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Model of creative strategy in organization management – synthesis of approaches

Model twórczej strategii w zarządzaniu organizacją – synteza podejść

ABSTRACT

Rejecting strategic planning and replacing it with other theories of strategic management seems illogical, unjustified and impractical. In this situation, it is reasonable to say that the school of planning (conventional, rational) is still of fundamental importance for the development of strategic management (and it can be assumed with high probability that it will also be in the future). It can be treated as a specific paradigm setting directions for the research into new ideas about management in conjunction with other concepts or approaches in strategic management. The aim of this work is to develop a model of “synthesis of approaches” as an instrument for generating creative strategic options based on various approaches, schools and concepts of strategic management.

Keywords: strategic management, strategic planning, concepts, alternatives.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of strategy was borrowed from the art of war. Initially, it referred unequivocally to a specific human social activity: war. In the case of such a construct as an organization operating today, one should talk about strategy in the context of a given organization, its alliances, cooperation, or collaboration with other organizations, not wars or battles. For this reason, a new context, content, processes, and values for the strategy should be sought as a kind of human thinking and action. As Toffler & Toffler write (1998, p. 9) “(...) a new, revolutionary economic order, based on knowledge and not on raw materials and physical work, revolutionizes the way wars are

STRESZCZENIE

Odrzucenie planowania strategicznego i zastąpienie go innymi teoriami zarządzania strategicznego wydaje się nielogiczne, nieuzasadnione i niepraktyczne. W tej sytuacji zasadne jest stwierdzenie, że szkoła planowania ma nadal fundamentalne znaczenie dla rozwoju zarządzania strategicznego (i z dużym prawdopodobieństwem można przypuszczać, że będzie miała również w przyszłości). Można ją traktować jako swoisty paradygmat wyznaczający kierunki poszukiwań nowych sposobów myślenia o zarządzaniu w powiązaniu z innymi koncepcjami czy podejściami w zarządzaniu strategicznym. Celem pracy jest opracowanie modelu “syntezy podejść” jako instrumentu generowania kreatywnych opcji strategicznych w oparciu o różne podejścia, szkoły i koncepcje zarządzania strategicznego.

Słowa kluczowe: zarządzanie strategiczne, planowanie strategiczne, koncepcje, alternatywy.

waged. [...] Anti-war is the actions taken by politicians and even by soldiers aimed at creating conditions allowing for the peaceful use of military and economic power, as well as the information potential to limit violence in changes on the world stage”.

Rejecting strategic planning and replacing it with other theories or concepts of strategic management seems illogical, unjustified, and impractical. In this situation, it is reasonable to say that the school of planning (conventional, rational) is still of fundamental importance for developing strategic management (and it can be assumed with high probability that it will also have in the future). It can be treated as a specific

paradigm setting directions for the search for new ways of thinking about management in conjunction with other concepts or approaches in strategic management.

The work's aim is to develop a model of "synthesis of approaches" as an instrument for generating creative, strategic options based on various approaches, schools, and concepts of strategic management.

1. THE "SYNTHESIS OF APPROACHES" MODEL IN STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF AN ORGANIZATION

Despite the continuous improvement and development of new concepts, methods, and techniques of strategic management, traditional concepts or approaches known to strategists for at least half a century are still dominant. Obłój (2017, p. 71) aptly captures this state of affairs, who states that: *"Identifying the great theories is not too complicated, because there are only four: planning, evolutionary, positional and resource. Planning emerges somewhere in the 1960s, has a weaker period in the 1970s (when we lose respect for forecasting and shorten the time horizon, because great oil shocks are coming, the departure from the gold standard and fixed exchange rates), and is currently experiencing a renaissance. Evolutionary theory developed dynamically mainly in the 1970s and 1980s and loses some momentum in the present. Positional theory triumphed in the 1980s and is now at a standstill, while resource theory, which developed in the 1990s, holds firm, but mainly in the academia"*.

