

Strategic Synergy Creation in Shared Services Centres: An Attention-Based View Framework for Shared Contact Centres in South Africa

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ABSTRACT

This study develops and empirically validates a Synergy Framework for Shared Contact Centres (SCCs), examining their role in enhancing organisational performance and citizen-facing service delivery outcomes within the public sector. Adopting a mixed-methods design, the research integrates qualitative insights from semi-structured interviews and case studies with quantitative evidence from a structured survey of 116 respondents across diverse organisations in the Eastern Cape Province. The qualitative findings revealed that SCCs function as strategic mechanisms for synergy creation through attentional alignment, resource mobilisation, and relational integration. Themes of collaboration, cultural alignment, process standardisation, and technology enablement highlighted the dual importance of managerial attention and relational networks in sustaining organisational value. Quantitative analyses, including descriptive statistics, Net Promoter Score (NPS) correlations, and regression modelling, provided empirical support for these insights, demonstrating that governance effectiveness, resource utilisation, collaborative coordination, and strategic alignment significantly predict organisational performance and customer satisfaction. The proposed Synergy Framework synthesises Attention-Based Theory (ABT) and Relational-Based Theory (RBT), addressing key gaps in existing scholarship: fragmentation across levels of analysis, lack of contextual sensitivity in public sector environments, and insufficient operationalisation of synergy constructs. By situating synergy within SCCs, the framework advances theory by integrating micro, meso, and macro perspectives, while offering practical guidance for managers and policymakers seeking to design responsive, collaborative, and sustainable service delivery systems. Future research should extend the framework through cross-contextual validation, longitudinal studies, and exploration of digital transformation and stakeholder value co-creation mechanisms. Overall, the study positions synergy as a multidimensional strategic capability that enhances organisational effectiveness and public value in complex service ecosystems.

Key Concepts: Shared Contact Centres (SCCs); Synergy Framework; Attention-Based Theory (ABT); Relational Theory (RBT); Organisational Performance; Public Sector Governance; Customer Satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

The Shared Services Centres (SSCs) continue to generate debate in public administration, with recent international surveys portraying them as platforms for integration, standardisation, and digital transformation, while critics caution that centralisation may entrench bureaucracy and obscure accountability (Deloitte, 2021; European Commission, 2022). These tensions are particularly pronounced in Shared Contact Centres (SCCs), which have evolved from transactional call hubs into omnichannel, data-driven service interfaces, yet still struggle with legacy systems, fragmented responsibilities, and uneven governance capability (O’Leary & Eggers, 2022; Deloitte Digital, 2024). Theoretically, the pursuit of synergy within SCCs can be conceptualised as an emergent relational outcome shaped by *where managerial attention is directed* (Attention-Based View, ABV), *how distinctive resources are mobilised* (Resource-Based View, RBV), and *how routines adapt under conditions of change* (dynamic capabilities). Contemporary ABV scholarship foregrounds situated attention

and emotion-laden communicative practices as mechanisms that channel managerial focus (Brielmaier & Friesl, 2023; Vuori, 2024). RBV remains influential, though increasingly contested, in turbulent and digitising contexts, prompting calls for integration with capability-based perspectives (Davis & DeWitt, 2021). Dynamic capabilities research in the public sector extends this reasoning by explaining how organisations sense, seize, and reconfigure technologies, processes, and multi-actor collaborations to remain adaptive under conditions of policy and service uncertainty (Santos, 2024; Miller & Ghaffarzadegan, 2025). South Africa's evolving digital governance landscape heightens this relevance. The Draft Digital Government Policy Framework (DGPF, 2024) and the Roadmap for the Digital Transformation of Government (2025) emphasise digital identity, secure data exchange, digital payments, and trusted service channels anchored in a whole-of-government programme led by the Presidency's Digital Service Unit (DPSA, 2024; Government of South Africa, 2025; The Presidency, 2025). Yet persistent findings of uneven performance, weak consequence management, and coordination gaps complicate the institutionalisation of synergy in shared services (AGSA, 2024; National Planning Commission, 2025). The Eastern Cape further illustrates this complexity, where emerging studies show both progress and asymmetries in transparency, engagement, and efficiency (Zindi, 2024). Against this backdrop, this study develops and validates a multi-level synergy evaluation framework for SCCs grounded in ABV–RBV–dynamic capabilities. By integrating inductive practice insights with deductive theorisation, it explains how attentional alignment, resource orchestration, and adaptive routines enabled by technology and collaborative governance translate into organisational performance and citizen-service outcomes.

Problem Statement and Research Gap

Although recent policy developments and digital transformation initiatives signal growing institutional commitment to modernising public sector service delivery in South Africa, Shared Contact Centres (SCCs) continue to operate without a validated and contextually grounded framework capable of explaining how synergy emerges and translates into measurable performance outcomes. The absence of such a framework is notable given that SCCs sit at the intersection of managerial attention, resource orchestration, technological enablement, and interdepartmental collaboration domains increasingly recognised as central to public sector reform. Existing scholarship provides important but partial explanatory threads. The Attention-Based View (ABV) illuminates how managerial focus and organisational structures shape decision-making priorities, while the Resource-Based View (RBV) foregrounds the role of valuable and hard-to-imitate assets in performance differentials. Dynamic capabilities theory further explains how organisations sense, seize, and reconfigure resources in conditions of turbulence and change. However, despite these contributions, integration across these theoretical traditions remains underdeveloped, particularly in relation to government contact centre ecosystems characterised by fragmented governance, inconsistent accountability practices, and uneven capability maturity (Brielmaier & Friesl, 2023; Davis & DeWitt, 2021; Santos, 2024).

The South African policy environment amplifies this conceptual gap. The Draft Digital Government Policy Framework (DPSA, 2024) and the national Roadmap for the Digital Transformation of Government, supported by the establishment of the Digital Service Unit in the Presidency (The SA Presidency, 2025), have substantially advanced the strategic agenda for digital governance. Yet evaluative and measurement models lag behind these reforms. This disconnect is particularly visible at provincial and municipal levels, where audit findings continue to highlight control weaknesses, capability constraints, and persistent inconsistency in governance and service delivery processes (AGSA, 2024). Consequently, while policy frameworks articulate an ambitious vision for integrated, citizen-centred digital service platforms, there remains limited empirical and theoretical clarity on how synergy is generated within SCCs, how it is shaped by attentional and resource configurations, and how it influences organisational performance and citizen service outcomes in resource-constrained environments. This study addresses these shortcomings by conceptualising synergy as a multi-level configuration of attentional structures, resource endowments, and adaptive capabilities. It develops and operationalises indicators designed to capture technology enablement, collaborative governance, and attentional alignment across SCC operations. Through empirical validation within SCC settings in the Eastern Cape, the study aims to develop a robust and context-sensitive evaluative framework that can inform responsive budgeting, enhance organisational performance, and improve the provision of citizen-facing services within the broader public sector modernisation agenda.

Central Research Question (CRQ)

How do attentional structures, resource configurations, collaborative governance practices, and technology enablement interact in resource-constrained public sector environments to generate multi-level strategic synergy within Shared Contact Centres, and through which mechanisms does this synergy influence organisational performance and citizen service delivery outcomes?

