

Understanding Organizational Research

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ABSTRACT

Organizational research is an essential element for modern day business. The chief objective of this paper was to develop an organizational research model that may assist firms to achieve competitive advantage through research. The methodology involved a review of numerous literatures that cover the discipline of organizational research. We consulted both theoretical and empirical literatures with the aim of developing a rich theoretical framework. This research process revealed three essential processes that comprise organizational research. These processes include; choosing research method; designing research procedures and selecting analytical approaches. The model suggests that firms can conduct excellent organizational research by enhancing these three processes. This model presents organizational researchers with a tool that may assist them to enhance research processes within their organization. One limitation of the study is that this model has not been practically applied to an organization in order to evaluate its practicability.

Keywords: *Organizational Properties, Historic Properties, Validity, Reliability, Interpretive Vigor*

1. INTRODUCTION

Research is a process that entails a systematic investigation with the aim of constructing new knowledge [1]. Research is an important process in the business setting. Studying organizations is essential because organizations are made up of complex and dynamic systems. Organizational research enables firms to understand how different components of the organization work and respond to changes within the system. Research excellence can be a source of competitive advantage for an organization. Research excellences enable organizations to have a clear understanding about its customers. Marketing research is an example of organization research [2].

Marketing research enables organizations to have a clear understanding of its customers thus, enabling the organization to establish efficient marketing strategies. Research excellence also enhances the capacity of organizations to manage its assets [3]. Organization research may also be directed towards evaluating the operations of the business [4]. This may lead to the establishment of efficient operations. In addition, excellence in research also gives organizations a clear understanding of the setting in which they operate. The environment in which an organization operates is an essential determinant of business success. Understanding this environment enhances an organization's chances for success. This paper explores the discipline of organization research method.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The researcher's objective is to establish a model that can assist organizations to create a competitive advantage through research. The student combined several research methods in order to establish a rich theoretical insight. Reviewing existing theories is one of the research methods that the student has used to develop a theoretical framework for organizational research method [5]. This entailed a review of literatures that

present theories on organizational research methods. The paper combined the theoretical reviews with a review of empirical studies conducted on this topic. The theoretical and empirical studies provided rich information that has become instrumental to the establishment of an organizational research model. The student consulted over 100 literatures that cover the discipline of organizational research. Reviewed literatures gave three essential factors that form the basis of an excellent organization research. These factors include; choice of research methods; development of research procedures and selection of analytical approaches. Five to ten sources are used under each of these factors.

3. WHAT IS ORGANIZATION RESEARCH?

Organization research is a systematic process of examining an organization in order to enhance the understanding of components that are essential to the organization's success. Organizational research is an essential element to the competitiveness of a business. This is because organizations are complex systems that consist of numerous components, which interact in order for the organization to function. Organization research enables organizations to be aware of the different parts that make up the system and how they interact. This enables an organization to identify areas that need improvements thus enhancing the operations of the firm. Organization research is essential to business success because it enables organizations to respond to changes within the environment. Organizations operate in dynamic environments. These environments are categorized into; the competitive environment, political, social cultural, technological and economical. These environments change on a regular basis thus, affecting the business operation. Organization research enables organizations to identify changes within the business environment and implement measures to respond to these changes.

