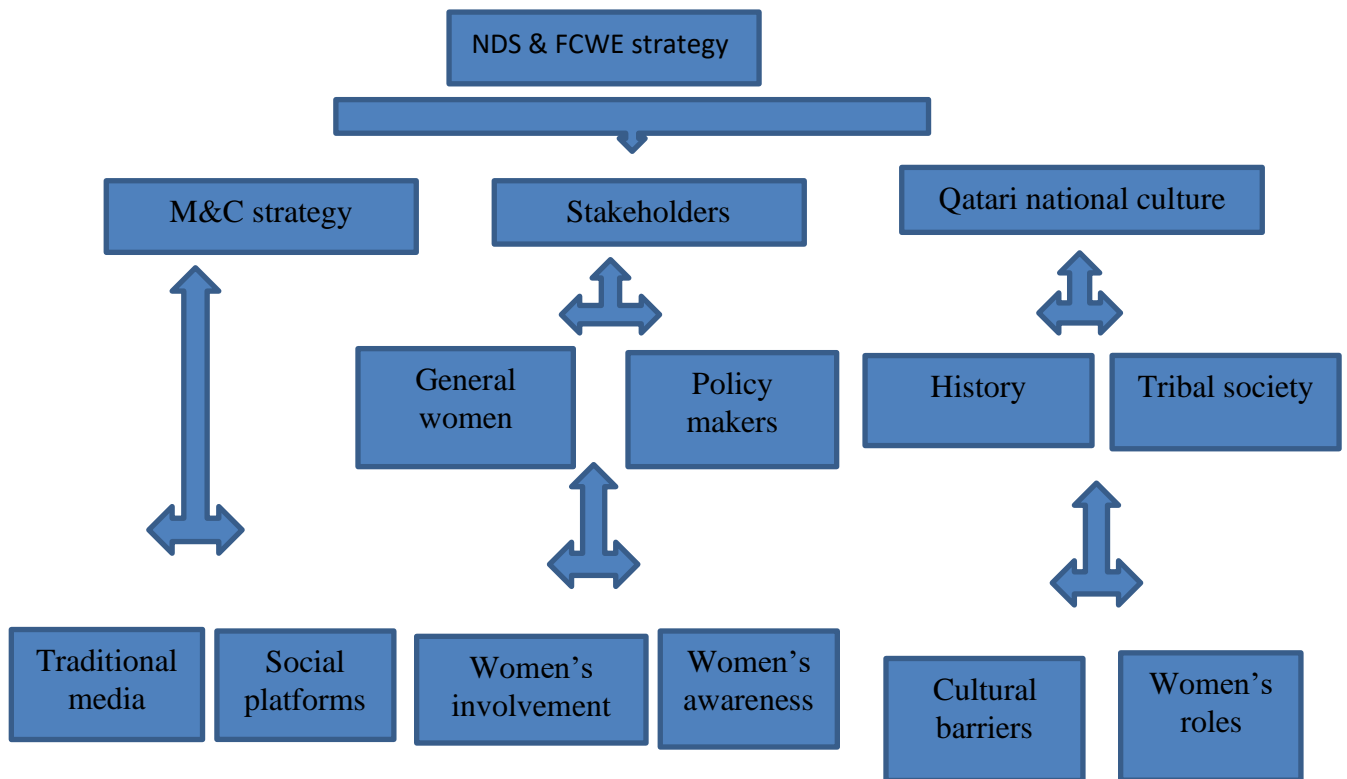
## **2.8 Conceptual Framework**

### **2.8.1 Overview of the Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework that has been developed as a result of the findings of this literature review contains the following elements: QNV, FCWE strategy, stakeholders, Qatari women, strategy implementation, media and communications (M&C) strategy, the role of cultural barriers, media platforms, and Qatari national culture (see Fig.1 below). The fundamental aim of the conceptual framework is to highlight the relationship between the QNV, stakeholders, strategy implementation, and the extent to which different media platforms, Qatari national culture, and cultural barriers affecting women impact on this relationship. The effectiveness of the communication of the FCWE strategy is identified as the core variable that, if sensitive to its surrounding parameters, can facilitate effective strategy implementation.

The main ideas of the framework came from the thoughts of Bryson (2018). The core idea behind the framework is that strategies should be shared by stakeholders and communicated effectively but, at the same time, issues related to national culture should be taken into consideration. For this reason, it is not enough to set strategies, rather it is more important to involve stakeholders and develop a communication strategy. As appears in the figure, the channels of M&C could be traditional or social communication platforms. The stakeholders were divided into social workers and general population, and Qatari national culture was considered as it influences stakeholders.

Fig. 1 – Conceptual Framework (Key ideas adapted from Bryson, 2017)



### 2.8.2 Justification of the Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework considered three key issues: M&C strategy, stakeholders, and national culture. This is to absorb all factors related to the success of family strategy. The three factors were selected as they may explain the success or failure of family strategy. Communicating a national strategy effectively requires a multi-pronged approach that considers both the content of the message and the cultural context of the audience (Lim, 2022). In brief, the communication of a national strategy influences its success, and it is crucial to communicate national strategy effectively and properly. At the same time, it is important to involve stakeholders in all aspects of the national strategy because a strategy is not an isolated entity but rather a component of a wider social body. Other than planners, policy makers have obligations to other individuals and organizations (Crowther and Seifi,

2017). Besides, national strategies should consider national culture including gender role in the society. By understanding the influence of national culture, policymakers can develop strategies that are more likely to resonate with the public, garner support, and achieve their intended outcomes (Maleka, 2023).

This conceptual framework contends that the QNV, NDS, and the FCWE strategy can be implemented effectively to satisfy the demands of key stakeholder groups if a comprehensive and cohesive M&C strategy is mostly developed and articulated successfully. This literature review has shown that a cohesive and comprehensive M&C strategy can be justified on the basis that it was virtually absent in the first NDS document and was highlighted by the Qatari government itself as an urgent priority moving forwards. The second NDS outlined the imperative of clearer and more transparent communication with different stakeholder groups, recognising the failings in this regard of the first NDS. In this context, where the need for a M&C strategy has been firmly established, the focus therefore shifts towards effective implementation. This will require closer engagement with, and greater engagement of, key stakeholder groups, as outlined in this literature review and conceptual framework, concentrating on women in the context of the FCWE strategy. It will need to assess their needs, the platforms through which they can be reached most effectively, and any barriers or extraneous factors that prevent the successful articulation of the M&C strategy or how it is received by the stakeholder group. The conceptual framework outlined above meets all these criteria, highlighting the urgent need for such a strategy, and showing how the Qatari government can move from the development of the QNV and FCWE strategy towards its policy imperatives, reaching receptive audiences among key stakeholder groups. The factors that will need to be

considered in this process and how they may impact on this process are clearly identified in the conceptual framework.

### **2.8.3 Overview of the Key Concepts of the Framework**

As has already been outlined above, the effectiveness of the communication of the FCWE strategy has been identified as the core variable in this conceptual framework. This is because it has been argued in the literature review that effective overall strategy implementation in relation to the QNV, NDS, and the FCWE strategy relies on developing a comprehensive and cohesive M&C strategy that has been lacking thus far. It has been argued that the Qatari government cannot achieve its aim in relation to these policy initiatives without the support of key stakeholder groups and, therefore, the questions of what messages to direct at these groups, how to interact with them, on what platforms this should be carried out, and what external factors may impact on this process become vital. The role that Qatari national culture plays in situating and defining the social role of women in Qatar is central at a macro-level in this respect, and empirical evidence of the ways in which women in Qatar are approaching cultural barriers is also crucial. Empirical evidence of what communication channels women in Qatar are predominantly using, and how the media and communications strategy could seize upon evidence of the greater use of social media, are also key questions in enhancing the effectiveness of overall strategy implementation.

There are several key concepts that feature in the conceptual framework and it is important to highlight these in greater depth. One of the most important concepts that has been outlined on several occasions above is the idea of strategic communication. This idea of targeting groups with M&C efforts lies at the core of what the architects of the QNV and NDS need to incorporate and improve on. Being aware of changes in how the target group

of women communicates, and how women access and interact with modern forms of social media is clearly essential in this process. Another core concept that has been emphasised is the idea of inclusion. By involving stakeholders to a greater extent and by enabling women to participate, particularly those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, it is likely that not only will participation and legitimacy increase, but also that a more well-rounded and balanced implementation of the QNV and NDS will be facilitated. The final core concept also relates to this issue and that is the notion of gender equality. In a conservative and patriarchal cultural context such as Qatar, arriving at genuine gender equality in the short-term is unrealistic. However, in an environment in which more women are accessing higher education and increasingly penetrating different sectors of the job market, aiming for greater gender equality is a necessary step. Therefore, greater involvement of women, particularly at more senior levels, is an element that needs to be increasingly prominent in relation to the QNV and NDS. These concepts play a key role in binding together national planning, M&C strategies, stakeholders, and the wider cultural context.

## 2.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, the relevant literature was reviewed. It has become clear that there is a growing interest in the existence of a M&C strategy to ensure the success of national strategies. This confirms that the success of any national strategy requires many things, foremost of which is the existence of a clear strategy for communication and information with specific goals and appropriate means. The means of communication must keep pace with technological development, especially in the era of social media development. At the same time, the literature emphasises the importance of integrating and participating stakeholders since their participation benefits the success of national strategies. However,



it is necessary to consider the environment and national culture in all its dimensions because the communication process takes place within the framework of the general environment of society. In this context, an important element in understanding the national environment recognises the role and participation of women, especially in those national strategies that are geared towards women. All of this paves the way, and motivates us to try to understand what was presented in the literature review of the subject in light of the Qatari national environment, especially with regard to the national strategy for empowering women.

## Chapter Three: Research Methodology

### 3.1 Introduction

This piece of research has four specific objectives, listed in Chapter One of this document. They are all focused on the overall aim of exploring relationships between Qatari women, the new national Qatari family strategy (FCWE), and the M&C methods used to promote this. To meet these objectives, it is essential to use the most appropriate research methodology. Based on that, the objective of this chapter is to discuss and justify all issues related to the research methodology pertaining to Doc. 5.

Sarantakos (2013, p.13) delineated the aims of social research as follows: “To explore social reality for its own sake or in order to make further research, to accurately describe social phenomenon, to explain social life by providing reliable, valid and well documented information, to evaluate the status of social issues and their effect on society to make predictions, to suggest possible solutions to social problems, and finally to develop and/or test theories”.

More succinctly, Babbie (2018) argues that there are three purposes for social research: exploration, description, and explanation. Descriptive studies answer questions of what, how, where, and when. Explanatory studies answer questions of why. Emphasising the significance of descriptive studies, Singleton (2015) informs the reader that they are fact-finding enterprises. They are structured, and they focus on a few dimensions of a phenomenon or an entity and measure these dimensions systematically and precisely, usually with detailed numerical descriptions. The information is gathered from a set of carefully selected cases. Descriptive studies are particularly important when the field is

nascent, or a phenomenon is not well studied. Many pilot studies begin as descriptive investigation in preparation for larger analytic works (Singleton, 2015, pp.68-69).

The current study is exploratory. This is because it seeks to explore relationships between Qatari women, the FCWE strategy, and the M&C methods used to promote this. The term explanatory research implies that the research in question is intended to explain, rather than simply to describe, the phenomena studied (Given, 2018). The current research seeks to meet the specific objectives mentioned previously in Chapter One of this document.

