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Original Research

Analysis of Dimensions and Components of Strategy in Media Based on the Meta-Synthesis Method

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Today, media have influenced all aspects of life. Therefore, a deeper understanding of media strategy is essential. The aim of the present study was to analyze the dimensions and components of strategy in media based on the meta-synthesis method. In this research, using the meta-synthesis approach, an attempt was made to systematically analyze the scientific literature in this field and provide a conceptual framework for configuring the subject of science and technology diplomacy. To this end, out of 130 identified relevant sources, after undergoing the necessary steps, a total of 23 sources were reviewed and analyzed. The findings indicated that the concepts related to media strategy can be categorized into four main dimensions: the nature and essence of strategy in media, the formulation of strategy in media, the implementation and execution of strategy in media, and finally, the outcomes, evaluation, and impact assessment of strategy in media.

Keywords: Media Strategy, Conceptual Framework, Strategic Objectives, Meta-Synthesis

1. Introduction

Like other organizations, media outlets are influenced by environmental conditions and changes, and strategy can protect them from these changes and help them respond flexibly to environmental shifts. Media organizations, in particular, have experienced such turbulent and complex environments in recent decades. These changes have manifested in the type and number of competitors, the diversity of tools and methods for message production, the level of risk, the degree of ambiguity, and the increase or decrease in instability (Zilola et al., 2023). Managers of these organizations adopt various approaches to avoid being caught off guard and to confront the negative consequences of these transformations, with strategy design and formulation being among the most important and well-known approaches. Strategic media planning involves a process that results in media strategies (Anwar et al., 2020). The success of a strategy in media is achieved through an understanding of the nature of media strategy, precise formulation, implementation, and evaluation (Lonsdale & Kane, 2019). To understand and reach a destination, it is essential to know the roadmap. Similarly, achieving the ultimate goal requires using a roadmap, which, in essence, is the strategy.

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Strategy is a significant principle composed of several interconnected components, with the critical aspect being how these components and various actions are combined (Jungherr et al., 2019).

Strategies are tools through which an organization can achieve its long-term objectives. These strategies may involve expanding geographical activities, diversifying activities, acquiring other companies, producing and offering products, penetrating markets, reducing costs, selling off assets, delegating authority, and forming various partnerships (Plesner & Gulbrandsen, 2015). A comprehensive strategy reflects the core values of an organization. To this end, the strategy design team must assess the organization's capabilities, resources, and the attitudes of its members and set goals accordingly. Strategies should be realistic and operational. In designing a comprehensive strategy, the focus should be on the final outcome and the primary goal (Zappettini et al., 2021), as strategy forms the foundation of all internal organizational activities. The figure below illustrates the general characteristics of a comprehensive strategy. Strategy is a pattern or plan that integrates an organization's fundamental objectives, policies, and a chain of actions into a coherent whole. It encompasses external environmental relations, the overall mission, and the goals of organizations. Both strategic approaches have three major characteristics: articulating long-term and short-term objectives, formulating an execution plan that connects the environment with the organization, and designing an effective implementation method (Effing & Spil, 2016). Strategy includes globalization, multi-faceted and comprehensive business models, collaboration, and customer orientation (Bouyi Ardakani et al., 2010).

Having a clear strategy ensures that daily decisions align with the organization's long-term interests. Without a strategy, today's decisions might negatively impact future outcomes. Additionally, strategy encourages individuals to collaborate in achieving common goals. Most organizations employ strategic planning at the highest level. A clear strategy is equally important for providing services to both external audiences and internal employees across various organizational departments (Mills & Plangger, 2015).

Policy-making is a tool for achieving annual objectives. The product of policies includes guidelines, regulations, and procedures that a company adheres to in achieving its declared goals. Policies serve as guidelines for decision-making and define the day-to-day and repetitive conditions of the organization (Mensah & Onyancha, 2021). On the other hand, long-term objectives can be defined as specific outcomes that the organization strives to achieve in fulfilling its mission. The term "long-term" refers to a period exceeding one year. These objectives are critical for the organization's success, as they determine its direction. They help the organization conduct evaluations, create synergies, set priorities, coordinate activities, and effectively plan, organize, motivate employees, and control organizational activities. Long-term objectives should be challenging, measurable, stable, reasonable, and clear (Carvalho et al., 2022).