Sub-Question 1: Attentional Alignment and Governance Conditions: SQ1: *To what extent does attentional alignment across managerial levels influence the mobilisation of organisational resources and uptake of enabling technologies within Shared Contact Centres, and how is this relationship mediated by the quality of collaborative governance across departmental and intergovernmental boundaries?*

Sub-Question 2: Forms and Indicators of Synergy: SQ2: *How do interactions between attentional alignment and resource capabilities give rise to operational, strategic, and relational forms of synergy, and what valid indicators can be used to measure the presence and strength of each synergy type in a provincial context characterised by uneven capability maturity?*

Sub-Question 3: Synergy Effects on Organisational and Service Outcomes: SQ3: *In what ways, and with what effect sizes, do different synergy configurations predict variation in organisational performance and citizen-facing service delivery outcomes, after accounting for contextual constraints such as audit-identified control weaknesses, budget rigidity, and infrastructure limitations?*

This reframing preserves core constructs, makes the configurational logic explicit, and foregrounds the causal pathway from attentional structures and resources, through governance and technology, to synergistic value creation and performance. It also anticipates measurement by signalling the need for indicators of technology enablement, collaborative governance, attentional alignment, and multi-level synergy, which can be validated within Eastern Cape SCC setting. In summary, the study asks how attentional structures, resource configurations, collaborative governance, and technology enablement jointly configure to generate multi-level strategic synergy in Shared Contact Centres, and how that synergy, in turn, affects measurable organisational performance and citizen service outcomes in the Eastern Cape. It further probes the mechanisms linking attentional alignment and resource orchestration to technology uptake and cross-departmental collaboration, and examines whether these interactions produce operational, strategic, and relational forms of synergy that can be validly measured in resource-constrained, audit-sensitive setting.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Strategic role of Shared Services and Shared Contact Centres have evolved from cost-reduction mechanisms into strategic platforms that enable operational efficiency, standardisation, and innovation across the public and private sectors (Goth & Catala, 2025). Within this framework, Shared Contact Centres (SCCs) serve as critical interfaces for customer engagement, service delivery, and responsiveness. Recent literature highlights the transformation of SCCs into strategic assets capable of driving citizen-centric outcomes and organisational agility (Williams, 2024; KPMG, 2024). However, the strategic potential of SCCs remains under-theorised, particularly in emerging economies. While operational metrics such as call resolution and service speed are well-documented, the relational and strategic dimensions such as synergy creation, attentional governance, and cross-functional collaboration are less explored (Ntlube & Pillay, 2024).

Synergy Creation and Strategic Alignment

Synergy in SSCs is increasingly viewed as a dynamic construct shaped by strategic alignment, resource integration, and collaborative practices. Kivimaa & Entsaló, (2026) argue that synergy emerges when shared services are embedded within broader organisational strategy, enabling value creation beyond cost savings. This view is supported by Ntlube and Pillay (2024), who propose a multi-level synergy evaluation framework

that incorporates governance, attentional structures, and technology enablement as key drivers of performance.

The Attention-Based View (ABV) offers a compelling lens for understanding how managerial focus and strategic priorities influence synergy outcomes. Ocasio, 2026) posits that organisational attention is a scarce resource that must be strategically allocated to areas of high impact. In the context of SCCs, attentional structures determine how resources, technologies, and human capital are mobilised to achieve strategic goals.

Collaborative Practices and Technology Enablement

Collaboration across departments and service units is essential for realising the full potential of SCCs. Studies by Reinhardt & Gonzalez, 2026) emphasise the role of process integration and interdepartmental communication in enhancing service quality and responsiveness. In South Africa, collaborative partnerships have been shown to improve service delivery outcomes in local government settings (Masiya, 2021). Technology enablement further amplifies the strategic value of SCCs. Digital platforms, analytics, and automation tools facilitate real-time decision-making, customer insight generation, and performance monitoring (KPMG, 2024). These capabilities support dynamic capabilities theory, which underscores the importance of sensing, seizing, and transforming resources in rapidly changing environments

Identified Gap and Contribution:

Despite growing interest in SSCs and SCCs, there remains a lack of integrative frameworks that link strategic management theories with empirical evaluation of synergy creation. Most studies focus on operational efficiency, neglecting the strategic, attentional, and relational dimensions that underpin sustainable performance. This research addresses this gap by proposing a synergy evaluation framework grounded in ABV, RBV, and dynamic capabilities theory, with empirical validation from SCCs in South Africa

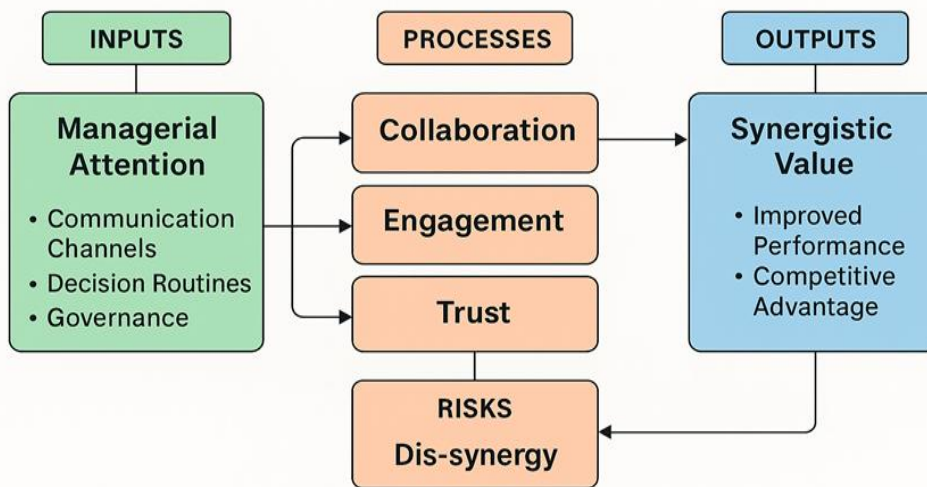
An Attention-Based Perspective on Synergy in Shared Services Centres

This conceptual study advances a theoretical framework that explicates the emergence of synergistic value within Shared Services Centres (SSCs), with a particular emphasis on Shared Contact Centres (SCCs), through the strategic deployment of managerial attention. Grounded in the Attention-Based View (ABV) of the organisation, the framework reconceptualises synergy not as a fixed structural attribute but as a dynamic, relational outcome shaped by attentional distribution and strategic interaction. The ABV posits that organisational behaviour and strategic outcomes are contingent upon how managerial attention, an inherently limited resource is allocated across competing priorities (Ocasio, 2026). Within SSCs, the configuration of attention structures, including communication channels, decision-making routines, and governance mechanisms, plays a pivotal role in directing focus toward strategic issues and relational dynamics (Ocasio et al., 2020). These structures influence the salience of synergistic drivers such as collaboration, trust, and stakeholder engagement, which are essential for capability pooling, interest alignment, and cross-functional integration (Bauer & Friesl, 2022). When managerial attention is coherently concentrated on these relational drivers, SSCs are more likely to realise synergistic outcomes, including enhanced operational performance, strategic agility, and value creation (Ntlube & Pillay, 2024). Conversely, fragmented or misaligned attention can precipitate dis-synergy, manifested in inefficiencies, performance deterioration, and missed strategic opportunities. Such adverse outcomes often stem from neglected relational dynamics or poorly orchestrated integration efforts (Deloitte, 2021).