### 3.2 Epistemology, Ontology and Axiology

Epistemology, which can be translated directly as the study of knowledge and understanding, concerns itself with what can be regarded as acceptable forms of knowledge and how such knowledge can be acquired (Jaggar, 1989; Fard, 2012). Ontology is a philosophical term that discusses the nature of being and existence. One of the longest standing ontological questions in philosophy, for example, concerns the existence, or otherwise, of God or at least some sense of a higher being (Sale et al., 2002; Krauss, 2015). Both of these concepts are complimentary because, ultimately, they revolve around the way in which knowledge ought to be understood, and the way in which information and meaning concerning human beings and the natural world ought to be organised (Giaretta & Guarino, 1995; Morgan & Smircich, 1980).

Although there are numerous ways in which the world might be understood, there are two main paradigms that have been developed in order to form a coherent epistemological basis for social science research (Guba & Lincoln, 1995). Positivism is understood as an empirical, scientific and quantitative approach towards research that focuses on measurable and quantifiable data that can be borne out through the rigorous testing of hypotheses

(Healy & Perry, 2000; Annells, 2016). At the opposite end of the scale is interpretivism, which does not accept the validity of a scientific approach towards the study of human behaviour and relations within the social world (Ponterotto, 2015; Rolfe, 2016). Rather than thinking in terms of absolutes and definitive answers, this school of thought believes that interpretation and multiple meanings are important, and prominent features of social interaction (Denzin & Lincoln, 1995; Tuli, 2011). Interpretivism is, therefore, more closely aligned with qualitative research methods because, in contrast to the emphasis that positivists place on quantitative methods, interpretivists are interested in examining and analysing the way in which human beings view the world and the impact that this has on their behaviour (Willis et al., 2017; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Research ontology should be identified because it influences the choice of research choice, strategy, and approach. This is because it identifies the researcher's view of the world, which in turn expresses the researcher's beliefs and assumptions regarding the nature of the reality of the issue under study (Bryman, 2012). Based on revision of the assumptions of each philosophy, it was found that interpretivism fits the current research. This philosophy is in accordance with the nature and objectives of the current study, which is exploratory rather than descriptive. Current research uses interviews as a qualitative tool to collect data, and researchers believe that the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm benefits from qualitative methods (Nind & Todd, 2011). As explained by Willis (2017), qualitative approaches give rich reports that are necessary for researchers to fully understand contexts. Consistent with this, Thomas (2003) maintains that the interpretive paradigm "portrays a world in which reality is socially constructed, complex, and ever changing..." (p.6).

In terms of adopting qualitative methods to approach reality, the characteristics of interpretivism contrast with the positivist paradigm. McQueen (2002) states that “Interpretivist researchers seek methods that enable them to understand in depth the relationship of human beings to their environment and the part those people play in creating the social fabric of which they are a part” (p.17). Hence, interpretivists do not prefer methods that offer objective or precise information. Instead, according to McQueen (2002), interpretivists view the world through a “series of individual eyes” and choose participants who “have their own interpretations of reality” to “encompass the worldview” (p.16). Thus, quantitative methods are not the preferred mode of interpretivism.

The foundation of interpretivism is the idea that reality is socially created, multifaceted, and subjective. We can only comprehend a person's reality by their own experience of it, which may differ from another person's due to the influences of their social or historical background. To find or produce a rich and deep understanding of the topic under investigation, interpretive approaches rely on observation and questioning. This is strongly related to qualitative data collection techniques (Nind & Todd, 2011).

The interpretivist paradigm typically underlies studies where the research aims involve attempting to understand the meanings and interpretations that people assign to their experiences. An interpretivist philosophy also typically manifests in the adoption of a qualitative methodology, relying on data collection methods such as interviews, observations, and textual analysis. These types of studies commonly explore complex social phenomena and individual perspectives, which are naturally more subjective and nuanced (Bryman, 2012).

### 3.3 Quantitative and Qualitative Methods

Creswell (2009 p.123) identifies three types of research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. Quantitative research methods are appropriate when ‘factual’ data are required to answer the research question; when general or probability information is sought on opinions, attitudes, views, beliefs, or preferences; when variables can be isolated and defined; when variables can be linked to form hypotheses before data collection; and when the question or problem is known, clear and unambiguous.

Qualitative methods are used to answer questions about experience, meaning and perspective, most often from the standpoint of the participant. These data are usually not amenable to counting or measuring. Qualitative research techniques include ‘small-group discussions’ for investigating beliefs, attitudes and concepts of normative behavior; ‘semi-structured interviews’ to seek views on a focused topic or, with key informants, for background information or an institutional perspective; ‘in-depth interviews’ to understand a condition, experience, or event from a personal perspective; and ‘analysis of texts and documents’, such as government reports, media articles, websites or diaries, to learn about distributed or private knowledge (Newman, 2010).

As it was decided to pursue an interpretive research philosophy, qualitative data derived from open-ended, semi-structured, interview questions were preferred. Semi-structured interviews are a popular choice for researchers and interviewers due to several advantages they offer over fully structured or unstructured interviews. They provide a balance between standardization and flexibility. This flexibility allows the researcher to gather richer and more nuanced data compared to fully structured interviews (Ruslin, 2022). While there is some flexibility, the use of a core set of questions allows for some level of comparability between interviews with different participants, and this can be useful for thematic analysis.

The back-and-forth nature of a semi-structured interview fosters a more conversational atmosphere. This can help build rapport with the participants, making them feel more comfortable sharing their experiences and insights (Magaldi & Berler, 2020). This doesn't mean that semi-structured interview is ideal and without drawbacks. The shortcomings of semi-structured interview include loss in translation; restricted probing because of a language barrier; little understanding or inadequate reaction to the topic; and data loss either through the employment of technology that more closely resembles the circumstances of face-to-face talks or limited probing owing to that language barrier (Kkilla,2021). Conducting online interviews enabled the researcher to overcome some of the drawbacks of the semi-structured interview. Besides, the researcher didn't face any language or cultural barrier because all interviewees were Qatari women.

There are some benefits of using qualitative research approaches and methods. Firstly, qualitative research approach produces the thick (detailed) description of participants' feelings, opinions, and experiences; and interprets the meanings of their actions (Denzin, 1989). This is very important in the current study since it is crucial to deeply understand the opinions and experiences of women with the national strategy. Secondly, there are some who argue that qualitative research approach (interpretivism) can lead to a more holistic understanding of human experience in specific settings. This is important to deeply understand the national strategy from the perspective of Qatari women. Thirdly, this approach helps to study individual cases or events, or people (Kelin & Myers, 1999) and it allows different people's voices, meanings, and events to be understood. This helps to understand the women perspective regarding national strategy. In this approach, the source of knowledge is the meaning derived from understanding different people (Rahman, 2017). Fourthly, in qualitative research the researcher can discover the participants' inner

experiences, and to figure out how meanings are shaped through and in culture (Corbin & Strauss, 2018). This helps to deeply perceive national strategy from the perspective of women and based on their experience. During data collection, the researcher interacts with the participants directly, such as when data is collected through interviews. Consequently, data collection is subjective and detailed.

Beyond the above advantages, there are also limitations. First, Silverman (2010) argues that qualitative research approaches sometimes leave out contextual contingencies and focus more on meanings and experiences. Second, policymakers may give low credibility to results from qualitative approach. For example, Sallee and Flood (2012) found that stakeholders frequently use quantitative research when external requests for research are made, and in many social sciences, quantitative orientations are frequently given more regard (Berg, 2009). Third, in terms of research method, a smaller sample size raises the issue of generalizability to the whole population of the research (Harry & Lipsky, 2014; Thompson, 2011). Berg and Lune (2012, p. 4) also commented that “Qualitative research is a long hard road, with elusive data on one side and stringent requirements for analysis on the other.” Along with the data interpretation and analysis issue, Darlington and Scott (2003) claimed that developing the undeveloped question into a researchable form is harder, and the refining question in qualitative research may be continuous throughout a whole study.

#### 3.4 Deductive, Inductive, and Abductive research approaches

A feature of research designs is the approach to reasoning that they incorporate. There are various approaches that can be taken. Three of the main ways are deduction, induction, and abduction (Saunders et al., 2017). The deductive approach develops the research questions from a pre-existing theory and then formulates the research approach to test it (Silverman,



2010); the inductive approach is characterised as a move from the specific to the general, and this involves working from observations towards an inference (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Abductive reasoning involves deciding what the most likely inference is that can be made from a set of observations (Monette 2011).

The current research is abductive. Inductive work is designed to create new theories, whilst deductive work is designed to test new, or confirm established, theories. Abduction means “inference to the best, or most likely, explanation” and was developed by Charles Pierce, the American pragmatist (Monette 2011, p.34). This means using ‘common sense’ to interpret a situation. In the social sciences, especially for exploratory and descriptive work, it is often useful to see whether evidence or observations can be explained by existing theories (that is. as the best or most likely explanation). In this research we have a set of theories which help explain, and I wanted to explore whether evidence or observations would work best.

### 3.5 Research Strategy

There are a variety of research strategies, including case study, survey, experiment, and action research at a researcher’s disposal (Saunders et al., 2017). The current study is a cross between a case study and a survey. It is a ‘case’ in that it focuses on a very specific country, but also a ‘survey’ in that it derives opinions from a range of different stakeholders. Surveys are normally conducted quantitatively via questionnaires, but in the current study, qualitative data is collected through conducting interviews. An interview is generally a qualitative research technique in which questions can be open unstructured questions, closed structured or, often, semi-structured questions. In most cases, the interviewer is the subject matter expert whose intention is to understand respondents’ opinions from a well-planned and executed series of questions and answers (Smith, 2016).

A researcher must conduct interviews with a group of participants at a juncture in the research where information can be obtained by meeting and personally connecting with a section of their target audience. Interviews offer researchers a platform to prompt their participants and obtain inputs in the desired detail. In the current research, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews. This is because they were in-depth interviews; in fact, semi-structured interviews are usually described as conversations held with a purpose in mind – to gather data about the research study. These interviews have the least number of questions as they lean more towards a normal conversation, but with an underlying framework. The main objective of most researchers using semi-structured interviews is to build a bond with the respondents to increase the chance that the respondents will be 100% truthful with their answers. There are no strict guidelines for the researchers to follow; thus, they can approach the participants in any manner that is ethical to gain as much information as they possibly can for their research topic (Charmaz, 2016).

Semi-structured interviews are one of the most effective tools for systematically collecting qualitative and quantitative data. This is a method in which predetermined questions can be asked, determined by the project's underlying theoretical framework, theory of change, or research hypothesis (Mashuri,2022). Furthermore, the questions were kept open-ended to provide a comprehensive overview of the surrounding information. Semi-structured interviews are more powerful than other types of interviews in qualitative research because they allow researchers to obtain detailed information and evidence from respondents while keeping the research focus in mind (Kristina, 2018). This allows researchers to stay on top of things with flexibility and adaptability, compared to unstructured interviews where direction is not well thought out (Zarin, 2018).

A semi-structured interview is a type of interview where the interviewer only asks a few predetermined questions, and the rest of the questions are not planned. Semi-structured interviews are a combination of both structured and unstructured interview styles, so they can offer the best of both worlds. These allow for an objective comparison of candidates, while at the same time providing an opportunity to engage spontaneously with topics relevant to each candidate (Mashuri,2022).

