

Employer Employee Relationship and Impact on Organization Strategy

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ABSTRACT

Organizational structures are created to deploy a strategic direction and create a competitive advantage. This research-paper would attempt to review the effect that organizational strategy has on the Employer Employee relationship of business organizations and how companies resolve the inherent dilemma associated with the conflicting adaptive pressures associated with short-run efficiency and long-run effectiveness. Business Environment shapes the organizational strategy and since the environment is not static, adaptive pressures on organizations to continuously change and modify structures and consequent impact on employee and employer relationship can be appreciated. The Objective of this paper is to critically analyze and review how the present day organizations cope up with this situation. While strategic constraints can be appreciated or rather needs to be so, organizational flexibility and adaptability need focus for maintaining a cordial and fruitful relationship. Overcoming environmental challenges is the purpose and motive of organizations and how this is done will vary according to organizational constraints on human resources (employees) and their strategy to deal with Employer and employee relationship. Though organizational structures are flexible by design and intent, there are several constraints for organizations in managing the Employer employee relationship to suit strategic needs. How organizations manage this is the central theme of this research paper.

Keywords: Competitive Advantage, Short Term Efficiency Flexibility and Long Term Effectiveness, Impact on Employee Employer Relationship, Challenges.

INTRODUCTION

Business Managers all over the world, deal with the dual pressures of short-run efficiency and long-run effectiveness which seems to increasingly occupy their minds. Globalization has made it possible such for vast numbers of highly skilled and motivated workers who invest in education and research in countries like India and China to enter high-technology sectors such as electronics, biotechnology, and information technology. Because developing countries in the future will be able to meet the demanding standards of consumers and societies in the developed world, this challenge of managing the employer employee relationship looks bigger.

The clock seems to wind anticlockwise, thanks to BREXIT and afterwards! When the flow of information becomes more uniform as a result of performance feedback organizational structures undergo dramatic changes. When it becomes more predictable even if information is ignored, how information is now considered and weighed, and how it is transmitted within the organization - the static organization. The strategic intent and the realized strategy of the firm may be compromised if the relationship between employer and employee are not taken care of. Maintaining a strong employer and employee relationship can be the key to the ultimate success of an organization, the results are advantageous. It is known that if a strong relationship is in place employees will be more productive, more efficient, create less conflict and will be more loyal. Taking this into consideration, is your company operating at its peak performance? Is this because you lack a strong relationship with your employees?

The task cut out for this research-paper will elaborate on the relationship between Employer and Employee to deal with strategic changes and organizational structure in the following pages. To start with, organizational structure influences the strategy formulation process or strategic intent; then, organizational structure, which follows, influences the capabilities the firm has for realizing different growth strategies and not to speak of the relation between the employer and the employee. Organizational structures start influencing the firm's adaptation to external changes. But before the research-paper turns to the detailed analysis of the relationship between organizational structure and strategy, the purpose and function of organizational structures will be reviewed.

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Figure 1: Is this an ideal Employer - Employee relationship

The structure of the organization regulates the flow of information in the organization, and therefore, information processing can be viewed as an essential pre-requisite to the realization of strategic intent. This is possible only through structured relationship and communication between employer and employee. For example, organizations develop procedures and mechanisms for obtaining, interpreting, and communicating information; they delegate responsibility for interpreting and communicating information and for making decisions. As organizations develop such structural properties, these may come to influence how issues are framed, what events decision makers judge to be important, how the employer-employee relationship is affected, and how problems are solved. Since the organizational structure is responsible for both channeling information within the organization and for filtering information into relevant and irrelevant categories, the structure is an important determinant for what the organization happens to perceive and for how the organization acts upon its perception. Organizations can be described as information systems that are composed of human, structural, and technological elements. The information system enables organizations to reduce uncertainty about their task environment and external environment, and therefore, to make better decisions if the design of the information system's information-processing capacity reflects the underlying need for information processing. If information-processing capability in the form of the organizational structure constitutes a specific and irreversible investment, changes to Employer and employee relationship in the organizational structure are likely to be difficult and costly. The organizational structure in place will therefore impact on the firm's ability to adapt its activities. Adaptation to environmental challenges represents perhaps the key task for managers of business organizations. This task is made difficult by the potentially conflicting tasks of efficiently exploiting current assets and knowledge while simultaneously ensuring future competitiveness arising from the development of new assets and knowledge.

