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Analysis of Strategy as Practice Approach in Comparison with Strategy Schools

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Abstract

This study examines the positioning of the Strategy as Practice (SaP) approach within the strategic management literature by comparing it to Mintzberg's ten strategy schools. Through a detailed analysis of theoretical foundations, terminologies, methodologies, and practices, the research highlights SaP's unique contributions to bridging the gap between prescriptive and descriptive approaches in strategy formation. SaP provides not only a theoretical framework but also practical contributions to the understanding of micro-level social interactions and organisational routines in strategy formulation processes. These contributions make strategy work more context-sensitive and participatory. The findings reveal that SaP aligns most closely with the Cultural and Learning schools, emphasizing the dynamic, socially constructed, and emergent nature of strategy as a practice. By focusing on micro-level social interactions and organizational routines, SaP offers a complementary perspective to the structured frameworks of Mintzberg's schools. In this context, it is seen that SaP provides a guide for practitioners in strategy formulation processes to understand the social and dynamic nature of strategy and to make more flexible and creative strategic decisions accordingly. Furthermore, it is considered that SaP enables the development of practical tools and methods that can make strategy implementation more effective in organisational contexts. This study contributes to the strategic management field by providing a comprehensive comparison and proposing a more integrated understanding of strategy formation processes. Implications for future research and practice are discussed, emphasizing the need for a nuanced, context-sensitive approach to strategizing.

Keywords: *Strategy as Practice, Strategy Schools, Strategic Management, Micro-level Strategy, Strategizing*

Jel Codes: *M10, M19, L20*

Strateji Okullarıyla Karşılaştırmalı Pratik olarak Strateji Yaklaşımı Analizi

Öz

Bu çalışma, Pratik olarak Srateji (SaP) yaklaşımının stratejik yönetim literatüründeki konumunu, özellikle Mintzberg'in strateji okulları ile ilişkisi bağlamında incelemektedir. SaP ve Mintzberg'in on strateji okulunun teorik temelleri, terminolojileri, metodolojileri ve uygulamaları arasındaki etkileşimleri ele alarak, strateji oluşturma süreçlerindeki teorik çerçeveler ile pratik gerçeklikler arasındaki boşlukları doldurmayı amaçlamaktadır. SaP, yalnızca teorik bir çerçeve sunmakla kalmayıp, aynı zamanda strateji oluşturma süreçlerinde mikro düzeyde sosyal etkileşimlerin ve organizasyonel rutinlerin anlaşılmasına yönelik uygulama katkıları sağlamaktadır. Bu katkılar, strateji çalışmalarını daha bağlam duyarlı ve katılımcı bir hale getirmektedir. Bulgular, SaP'nin Kültürel ve Öğrenme okullarıyla yakın bir uyum gösterdiğini, stratejinin dinamik ve sosyal olarak inşa edilmiş doğasını vurguladığını ortaya koymaktadır. Mintzberg'in okulları ise daha yapılandırılmış ve sistematik bir stratejik yönetim perspektifi sunmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, SaP'nin strateji oluşturma süreçlerinde uygulayıcılara, stratejinin sosyal ve dinamik doğasını anlamaları ve bu doğrultuda daha esnek ve yaratıcı stratejik kararlar almaları için bir rehber sunduğu görülmektedir. Ayrıca, SaP'nin organizasyonel bağlamda strateji uygulamalarını daha etkili hale getirebilecek pratik araçlar ve yöntemler geliştirilmesine olanak sağladığı değerlendirilmektedir. Bu çalışma, SaP'nin stratejik yönetim literatürüne sağladığı özgün katkıları vurgulayarak, gelecekteki araştırmalar ve uygulamalar için daha derinlemesine bir anlayış geliştirmeyi hedeflemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Pratik Olarak Strateji, Strateji Okulları, Stratejik Yönetim, Mikro Düzeyde Strateji, Strateji Oluşumu*

Jel Kodu: *M10, M19, L20*

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INTRODUCTION

Strategic management stands out as a multifaceted academic field shaped by the contributions of various schools of thought. Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel (1998) identified ten different schools of thought in strategic management and categorized them into three main groups: *prescriptive schools* (Design, Planning, and Positioning), *descriptive schools* (Entrepreneurial, Cognitive, Learning, Power, Cultural, and Environmental), and the *configuration school* (Kipley & Lewis, 2009). These schools provide diverse perspectives on strategy formation, offering a rich theoretical framework. However, most of these schools either focus on normative frameworks or context-sensitive processes, creating a critical gap in our understanding. This gap significantly limits our ability to comprehend and address the complex interplay between theoretical approaches and the practical realities of strategy formation in real-world organizational contexts.

Strategy as Practice (hereafter SaP) addresses this limitation by considering strategy not only as an outcome but also as a process, a practice, and a social phenomenon. Whittington (1996) defines SaP as a perspective that shifts the focus from strategy as a static plan to strategy as something people do in practice. This approach examines strategy formation processes through micro-level social activities, processes, and practices, emphasizing the context-sensitive and socially constructed nature of strategy (Golsorkhi et al., 2010). According to Jarzabkowski et al. (2021), SaP demonstrates how strategy has evolved from a corporate feature to a social undertaking in contemporary industrialized nations, providing a framework that integrates theoretical insights with practical realities.

SaP's perspective is expected to align strongly with descriptive schools. For instance, the Learning School's view of strategy as an emergent process corresponds with SaP's emphasis on the contextual and iterative nature of strategic decision-making processes. Similarly, the Power School's focus on political dynamics in strategy complements SaP's interest in the social interactions and power relations that influence strategy formation processes (Kipley & Lewis, 2009; Golsorkhi et al., 2010). However, SaP's position within the schools of strategy is not limited to descriptive schools alone. SaP also serves as a bridge to understand how the analytical frameworks of prescriptive schools are applied in the complex realities of organizational life and how these processes are shaped by social practices (Golsorkhi et al., 2015). In this regard, SaP plays a unifying role among the schools of strategy, offering a critical tool to rethink the relationship between the theory and practice of strategic management.

Building on these insights, this study serves two primary purposes: first, to clarify SaP's theoretical and practical contributions within the schools of strategy, and second, to explore how SaP bridges the divide between theoretical frameworks and the practical realities of strategy formation. By addressing these objectives, the study aims to advance our understanding of strategy formation processes and their implications for both academic research and practical applications. To achieve these aims, the study focuses on two interconnected research questions: How does SaP position itself within the schools of strategy, and why is this positioning significant for understanding strategy formation processes? And how does SaP's relationship with the schools of strategy contribute to bridging the gap between theoretical frameworks and practical realities? Through these questions, the study seeks to contribute to developing a more holistic and integrated understanding of strategy formation processes that benefits both theoretical development and practical application.

1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

1.1. What is SaP?

The SaP approach can be defined as a field of interest that focuses on the actual activities of strategic actors during the strategy formation process (Hendry, 2000; Jarzabkowski, 2003; Johnson et al., 2003; Whittington, 1996, 2002). The central focus of this approach is the "*micro-level social activities, processes, and practices that characterize organizational strategy and its development*" (Golsorkhi et al., 2010:1). Vaara and Whittington (2012) describe the SaP approach as a method that examines how strategies are shaped under the influence of widespread organizational and social practices, and how strategizing activities are interpreted within the context of interactions between social structures and individuals. In other words, SaP investigates the "black box" of strategy formation (Golsorkhi et al., 2010). From this perspective, the core research questions of SaP are as follows: Who are the strategists? What do they do? Why and how are they effective in the implementation of strategy? (Jarzabkowski, 2005).