In the media, one of its subfields is media management. The primary goal of media management is to bridge the gap between management theories and principles and the characteristics of the media industry. The main objective of media management is to connect management theories and principles with the unique characteristics of the media industry. The media industry encompasses a wide range of different communication tools that vary significantly in terms of customer or audience engagement, content delivery, scope of activities, and more (Mierzjewska & Hollifield, 2006). The media industry can be seen as one in which news, art, and other inputs are processed and presented as marketable and influential products. Compared to other industries, the media industry is relatively new and is in the early stages of its life cycle. Companies are introducing a variety of products, the rate of product innovation is high, and market share in this industry is rapidly changing (Havens et al., 2009). The media industry comprises different sectors, each sharing commonalities with others while experiencing distinct competitive environments and environmental changes (Kanagarajoo et al., 2020; Wirtz, 2017).

Some studies have focused on the components of media strategy. Ali-Asgari and Mokabari (2011) concluded in their research that a reformist and adaptive perspective was accepted by the majority of the focus group, and ultimately, a combined strategic management paradigm with specific considerations and requirements was emphasized by experts (Ali-Asgari & Mokabari, 2011). Astanah and colleagues (2020) found that the most critical causal conditions of strategic management

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included 1) secrecy and selective gatekeeping, 2) trust in alternative media, and 3) the lack of media democracy. Additionally, the most important strategies included 1) enhancing social capital through media, 2) building media trust, 3) establishing effective communication, and 4) adopting a science-based media approach and utilizing media tactics (Astaneh et al., 2020). Khashaei (2012) concluded that having a robust media system depends on the management policy-making system and the correct policy-making method and model. Therefore, the main issue in this article is the lack of a policy (strategy) formulation model at the national level in the media domain (Khashaei, 2012).

Regarding the necessity of the topic, it should be noted that today, media affects all aspects of life. In other words, it is difficult to find any area of life where the effects of media are not observed. Therefore, media outlets employ various strategies for news coverage, and gaining a deeper understanding of this subject can help better comprehend the meaning and activities of the media. The primary objective of this study is to analyze the dimensions and components of strategy in media based on the meta-synthesis method.

2. Methods and Materials

Meta-study is one of the methods used to examine, synthesize, and analyze past research. Meta-study involves in-depth analysis of research conducted in a specific field and, depending on the research needs, focuses on four areas: meta-method, meta-theory, meta-analysis, and meta-synthesis. The present article is applied in its objective and qualitative in its data type, utilizing a library research method based on secondary data with a meta-synthesis approach, grounded in a review of information sources in the field of media strategy. For this purpose, relevant and appropriate databases were first selected for article searches, and to ensure comprehensive search coverage, scientific

resource search engines, including Google Scholar and Normags, were used to identify credible documents. This approach was adopted due to the limited number of sources in various scientific databases. Therefore, all scientific sources and documents in this field up to the end of 2024 were reviewed without limiting the database. In reviewing and selecting these documents, a checklist was used as the basis. According to this checklist, articles and documents were examined in four areas: clarity in problem and goal statement with two indicators, methodology including data collection and analysis with six indicators, presentation of findings with five indicators, and discussion and reasoning with two indicators. Based on this checklist, a total of 15 indicators were used to assess the quality and selection of articles. In the present study, out of 110 identified articles, books, and work reports, 23 sources with medium to high quality were selected and deemed suitable for analysis.

3. Findings and Results

According to Table 2, the coding of definitions related to science and technology diplomacy was conducted at two levels: the main category and the sub-category. The first category is the nature and essence of strategy in media, which explores what the nature of media strategy is and how the levels and distinctions are classified. The second category is the rationale and process of formulating a strategy in media, which includes the six-step process of designing a media product and program strategy. The third category, titled the implementation and execution of strategy in media, focuses on considerations for implementation. Finally, the fourth category is the evaluation and impact domains of strategy in media, which includes pre-evaluation, impact assessment of programs and media productions, strategic learning, and analysis of achievements and failures, as well as documentation of experiences (Table 1).