This interview style is very flexible as it aims to adapt to the respondent's answers and reactions. Besides, open-ended questions allow respondents to provide more nuanced answers and can provide more valuable insights than other forms of data collection, such as structured interviews, surveys, and questionnaires (Zarin, 2018).

Different research methodologies and tools have been used in the author's previous DBA documents, but there is still a need to deeply understand the role of media and communication in national strategy, and to explore relationships between Qatari women, the FCWE strategy, and the M&C methods used to promote this. Semi-structured interviews will allow this.

### 3.6 Research Time Horizon

There are two-time horizons which can be adopted in research: longitudinal and cross-sectional (Saunders et al. 2018). While longitudinal research is adopted when the researcher focuses on change or development that occurs over a period, the cross-sectional research focuses on studying a phenomenon at a specific time. The current study is cross-sectional research as it investigates the association between media/communication and strategy implementation using data that was collected during a specific short period.

### 3.7 Research Instrument

To develop the research instrument (online interview), a review of research instruments was made in the related literature, along with a review and analysis of the research objectives. Based on that, a draft of interview questions was developed and discussed with colleagues. The draft was then discussed several times with the research supervisors until it was agreed that all relevant issues would be addressed. Generally, the research informed the question selection. Subsequently, a list of questions was confirmed to meet all objectives of the research, and two lists of interview questions were set as a basis for conversations with respondents. Interview questions were developed in light of research questions. The first one is for women in the general population, and Table 2 below shows the relationships between research objectives and interviews with the general population in this group.

The second list was for interviews with women government policy workers. The list included 10 questions that focused on the role of M&C in supporting Qatar's new family strategy implementation. Table 3 below shows the relationships between research objectives and interviews with policy workers.

Table 2: The relationships between research objectives and interviews with the general population

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Interview questions with women in the general population</b>
<p>Assess the role of media and communications in supporting strategy implementation.</p>	<p>How effective do you think the following are for disseminating Qatari family strategy: social media, print media, broadcast media?</p> <p>What influences you most when thinking about family priorities?</p> <p>If you were responsible for drafting the family strategy media and communication programme, how would you improve this?</p> <p>Are your attitudes towards the role of women and family values in Qatari society influenced by other women in the following age groups? 18-25, 26-55, 56 and above? If so, to what extent?</p> <p>Are you influenced by other cultures/images when thinking about either the role of women or family values in Qatari society? To what extent?</p>
<p>Find out if planners have involved Qatari women and/or their concerns in strategy.</p>	<p>To what degree do you believe that Qatari women were given opportunities to participate in establishing or articulating family strategy?</p>
<p>Find out the media and communications channels preferred by women in Qatari society.</p>	<p>What are the most common communication methods you believe that women in your age-group pay most attention to?</p> <p>Which communication method platforms (if social media), titles (if newspapers/magazines) or programmes (if TV and/or radio) do you pay most attention to?</p>
<p>Find out if Qatari women have enough awareness about family-related issues.</p>	<p>Are you aware of Qatar’s official family strategy?</p> <p>What do you think are the aims and objectives of Qatar’s official family strategy?</p>

Table 3: The relationships between research objectives and interviews with policy workers.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Interview questions with women government policy workers</b>
Assess the role of media and communications in supporting Qatar's new family strategy implementation.	<p>How do you assess the effectiveness of the communication methods and platforms used in family communication strategy?</p> <p>What do you believe are the key weaknesses and strengths of the communication strategy of the family strategy?</p> <p>From your perspective, how effective has the communication strategy been in raising awareness among young women regarding Qatar's family strategy?</p>
Find out if planners have involved Qatari women and/or their concerns in planning the family strategy.	<p>To what extent do you believe that Qatar's family strategy was informed by the views of women?</p> <p>To what extent do you believe that Qatar's family strategy communications strategy was influenced by knowledge of different women's communication preferences?</p> <p>Do you believe that you had the opportunity, as a woman, to influence any aspect of the communication methods used to disseminate Qatar's family strategy</p>
Find out the media and communications channels preferred by women in Qatari society.	<p>What are the most common communication methods that were used to communicate Qatar's official family strategy?</p> <p>Did you utilise social platforms to communicate family strategy? Why/why not?</p> <p>What other platforms were used? Why?</p>
Find out if Qatari women have enough awareness and knowledge about NDS and family-related issues.	<p>Do you believe in Qatar's family strategy? Why/Why not?</p>

### 3.8 Population and Sampling

Babbie (2018, p.112) defines the population for a study as that group (usually people) about whom we want to draw conclusions. Since in most situations it is very difficult to study all members of a research population, researchers select a sample from that population either

to represent the whole population if the population framework is available, or they select a non-representative convenience sample if that framework is unavailable.

In the current research, both populations of interest - women in the general population, and women government policy workers, are important because the current research focuses on exploring relationships between Qatari women, the FCWE, and the M&C methods used to promote this. Therefore, it is crucial to conduct interviews with the first population, women in the general population, because they are the target of the family strategy, and the present study focuses on mainly women born in Qatar as they are the target of the FCWE strategy of 2018-2022. In this regard, the FCWE strategy seeks to foster the implementation of the Qatar National Vision 2030. It aimed at several essential outcomes related to social development, strengthening family cohesion, and preservation of traditional values (Qatar General Secretariat for Development Planning, 2018). These targets include the improvement of family cohesion, the elimination of domestic violence, a balanced approach to the use of domestic helpers and child care services, special attention to disabled children and families with specific circumstances, the promotion of children's well-being, the cultivation of higher financial responsibility among parents, a further fostering of female roles in economic life and politics, and the achievement of a better work-life balance for Qatari families (Khalif and Al-Kuwari, 2012).

My intention was to interview between 5 and 8 respondents from each of three groups of Qatari women, who are the primary target of the family strategy. My purpose for selecting three groups from the general population is to explore different perspectives regarding M&C strategy. It is important to include women of different ages, different perspectives, and different generations. This is because the three groups reflect varied cultural

perspectives and opinions. The three groups were women in the general population from different age groups: 18-25, 26-55, and 56 and over. My research participants were a mix of adults of differing working status, such as university students, working women, and housewives. As students, most women in Qatar who graduate from secondary school go to local universities. Based on that, university students represent an important part of female society in Qatar, as women who have not yet entered the labour market. As employees, women in Qatar prefer working for the government, and a very limited number of Qatari women work in private sector organizations. Therefore, women employees in the public sector represent an important part of this sector of society in Qatar's labour market. In addition, the non-governmental sector is an important part of society, so it is also important to select some women who are volunteers at NGOs. Given that there are women who do not study or work, who are mainly housewives, it is important to include them too. Overall, the views of these three groups collectively represent the broad Qatari women perspective.

For the 5 and 8 respondents from each of three groups of women, my purpose was to select suitable number of women that could help to understand the perspectives and experiences of women with the national strategy. I found that this number of women provided me with insight into women's perspectives regarding national strategies.

For women government policy workers, the population includes those who work in the departments responsible for developing and disseminating the new strategies. There were no official statistics about the women who work in government policy departments, so it was decided to randomly select 6 to 8 respondents from those who work in these departments. This number is not ideal, but it provided me with enough data about women's experiences with the national strategy. In this regard, actions were taken for them not to be



readily identified. For example, they were not asked their names or specific job titles. They participated voluntarily in the research, and their managers do not know who participated and who did not participate in the research.

### 3.9 Data Collection

As explained previously, interviews with open-ended questions were used to collect data. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, interviews were conducted online via Microsoft Teams or Skype for Business, depending on the respondents' preference. Online interviews were necessary for the safety of the interviewees and interviewer and replicated that activity which would otherwise have taken place face-to-face during the Covid-19 pandemic. To recruit participants from the general population, women were encouraged to participate in the study via social media, mainly Twitter. An invitation was sent via this means to the public in Qatar. The invitation included details about the research objective and how to contact the researcher. Several women showed interest in participating in the study, with the total responses received numbering 20. This group of 20 coincidentally covered the age ranges deemed appropriate for the study and it was decided to conduct interviews with all those women from the general population who responded to the invitation. A further invitation was sent via Twitter mainly, to recruit participants from the three age groups and, fortunately, I received responses from the three age groups.

I think that there is no ideal size for the sample, with the most important issue being to have a suitable and relevant number of interviewees. In this regard, the question "how many interviews are enough for qualitative research?" is always a topic of debate among qualitative researchers in the social sciences (Baker, 2012, p.27). Although this question is frequently asked, most researchers choose to provide general guidance for determining the

sample size needed for qualitative research. The answer tends to be "It depends on the situation" (Yong, 2018, p.123). In other words, how does determining the number of respondents required depend on the circumstances? The answer generally depends on the focus of the study, the nature of the research question, available resources and time, the requirements of the organising committee, the judgment of the epistemological community to which the researcher belongs, such as the type of group selected, the field of study, and the researcher's experience in qualitative research. The most observed sample size range is specific to the numbers 20 to 60 (Hennick, 2022). Selecting this number of women provided me with the breadth of representation I was looking for and broadly circumscribed the key factors differentiating different groups of women in Qatar. I obtained representative answers from a sample of 20.

In the case of women government policy workers, communications were made with departments responsible for developing and disseminating the new strategies in Qatar. The departments were informed clearly, honestly, and precisely about the purpose and nature of the research. They were informed that interviews included point of view questions, and interviewees would not be asked to provide or discuss any sensitive information. They were asked to inform participants that interviews would last approximately 45 minutes (to complete the whole online one-to-one interview). They were also asked to inform the interviewees that they would answer the interview questions according to their own situation. The departments were asked to encourage their policy workers to participate voluntarily in the study, and for managers not to have any knowledge of who the participants were. The volunteers were sought from a group of workers that were previously advised of my requirements and had my email address to contact me with any questions. In this way, the policy workers who participated in the research were not

nominated by their departments, and those who decided to participate voluntarily in the research communicated this by email. This meant that their managers did not know who participated and who did not participate in the research.

Interviews and discussions were conducted in Arabic because participants may not have been able to converse in English. Because interviews were conducted online, and to protect confidentiality and anonymity, respondents were advised that these could take place from a place and at a time of their choosing, and they gave their preference of three options for recording interviews that were presented to them, and agreed to be interviewed in that way. Interviewees were asked if they did not mind notes being taken by a third person. Some of them preferred notes being taken while others preferred their spoken words to be recorded. Others were suspicious of both and requested that interviews would just involve themselves and the researcher. Based on that, the three options of recording the interviews were: (1) a computerised programme where interviews were video recorded; (2) another person was present to take notes with permission from the interviewee; or (3) the main points in the interview were noted by the researcher.

### 3.10 Method of Analysis

The analysis of qualitative interview data was undertaken with a set of key notes from the interviews conducted. For those where the computerised program was utilised, the main notes were printed out. For my notes and the reporter's reports, both notes and reports were typed. For the interviews that were video recorded, key points of the interview were printed out. Thus, the researcher did not write down the full transcript of interviews, but just the key points since, as Patton (2001) points out, identifying key points is an issue of analysis, not transcription.

