

BUSINESS GROWTH THROUGH A SUSTAINED STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT APPROACH IN MANUFACTURING ORGANISATIONS

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Abstract

Organizations regularly encounter unforeseen occurrences like government policy change, market failure natural catastrophes, terrorist attacks, or technology failures in extremely unpredictable and uncertain times. Thus, the study of strategic management and organization growth was embarked upon. Two research questions were asked leading to two research hypothesis formulated to guide the study. The population of 63 of the study were taken from the staff of the Mouka and Frendy foam production industry which also formed the sample size. Fifteen (15) items Questionnaire instrument validated and tested for reliability at 0.75 Cronbach Alpha were then distributed to the sampled staff of Mouka and Frendy foam production industry in Warri and Abraka. There after the extracted data were subjected to statistical analysis. the result shows that there is significant effect between defensive strategy and organization growth; also, that there is no significant effect between prospective strategy and organizational growth. From the finding recommendation were made among others that defensive strategy boosts organizational growth, and it should be adopted by managers at all level and stages of business development as it help to fight competitors amidst harsh competitive business environment

Keywords: *Business Growth, Strategic Management, Approach, Manufacturing Organisations.*

DOI: 10.31039/jgeb.v4i12.120

1. Introduction

Strategic management is a continuous process that examines and safeguards the organization on the businesses which the company operates, evaluates its competitors and sets goals and strategies to satisfy all current and potential competitors, and then reassesses each strategy every year or quarterly, maybe regularly, to ascertain how well it has been executed and whether it needs to be replaced by a new strategy to address changing circumstances, new technology, and new competitors (Wan et al (2022)). The key goals that business organizations in particular should aim to achieve are securing a competitive advantage position and improving especially in the areas in comparison to their rivals. (Biswas and Akroyd, 2022). Strategic management is increasingly about productivity. It is about setting corporate goals and devising a plan to achieve them. Strategic management is concerned with planning and forecasting the future of the business, taking into consideration the current and future of the business's surrounds. Once the entrepreneur has a sense of how the future may appear and what the business's place ought to be in that future, tangible targets can be established, as well as the path to achieve these objectives. These objectives and the approach for achieving them are designed to maximize the return on investment.

The centric of strategic management is when corporate organizations create plans to anticipate unanticipated events, reduce production costs and waste, and then be able to compete with rivals in a planned manner. No of the type of market they operate in—competitive, oligopolistic, or monopolistic—all business organizations need to prepare ahead of time. Planning and developing strategies that will first assure an organization's survival and ongoing profitability is necessary for businesses functioning in competitive markets (Obeta, 2010). The size of a company and the propensity of its business environment to change may both affect strategic management. Due to its scale, operational range, and obligation to take into account stakeholder needs and opinions, a global transnational organization may thus use a more formal strategic management model.

Types of strategic management.

Raymond in his popular book of 1978 which was titled organization strategy, structure, and process, he focused on three fundamental problems which strategic management could resolved. They are Entrepreneurial problems which dwells on how companies manage its market share. Another one is engineering problem which is concerned with how a company

should implement its solution to the entrepreneurial problems and finally administrative problems which focus on structure itself to manage and implementation of the solution to the problems. It was based on that he rooted out the four types of strategies. They are as follows: Defense Strategy, Prospect strategy, Analytic Strategy and Reaction strategy

- i) **Defensive Strategy.** A mature type of company in a mature industry that seeks to protect its market position through efficient production, strong control mechanisms, continuity, and reliability.
 - a) Entrepreneurial problem: how to maintain a stable share of the market? Hence they function best in stable environments, they strive for cost leadership, they specialize in particular areas and they use established and standardized technical processes to maintain low costs.
 - b) Administrative problem: how to ensure efficiency? Centralization, Vertical Integration, formal procedures, and discrete functions.
 - c) Environment: because their environments change slowly, Defenders can rely on long-term planning.

- ii. **Prospector.** A type of company that seeks to exploit new opportunities, to develop new products and/or services, and to create new markets. Typically its core skills lie in marketing and R&D and it will tend to have a broad range of technologies and product types.
 - a) Entrepreneurial problem: how to locate and exploit new product and market opportunities? Prospectors have broad product or service lines and often promote creativity over efficiency. They prioritize new product and service development and innovation to meet new and changing customer needs and demands and to create new demands.
 - b) Administrative problem: how to coordinate diverse business activities and promote innovation? Decentralization, employing generalists (not specialists), have few levels of management, encourage collaboration among different departments and units.

c) **Environment:** Prospectors thrive in changing business environments that have an element of unpredictability, and succeed by constantly examining the market in a search for new opportunities.