Table 1

Process of Categorizing Codes and Categories

Row	Main Category	Sub-Category	Codes	Frequency	Rank
1	Nature and Essence of Strategy in Media	Nature of Strategy in Media	Strategy as Position - Strategy as Pattern - Strategy as Perspective - Strategy as Plan	7	3
		Levels of Strategy in Media	Organizational Strategy - Media Strategy - Media Program Strategy		

		Distinctions in Media Strategy	Type of Media - Range of Distribution - Media Ownership		
2	Rationale and Formulation of Strategy in Media	Six-Step Process for Designing Media Product and Program Strategy	Problem Analysis - Writing Program and Setting End Time - Map and Model of Program Structure - Predicting Expected and Unexpected Events - Program Evaluation Map and Model - Program Creation	4	4
3	Implementation and Execution of Strategy in Media	Execution of Strategy in Media	Developing Actions and Organizational Execution Plans, Scheduling, Establishing Organizational Structures, Defining Reward Systems and Organizational Performance, Preparing Other Necessary Organizational Tools and Infrastructures	11	2
		Implementation of Strategy in Media	Principle of Causality: Identifying activities leading to the realization of strategic goals and ensuring alignment of projects and organizational systems (processes). Principle of Importance: Focusing on vital activities identified to achieve the strategy. Principle of Consistency: Ensuring that vital activities do not conflict and guide the organization toward the intended direction. Principle of Continuity: Aligning projects and organizational systems (processes) with vital activities to ensure physical implementation and accountability for results. Principle of Transparency: Ensuring intellectual clarity in strategy implementation, where individuals have a clear understanding of the strategy, its implementation, and related duties and responsibilities.		
4	Evaluation and Impact Domains of Strategy in Media	Pre-Evaluation	Pre-testing the plan in specific groups can largely measure the potential outcomes after broadcasting.	16	1
		Impact Assessment of Programs and Media Productions	Continuous assessment in three forms: immediate, mid-term, long-term		
		Strategic Learning, Analysis of Achievements and Failures, and Documentation	Media Brand Status - Level of Trust - Media's Position in the Message Market - Audience Satisfaction and Loyalty - Value Creation for Media, Society, and People		