SaP views strategy not as something an organization possesses but as something its members do (Jarzabkowski, Seidl & Balogun, 2022). By emphasizing the importance of human actors and their daily practices, this approach offers an alternative perspective to traditional strategy research (Whittington, 1996; Johnson et al., 2003). Therefore, the SaP approach focuses on praxis (strategizing activities), practitioners (actors), and practices (routines and tools) as the fundamental elements of strategy formation, examining various parameters under these three headings (Jarzabkowski, Balogun & Seidl, 2007; Whittington, 2006). Thus, the core components of SaP are structured as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Fundamental Information on the SaP

Concept	Approach	Key Ideas	Key Actors *(Alphabetically ordered)*
Strategy is seen **as a practice,** focusing on the daily activities and processes that constitute strategic work in organizations.	SAP emphasizes the ***micro-level actions and interactions of individuals and groups*** involved in strategizing. It seeks to understand ***how strategy is shaped*** ***by the practices, tools, and routines used*** ***by practitioners***.	**Practices:** These are the shared routines, norms, and tools that guide the strategic activities of organizations. ***Practices include both formal methods (like SWOT analysis) and informal ones (like storytelling or meetings).*** **Practitioners:** The individuals who are involved in the making and executing of strategy, **including not only top managers but also middle managers, consultants, and other organizational members**. **Praxis: The actual work or activities involved in strategizing**, such as **meetings, workshops, and the use of strategic tools.**	Andreas Paul Spee Ann Langley Brad Mackay Chris Carter Damon Golsorkhi David Seidl Eero Vaara George Wright Gerard P. Hodgkinson Gerry Johnson Jean-Louis Denis Julia Balogun Leif Melin Linda Rouleau Martin Kornberger Paula Jarzabkowski Richard Whittington Robert Chia Stewart R. Clegg

1.2. The Institutionalization Process of SaP

Over the past two decades, the SaP approach has shown significant development in strategy research. In 2003, the Journal of Management Studies (JMS) published a special issue based on the outcomes of the European Institute for Advanced Studies in Management (EIASM) conference held in Brussels in 2001. This conference, organized by Johnson, Melin, and Whittington to discuss micro-processes and micro-issues of strategy, is considered the birthplace of SaP as an approach. Although there were earlier studies on SaP (Whittington, 1996), these early works are generally regarded as individual efforts rather than part of a collective movement.

Since 2001, significant progress has been made in the SaP field, including the publication of foundational books (Jarzabkowski, 2005; Johnson et al., 2007; Golsorkhi et al., 2010), eight special issues in leading journals over 15 years (Journal of Management Studies (JMS), 2003; Human Relations (HR), 2007; Long Range Planning (LRP), 2008; Business History (BH), 2013; JMS, 2014; Journal of Strategic Information Systems (JSIS), 2014; British Journal of Management (BJM), 2015 & Strategic Management Journal, 2018), and dozens of articles. SaP researchers have established their official website (www.strategy-as-practice.org), organized conferences, and formed interest groups at major conferences such as the Academy of Management and EGOS, turning SaP into a deliberate movement (Jarzabkowski et al., 2022; Prashantham & Healey, 2022). This rapid development has been driven primarily by European professionals and academics. Consequently, some authors have portrayed SaP as a rebellion against the North American dominance in strategy studies (Carter et al., 2008).

Jarzabkowski et al. (2022) describe the development of the SaP field over the past 20 years in three stages —Germination, Blossoming, and Harvesting— explaining how the field has matured and evolved into an academic community. According to the authors, the growth of SaP has depended not only on the quality of scholarly work but also on processes such as influencing other academics, building a supportive community, and defining the boundaries of the field. The authors argue that SaP is currently transitioning into a new "Propagation Phase," during which collaboration among different sub-communities and cross-interactions with other research areas are essential for creating broader impact and completing a more robust institutionalization process. They emphasize that the future success of SaP depends on maintaining this diversity and pluralism while contributing to new research domains. Rouleau and Cloutier (2022: 731), referencing Jarzabkowski et al. (2022: 18), note that the SaP research field is still at a "critical juncture," highlighting that the field is in a period where options for further development remain open. They stress the importance of continuing to advance the field to ensure its growth and sustainability.

1.3. The Theoretical Foundations of SaP

While SaP draws on many existing strategy studies and various disciplines, leading researchers in this field (Jarzabkowski, 2005; Johnson et al., 2007; Golsorkhi et al., 2010) argue that the theoretical foundations of SaP are rooted in pragmatism and practice-based social theory. The views of these pioneers can be summarized as follows: From a pragmatist perspective, strategy research aims to establish a direct connection with actors and their actions rather than producing abstract generalizations. This approach contributes to enabling actors to be more effective in their respective fields. From the perspective of practice-based social theory, unlike traditional strategy studies, social and economic contexts are not external to the strategy process but are internalized at every stage of this process. In this regard, the practice perspective provides an in-depth analysis of the micro-level activities within organizational processes and the macro-level factors outside these processes. Consequently, the philosophy of pragmatism and the practice turn in social theory emphasize the importance of experience and action.

Balogun, Huff, and Johnson (2003) suggested that the SaP approach, which is grounded in practice theory, should focus on reconceptualizing existing problems rather than producing new theories. Indeed, the SaP approach leverages existing strategy research, such as dynamic capabilities, the resource-based view, sensemaking, knowledge-based approaches, and strategy process theory, and has the capacity to shed light on the issues emerging from these studies through a practice-

based lens (Albertsen et al., 2024; Jarzabkowski, 2005; Johnson et al., 2003). Jarzabkowski (2005) further argues that the SaP approach can provide in-depth explanations of how strategy is formed by utilizing different levels and units of analysis. Additionally, beyond existing strategy studies, the development of SaP based on practice theory demonstrates that it draws on many related disciplines, such as philosophy, sociology, action and discourse studies, and anthropology.

Johnson et al. (2007) note that scholars in many disciplines are increasingly interested in contemporary practices, and now, with SaP, it is the strategists' turn: "It is time to shift the strategy research agenda toward the micro" (Johnson et al., 2003:14). On the other hand, both pragmatism and practice theory are ultimately meta-theoretical, and it is the researchers' task to translate these meta-theoretical alignments into practical research. Finally, Golsorkhi et al. (2010) suggest that this reconceptualization could signify a fundamental ontological shift in several respects:

i. The phenomena of the strategy world can no longer be seen merely as observable stable states, as they constitute a reality in flux.
ii. Instead of accepting strategy as a phenomenon "found" at the organizational level, it should be recognized as being distributed across multiple levels, from individual actions to the institutional level.
iii. The strategy world constitutes a genuine social reality created and recreated through interactions among various actors both within and outside the organization. Accordingly, there are several fundamental epistemological implications for both researchers and practitioners.

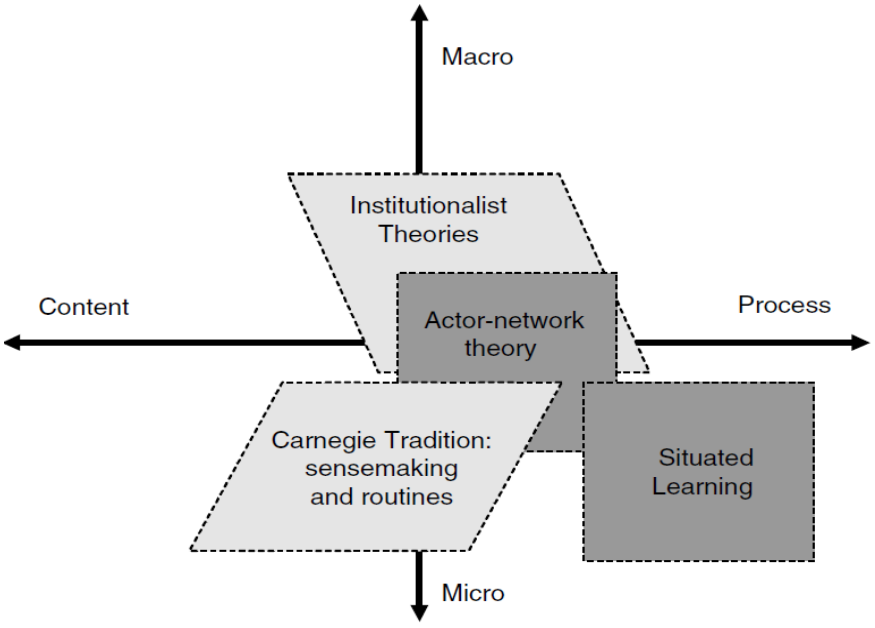


Figure 1: Four Theoretical Foundations for SaP Research (Johnson et al., 2007:37)

Moreover, the SaP approach is supported by various theoretical sources and models, some of which originate from the strategy discipline, while many come from outside it. Institutional theories, the Carnegie Tradition (sensemaking and routines), actor-network theory, and situated learning are foundational theoretical sources for SaP in terms of its focus on the practice turn and pragmatism (Johnson et al., 2007:37). Therefore, these four theoretical sources are addressed within the theoretical orientations of SaP—pragmatism and the practice-based social theory of the "practice turn." As shown in

Figure 1, all these theoretical sources are situated at or near the micro-level of strategy, and thus, SaP shifts the focus of strategy from the macro to the micro and from content to process.