The way to approach and resolve strategic challenges may have an impact on the organization's overall development. It goes without saying that the strategic framework must also take into account important factors like the resource base, infrastructural limitations, the acceptable degree of technology, and resource output variable service lines and often promote creativity over efficiency. They prioritize new product and service development and innovation to meet new and changing customer needs and demands and to create new demands.

3. **Analytic Strategy.** A type of company strategy that avoids excessive risks but excels in the delivery of new products and/or services. Typically, it concentrates on a limited range of products and technologies and seeks to outperform other companies on the basis of quality enhancement.
4. **Reactive Strategy.** A type of company which have little control over their external environment, lacking the ability to adapt to external competition and lacking in effective internal control mechanisms. They do not have a systematic strategy, design, or structure.

No single strategic orientation is in isolate of the other. Most company employ the four to achieve a meaningful outcome. Miles and Snow argue that what determines the success of a company ultimately is not a particular strategic orientation, but simply establishing and maintaining a systematic strategy that takes into account a company's environment, technology, and structure.

The problem

Many organizations, ranging from the list entrepreneurial setting to a more mega company, they need strategy to be able to pilot the company or organizational towards its growth and goal attainment. Many managers find it difficult to classify the type of strategy needed to meet up the challenges they and their company face. Thus, the defensive strategy and the prospective strategy will be considered in this study to know whether the foam production company apply the strategies mentioned.

Objectives

- i) to what extent does defensive strategy affects organizational growth
- ii) to determine the effect of prospective strategy effect on organizational growth

Research questions

- i) Does defensive strategy affect organizational growth and if it does what is the level of effect
- ii) what is the effect of prospective strategy on organizational growth

2. Literature Review

Strategic management and Organizational growth (OG) or change (SM), as well as their many combinations, have been researched and used for a long time in the several unique units of organizations, private corporations, and companies, such as production, operation, and R&D (Shenhar, 2004). Strategic management may be described from a variety of perspectives, including economic, social, marketing, and management. The process of creating an organization's vision, mission, objectives, and goals in order to provide value for clients, stakeholders, and the community at large while competing in markets is known as strategic management (SM) (Puthamont and Charoenngam, 2007). To manage many projects at once, governmental or commercial companies may have a functional matrix or a projectized structure [Kerzner, 2017]. Additionally, SM plans are typically used by corporations to better implement their strategic

Defensive strategy

Organizations regularly encounter unforeseen occurrences like natural catastrophes, terrorist attacks, or technology failures in extremely unpredictable and uncertain times (Duchek, 2020). In order for any organization to fulfill its objective, it must first and foremost continue to exist. This is no easy undertaking given the company's difficult competitive climate and the kind of

people working there, among other things (Friday, Damiebi & Hope, 2018). As a result, businesses must cope with issues such as increased global rivalry, altered customer expectations and behaviors, new technology, and a variety of unforeseen occurrences at the economic, social, and institutional levels and because of this, for a business to succeed, it must demonstrate its inherent capacity to react pro-actively and creatively to significant changes that might derail the planned sequence of events. It might not be able to live for a long time without such a skill. In order for an organization to survive, its overall resilience is crucial (Edwinah & Frank, 2017).

Management use a defensive approach as a marketing tactic to protect their company from possible rivals. In other words, it's a battlefield where you have to engage in combat to defend your market share while maintaining customer satisfaction and profit stability (Yannopoulos, 2021). According to Bradley (2019), effectively protecting your business depends on recognizing the market you can operate in and when to broaden your appeal to enter other markets. Holding onto what you have and exploiting your competitive edge to fend off rivals are the goals of defensive tactics.

Thus, according to The defensive strategy's primary objective is to deter challenger firms from attacking. It is further broken down into two parts: pre-entry (which protects a firm by making it difficult for another firm to enter in the same industry by raising the entry barriers, or it occurs before the market leader firm is attacked by the challenger firm), and post-entry (which involves making the competitor firm's life difficult after it has entered the market).

Types of Defensive strategy

Pre-entry defensive strategies: are steps made by businesses to lead potential competitors to believe that entering the market would be challenging or unprofitable. These include sending out signals, defending oneself, covering all bases, improving continuously, and increasing capability (David, Micheal & Neeka, 2017). Pre-entry defensive strategies focus on fortification and defend, covering all basis, signaling and increasing capacity

Post-entry Defensive Strategies: Post-entry defensive strategies are steps done by businesses to defend their market position from rivals that have already entered the market or are posing a danger to overtake them. These include maintaining one's position before rivals establish themselves, creating warring brands, and implementing cross-parry tactics (David, et al. 2017). These takes the form of resilience and in dynamic environment, adaptability is considered.

