A Revolutionary Look: Depicting the Future of Organization via Considering Its Strategy as a Cultural Product

Khadijeh Rouzbehani, University of Tehran, Iran

ABSTRACT

The strategy of each organization is an index by which an organization can be introduced. It can represent a holographic image of all elements which are effective in formation of an organization since strategy itself is under influence of culture. In fact, the strategy of each organization is one artifact among all organizational artifacts which to a noticeable extent can represent the future images of the organization. Considering strategy as a cultural product, this study believes the future dimensions of organizations can be predicted based on their current strategies and previous cultural structure.

KEYWORDS


INTRODUCTION: CULTURE AND STRATEGY

Sometimes an event is analyzed and interpreted in different ways by various countries. Even the way they react is absolutely different from one another. In fact, understanding these differences via recognizing effective cultural dimensions help individuals not only to predict other countries’ reactions to strategic matters but also implement the right strategy at the right time.

When it comes to organization, we can assume organizations and their environments as subjective realities which are under certain influence of culture. So far, different definitions for the term “culture” have been presented but we assume culture as the collection of solutions for solving problems arising from external conformity and internal integration. In fact these solution and reaction are acquired knowledge that people use to interpret experience and generate social behavior. This knowledge forms values, creates attitudes, and influences behavior. In the other words, culture affects how people think and behave” (Hodgetts & Luthans, 2003, 108). “Culture often sets the limits on what is considered as acceptable and unacceptable behaviors; it pressures individuals and groups into accepting and following normative behavior. Culture determines the rules of the road that guide what people can do” (Steers & Sanchez, 2010, 52). “All people in the organization feel culture even though they may not be able to describe it. Like manners and etiquette, some beliefs are visible, but other deeply held beliefs are invisible” (Solomon & Schell, 2009, 30). One of reasons cultural attitudes are so powerful is that the distinguishing characteristics of deeply held beliefs are often invisible. “Culture hides much more than it reveals, it hides most effectively from its own participants” (Hall, 1990, 29).
Culture of every organization is like a miniature of society’s culture in most of characteristics and aspects. “Corporate culture is just a habitual way of behaving and acting, often motivated from deeply integrated presumptions about the right way to act” (Doise, 2008, 27). Contrary to structuralism, it is generally believed that it is culture that has dominant role in creating structures, systems and procedures. Every organization considers its cultural context creates unique artifacts, symbols, values and assumptions by recognizing which we can understand organization’s characteristics and also analyze and predict the organization’s reaction and behavior along time. For instance, Societies differ in their attitude toward change and progress. Although change is inevitable, some cultures look upon change as a phenomenon which occurs naturally, and as part of the overall evolution of humans and their universe. Change in such societies is accepted, but passively, without any deliberate effort to bring it about. The people in other cultures, however, feel that the future is not predestined and that humans, by actions and deeds, are capable of manipulating the environment in which they shall live in the future, and of changing it to their liking (Phatak, 1997, 147). Following such an attitude, strategies of each organization can be considered as the artifacts of that organization in a way. This artifact is, in fact, outcome of tendencies, assumptions, and values and believes of the organizational staff. Hence, the strategy of each organization is one of its cultural products which represent a considerable dimension of its cultural specifications. Even Strategy could be viewed through different lenses, shaped by different cultural assumptions (Schneider & Baresou, 2003, 122). Taking this issue into consideration, it is assumed that the future of each organization depends on the way it faces the environment and its competitors; and this very important issue is possible through the strategies. Strategy is a direction and scope of an organization over long term, in fact. Therefore, organizations need to evaluate their external environment besides internal abilities at the time of drawing and carrying out the strategy. Strategic decisions are effective in catching appropriate external conformity. Carrying out these decisions need organizing internal resources, especially employees, to gain internal cohesion (Schneider & Baresou, 2002, 118). So culture is important because it limits or enables strategy. It provides consistency, order and structure, and sets internal ways of life and patterns for internal relationships. It determines conditions for internal effectiveness and drives effective performance. Whenever there are various subcultures in an organization, its cultural artifacts - including its strategy - may not be coherent enough and this issue would influence the way the organization is going to face the environment (adapted: Hatch, 1997, 226-7).

If the cultural structure of organizations is coherent, its strategies to face the environment would enjoy a high level of harmony as well. That is to say strong cultures promote successful strategy implementation while week cultures do not. By strong culture, I mean there is a shared belief in practices, norms and other practices within the organization that helps energize everyone to do their jobs to promote successful strategy implementation.

The relation, however, between structure and culture is reciprocal (Figure 1). Therefore, we can consider culture as the product of strategy and the strategy as the product of culture assuming that strategy is an oral product of culture as well (Adapted: Hatch 1997, 216-7).

As a result, it can be stated that the strategy of each organization is the result of its cultural artifact. Considering so, it can be alleged that the culture of each organization is under influence of its strategies, especially its cultural-development ones.

THE STRATEGIES BASED ON CULTURE AND THE FUTURE OF ORGANIZATIONS

As it was mentioned before, culture is the public pattern of action which results in unifying people’s reaction in similar situations and in fact this matter helps to predict future behavior of organization.
Related Content

Buyer-Supplier Relationships in Business-to-Business E-Procurement: Effects of Supply Conditions
[www.igi-global.com/chapter/buyer-supplier-relationships-business-business/8677?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/chapter/buyer-supplier-relationships-business-business/8677?camid=4v1a)

Directions and Trends in Knowledge Management Research: Results from an Empirical Analysis of European Projects
[www.igi-global.com/chapter/directions-trends-knowledge-management-research/24833?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/chapter/directions-trends-knowledge-management-research/24833?camid=4v1a)

Comments on Two Models for Operating Two-Warehouse Inventory Systems with Deteriorating Items and Inflationary Effects
[www.igi-global.com/article/comments-two-models-operating-two/53467?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/article/comments-two-models-operating-two/53467?camid=4v1a)
Markovian Analysis of a Push-Pull Merge System with Two Suppliers, An Intermediate Buffer, and Two Retailers