Wit de & Meyer (2017, pp. 19–21) developed a three-dimensional model of strategy synthesis: strategy development process, strategy content, and strategic context. This model can be summed up as generalization of the achievements of both the planning and positional schools. In this situation, it is worth asking how this synthesis of the strategy and the suggested dimensions of the strategy should be related to the resource concept or new approaches and trends in strategic management that appeared, historically speaking, later than the planning and positional school. In other words – how to make a "synthesis of newer approaches to strategy with the synthesis of B. de Wit and R. Meyer". Although this question may sound paradoxical, it seems justified because the creators of the strategy synthesis themselves make the paradox a point of reference when it comes to developing an organization's strategy.

The symbiosis of the planning school with other approaches to strategy is well illustrated by the words of Catmull (2015, p. 150), who claims: *"it can be assumed that if you think everything through carefully, if you meticulously prepare and plan each step, taking into account all possible results, you have a better chance of creating a lasting product. I must warn you, however, that if you plan every move in advance – if you trust the belief that slow, deliberate action will keep you from failing – you are fooling yourself. First, it is much easier to plan for re-creation, i.e. copying or repeating something that already exists. So if your goal is to come up with a detailed, all-encompassing action plan, you're only increasing your chances of getting something devoid of any*

originality. Moreover, it is impossible to plan a way out of problems. While we appreciate the importance of planning and create many plans ourselves, we are aware that in a creative environment you cannot control everything. In general, I've found that people who put their energy into thinking about the right approach and say it's too early to act are as often wrong as those who go straight to work and act hastily. The difference is that planners discover their mistakes later (and when things start to fall apart, which is inevitable, they worry more about their failure)". The quoted statement proves that the quoted author not only does not reject planning as an activity, but also suggests the what how to enrich this activity with new creative elements in order to obtain creative solutions.

Therefore, looking for new approaches to strategy and making thinking within individual theories, approaches or schools of strategic management as a starting point, a model of creative strategy based on the "synthesis of approaches" in strategic management in an organization is presented in Fig. 1.

The basis of the presented model is creativity as a material for developing a strategy in an organization. Its pillars are:

- market opportunity plan;
- organizational capacity plan;
- plan of requirements for market success.

The market opportunity plan synthesizes the strategic plan and Market Opportunities. The strategic plan defines the long-term direction and scope of the organization's activities, achieving the assumed goals thanks to the appropriate configuration of resources and competitive advantage in a changing environment. An alternative to the strategic plan is the statement that the organization's development is based on events in the environment interpreted as opportunities. In the opinion of Krupski et al. (2009), this thesis results from the belief that only the ability to take advantage of opportunities and being ahead of competitors in this respect is a significant source of competitive advantage and doubts in helpfulness pertaining to any forecasts regarding the environment when changes in the environment are of rapid nature. It is not possible to know any regularities that will occur in the future, taking into account the current time of conducting forecasting studies. Hence, the view that organizations develop from opportunity to opportunity is highly probable.

As Krupski et al. (2009, p. 204) write further: *"the clash of [strategic plan and market opportunities] does not lead to annihilation, but, on the contrary, to the creation of a new quality at a higher level of generalization – to a kind of synthesis creating a whole spectrum of strategic solutions, in which both the plan and the opportunity coexist to some extent, and to some extent – through the planning of seizing the opportunity – constitute the innovative core of this quality of management"*.

Another alternative to the strategic plan is to say that organizational capability is a source of competitive advantage. In strategic terms, organizational capabilities most often determine the organization's readiness to effectively use its re-