To briefly address the relationship of these approaches with SaP, the concept of situated learning is associated with tacit knowledge and communities of practice. On the other hand, the Carnegie Tradition delves deeply into the perspectives of sensemaking and organizational routines. Furthermore, in a broader framework, both the dominant American Neo-Institutionalists and the more European-originated Foucauldian institutional perspectives are closely related to SaP. Vaara and Whittington (2012) argue that SaP is connected to strategic management and institutional theory in many ways and advances these fields theoretically. These views are summarized in Table 2. Finally, actor-network theory analyzes fundamental assumptions related to content and processes at both micro and macro levels. These four approaches not only provide a significant starting point but are also supported by compelling empirical studies (Johnson et al., 2007).

Table 2: SAP and Related Traditions in Strategy and Institutional Research

	Strategy Process	**Micro-Foundations**	**Macro-Institutional Theory**	**Institutional Work**	**Strategy as Practice**
Empirical focus (macro/ micro)	Examines phenomena at the individual, team, and organizational levels	Investigates decision-making and strategies at the micro level	Explores inter-organizational fields and institutional practices	Focuses on individuals' roles in the creation, maintenance, and transformation of institutions	Analyses organizational and institutional practices that both enable and constrain actions
Structure/ agency	Highlights the role of managerial actors	Emphasizes the importance of individual decisions and actions	Focuses on institutions as dominant structures shaping behaviour	Highlights the creative and transformative capabilities of individuals	Examines practices as intermediaries connecting structure and agency
Process/ outcome	Investigates how managerial processes influence organizational performance	Analyses how individual behaviours and decisions impact outcomes	Studies how institutions shape and structure organizational behaviour	Explores how institutional continuity and change depend on individual contributions	Examines how institutionalized practices shape activities and emerge as outcomes

Source: Vaara & Whittington, 2012:35.

1.4. Novelties Brought by SaP

Strategy researchers traditionally view strategy as an asset of organizations; in this context, "organizations have diversification, differentiation, and joint venture strategies, as well as strategic planning, decision-making, and change processes." However, SaP researchers approach strategy as an activity and focus on what people actually do. From this perspective, SaP introduces four main innovations or contributions to the field of strategic management (Jarzabkowski, 2005; Johnson et al., 2007; Golsorkhi et al., 2010):

Understanding Managers' Actions: SaP researchers aim to uncover what people, particularly managers, actually do to manage strategies. In this sense, they engage deeply with strategic management practices, not to discuss what goes wrong, but to explore how strategy is managed. The better we observe what managers are directly involved with in practice, the better we can understand their daily lives and teach them more effectively (Kohtamäki et al., 2022).

In-Depth Explanations: Immersion in practice can provide deeper explanations for some key strategic issues traditionally studied in the field of strategy. While traditional studies often approach these issues at a superficial level, SaP helps us grasp them with concrete details (Carter et al., 2008).

An Integrative Framework: SaP provides an integrative framework for the field of strategy as a whole. What people do in relation to strategy is where all the themes of strategy research converge, helping to gain insights into macro-level concerns in the field (Langley, 2015).

A Rich Research Agenda: This benefit stems from the other three. SaP offers researchers a rich and exciting research agenda by crossing traditional boundaries within the academic discipline and providing direct access to practitioners who have long been excluded from the field (Golsorkhi et al., 2015).

Unlike traditional strategy approaches, SaP shifts the focus from abstract, top-down models of strategy to the micro-level practices and activities of individuals within organizations. This perspective challenges the dominant economic and rationalist paradigms in strategic management, which often prioritize measurable outcomes and efficiency over the social and cultural dimensions of strategy-making (Whittington, 2006). SaP emphasizes that strategy is not merely a plan or a set of decisions but a socially constructed and context-dependent activity shaped by interactions, routines, and practices (Jarzabkowski et al., 2007).

There are also some differing views on the innovations brought by the SaP approach. Unlike dominant perspectives on strategy, SaP offers a micro-level perspective and recognizes a larger number of organizational members as strategic actors (Jarzabkowski et al., 2007). This inclusivity contrasts with traditional approaches, such as the resource-based view (RBV) or dynamic capabilities, which often focus on the firm as a whole or on top management teams (Barney, 1991; Teece et al., 1997). SaP instead highlights the contributions of middle managers, frontline employees, and other actors who are typically overlooked in traditional strategy research (Rouleau, 2005). Additionally, SaP provides a perspective distinct from the economic dominance over strategy. It addresses and responds to challenges and issues emerging from other approaches, such as the strategy process, the resource-based view, and dynamic capabilities research (Rouleau, 2013).

Another key difference lies in SaP's methodological orientation. While traditional strategy approaches often rely on quantitative methods and large-scale data to identify patterns and correlations, SaP advocates for qualitative, practice-based methods such as ethnography, discourse analysis, and video ethnography (Balogun et al., 2003; Gylfe et al., 2016). These methods allow researchers to capture the nuanced, context-specific, and emergent nature of strategy-making processes, which are often missed in more positivist approaches. This methodological shift has enabled SaP to uncover the social, cultural, and material dimensions of strategy that are critical to understanding how strategies are actually formed and implemented.

The growth of SaP literature has led to a diversification of topics and themes addressed in this field. The main themes of SaP research are also represented in the articles included in this thematic collection. As Carter et al. (2008) note, the SaP community may have achieved success in institutionalizing itself as a research community rather than as a source of intellectual innovation. Indeed, an impressive volume of articles on SaP has been produced over the past two decades. While

Golsorkhi et al. (2015) emphasize that SaP research has fulfilled its promises and demonstrated vitality, Kohtamäki et al. (2022) state that SaP has become one of the most dynamic areas of contemporary strategy research.

However, the diversity within SaP research may create challenges related to complexity and consistency, which could hinder the development of cumulative knowledge, as Langley (2015) points out. This issue has also been similarly debated in the broader field of strategic management. Nag et al. (2007) argue that the success of the strategic management field stems from its ability to balance attracting diverse perspectives with establishing a coherent identity. SaP research reflects this balance as well. On the other hand, Kohtamäki et al. (2022) argue that the diversity within SaP should not be seen as a problem but rather as an opportunity for future research.