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

Organizational strategy and Business strategy are bywords in modern management literature. Business strategy is always aligned to the employer and employee relationship because of environmental pressures and is in fact shaped by them. The relationship between Employer and Employee and its impact on organizational strategy and structure has been discussed at length in management literature and research. This paper tries to analyze the adaptive challenges to organizations in the process of designing and aligning this relationship with implementation of their strategic plans. While doing the desk research and also making a literature survey it was observed that the topic is so vast and has tremendous potential for a researcher. For this particular research paper, following specific objectives have been identified.

1. Environmental pressures and Organizational responses
2. Employer employee relationship and Impact of Organizational response
3. Adaptive pressures on growth and market position
4. How organizational structure adapts to such pressures.
5. Challenges for organizations in facing the above constraints
6. Recommendations for futuristic organizations.



Figure 2: The Myopic Employer!

At the outset let me admit that the objectives have been a little ambitious for a research paper of this nature. But the volume of data and research work on related areas unearthed during the literature survey was so enormous that the researcher was encouraged to proceed further. (Like Figure 2, there can be a myopic researcher!). So, a comprehensive review of literature was made and the web sites and printed literature in the form of previous research papers, periodicals, publications and books were available for reference and review in arriving at answers to above research questions. These references are mentioned at appropriate places and a detailed list is given at the end of the paper.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

For any business to grow and prosper, managers of the business must be able to anticipate, recognize and deal with change in the internal and external environment. Change is a certainty, and for this reason business managers must actively engage in a process that identifies change and modifies business activity to take best advantage of change. That process is strategic planning. The following diagram provides examples of factors that are agents of change and need to be considered in the strategic planning process. Explanation of these factors is found below. The main classification of the Factors is; External Environmental Factors and Internal Environmental Factors.

EXTERNAL FACTORS

Figure 3: below identifies important aspects of the external environment in which the business operates. The business cannot control these aspects but can respond to change if needed. The main problem for business managers is to be able to respond early to change in the external environment, and this depends on how soon any change is identified. Some external environmental factors such as economic conditions are reported daily in the media and managers have a wealth of information on which to develop strategic plans. However, some external factors may be difficult to identify, particularly of the pace of change is very slow or is hidden from view.

Economic Conditions

Prevailing economic conditions of the nation will have an effect on the spending patterns of citizens. Increases in interest rates and/or a high level of unemployment will depress consumption of non-essential goods and services. For example, when people experience financial hardship, they will spend much less on sport and recreation, holidays, new cars and luxury goods. Economic conditions are global as well as national, and when there is a global financial crisis as in 2007, changes in the external environment can be dramatic.

Market Competition

The strength of business competition is a constantly changing factor in the external business environment. Not only will competitors come and go, but they will also change marketing strategies, product lines and prices. Often such changes are not heralded and business managers must be alert as to what competitors are doing.

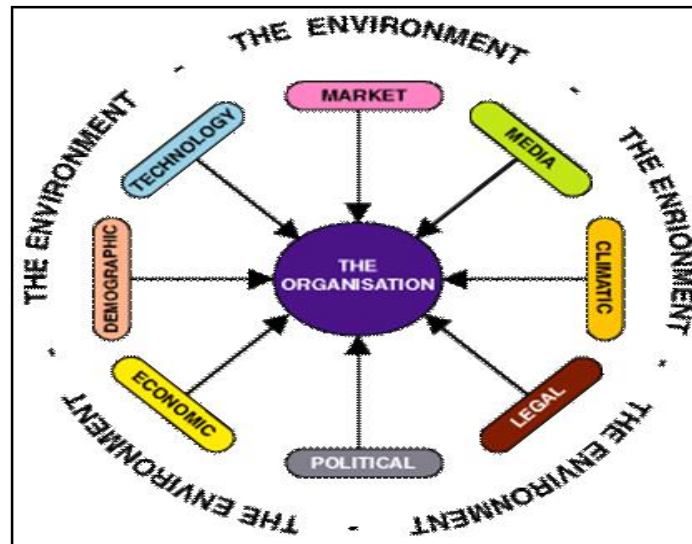


Figure 3: External factors

Technology

Technological change has been rapid in the last 50 years and is a factor in the external environment that constantly exerts pressure on the business or organization. If businesses do not adapt sufficiently quickly to technological change, they risk losing market share. It's not just that technological change affects the design of products, but even the delivery of services can change.