4. SCIENTIFIC CAUSAL MODEL

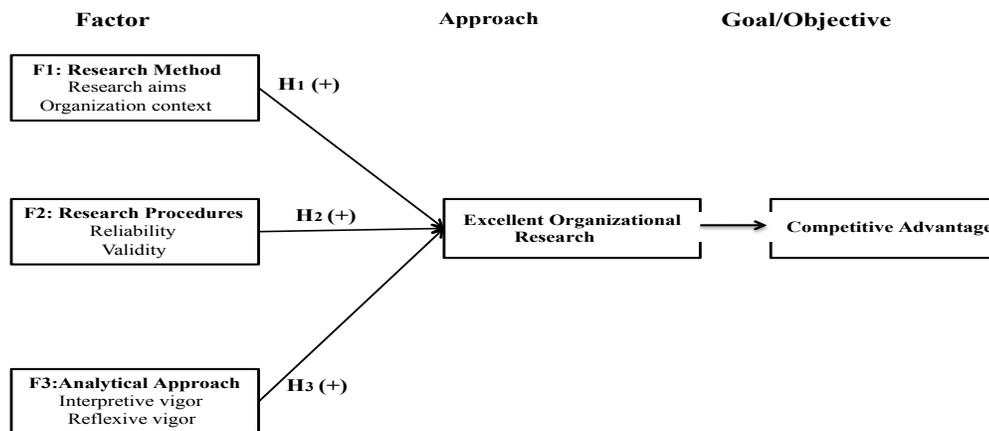


Fig 1: Structural Model of Organizational Research Model and Competitive Advantage.

5. CHOOSING RESEARCH METHODS

There are a variety of research methods. These research methods can be grouped into four broad categories; quantitative, qualitative, mixed method and action research. Quantitative research methods use statistical techniques to evaluate links between variables [6]. Quantitative research methods focus on describing a phenomenon. Qualitative research methods uses non-statistical data often obtain through observation, documentation and discussion [7]. Mixed method research combines qualitative and quantitative research techniques [8]. Action research is a collaborative effort among members of an organization that is directed towards providing solutions to everyday problems [9]. This research method allows a firm to inquire and hold discussions concerning various organization's problem. There are various factors that determine the most appropriate choice of research methods. The research aim is one of these determinants [10]. Research aims refers to the outcome that the organization wants to achieve through the research process. Different research goals require different research approaches. The research goal may seek to establish the relationship between variables. For instance, a research may seek to establish the relationship between working hours and employee productivity. Such goal may require quantitative research approaches. The research process may also seek to explain a certain trend. For instance, a study may seek to investigate where there is a high employee attrition rate with the organization. Such a goal may require the use of qualitative techniques. Other studies may seek to establish causal relationships, build models or solve a technical problem. These goals will determine the most suitable research method for the organization.

The organizational context is also an essential consideration when selecting research methods. The context in which an organization operates determines the methodological decisions on an organization. Organizational context comprises of five main elements; organizational properties, historical properties, political properties, ethical properties and personal properties [11]. Organizational properties refer to the size, location, industry, traditions, norms and many other factors that define the organization at present [12]. These factors will influence the choice of research methods. Historical properties refer to the organization past experiences. New knowledge is built on existing knowledge and thus, the historical context is an essential consideration when it comes to organization research. Political properties relate to factors that influence organization authority and power. Businesses are political organizations and, thus, researchers need to ensure that the research process is not entangled with the politics of the organization. Ethical properties refer to elements that define what is acceptable within the organization. Ethics vary from one firm to the next. The research approach needs to adhere to the ethical standard of the organization. Personal properties refer to the interest, perspectives and feelings of individual stakeholders within the organization. The research needs to incorporate these personal elements into the research process in order to develop an effective research design.

6. DESIGNING RESEARCH PROCEDURES

Research design provides the adhesive that holds the research process together. The design shows the different parts of the research process and how these parts

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interact [13]. The research designs determine what facts need to be gathered and how the facts should be collected. The research parts may include sampling procedures, data collection procedures and treatment procedures among others. There are numerous research designs. Research designs may be categorized into three broad categories; experimental, quasi experimental and non-experimental. Experimental designs comprise of a treatment and control group. Non-experimental designs comprise of only one group of participants. Research designs may also be categorized according to the mode of selecting samples. This mode of categorization divides designs into randomized and non-randomized studies. Randomized assignments entails random grouping of participants. This eliminates systematic selection.