In summary, SaP distinguishes itself from other strategy approaches by focusing on the micro-level practices and social interactions that shape strategy, challenging the top-down, outcome-oriented perspectives of traditional approaches. Its emphasis on inclusivity, qualitative methodologies, and the socially constructed nature of strategy provides a unique lens through which to understand strategy formation and implementation. These differences not only highlight SaP's contributions to the field of strategic management but also underscore its potential to address gaps and limitations in existing strategy theories**.**

1.5. Methodological Issues and Contributions of SaP

Golsorkhi et al. (2010) emphasize that the call for SaP researchers to develop methodologically innovative approaches does not necessarily mean creating entirely new methodologies. Instead, it aims to approach strategy studies through a "practice lens," engaging with managers in innovative ways and reconstructing their strategy-making activities and roles. Accordingly, SaP research proposes examining strategy-making processes not merely as an outcome but as a process and a set of practices. In this context, the pioneers of the SaP approach advocated for more qualitative methods, such as practice-based ethnomethodology and ethnographic approaches, rather than quantitative methods. These methods, seen as essential tools for understanding the social and cultural contexts of strategy-making processes, are argued to be the most effective means of understanding what managers and other actors do during strategy-making (Johnson et al., 2003; Rasche & Chia, 2009). Balogun et al. (2003) also highlight that today’s complex organizational contexts require broader and more flexible methods. In this regard, Huff, Neyer, and Möslein (2010) suggest using a wider range of methods that can provide greater rigor in theory building, rather than focusing solely on ethnographic methods. However, the potential of SaP research has sometimes been overlooked compared to methods perceived as more rigorous and generalizable.

In subsequent years, Vesa (2012:4) examined the methodologies used by SaP researchers and found that "the use of strong participation-based ethnography in the field of strategy remains quite rare." Instead, SaP researchers have often leaned toward quantitative methods. Particularly in its early stages, SaP research relied on data obtained from traditional methods such as longitudinal panel data and case studies to address issues related to strategy and strategy-making. This indicates that SaP research initially adhered to a methodological framework closer to traditional strategy studies. However, Vaara and Whittington (2012) note that in recent years, various qualitative methods, such as discourse analysis, have become more widely used. Discourse analysis has emerged as a significant tool for understanding the effects of strategy texts and discourses on power relations (Vaara, Sorsa & Pälli, 2010). Moreover, it is generally accepted that SaP research has

methodologically enriched the field of strategic management by integrating qualitative approaches (Balogun & Johnson, 2005; Heracleous & Jacobs, 2008; Paroutis & Pettigrew, 2007; Stensaker & Falkenberg, 2007).

According to the findings of one of the most recent studies by Kohtamäki et al. (2022), the methods used in SaP research have increased the diversity and depth of strategy studies. For instance, discourse analysis has been highlighted as a key tool for understanding the effects of strategy texts and discourses on power relations (Vaara et al., 2010). Additionally, ethnographic methods have been recognized as powerful tools for understanding the micro-level dynamics of strategy-making processes (Jarzabkowski et al., 2007). Furthermore, innovative methods such as video ethnography have begun to be used to examine the impact of elements like body language, material tools, and spatial arrangements in strategy studies (Gylfe et al., 2016). These methods have introduced both theoretical and methodological innovations to strategy studies, enabling the field of strategic management to be approached from a broader perspective.

In conclusion, while the potential of SaP research may initially have been overlooked, empirical SaP studies have relied on methods such as observing strategy meetings (Stensaker & Falkenberg, 2007), interviews (Paroutis & Pettigrew, 2007), action research (Heracleous & Jacobs, 2008), and practitioner diaries (Balogun & Johnson, 2005). These studies have generally integrated more qualitative approaches into the field of strategic management, thereby methodologically enriching it. Approaches such as discourse analysis, ethnographic methods, and video ethnography have enabled a deeper understanding of strategy-making processes and revealed the social, cultural, and material contexts of these processes. In this regard, the methodological diversity of SaP research has provided a significant foundation for both theoretical and practical innovations in the field of strategic management. Therefore, it is evident that SaP research has made substantial contributions to strategy studies through the integration of qualitative methods and has methodologically enriched the field of strategic management.

1.6. The Place of the SaP in the Field of Strategic Management

Strategy is the roadmap organizations use to achieve their goals, while strategic management is the process of creating, implementing, and evaluating this roadmap. The theoretical approaches in the field of strategic management have undergone significant transformations over time. From the 1960s to the present, various researchers and thinkers have developed theories and models by focusing on different aspects of strategic management. This evolution has led to the emergence of new approaches that help businesses adapt to changing competitive environments and achieve their strategic objectives.

Table 3 summarizes the periodic development of the strategic management field and the key focus areas of each period. For instance, during the 1960-1980 period, pioneers such as Chandler (1962) and Ansoff (1965) focused on identifying "best practices" for managers and employed qualitative research methods. In the 1980-1985 period, Porter revolutionized the field by using empirical research and econometric techniques for systematic and theoretical analyses at the firm level. Between 1985 and 1990, Williamson (1985) and Eisenhardt (1989) focused on the interaction between firms and their environments. Mintzberg and Waters (1985) emphasized the importance of unplanned processes in strategic management with their concept of "emergent strategy." In the 1990-2000 period, researchers such as Wernerfelt (1984) and Barney (1991) introduced a quantitative approach to strategic management by utilizing large-scale data and multivariate analysis techniques.

Table 3: The Periodic Development and Key Focus Areas of the Strategic Management Field

Period	Key Contributor	Main focus
1960 - 1980	• Chandler (1962), • Ansoff (1965), • Learned *et al. (1965/1969)* • Andrews (1971)	Using qualitative methods in research to find the 'best practices' useful for managers and develop practitioners who wish to be managers.
1980 - 1985	Porter (1980, 1985)	Introduced a framework for systematic, theoretical analysis at firm level by empirical research combined with econometrics techniques.
1985 - 1990	• Williamson (1985), • Eisenhardt (1989)	Focusing on the interface between firm and environment at firm level.
1987 - 1990	Mintzberg & Waters (1985)	Emergent Strategy
1990 - 2000	• Wernerfelt (1994), • Barney (1991)	Using large-scale data and sophisticated multivariate analysis techniques and inductive case methods.
2001- Present	• Johnson *et al. (2003)* • Whittington (2004) • Jarzabkowski (2004)	Strategy as Practice *"a situated, socially accomplished activity"* Strategizing: "***doing of strategy***"

Source: Adapted from Ghobadian & O'Regan, 2008:10-11

In the late 1990s, Whittington (1996) conceptualized the SaP approach by focusing on organizational routines and procedures in strategy research, initiating a new wave of discussion that went beyond Mintzberg and Waters' (1985) distinction between planned and emergent strategies. Within this framework, SaP aimed to explain strategy-making not merely as a process focused on outcomes but as a social activity grounded in micro-level practices. After 2001, researchers such as Whittington (2004) and Jarzabkowski (2004) made significant contributions to the theoretical framework of this field by examining strategy-making as an "embedded and socially accomplished activity." This approach reshaped the dynamics of strategic management, shedding light on the social and organizational dimensions of strategy-making processes.

On the other hand, the historical development of the strategic management field provides an important foundation for understanding the relationship between the SaP approach and the processual strategy perspective. The processual strategy perspective views strategy as a process dependent on actors, while SaP takes this a step further by aiming to explain strategy through practices (Chia & MacKay, 2007). In this context, SaP argues that processes are not only dependent on actors but are also the product of practices, social contexts, and collective entities. Chia and MacKay (2007) compare these two approaches and summarize how SaP differs from the processual strategy perspective and adds a new dimension to the field in Table 4.

Table 4: Towards a Post-Processual Strategy Perspective

Strategy Perspective	Ontology	Philosophical Commitment/Connection	Focus Area	Examples
Processual	Processes are dependent on actors	Processes matter but can ultimately be reduced to events/actions	Micro and macro activities of individuals and organizations	Time, agency, structure, context, operations
Post-Processual: SaP	Actors and processes are dependent on practices	Actions and events are manifestations of practice complexes	Domain of practices	Social practices, knowledge, language, implication, power as collective entities

Source: Chia & MacKay, 2007:229.

As seen in Table 4, the SaP approach demonstrates significant differences from the processual strategy perspective in terms of ontology, philosophy, and focus. While the processual strategy perspective argues that processes are dependent on actors and can ultimately be reduced to phenomena or actions, the SaP approach posits that actions and phenomena are manifestations of complex practices. In this context, SaP examines strategy not only through the micro- and macro-level activities of individuals or organizations but also through social practices, knowledge, language, and collective entities.