There are two primary ways of thematically analysing qualitative data. One is via the use of *a priori* themes and the other is through *in vivo* themes. A priori analysis generally means applying theory to the data to test the theory. It is a kind of “top-down” approach to data analysis and, in qualitative analysis, this often means applying predetermined codes to the data. In a priori coding, the researcher develops the codes ahead of time based on a theoretical framework, the interview questions, or pre-existing knowledge (Gibbs, 2018). In vivo themes are developed from the new insights into a problem that the researcher has no previous prior understanding of. This sort of analysis is used extensively for theory building. Therefore, as my purpose was not to develop a new theory, I used a priori theme analysis by using template analysis. I designed the questions in my interview schedule to address the specific issues I was interested in, so my analysis is focused on those.

In template analysis, it is common to identify several themes in advance, thus a priori themes. This is because a research project usually begins with the assumption that it needs to focus on a particular aspect of the phenomenon being studied. Another good reason for using deductive themes is that the importance of certain themes in relation to the topic under study is well established, so it is safe to assume that they will appear in the data. The main advantage of using a priori topics is that they speed up the initial coding stage of the analysis, which is typically very time-consuming.

Analytical work that begins with some a priori codes that identify themes that are likely to be relevant to the analysis may often find that these codes are modified or omitted if they are found to be unhelpful or inappropriate for the actual data being investigated. To use a priori thematic analysis, the following approach was employed:

1. I identified all the a priori themes in light of the research and the interview questions.
2. I read the collected data many times to be familiar with the data of the interviews.
3. I read the data extensively and highlighted segments that appeared to tell me something relevant to the research question.
4. If such segments corresponded to an a priori theme, I coded them as such. Otherwise, a new theme was defined to include related material and organised into an initial template.
5. I did this after initial coding of a subset of the data, after reading and coding the first three of the study's twenty transcripts.
6. I applied the initial template to the entire dataset and modified it by carefully reviewing each transcript.
7. Once the final version was defined and all transcripts were coded onto it, the template served as the basis for me to interpret or elucidate the dataset and write up their findings.

In this regard, I used numbers and tables in the analysis of the data. I used a series of numerically oriented matrices in my analysis to help me search for and analyse differences between groups. This is sometimes called 'hot cell' analysis as it seeks to find concentrations of specific behaviours or attitudes.

### 3.11 Reliability and Validity

Validity and reliability in qualitative research represent important aspects of research quality, and if handled carefully, reliability and validity parameters can help distinguish

between good and bad research. It also assures readers that the research results are reliable and be replicated (Noble, 2015).

This aspect becomes particularly important in the case of case studies that involve primary data analysis because the subjectivity of the researcher can have a significant impact on the interpretation of the data (Leung, 2015).

To make sure of the reliability and validity of the interview, the following approach was taken:

1. I developed the interview questions in light of the research questions and objectives. Which in turn were supported by relevant academic literature. I developed a table with two columns: research questions and interview questions. I made sure that interview questions covered all the research questions, not more nor less.
2. I sent a draft of the interview to the supervisors of this research. I asked them to investigate the questions of the interview, and to check for any comments.
3. I conducted pilot interviews with two persons, and I asked them to provide me with their feedback about the questions in terms of their suitability, clarity, and validity.
4. I ensured respondents felt comfortable with me as the person asking the questions. My role was as a senior man interviewing women in the Qatari context, so I think using Teams helped as it seemed to make some women feel more comfortable.
5. I tested the initial data in light of the research questions and a priori coding.

### 3.11 Reflexivity

In qualitative research, reflexivity—the act of critically analysing oneself as a researcher—is essential to the process of knowledge construction. It necessitates that the process of creating knowledge be the focus of research. As the researcher moves through the several

phases of the research process, reflexivity helps them to think about their "continuing engagement with participants and revelations of the self" (Narayanasamy, 2015, p. 238).

The framework of Rolfe et al. (2001) focuses on three questions: what? so what? and now what? I was trying to collect in-depth information from Qatari women about their experiences with national strategies, so, in my research, I made efforts to be subjective all the time. For this purpose, I used several tools, such as peer debriefing. This involves ongoing discussions with the supervisors about issues related to research objectives, interviews, and data collection. My goal was to provide myself with an outside perspective. These discussions helped me to identify potential biases, challenge their interpretations, and consider alternative explanations. I shared my interview transcripts and preliminary analyses with the supervisors.

At the same time, I used self-reflection where I critically examined my assumptions, values, and worldviews. I also considered how these elements might influence the research. I reflected on my personal experiences as a researcher and how these might relate to the research topic. I also considered my positionality concerning the participants and reflected on the power dynamics that this might entail.

Nevertheless, I expected some key issues to influence my bias. Firstly, my status in the organisation might impact female respondents. At the same time, Qatari society women traditionally have not had positions of power. Fortunately, interviews did not take place face-to-face, and this helped to reduce bias and ease data collection.

At the same time, my position ahead of the research was that the family strategy was not communicated effectively, and my position did not change during or after the research. I came to the conclusion that the family strategy was not communicated properly. Although

I was to some extent aware that the family strategy was not communicated effectively, this was only my overall opinion and impression. It was not the opinion of family policy makers and officials. Besides, it was not based on scientific justifications. Adding to that, the target of the family strategy, Qatari women, are more capable to evaluate the communication of the strategy precisely and deeply.

### 3.12 Research Ethics

Major ethical issues to be observed by every responsible and honest researcher include voluntary participation of respondents, ensuring informed consent based on accurately informing respondents about the nature of the research, its purpose, and who is behind it. It also includes guaranteeing the confidentiality of information provided by respondents and protecting their anonymity, as well as ensuring that respondents will not be harmed psychologically or materially as a result of their voluntary participation in the research project (Bryman, 2012). One more ethical issue related to Qatari culture, mentioned briefly above, is that overall, women do not feel free to talk to a man about female issues. Women tend not to speak openly to a senior male or present a more positive picture of their reality to them, and this was certainly a key challenge. The fact that, in most cases, women provided short answers could be attributed to their shyness in the presence of a male. Finally, as permission to be video-recorded was not given in most cases, a female secretary noted down the women's answers to make those women feel more comfortable.

For the general public groups, because no questions in the discussions were of a sensitive nature, nor was the data collection method intrusive, there were no ethical issues beyond those listed at the beginning of this section. The only other issue that could arise would be if respondents felt that their answers might impact unfavourably on them, but anonymity overcame that. Nonetheless, to abide by the guidelines of ethical review boards, this study



guaranteed confidentiality to all participants, and in turn required approval on informed consent. As interviews were not held face-to-face but took place electronically, the researcher at the beginning of each interview read the informed consent and obtained approval of it from each participant, and this procedure received approval from the College Research Ethics Committee (CREC). For the policy workers group, they may have been wary of giving answers that might get them into trouble with their managers. Therefore, the sample members were selected based on the willingness of those who volunteered, and through direct communication with the researcher via e-mail. In this way, their managers do not know who participated in the research.

## Chapter Four: Findings

### 4.1 Introduction

This piece of research has different objectives, all focused on the overall aim of exploring relationships between Qatari women and the methods of M&C used to promote the national Qatari family (Family Cohesion and Women's Empowerment – FCWE) strategy. This issue is of much importance in Qatar since, in many cases, women are not involved in the communication process, a topic discussed at length in the literature review. Therefore, where the role of women is still limited in the field of communication, they are often receptive but not interactive or involved. This reflects negatively on the participation of women and their developmental role.

Issues related to the research objectives and methodology have been discussed in the previous chapters, specifically Chapter One and Chapter Three. In sum, to meet the research objectives, online semi-structured interviews have been conducted with a total of four groups of Qatari women. The first group was women government policy workers from the departments responsible for developing and disseminating the new strategies, and six interviews were conducted with these workers. The other three groups were women in the general population with different age groups as follows: 18-25, 26-55, 56 and over.

Interviews focused on issues related to the role of M&C in supporting Qatar's new family strategy implementation, and to find out if planners have involved Qatari women and/or their concerns in planning the family strategy and if their inputs were taken into consideration during the development of the M&C used in promoting the strategy. Interviews also focused on the M&C channels preferred by women in Qatari society, to advise strategy planners and implementers on the best ways of conveying their messages

to Qatari women, and to find out if Qatari women have enough awareness and knowledge about NDS and family-related issues.

#### 4.2 Analysis of Interviews with Policy Workers

One of the key objectives of the current study is to find out if planners have involved Qatari women and/or their concerns in planning the family strategy and if their input was taken into consideration during the development of M&C used in promoting the strategy. Based on that, the interviews focused on issues related to effectiveness of the communication strategy in raising awareness among women regarding Qatar's family strategy.

6 interviews were conducted with women government policy workers, all of whom were married, employees, and in the 26-55 age group. These interviews included 10 questions, which were developed considering the research objectives to investigate four a priori issues: the role of communication methods and social platforms in communicating family strategy, the effectiveness of communications in supporting Qatar's new family strategy, the involvement of Qatari women in family strategy, and their belief in the role of family strategy.

##### **4.2.1 Research objective: Assess the role of media and communications in supporting Qatar's new family strategy implementation.**

When women government policy workers were asked how they assessed the effectiveness of the communication methods and platforms used in family communication strategy, it is of note that all answers pointed to a weak strategy. These workers were clear and honest when they agreed that the effectiveness of the communication methods and platforms used in family communication strategy was very low. One interviewee (the 3<sup>rd</sup> policy worker PW3)said:

*“To be honest, the communications of the strategy were weak.”*

When they were asked about the key weaknesses and strengths of the communication strategy of family strategy, they focused on the weaknesses. They pointed to a lack of communication strategy, priority not being given to communication, the use of traditional communication methods, and ignorance of the stakeholders, mainly Qatari women. One social worker (PW2) pointed out this issue by saying:

*” Honestly, the communications of the family strategy were not effective at all. There are many reasons behind this but, most important of all, was ignorance of women’s involvement and participation.”*

Other weaknesses mentioned included lack of experience in communication strategy, lack of funds, and lack of top management support. It is worth noting that no answers pointed to the strengths of the communication strategy, which indicates that the strategy was very weak. One interviewee (PW5) said this:

*“The communication strategy is full of weaknesses, there are no strengths at all.”*

Based on that, when women were asked about how effective the communication strategy has been in raising awareness among young women regarding Qatar’s family strategy, the answers were that the communication of the strategy was not effective. This is because the communication strategy focused on traditional and media and communication channels, with complete ignorance of social media. There was a clear gap between the communication strategy and young women. While young women are connected to social media, communication strategy used traditional methods. One policy worker (PW6) commented that:

*“It is to be expected that the communication strategy was not effective as it ignores the key stakeholder of the strategy, which is Qatari women.”*

Therefore, ignorance of social platforms and gaps in communicating family strategy negatively influenced the effectiveness of communications. It seems that women government policy workers are fully aware of the weaknesses in communicating the family strategy.

#### **4.2.2 Find out if planners have involved Qatari women and/or their concerns in planning the family strategy.**

Policy workers were asked about the extent to which Qatar’s family strategy was informed by the views of women. They were not asked about whether they were involved or not in family strategy, but whether they believed that Qatar’s family strategy was informed by the views of women from the general population, and to what extent they believed that Qatar’s family strategy communications strategy was influenced by knowledge of different women’s communications preferences. All the answers given were, again, negative: the strategy was not informed or, as one interviewee (PW1) said:

*“Unfortunately, women were ignored, they were not involved at all.”*

This is because the strategy was made in a traditional, top-down manner. In this case, an individual or group proposes and makes public policies without participation, which leads to the failure of most public policy-making attempts. For some interviewees, the main aim of public participation is to encourage the general population to have meaningful input in the decision-making process, thus providing the opportunity for communication between

the agencies who are making decisions and the public. Despite that, women were not involved in developing family strategy.