Climate Change

Climate change is an insidious threat because the pace of change may be recognizable only if considered on a decade-by-decade basis. The effect of climate change will not fall equally on all nations and all businesses. Businesses that depend directly on a good supply of water e.g. agriculture, field sports will be adversely affected if climate change results in reduced rainfall. However the flow on affects of drought will eventually work their way through to all businesses in the effected community.

Legal

Taxation is one of most obvious changes in law through legislation. Sometimes taxation changes occur overnight with little warning and sometimes there is plenty of time for the business to prepare. Other law changes that commonly affect business include Workplace Health and Safety, Industrial Relations, Consumer Protection and Environmental Law.

Media

The media is undergoing rapid and significant change. The main driver of this change is technology and the rise of the internet. Newspapers once carried many pages of job adverts but now this business is conducted by online recruitment companies such as Seek.

Political

Like law, changes in government policy can be well notified and discussed, or without warning. As an example of how government policy has an effect, is that many organizations depend on government financial assistance. When there is a change of government, such funding assistance can disappear in a short space of time.

INTERNAL FACTORS

Figure 4: below identifies important aspects of the internal environment that can significantly impact on the Strategy of a business or organization. Generally the strategic planning process will examine the strengths and weaknesses of the organization (through SWOT analysis), and it is likely that significant discussion will center on the relative strength of internal environment factors. This is achieved through an interactive process between Employer and Employee facilitated by Human Resources department.

Demographics

There is constant change in the make-up of the population. Some of these changes include an increasing proportion of elderly citizens, increasing number of two-income families, the age at which people marry is increasing, increasing ethnic diversity, and suburbs which were once dominated by young families now have few. These demographic changes can have a significant effect locally. For example, a sport club which once prospered can begin to decline as the local area has less and less children.

Human Resource

The knowledge, experience and capability of an organization's workforce are determining factors of success. For this reason, organizations pay particular attention to the recruitment of staff and also to engage in the training of staff and volunteers to build the organization's capability. In pursuing both recruitment and training strategies, an organization is often limited by its financial strength. Nevertheless, training of staff is an essential aspect of good business management, and even in difficult financial circumstances is an achievable strategy.

Organizational Culture

The culture within the organization is a very important factor in business success. The attitudes of staff and volunteers, and their ability to "go the extra mile" make a very significant difference. Negative attitudes can severely impact on the organization's ability to implement strategies for development despite however thorough the planning processes. Positive attitudes of staff and volunteers will not only make the management task easier but also will be noticed and appreciated by customers of the business or members of organization.



Figure 4: Internal Environmental Factors

Organizational Structure

Businesses and organizations may be impeded by their structure, constitution and/or forms of governance. Organization structure is essentially the way that the work required to carry out the mission of the organization is divided among its workforce. In a non-profit organization, the organization will include the management board or committee (i.e. President, Secretary, Treasurer and Ordinary Committee Members), the salaried staff of the organization and all the volunteers that have roles as coordinators of various business functions (e.g. Event Coordinator, Promotions Coordinator and Coaching Coordinator). When an organization is a for-profit business that operates in a very competitive environment, its organization structure may help or hinder the ability of the organization to react

to change. For example, when the organization structure has many levels of management, decision making can be slow as information is carried up and down the hierarchy. For this reason, "flatter" organization structures are often preferred i.e. people who work "at the coal face" and one level of management above. Volunteers are normal part of the non-profit organization but not the profit-business. Although it is often hard to find volunteers, the organization structure of the non-profit organization can be very flexible by appointing volunteers as needed.