However, to fully understand the place and significance of this approach within the field of strategic management, it is necessary to analyze its position among the schools of strategy in detail. This positioning among the schools of strategy will provide a better understanding of the innovations and contributions SaP brings to the field, while also shedding light on the theoretical and practical transformations within the discipline of strategic management. Therefore, the role of SaP in the field of strategic management should be evaluated not only through the new perspectives it offers but also in the context of its relationship with other strategy approaches.

In this regard, analyzing SaP's position among the schools of strategy has the potential to offer significant insights into the field. Despite the existence of numerous studies on the schools of strategy, three main classifications stand out in this area. Chaffee (1985) proposed three schools—linear, adaptive, and interpretive—while Whittington (1993) categorized the schools of strategy into four main groups: classical, evolutionary, processual, and systemic. Mintzberg et al. (1998), on the other hand, classified strategy into ten different schools, highlighting the diversity and depth of strategic thinking.

This study finds it appropriate to compare SaP with the ten schools identified in Mintzberg et al. (1998) to analyze SaP's position within the schools of strategy in greater detail and to question its most suitable placement. This comparison will be a critical step toward better understanding SaP's role and impact in the field of strategic management. In particular, the differences between the fundamental assumptions, methodological approaches, and practical applications of the various strategy schools will clarify SaP's relationship with these schools and its potential contributions. Thus, SaP's place in the field of strategic management will not only provide a theoretical framework but will also be supported by its practical applications.

In addition to its alignment with Mintzberg's schools, the SaP approach can also be positioned within the broader subfields of strategic management. The field encompasses various perspectives, including content, cognition, environmental, and process schools or studies (Nag, Hambrick & Chen, 2007). SaP aligns most closely with process studies due to its focus on the micro-level social practices, interactions, and routines that shape strategy formation (Whittington, 2006; Jarzabkowski,

2005). However, it also offers valuable insights into the cognitive and environmental dimensions of strategy. For instance, SaP's emphasis on the role of strategists and their practices complements the cognitive school's focus on mental models and decision-making processes (Simon, 1947; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). Similarly, its attention to the contextual and emergent nature of strategy aligns with the environmental school's emphasis on external forces shaping strategic choices (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967). By bridging these subfields, SaP provides a more integrated and nuanced understanding of strategy formation processes, highlighting its unique contribution to the strategic management literature.

1.7. Mintzberg et al.'s Strategy Schools

The field of strategic management has been shaped by various schools of thought, each offering different perspectives on the strategy formation process. Mintzberg et al. (1998) identified ten distinct schools of thought in strategic management and categorized them into three main groups: prescriptive schools (Design, Planning, and Positioning), descriptive schools (Entrepreneurial, Cognitive, Learning, Power, Cultural, and Environmental), and the Configuration school (Kipley & Lewis, 2009). These schools provide a comprehensive yet fragmented understanding of strategy, ranging from normative frameworks to context-sensitive processes (See Table 5).

Prescriptive schools emphasize a rational and analytical approach to the strategy formation process, focusing on how strategies should be developed. In contrast, descriptive schools highlight the dynamic, social, and unpredictable nature of strategy formation by examining how strategies actually emerge. The Configuration school seeks to bridge these two approaches, acknowledging that strategy formation processes can incorporate both prescriptive and descriptive elements (Kipley & Lewis, 2009). However, since these schools often operate independently, gaps arise in understanding the relationship between theoretical frameworks and the practical realities of strategy formation processes.

Each school offers a unique perspective on how strategies are designed, developed, and implemented within organizations. These perspectives range from approaches emphasizing planned and rational processes to those focusing on emergent, adaptive strategies shaped by learning and environmental changes.

The Design School views strategy formation as a deliberate process of thought, where strategies are intentionally crafted by aligning internal capabilities with external opportunities (Mintzberg et al., 1998). The emphasis on tools such as SWOT analysis reflects a systematic approach to achieving strategic alignment, a concept widely discussed in the corporate strategy literature (Andrews, 1971). This approach has been foundational in early strategic planning models and remains a cornerstone of strategic management (Mintzberg, 1990).

The Planning School argues that strategy formation is a formal and systematic process requiring detailed long-term planning and forecasting. This school adopts a structured approach involving experts who analyze and predict future organizational needs. The methodologies of the Planning School have been influential in strategic management, particularly in the development of comprehensive business plans and forecasts (Ansoff, 1965). However, its emphasis on formalization has been criticized for its potential rigidity, yet it remains a fundamental pillar of traditional strategic planning (Grant, 2003).

Table 5: Key Information on Mintzberg and Others' Strategy Schools

School	Concept: *Strategy formation is*	Approach	Key Ideas	Key Actors	Key Source
Design School	a process of conception.	Strategy is created through deliberate, conscious thought, aligning internal capabilities with external possibilities.	Emphasizes SWOT analysis and strategic fit.	Kenneth R. Andrews Igor Ansoff	Andrews, K. R. (1971). *The Concept of Corporate Strategy*. Homewood, IL: Dow Jones-Irwin.
Planning School	a formal process.	Systematic, step-by-step planning is essential, involving specialists and detailed analysis.	Long-term planning, forecasting, and detailed plans.	Igor Ansoff	Ansoff, H. I. (1965). *Corporate Strategy: An Analytic Approach to Business Policy for Growth and Expansion*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
Positioning School	an analytical process.	Focuses on positioning within the market using analytical tools like Porter's Five Forces.	Emphasizes competitive positioning and market analysis.	Michael E. Porter.	Porter, M. E. (1980). *Competitive Strategy: Techniques for Analysing Industries and Competitors*. New York: Free Press.
Entrepreneurial School	a visionary process.	Driven by the vision and intuition of a leader, emphasizing flexibility and innovation.	Leadership, vision, and proactive innovation.	Joseph Schumpeter Howard Stevenson	Schumpeter, J. A. (1934). *The Theory of Economic Development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Cognitive School	a mental process.	Focuses on how the mind processes information, including cognitive biases and mental frameworks.	Mental models, perception, and bounded rationality.	Herbert A. Simon James G. March.	Simon, H. A. (1947). *Administrative Behaviour*. New York: Macmillan.
Learning School	an emergent process	Strategies emerge over time as organizations learn and adapt.	Emphasizes adaptation, trial and error, and incremental learning.	James G. March Richard Cyert Henry Mintzberg	Mintzberg, H. (1994). *The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning*. New York: Free Press.
Power School	a process of negotiation.	Strategy is shaped by power dynamics, political negotiations, and stakeholder influence.	Politics, bargaining, and power struggles within and outside the organization.	Jeffrey Pfeffer Henry Mintzberg	Pfeffer, J. (1981). *Power in Organizations*. Marshfield, MA: Pitman.
Cultural School	a collective process.	Emphasizes the role of organizational culture and shared values in shaping strategy.	Strategy as a reflection of shared values, beliefs, and norms.	Gareth Morgan Edgar Schein	Schein, E. H. (1985). *Organizational Culture and Leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
Environmental School	a reactive process.	Strategy responds to external environmental forces and pressures.	External forces, such as economic and political changes, drive strategy.	Michael E. Porter Paul Lawrence	Lawrence, P. R., & Lorsch, J. W. (1967). *Organization and Environment: Managing Differentiation and Integration*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
Configuration School	a process of transformation	Integrates various aspects of the other schools, focusing on stages of organizational development and transformation.	Organizations undergo periods of stability, punctuated by transformational change.	Henry Mintzberg Danny Miller	Miller, D. and Mintzberg, H. (1984). The case for configuration. In Miller, D. and Friesen, P. (eds), Organizations: A Quantum View. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, pp. 10–30

The Positioning School approaches strategy formation as an analytical process focused on competitive positioning in the market. This school employs rigorous analytical tools, such as Porter's Five Forces, to guide strategic decisions and achieve competitive advantage (Porter, 1980). The Positioning School's emphasis on market structure and competitive forces has had a profound impact on strategic management, particularly in industries with high levels of competition (Porter, 1985). Research has shown that firms utilizing these analytical tools are better able to anticipate and respond to market changes (Barney, 1991).