This framework positions synergy as a behavioural and attentional construct, underscoring the critical role of strategic focus and organisational design in enabling collaborative value generation. Integrating ABV into the study of SSCs, the framework contributes to a nuanced understanding of how managerial cognition and organisational architecture interact to shape synergistic potential. Furthermore, it offers a foundation for evaluating the efficacy of attention allocation in the implementation and success of shared services strategies within complex organisational ecosystems

Figure 3.1: Conceptual Framework — Attention-Based Synergy Creation in SSCs

Attention-Based View (ABV) Framework



An Attention-Based Perspective on Synergy Evaluation

This framework is anchored in the Attention-Based View (ABV) of the organisation, which conceptualises managerial attention as a finite cognitive resource that critically shapes strategic outcomes. Extending Bauer and Friesl’s (2022) integration of ABV with valuation practices, the framework explores how organisations identify, prioritise, and pursue synergistic opportunities within Shared Services Centres (SSCs), particularly Shared Contact Centres (SCCs). ABV posits that decision-making is bounded by cognitive limitations and organisational structures, with attention directed through formal mechanisms such as communication channels, governance frameworks, and decision-making routines (Ocasio et al., 2020). Within this context, synergy is not merely a structural or operational artefact but a function of attentional focus. Figure 1 illustrates how synergistic value in SCCs emerges through strategic allocation of attention to relational drivers namely collaboration, engagement, and trust. These relational elements facilitate capability pooling and stakeholder alignment. When attention is effectively concentrated on these drivers, organisations are more likely to achieve enhanced performance, competitive advantage, and value creation. Conversely, fragmented or misaligned attention can result in dis-synergy, characterised by performance decline, inefficiencies, and strategic misalignment (Brielmaier & Friesl, 2023).

Synergy Evaluation through the Attention-Based View

This study proposes a conceptual framework for evaluating synergy within SCCs, grounded in the Attention-Based View of the organisation. ABV theorises organisational behaviour as a function of how limited managerial attention is distributed across competing priorities (Nicolini & Mengis, 2023). Within this framework, synergy is reconceptualised as a dynamic, relational outcome shaped by attentional focus and strategic interaction rather than a static structural attribute.

Framework Components

The framework comprises two interrelated components: *Synergy Types as Issues*: These represent distinct forms of synergy operational, managerial, investment, and knowledge-based that emerge through integration and collaboration. Each type reflects specific value drivers and strategic priorities within the organisation.

Valuation Practices as Answers: These encompass the tools, metrics, and interpretive methods used by managers to assess the potential value of synergy. Such practices are shaped by organisational attention structures, which determine what is measured, how it is interpreted, and which opportunities are pursued.

Organisational Attention Structures

Organisational attention structures including communication channels, decision-making routines, and governance mechanisms play a pivotal role in determining which strategic issues are prioritised and how resources are mobilised (Brielmaier & Friesl, 2023). These structures influence the visibility of strategic opportunities and shape managerial cognition and action. ABV is built around three interdependent constructs: top managerial attention, organisational attention, and organisational action. An issue that receives top managerial attention defined as the prioritisation of specific concerns by senior executives shapes the broader organisational focus and ultimately drives strategic action (Colombo & Mella, 2022). Given cognitive and temporal constraints, executives cannot attend to all issues equally. Their focus is often revealed through formal governance artefacts such as board meeting minutes, CEO statements, and annual reports (Schiehl et al., 2023).

Application to SCCs

In the context of SCCs, this attentional perspective offers valuable insight into why certain synergy opportunities are pursued while others are overlooked. It highlights the importance of aligning attention structures with strategic goals to ensure that high-value synergies are identified, evaluated, and implemented effectively. By framing synergy as an attentional construct, the model provides a dynamic lens for assessing how managerial focus shapes collaborative outcomes and organisational performance

Figure 3.2 illustrates Attention Based View (ABV) model applied to synergy evaluation

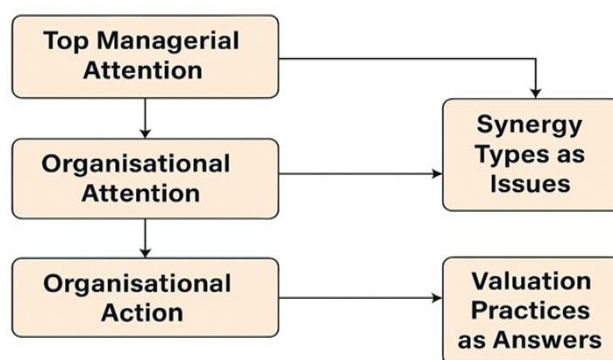


Figure 3.1: Attention-Based View (ABV) Model Applied to Synergy Evaluation

A Flow-Based Conceptual Model of Synergy Evaluation in Shared Services Centres

This section introduces a flow-based conceptual model grounded in the Attention-Based View (ABV) of the firm, which posits that organisational behaviour is shaped by the selective focus of managerial attention (Ocasio, 2026). The model illustrates how managerial attention influences organisational action and the evaluation of synergy within Shared Services Centres (SSCs), with particular emphasis on Shared Contact Centres (SCCs).

Core Components

The model is structured around three interdependent components that define the flow of attention and its translation into strategic action:

Top Managerial Attention: This refers to the prioritisation of strategic issues by senior executives. Due to cognitive and temporal limitations, top managers must allocate their attention selectively to areas deemed most critical (Colombo & Mella, 2022). Their focus establishes the tone for organisational priorities and guides the mobilisation of resources. **Organisational Attention:** Emerging from top managerial focus, organisational attention reflects how strategic priorities are disseminated across departments, initiatives, and operational

domains. It shapes how synergy opportunities are recognised, interpreted, and acted upon (Brielmaier & Friesl, 2023). *Organisational Action*: This represents the culmination of attentional focus, encompassing the concrete steps taken to realise synergy through integration, collaboration, and resource alignment. Organisational action operationalises strategic intent and translates attention into measurable outcomes.

Supporting Elements

Three supporting elements further contextualise the model and enhance its explanatory power: *Synergy Types (Issues)*: These include operational, managerial, investment, and knowledge-based synergies that arise from collaborative practices. Each type reflects distinct value drivers and strategic imperatives within the organisation. *Valuation Practices (Answers)*: These encompass the tools, metrics, and interpretive frameworks used to assess the potential value of synergy. Examples include return on investment (ROI) analyses, strategic fit assessments, and capability mapping. These practices are shaped by the organisation's attention structures and influence which opportunities are pursued and prioritised.

Attention Structures:

These consist of formal and informal systems that guide the allocation of attention, such as governance mechanisms, communication platforms, and decision-making routines. Attention structures determine the visibility of strategic issues and regulate the flow of information across the organisation (Schiehll et al., 2023).

Flow of Influence

The model follows a linear progression: *Top Managerial Attention* → *Organisational Attention* → *Organisational Action*: This flow demonstrates how strategic priorities are translated into operational realities. Feedback loops from valuation practices and attention structures continuously inform future decisions, shaping the organisation's capacity to identify and pursue high-value synergies. These loops also explain why certain opportunities may be overlooked, particularly when attention structures are misaligned with strategic goals. By conceptualising synergy as an attentional construct, this framework offers a dynamic lens for understanding how managerial focus and organisational design interact to influence collaborative outcomes and performance within SSCs. It underscores the importance of aligning attention structures with strategic imperatives to maximise the realisation of synergistic value

Meta-Theoretical Proposition: Synergy as a Multilevel Enabler of Competitive Advantage.

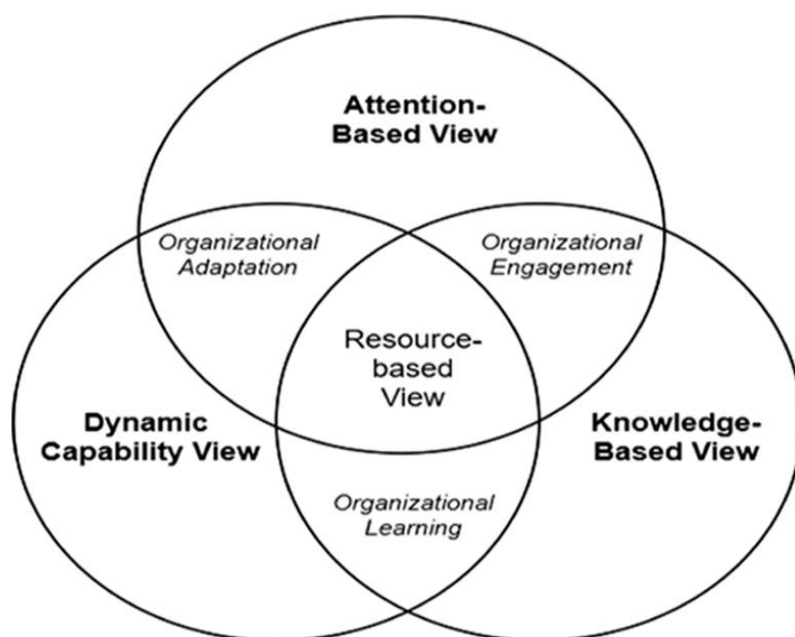


Figure 3.3: Managerial attention and knowledge-based dynamic capabilities: A meta-theoretical approach to competitive advantage and synergy within an organisation.