Again, the women policy workers believe that Qatar's family strategy communications were not influenced by knowledge of different women's communications preferences. One policy worker (PW4) said:

*“Women, the main target of family strategy, were ignored completely.”*

while another (PW5) added:

*“The communications did not consider Qatari women's needs and expectations.”*

This is because the strategy was built with no participation from women. For interviewees, public participation, including women's participation, contributes to better decisions because decision-makers have more complete information, including additional facts and perspectives, to consider in the decision-making process. In this way, the best information and expertise of all stakeholders can be incorporated, and it is easier and more sustainable for the implementation of decisions. When the needs and interests of all stakeholders, including vulnerable or marginalised sectors of the population are considered, the stakeholders feel that they are understood. As Kandil (2021) states, “As a result, decisions that are informed by public participation processes are more legitimate and are less subject to challenge. Decision-makers who fully understand stakeholder interests also become better communicators, able to explain decisions and decision rationale in terms stakeholders understand and in ways that relate to stakeholders' values and concerns”. Despite that, women are not involved in making family strategy in Qatar. Finally, when the government policy worker interviewees were asked if they believe that they had the

opportunity, as women, to influence any aspect of the communication methods used to disseminate Qatar's family strategy, they all gave negative answers. This is because of centralisation, the lack of participation, and the lack of interest in building a communication strategy.

The next objective was to find out if planners have involved Qatari women and/or their concerns in planning the family strategy, and if their input was taken into consideration during the development of M&C used in promoting the strategy. Results of the data analysis again revealed that family strategy was developed with no participation from women. Overall, women were found not to be involved in making family strategy, nor had they been able to influence any aspect of the communication methods used to disseminate Qatar's family strategy. The reasons are the same as above.

#### **4.2.3 Find out the media and communications channels preferred by women in Qatari society.**

When women government policy workers were asked about the issue of media and communication regarding Qatar's family strategy, the answers were short and specific. The most common methods that were used to communicate Qatar's family strategy were television and radio spots, billboards, and advertisements. The answers were almost the same from all respondents and provided a list of three or four methods. These were Qatar TV, Qatar Radio, and local newspapers. For one interviewee (PW1), the communication methods used as Qatar's family strategy were limited and traditional:

*“There was little concern with communicating the strategy. Therefore, just a few traditional communication methods were used.”*

When women policy workers were asked if they use social platforms to communicate family strategy, all answers were negative. They highlighted the following words: ‘not used at all’, ‘traditional media used’, and ‘no social media strategy’. According to one policy maker (PW3):

*“Social media was not used at all.”*

This is due to different reasons given by the interviewees, and the main reason was that the family strategy did not include an independent M&C strategy, showing a lack of awareness of the importance of M&C. In addition, lack of a coherent strategy, a lack of funding, a lack of expertise, and a lack of awareness of the importance of social media were all identified. One social worker (PW6) said:

*“Unfortunately, social media platforms were not utilised despite their advantages and benefits.”*

Another worker (PW3) justified this by saying that:

*“We didn’t recognise the effectiveness of social platforms, and we were not aware of the value of social media.”*

To sum up, from the perspective of female policy makers, family strategy was communicated by using traditional communication channels and methods. Social platforms were not utilised at all. This indicates that policy makers ignored the fact that women in Qatar cope well with technology and use a wide range of social platforms. This also indicates that there are gaps in the communication of family strategy, and one of the key gaps is ignoring the use of social platforms for this means.



#### **4.2.4 Find out if Qatari women have enough awareness and knowledge about NDS and family-related issues.**

After discussing communication strategy, discussions moved to family strategy itself. Women were asked if they believe in Qatar's family strategy. All respondents agreed that family strategy is important. One policy worker woman (PW3) said:

*“We really need family strategy to protect our families in Qatar.”*

The family strategy, according to the interviewees, is important to create families which are prepared to face the challenges of married life; uphold the values of maintaining the stability, sustainability and cohesion of the family; provide a healthy and sound environment that supports the family in facing the pressures of life; upgrade their capabilities to build promising generations that assume their responsibilities towards society and the nation; are proud of their national identity; adhere to noble values, principles and morals; and achieves happiness through family cohesion. One policy worker (PW5) expressed her belief in family strategy:

*“Yes, it is crucial for Qatar, mainly because of the many challenges faced by Qatari families.”*

For interviewees, the family represents the main building block of social structure and societal cohesion. The family is also the institution in which young people are formed and generations are nurtured to establish the future and catch up with development. Qatari family development includes a set of key components related to addressing the issues of

delaying marriage, parenthood and childcare, domestic violence, the strengthening of the economic status of the country’s families, and enhancing social capital.

#### 4.3 Analysis of Interviews with General Population

After analyzing the interviews of policy workers, I moved to analyse the interviews with women from the general population.

##### 4.3.1 Characteristics of the Sample

The women from the general population who were interviewed were asked about their age group, job, and social status. Table 5 shows the characteristics of the 20 respondents from the general population. It shows that a total of 20 interviews were conducted, 7 with the 18-25 age group, 7 with the 26-55 age group, and 6 with women aged 56 and over. In terms of occupation, 4 women are university/college students, 8 are working for different government agencies and ministries, and 8 are housewives. As for social status, 3 women are single, and 17 married and working.

Table 5: Characteristics of the general population sample

Age		18-25	26-55	56 and over	Total
Occupation	Student	4	0	0	4
	Employee	2	5	1	8

	Housewife	1	2	5	8
<b>Total</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>20</b>
Social status	Single	3	0	0	3
	Married	1	8	8	17
<b>Total</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>20</b>

Discussions with women from the general population included 10 questions, which had been developed considering the research objectives. After asking these women about their age group, occupation and social status, the next step was to ask the 10 questions, which addressed the a priori themes. These were: awareness of family strategy and its objectives, factors influencing family priority and women's roles, preferred communications channels and social platforms, and participation in family strategy.

#### **4.3.2 Find out if Qatari women have enough awareness and knowledge about NDS and family-related issues.**

One of the key objectives of the current study is to find out if Qatari women have enough awareness and knowledge about family-related issues. Based on that, the women were asked about their awareness of family strategy.

When they were asked if they are aware of Qatar’s family strategy, different answers were recorded. It is to be noted that women provided short answers to the question. Table 6 below lists the most common answers of the different age groups from the general population.

Overall, it was found that women have little awareness of Qatar’s family strategy. The answers range between “have general idea” and “have no idea.” No one answered that she is deeply aware of family strategy. One woman (Citizen 1 C1) told me:

*“...it is the first time I know that there is family strategy in Qatar.”*

Others know about family strategy, but they do not have a deep knowledge of it. One woman (C10) told me:

*“Yes, I know about family strategy, but I do not have comprehensive and detailed information about family strategy.”*

Table 6: Awareness of Qatar’s official family strategy

Variable		Most repeated/common answers
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		Have a general idea	Little bit/not too much	Somewhat aware/not deeply	Have no idea
Age	18-25 (7)	3	2	1	1
	26-55 (7)	2	2	2	1
	56 and over (6)	2	2	1	1
Occupation	Student (4)	1	1	1	1
	Employee (8)	2	3	2	1
	Housewife (8)	2	2	2	2
Social status	Single (3)	1	1	0	1
	Married (17)	5	5	5	2

Respondents highlighted the following words when discussing the awareness of Qatar’s family strategy: “limited”, “weak”, “not aware”, “simple knowledge.” It must be noted that half of the women answered that they are not aware at all. This indicates that there is a lack of awareness of Qatar’s family strategy amongst the general female population. The common themes of the answers of the three age groups are almost the same, with not even one woman saying that she is deeply aware of family strategy.

As the above table shows, the breakdown of the responses in terms of employment status and marital status were also very similar. There are no great differences between the answers of single or married women, or between students, employees, and housewives. All the answers of the different groups of women from the general population were almost the same, and all indicate a low degree of awareness of family strategy.

Given that there is a low level of awareness about family strategy, when women were asked about their thoughts regarding the aims and objectives of Qatar's family strategy, many of them answered that they do not have precise and definite answers. They were not able to provide specific objectives for family strategy, and some women even answered this question with "I have no idea."

In the interviews, many women blamed the researcher about the ignorance of women's participation in family strategy. As a man, I was the cause of this ignorance. The women stated that such strategies are developed only by men, and that women are completely ignored.

Overall, for the objective of finding out if Qatari women have enough awareness and knowledge about NDS and family-related issues, it was clear that women do not have enough awareness and knowledge about NDS and family-related issues.

#### **4.3.3 Find out if planners have involved Qatari women and/or their concerns in planning the family strategy.**

The women interviewed were asked to what degree they believe that Qatari women were given opportunities to participate in establishing or articulating family strategy. Table 9 below presents the analysis of their answers.

Table 9: Involvement in family strategy

Variable		Most repeated/ common answers		
		Limited participation	Participation is not common	Not at all
Age	18-25 (7)	0	1	6
	26-55 (7)	0	1	6
	56 and over (6)	0	1	5
Job	Student (4)	0	1	3
	Employee (8)	0	2	6
	Housewife (8)	0	2	6
Social status	Single (3)	0	1	2
	Married (17)	0	4	13

Different answers were received, though the common words gave negative indications. These common words were: “not at all”, “no participation”, “participation is not common”, and “women’s participation is very limited”. According to one of the respondents (C6):

*“In Qatar, women’s participation in strategies is rare. These are mainly strategies that are set by us.”*

Answers to this question were short and direct, and were mostly simply “no.” In fact, almost all the three different age groups gave the same answers. No one answered that they were given enough opportunities to participate in family strategy. Therefore, “not at all” was the most repeated answer for all women in the different groups of age, employment, and social status.

This means that family strategy was articulated with no participation from women despite the fact that they are the focus and the key stakeholders of family strategy. However, they were not given any opportunities to articulate the strategy. In simple words, the result is that women, as key stakeholders, were not engaged in articulating family strategy. This, in return, means that popular support was not generated to a great enough extent.

There are many factors related to communication which influence the success of strategy implementation, a key factor being related to stakeholder involvement. This is because involvement can indicate whether communications are of a high level and suitably entrenched within an organization, or that the processes in place are effectively facilitating engagement of different audiences or users of information. In this research, very few women said that women in Qatar are given enough opportunities to participate in policy development, and that policies were set without stakeholder involvement. Building commitment through broad stakeholder engagement is an increasingly important element of the strategic planning process. Consequently, without women’s participation in family strategy, strategy implementation faces different obstacles.



#### **4.3.4 Find out the media and communications channels preferred by women in Qatari society.**

One of the key objectives of the current study is to find out which M&C channels are preferred by women in Qatari society in order to advise strategy planners and implementers on the best ways of conveying their messages to them. Therefore, women from the general population were asked about this issue, and their answers are presented in Table 8 below.