Prospective Strategy

Future exploration is the focus of the business field of strategic prospective. The strategic perspective allows building several future scenarios and planning the transformation of a present state into a desired future. It is rooted in qualitative approaches with participatory experts and stakeholders.

There are two basic schools of thought in future studies: the first stresses the past as the primary predictor of the future and takes into account phenomena that exhibit historically verifiable behavior. The present is a son of the past, as Miklos & Tello, (2006) stated. The other stream, voluntarism, views how human action is shaping the future and allows for the proactive design and modification of the future (Miklos & Tello, 2006). When emphasizing that perspective presupposes the creative energy of man, associated to the concept of freedom, to function in some manner, refers to the "proactive oxygen" in this sense. Therefore, whereas the tools of the deterministic current primarily consider a static approach in which it is necessary to provide instruments to first identify the system's present state and then those conditioning components to construct and achieve the desired future, the tools of the voluntaristic current primarily take into account a dynamic approach.

As Zafar, Butt, & Afzal (2014) put it, a four-step process is required in perspective strategy which may be used to design and create a research of futures. The first phase focuses on the overall comprehension of the context; the second, on a strategic perspective; the third, on the design of futures; and the fourth, on the creation of the future. They are Understanding the context. Strategic visualization. Sketching the futures. Building the future.

It is the initial approach to the research object. It alludes to the widespread comprehension of the issue or research topic for which the future will be imagined. It entails comprehending the aspects of the system. When it comes to using qualitative approaches, it is important to understand how to communicate with specialists if the study calls for their input. Understanding the context in terms of quantitative methodologies involves identifying variables, observing and comprehending their prior behavior, and establishing causal linkages between variables. Understanding the context therefore entails having a macro-level notion from a surface-level observing position.

After gaining a broad knowledge, it is feasible to hone the observational method to ascertain how the relative significance of the studied constituent elements may influence their future

evolution; this is called strategic visualization. In terms of qualitative approaches, this includes not only the classification and analysis of variables and stakeholder interactions, but also the identification of strategic internal and external elements and their future effects. The validation and quantification of causal links between variables is a focus of quantitative approaches, as is the recognition of patterns so that their internal structure and potential future effects may be examined. Strategic visualization therefore entails having a micro-level understanding and adjusting the level of observation from an internal level.

creating future sketches. There are sufficient components to delve further into the potential futures of the thing under investigation once the first two stages of the prospective process have been finished. The third step, future drawing, enables the start of designing many future situations. It's time to use the strategic knowledge gained from the prior two phases to present the potential future states and sketch either alternative or probable possibilities. This may be done either through the exploratory technique or the regulatory one. The narrative that each scenario offers are explained, and each scenario is given a meaningful name, making this stage the most imaginative.

constructing the future. The defining or selection of the desired or bid scenario is the first step in the fourth stage, constructing the future. To get to the bid scenario, the route and appropriate courses of action should be outlined here. According to Godet (1995), this is the point at which perspective and strategy come together to form one indivisible binomial. This is unquestionably the most difficult stage, when it is necessary to balance the interests of all parties involved, resolve conflicts, and address internal and external difficulties. In order to realize the desired situation, the change components need be internalized. Setting up the process that results in the system evolving from its current state to the one intended in the future is important from a systemic perspective.

3. Methodology

The study used descriptive survey research design and the population of the study was the middle and top management staff of foam manufacturing firm . The total number of staff were about sixty-three (63). Since the population size was small all of them were used as sample size for this study. Otherwise called Census in statistical description of this nature, Lakens (2022).

The instrument for data collection was the use of questionnaire developed which the researcher developed himself titled “Stramogroq”. The Questionnaire was designed in four-point Likert scale weighing as follows: *Strongly Agree (SA-4) Agree (A-3), Disagree (D-2) and Strongly Disagree (SD- 1)*. The instrument for reliability test was done using the Cronbach alpha (α) using instrument outside the sample one. Correlation and Regression analysis with Linear Modeling were used to test the data from respondents for significance of the formulated hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. STATA 24 version app was used in performing the test.