Meta-Theoretical Integration and Impact Dimensions of Synergy

Building on Kaur's, (2023) meta-theoretical framework, this study integrates micro-level cognition, meso-level knowledge capabilities, and macro-level dynamic capabilities to explain how synergy drives sustainable competitive advantage. Synergy is conceptualised as the connective tissue that binds these levels, transforming individual insights into collective action and organisational transformation. This multilevel integration reflects a holistic understanding of how strategic outcomes emerge from the interplay of attention, knowledge, and capability orchestration (Kaur, 2023).

Impact Dimensions of Synergy

The framework identifies four interrelated dimensions through which synergy shapes organisational outcomes. First, synergy enhances organisational responsiveness to change by strengthening cross-functional collaboration and coordination. Through integrated interaction among organisational units, synergy enables organisations to anticipate, interpret, and respond more effectively to environmental shifts. This capacity for adaptive responsiveness is particularly critical in dynamic and complex sectors such as public service delivery, where timely and coordinated responses constitute a core performance requirement (Ntlube & Pillay, 2024). Second, synergy plays a central role in improving organisational innovation capacity. By facilitating shared learning, knowledge integration, and collective problem-solving, synergy cultivates an environment conducive to experimentation and iterative refinement. Such collaborative processes are especially salient in knowledge-intensive contexts such as Shared Contact Centres (SCCs), where service innovation depends heavily on the continuous exchange and recombination of tacit and explicit knowledge (Brielmaier & Friesl, 2023). In this regard, synergy functions as an enabling mechanism that transforms dispersed expertise into organisational learning and innovation. Third, synergy contributes to stronger alignment between strategy formulation and operational execution. By fostering integrated planning processes, shared accountability structures, and continuous feedback loops across organisational levels, synergy helps bridge the persistent gap between strategic intent and day-to-day implementation. This alignment ensures that strategic objectives are translated into coherent operational actions, thereby improving consistency, coordination, and execution effectiveness throughout the organisation (Colombo & Mella, 2022). Finally, synergy exerts a positive influence on overall organisational performance outcomes. Synergistic interaction among organisational components enhances efficiency, service quality, and stakeholder satisfaction, while simultaneously strengthening organisational resilience. These performance gains enable organisations not only to meet immediate operational demands but also to adapt and thrive within increasingly complex and evolving environments. Empirical evidence suggests that organisations characterised by high levels of synergy demonstrate superior performance across multiple dimensions, particularly in contexts that require sustained adaptability and responsiveness (Schiehl et al., 2023).

Emergent Themes from Theoretical Propositions

Figures 3.2 and 3.3 depict the emergent themes derived from the theoretical propositions examined in this study and highlight the pivotal role of involvement and collaboration in enabling strategic synergy. These themes collectively underscore the argument that synergy emerges through deliberate relational and participatory processes rather than through isolated organisational actions. Involvement is positioned as a foundational element of strategic synergy, as inclusive participation in strategic planning processes ensures that the priorities, interests, and perspectives of both internal and external stakeholders are systematically identified, aligned, and legitimised. By extending participation beyond conventional managerial hierarchies, organisational involvement fosters stronger ownership of strategic objectives and consolidates commitment to the broader strategic agenda. From the perspective of stakeholder theory, inclusivity in decision-making processes embeds diverse perspectives into organisational discourse, thereby enhancing coherence and legitimacy. Such integration reduces resistance to change and increases the likelihood of effective implementation of strategic initiatives. Recent scholarship has advanced this argument by situating stakeholder engagement within the emerging "new stakeholder theory," which emphasises the instrumental role of stakeholders in value creation and organisational resilience (McGahan, 2021). Embedding pluralistic

viewpoints into strategic processes thus represents both a theoretical imperative and a practical mechanism for sustaining organisational performance in complex governance environments.

Building upon involvement, collaboration represents a more advanced and sustained form of interaction characterised by the joint definition of goals and shared responsibility among organisational actors and their partners. Collaboration extends beyond consultation by fostering co-creation and mutual accountability within an interconnected organisational ecosystem. The formalisation of collaborative relationships through governance mechanisms such as Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and Service Level Agreements (SLAs) plays a critical role in institutionalising trust, clarifying expectations, and establishing accountability structures. These instruments provide a stable framework for long-term coordination, enabling organisations to harness complementary resources and capabilities in pursuit of collective outcomes (Kaur, 2023). Taken together, the themes of involvement and collaboration reinforce the central proposition that sustainable strategic advantage is not solely determined by internal resources or capabilities. Rather, it is deeply contingent upon the quality of relationships, the legitimacy of shared commitments, and the capacity to coordinate actions across organisational boundaries. Strategic synergy, as illustrated in Figures 3.3 and 3.4, thus emerges as an ecosystem-level phenomenon in which value creation is jointly produced through inclusive engagement and collaborative governance mechanisms. This relational perspective broadens conventional understandings of strategy by situating organisational performance within a networked context of interdependence and shared purpose.

Critical Analysis of Theoretical Propositions

Strengths:

Recent scholarship provides a robust conceptual foundation for understanding organisational synergy by drawing on dynamic capabilities, stakeholder theory, and knowledge management. The dynamic capabilities perspective emphasises the importance of adaptive capacity in turbulent environments, highlighting how organisations sustain performance by sensing opportunities, seizing options, and reconfiguring resources (Donaires & Cezarino, 2026). Stakeholder theory has been extended to underexplored contexts, demonstrating how interdependencies and governance arrangements facilitate value co-creation and legitimacy across diverse organisational settings (Barakat & Santos, 2026). Knowledge management scholarship further underscores the role of collaborative knowledge creation in enhancing innovation and sustainability, particularly through the integration of tacit and explicit knowledge across organisational boundaries (Aljuwaiber, 2026). A central strength of this literature lies in its emphasis on cognitive alignment, whereby shared understandings and interpretations of strategic objectives reduce ambiguity, improve coordination, and enhance collective action. Closely related is strategic responsiveness, which captures the ability of organisations to adapt efficiently to external change. These perspectives converge in their attention to the integration of managerial attention and knowledge processes, illustrating how micro-level practices of sense-making, communication, and learning scale up to influence organisational adaptability, innovation, and performance (Nicolini & Mengis, 2023).

Limitations

Despite these conceptual strengths, several limitations constrain explanatory power and practical applicability. One significant limitation concerns the fragmentation of analysis across levels of inquiry. Much of the literature isolates micro-level cognition from meso-level organisational practices and macro-level institutional conditions, restricting understanding of how synergy emerges through multi-level interactions.

A second limitation lies in the contextual assumptions underpinning much of the theoretical work. Many frameworks are developed primarily within private sector contexts, privileging efficiency and profitability as performance measures. Such assumptions limit transferability to public sector environments, where objectives are multidimensional and contested, shaped by accountability regimes, governance structures, and value pluralism (Barakat & Campos, 2022).