The respondents were asked about the most common communication methods they believe that women in their age group pay most attention to. Although there were some different answers, the most frequent key words were social media. It is of note that many women answered this question in a simple and direct way. Several of them (C7,8,9) said:

*“It is the age of social media, and there is not one woman in Qatar who is not connected to social media.”*

This indicates that women in Qatar, regardless of their age, use social media. Table 8 shows the different answers of the three groups of women in relation to which social media platform is used. None of the women answered newspapers, TV, radio, or any other traditional communication methods, reflecting the fact that social media is the preferred communication method for all women regardless of their age, occupation, and social status. This result is in accordance with the real-world situation in Qatar in that women are using social media to engage with the public sphere, even in a country where political activism has not been common (Shockley, 2020). Overall, social media usage is related to increased support for women in community leadership among Qatari females, but not males.

Table 8: Preferred communication methods and social platforms

Variable		Methods and platforms		Most repeated/common answers				
		Social media	Traditional methods	Instagram	Twitter	Facebook	Whats App	Smart TV
Age	18-25 (7)	7	0	4	2	1	0	0
	26-55 (7)	7	0	0	1	3	2	1
	56 and over (6)	6	0	0	0	2	3	1
Occupation	Student (4)	4	0	0	1	1	2	0
	Employee (8)	8	0	1	2	2	3	0
	Housewife (8)	8	0	0	1	2	2	3
Social status	Single (3)	3	0	1	1	1	0	0
	Married (17)	17	0	1	3	4	4	5

Based on that, the question is not whether women use or do not use social media, but which social media platform is preferred by women. Most women in the first age group (18-25)

use Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook. Most women in the third age group (56 and over) use WhatsApp and Facebook. It is of note that students and employees prefer WhatsApp, while housewives prefer smart TV. Single women do not prefer smart TV, while married women prefer WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter.

These answers denote a clear separation between traditional and social media communications. Women in Qatar are not interested in traditional communication channels such as radio, magazines, and printed media. They are interested in social media, and they relate to a variety of social media platforms, including Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, smart TV, and Instagram, which is because internet penetration is high in Qatar.

In this regard, there is an obvious contradiction between what channels are used for communication and what women from the general population prefer. It is much more logical to find that, when women were asked about how effective they think that social media, print media, and broadcast media are for disseminating family strategy, the common words in their answers pointed in one direction: social media. Many women (C1,2,3,4,5) answered:

*“Absolutely, social media.”*

Not one woman mentioned print media or broadcast media. This reveals that women in Qatar cope well with advanced technology and are fully connected to social media.

As the above table shows, the breakdown of how different groups responded reveals that the response from all groups, whether considered in terms of age, employment status or marital status, was almost always the same. This high degree of similarity in the answers of the three groups of women clearly indicates that they all agree that social media is the

most effective way for disseminating family strategy. This is because of the many advantages of social media over print media and broadcast media. Firstly, social media is interactive, while traditional media is passive. The former not only encourages a response from fans and followers, but it requires it. In addition, social media makes it extremely easy for audiences to provide feedback and constantly interact with the materials presented. Traditional media, on the other hand, does not readily provide the means for audiences to interact.

#### **4.3.5 Find out if Qatari women have enough awareness and knowledge about NDS and family-related issues.**

Women in the general population were asked about their awareness of family strategy, and all of them said that they do not have enough knowledge about family strategy. Based on that, they were asked about what influences them most when thinking about family priorities. The women interviewed thought deeply before they answered this question. The most common answers they gave are listed in Table 9 below.

Respondents highlighted the following words when considering family priorities: “parents”, “society”, “traditions”, “big family”. In this regard, Qatari women have been active in society throughout history, especially during the pearl diving period, the period before oil and gas production in Qatar. The Qatari society was called the feminist society, meaning society that is largely dependent on women and their multiple roles, instilling sound values, and teaching the principles, behaviors, customs and norms of society, which reflect their own identity and personality (Shereena, 2015).

Table 9: Influences on family priorities

Variable		Most repeated/common answers				
		Family and parents	Friends and colleagues	Social values, rules, and traditions	Media	Self-image and perspective
Age	18-25 (7)	2	2	1	2	0
	26-55 (7)	2	1	1	2	1
	56 and over (6)	3	1	2	0	0
Occupation	Student (4)	1	1	0	2	0
	Employee (8)	2	2	2	1	1
	Housewife (8)	2	2	2	1	1
Social status	Single (3)	1	1	1	1	0
	Married (17)	6	3	5	1	2

Table 9 shows that there are a number of different factors that influence women when thinking about family priorities, but there are also common factors, such as family, social values, traditions, women's self-image, and friends. It was clear that family highly influences women in terms of family priorities. This notion of family includes the big or extended family, the tribe, and the small or nuclear family. This means that women are influenced by their fathers, husbands, brothers, and relatives. One woman (C15) answered:

*"My priority is my family's priority."*

Another key factor which influences women when thinking about family priorities is the values of society. Many women answered that they are not free to set their priorities; they are a part of a traditional society. One woman (C11) said:

*" Yes, it is the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the social media era, but we are committed to our values."*

It is worth noting, therefore, that although there are many factors which influence family priorities, family is still the most common answer in all the groups of women from the general population regardless of their age, social status, and occupation. By comparing the answers of these different groups, we can see a high degree of similarity. Women's ideas about family priorities are influenced by different factors, but there are two integrated factors: family, both extended and nuclear as discussed above, and social values, mainly Arabic-Islamic values. This indicates that, when women consider family priorities, the factors which influence them are not related to the women's perspectives in the main, but to society and family. Social values and traditions were repeated in their answers many times and were the second factor of influence after family. In fact, the role of social values and traditions was most evident in the answers given by the women in the age group of 56 and over who are married, and either employed or housewives.

Although Table 9 shows the breakdown of the different responses of the age groups, the response from all groups, whether considered in terms of age, employment status and marital status, was almost the same. However, there are some small differences between the answers of the three groups of women. For example, women from the first age group (18-25 years) focused on the role of media and self-image. A few of them expressed the opinion that women in 21<sup>st</sup> century are not the same as before. This is likely to be because of social media and interactions with people from different cultures, though the word “media” was rarely mentioned in their answers. One woman (C13) made this point:

*“We have to be self-confident to present ourselves in society.”*

This reflects the fact that young women think seriously about change in terms of the traditional roles and priorities. The role of media was clear for young women who are students, while its influence was hardly ever mentioned by the 56 and over group who are married and work as employees or housewives.

It was found that the second age group (26-55) mentioned the role of friends, coworkers, and educational institutions as being most important. For some of them, women now have enough opportunities to work, interact with colleagues, and learn. This contributes to changes in women’s ideas about their roles and priorities. It is worthy of note that the influence of friends and colleagues was clear for employees, housewives, and married women, while this factor was not commonly mentioned by the women who are 56 and over, or by single women.

Self-image and perspective were listed in some answers as a factor that influences family priorities. Although its effect is limited, it was mentioned mainly by women in the 26-55

group who are married, employees and housewives. This factor of influence was not mentioned by students, single women, or by those 56 and over.

Women were asked if their attitude towards the role of women and family values in Qatari society was influenced by women of other age groups, but their answers were negative. Some women added comments saying that attitudes towards the role of women and family values in Qatari society were influenced by family, social traditions, and social culture. This shows that such attitudes are influenced by cultural norms and traditional values even though Qatar has been witnessing developments in all aspects of society in recent years. Qatar is a traditional country experiencing rapid social change, but these women's answers reflect the opinion that it is important for Qatar to maintain its heritage. The modern appearance of the country may lead people to forget that it is still a traditional society with consequential social misunderstandings.

The respondents were asked if they are influenced by other cultures/images when thinking about either the role of women, or family values, in Qatari society. They provided a range of answers, but the key words were "no", "very little", or "not at all". For some, the role of women or family values in Qatari society is not easy to change. This is because they are a part of social culture and identity and, if changes do take place, a long time would be necessary for that to happen. Some women expressed their view that the real challenge is "to maintain our culture while building the country we will become." For other women, the focus is on the expat workers: "We welcome the expats, and we want them here. But we will not permit any disrespect to our religion or culture." One woman (C8) said:



*“The pace of economic expansion in Qatar over the last decade is almost without precedent. It is remarkable that the traditionally conservative society has handled these changes as well as it has.”*

Based on the above analysis, the respondents’ answers on the influences on family priorities revealed that Qatari society tends to be conservative. In this regard, religion is not the only aspect of Qataris’ conservatism: social norms are also highly important to Qataris. The strong tribal nature of Qatari society elevates the significance of social conservatism as norms for gaining an understanding of the factors influencing family priorities. This reveals that there is strong moral conformity, a fact that stresses the importance of conventions and the respectability of social practice. In addition, conservative societies rely heavily on the sanctity of family structures and roles, suggesting

Based on that, women in the group of respondents from the general population were also asked the following question: “If you were responsible for drafting the family strategy media and communication programme, how would you improve this?” They provided different answers, but there were some similarities on some points, as shown in Table 10 below.

From the table, there are different suggestions as to how to improve the family strategy M&C programme. One point agreed on by all the women, regardless of their age, employment, and social status, is that it is important to use different communication channels and platforms in the family strategy, with an emphasis on an extensive use of different social media platforms.

Another idea was regarding women’s involvement in communication strategy, where the answers focused on providing women with a role in the family strategy M&C programme.

This involvement is crucial to understand women needs, preferences, and expectations.

Table 10: Improving media and communication of family strategy

Variable		Most repeated/ common answers				
		Different methods, mainly social media	Women involvement	Stakeholder involvement and preferences	Society values and feedback	Short, simple, realistic, and clear
Age	18-25 (7)	3	2	2	0	0
	26-55 (7)	4	0	0	2	2
	56 and over (6)	0	2	0	2	2
Job	Student (4)	2	2	1	0	0
	Employee (8)	3	2	2	1	0

	Housewife (8)	1	1	2	3	1
Social status	Single (3)	2	1	0	0	0
	Married (17)	4	3	2	5	3

One respondent (C5) suggested that:

*“Involvement could improve the relevance of the communication.”*

This reflects the fact that family strategy is a long-term strategy, and it is important to have a long-term communication plan. In this regard, the women pointed to important issues such as simplicity, clarity, and the realistic nature of the messages sent to women about family strategy. They stated that messages must serve as a hook to attract their audience; therefore, each message must be clear, short, and easy to remember. Another very important point is related to presenting the advantages and benefits of a family strategy. Women suggested that if they knew of the benefits of the family strategy, it would gain more support, with one woman (the 10<sup>th</sup> interviewee) saying:

*“It is easy to improve the involvement of women in communication strategy. The key point is to believe in the value of women’s involvement.”*

A further point focused on communicating family strategy in accordance with national norms and values, as well as on the importance of considering women’s feedback. Some women, mainly married, housewives, and aged 26 and above, referred in their answers to

the need to consider social values and women's feedback. One woman (C1) summed up the answers by stating that:

*“Improving communications of family strategy requires using advanced technologies, involving women, and considering Qatari values.”*

#### 4.4 Findings and Research Objectives

This research has four objectives, all focused on the overall aim of exploring the relationships between Qatari women, the new national Qatari family strategy, and the M&C methods used to promote this. Each objective is presented below with the corresponding findings from the analysis of the data from the interviews conducted.

1. First, to assess the role of M&C in supporting Qatar's new family strategy implementation, especially since the planners of the family strategy have considered the importance of M&C for the success of these strategies.