The Entrepreneurial School shifts the focus to visionary processes driven by the intuitive leadership of individuals, often entrepreneurs, who guide organizations with innovation and flexibility (Mintzberg et al., 1998). This school highlights the importance of visionary leadership in driving strategic innovation, a concept supported by scholars such as Schumpeter

(1934), who emphasized the role of entrepreneurship in economic development. Studies have demonstrated that entrepreneurial vision plays a critical role in navigating uncertain and dynamic environments (Miller & Friesen, 1982).

The Cognitive School adds a psychological dimension to strategy formation by exploring how mental models, cognitive biases, and information processing influence strategic decisions (Simon, 1947). This school emphasizes the importance of understanding the cognitive limitations and perceptions of strategists. This theme has been extensively explored in the behavioral strategy literature (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). For example, cognitive biases such as overconfidence and anchoring have been shown to significantly impact strategic decision-making processes (Bazerman & Moore, 2012).

The Learning School argues that strategies emerge over time as organizations learn and adapt (Mintzberg et al., 1998). This school advocates an iterative and adaptive approach to strategy, evolving in response to internal and external feedback. Research has shown that learning organizations are better equipped to adapt to complex and changing environments, innovate, and respond to environmental shifts (Do et al., 2022; Senge, 1990:2017).

The Power School views strategy formation as a process shaped by power dynamics, political negotiations, and stakeholder influences. This school emphasizes how power struggles within and outside the organization shape strategic outcomes (Pfeffer, 1981). Studies have shown that power and politics can significantly influence strategic decisions and outcomes (Buchanan & Badham, 2008).

The Cultural School focuses on the collective processes that shape strategy, emphasizing the role of shared values, beliefs, and norms within organizational culture (Mintzberg et al., 1998). This school examines how cultural factors influence strategic decisions. Research has shown that aligning strategy with organizational culture is critical for successful implementation and long-term organizational success (Denison, 1990).

The Environmental School considers strategy formation as a process developed in response to external forces such as economic, political, and technological changes (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967). Studies have confirmed how external factors shape strategic choices and necessitate organizational adaptation (Porter, 1980).

Finally, The Configuration School integrates elements from other schools and focuses on stages of organizational development and transformation (Mintzberg et al., 1998). This school suggests that organizations go through periods of stability, interrupted by significant transformational changes. Research has shown that organizations that successfully manage these configurations can achieve long-term strategic success (Tushman & Romanelli, 1985).

These strategy schools provide a comprehensive understanding of strategy formation by addressing different contexts and approaches. This model emphasizes that no single school is universally applicable to all situations, advocating for strategies that are context-sensitive, flexible, and emergent in nature. By critiquing overly prescriptive approaches, it offers a more pragmatic and adaptable perspective on strategy. While these schools provide a framework for understanding how organizations approach strategy, each has its own unique strengths and limitations.

2. METHOD

This study employs content analysis and theoretical comparison methods to compare the theoretical foundations, terminologies, methodologies, and practices of the SaP and Mintzberg's strategy schools. Content analysis enables the

detailed and systematic examination of texts, allowing for the identification and coding of relevant themes and concepts. This method ensures a rigorous and unbiased comparison by systematically and objectively analyzing the texts (Krippendorff, 2018). The coding framework used enhances the reliability and validity of the analysis process (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008).

2.1. Research Design

The research design was developed in alignment with the research objectives of comparing the theoretical foundations, terminologies, methodologies, and practices of SaP and Mintzberg's strategy schools. This approach provides a solid foundation for addressing the research questions and achieving the study's aims. Through the content analysis method, this study offers a rigorous comparison that highlights the unique contributions and limitations of both frameworks, thereby contributing to the strategic management literature.

2.2. Selection of Texts

The texts used in the analysis are seminal works on SaP and the strategy schools of Mintzberg et al. (1998). These works were selected as primary sources that outline the fundamental principles, methodologies, and practices of their respective approaches. The selection of key texts ensures that the analysis captures the core elements of each approach, providing a robust foundation for comparison. The texts used are listed below:

Table 6: Sources Included in the Analysis

Strategy as Practice	Source of Strategy Schools
• Cambridge Handbook of Strategy as Practice (2010) by Golsorkhi et al. • Strategy as Practice: Research Directions and Resources (2007) by Johnson et al. • Strategy as Practice: An Activity Based Approach (2005) by Jarzabkowski.	Strategy Safari (1998) by Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel.

2.3. Research Methods

In this study, content analysis and theoretical comparison methods were employed to examine the relationships between SaP and Mintzberg's strategy schools. Content analysis was conducted to uncover the themes and concepts shared by or distinguishing these two approaches (Krippendorff, 2018). Theoretical comparison, on the other hand, was used to determine which strategy schools SaP is more closely associated with (Chia & MacKay, 2007).

2.4. Coding Framework

To ensure the validity and reliability of the content analysis, a coding framework based on established literature was developed (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). The coding process was independently conducted by two researchers to minimize bias, and disagreements were resolved through discussion (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014). Additionally, a pilot test of the coding framework was conducted to refine the codes and ensure consistency based on Boyatzis (1998).

2.5. Data Analysis

The coded data was analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods to conduct a comprehensive comparison between SaP and the strategy schools. The analysis process focused on identifying patterns, relationships, and differences by examining the theoretical foundations, terminologies, methodologies, and practices of the coded data (Merriam, 2009). The frequency of codes and themes was calculated to identify trends and patterns, thereby providing an objective basis for comparison (Silverman, 2013).

Content analysis was conducted using an artificial intelligence agent developed specifically to identify the similarities and differences between the SaP approach and the strategy schools. This algorithm, created with the assistance of the abacus.ai LLM (Large Language Model), parses textual data, categorizes it under relevant themes, and calculates the frequency of key terms specific to each strategy school and SaP. This methodological approach enables an in-depth examination of the relationships between SaP and Mintzberg's strategy schools, providing significant contributions to strategic management literature. By highlighting the unique contributions and limitations of both approaches, the research aims to foster a more comprehensive understanding in the field of strategic management.

2.6. Limitations of the Study

This study presents several limitations. The analysis primarily examines the theoretical and methodological relationship between SaP and Mintzberg's strategy schools, without addressing the practical application of SaP across various organizational contexts. Additionally, the sources utilized, although comprehensive, may not fully represent the entirety of the SaP literature, and the connections with other strategic approaches, such as the resource-based view or dynamic capabilities, are less frequently addressed. The identified limitations present avenues for future research.

3. FINDINGS

This study conducts a comparison between the SaP approach and Mintzberg's Strategy Schools by structuring the analysis around four main categories: theoretical foundations, terminology and jargon, methodologies, and practices. By examining these dimensions, we aim to better understand the unique perspectives and contributions each approach brings to the field of strategic management. Below, the main findings of this structured comparison are presented.

i. Theoretical Foundations:

The SaP approach and Mintzberg's schools of thought are based on different theoretical frameworks related to strategy formation processes. The SaP approach defines strategy as a social practice, in contrast to Mintzberg's schools, which primarily focus on analytical and normative frameworks. From the SaP perspective, strategy is formed through the daily practices and social interactions of individuals, emphasizing the dynamic and context-dependent characteristics of strategic development (Whittington, 2006). In contrast, Mintzberg's schools argue that strategy arises from a systematic process of planning and analysis. Although each school offers a unique manifesto, they collectively maintain that strategy is a rational and systematic process (Mintzberg et al., 1998).

ii. Terminology and Jargon

There are significant terminological distinctions between the SaP and Mintzberg's schools of thought. Within the SaP framework, concepts such as "praxis," "practitioners," and "practices" facilitate an understanding of strategy formation

processes at the micro level, emphasizing the role of social practices (Jarzabkowski, 2005). In contrast, Mintzberg's schools utilize terms such as "planning," "positioning," and "entrepreneurship," which pertain to strategy formation processes at a more macro level. These terminological differences underscore the varying perspectives and focal points of each approach concerning the nature of strategy.