A further limitation concerns the abstract nature of the synergy construct itself. While widely invoked, synergy remains under-theorised and insufficiently operationalised. Definitions often remain broad and aspirational,

lacking clear mechanisms or measurable indicators. This abstraction hampers empirical validation and limits translation into actionable managerial practices (Aljuwaiber, 2026).

Taken together, these limitations point to the need for more integrative, context-sensitive, and operationally grounded approaches. Future theoretical models must explicitly connect micro-level practices to organisational processes and institutional conditions, while tailoring propositions to the complexities of public sector service delivery. Such an approach would strengthen explanatory coherence and enhance both scholarly and managerial relevance

Research Questions and Literature Linkage

The central research question (CRQ) and sub-questions (SQ1–SQ3) are grounded in contemporary organisational theory, drawing on cognitive alignment, dynamic capabilities, collaborative governance, and knowledge creation frameworks. Together, they extend existing scholarship by situating synergy within the public sector Shared Contact Centre (SCC) context, addressing limitations of prior work that has been overly private-sector oriented, fragmented across levels of analysis, and insufficiently operationalised.

Central Research Question (CRQ)

How do attentional structures, resource configurations, collaborative governance practices, and technology enablement interact in resource-constrained public sector environments to generate multi-level strategic synergy within Shared Contact Centres, and through which mechanisms does this synergy influence organisational performance and citizen service delivery outcomes?

The CRQ builds on the literature's emphasis on cognitive alignment, which enhances coordination and coherence across organisational levels (Nicolini & Mengis, 2023). It also integrates insights from the dynamic capabilities framework, which highlights the importance of sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring resources in uncertain environments (McGahan, 2021). By explicitly linking micro-level attentional structures to meso-level governance practices and macro-level service delivery outcomes, the CRQ addresses the fragmentation of analysis noted in prior studies.

Sub Question 1: Attentional Alignment and Governance Conditions

To what extent does attentional alignment across managerial levels influence the mobilisation of organisational resources and uptake of enabling technologies within Shared Contact Centres, and how is this relationship mediated by the quality of collaborative governance across departmental and intergovernmental boundaries?

SQ1 operationalises the literature on cognitive alignment, showing how shared mental models facilitate resource mobilisation and technology adoption. It also draws on collaborative governance theory, which emphasises trust, accountability, and cross-boundary coordination in public sector contexts (Ansell & Gash, 2021). By examining mediation effects, SQ1 responds to calls for multi-level integration, linking attentional alignment (micro) with governance quality (meso).

Sub Question 2: Forms and Indicators of Synergy

How do interactions between attentional alignment and resource capabilities give rise to operational, strategic, and relational forms of synergy, and what valid indicators can be used to measure the presence and strength of each synergy type in a provincial context characterised by uneven capability maturity? This question builds on the literature's recognition of collaborative knowledge creation, which transforms dispersed expertise into organisational learning (Spanò & Zampella, 2026). It addresses the limitation that synergy is often under-theorised and insufficiently operationalised, by proposing measurable indicators for different synergy types. The focus on uneven capability maturity situates the study within the public sector context, responding to critiques that existing theories are overly private-sector oriented.

Sub Question 3: Synergy Effects on Organisational and Service Outcomes

In what ways, and with what effect sizes, do different synergy configurations predict variation in organisational performance and citizen-facing service delivery outcomes, after accounting for contextual constraints such as audit-identified control weaknesses, budget rigidity, and infrastructure limitations?

SQ3 links directly to the literature on strategic responsiveness, which emphasises adaptability and renewal in uncertain environments. It operationalises synergy by examining its predictive power on performance and service delivery outcomes, moving beyond abstract theorisation. By incorporating contextual constraints (audit, budget, infrastructure), SQ3 addresses the literature's limitation regarding private-sector bias, tailoring the analysis to public sector realities

Synthesis:

Taken together, the central research question and its sub-questions extend existing theory by integrating micro, meso, and macro levels of analysis in order to overcome the fragmentation that has characterised much of the prior literature. They also address the contextual gap by situating the study of synergy within public sector Shared Contact Centres, a domain often overlooked in frameworks developed primarily for private sector organisations. In addition, the questions respond to the operationalisation gap by proposing measurable indicators and effect sizes that can empirically capture the dynamics of synergy. Collectively, this positioning advances both theoretical and practical contributions to the study of governance and service delivery, offering a framework that is integrative, context-sensitive, and empirically grounded.

Justification for the Proposed Framework

The critical gaps identified in the preceding analysis provide a clear and compelling justification for the development of the proposed framework. While existing theories offer valuable yet partial explanations of how synergy emerges within organisations, their fragmented treatment of individual, organisational, and inter-organisational dynamics limits both explanatory coherence and practical applicability. The absence of an integrative perspective capable of linking micro-level practices, meso-level organisational processes, and macro-level institutional arrangements underscores the need for a unified analytical framework that can more fully account for the complexity of synergistic value creation. This directly responds to the Central Research Question (CRQ), which seeks to understand how attentional structures, resource configurations, governance practices, and technology enablement interact to generate multi-level strategic synergy within Shared Contact Centres (Miller & Ghaffarzadegan, 2025).

In particular, the limited theorisation of formal governance instruments such as Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and Service Level Agreements (SLAs) reveals a significant conceptual blind spot. Although these mechanisms are widely employed in practice to structure inter-organisational relationships, they are most often analysed through legalistic or administrative lenses rather than as strategic enablers of trust, accountability, and coordinated action. The proposed framework addresses this omission by explicitly incorporating such instruments as relational and institutional mechanisms that mediate collaboration and stabilise expectations across organisational boundaries. In doing so, it extends existing theories by demonstrating how formal structures interact with informal relational processes to sustain synergy over time, thereby directly informing Sub Question 1 (SQ1), which examines how attentional alignment and governance conditions mediate resource mobilisation and technology uptake (Satheesh et al., 2026). Similarly, the insufficient attention paid to inclusive stakeholder involvement in existing models necessitates a reconceptualisation of how strategic priorities are formed and legitimised. Current frameworks frequently acknowledge stakeholder engagement as a normative requirement without adequately specifying its causal role in shaping cognitive alignment, shared ownership, and execution capability. The proposed framework responds to this gap by positioning stakeholder involvement as a central operational mechanism through which strategic coherence and collective commitment are achieved, rather than as a peripheral or instrumental concern. This reconceptualisation directly supports Sub Question 2 (SQ2), which investigates how attentional alignment and resource capabilities give rise to operational, strategic, and relational forms of synergy, and how these can be validly measured in contexts

characterised by uneven capability maturity (Sarturi & Barakat, 2025).

The need for a new framework is further reinforced by the lack of contextual sensitivity in prevailing theories, particularly with respect to public sector service delivery environments. Much of the literature assumes market-oriented settings and prioritises efficiency-centric performance outcomes, thereby neglecting the institutional complexity, governance constraints, and value plurality that characterise public organisations. By situating synergy explicitly within public sector contexts, the proposed framework adapts and extends existing theoretical propositions to reflect the realities of service-based, multi-actor systems where legitimacy, accountability, and collaborative capacity are as critical as efficiency. This contextual grounding directly informs Sub Question 3 (SQ3), which examines how different synergy configurations predict variation in organisational performance and citizen-facing service delivery outcomes under conditions of audit-identified control weaknesses, budget rigidity, and infrastructure limitations (Yulianto & Hamidah, 2025; Aljuwaiber, 2026).