Results of the interviews showed that M&C were ignored by the planners of the family strategy, and the strategy was launched without enough efforts to communicate the strategy effectively. It is clear, therefore, that a lack of awareness of Qatar's family strategy was caused by a lack of effort to communicate family strategy. If enough efforts were made to communicate family strategy, then women would be aware of it. This indicates that there are problems and weaknesses in the communication strategy of family strategy, and that there is a need for an effective M&C strategy.

2. Second, to find out if planners have involved Qatari women and/or their concerns in planning the family strategy, and if their input was taken into consideration during the development of the M&C used in promoting the strategy.

Results of the interviews revealed that family strategy was articulated with no participation from women. Although women are the focus and the key stakeholders of family strategy, they were not given opportunities to articulate the strategy. This, in return, means that popular support was not generated to a great enough extent. It was said in the interviews that policies were set without stakeholder involvement. Given that building commitment through broad stakeholder engagement is an increasingly important element of the strategic planning process, it follows that, without women's participation in family strategy, strategy implementation faces a range of obstacles.

3. Third, to find out which M&C channels are preferred by women in Qatari society and to advise strategy planners and implementers on the best ways of conveying their messages to Qatari women.

Results of the interviews showed that women in Qatar, regardless of their age, use social media. The traditional media such as newspapers and radio were not mentioned at all. Women in Qatar are not paying attention to traditional communication channels such as radio, magazines, and printed media; rather they are paying attention to social media. They relate to different social media platforms as a result of high internet penetration in Qatar. The top social networking sites used by women are Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

4. Fourth, to find out if Qatari women have enough awareness and knowledge about family strategy.

Interviews showed that women have little awareness of Qatar's family strategy. It should be noted that many women stated that they are not aware at all. This indicates that there is a distinct lack of awareness of Qatar's family strategy. It is also worthy of note that there are no differences between the three groups of women from the general population in terms of their awareness of family strategy. This finding reflects the insufficient efforts to communicate family strategy.

## Chapter Five: Discussion of the Findings

### 5.1 Introduction

The objectives of this research focused on the overall aim of exploring the relationships between Qatari women and the methods of M&C used to promote the national Qatari family strategy. This issue is of much importance in Qatar though, in many cases, women are not involved in the communication process. Issues related to the findings of the data analysis have been detailed in Chapter Four, and now this chapter presents the key findings.

### 5.2 Key Findings

To discuss the results of the current research, it is necessary to detail the key findings.

#### **Assessment of the role of M&C in supporting Qatar's FCWE strategy implementations.**

The role of M&C in supporting Qatar's Family strategy was very limited. Lack of communication strategy, priority not being given to communication, the use of traditional communication methods, and ignorance of the stakeholders, mainly Qatari women, are key weaknesses of M&C. Overall, it was found that women have little awareness of Qatar's family strategy. Not even one woman answered that she is deeply aware of Qatar's family strategy, indicating a lack of awareness of this strategy. It should also be noted that there are no differences between the three age groups of women from the general population in their awareness of family strategy.

#### **Find out if planners have involved Qatari women and/or their concerns in planning the family strategy.**

Women were not involved at all in planning this strategy. Both government policy workers and women from the general population believe that Qatar's family strategy was not

informed by the views of women. They all believe that Qatari women were not given opportunities to participate in establishing or articulating family strategy.

**Find out which M&C channels are preferred by women in Qatari society.**

Results of the interviews showed that women in Qatar, regardless of their age, use social media. The traditional media such as newspapers and radio were not mentioned at all. Women in Qatar are not paying attention to traditional communication channels such as radio, magazines, and printed media; rather they are paying attention to social media. They relate to different social media platforms as a result of high internet penetration in Qatar. The top social networking sites used by women are Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

**To find out if Qatari women have enough awareness and knowledge about family strategy.**

Interviews showed that women have little awareness of Qatar's family strategy. It should be noted that many women stated that they are not aware at all, thus indicating a distinct lack of awareness of Qatar's family strategy. It is also worthy of note that there are no differences between the three groups of women from the general population in terms of their awareness of family strategy. This finding reflects the insufficient efforts to communicate family strategy.

### 5.3 Discussions

Efforts to communicate family strategy were not effective enough. The problems and weaknesses in the communication strategy of family strategy can be attributed in part to the lack of involvement of women in strategy development. The findings showed that women believe in the importance of family strategy, and that issuing national strategies to protect the Qatari family is a crucial issue, but it must be communicated effectively. The view that communication is essential for the success of strategy implementation is



supported by Hallahan et al., 2007; Steyn, 2004; and Lewis, 2019, who claim that successful strategic communication is a proactive rather than a reactive process in which rigorous research is conducted in order to define strategic outcomes. This underpins the significance of M&C to the success of national strategies.

Policy makers involved in developing and implementing the family strategy used traditional communication channels and methods to communicate family strategy to stakeholders, ignoring social platforms as a method of communication. However, social media platforms can be an important vehicle for social change. At the same time, ignoring social media platforms is not logical as women in Qatar use social media intensively (Varghese, 2018). This evidence suggests that there is an even greater onus on integrating social media platforms under the auspices of an overall strategic plan in order to target women effectively and to communicate messages relating to family cohesion, social development, and the preservation of traditional values, particularly in the Qatari context.

The official media adopts traditional, official communication channels and formally presents the family strategy through them, ignoring the fact that the new generation is following people, events, and news on social media. Digital transformation has become an inevitable necessity and a modern trend that corresponds to the changes the world is witnessing as a result of the entry of technology into all fields. Even a traditional country like Qatar is moving towards future trends and patterns related to the production and innovation of knowledge and openness to global culture, while preserving its values and cultural identity.

The current study concluded that government policy workers believe that communication of family strategy was weak. This is mainly because family strategy ignored three key

aspects: the use of social media platforms, women's involvement, and the role of communication. Women's high level of engagement with the use of social platforms and technology was a missed opportunity by policy makers. This ignorance of social platforms and gaps in communicating family strategy negatively influenced the effectiveness of communications. It seems that the communication of family strategy included many weaknesses.

Another reason why there is a low degree of awareness of family strategy is that women were not involved in developing the family strategy. Even though they are the key stakeholders of family strategy, they were not asked by policy makers to engage in formulating the strategy, and this does not uphold the importance of involving stakeholders. The stakeholder approach has several important benefits, particularly in the context of national development, because it allows policy makers to learn more about stakeholders in the implementation phase and thereby provides more reliable and productive relationships with them (Freeman, 1994; Jensen, 2002). A stakeholder approach also allows potential problems and risks to be identified early in the implementation process, thus developing a greater level of ownership on the part of stakeholders, as well as greater levels of compliance (Axelrod, 2000; Van Tonder, 2004). This opportunity was clearly missed in this case.

The third reason for a low level of understanding in terms of family strategy is the role of M&C. There is a crucial need for communication strategy, especially for the development and implementation of family strategy. It is vitally important that strategic implementation is aligned with a M&C strategy and, in this regard, the family strategy has largely failed to provide an adequate framework (Camilleri, 2021). It is likely that this shortcoming represents a wider failing on the part of the Qatari state to align policy and communications

but, in this case, the limited scope of the M&C strategy and the failure even to achieve limited aims, for example cultural training of media staff, represents a substantial shortcoming of the implementation process.

The fact that traditional communication methods were used to communicate family strategy is shown to be an unwise decision as the data analysis has shown that an emphasis purely on traditional media channels is likely to be inadequate, particularly in relation to younger audiences. Therefore, a social media campaign could prove to be highly effective (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010; O'Keeffe and Clarke-Pearson, 2011). There is a clear need to utilise social media to communicate family strategy, but it is also important to expand on what using social media as a media platform would entail in a Qatari context. If utilised effectively, social media can construct a new type of relationship between the implementers and stakeholders, based on open and genuine direct communication (Zarrella, 2009; DuBose, 2011).

The current research concluded that there are different factors that influence women when thinking about family priorities. Despite the common factors such as social values, traditions, women's self-image, and friends, the most influential was family. This reflects the tribal nature of Qatari culture. Traditional aspects of Bedouin culture continue to be emphasised in Qatari culture and the handing down of literary forms such as songs, storytelling and poetry to future generations is an integral part of the Bedouin culture (Fromherz, 2017, Cavendish, 2006). This powerful heritage is clearly seen in the analysis of the data regarding influences on women.

The current study showed that women in Qatar, regardless of their age, use social media, and it is the preferred communication method for all women. Nevertheless, social media

platforms were ignored in the M&C strategy despite their importance for communicating family strategy to women. It is likely that a targeting of the most dominant social media platforms of Facebook, Twitter and YouTube is appropriate. Facebook and Twitter are most likely to be useful on an interactive paradigm where a reciprocal relationship between government agencies and female stakeholders can be established. Some communication on traditional media platforms, such as television, with instructions of how to get involved on social media would also be helpful in this regard in order to ameliorate the pre-existing accumulated disadvantages that this part of the population faces. By adopting this type of strategy, the methods for targeting women who are already predisposed to using social media more actively than men become clear and the role within the overall strategy of boosting participation from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds gains in evidence. This helps to define the overall strategy more clearly and moves the onus away from the vague pronouncements that feature in the NDS 2018-2022 document.

The current study revealed that both government policy workers and women from the general population believe that Qatar's family strategy was not informed by the views of women. They believe that Qatari women were not given opportunities to participate in establishing or articulating family strategy. In many Middle Eastern countries, the evidence suggests that policymaking tends to be highly male-dominated and male-oriented, but that this can be to the detriment of both men and women in relation to inclusion and stakeholder involvement (OECD, 2014). For this reason, the literature review consistently advocated not only for the greater involvement and inclusion of women in relation to the QNV and NDS, but also to focus on targeting women from disadvantaged backgrounds as subjects for greater inclusion. In relation to the QNV and NDS, the role of stakeholder involvement in strategic plans revolves at its core around whether to pursue an open or closed approach,

or a hybrid of these two approaches. It is likely that in a country such as Qatar, which tends to adopt a more closed approach towards government and governance, stakeholder involvement in important national projects will face significant limitations. (UN, 2002; Wamsler, 2017; Bendell, 2017).

One of the key objectives of this research is to assess the role of M&C in supporting the implementation of Qatar's new family strategy, especially since the planners of the second NDS have considered the importance of M&C for the success of these strategies. (It is worth noting that social media, unlike when the first NDS was implemented, is currently widely used for dissemination purposes thus becoming a new issue of importance). As today's world has become a global village intertwined with other worlds near and far, whose theses we seem to have no choice in accepting, this blurring of definitions and terms means the abolition of national borders, the generalization of the concepts of globalization, and the transfer of its scope to the maximum extent of generality, without censorship or blocking, and in an open and universally accessible world. From this standpoint, the Arab media, including the Gulf media, will undoubtedly be affected by these accelerating developments (Murphy, 2019). The global media community and its impact have become an indisputable reality, and it seems inevitable that these upcoming developments will witness a marked decline in the national and cultural sovereignty of each state. Contemporary communication technology allows the individual to be open to various media and cultural fields without being subject to the will of the state and its media and cultural policies (Combi, 2016).