iii. Methodologies

From a methodological standpoint, SaP emphasizes qualitative research methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of the processes involved in strategy formation. Techniques such as ethnography and discourse analysis are employed to investigate the social and cultural contexts surrounding strategic practices (Vaara & Whittington, 2012). In contrast, Mintzberg's schools adopt a more systematic approach by integrating both qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze strategy formation processes. Commonly utilized methodologies include surveys, case studies, and statistical analyses. These methodological distinctions illustrate how each approach uniquely addresses and examines the dynamics of strategy formation.

iv. Practices

At the practice level, distinct differences emerge between SaP and Mintzberg's schools of thought. The SaP framework posits that strategy is shaped through daily practices and social interactions, emphasizing the context-sensitive and dynamic nature of strategic practices (Golsorkhi et al., 2010). Conversely, Mintzberg's schools assert that strategy is developed through a defined process of planning and analysis, contending that strategic practices occur in a more predictable and systematic manner. These observations illuminate the fundamental differences and similarities between the SaP perspective and Mintzberg's strategy schools. Below, Table 7 presents a general comparison of these ten schools alongside SaP, while Table 8 offers a detailed comparison of each school with SaP across four dimensions.

Table 7 provides a foundation for comparing SaP with Mintzberg's Ten Strategy Schools in a structured manner across four key dimensions: Theoretical Foundations, Terminology and Jargon, Methodologies, and Practices. The analysis reveals that SaP focuses on micro-level, context-specific practices and interactions, employing qualitative methodologies to explore the daily activities of strategists. In contrast, Mintzberg's schools offer a variety of perspectives emphasizing macro-level organizational and environmental factors, utilizing a broad range of both qualitative and quantitative methods. This distinction highlights that while SaP emphasizes the emergent, practice-based nature of strategy, Mintzberg's schools present a more structured and systematic perspective on strategic management processes.

The research further reveals that SaP aligns most strongly with the Cultural and Learning Schools, while its relationship with other strategy schools is more limited. The Cultural School focuses on understanding strategy within the cultural context of an organization (Johnson et al., 2003), whereas the Learning School views strategy as a process of learning and adaptation (Mintzberg, 1994). SaP's emphasis on context sensitivity and continuous change aligns closely with the core approaches of these two schools. On the other hand, SaP demonstrates limited alignment with more deterministic and rational approaches, such as the Planning or Positioning Schools. This can be attributed to SaP's dynamic, social, and context-specific perspective on strategy formation processes.

Identifying SaP's relationship with the strategy schools is not merely an effort to position it theoretically but also an important step in understanding its unique contributions to the strategic management literature. For instance, Whittington (2006) emphasizes that SaP interprets strategy formation processes through the daily practices of individuals, offering a more human-centered and context-sensitive understanding of strategy. Similarly, Jarzabkowski (2005) highlights the importance of practices such as tools, methods, and routines in strategy formation processes. In this context, comparing SaP with the strategy schools clarifies its unique position in the literature and its distinctions from other approaches.

Table 7: General Comparison of SaP and Mintzberg's Strategy Schools

Category	SAP	Mintzberg's Strategy Schools
Theoretical Foundations	**Social Practices:** Emphasizes social practices and interactions (Whittington, 2006). **Micro-level:** Focuses on everyday activities (Johnson et al., 2007).	**Diverse Perspectives:** Each school offers a distinct theoretical view (Mintzberg et al., 1998). **Macro-level:** Emphasizes organizational and environmental factors (Carter et al., 2008).
Terminology and Jargon	**Practical Terms:** Uses terms like "practices," "practitioners" (Golsorkhi et al., 2010). **Context-Specific:** Reflects specific context (Johnson et al., 2007).	**Theoretical Terms:** Each school has its own terms, e.g., "strategic planning" (Mintzberg et al., 1998). **Broad Language:** Reflects broader frameworks (Carter et al., 2008).
Methodologies	**Qualitative:** Uses ethnography, case studies (Jarzabkowski, 2005). **Detailed Analysis:** Focuses on day-to-day activities (Johnson et al., 2007).	**Varied Methods:** Uses both quantitative and qualitative methods (Mintzberg et al., 1998). **Broader Focus:** Aims to capture organizational dynamics (Carter et al., 2008).
Practices	**Everyday Activities:** Emphasizes daily interactions (Jarzabkowski, 2005). **Social Interactions:** Highlights the role of individuals (Johnson et al., 2007).	**Strategic Processes:** Focuses on different processes like competitive positioning (Mintzberg et al., 1998). **Organizational Factors:** Considers environmental influences (Carter et al., 2008).

Not: This table is derived from the study's findings. The references in the table demonstrate that the findings align with the assertion of the pertinent reference.

Table 7 serves as a foundational comparison by juxtaposing SaP with Mintzberg's strategy schools across four dimensions. The analysis reveals that SaP is deeply rooted in micro-level, context-specific practices and interactions, employing qualitative methodologies to explore the daily activities of strategists. In contrast, Mintzberg's strategy schools offer a broader range of perspectives emphasizing macro-level organizational and environmental factors, utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods. This distinction underscores the unique contributions of each approach: SaP's focus on emergent, practice-based strategies versus the more structured and systematic perspectives of Mintzberg's schools. The table provides a basis for understanding how these approaches differ and where they might intersect to advance strategic management. In addition to evaluating the ten schools as a whole, it is also considered valuable to compare each school with SaP in terms of the factors outlined here.

Following the content and theoretical comparison, the relevance levels of SaP with the ten strategy schools were calculated using an algorithm, and Figure 2 visualizes the Relevance Scores (RS) calculated for SaP and each strategy school. Accordingly, the Cultural (RS: 4.5/5) and Learning (RS: 4.5/5) schools, which were found to have high relevance with SaP, are highlighted in red. Schools with moderate relationships (RS: between 3 and 4) are shown in blue boxes, while schools with low relevance (RS: 2.5 and below) are left in black and without frames. This visualization effectively communicates the alignment levels between SaP and each strategy school, providing a quick reference for understanding the relative strengths and weaknesses of these relationships.

Table 8: Individual Comparison of SaP and Strategy Schools Across Four Dimensions

	Theoretical Foundations	Terminology & Jargon	Methodology	Practices
SAP	Social practices and micro-level interactions	Practices, practitioners, praxis	Qualitative: ethnography, case studies	Everyday activities and interactions
Design School	Strategy as a rational and deliberate process	Strategic fit, design	Formalized procedures and frameworks	Deliberate and rational processes
Planning School	Formalized, systematic process	Strategic planning, objectives, plans	Quantitative methods, formal modelling	Systematic and formalized planning processes
Positioning School	Competitive positioning and analytical processes	Competitive advantage, positioning, industry analysis	Analytical and quantitative methods	Analytical processes for competitive positioning
Entrepreneurial School	Visionary leadership of individuals, particularly entrepreneurs	Visionary, entrepreneurial spirit, innovation	Qualitative methods for entrepreneurial behaviours	Visionary actions and innovative practices of entrepreneurs
Cognitive School	Mental processes and cognitive biases	Mental models, cognitive biases, information processing	Psychological and experimental methods	Cognitive processes and biases of strategists
Learning School	Emergent process from organizational learning	Organizational learning, emergent strategy, adaptive processes	Qualitative and action research methods	Processes of learning and adaptation within organizations
Power School	Role of power and politics	Power dynamics, political processes	Case studies and qualitative methods	Political actions and power struggles
Cultural School	Organizational culture	Organizational culture, values, norms	Qualitative methods for cultural dynamics	Cultural practices and organizational values
Environmental School	Response to environmental factors	Environmental forces, external pressures, adaptive response	Qualitative and quantitative methods for environmental impacts	Adaptive strategic practices in response to environmental conditions
Configuration School	Stages of strategy formation and implementation	Strategic configuration, phases, stages	Longitudinal studies and processual analysis	Processes of strategic configuration and reconfiguration

Figure 2 presents a broader correlation among the Ten Strategy Schools, positioning them along a spectrum from a focus on internal processes to external environmental factors and from rational to natural approaches to strategy formation (Quaye et al., 2015). SaP's position among Mintzberg's strategy schools is determined by its interpretation of strategy not as something an organization possesses but as something its members do. This approach conceptualizes strategy formation processes through micro-level social practices, interpersonal interactions, and cultural contexts. In this regard, SaP's focus lies on learning, the influence of social structures, and the daily practices of individuals in the strategy formation process. Therefore, SaP's most appropriate position is between Mintzberg's Cultural and Learning Schools. The Cultural School emphasizes the shaping of strategy within a social and cultural context, while the Learning School views strategy as a dynamic process of learning. SaP's position between these two schools reflects its approach to strategy as a product of both social practices and learning processes.