Taken together, these theoretical and contextual limitations highlight the inadequacy of incremental refinements to existing models and instead call for a meta-theoretical approach capable of synthesising disparate strands of literature into a coherent whole. The proposed framework is designed to fulfil this role by integrating insights from dynamic capabilities, stakeholder theory, and knowledge management, while embedding them within a relational and institutional perspective appropriate to complex service environments. In doing so, it offers a more holistic, actionable, and contextually grounded understanding of synergy, thereby addressing the identified gaps and advancing both theoretical development and practical relevance.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a mixed methods research design to develop and empirically validate a synergy evaluation framework applicable to Shared Contact Centres (SCCs), organisational performance, and customer service outcomes. The methodological approach integrated qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques to balance contextual richness with empirical rigour. By combining interpretive inquiry with statistical validation, the study sought to generate a robust and contextually grounded framework capable of capturing the multifaceted nature of synergy within public sector service environments.

Research Design

A mixed methods research design was employed, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of synergy dynamics within Shared Contact Centres. Mixed methods research is particularly well suited to organisational and management studies where complex social phenomena require both in-depth contextual exploration and empirical testing. The integration of qualitative and quantitative approaches enables researchers to leverage the strengths of each method while compensating for their respective limitations, thereby enhancing explanatory power and validity (Creswell & Plano, 2021). In the present study, qualitative methods were utilised to explore contextual, relational, and process-oriented dimensions of synergy, while quantitative methods were subsequently applied to operationalise constructs and assess the empirical validity of the proposed framework. Semi-structured interviews and case study analysis provided insights into attentional alignment, governance practices, and stakeholder involvement, while survey data enabled statistical testing of synergy indicators and their relationship to organisational performance and service delivery outcomes. This combination facilitated methodological triangulation, strengthened internal validity, and enhanced the credibility of the findings (Magama, 2026). Furthermore, the integrative design supported theory development by allowing insights emerging from qualitative analysis to inform the construction of quantitative measurement instruments, ensuring coherence between theoretical propositions and empirical testing. This iterative process reflects best practice in organisational research, where the interplay between qualitative exploration and quantitative validation enhances both conceptual clarity and empirical robustness (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2022).

Qualitative Phase: Data Collection:

The qualitative phase formed the foundational stage of the study, designed to generate in-depth insights into the

drivers and manifestations of synergy within Shared Contact Centres (SCCs). Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with senior managers, operational staff, and subject matter experts across four public sector organisations in the Eastern Cape Province. These interviews provided rich accounts of strategic intentions, governance arrangements, and lived experiences associated with SCC implementation and performance. Complementing the interviews, case studies were developed for each organisation to capture contextual variations, organisational cultures, and implementation trajectories. This approach facilitated a holistic examination of SCCs within their institutional environments and enabled cross-case comparison to identify recurring patterns and emerging best practices (Yin, 2021). To further strengthen theoretical grounding and practical relevance, expert interviews were conducted with academics and practitioners specialising in shared services, public sector reform, and organisational performance. These perspectives contributed to construct refinement, informed the interpretation of empirical findings, and supported the development of a synergy evaluation framework that is both theoretically robust and practically applicable (Magama, 2026)

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis, supported by NVivo software to ensure rigour, organisation, and traceability. Iterative coding and categorisation revealed recurring themes of collaboration, cultural alignment, process integration, and technology enablement, which collectively illuminated the dynamics of synergy within Shared Contact Centres (SCCs). The findings demonstrate that SCCs function as strategic mechanisms for creating and sustaining synergy by integrating organisational attention, resources, capabilities, and stakeholder relationships. Four interrelated synergy relationship values were identified: (1) organisational strategic management and the SCC, (2) SCC linkages with business units and external partners, (3) SCC performance and organisational impacts, and (4) SCC resources, capabilities, and customer orientation. From an *Attention-Based View (ABV)*, outcomes were shaped by executive vision and the way organisational structures channelled managerial focus toward priorities such as process standardisation, service quality, and customer responsiveness (Ocasio & Laamanen, 2021). From a *relational perspective*, synergy was enabled through collaboration, trust, and integration, both internally across divisions and externally with customers and partners, supporting the argument that sustainable advantage emerges from high-quality relationships and network-based exchanges (Nicolini & Mengis, 2023). Overall, the SCC was shown to enhance organisational performance and service delivery by directing managerial attention to strategic priorities while strengthening relational networks. The combined effect of focused attention and relational mechanisms generated productive synergy, improved customer experiences, and contributed to sustainable organisational value creation. These findings provide the theoretical and empirical foundation for the proposed Synergy Framework.

Quantitative Analysis

Organisation Profile of Respondents: The quantitative survey yielded 116 responses drawn from a diverse range of public sector departments, municipalities, state entities, private organisations, and Shared Contact Centre (SCC) environments. This diversity ensured that multiple perspectives were captured regarding the contribution of SCCs to organisational performance, service delivery, and customer value creation.

The largest proportion of respondents originated from the Eastern Cape Department of Health (37.4%), reflecting the study's primary focus on healthcare and public service contexts. Additional representation came from municipalities such as Buffalo City and Nelson Mandela Bay, as well as departments including Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) and Education. Smaller contributions from private sector organisations and specialised service providers further enriched the dataset. From an *Attention-Based Theory (ABT)* perspective, the broad organisational representation illustrates how institutions allocate managerial focus toward support services, efficiency, and customer responsiveness (Ocasio & Laamanen, 2021). From a *Relational-Based View (RBV)*, the findings highlight the interconnected nature of organisational relationships, demonstrating the importance of collaborative networks, interdepartmental cooperation, and stakeholder engagement in sustaining performance and customer satisfaction (Nicolini & Mengis, 2023).

Overall, the diversity of respondents strengthened the triangulation process within the mixed-methods design and underscored the strategic role of SCCs as mechanisms for coordinating information flows, aligning

priorities, and enhancing organisational outcomes across sectors

Data Collection

The quantitative phase employed a structured survey to capture empirical evidence from 116 respondents engaged in Shared Contact Centre (SCC) operations across diverse public sector departments, municipalities, and partner organisations. The survey instrument utilised standardised Likert-scale items to measure constructs central to the Synergy Framework, including governance effectiveness, resource utilisation, organisational performance, customer satisfaction, and collaborative service delivery. This design ensured systematic data collection and enabled consistent assessment of relationships among the study variables.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive and inferential techniques including correlation analysis, regression modelling, and hypothesis testing were applied to examine relationships among governance mechanisms, resource utilisation, Net Promoter Score (NPS), service delivery outcomes, and organisational performance. The analyses identified significant associations among these constructs and demonstrated the predictive power of synergy in explaining variations in organisational and service delivery outcomes. These results provide empirical support for the proposed Synergy Framework and confirm its relevance in public sector SCC environments

Quantitative Analysis: Descriptive and Inferential Results

The descriptive statistics revealed consistently low mean scores (ranging from 1.39 to 1.67) across survey items, indicating strong agreement among respondents regarding the role of synergy and collaboration in enhancing organisational performance, customer satisfaction, and service delivery outcomes. Low standard deviations further confirmed the consistency of these perceptions. Respondents expressed strongest agreement with statements emphasising the contribution of synergy to organisational effectiveness, customer value creation, and the promotion of a shared organisational vision. Conversely, corruption and limited managerial competencies were identified as barriers to effective collaboration, underscoring the importance of leadership integrity and capability.