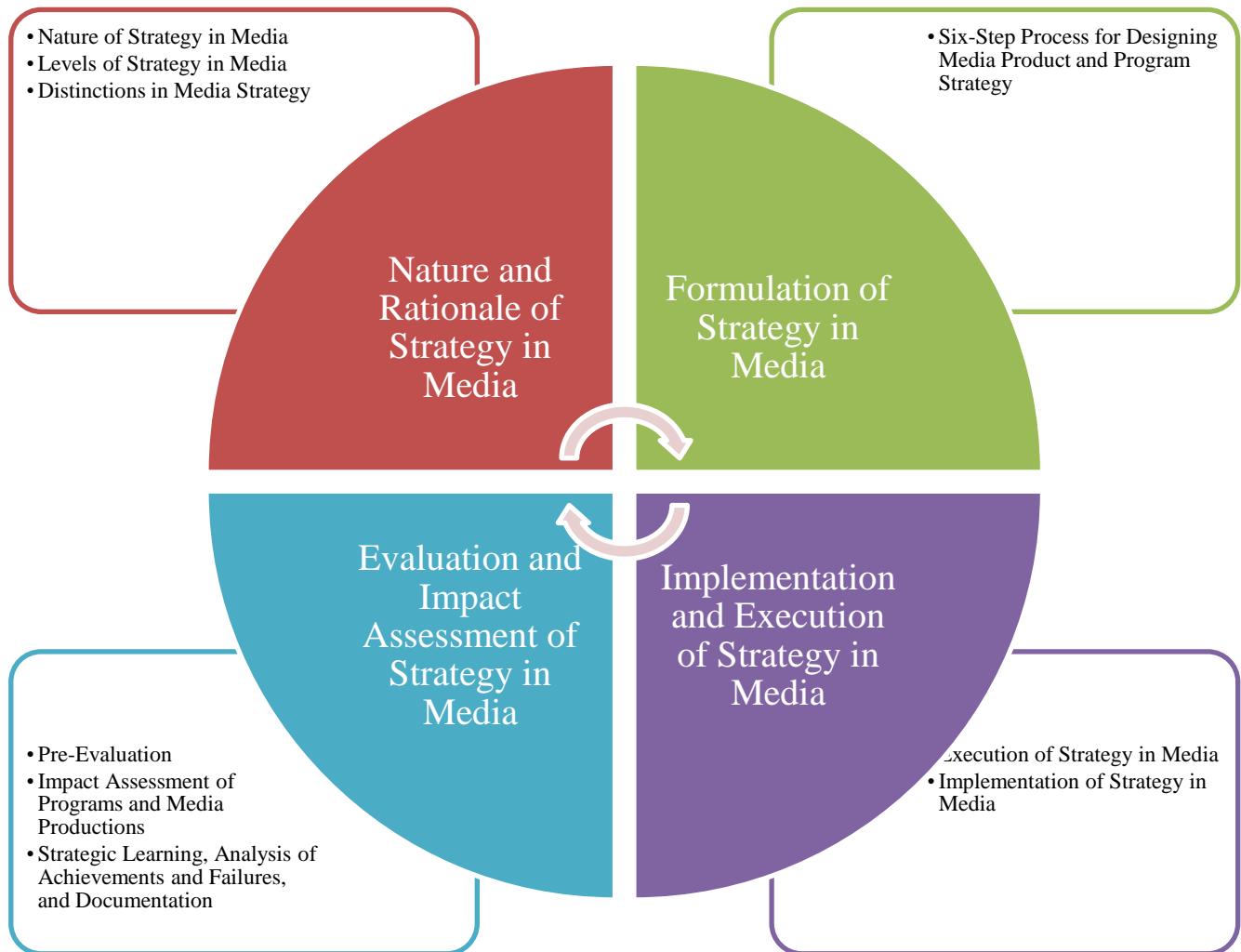**Table 2**

Main Categories, Source, and Frequency

Row	Main Category	Source	Frequency
1	Nature and Rationale of Strategy in Media	1,5,9,11,12,14,15	7
2	Formulation of Strategy in Media	2,6,9,11	4
3	Implementation and Execution of Strategy in Media	2,3,4,6,7,8,9,10,14,15,17,19	11
4	Evaluation and Impact Assessment of Strategy in Media	1,2,3,4,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18	16

According to the results in Table 2, the coding of definitions related to science and technology diplomacy was conducted at two levels: the main category and the sub-category. Four main themes were ultimately identified: the nature and rationale of strategy in media, the formulation of strategy in media, the implementation and execution of strategy in media, and the evaluation and impact assessment of strategy in media. The first category focuses on the nature and essence of strategy in media, including what the nature of media strategy is and how the levels and distinctions are classified. The second category involves the rationale and process of formulating a strategy in media, which includes the six-step process of designing a media product and program strategy. The third category, titled the implementation and execution of strategy in media, centers on considerations for implementation. Finally, the fourth category is the evaluation and impact domains of strategy in media, which includes pre-evaluation, impact assessment of programs and media productions, strategic learning, and analysis of achievements and failures, as well as documentation of experiences. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework of the main themes.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework for Analyzing Strategy Dimensions in Media

- Nature of Strategy in Media
- Levels of Strategy in Media
- Distinctions in Media Strategy

- Six-Step Process for Designing Media Product and Program Strategy

Nature and Rationale of Strategy in Media

Formulation of Strategy in Media

Evaluation and Impact Assessment of Strategy in Media

Implementation and Execution of Strategy in Media

- Pre-Evaluation
- Impact Assessment of Programs and Media Productions
- Strategic Learning, Analysis of Achievements and Failures, and Documentation

- Execution of Strategy in Media
- Implementation of Strategy in Media

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The present study aimed to analyze the dimensions and components of strategy in media based on the meta-synthesis method. Based on the mentioned criteria, only 23 published articles on media strategy were identified. These articles employed a qualitative method, each focusing on this issue from a different perspective. The main goal of the present study, which was "to understand the nature of media strategy and to find a suitable conceptual framework for comprehending it," was approached using the meta-synthesis method, whereby the dimensions and aspects of media strategy in various studies were analyzed and coded, and then grouped under similar concepts. Based on the designated codes in the present study, four components were examined. The findings indicated that the concepts related to media strategy could be categorized into four main dimensions: the nature and essence of strategy in media, the formulation of strategy in media, the implementation and execution of strategy in media, and finally, the outcomes, evaluation, and impact assessment of strategy

in media. These results align with prior studies (Ali-Asgari & Mokabari, 2011; Astaneh et al., 2020; Khashaei, 2012).

Today, the media holds the pulse of life. Media affects all political, economic, cultural, and social aspects of life. Media outlets employ various strategies tailored to their objectives. Therefore, it can be concluded that media strategies are justifiable based on the nature, goals, and essence of that media outlet.

Regarding the limitations of this study, it should be noted that presenting all the components of media strategy is challenging because media outlets are vast and diverse, with each serving specific functions. Additionally, providing a media strategy model was not feasible due to financial and time constraints. Moreover, the available articles that formed the basis of the analysis were the main structure of the research results, and in this respect, the number of articles was not very large. It is suggested that future researchers use mixed methods and strive to consider the perspectives of media experts and specialists more thoroughly.

Authors' Contributions

Authors contributed equally to this article.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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Declaration of Interest

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Ethical Considerations

Not applicable.

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