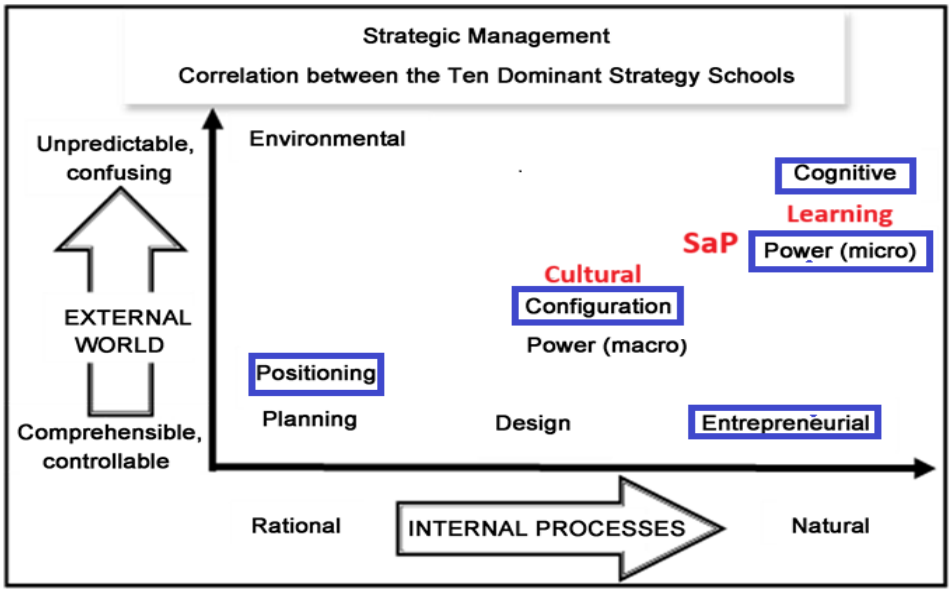


Figure 2: Comparison of schools' similarity highlighted with SAP

Source: Adapted to Quaye, Osei, Sarbah & Abrokwah (2015)'s figure based on the findings

Additionally, SaP's sensitivity to environmental factors and its focus on natural processes place it in the upper-left quadrant of the figure, near the "Unpredictable" and "Natural" axes. This position best represents SaP's micro-level, socially and practice-oriented innovations in the study of strategy.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined the place and significance of the SaP approach within the field of strategic management, particularly in the context of its relationship with Mintzberg's strategy schools. SaP views strategy not merely as something an organization possesses but as a dynamic process shaped by the daily practices of individuals, groups, and organizations. By interpreting strategy formation processes through micro-level social practices, interpersonal interactions, and cultural contexts, SaP introduces an innovative perspective to the strategic management (Whittington, 2006; Jarzabkowski et al., 2007). Identifying SaP's relationship with strategy schools and its position within this context is critical for a deeper understanding of its theoretical contributions and practical implications.

Strategy schools, systematically classified in the work of Mintzberg and colleagues (1998), provide theoretical frameworks that approach strategy formation processes from different perspectives. These schools have made significant contributions to the strategic management by addressing strategy through dimensions such as planning, positioning, entrepreneurship, learning, culture, power, and environmental adaptation. However, most of these schools conceptualize strategy either as a macro-level organizational construct or through the decision-making processes of individuals. SaP, in contrast to these traditional approaches, examines strategy through micro-level social practices and interpersonal interactions. Therefore, comparing SaP with strategy schools is essential to clarify its position in literature and highlight its unique contributions.

The research has revealed that SaP aligns most strongly with the Cultural and Learning Schools, while its relationship with other strategy schools is more limited. The Cultural School focuses on understanding strategy within the cultural context of an organization (Johnson et al., 2003), while the Learning School views strategy as a process of learning and adaptation

(Mintzberg, 1994). SaP's emphasis on context sensitivity and continuous change aligns closely with the core approaches of these two schools. On the other hand, SaP demonstrates limited alignment with more deterministic and rational approaches, such as the Planning or Positioning Schools. This can be explained by SaP's dynamic, social, and context-specific perspective on strategy formation processes. These findings show how SaP contributes to understanding strategy formation processes through its relationship with the schools of strategy. For example, SaP's alignment with the Cultural School allows us to understand how strategy is shaped in social and cultural contexts, while its alignment with the Learning School supports the consideration of strategy as a continuous process of learning and adaptation.

Identifying SaP's relationship with strategy schools is not merely an effort to position it theoretically but also an important step in understanding its unique contributions to strategic management field. For instance, Whittington (2006) emphasizes that SaP interprets strategy formation processes through the daily practices of individuals, offering a more human-centered and context-sensitive understanding of strategy. Similarly, Jarzabkowski (2005) highlights the importance of practices such as tools, methods, and routines in strategy formation processes. In this context, comparing SaP with strategy schools clarifies its unique position in the field and its distinctions from other approaches.

Beyond its alignment with Mintzberg's schools, SaP also connects with broader subfields of strategic management, including content, cognitive, environmental, and process studies (Nag, Hambrick & Chen, 2007). SaP aligns most closely with process studies due to its focus on micro-level practices, interactions, and routines (Whittington, 2006; Jarzabkowski, 2005). However, it also offers valuable insights into cognitive and environmental dimensions. For instance, SaP's emphasis on strategists' practices complements the cognitive school's focus on mental models and decision-making processes (Simon, 1947; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). Similarly, its attention to the contextual and emergent nature of strategy aligns with the environmental school's emphasis on external forces shaping strategic choices (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967). By bridging these subfields, SaP provides a more integrated and nuanced understanding of strategy formation processes, highlighting its unique contribution to the strategic management literature.

Future research could focus on participatory platforms, toolkits, and mindsets to further clarify SaP's role in the field of strategic management. In particular, gaining a deeper understanding of the roles of individuals and groups in strategy formation processes could enhance the context sensitivity of these processes. Additionally, the adoption of SaP's innovative perspectives could enable the development of more inclusive and sustainable approaches in the field of strategic management. Examining the historical development and future research goals of the discipline can help recent publications to provide the SaP literature with a more ordered and methodical framework (Gülruh Gürbüz et al., 2022).

In conclusion, this study has taken an important step toward understanding the place of SaP in the field of strategic management. Researchers and practitioners should embrace the novel perspectives offered by SaP to redesign strategy work in a more context-sensitive, participatory, and sustainable manner. This approach will enable both theoretical and practical transformations in the field of strategic management, bringing a fresh perspective to strategy formation processes.

ETİK BEYAN VE AÇIKLAMALAR

Etik Kurul Onay Bilgileri Beyanı

Çalışma, etik kurul izni gerektirmeyen bir çalışmadır.

Yazar Katkı Oranı Beyanı

Çalışmanın tamamı sorumlu yazar tarafından oluşturulmuştur.

Çıkar Çatışması Beyanı

Çalışmada potansiyel bir çıkar çatışması bulunmamaktadır.

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