From an *Attention-Based Theory (ABT)* perspective, the findings highlight the role of managerial focus in directing organisational attention toward collaboration, strategic alignment, and customer responsiveness (Ocasio & Laamanen, 2021). From a *Relational-Based View (RBV)*, the results demonstrate that organisational success is strongly influenced by trust, resource sharing, innovation, and sustainable partnerships (Nicolini & Mengis, 2023). Collectively, the descriptive analysis provides preliminary empirical support for the study's hypotheses and confirms the strategic value of synergy in public sector SCCs. Net Promoter Score (NPS) was incorporated as a key measure of customer satisfaction and loyalty. Correlation analysis revealed positive associations between synergy-related variables and NPS, suggesting that higher levels of organisational integration and coordination were linked to improved customer perceptions of service delivery. Regression modelling further demonstrated the predictive validity of the proposed Synergy Framework. Governance effectiveness, resource utilisation, collaborative coordination, and strategic alignment emerged as significant predictors of organisational performance and customer service outcomes. These results confirm that synergy-related dimensions exert measurable influence on both institutional effectiveness and citizen-facing service delivery, thereby reinforcing the framework's theoretical and practical relevance

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The mixed-methods analysis revealed convergent evidence that Shared Contact Centres (SCCs) function as strategic mechanisms for generating and sustaining organisational synergy. The qualitative phase highlighted themes of collaboration, cultural alignment, process integration, and technology enablement, demonstrating how managerial attention and relational networks shape organisational outcomes. From an *Attention-Based View (ABT)*, synergy was shown to emerge when executive vision and organisational structures channel managerial focus toward priorities such as service quality, process standardisation, and customer

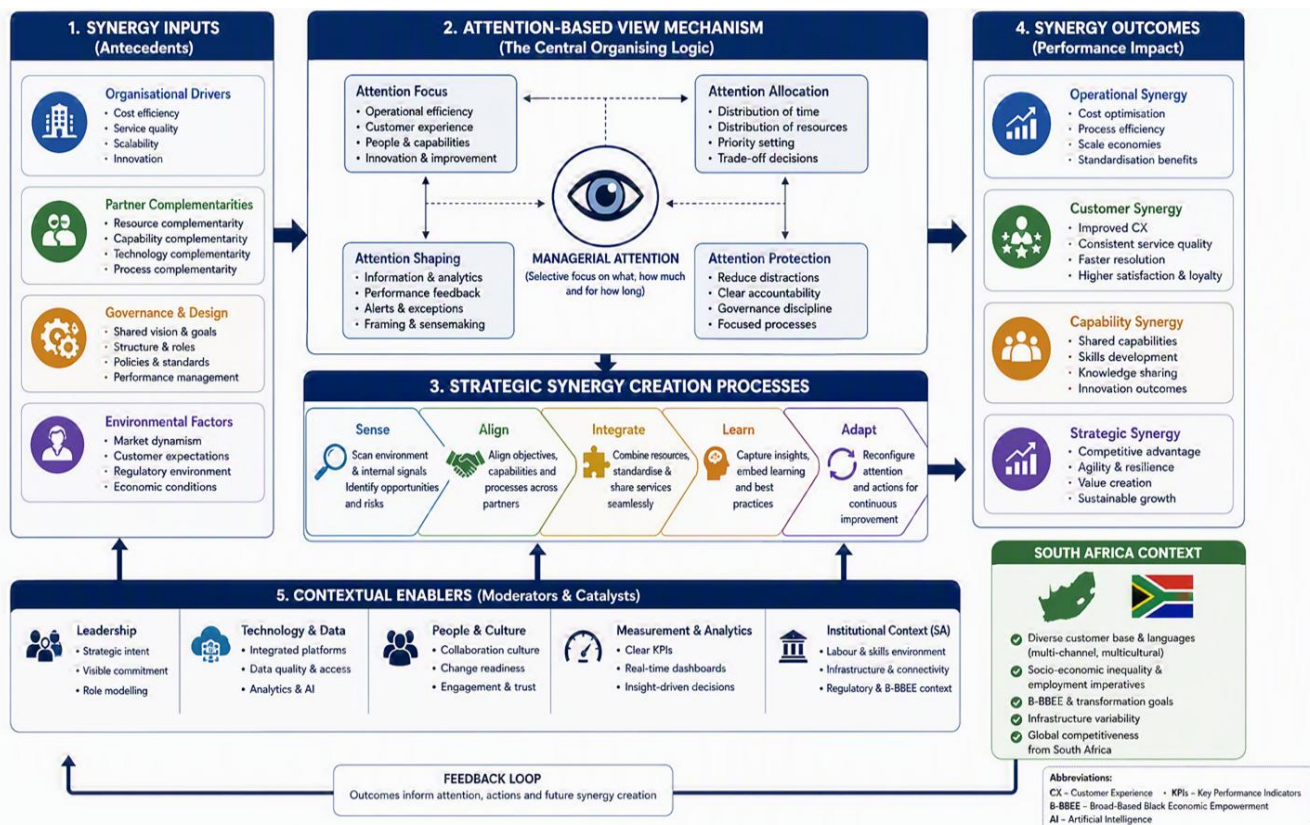
responsiveness (Ocasio & Laamanen, 2021). From a *Relational-Based View (RBV)*, synergy was enabled through trust, collaboration, and integration across organisational boundaries, reinforcing the argument that sustainable advantage derives from high-quality relationships and network-based exchanges (Nicolini & Mengis, 2023).

The quantitative phase provided empirical validation of these insights. Descriptive statistics revealed consistently strong agreement among respondents regarding the role of synergy and collaboration in enhancing organisational performance and customer satisfaction. Net Promoter Score (NPS) analysis confirmed positive associations between synergy-related variables and customer loyalty, while regression modelling demonstrated that governance effectiveness, resource utilisation, collaborative coordination, and strategic alignment significantly predicted organisational and service delivery outcomes. These findings empirically support the study's four hypotheses and confirm the predictive validity of the proposed Synergy Framework.

Taken together, the qualitative and quantitative results converge to show that SCCs enhance organisational performance by directing managerial attention toward strategic priorities while simultaneously strengthening relational networks. This dual mechanism attention and relationships creates productive synergy that improves customer experiences, fosters innovation, and contributes to sustainable organisational value creation. The findings therefore provide both theoretical and empirical justification for the development of a Synergy Framework that integrates attentional structures, governance practices, resource configurations, and stakeholder relationships within public sector contexts

Final New Framework Emerged

Figure 5. An Attention-Based View Framework for Shared Contact Centres in South Africa.



An Attention-Based View Framework for Shared Contact Centres in South Africa

Source: (Ntlube & Pillay, 2026)

This framework presents an *Attention-Based View (ABV)* explanation of strategic synergy creation within Shared Contact Centres (SCCs) in South Africa. It conceptualises synergy as a dynamic organisational

capability that emerges when managerial attention is purposefully directed towards the alignment, integration, and optimisation of shared resources, processes, and stakeholder relationships. The framework posits that synergy creation is initiated by a set of *antecedent conditions*, namely organisational drivers, partner complementarities, governance and design arrangements, and external environmental factors. Organisational drivers include strategic imperatives such as service quality enhancement, operational efficiency, scalability, and innovation. Partner complementarities refer to the integration of diverse resources, capabilities, technologies, and institutional knowledge across participating entities. Governance and design mechanisms provide the structural and procedural foundations necessary for coordination, accountability, and performance management, while environmental factors encompass regulatory requirements, customer expectations, market dynamics, and broader socio-economic conditions. At the centre of the framework is the *Attention-Based View mechanism*, which serves as the principal explanatory construct. Consistent with ABV theory, organisational outcomes are influenced by what decision-makers focus on, how attention is distributed, and how competing priorities are managed. Four interdependent attention mechanisms are identified. *Attention focus* directs managerial concentration towards strategic priorities and performance objectives. *Attention allocation* determines the distribution of time, resources, and decision-making effort across competing organisational demands. *Attention shaping* involves the use of information systems, performance data, feedback loops, and sense making processes to influence managerial priorities. *Attention protection* safeguards strategic focus by minimising distractions, reducing organisational noise, and reinforcing governance discipline. Collectively, these mechanisms determine which opportunities, risks, and collaborative initiatives receive organisational attention and support.