4. Result and Discussion Analysis of Respondents Responses

Table 1: Analysis of Respondents responses

S/N	Questionnaire items	Mean	STD	Remark
Ds	Defensive Strategy			
Ds1	We have defensive strategies in place that is covering all areas	2.14	0.67	Disagree
Ds2	Our organizational policy for signaling and increasing capacity in defensive strategies is strictly followed	1.90	0.30	Disagree
Ds3	We have developed defensive mechanism when ever the market is unfavourable	3.49	0.50	Agree
Ds4	Making our product durable is a competitive edge over other organization in the market	3.25	0.67	Agree
Ds5	We have quick feedback from the market environment which feeds us with market situation information	3.00	0.95	Agree
Ps	Prospective Strategy			
Ps1	We make plans for the future and get all gadget ready to fight opposition in the market share with adequate assurance	2.29	0.71	Disagree
Ps2	We identified verifiable behaviour of the product in the market before in introduction new ones	3.92	0.41	Agree
Ps3	We take proactive design and modification of the future market having taking consideration of past market outcomes on our product.	3.73	0.54	Agree
Ps4	We give demo product to evaluate the reaction of customers before mass production and subsequent introduction into the market	3.60	0.71	Agree
Ps5	Though we employ the best staff and place them on hand on desk training to maintain organizational knowledge and staff are retained	1.87	0.34	Disagree
OGr	Organizational growth			
OGr1	Since the application of the defensive strategies, the organization has maintained steady growth	2.59	0.68	Agree
OGr2	Adoption of defensive strategy has made organization to maintain good market share	2.35	0.72	Disagree

OGr3	Our staff are also monitored in line with business and the strategic plan for proper feedback	3.43	0.50	Agree
OGr4	There have been steady profit and organization expansion	1.56	0.88	Disagree
OGr5	There has been favourable feedback from customers and stakeholders over the years	3.87	0.34	Agree
Grand mean		2.85	0.82	Agree

Field work (2022)

The table 1 above shows the analysis of respondents responses to the various items in the questionnaire which were used to elicit information.

On the Ds (Defensive Strategy), out of the items Ds1 to Ds5, items Ds1 and Ds2 where disagreed upon where the mean were 2.14 ± 0.67 and 1.90 ± 0.30 , respectively where the bench mark for acceptance is 2.50 in a four Likert scaling. Hence were disagree. Meanwhile items Ds3 to Ds5 were agreed. The highest of the respondents is item Ds3 which shows mean value of 3.49 ± 0.50 where respondents agree that they have developed defensive mechanism whenever the market is unfavourable whereas the lowest mean response value is 1.90 ± 0.30 , where respondents disagree that “Our organizational policy for signaling and increasing capacity in defensive strategies is strictly followed”

On Prospective strategy (Ps), Items Ps1 and Ps5 were disagreed with mean of 2.29 ± 0.71 and 1.87 ± 0.34 respectively being below the bench mark of 2.50 acceptance level. Item Ps5 being the lowest because respondents disagree to the statement that “though we employ the best staff and place them on hand on desk training to maintain organizational knowledge and staff are retained” which shows that even if the staff are trained but they leave the job easily. Also, the highest mean respondents from the prospective strategy are 3.92 ± 0.41 where respondents agree that they identified verifiable behaviour of the product in the market before in introduction new ones.

On the questionnaire items on Organizational Growth (OGr) items OGr1 to OGr5, items OGr 2 and OGr4 were disagreed being below the bench mark value 2.50. They respondents disagree that Adoption of defensive strategy has made organization to maintain good market share and that they don’t maintain steady profit and expansion respectively, with mean value of 2.35 ± 0.72 and 1.56 ± 0.88 respectively. Meanwhile items OGr1, OGr3 and OGr5 were agree upon. The highest mean value is 3.87 ± 0.34 which shows that there has been favourable feedback from customers and stakeholders over the years.

Testing of Hypotheses

Table 2. Correlation Effect of the Variables

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. correlate Ds Ps OGr
(obs=63)
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	Ds	Ps	OGr
Ds	1.0000		
Ps	0.7894	1.0000	
OGr	0.6906	0.6322	1.0000

Table .3: Summary of Regression for Hypotheses 1 & 2

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. regress OGr Ds Ps
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Source	SS	df	MS	
Model	4.21031939	2	2.1051597	Number of obs = 63
Residual	4.25952188	60	.070992031	F(2, 60) = 29.65
Total	8.46984127	62	.136610343	Prob > F = 0.0000
				R-squared = 0.4971
				Adj R-squared = 0.4803
				Root MSE = .26644

OGr	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]
Ds	.3843749	.1127699	3.41	0.001	.1588015 .6099482
Ps	.2911418	.1879812	1.55	0.127	-.0848765 .6671601
_cons	.74057	.3861054	1.92	0.060	-.0317558 1.512896

Table 4.: Variable Inflation Factor

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. vif
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Variable	VIF	1/VIF
Ds	2.65	0.376868
Ps	2.65	0.376868
Mean VIF	2.65	