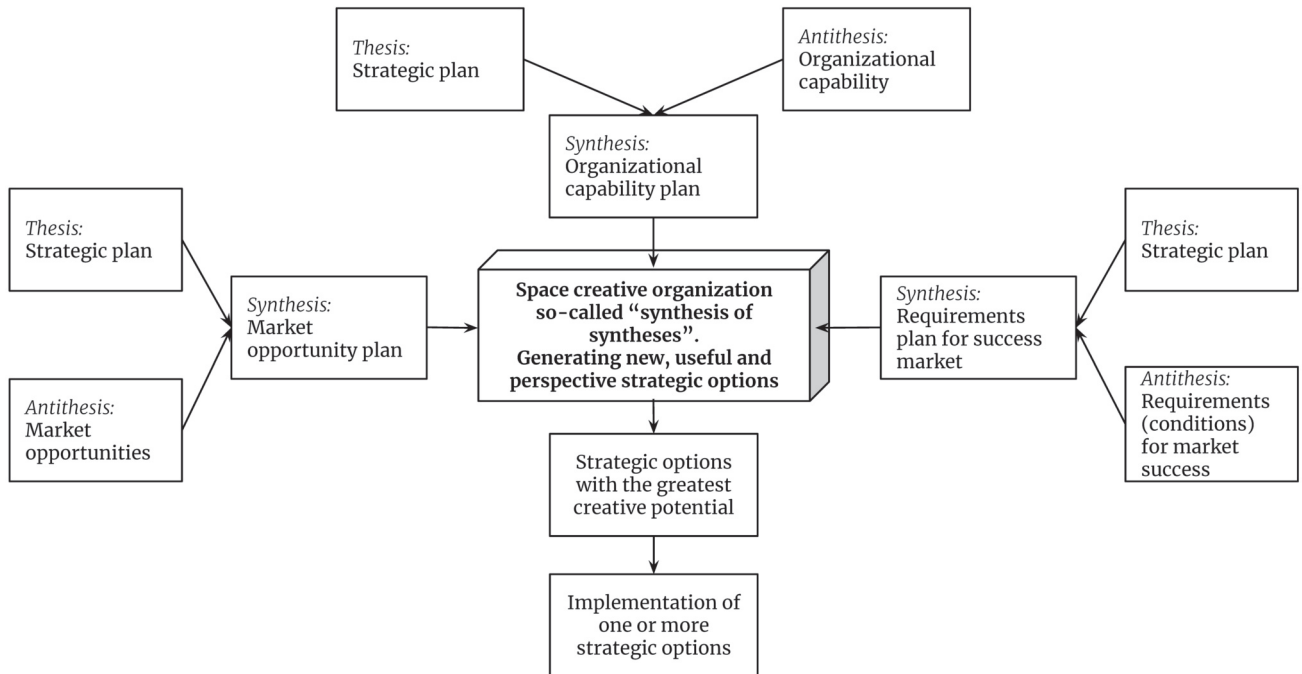


Figure 1. A creative strategy model based on the synthesis of approaches in strategic management in an organization
Source: own elaboration.

sources and skills, e.g., organizational structure: employees' experience; technologies, financial resources; knowledge; intellectual property image, and reputation. Organizational capabilities are an alternative to the strategic plan and are a premise for developing the resource approach in strategic management. The organizational capacity plan (synthesizing the strategic plan and organizational capability) is the basis for building creative, strategic options.

Yet another alternative to the strategic plan are market success conditions. According to Abell (2000, p. 197), strategies based on resources and skills may fail if customer orientation is not adopted when formulating and implementing them. In his opinion, many perfectly designed products created in laboratories fail on the actual market only because the R&D program was oriented not on what the organization should do but on what it can do with its resources and skills. Abell (2000) proposes identifying four forces influencing optimal decisions to avoid this challenge. These forces answer the questions: What should be done? What can be done? What do we want to do? What is feasible? Only keeping these forces in a relative balance will allow a creative organization to succeed in the market. Considering the answers to these questions, it can be concluded that the market requirements plan (as a synthesis of the strategic plan and market requirements) is the basis for building creative, strategic options.

The assessment of modified strategic plans, considering alternative approaches, takes place in the so-called organization's creative space. In this space, a kind of "synthesis of approaches" in the strategic management of an

organization takes place in the form of generating many strategic options. Only options that meet the criteria of novelty, usefulness, and perspective to the highest degree can be treated as strategic activities of a modern organization (Skonieczny, 2019). However, their implementation may contribute to the growth of the strategic potential of the organization.

2. CONCLUSIONS

The model of generating strategic alternatives presented in the article as "approach synthesis" in strategic management in an organization may, at first glance, seem to be only a theoretical construct. However, its elements are visible in the practice of the functioning of enterprises that base their existence not only on market needs but also on developing their leaders' passion and creative (artistic) talents.

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