The framework further proposes that strategic synergy is realised through five interconnected processes: *sensing, aligning, integrating, learning, and adapting*. Sensing involves the continuous identification of opportunities, threats, and emerging stakeholder needs within both internal and external environments. Aligning refers to the harmonisation of objectives, capabilities, and expectations among participating stakeholders. Integrating encompasses the coordination and standardisation of resources, technologies, knowledge, and service processes to achieve operational coherence. Learning captures the generation, dissemination, and institutionalisation of knowledge derived from operational experience and performance outcomes. Adapting reflects the organisation's ability to reconfigure strategies, resources, and attention structures in response to changing conditions and emerging requirements. The successful execution of these processes leads to four categories of *synergy outcomes*. *Operational synergy* is reflected in improved efficiency, cost optimisation, process standardisation, and economies of scale. *Customer synergy* manifests through enhanced customer experience, service consistency, responsiveness, and satisfaction. *Capability synergy* is achieved through knowledge sharing, skills development, innovation, and the development of collective competencies. *Strategic synergy* results in improved organisational resilience, competitive advantage, value creation, and sustainable growth.

The framework further identifies several *contextual enablers* that moderate and strengthen the synergy creation process. These include effective leadership, advanced technology and data infrastructure, collaborative organisational cultures, robust measurement and analytics systems, and supportive institutional environments. Such enablers facilitate the effective deployment of managerial attention and enhance the organisation's capacity to coordinate shared-service activities. Importantly, the framework is situated within the *South African context*, recognising the influence of multilingual service environments, socio-economic transformation imperatives, demographic diversity, infrastructure variability, and regulatory requirements. These contextual factors shape both the opportunities and constraints associated with strategic synergy creation in Shared Contact Centres. Finally, the framework incorporates a feedback mechanism, whereby achieved outcomes influence future patterns of managerial attention, resource allocation, strategic priorities, and organisational learning. This recursive relationship underscores the continuous and adaptive nature of synergy creation, suggesting that sustained performance improvements arise from the ongoing interaction between attention structures, organisational processes, contextual conditions, and performance outcomes.

Managerial Recommendations

The findings of this study suggest that managers should adopt a holistic approach to the management of Shared

Contact Centres (SCCs), recognising their capacity to generate strategic value that extends beyond operational efficiency. Contemporary organisational research emphasises that sustainable performance is increasingly dependent on the ability of organisations to integrate people, processes, and technology through collaborative and strategically aligned systems (Bos-Nehles et al., 2023). A key managerial priority should be the development of relational capabilities that foster trust, collaboration, mutual respect, and shared organisational goals. Recent studies on relational coordination demonstrate that organisations characterised by strong interpersonal relationships and effective communication achieve superior outcomes in service quality, innovation, employee well-being, and organisational performance (Gittel, 2022). These relational mechanisms are particularly important in highly interdependent environments where coordination across organisational boundaries is essential. Organisations should also establish governance structures that promote strategic alignment and cross-functional coordination. Effective governance mechanisms facilitate the integration of organisational objectives, operational activities, and stakeholder interests, thereby reducing fragmentation and enhancing organisational synergies. Contemporary research indicates that strategic alignment remains a critical determinant of organisational effectiveness and long-term sustainability in complex organisational environments (Cafferkey et al., 2023).

Investment in human capital development is equally important for achieving sustained organisational performance. Recent evidence from the Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) framework highlights the importance of equipping employees with the required competencies, motivation, and opportunities to contribute meaningfully to organisational objectives. Employees who possess these attributes are more likely to demonstrate innovation, collaboration, adaptability, and accountability, thereby contributing to improved organisational performance (Bos-Nehles et al., 2023). Furthermore, managers should implement robust monitoring and evaluation systems that enable continuous assessment of organisational priorities and performance outcomes. Contemporary performance management literature suggests that the use of performance metrics, feedback mechanisms, and continuous learning systems enhances organisational agility and facilitates alignment between strategic objectives and operational execution (Agarwal, 2023). Collectively, these recommendations provide a practical framework for leveraging Shared Contact Centres as strategic assets that facilitate organisational integration, strengthen stakeholder collaboration, improve service delivery outcomes, and contribute to sustained organisational performance in increasingly dynamic and complex environments

Future Research and Practical Recommendations

To strengthen the theoretical robustness and practical applicability of the Synergy Framework, several research and managerial priorities are identified. First, cross-contextual validation is required to assess the framework's generalisability across public, private, and hybrid service organisations, enabling the identification of context-specific mechanisms through which attentional alignment, relational coordination, and value co-creation generate synergy. Second, longitudinal studies are recommended to examine how synergy evolves over time, particularly in response to leadership transitions, policy reforms, and technological change. Third, the rapid advancement of digital transformation and artificial intelligence warrants investigation into how automation, predictive analytics, and digital platforms influence attentional focus, coordination processes, and adaptive capabilities within Shared Contact Centres (SCCs). Fourth, further research should explore stakeholder value co-creation mechanisms, including governance instruments such as Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), Service Level Agreements (SLAs), and citizen feedback systems, to understand how trust and accountability sustain collaborative relationships. Fifth, there is a need for the development of synergy measurement instruments capable of capturing attentional alignment, relational quality, adaptive capability, and service responsiveness. Such metrics would provide organisations with practical tools for monitoring performance and guiding strategic interventions. Finally, policy and governance implications should be examined to determine how institutional arrangements enable or constrain synergy within complex service ecosystems, offering insights for designing integrated, citizen-centred service delivery models. In conclusion, advancing these research and practice priorities will deepen understanding of synergy as a multidimensional strategic capability. By refining the Synergy Framework through empirical validation and contextual adaptation, scholars and practitioners can support the design of more responsive, collaborative, and sustainable service delivery systems in increasingly complex organisational environments.

CONCLUSION

This study has advanced both theoretical and practical understanding of synergy within Shared Contact Centres (SCCs) by integrating insights from qualitative and quantitative analyses into a unified Synergy Framework. The findings demonstrated that synergy emerges through the dual mechanisms of managerial attention and relational coordination, which collectively enhance organisational performance, customer satisfaction, and service delivery outcomes. From an Attention-Based View (ABT), SCCs were shown to channel executive and managerial focus toward strategic priorities such as process standardisation, service quality, and responsiveness (Ocasio & Laamanen, 2021). From a Relational-Based View (RBV), synergy was enabled through collaboration, trust, and integration across organisational boundaries, reinforcing the importance of stakeholder engagement and network-based exchanges in sustaining organisational value (Nicolini & Mengis, 2023). The proposed Synergy Framework contributes to theory by addressing three critical gaps: fragmentation across levels of analysis, lack of contextual sensitivity in public sector environments, and insufficient operationalisation of synergy constructs. Empirically, the framework was validated through descriptive and inferential analyses, including Net Promoter Score (NPS) and regression modelling, which confirmed the predictive power of synergy-related dimensions in explaining performance variations. Practically, the framework provides managers and policymakers with a structured approach to strengthening governance mechanisms, mobilising resources, fostering collaborative relationships, and aligning organisational attention with citizen-centred service delivery. By situating synergy within the realities of public sector SCCs, the study offers actionable insights for designing more responsive, integrated, and sustainable service systems.

In sum, the research establishes synergy as a multidimensional strategic capability that emerges from the interaction of attentional alignment, relational coordination, adaptive organisational capacities, and stakeholder value co-creation. The Synergy Framework thus represents both a theoretical advancement and a practical tool for enhancing organisational effectiveness and public value in complex service delivery environments

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