Management of Employees/Human Resource

A good Employer Employee relationship is the key to success of organizations. The capability of the management team and the leadership styles employed by managers will also have a major impact on the morale of staff (and volunteers in a non-profit organization) and organization culture. More contemporary forms of management involve workers in decision making processes and trusting that, although managers and workers have different viewpoints, they largely benefit by working together to achieve the business objectives.

Assets

The internal environment of the organization can be made richer or poorer by its assets. For example, the organization's premises can be pleasant and uplifting, or demure and depressing. The availability of equipment is another asset that can significantly impact on the internal environment. If equipment is in short supply or not of the expected standard, then staff may be hindered in the performance of their duties, or if equipment is used by customers then customer satisfaction will fall.

Financial Strength

Financial Strength is a factor in its own right that influences the internal environment of the organization. Despite several favorable factors, a cash starved organization cannot implement its strategic vision. It can impact the morale of people when budgets will be very tight.

The simplest way to conduct environmental scanning is through PEST Analysis. PEST is the acronym used for describing the Political, Economical, Social-Cultural, and Technological factors that affect the organization. The external environments consist of variables opportunities and threats that are outside the organization and not typically within the short-run control of the top management. The management of any organization has little or no influence on the external environment. Most managers feel that in today's turbulent business environment the best scanning style is continuous scanning using PEST analysis because this allows the firm to act quickly, take advantage of opportunities before competitors do and respond to environmental threats before significant damage is done, this will allow the organization to survive, sustain the environment hardship. As a way of managing organization strategies, the managers have to keep abreast of everything about his environment (internal Employer - Employee environment and external) for the purpose of achieving the organization goals and objectives. It is the fundamental decision about the future direction of an organization, its purpose, its resources and how it interacts with the world in which it operates.

A tried and tested model classifies organizational change due to uncertainty into three interrelated types: strategic, structural, and job-related. While control would mediate the effects of job-related uncertainty upon psychological strain, and that management communication and participation in decision-making (PDM) would reduce uncertainty and increase feelings of control. The model was tested in a public sector organization and the results supported it. Control was found to mediate the effects of job-related uncertainty upon psychological strain. Management communication was negatively related to strategic uncertainty, whereas PDM was negatively related to structural and job-related uncertainty, suggesting different mechanisms to deal with the types of uncertainty during change. Finally, PDM was positively associated with feelings of control and negatively associated with psychological strain. These results suggest that PDM can short-circuit the damaging effects of uncertainty by allowing employees to have a say in change related organizational affairs, thereby instilling a sense of control over their circumstances.

McKinsey's Lowell Bryan, in a 2007 Quarterly article, asserted that "in the digital age, there is no better use of a CEO's time and energy than making organizations work better." In his view, that involved "remaking the organization to mobilize the mind power of the workforce and tap into its underutilized talents, knowledge, relationships, and skills." Companies have begun realizing this vision by crowd sourcing ideas and holding "values jams," as IBM famously did. They have even been throwing open the strategy process "to enhance the quality of dialogue, improve decision making, and boost organizational alignment," as Arne Gist and Michele Zanini wrote in a 2012 Quarterly article. There's no substitute for regularly revisiting how to adapt structures, people, and processes to create the most effective organization design. This points to Employer - Employee relationship.

THE ADAPTIVE CHALLENGE

Normally, exploitation and exploration (of environmental opportunities) are viewed as mutually conflicting activities, and the key reason for this appears to be that they pose substantially different challenges for the organization in terms of the underlying organizational processes and structures (Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004; Jansen, van den Bosch, & Volberda, 2006; March, 1991; Sidhu, Commandeur, & Volberda, 2007; Sidhu, Volberda, & Commandeur, 2004; Tushman & O'Reilly, 1996). Following this entails that business organizations modify and align their structures, technological orientation, and market strategies, and as suggested by Miles and Snow (1978), and organizations that fail to align these elements properly will show poor performance due to the inconsistencies among the elements characterizing their strategy, structures, and technological orientation.

