Christine Vallaster

Strategic Decision Making by Multicultural Groups

Verlag Dr. Kovač

Hamburg 2005

TABLE OF CONTENT

FOREWORD1
I. POSITIONING THE RESEARCH PROJECT5
1. Research Objective
2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS
3. STRUCTURE OF DISSERTATION
II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND15
1. DECISION MAKING PROCESSES AS THE UNDERLYING NOTION
OF STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION15
1.1. ABSTRACT
1.2. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON STRATEGIC DECISION MAKING: SHIFTING
FROM THE RATIONAL INDIVIDUAL TO THE SUBJECTIVE EVALUATOR16
1.3.StrategicDecision-making Processes - A Cognitive Perspective 22
1.3.1. Conceptualizing the Individual Decision Maker23
1.3.2. Cognitive Biases and Their Influence on Strategic Decision-making
Processes26
1.3.3. Determinants of Individual Cognitions and Their Effects on the
Process of Strategic Decision-making
1.3.4. Level of Analysis in Cognition Research
1.4. Conclusion
1.5. SOCIAL REPRESENTATION (SR) THEORY60
1.5.1. Locating Social Representation Theory in Modern Cognitive
Thought 61

1.5.2. Applicability of SR-Theory as a Methodological Framework for the
Analysis of Strategic Decision Making67
1.6. An Attempt to Develop a Refined Conceptual Framework – The
SHARED VISION AS THE CORE ELEMENT69
2. COMMUNICATION AS THE VEHICLE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF
A SHARED VISION71
2.1. Abstract71
2.2. Understanding the Process of Communication72
2.3. Understanding the Notion of 'Culture' - General Concepts and
THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO A STRUCTURED DISCUSSION
2.4 CONCEPTUALIZING 'CULTURE' WITHIN THE PRESENT FRAMEWORK80
2.5. Influence of Culture on the Process of Communication83
2.6. Conclusion
3. INTEGRATING LITERATURE FROM CROSS-CULTURAL GROUP
RESEARCH91
3.1. ABSTRACT91
3.2. IMPACT OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY ON GROUP PERFORMANCE92
3.3. REVIEW OF CROSS-CULTURAL GROUP RESEARCH95
3.3.1. Cross Cultural Research - Cognition98
3.3.2. Cross Cultural Research - Affect
3.3.3. Cross Cultural Research - Communication104
3.4. CONCLUSION
4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK TO THE STUDY OF STRATEGIC
DECISION MAKING BY MULTICULTURAL GROUPS115
III. EMPIRICAL PART121

1. RESEARCH DESIGN	21
1.1. ABSTRACT	21
1.2. Introduction	22
1.3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY12	23
1.3.1. Qualitative Research12	23
1.3.2. Introduction to Research Procedure: Field Research	26
1.3.3. Research Strategy: The Case Study12	28
1.3.4. Defining Membership Role During Field Research	29
1.3.5. Dilemma of the Chosen Research Methodology13	32
1.4. Data Gathering and Analysis	33
1.4.1. Sampling and Nature of Task	34
1.4.2. Within-case Analysis14	41
1.4.3. Employed Data Collection Methods/Techniques and Procedure of	
Data Analysis14	48
1.5. Cross-Case Analysis	68
1.6. REACHING CLOSURE	69
2. RESEARCH RESULTS1	71
2.1. Case Study 1:1	74
DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT	
STRATEGY (SCM) AMIDST ECONOMIC TURMOIL IN ASIA1	74
2.1.1. The Company1	74
2.1.2. Observation Group1	77
2.1.4. Summary of Findings – Factors that Allowed/Inhibited Shared	
Vision Development and Impact on Decision-making Process20	06
2.1.5. Remarks on Methodological Issues20	08
2.2. Case Study 2:	10

DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A MARKETING STRATEGY TO	
PROMOTE CHEMICAL PRODUCTS IN SOUTH CHINA (CP-STRATEGY)	210
2.2.1. The Company	210
2.2.2. Observation Group	211
2.2.3. The Development Phases of a Shared Vision by a Work Group	
Consisting of Central European and Chinese People	213
2.2.4. Summary of Findings – Factors that Allowed/Inhibited Shared	
Vision Development and Impact on the Decision-making Process	241
2.3. CASE STUDY 3:	244
STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION TO ENSURE A MORE	
CUSTOMER FOCUSED (MCF) SERVICE IN THE FINANCIAL DIVISION	244
2.3.1. The Company	244
2.3.2. Observation Group	248
2.3.3. Changes in Research Methodology	249
2.3.4. The Development Phases of a Shared Vision by a Work Group	
`Consisting of Chinese, Japanese, Singaporian and Austrian employees	.250
2.3.5 Summary of Findings – Factors that Allowed/Inhibited Shared	
Vision Development and Impact on the Decision-making Process	277
IV. DISCUSSION – IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY AND PRACTICE.	281
1. DISCUSSION	281
1.1. CONTEXT AND TASK DESCRIPTION	282
1.2. SHAPE OF OBSERVED STRATEGIC DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES	283
1.3. Process Losses Due to Cognitive Differences	287
1.4. PROCESS LOSSES DUE TO COMMUNICATION ISSUES	291
1.5. Process Losses Due to Affective Issues	294
1.6 PROCESS LOSSES DUE TO LACK OF LEADERSHIP	296

1.7. THE SHARED VISION AS THE LYNCH PIN BETWEEN PEOPLE FROM DIFFI	ERENT
Cultures	299
2. IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY	301
3. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS	307
4. STUDY CONTRIBUTION, LIMITATIONS AND AGENDA FOR	
FUTURE RESEARCH	315
V. APPENDIX	325
1. OPERATIONALIZATION OF VARIABLES	325
2. REFERENCES	326