Organizations need to make two essential considerations while designing a research process. One of these considerations is the type of information that the organization desires to collect [14]. Researches need varied types of data in order to reach the goals of the research process. The organization needs to tailor the research process according to the information that is required. The second consideration that an organization needs to make is how the data should be collected. There are different approaches of collecting data. Each of these approaches has its merits and disadvantages. The organization should design the most appropriate approach of collecting data.

Organization researchers should focus on enhancing reliability and validity when designing the research process. Reliability refers to the consistency of the processes used in a given studies [15]. A reliable research should give the similar outcomes when conducted numerous times under consistent conditions. Reliability of a study is mainly determined by the accuracy of data collection tools in collecting what it supposed to collect [16]. It is concerned with the procedural rigor of the research process. Validity refers to the precision of the conclusion that the research process has reached. Validity can either be internal or external validity. Internal validity is mainly significant in quantitative studies where the accuracy of the causal relationship needs to be determined. External validity is concerned with the extent at which the results of the research activity can be applied to the general population. Due to limitation, organization researches often study a small section of the population with the hope of projecting the results onto the entire population. External validity is dependent on the level of representativeness of the studied section of the population. Thus, external validity is mainly concerned with the strategy used in the sampling stage of the research.

7. SELECTING ANALYTICAL APPROACHES

There are numerous approaches of analyzing data. These approaches can be categorized into two broad classes; quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative approaches make use statistical tools to

analyze data [17]. Quantitative analytical techniques are divided into descriptive and inferential statistical tools. Descriptive statistical tools mainly focus on describing the pattern of the collected data. The tools include; percentages, frequencies, mean, median and mode. Inferential statistical tools focus on evaluating the value of relationship between variables. These tools include; chi square tests, regression analysis, cross tabulation and many others. Qualitative analytical approaches seek to explore the qualitative aspect of data instead of focus on figures and statistics. Qualitative analytical approaches include; discourse analysis, content analysis, triangulation and many others [18].

The analytical approach should establish procedures for tackling each of the research hypotheses or questions [19]. The analytical approach should be capable of measuring all relevant variables that may influence the conclusion of the process. Business research should focus on enhancing interpretative rigor when selecting analytical approaches. The data analysis process helps the research to organize data in order to makes them relevant to the goals of the study. Thus, the analytical approach should focus providing a thorough analysis of the collected data [20]. The analysis should also be relevant to goals of the study. The analytical approach should also promote reflexive rigor. Reflexive rigor refers to the ability of the analytical tool to respond to the social cultural element of the research environment. Business organizations are human made entities and engage human elements in almost all aspects of business. Therefore, the research process needs to address this social aspect of organization research.

8. CONCLUSION

Organization research is a systematic process of reviewing an organization with the aim of developing an enhanced understanding about the organization processes and functions. Organizations need to evaluate themselves through research in order to remain competitive. This is because organizations are complex systems, which operate in dynamic environments. The research process enables organizations to be aware of the different parts that make up the business system, and the changes within the environment. This paper has developed a model that business can use to enhance competitiveness through organizational research. The model identifies three essential processes in organizational research. These processes include; choosing research methods; designing research procedures and selecting analytical approaches.

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AUTHOR PROFILE

Areej Alshehri. Areej holds a Master's degree in Technology Management with a concentration in Biotechnology Management from Bridgeport University. She also holds a Bachelor's Degree in Science and Education, major in chemistry from King Khaled University. She has submitted three research papers to the Norwich conference 2013 of Norwich University and in the International Journal of Innovation and Applied Studies (IJIAS); the titles of her research are Network Marketing, Organization Research Paper, and Corporate Social Entrepreneurship and Collectivist Personal Values. April, 2014 she published her research paper and poster titled "Challenges of Cerebral Palsy Management" in the conference of American Society for Engineering Education. Areej research interests include Biotechnology, Entrepreneurship, Science and Biomedical engineering. Increased knowledge in Cerebral Palsy caused the author to have an increased interest in Cerebral Palsy, as a topic for her thesis "The Use of Electrical Signals as A Therapy for Cerebral Palsy"