The traditional perspective therefore seems to hold that business organizations need to strike a balance between exploration and exploitation, suggesting that the underlying structures and processes are constraining in terms of the strategies that firms are able to implement. Other, more recent perspectives acknowledge this trade-off but emphasize that some business organizations are able to implement dual strategies, attempting both to increase efficiency in the short run while simultaneously improving long-run adaptability (Duncan, 1976; Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004; Jansen, van den Bosch, & Volberda, 2006; Sidhu, Commandeur, & Volberda, 2007; Sidhu, Volberda, & Commandeur, 2004; Tushman & O'Reilly, 1996). This ability to maintain a dual strategic focus was referred to as "ambidexterity" by Duncan. While the managerial appeal of ambidexterity has been high, conceptual development of the concept and empirical evidence has been modest (Lubatkin, Simsek, Ling, & Veiga, 2006), although some studies show that ambidexterity may be associated with higher performance (e.g., Gibson & Birkinshaw, 2004; He & Wong, 2004; Lubatkin et al., 2006).

DATA ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

Business environment has a profound influence in shaping the strategy of a company or business. In Figure 1 & 2 various environmental factors (representative!) were considered and it was examined as to how these factors influence the strategy formulation. With environmental pressures organizations are bound to make changes in the structure that makes a statement of Employer - Employee relationship as well as business policies. Through constant application of SWOT/PEST or other analytical tools organizations can review their current relationships and strategies and make necessary course corrections to suit the environment to maximize organizational performance.

Organizations want to be flexible and adaptive, but internal constraints like Resources, Technical manpower, cultural changes dictated and the existing strains on culture, demographic differences etc exert a lot of pressure on organizations. Worker participation in decision making can be termed as the "Adaptive" pressure, but is an important aspect of strategy. Sometimes the changes required may be so much that it may be better to incorporate a new enterprise to take care of the promising future businesses than to make wholesale changes. This is a decision dilemma that managers have to squarely face!

Market conditions are dictated by customer perceptions of quality and product utility. The Product is continuously challenged by competition and customer tastes and perceptions. Corporate and business strategies do consider these and discount them or make allowances. But organizational readiness and resources need to be considered. Organizational readiness and resources of people can be enhanced only by true cooperation between employer and

employee. Dynamic organizations and leaders shape and reshape their organizations to suit the environmental needs. This is done through new organizational structure, new managers, retraining managers, recruitment of new talent etc. Dealing with uncertainty is one of the greatest challenges of organizations during this process. Organizational change needs have been classified as Strategic, Structural and Operational. While many organizations have addressed the issues of structure and strategy and made course corrections, they need to upgrade their ability to control information requirements, flow and processing and data analysis and most importantly through human resources i.e. a good employer and employee rapport and cooperation. Developments like Big data and the internet and the present day hand held devices make it imperative for organizations to be information savvy.

This research-paper has focused on the impact of Employee - Employer relationship on organizational structures and the strategies of business organizations, and on how companies may resolve the inherent dilemma associated with balancing the conflicting adaptive pressures associated with short-run efficiency and long-run effectiveness. The research-paper has also shown that organizational structures regulate the flow of information within the organization, which leads to effects on both the strategic intent and the realized strategy of business organizations. The research-paper has in particular emphasized the basic adaptive challenge of exploration versus exploitation, first emphasizing the conventional view that pose these as opposites, and then contrasting the conventional view with the notion that organizations can achieve ambidexterity by implementing dual structures.



Figure 5: Recognizing the Employer - Employee relationship

RECOMMENDATION AND SUGGESTIONS

Organizations to grow and survive in the current business environment they need to find resources to continuously update their technologies and information needs. Most importantly they need to improve the Employer - Employee relationship. This is the only way to ensure success through structural changes and environmental pressures.

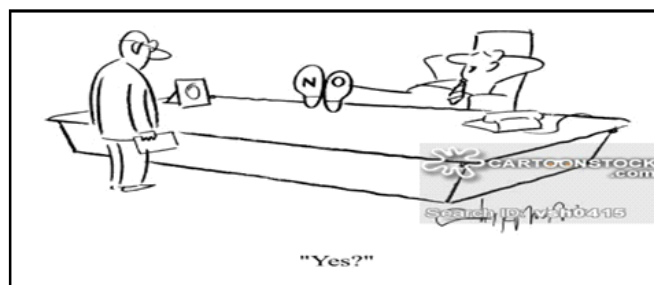


Figure 6: Knowing your employee(Not 'no'ing) is the first step...

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