There are some gaps in the literature which could be bridged in future studies. For example, the impact of national culture on communicating the national strategies needs to be investigated deeply. Besides, the role of social media in communicating the national

strategies during crisis and pandemics need also to be investigated. Adding to that, the role of women in national strategies should be investigated deeply in the literature.

## Chapter Six: Conclusion and Recommendations

### 6.1 Introduction

This piece of research has different objectives, all focused on the overall aim of exploring relationships between Qatari women and the methods of M&C used to promote the national Qatari family strategy - FCWE - as this issue is of such importance in Qatar, where in many cases women are not involved in communication process. Issues related to the research findings have been discussed in Chapter Four and Chapter Five. This chapter presents the key conclusions and recommendations of the research.

### 6.2 Theoretical Contributions and Discussion

There are several important findings from the primary research that were established during this study in relation to the central research aim. It was clearly shown in the interviews that there was not a coherent and comprehensive independent M&C strategy in relation to the new national Qatari family strategy. Again, although this is not the first time Qatar has experienced major national development planning, the role of M&C was still ignored. Policymakers believe in the value and benefits of family strategy, but they were unconvinced about the benefits of an independent M&C strategy and this affected the structure of the limited strategy that was employed and, crucially, the support such strategies received during the implementation phase. Policy makers and women in general believe that family strategy is crucial, but this did not translate into an effective M&C strategy. This means that it is not enough to develop excellent strategies, it is more important to communicate them and implement them effectively.

When considering all the findings, the strategy did not consider women's opinions or participation. This shows that there are significant gaps between M&C strategies of the family strategy and the reality of the situation in Qatar. In other words, policy makers used

traditional communication channels and methods to communicate family strategy to stakeholders, with no utilization of social media platforms at all. Policy makers ignored the fact that women in Qatar, regardless of their age, use social media, the overwhelming choice of all the women interviewed. Using traditional communication channels to communicate family strategy is like swimming upstream. It is not logical to use traditional M&C methods in the era of social media and advanced technology. This justifies the opinion of both policy makers and women that communication of family strategy was weak. At the same time, this explains why women have little awareness of Qatar's family strategy. This lack of awareness of Qatar's family strategy was evidenced by the fact that not even one woman said that she was deeply aware of family strategy. Again, there were no differences between the three age groups of women from the general population in their awareness of family strategy. This indicates that there are problems and weaknesses in the communication strategy of family strategy, which could also be a reflection of the lack of women's involvement in strategy development.

Although stakeholders should be engaged in the communication process, this involvement was completely ignored in the case of family strategy. Both groups of women interviewed believe that Qatar's family strategy was not informed by the views of women. Not giving opportunities to women to participate in establishing or articulating family strategy negatively influences the effectiveness of family strategy. It is very strange that a strategy related to women would ignore them completely in the development and implementation of such a strategy.

The study revealed that communicating a national strategy requires a deep understanding of national culture. Communication of a national strategy should take into consideration the factors which influence family priorities and women's roles.



### 6.3 Methodological Implications

It was a new experience to conduct interviews with women for research purposes. In my project, there are two populations of interest: women in the general population, and female government policy workers. The two populations are important because the current research focuses on exploring relationships between Qatari women, the new national Qatari family strategy, and the M&C methods used to promote this. The interviews I held with these women provided me with a completely new perspective.

The interviews I held with women taught me the important lesson that we males may not be aware of women's perspectives. I learned that we need to look at the world through their eyes. Women are not the same; they have different experiences and perspectives. One more important point is related to flexibility. Although I had plans to conduct face-to-face interviews, all those plans changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, the plan was to use focus groups in Document 5. Due to COVID-19, I had to change my plans and use interviews instead, and these had to take place mainly via online devices.

Using different methodologies enabled me to collect data from different groups, and enabled me to collect in-depth data. I became aware that using different methodologies allowed me to add insights and methods that might be omitted when only a single method is adopted. Using different methodologies provides a more complete and comprehensive understanding of the research problem than doing it separately (Creswell, 2009).

My research philosophy was that, in order to arrive at a balanced picture of the implementation process of the FCWE strategy and the contribution of M&C to implementation, I had to measure and understand the experience of the two parties involved in that strategy, namely the delivering party or implementing organizations, and the

receiving party or target groups and the public at large. I believe this to be a very logical approach that serves the purpose of my study.

To be honest, for Document Five, I faced different challenges. For example, Qatari women do not feel free to talk to a man about female issues. Women, in general, tend not to speak openly to a senior male, or present an overall positive picture of their reality. This issue was clear in the case of Qatari women. Thus, one of the key challenges was that a male interviewer was conducting interviews with females. First, the fact that a man was carrying out research related to women surprised many of them. Added to that was the challenge related to the answers to the interview questions provided by the respondents in that, in most cases, they only gave short answers. This could be attributed to their shyness at being interviewed by a man. Another challenge related to recording interviews was that most of the women refused to be video recorded, limiting the number of such interviews. Therefore, if I were to do this again, I would engage the help of a female research assistant.

#### 6.4 Social Policy Implications

Communication of the family strategy was not effective enough. The problems and weaknesses of the family strategy communication strategy can partly stem from the fact that women are not involved in the development of the strategy. Since the results showed that women believe in the importance of a family strategy, the development of national strategies to protect the family is crucial, but it must be effectively communicated.

The decision-makers involved in the development and implementation of the family strategy used traditional communication channels and methods to communicate the family strategy to stakeholders, neglecting social platforms as a means of communication. However, social media platforms can be an important vehicle for social change. This evidence indicates that the integration of social media platforms into the overall strategic

plan is even greater to effectively target women and deliver messages related to family cohesion, social development, and the preservation of traditional values, especially in the Qatari context. The official media embraces the traditional official communication channels and officially presents the family strategy through them, ignoring that the new generation follows people, events, and news on social networks.

Digital transformation has become an inevitable necessity and a modern trend that responds to the changes that the world is experiencing with the emergence of technology in all fields. Even a traditional country like Qatar is moving towards future trends and models in terms of knowledge production and innovation and openness to global culture while maintaining its values and cultural identity.

The present study found that policy workers believed that communication about the family strategy was weak. This is mainly because three key aspects have been neglected in the family strategy: the use of social media platforms, the participation of women, and the role of communication. The great commitment of women to using social platforms and technology has been unexploited by policy makers. This ignorance of social platforms and gaps in family strategic communication had a negative impact on the effectiveness of communication.

Women were not involved in the formulation of the family strategy. Although they are key players in the family strategy, decision makers have not asked them to participate in strategy development. This is not to underestimate the importance of stakeholder participation since this approach has several important advantages, especially in the context of national development, because it allows decision-makers to learn more about

stakeholders during the implementation phase and thus establish more reliable and productive relationships with them.

The current study found that there are different factors that influence women when they think about family priorities. Despite common factors such as social values, traditions, the self-image of a woman and friends, the family was the most influential. This reflects the tribal nature of Qatari culture.

### 6.5 Managerial Implications

Communication is crucial to the success of strategy implementation. Communication plays an important role in education, knowledge dissemination and learning during strategy implementation. An efficient strategy implementation process includes clear and precise communication about the need for the strategy, the process of strategic and logical change, and their impact on the status quo of employees. Communication brings commitment and consensus, and helps build the strategy relationships between different units/departments, and different strategic levels. Because strategy formulation and effective strategy implementation require coordination of several actors and their actions, the interaction between the actors is extremely important.

Social media platforms can be an important vehicle for social change. This evidence indicates that the integration of social media platforms into the overall strategic plan is even greater to effectively target women and deliver messages related to family cohesion, social development, and the preservation of traditional values, especially in the Qatari context.

Stakeholder engagement is crucial. This approach has several important advantages, especially in the context of national development, because it allows decision-makers to

learn more about stakeholders during the implementation phase and thus build more reliable and productive relationships with them. A stakeholder approach also allows potential problems and risks to be identified early in the implementation process, which increases stakeholder ownership and alignment.

## 6.6 Recommendations

In the evidence and data collected during this study, there is a large degree of consensus concerning the M&C strategy adopted in relation to the family strategy. There is a general acceptance that the strategic use of M&C will play a far more important role during the later phases of implementation. As a result, the major recommendation of this research would be for the family strategy team to explore this question in detail because this study has revealed the dangers of embarking on a major national development project without a coherent M&C strategy, and this mistake ought not to be repeated. It is also recommended that social media platforms be utilised to communicate family strategy effectively as women of all age groups in Qatar use social media.

A further recommendation is to involve women in all national strategies related to women. As the general belief is that Qatari women were not given opportunities to participate in establishing or articulating family strategy, they now need to be provided with a critical role in the M&C programme of the family strategy because this will increase the realism of the communications. It is crucial that policymakers be aware of the different dimensions and influences of national culture when communicating national strategy.

Taking all these aspects into consideration, there are three important recommendations: all sector strategies should have a M&C strategy; M&C agencies should be involved in developing and promoting the NDS; and planning teams, as well as implementation teams,

must design training and capacity building programmes to develop and involve media professionals in NDS ownership, feedback, and promotion.

The development of a long-term M&C strategy aligned with a stakeholder approach is, therefore, a critical imperative and can target specific stakeholders in order to increase transparency, mobilise support, enlist participation, increase levels of perceived ownership, provide greater clarity on the aims of the development process, and increase accountability.

In this regard, creation, dissemination, and feedback should be a constant and dynamic process. This requires involving stakeholders, using social platforms, and focusing on quick feedback. This also required developing employee skills in communication and social media.

It is also important to be aware of Qatari culture in design strategies. Policymakers should take into consideration all issues related to national culture. The study revealed that communicating a national strategy requires a deep understanding of national culture. Communication of a national strategy should take into consideration the factors which influence family priorities and women's roles.

Furthermore, it is essential to consider the changing perceptions of younger Qatari women. This requires considering differences in media needs, for example. However, while it is important to focus on women, it is important to consider the family unit as a whole and the role of men in supporting the woman and family unit. Behind every strong woman there is a strong man.

#### 6.7 Limitations and Future Research

It is necessary to shed light on some limitations related to this research. First, the plan was to use a focus group approach, but this turned into online meetings due to the Covid-19

pandemic, where face-to-face interviews became difficult, if not impossible. The State of Qatar had been taking all necessary precautionary measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 to ensure the safety of all its residents, and this is one of the key limitations related to the process of collecting data. Despite that, interviews became easier with online techniques. Perhaps doing interviews online meant the women felt more comfortable than being in a room with a man. However, I was not able to observe the reactions of the interviewees. Looking at the two situations, the remote/individual data collection may have also meant that women were more open than they might otherwise have been though they may have been suspicious of being recorded. At the same time, I saw people individually rather than as a group and this, in turn, influenced the discussions and comparison.

Another challenge was the fact a male interviewer was conducting interviews with females and, in fact, many women were surprised that a man was carrying out research related to women. This did influence their way of answering questions as, in most cases, the women provided relatively short answers. A further limitation was related to recording the interviews because most of the women refused to be recorded on video. Therefore, video recorded interviews were limited. Only 3 interviews were videoed, 9 interviews were written down by a secretary, and 15 interviews were just subject to researcher note-taking.

There are some gaps in the literature which could be bridged in future studies. For example, the impact of national culture on communicating the national strategies needs to be investigated deeply. Besides, the role of social media in communicating the national strategies during crisis and pandemics need also to be investigated. Adding to that, the role of women in national strategies should be investigated deeply in the literature.





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