5. Results and Discussion

The table 2 above shows correlation effect of the tested variable. It was done to show if there are positive correlation between Defensive strategy, prospective strategy and Organizational growth (OGr) which shows 0.7894, 0.6906 and 0.6322 respectively.

a) Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 stated there is no significant effect between defensive strategy and organizational growth. The analysis was tested to show if there is significant effect of Defensive strategy (Ds) on Organizational Growth (OGr), the obtained $F(2,60) = 29.65$ with $p\text{-value} = 0.000$ at 0.05 level of significant. Where r^2 is 0.4971. coefficient of 0.384 with error of 0.1127 and $t = 3.41$ with p value of 0.001 with 60% confidential interval, we can say there is there is significant effect between defensive strategy and organizational growth.

The corroborated with study of Wegwu (2022), Yannopoulos, (2021), Bradley (2019), and Friday, Damiebi & Hope (2018), on Defensive strategy and opined that Defensive strategy are more effective if they are implemented before the competitor invests in the business or if they enter the market before exit barriers are put in place, making it more difficult for challengers to depart. If an attack has already started, a defensive business may try to reduce the severity and likelihood of harm by shifting the attack to locations where the firm is less vulnerable or where the attacker has less desire or when entrance has taken place, they should start making the entrant's life challenging. This may persuade the applicant that its projections were overly optimistic and that its limited industry expertise makes it necessary to develop new goods (Karakaya & Yannopoulos, 2008).

b) Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 stated that there is no significant effect between prospective strategy and Organizational growth. The analysis was tested to show the obtained $F(2,60) = 29.65$ with $p\text{-value} = 0.000$ at 0.05 level of significant. Where r^2 is 0.4971. coefficient of 0.2911 with error margin of 0.1879 and $t = 1.55$ with p value of 0.127 with negative confidential interval, we can say there is there is no significant effect between prospective strategy and organizational growth. The combined variable inflation factor obtained was tolerance because the VIF values of 2.65 falls within the acceptable of limit of between 10 and 1 which shows good tolerance. This was supported Zafar, Butt, & Afzal (2014), and Asmuss (2018) when they opined that the

examination of strategy execution should begin with people, their perspectives, personalities, and motivations. They are essential for the proper implementation of strategy and serve as the starting point when things go wrong. The research should center on their ideas, experiences, and talents. Where prospective strategy is effective is at a start of business or where business is about given birth to a new business outfit. Hence the there was not statistical significance in the above result of prospective strategy. Implementing a strategy entails following a strategic plan's predetermined components and timetable. These factors are the core of implementation and need to be closely watched throughout. The studies (Beer & Eisenstat, 2000; Rado, 2006; Puko & Ater, 2008; Brinkschröder, 2014; Harrison, 2017) shown that the most typical error in strategy execution is the absence of systemic control over these aspects.

Strategic management is not easily come by it required tactful thinking and articulated one for that matter. The requirement to coordinate a sizable number of individuals on various organizational levels and with various business activities adds another layer of complexity to the strategy implementation process (Candido & Santos, 2019). The senior management team is no longer the exclusive group responsible for strategy; instead, any internal and external organizational player whose activities may be determined to be relevant for strategic results may be included (Asmuss, 2018). An organization may be thought of as a collection of interrelated sets of processes, where processes are the tasks and activities that work together to convert inputs into outputs (Verweire, 2018)

6. Conclusion

In a fast-paced corporate context, this study looked at organizational growth and strategic management. Businesses must discover strategies to avoid the current financial and economic crisis and to survive the harsh and competitive business climate in today's globe. Adopting strategy that might help businesses adapt and endure in the marketplace is essential. Defensive and prospective strategies among others in strategic management is considered to be those important strategies. Thus, two research questions were raised and two hypotheses formulated to guide the study. Literature on the defensive and prospective strategy were reviewed. Thereafter the instrument for the study constructed with 15 questionnaire items distributed to sampled size of 63 and they were all retrieved without error. The data were tested using linear regression and the major findings are as follows:

- i) there is significant effect between defensive strategy and organizational growth

- ii) There is no significant effect between prospective strategy and organizational growth

Recommendations

- 1) Defensive strategy boosts organizational growth and it should be adopted by managers at all level and stages of business development as it help to fight competitors amidst harsh competitive business environment
- 2) Prospective strategy only work at the start of a business concerned or if there is a new birth of business thus it is recommended for management whenever they considered a new brand of market or during repackaging product. Prospective strategy is for prospecting it has little value for ongoing business concerned.

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